

TEST > Surround sound amplifier

€1345,00

Cambridge AUDIO AZUR 640R

This 7.1-channel surround sound amplifier packs a punch with movies and music, and it's multiroom compatible too

85% WHAT HOME CINEMA

RATINGS

STYLE	★★★★★
EASE OF USE	★★★★★
FEATURES	★★★★★
SOUND	★★★★★
VALUE	★★★★★
OVERALL	★★★★★

TEST SCENE

>King Kong

The Cambridge Audio



640R doesn't ape around, and naturally portrays the intense atmosphere during the island sequences

AT A GLANCE

7.1-channel receiver
 100W x 7 (RMS rated at 8 Ohm)
 Dolby Digital EX
 DTS-ES Discrete/Matrix
 Dolby Pro-Logic IIxm
 DTS Neo:6
 FM/AM RDS tuner

CONNECTIONS

4mm binding post terminals
 5 x audio input
 Multi-channel audio input
 5 x coaxial digital audio input
 5 x optical digital audio output
 2 x Optical digital audio output
 2 x coaxial digital audio output
 3 x HDMI output
 Component video input
 Component video output
 5 x S-video output
 3 x S-video input
 5 x composite video output
 FM/AM antenna
 6,3mm headphone jack

The Azur 640R is the latest addition to the Cambridge Audio line-up and marks the brand's first entry into the 7.1-channel surround arena.

The 640R sports a sleek brushed metal front panel, easy to read display, perfectly tooled function buttons, and a substantial volume knob to crank.

In fact, it's one of the best looking 7.1 home cinema receivers around, and furthermore the tidy unit is capable of driving each channel at 100W power output. Stereo mode is rated at an even more potent 120W power output, and the high grade components and considered amplifier design ensures that the Azur 640R is equally geared towards hi-fi enthusiasts as home cinema aficionados.

Rear window

The rear panel has one of the neatest layouts we have seen, with all the audio and video connectivity you could wish for. The three HDMI inputs are top of the connection list, carrying digital video signals from HD and compatible LCD or plasma TV screen via a single HDMI cable. Digital audio connections must be made separately. Analogue video switching is also onboard and can up-convert composite and S-video analogue



Button frenzy: great if you like to touch

Neat, tidy and packed with all the right connections

Solidly built and very easy to navigate

signal connections to component video.

The Azur 640R is fully compatible with Cambridge Audio's Incognito Multi-room system, which will appral to custom installers, allowing sources to be independently accessed and controlled from two additional zones around the home.

Facilities are impressive, but

THE TIDY UNIT IS ABLE TO DRIVE EACH CHANNEL AT 100W POWER OUTPUT

there's no auto calibration set-up mode to tune the 640R to your speaker system and room acoustic. Nevertheless, it's easy to grips via the basic onscreen menus and manually tune it to your ears.

Playing King Kong on DVD demonstrates the flawless HDMI video socketry. There's no degradation to digital video signals routed through, and movie images remain stratingly vibrant and solid.

Audio-wise, movie soundtracks

are incredibly energetic, and it copes with the movie's relentless surround effects with incredible poise. It's remarkably surefooted, even at multiplex volume levels, and there are no weaknesses when it comes to gargantuan movie effects during big set island sequences.

Grim reaper

Attention to the audio circuitry reaps sonic dividends with stereo music material too, and Graig Armstrong's *As if no Nothing* album sounds impressively atmospheric.

With its 7.1 capabilities and custom install possibilities, the Cambridge Audio Azur 640R is undoubtedly designed to appeal to home entertainment enthusiasts. It's competitively priced when you consider the remarkably potent performance and HDMI connectivity, but more feature loaded receivers can be found. ■

Even when the volume's cranked up, the Azur 640R still delivers

The powerful amp packs 100W RMS from its seven channels

Analog video switching is among the features

