

New Zealand Perreux Audiant 80i is as aggressively priced as a Haka war dance, which the country's national rugby team the All Blacks perform before each match.

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Ready for any challenge

For most people, Perreux is an unknown brand, and if anyone has heard of hi-fi equipment from New Zealand, more mention Plinius than Perreux. This despite that Perreux has been around for almost 40 years.

Today Perreux stock three series, the most affordable Silhouette, Eloquence and high-end Prisma. In addition, the amplifier under test, the Audiant 80i. There is a lot to choose from, especially in the Silhouette

WE LIKE:

- Built in DAC and RIAA
- Excellent sound quality
- Attractive design

WE DO NOT LIKE:

- Only two analogue inputs
- Doesn't drive all speakers
- Slightly drab remote

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series, so stop by www.perreux.com recommended.

Audiant 80i

The integrated amplifier Audiant 80i is a real bomb design. It felt like tiny, with its low front under seven inches and just over 30 cm depth. This amplifier dominates not visually.

In standby is the only thing that breaks the smooth black and aluminium-coloured front, the large volume dial. Press the power button on the remote control and small white letters appear from nowhere on the line over the black portion of the front. The genius is that this is only for show. For those who remember - and not least, was impressed by - Bang & Olufsen amplifier in the early 80's with his feathertouch-operation, as has Audiant exactly the same. A little pressure on either the analogue or digital input you want, then light a little stronger on the selected input. It's just

very elegant. Besides the four analogue inputs, including one for the record player and one for home theatre, the four digital, two optical, one USB and one coaxial, it is also possible to put the amp in standby on the front. The same can be done in the not-so-nice remote control too.

Should I be extra picky I think that two pure analogue inputs might be a little bare best team.

The Sound

Sound-wise, New Zealanders very neutral, and is perceived to be almost entirely without its own sound. I write almost because on my beast of some speakers, it has had some many square inch woofers to control. Not that the bass has been dropped and uncontrolled, rather the opposite. Perreux has never

let anything get out of hand, but compared to my integrated Plinius Hiato amp, it lacks a little authority and ultimate bass punch at the bottom. Now you should know is that my amp spits out 300 watts per channel into eight ohms with both channels in operation, while Perreaux stops at 80. It will therefore be totally unfair to put the two New Zealanders against each other, but it is nevertheless worth noting that only the bass that the difference is striking.

The result is that regardless of my speakers so the sound has been a little leaner than I'm used to down, but who puts two seven-driver speakers worth 200,000-kroner at the other end of a 25,000-kroner amplifier? A little experiment with my easy to drive Klipsch RB61 showed in fact that there was nothing wrong with the capabilities of the bass on Audiant. It could still be worthwhile to have in mind when to match the amplifier and speakers. Do you have a beast of some speakers, is likely only a beast of an amp help. Calling the Perreaux amplifier a beast, would be the same as calling Keira Knightley it.

As yet I have chosen to use my Montana speakers to test this integrated amplifier, because it is solely the amplifier is so good that it does away even with so much more expensive speakers.

For the small slim device that caused a bit poor match with the speakers, be forgotten very quickly when you do not test them against each other back

and forth. The first thing that strikes one is because of the incredible purity of sound are presented. With the amplifier on and ears close to the tweeter elements of the speakers, it is very quiet. There is not a sound. My three times as expensive reference amplifier can not even manage this.

Thus presented music is in a completely black background, making the details, even the smallest, appear. This applies both in the midrange, treble, and so far in the bass. It lacks that little bit extra in absolute fine graininess the Plinius amp has, and is a little smooth compared to it, but the differences are small. Almost a little too small.

For the midrange there is not much to complain about. It provides both detail, resolution and especially the glass-clear transparency that the you often need to pay an awful lot for. At the same time there is fullness and body to the voices or solo instruments. In relation to tube amplifiers there is still a lot to be gained from this area, but for the price this is very good.

The frequency remains higher in the registry as well. The treble does not roll, but continues and continues upward. This means you do not lose critical information such as the harmonics acoustic instruments give you. It creates life in the music, but without attracting attention it should not have. There is certainly equipment that adds a little too much to the famous treble range to deceive

the listener into believing that it has more detail. The Audiant does not try to fool anyone. It is the honesty of itself and communicates only what it is supplied with.

I have also been impressed with the holography this amplifier has been able to show. The sound spreads out in both width and depth, and precision, that is - the amplifier's ability to place musicians in the soundstage is very good.

Funny also that it works so well connected directly to a computer. I connected the USB cable directly from the laptop to the amp, and with Foobar2000 player it sounded incredibly good. A little less air in the top and not quite the same degree of transparency in the rest of the sound, but even for the discerning listener, this is more than acceptable.

Conclusion

The rugby team of New Zealand, the All Blacks, are the most successful rugby team, and it will be up early in the morning to beat Perreaux Audiant 80i on flexibility and sound quality. Especially if you have speakers that are not too hard to drive. Simply a great amplifier.

WE BELIEVE: Both the user interface and the sound of the Perreaux Audiant 80i is a huge challenge for the competition.

