



Perreaux Radiance R200i amp

The best yet from premier New Zealand audio manufacturer

Perreaux's Radiance R200i integrated amplifier is not so much an audio component as a minimalist work of art. The front panel - a 10mm-thick slab of milled aluminium is devoid of all unnecessary adornments or accoutrements, save a vacuum fluorescent display surrounded by five tiny buttons that control the amp's basic functions. An amplifier this beautiful deserves to be looked at and not touched,

so Perreaux thoughtfully supply an equally gorgeous 36-button, backlit remote control. The whole effect is très chic - the slim, elegant lines of the Radiance belying its dual mono construction and 200-watt output.

Underneath the acrylic top cover, the Radiance sports some pretty impressive technology. In this day and age, microprocessor-controlled amps

in a non-volatile EEPROM.

The Radiance is a true audio thoroughbred - and like a thoroughbred it doesn't take kindly to being fed second-grade oats. Which is another way of saying that the Radiance needs - make that demands - to be partnered with the very best equipment. Unless your source components are of a similarly high standard, any upstream problems with the signal will simply get channelled through the Radiance unalloyed.

The break in period is long - after three weeks of pretty solid use, the performance of the Radiance was still improving. An initial hardness in the lower treble, which manifested itself most noticeably on female vocals, gradually disappeared, allowing voices to project into the room in a life-like manner that bordered on the uncanny.

Bass, soundstaging (both left to right and front to back) and detail are as good as I've heard from any amplifier, regardless of price. It's possible a much more expensive pre/power tube combo would image a fraction better. Maybe a pair of solid-state 1000-watt monoblocks might punch a semitone lower.

On the advice of Perreaux retailer John Ransley (from Dunedin's Totally Wired), I also tried the Rod~ with an aftermarket AC power lead - the Eichmann eXpress AC Enhancing Cable. It would be overstating the case to say that the Eichmann transformed the sound of the Radiance, but at \$590 for a 2m length (\$620 for 3m), the Eichmann eXpress added further subtle improvements to the already superb sound of the Radiance.

are nothing new, but the Radiance's implementation of this technology is cleverer than most. Labels can be assigned to each of the five inputs, while balance, initial and maximum volume, display brightness, display timeout, energy saver mode and speaker settings are all user-configurable. The microprocessor even handles thermal monitoring, meaning you can call up the left and right heatsink temperatures in real time. Once configured, the customised settings are stored

>> VERDICT

Perreaux Radiance R200i integrated amplifier

PROS: A technical tour de force and an ergonomic delight, the Radiance R200i has a detailed, high resolution sound with phenomenal bass and holographic soundstaging

CONS: Expensive (but the level of performance easily justifies the price tag)

Sound	★★★★★
Features	★★★★★
Build Quality	★★★★★
Value	★★★★★
OVERALL	★★★★★

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Perhaps there are other amplifiers out there that offer even greater levels of detail. But overall, the resolving prowess and sheer musicality of the Radiance - an integrated amplifier, remember - is quite extraordinary. Make no mistake, the Perreaux Radiance R200i is a stunning performer - so stunning we've decided to pin our inaugural >>FFWD "Editor's Choice" award to its beautifully understated fascia.

Martin Bell

TECH SPECS

Perreaux Radiance R200i integrated amplifier

Power rating: 200 watts/channel (8 ohms)

Frequency range (claimed): 5Hz - 30kHz (+/- 0.5dB)

Inputs: Five inputs including one pair of balanced (XLR) inputs. Optional phono and USB modules available

Remote control: ✓

Headphone socket: -

Preouts: ✓

Speaker terminals: Two pairs

Dimensions: 430 x 105 x 340mm (w/h/d)

Weight: 13.5kg