



Rotel's music and movie star



Rotel RSX-965rds

Receiver £1000



For Powerful, weighty sound; good stereo performance to match its multichannel flair

Against Nothing

Verdict Able to impress with both music and movie sound this solid amp is destined to find its way into a lot of people's homes

There's obviously a market for the all-singing integrated home cinema amp at around the £1000 price mark. Denon, for example, has the AVR-3300 at £800 and Yamaha the DSP-A2 at £1000. Now Rotel enters the fray with the £1000 RSX-965rds.

A big, sturdy box, the Rotel provides five channels of amplification. It also decodes Dolby

Digital 5.1, DTS, and Pro-Logic signals, provides two-channel stereo and comes with an RDS tuner. A comprehensive remote handset accessing on-screen displays makes set up a doddle.

To the rear can be found five video inputs with both composite and S-Video connections, four digital audio inputs (two coaxial, two optical), three line-level inputs – two of which are part of tape loops – and even a MM phono stage. There are also preouts to connect power amps, though the Rotel does a fine job driving our reference M&K speaker package thanks to a 75W-per-channel power output.

Load up *Plunkett & MacLeane* and the sounds of muskets and banging techno are all conveyed with impressive punch and weight. And the Rotel does this while keeping a firm grip on surround sound placement, the firework display engulfing the listener in a highly dramatic way.

Music is also handled deftly, the Rotel delivering the straight stereo of Beck's *Midnite Vultures* with impressive levels of subtlety and detail. Rhythmically it's no slouch either, although it's no match for the best dedicated stereo amps at this price. Even so, it's a far more tuneful performer than most AV receivers.

The Rotel RSX-965rds is an impressive piece of kit. It has all the power needed to deliver those home cinema thrills yet does so with control. It's also capable of playing a tune, which makes it a star in our book.

LEADING RIVALS

Denon AVR-3300

£800 ★★★★★

(Nov 99) Packed with features, the Yamaha is a top-class performer boasting bags of get up and go

Yamaha DSP-A2 £1000 ★★★★★☆

(Feb 99) No shortage of socketry and an effortlessly smooth presentation, though straight stereo can sound lifeless through the Yamaha