

Yamaha RX-V2600

Yamaha RX-V2600 AV receiver.

\$3199.

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Contrary to what you may think, the life of an audio reviewer is not all about overseas trips, wining, dining and fast women laid on thick in order to win a few good words in your next review. No sir, it can be a lot of hard work and frustration. You should try un-connecting and reconnecting your receiver every month. That's seven sets of speaker wires, three of those bi-wiring, aerials, remote cord, pre-out cables to the sub and to my zone 2 amp and octopus of input cables for my toys. It's a bloody nightmare [Sympathy notes to Jamie may be sent care of AudioEnz – Editor]

Inside and Out

The 2600 has all the features you could want. HDMI switching, big power ratings, inputs for Africa, dual remotes, automated setup, three zones and THX certification as well.

With exactly the same dimensions as my Denon 3805, the Yamaha just doesn't have the same visual impact. I liked the no-nonsense

chunky look of old but the newer receivers have had the fascias smoothed and, to me, the Yamaha's have lost their brutish good looks. It's a shame they've been emasculated so that females might find their look more appealing.

The 2600 sports a large amount of inputs and useful buttons hidden behind a large panel, which means you can completely work the receiver after you've lost the remote. Around the back, what little real estate was free on the outgoing RX-V2500 has now been allocated to two HDMI inputs and single output. This feature should appeal to anyone with a LCD or Plasma screen allowing a simple, single cord connection for high definition video.

Crash Bang

The chase scene in *Matrix Reloaded* demonstrates the Yamaha's immense capability. This scene has 10 minutes of



utter carnage, machine gun fire, hand-to-hand combat, tyres screeching, a swishing blade, glass shattering, cars crashing and explosions. Everything happens at great speed, with thunderous effect and utilizing the full compliment of speakers. If retailers used this scene as part of their sales pitch they should sell pallet loads of these receivers, as the 2600 is simply awesome.

It's not just the bash and crash that the Yamaha does well, its even better with the little things. The 2600's large soundstage provides a genuine sense of ambience and realism. A perfect example of this is in the *Currahee* episode of *Band of Brothers*. At the Brooklyn Naval Yard, a crane is loading cargo onto a ship while the men of Easy Company wait to ship out. Around the "crank, crank, crank" of the crane there is accompanying sounds of vehicles, troops moving, talking and a bell ringing – a very absorbing and realistic scene.

Play That Funky Music

History has shown Yamaha receivers' intense, in your face, assaulting performance has been their downfall when it comes to music. It's good for "unst unst" music but not much else. Though, most of you older types will tell me dance music isn't really music anyway.

Anyway, this is the fourth Yamaha I've had to play with and with each generation the music performance improves. Well, the 2600 continues this trend – as long as it is in Pure Direct mode. Pure Direct switches off all the fancy-pants switching and processing inside and is the only mode worth listening to.

Excluding the incredible Rotel I had a couple of months ago, the 2600 is one of the best receivers for playing music

that I've tested. The harmonica in Ryan Adams *Firecracker* was very impressive and Tristan Prettyman's acoustic guitar sounded very naturally, though it ultimately lacked a little warmth compared to my Denon.

While the receiver is great, the remote is still crap. Sure it's a learning remote and is well laid out but it is not the type of remote I would expect after spending \$3199 on a receiver. It looks cheap and feels cheap. If you choose to use the 2600 as the centre piece for a multi room hi-fi system, then the second remote is an excellent feature as it will allow you to control the 2nd and 3rd zones from other rooms. Another cool feature is that you can send a video signal to the 2nd zone as well as audio.

Overall, the 2600 is one hell of a piece of kit. While it might not have ultimate musical subtlety you shouldn't be too concerned, as it more than acceptable with tunes. Anyway this isn't why you should buy Yamaha receivers. You should buy them for their ability to enrich your movie watching and this is as good as it gets.—*Jamie Gemming*

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