

# Marantz reloaded

With the SR7005 Marantz has shaken off its reputation for staid amp performance and is now a home cinema supremo, as **Richard Stevenson** discovers

I confess that I have never really been excited by Marantz's AV receivers. They were never ahead of the features game and always aired too much on the side of sonic caution for my liking. Safe, reliable, solid and about as exciting as endurance snail racing. When the SR7005 arrived I brewed a really fresh cup of Horlicks, put my slippers on and settled down for an evening of light entertainment.

I should have known something was different the moment the SR7005's curvy-sided fascia came out of the box, like Angelina Jolie emerging from the lake in *Beowulf*. Based on the successful styling of Marantz's high end hi-fi equipment, this multichannel receiver is utterly gorgeous. The curves in all the right places, different fascia textures, brushed knobs and that unique circular display make our previous favourite super-models from Pioneer look as if they have had a good thrashing with the ugly stick.

And just when you are thinking that the display window is going to prove a little petite for comprehensive menu display, you drop down the front flap to reveal a bigger main display. That is so cool.

And then there is the features list. **No longer the stripped down, audiophile device of previous Marantz receivers, the SR7005 is right up there at the cutting edge of AV tech.** Based on the latest generation 32-bit SHARC processor from Analog Devices, it handles all the regular HD audio formats as well as Audyssey MultEQ XT room EQ, Audyssey DSX height/width processing and Dolby Pro-Logic IIz

height channels. It remains a seven-channel amp, which means running height or width channels will require binning rear-back speakers, but at a claimed 125W per channel who is complaining?

Very much a network-ready receiver, the SR7005 offers a dedicated iPod/Phone input, IP addressable and web-access interface and Marantz's bespoke M-Xport interface to hook up to its optional RX1010 Bluetooth module. The networking side is hardwired Ethernet with vTuner net radio and direct access to your Napster and Last.FM accounts.

## Apps to go... soon

In development and, alas, not available for this review is a seductive iPhone/Touch app that will control the SR7005 from your Apple device – ideal for when the dog has eaten the relatively mundane remote handset supplied. The 6-in 2-out HDMI connections all have 3D compatible V1.4a spec, and there is an Anchor Bay upscaler to work some hi-def magic into your SD DVD collection and video material.

Under the hood, Marantz has gone to town to ensure the SR7005 shakes off the older, rather sedate sound and can drive an action movie as fast, if not faster, than any competing device. The power amplifiers are a current feedback circuit with a whopping transformer power supply for high current on demand. There are a bunch of hand-selected components that would make the most anorak-wearing of hi-fi aficionados nod appreciatively. Much attention has been lavished on separate power

## AV/CV

**Product:**  
All new, fully featured AV receiver

**Positioning:**  
On its own at the top of Marantz receiver range

**Peers:**  
Denon AVR-4310,  
Onkyo TX-NR5007



More seductive than a date with Betty Draper and likewise guaranteed to drive you mad with excitement



## → Specifications

Dolby True HD: yes and Dolby Pro-Logic IIz  
DTS HD Master Audio: yes and DTS ES 6.1 Discrete  
THX: no and no loss here  
Universal Remote: yes, with iPhone app to follow!  
Zone 2 Remote: no see iPhone app  
Multi-channel input: yes, 7.1 RCA  
Multi-channel output: yes, 7.2 RCA  
Multi-room: yes, main + 1 zones  
Phono-stage: yes  
AV inputs: yes 5x composite & RCA audio  
HDMI Switching: yes 6-in 2-out (one front loader), V1.4a  
HDMI audio: yes PCM and bitstream  
Video upscaling: yes to 1080p  
Component video: yes 4-in, 2-out  
iPod dock: yes via USB  
Networking: yes, wired Ethernet, IP, Bluetooth option  
USB reader: yes, WMA, MP3, FLAC and WAV  
Room EQ: yes Audyssey Mult-EQ  
Auto set-up: yes with mic supplied  
Headphone: yes  
Amplification: 7 x 125W claimed  
Tuner: FM/AM, vTuner, Napster, last.FM  
Dimensions: 440(w) x 185(h) x 406(d)mm  
Weight: 13.2Kg  
Also featuring: Audyssey DSX, iPhone/iPod Touch control app available soon; M-Xport for Bluetooth comms; re-introduced MM phono stage; 3D compatible HDMI, audio return channel, DLNA 1.5 certified, current feedback amplifiers, twin displays, IR and 12v triggers

supplies for each key audio section and extensive internal shielding to avoid electrical interference. There's also a Pure Direct mode that closes down all superfluous circuits and features, such as the display.

**The SR7005 is a whole lot of receiver for the money and, in technology and features alone, has leapfrogged forward to join the leading pack.**

Back this up with Marantz's audiophile expertise and this receiver has the potential to be a real winner. So where's the catch? Frankly, there isn't one; well, not a major one anyway. Yes, the build quality could be a little better as the main knobs wobble like weebles with vertigo at the lightest sideway push, and the speaker terminals are rather budget binding posts for a 1.5 kilo-pound amp. Hey-ho.

**Belt up for take-off**

Horlicks is a bitch to wipe off of the ceiling. Having run the SR7005's Audyssey auto set-up and EQ system, accessed from its slick and easy GUI, I settled down with *Serenity*

on Blu-Ray. Skipping to the chapter where the ship emerges from the ion cloud straight into a huge space battle between the alliance and the reavers, was something of a shock. No longer the restrained Marantz performer of old, this beast reaches deep into electronic soul and pulls out wave after wave of thunderous action, set against a huge soundstage, as well as bass effects so powerful that they threatened the very fabric of the building.

The opening onslaught of missiles exploded with epic scale, causing my room's glass light fitting to vibrate like a demented alarm clock. Very few receivers without separate box power amps manage that and the Marantz's feed to the sub is as prodigious as it is tight. Strewth, this is a receiver with a real passion for the adrenaline-fuelled side of home movie entertainment! The ship's crash landing is an epic, whirling maelstrom of sonic action, with every effect projected well out into the room and perfectly defined. It's not merely the wall of sound that lesser amps manage to produce, but finely



Through the round window: is a much larger display, revealed by dropping down the hinged panel

orchestrated sound effects that send the pulse racing.

**Taming the beast**

When the light fitting threatened to detach itself from the ceiling, I decided I had to manually fine-tune the SR7005's bass management to tame the LFE output a little and thereby keep the house in one piece. Simply put, the main volume on my Velodyne DD18 was set too high and the Marantz, like all Audyssey-based receivers, didn't have the latitude to auto-reduce the sub output enough in relation to the main speakers.

Its max cut of -12dB was applied to the sub, but due to very efficient speakers and Audyssey trying to deliver a reference 80dB level, it was also cutting the main speakers by anything from -9dB to -12dB. While this did mean I had to trim the Velodyne back manually, it didn't stop the SR7005 banging out big low frequency effects with the impact and tautness of an amp of three or four times its price!

The SR7005 is the best Marantz AV receiver to date. It is passionate,

detailed and powerful, and really digs deep into the recording to extract every last bit of information on the disc. With the more sedate parts of *Serenity*, such as its excellent dialogue and interesting character interactions, you can't help but be impressed with the Marantz's attention to detail and big, upfront approach. Yet move to more intense drama like *Girl With The Dragon Tattoo* and SR7005 simply finds new reserves of depth and atmosphere.

**It can sound as moody as it is feisty and as intense as it is ebullient, perfectly matching its pace and balance to the movie.**

This is no one-genre wonder, but a genuine all-rounder as happy with *The Hurt Locker* as it is with *Toy Story*.

But the SR7005's best trick is actually its own disappearing act. With most movies you won't find yourself listening to the amp or even your speakers. Instead you will find yourself deep within the film, being immersed in the full cinematic effect as the director intended – and that is the best home cinema you can get!

**Connections**

**A Component king**

A surfeit of inputs for video switching any legacy kit clinging to hi-def analogue component video

**B Blue in the tooth**

The bespoke M-Xport interface lets you hook up to its optional RX1010 Bluetooth module

**C Last resort**

The hardwired Ethernet jack is your gateway to network services such as Napster and Last.FM

**D Analogue alternative**

The SR7005 will happily handle a decoded 7.1 channel feed from a Blu-ray deck

**E HDMI maestro**

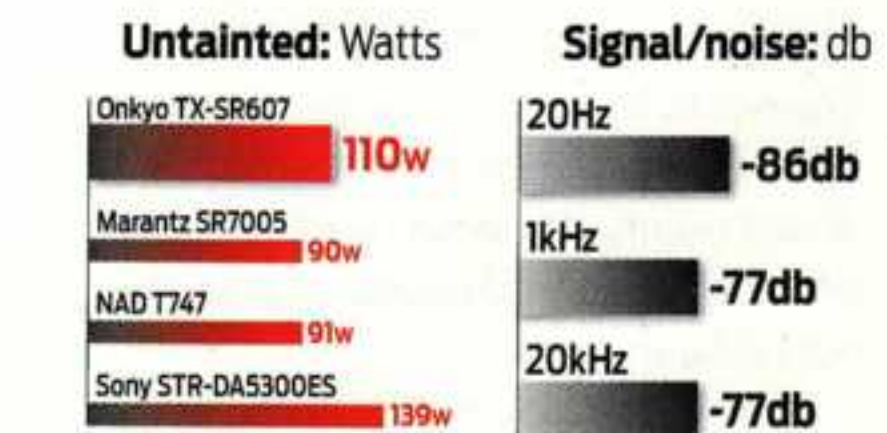
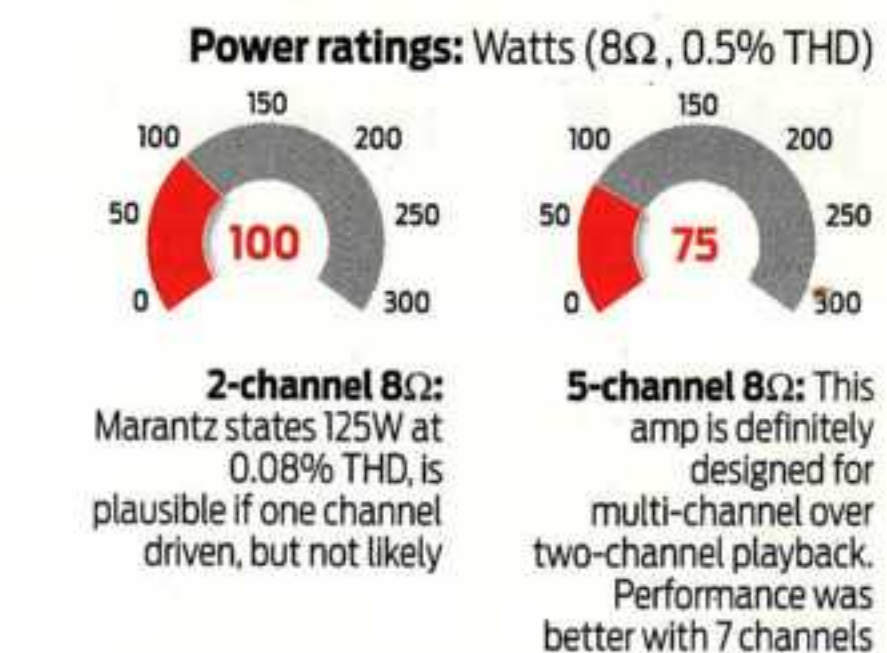
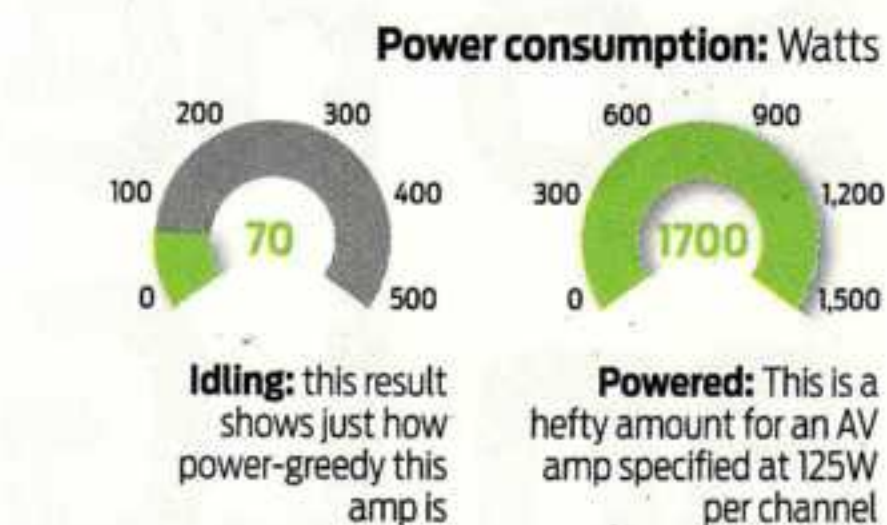
All six HDMI inputs and both outputs are v1.4a and provide plenty of HD and 3D connectivity options

**F What a bind**

The plastic binding posts used for speaker terminals aren't of the highest build quality



→ Tech Labs



**Fidelity firewall:** A measurement of power untainted by distortion (0.05THD, 8Ω, 1kHz), this is an average result that's good for the money

**S/N tests:** Good results, but they don't meet the THX standard of 85dB



**HCC VERDICT**

Marantz SR7005  
£1,400 Approx

**Highs:** Superb detail; a movie lover's dream amp; great value  
**Lows:** External build quality; lack of 9-channel output; absence of THX

