



The great-looking SR7005 oozes specs appeal, and offers very muscular sound

NEED TO KNOW

CONSIDER IF

You're keen to wirelessly stream from your computer as painlessly as possible

MAKE SURE

You invest the time to run the auto-calibration from a number of different seating positions in your listening room

AVOID

Partnering equipment with an overly muscular balance. This Marantz receiver already sounds burly enough

YOU'LL NEED

To hard-wire the SR7005 via Ethernet to use its network abilities

HIGHLIGHT

The pop-eyed fascia. It's an exciting break from the home cinema receiver norm

Marantz | SR7005 | £1400

Overflowing with features and oomph

Kit-rack presence doesn't come much burlier or more intriguing than Marantz's strapping SR7005 multichannel receiver. This is the first time we've seen a home cinema amplifier fitted with a monochrome display, for starters.

That circular, watchcase-like display is a lovely design flourish, and there's a much more comprehensive display hidden behind the fascia flap - like your fridge, it only lights up when the door's open.

As befits a receiver at this price, the Marantz is creaking under the weight of its own specification. Eight HDMI's (six in, two out, all 3D-compatible), audio processing to accommodate surround rear, front height or front width 7-channel configurations, hardwired Ethernet networking ability and Apple AirPlay compatibility are among the highlights - the full list is exhaustive. The automatic, mic-assisted set-up, achieved via so-so on-screen menus and a so-so remote control, isn't the fastest, but is as accurate as any receiver we've used that isn't a Pioneer.

Asked to decode, amplify and distribute the DTS-HD Master Audio 7.1 soundtrack to the Blu-ray reissue of *Se7en*, the SR7005

performs with a deal more brio than recent Marantz multichannellers. The soundstage isn't the most expansive, but rather an intimate, tightly unified circle, with effects steered securely and the feeling of immersion tangible. The SR7005 punches determinedly, with little slack at the beginning or the end of low-frequency hits or notes, and summons crisp attack at the top. Detail levels are high and dynamic headroom is considerable. It's a much faster listen than Marantzes of old - progress of which we entirely approve.

Hefty midrange is an issue

It's the midrange, and consequently the centre speaker, that proves most problematic. There's an undeniable thickening of low-midrange/upper-bass frequency information, which stifles transparency and hampers dynamic subtleties. This rather muscle-bound approach to dialogue spoils an otherwise well-judged tonal balance and impacts negatively on the overall agility of the sound. Plus it leaves the SR7005 palpably more difficult to match to speakers than the best of its rivals.

USE IT WITH Cloudy with a Chance of Meatballs

It's number one in a fairly narrow field of 3D Blu-rays right now, but *Cloudy...* is still a mightily effective way to show off 3D and HD-audio. It's really funny, too



It's similar with stereo music, too: ample attack, decent timing and good focus, all undermined by a crisis of confidence a third of the way up the frequency range.

But the fact remains that this is as exciting a multichannel amp as Marantz has turned out in ages, and one that's far more thoroughly specified too. With that system-matching caveat to the fore, then, it's well worth an audition.

Rating ★★★★★

FOR Interesting looks, bomb-proof build; great spec; immersive sound; plenty of drive

AGAINST Lacks the transparency of the best

VERDICT For the first time in a while, a Marantz receiver has delivered an authentic alternative to the established front-runners

TECH SPECS

Channels 7x125W **Inputs** HDMI x6, component x4, composite x4, coaxial x2, optical x2, USB, analogue x6, phono, multichannel, ethernet **Outputs** HDMI x2, optical, component x2, composite x3 **Size (hwd)** 19x44x41cm **Weight** 13kg

System Builder

Monitor Audio Apex £2425

★★★★★

The Apex has the bite and speed to minimise the negative impact of the Marantz's troublesome midrange, and is every bit as handsomely designed



Sony KDL-46HX903 £2500

★★★★★

The HX903's sophisticated looks are perfect for the Marantz but, even more importantly, it's capable of simply stunning picture quality



Sony BDP-S570 £230 ★★★★★

Your TV is a 3D TV. Your receiver is 3D ready. This Sony 3D Blu-ray player's almost supernatural value won it an Award last month... it's not rocket surgery





**YOUR
QUESTIONS
ANSWERED
IN FULL**

Joe Cox | Simon Lucas | Ketan Bharadia

ASK THE EXPERTS

Isn't AirPlay just a new name for AirTunes?

Not quite. Streaming from AirTunes requires an AirPort Express or another computer running iTunes. With AirPlay, you can stream music directly to devices with integrated AirPlay compatibility. The Marantz SR7005 is the first product we've seen with AirPlay on board, but expect it to crop up in a number of speaker docks and stereo amplifiers before much longer. Plus, if you select 'multiple speakers' from your iTunes menu, you can stream to multiple AirPlay-equipped devices throughout the house simultaneously - and bingo! An instant multiroom system with no special, dedicated kit.

You'll be able to stream music from an iPhone, iPod or iPad directly to AirPlay-enabled products - without a computer

So I'm just removing one element of the AirTunes chain of command? That sounds good, but is it great?

It's slightly more than that. With AirPlay, you'll be able to stream music stored on your iPhone, iPod or iPad directly to AirPlay-enabled products with no computer input required. And if you download video to your iPad, you can watch and control the content from there while enjoying the sound via your AirPlay device.

So is there any facility to stream video as well as music?

Not just yet, but before much longer. With AirPlay, you'll soon be able to stream video content from your iPhone, iPod or iPad directly to an Apple TV - and from there to your widescreen LCD or plasma telly.

That all sounds pretty exciting. Is there anything else AirPlay can do for me?

As well as streaming music, AirPlay will stream the information associated with it, too. Song titles, album artwork, artist information and more all appear on any AirPlay product with a graphical display.



Stream music to any AirPlay device and if it has a display, you'll even get album art