

Yamaha RX-V740

Good sound and component switching

By Michael Jones

Yamaha RX-V740 Av receiver.
\$1699

One of the hottest sectors of the AV market is lower-mid priced AV receivers. This is the area above the entry-level models, but below the more serious (and serious money) amps and receivers such as the Denon 3803 and Yamaha's own Z1.

Into this area struts the brand new RX-V740. In model number it replaces the 730; in price it replaces the 630.

First, some facts and figures. The 740 is rated at 90 watts (though, with the "more watts are better" buying mentality out there, Yamaha also mention 130 watts if measured by a different measurement regime).

There are six channels of equal power amplification on board, which means that the 740 can handle a speaker for the centre rear. I specifically mention this as there are some AV receivers (the NAD T752 comes to mind) that has all the processing necessary for 6.1 film reproduction, but lacks the sixth channel amplifier. The Yamaha is ready to go out of the box.

The 740 includes a wide range of inputs and outputs. There are four optical digital inputs (including one on the front panel) and one coaxial digital input. There's a lone optical digital output.

There are four analog AV inputs (each with an associated s-video and composite video input) and three straight audio inputs. A six-channel input is included for adding a DVD-Audio or SACD player.

It's nice to see an AV receiver

at this price include two inputs for component video, along with one set of component video outputs. In their literature Yamaha talks about how the component connections are compatible



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with HDTV (high definition television).

We may never see HDTV here, but the wide video bandwidth of the component connections should mean that it will pass progressive video from a DVD player through to a progressive capable TV or projector. Some component video connections lack the necessary bandwidth to support progressive scan video – it's nice to see such facilities in a low price receiver.

The 740 includes all of the necessary movie sound modes: Dolby Digital EX, DTS-ES (matrix and discrete modes), Dolby Pro Logic II and DTS Neo:6.

There's also – like it or loath it – plenty of Yamaha's Cinema DSP processing modes. The spec sheet claims 44 variations of 22 surround programs. I'll take Yamaha's word for it; I'm certainly not exploring them.

Sound

A couple of months prior to receiving the 740 for review, I had its predecessor, the 630, in my home. The 630 I found disappointing, displaying the "old Yamaha" sound – a bit thin, harsh and bright. I didn't get on well with the 630.

The 740 is quite different. It's easy to tell that the work Yamaha has been putting in to their more expensive models (such as the RX-V1200 I reviewed in May 2002) is trickling down the line.

Gone is the old sound of Yamaha. In its place is a much more natural and full-bodied sound, without the harshness that I've previously disliked

with Yamaha AV amps.

As usual with AV receivers, I use two channel music to ascertain the sound of the amp. I've found that the overall sound of an AV receiver is in the amplifier stage, and what I hear with music flows through to the AV receiver's sound with movies.

Refugees from audiophile-quality two-channel will find much to like here. But audiophiles may still find that the similarly priced NAD T752 and Marantz 5300 a little closer to what they're used to with a good stereo amp.

That said, there's plenty to like here with the Yamaha 740. There's an open and vibrant sound that helps make music come alive. Bass is solid – particularly if you add a good subwoofer to the mix (I used the diminutive REL Quake reviewed last month).

Summary

Yamaha is onto a winner with the 740. This AV receiver is streets ahead of its price predecessor in the range, losing the harshness while keeping a vibrant sound. Good sound, plenty of inputs and support for progressive-scan component video switching make this an easy recommendation.

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