

# Marantz SR6004 Review

Product Review

Specifications

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9.5/10



Marantz' SR6004 piles on techie features like Bluetooth as thick as a brick. Audiophile could ask for, without compromising the legendary sound quality. ~~\$1249.95~~ at [Panis.com](#) ~~\$888.00~~ at [GildaySound.com](#) ~~\$929.00~~ at [PowersellerNYC.com](#)



**Highs:** Superb sound, Bluetooth and USB connectivity, 7.1, multi-zone and bi-amp capable, Pro-Logic IIz support, , ,

**Lows:** No THX processing, Only one S-Video input

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By: [Caleb Dennison](#)

Date: January 26, 2010

We review the Marantz SR6004 A/V receiver, one of the best sounding receivers we've had the pleasure testing.



## Introduction

For the last 55 years, Marantz has made quality its number one priority. While other receiver manufacturers have often scrambled to be first to market with the latest, greatest features, Marantz has remained quietly patient, waiting out the inevitable bugs and limitations of brand-new technologies. The result of the company's patience is a legacy of remarkably well-made, solid products that, to the delight of their owners, have a way of performing flawlessly for years and years. Today, Marantz offers a suite of state-of-the-art receivers that, true to its tradition, have been thoughtfully designed to offer today's latest audio decoders and video processing in combination with their legendary high-end sound. Positioned toward the upper end of Marantz's A/V receiver offerings, the \$1249.99 SR6004 represents a tremendous value by offering uncompromised sound, incredible connectivity and an intuitive user interface in a very attractive package that is consistent with Marantz's history of high style/high performance products.

## Out of the Box

A well powered and well constructed amplifier is, generally speaking, going to be heavy. Big power supplies, copper chassis' and capacitors are weighty components, so it is difficult not to begin judging a receiver the moment you pick it up. The SR6004's 28lb heft is admirable, but it is the fact that it is clearly concentrated in the power supply section of the receiver that is exciting.

The jet-black SR6004 is very attractive, as electronic components go. Marantz has always made elegant looking products and this receiver carries on that tradition. The remarkably clean face of the unit is suavely curved on the left and right hand sides, softening the appearance of this gentle giant.



Packaged with the receiver is one back-lit, multi-function remote control; a microphone for Audyssey's calibration software; a Bluetooth wireless receiver; an antenna (or aerial, if you prefer); some batteries; and a user manual.

that is thicker than most state-history textbooks.

## Features

The Marantz SR6004 is very competitively featured. We immediately noticed four HDMI 1.3 inputs and two HDMI outputs. Component video and composite inputs are plentiful, but there is just one S-Video connection available and it is on the front panel. Marantz omitted the S-Video connection from the bay on the back of the receiver in order to reduce clutter increase



ease of setup. We are extremely pleased to see that Marantz's on-screen interface is output via HDMI (along with component and composite options), a convenience feature often overlooked by other receiver manufacturers. SR6004 will upscale all video sources to 1080p and output it through one of its two HDMI connections using on board video processing from i-chips. Another notable video feature is the SR6004's ability to output a component video signal that is synched with the second zone audio output. This essentially enables the user to offer full A/V capability to two rooms with different sources simultaneously, so now you can enjoy DVD screenings of *Distric* in one room while the kids watch *SpongeBob* in the other. Perfect!

The SR6004 offers all the latest audio decoders, including Pro-Logic IIz for "height speakers" that add to the vertical surround field for more realistic effects. You can enjoy uncompressed audio from Blu-Ray discs, hi-resolution multichannel SACDs, DVD-Audio... you name it, and the SR6004 has you covered. Marantz has even included their proprietary M-DAX processor to restore high frequencies to compressed music for significantly better sound from your *iPod* or *iPhone*.

Other special features include a Bluetooth wireless receiver to allow wirelessly streamed music from your Bluetooth device; a USB input that works with your *iPhone* as well as most other portable music devices; XM/Sirius radio capability; and an Infrared receiver that allows you to hide your equipment in one room and control it from another.



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## Performance

To evaluate the SR6004, we connected an [Oppo BDP-83](#), an [Xbox 360](#), a [Nintendo Wii](#), a VIP722 Dish Network receiver and an [iPhone 3G](#). We used speakers from Snell Acoustics, Aperion Audio and B&W.



Perhaps the most exciting new feature that the SR6004 offers is its Bluetooth connectivity. Since it doesn't offer a network interface, the receiver's Bluetooth and USB connectivity are likely be the most heavily used input sources. We tested each one of these inputs using our iPhone 3G, first with compressed files, then with uncompressed files. What we found was that the all digital USB interface was clear superior in sound quality with uncompressed files and less distinctly so with compressed music. The Bluetooth interface, however, was significantly more convenient. We were able to control everything from our phone from across the room and, in some cases, from adjacent rooms. When we moved out of range, the music stopped, then resumed once we were back in range of the receiver. With Marantz's M-DAX processing engaged, we noticed a considerable improvement in the high frequency response, but it was still pretty obvious that the sound was compressed to begin with.

The first track off of Mark Knopfler's *Get Lucky* release opens with eerie woodwinds backed by a lush string section, then bursts into a double-time groove that takes off – just like the big rig truck the song is written about. During the quiet opening, the SR6004 exposed a tremendous amount of air around the Scottish flute and gave us a real sense of texture as bows etched across strings. When the rhythm section kicked in, so did the Marantz's prodigious power supply – bass was taught, punchy and balanced against the terrific transients of the acoustic guitar. We've listened to this track through several systems, and it has often had a rather flat, compressed sound stage, but the SR6004 breathed a life of depth into the recording that was very satisfying.



For multi-channel music, we queued up Pink Floyd's *Dark Side of the Moon* on SACD and kicked back as the room lit up with instruments from every direction. We've heard this recording dozens of times, but listening to it through the SR6004 was an entirely different experience. There was remarkable separation amongst the channels while simultaneously maintaining musical cohesion. Each layer of the recording was well-balanced and crystal clear.

For movie playback, we put the SR6004 through a series of speaker configurations. Most receivers support either a 7.1 speaker configuration or a 5.1 configuration with the option to add "height speakers" supported by Pro-LiIz, but not both at the same time. The SR6004 is one of the few receivers available that will allow both in tand

You may also forego height speakers and use the outputs to bi-amplify your front speakers or run a pair of speakers in another room. This flexibility allowed us to run our full 7.1 system and include the height speakers our discretion. It didn't take much listening to conclude that the SR6004 really did behave more like separate components than it did a receiver. The clean channel separation, lack of crosstalk, instant power and super low audible distortion levels all pointed to a Pre-Amp/Processor and 7 channel amplifier combo. By offering such exemplary performance from a receiver, Marantz has made it considerably more difficult to make the leap to separate components.

To be frank, we were finding it difficult to sniff out any weak points that the SR6004 might exhibit. So, we subjected it to a barrage of tests to determine the quality of each of its components and, in the end, we were impressed that the SR6004 managed to pass each with flying colors. We even stacked its on-board DACs against those found in high-end SACD and Blu-Ray players and found that in most cases, the Marantz's decoding actually sounded



better. It is true that the SR6004 doesn't offer THX processing, but its absence was hardly noticed and should only be a factor of consideration for those that really enjoy THX flavor of processing.

## ***Conclusion***

The Marantz SR6004 is perhaps the best sounding receiver in its price class that we've had the pleasure of testing. It pairs cutting-edge technology, top quality components, breathtaking sound, high style and extreme flexibility to culminate in what we would feel safe calling "the audiophile's receiver." In short, if you long for the sound of separate components, but crave the convenience of a receiver, then the SR6004 is your ticket to audio paradise.

## ***Highs:***

- Superb sound
- Bluetooth and USB connectivity
- 7.1, multi-zone and bi-amp capable
- Pro-Logic IIz support

## ***Lows:***

- No THX processing
- Only one S-Video input

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