

## Rotel RSX965 AV Receiver

*Manufacturer:* Rotel of America, 54 Concord St., North Reading, MA 01864; 800/370-3741; [www.rotel.com](http://www.rotel.com)

*Price:* \$1,199.95

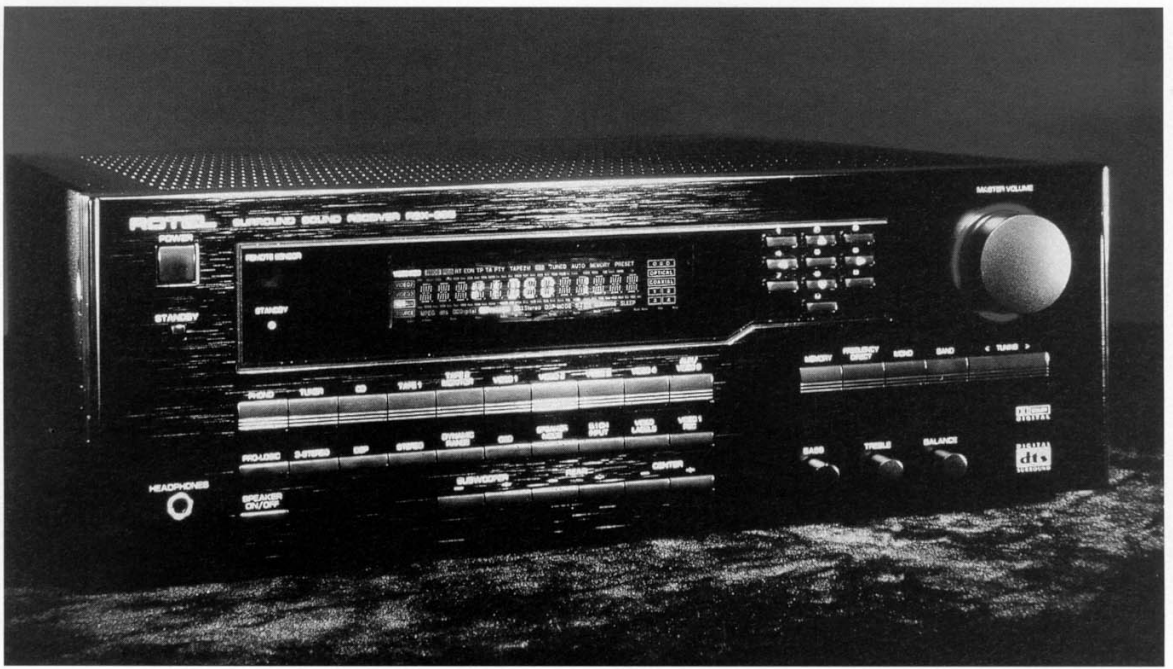
*Source:* Manufacturer loan

*Reviewer:* David M. Doll

The Rotel RSX 965 is twice the price of the AV receivers I have been reviewing of late. Alas, for those of us on limited budgets, it performs as though it cost many times its list price. After reveling in its remarkable qualities as an AV receiver, I used it as the preamplifier surround sound decoder in a system using the massive five-channel Outlaw amplifier. I kept trying to tell myself that this was wasteful of the quite solid amplifiers to be found in the RSX 965. My wife hinted that the combination of the RSX 965 and the Outlaw took up a large portion of the listening room. When she heard the clarity, power, and musicality of the system she began to suggest screenings of her favorite movies with no more negative comments and relatively few requests to turn down the power.

Rotel has clearly not stinted on its chips (or anything else). The Dolby 5.1, DTS, and Dolby Pro Logic materials are decoded beautifully. By a happy coincidence, I got the new Dolby 5.1 DVD of *Richard III* with Sir Ian McKellan. I have the laser disc version but lack the 5.1 adapter for my laser disc player. Knowing the impressive sound of the laser disc, I was blown away by the subtle but significant differences in the surround detail and presence afforded by the Dolby 5.1 version. My wife had cheerfully allowed me to order the DVD version and there was no pressure on me to wax eloquent on the new version. I also found that the Rotel RSX 965 did DTS proud. Indeed, the family dogs frequently suggest that DTS is not their preferred surround system. They prefer less precisely located sound and moving sound fields. I love to watch the Shepherd puppy trying to locate the helicopters in *Apocalypse Now*.

In point of fact, the dogs hate the precision and wide sound field of DTS musical discs with equal passion. And THX discs reproduced at reasonable levels have led to attempted palace coups by the pets, only



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forested by handfuls of distracting treats.

The RSX 965 is beautifully designed and solidly constructed. It has 5 times 75 watts of power. Digital sound processing is included with multiple hall effects, two- and three-channel stereo, theater, and stadium effects.

The visual display is visible from across the room even with my aging eyes. The rear panel offers a full range of analog and digital connections. There are no less than 5 audio/video inputs, two audiotape inputs and outputs, phono and CD inputs, 5.1 digital inputs and outputs, four digital video inputs, and analog 5.1 outputs. While the front panel has no fewer than 23 control buttons and knobs, all of these can be controlled by a functional universal remote and the displays sent to the TV monitor and displayed on the front panel. Given a plethora on FM signals from Chicago and Milwaukee with no significant problems from ghosts, I do not pretend to make meaningful evaluations of tuners. I have no reason to suspect that the tuner section of the RSX-965 is any less worthy of praise than are the other sections of this fine piece of hardware.

If I had any reservations about selecting the Rotel RSX-965 Surround Sound Receiver as a sensible choice, it would be the impact its price would have upon my rather more modest budget. In terms of performance,

value for price, ease of operation, and power, however, I will lust after it long after it has been returned to the manufacturer. I envy those who can afford to make it the anchor of their home theater system.

—DMD

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