



pattering across the front soundstage. With Audyssey MultEQ on Reference setting, the sea spray is wide, the voices of would-be assailants fighting to be heard in the mix. Turn MultEQ to Flat, where sound calibration is optimised for a slightly smaller listening room, and the mix is better behaved, almost clinically clear. Turn MultEQ off altogether and the action becomes a good deal heavier, and the seas suitably rougher. Switching to MultEQ Left/Right Bypass, the soundstage retains weight in the stereo pair, though central dialogue remains crisp. Some might consider this a good compromise.

While the NR1605 won't blow the bloody doors off, it does seem a tad more dynamic than its predecessor. The AVR's powerplant, still rated at 50W into eight ohms, is

'An entirely successful update, capable of an energetic multichannel performance – the best NR model yet'

deceptively agile. As Vin Diesel races through the gears at the start of *Fast & Furious 6* (Blu-ray), the NR1605 has no problem keeping pace and accelerating hard.

It goes without saying that the NR1605 will handle all current, popular surround formats, including DTS-HD Master Audio and the Dolby TrueHD family. While it's not Atmos capable, you can apply Dolby Pro-Logic IIz if you prefer front height speakers to rear backs.

As part of the 'simply does it' ethos, there are no swathes of DSP to contend with here. Audio presets are limited to Movie, Music and Games, with all-channel stereo, Dolby Pro-Logic, DTS Neo 6: Music and Virtual options; all have various traits. If nothing appeals there's always Direct.

Network functionality ticks the right boxes. The model is AirPlay compliant, supports Spotify Connect, and has internet radio services registered. The latter are divided into

With its antennas down, the NR1605 measures just 106mm high, so should fit easily into most AV cabinets

genres and location, as is the norm. I can't help feeling a filter for bitrates would be nice. The receiver happily streamed AIFF, MP3, FLAC (24-bit/192kHz), AAC, ALAC and WMA from my NAS.

The Marantz proved to be enjoyable with music. Lenny Kravitz's *Are You Gonna Go My Way* (Pure Audio Blu-ray), in 24-bit/192kHz, was delivered with acidic licks that'll test the mettle of any speakers. It also coped surprisingly well with a complex classical DSD (2.8MHz) download from 2L, playing with extreme clarity from a connected USB drive. Double DSD files weren't recognised, however.

A spin of *Ministry of Sound Anthems 90s* (CD), delivered via a Musical Fidelity V90 DAC, also reveals this AVR to be a plate-eyed party animal. The deep, recursive beat and centre-locked dialogue of *Pump Up The Jam* (Technotronic featuring Fell) is infectious. Processed via the Multichannel Stereo mode, your joint will soon be jumping. The AVR's Virtual surround mode is similarly fun, although both Pro-Logic and DTS music processing seemingly have no sense of rhythm.

Importantly, this Marantz offers good usability. That HDMI passthrough feature means you'll not need to induct reluctant family members into the home cinema guru gang just so they can operate their set-top box of choice. Passthrough can be set to the last input chosen or a specific default. Menus are responsive, the user interface intuitive, and there's a handy auto standby mode which turns the AVR off when it's not being used.

Real-world star

This update to Marantz's NR line is entirely successful. There's seemingly no overt sonic penalty incurred by building in the Wi-Fi receiver, and the improved feature set and connectivity make it easy to live with. Capable of an energetic multichannel performance, dynamic stereo and decent streaming functionality, the NR1605 is a real-world star. Marantz's best slim model yet ■

ON THE MENU



→ Marantz's user interface, which can be overlaid (over HDMI) on whatever you're watching, uses a simple menu structure jazzed up by a few visual tricks. Initial setup is guided to help fledgling AV addicts

SPECIFICATIONS

DOLBY TRUEHD: Yes. Plus Dolby Digital EX, Pro-Logic IIx, Pro-Logic IIz

DTS-HD MASTER AUDIO: Yes. Plus DTS-ES, DTS 96/24

THX: No

MULTICHANNEL INPUT: No

MULTICHANNEL OUTPUT (CLAIMED): 7 x 50W (eight ohms, two channel, 0.08% THD)

MULTIROOM: Yes. Second audio zone

AV INPUTS: 3 x composite inputs; 2 x digital audio (1 x optical, 1 x coaxial)

HDMI: 8 x inputs, 1 x output, v2.0/v1.4

VIDEO UPSCALING: To 4K

COMPONENT VIDEO: 2 x inputs, 1 x output

DIMENSIONS: 440(w) x 106(h) x 376(d)mm

WEIGHT: 8.6kg

ALSO FEATURING: Audyssey MultEQ with Dynamic Volume/DynamicEQ; built-in Wi-Fi and Bluetooth; Ethernet; Spotify Connect; internet radio; AirPlay; FM tuner, DLNA and USB file playback (includes hi-res DSD, AIFF, FLAC, WAV and ALAC); gapless playback; Android/iOS remote app; Pure Direct mode; compressed audio enhancer; HDMI passthrough; GUI overlay on HDMI

HCC VERDICT



Marantz NR1605

→ £600 Approx → www.marantz.co.uk

→ Tel: 0289 027 9830

HIGHS: Entertaining, lively multichannel performance; 4K/60Hz HDMI passthrough; Wi-Fi convenience; capable audio streamer; responsive user interface

LOWS: No 5GHz wireless support; no HDCP 2.2 copy protection; no Double DSD support

Performance ★★★★★

Design ★★★★★

Features ★★★★★

Overall ★★★★★