



PRE/POWER
AMPLIFIERS
ROTEL RC-1580/
RB-1582

★★★★★
£ 995/1095

↑ FOR

Unobtrusive character; powerful sound; build and finish

↓ AGAINST

Slight shortfalls in transparency and agility

→ VERDICT

A likeable, fully featured performer that delivers much for the money

Power pairing show sensitive side

IN THE UK, Rotel is best known for its long-running success with budget amplifiers. But the Japanese company is no slouch at higher price points. There's a feeling of real quality about both the products on test, and the strong impression that they're seriously built to last.

Our only real complaint is that the supplied handset doesn't match the quality of the main units in either feel or ergonomics.

The RC-1580 is a fully featured preamp. It has tone and balance controls – something of a rarity at this price level – and enough line-level inputs to accommodate even the most complex stereo system, along with two tape loops and a headphone output.

“There's no trouble delivering massive dynamic swings”

It's the preamp's MM/MC phono input that catches our attention, though. Most rivals don't include one, arguing that there are plenty of good quality outboard units available. That it reduces their manufacturing and design costs is less often stated.

The phono stage is a good one, too, delivering a high level of clarity and a good dose of dynamics. It's decently quiet, too.

With its 200 Watt per channel power rating, the RB-1582 power amplifier is capable of high volumes without a struggle. It's a real workhorse that just gets on

“This Rotel pairing pleases with its delicacy and drive”

with the job of driving a speaker without complaint or hardening up when pushed. There's a fair bit of speed on offer, too, not always a given with high-power amps.

In combination with the RC-1580 the power amp delivers an understated yet enjoyable sound. There's not quite the transparency or timing precision of similarly priced alternatives from the likes of Cyrus, but there remains enough of both to keep us listening.

As you would expect, there's no trouble delivering the massive dynamics swings of *The Dark Knight OST*. Low frequencies are thumped out with control and venom, and scale and authority are both top class, too.

Plenty of power delivered unobtrusively and with little effort means this Rotel pairing deserve a listen

Given something smaller-scale and challenging, such as Nina Simone's *Feeling Good*, this pair pleases with its delicacy and drive. The midrange is expressive, while the highs are a neat combination of bite, insight and refinement.

This is a powerful, well-built pre/power combination that just gets on with the job without drawing attention to itself. That makes it well worth an audition.



RC-1580
LINE LEVEL IN 5
PHONO IN
MM/MC
TAPE LOOPS 2
PREAMP OUT Yes
HEADPHONE OUT Yes
TONE CONTROLS Yes
REMOTE CONTROL Yes
DIMENSIONS 10x43x34cm

RB-1582
POWER 200W
INPUTS Phono in
DIMENSIONS 14x43x41cm
WEIGHT 33kg