

Marantz CD-7300

Upmarket fit'n'finish By Michael Jones

Marantz CD-7300. \$1499

A few years back, many Japanese hi-fi manufacturers had upmarket CD players that were incredibly well built – solid, heavy and with a feel that screamed “luxury.

I haven't seen many CD players like that for a while, until I laid hands on the Marantz CD-7300. It's not as big and bulky as those older players, but it feels very solid and looks very expensive. Plus – and this is important to some people – the CD7300 is made in Japan.

One welcome – and increasingly rare – feature on CD players is a headphone socket. Not only does the 7300 have a headphone socket, but also a volume control for the headphone output. Nice.

Looking in

Marantz normally use their proprietary HDAM (Hyper Dynamic Amplifier Modules) inside a lot of their equipment, instead of the more common op-amps, claiming that this achieves better sound quality. The 7300 also boasts ELNA capacitors, chosen for their sound quality. The 7300 uses Cirrus DACs. The 7300 has some unusual features. While playing CDRs and CD-RWs is normal these days (indeed, it's hard to find a CD player without this capability),

the CD7300 claims to play unfinalised CDRs.

When a CD is written on your computer, it normally needs to be finalised before the disc can be played.



This involves writing a Table of Contents (TOC) on to the disc, which tells the CD player where all the tracks are. Once finalised, the disc cannot be added to.

So I tried it, writing a couple of audio tracks on CD-R from my trusty Macintosh. The 7300 could not only see and play the tracks, but the title information (showing the track name) also reproduced. This is great, I thought, until I tried the same disc in the other CD players (Arcam, Rega and Rotel) also in-house. They also played the tracks, as did my DVD player.

It's still a good idea though. But beware: all of the players would only see the first session of recording. Add some more tracks on to the disc and they won't be seen until the CD-R is finalised.

Another rare feature is the ability to alter the pitch of the CD by up to 12%. This option is available only from the remote. Pitch control can be useful to aspiring musicians.

Sound

Listening to the CD7300 it was immediately obvious that this was a quality CD player, but like the rest of the players under review it still had its own sound.

The CD7300 had a big, meaty sound with plenty of weight and body to voices and instruments.

For example, one of my favourite test pieces is the Cyrus Chestnut CD *Revelation*. You could clearly hear that the double bass is a big, vibrating instrument, while the piano had body and depth, as well as attack in its sound.

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of this disc. The Marantz, with its delicate, detailed and revealing high end, brought this to life.

The one area where the Marantz well a little behind the other players is in pace and timing. The CD7300 always seemed a little “slower” sounding than the other three, but better in this regard than what I remember from some previous Marantz CD players.

The characteristics described above showed up in all of the music played through the Marantz. Steely Dan's classic *Rikki Don't Lose That Number* had a natural body and weight to voice and piano, while the percussion and guitar had an excellent attack.

While some modern hi-fi equipment is a little upfront in sound (possibly because it sounds more immediately impressive in a hi-fi shop, or because some magazines reward such a sound), the Marantz will be regarded by some as a little laid back in sound.

This is, I suspect, because Marantz is one of the few hi-fi brands that place an emphasis on reproducing the weight and body of musical instruments.

Conclusion

An excellent CD player from Marantz at an excellent price. The CD7300 majors on reproducing the weight and body of musical instruments, offering a viable alternative to other players.

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