

i-fidelity.net

"Its visual appearance radiates the power of a large eight-cylinder engine"

Magnat RV3

i-fidelity.net

Magnat RV 3

Testresult: very good

- Sound quality: outstanding
- Lab: good
- Workmanship: very good
- Overall rating: very good



Magnat

Lise-Meitner-Str. 9 · 50259 Pulheim · Germany · www.magnat.de

i-fidelity.net
JUNE 2013

Magnat RV3

Lise-Meitner-Str. 9 · 50259 Pulheim · Germany · www.magnat.de

i-fidelity.net

Highlight

The degree of skepticism that Magnat initially encountered with regard to its production of high-quality electronic components has long since evaporated. In particular, its RV 1 and RV 2 amplifiers have built up an excellent reputation, which is not simply down to their excellent price/performance ratio. Instead of resting on its laurels, the company, which has its headquarters in Pulheim near Cologne, is now launching the RV 3. The unit, which weighs in at around 20 kg, can be purchased for around € 2,700. The 3rd model is, without question, the most beautiful amp in the RV series. Its visual appearance radiates the power of a large eight-cylinder engine.

This impression is generated thanks to two massive, fanned heat sinks. These are used to dissipate the heat from the Toshiba power transistors located directly underneath. But wait, wasn't there talk about tubes? Magnat has utilised ECC82 tubes for this preamplifier (with one used per channel). This makes the RV 3 a hybrid tube amplifier, as it amplifies music based on two different principles. This brings us to the performance, which is often conspicuous by its absence in tube setups. A measured output of 254 watts at four ohms in the i-fidelity.net lab, however, means this machine is more than capable of satisfying power hungry speakers.

The immaculate high-end appearance is evident in both the compact metal remote control as well as the solid, 8 mm thick front panel. At the centre sits a large, precise volume controller, which operates the expensive ALPS potentiometer inside the amplifier. Besides the power switch there is only a balance controller and a source selector for a total of five inputs. These include a full tape loop and a phono input, which caters for both MM and MC pick-ups. The RV 3 also features a jack for headphone users.

A real feast for the eyes is the handy remote control, which only features four buttons: two for volume control, one for mute and one for input selection. This allows it to fulfil its purpose perfectly. The fact that the RV 3 has not only been developed from a purist point of view is revealed by a glance at the rear. This is where you will not only find the usual four, but a total of eight speaker terminals. These additional terminals are not used for connecting a second pair of speakers, but for a so-called bi-wiring configuration. If the appropriate speakers are used in this setup, the

bass and mid/treble range frequencies can be supplied via two cables. In the majority of cases this configuration results in a more precise localisation of the sound and a more contoured bass range.

No secrets

Amplifiers which have been developed from a puristic perspective often withhold information about their operating status. This frequently leaves users feeling irritated as they are unaware of which function is currently active. Magnat's developers have invested in a round, informative display for this very purpose. When the RV 3 is switched on a "Warm up" welcome message appears on the display. A bar reveals the precise progression of this phase. The selected input then appears and, if the volume is changed, Magnat's unit shows if the level has been increased or decreased. That's all anyone needs.

If the owner happens to connect the positive and negative ends of the speaker cable during operation by mistake, or the tubes experience an error, it will result in the RV 3's protective circuit being activated. The word "Protect" will then appear in the display. There's really nothing to complain about with regard to the configuration of this amplifier; on the contrary, it is thoroughly practical and everything makes sense. During our test we sent signals to the RV 3 from sources such as the Audionet ART G3 and the Clearaudio Anniversary turntable, while the speakers we used included the Dali Epicon 6 and the Amphion Argon 3L. The system was fully wired with HMS components.

We started the listening test with "Zona Desperata" by Al di Meola. This track doesn't only come alive thanks to Meola's guitar, but also from the rhythm of the percussion and the subtle, but very groovy bass guitar. Many amplifiers abandon proceedings when the fine cymbals emerge and they tend to hiss angrily. The RV 3, however, manages to reproduce the cymbals with a bright, fine and extremely harmonious sound pattern. An effect that is particularly evident with tube amplifiers is that percussive sounds often appear as if they have been doused in honey. However, this is not evident in our test at all.

Emotional intelligence

A common thread that runs throughout the listening test is an impression that the development team has really listened to and optimised this amplifier. This is because the RV 3 has a pronounced penchant for musicality. In other words, it not only reproduces everything in a neutral manner, but interprets the track in its own way. Describing the way it does this as attractive is simply inadequate. If the purpose of music is to express things that cannot be described with the spoken word, then Magnat's unit is a really good transmission medium.

The RV 3 not only offers its excellent sound properties via the high level inputs, but also via the phono input. This is a component that is simply a token gesture in some components, whereas Magnat has given it high priority. The LP signal from Supertramp's "The Logical Song" sampled by the Clearaudio Stradivari is in an impressive statement for the preservation of this audio medium. Comprehensibility, fine dynamics and the level of homogeneity are particularly impressive. Simply listening to music in a passive manner won't cut it here, as the RV 3 pulls the listener into the action too forcefully.

Test result

Magnat's RV 3 hybrid tube amplifier sounds thoroughly compelling, looks exquisite and has been sensibly equipped. Anyone who takes time out to properly listen to music, and is capable of turning off his/her mobile phone and other sources of interruption to do so, will be rewarded with a sound of unparalleled beauty and refinement from this amp. Its estimated price of €2,700 would easily earn it our "price tip" award. This kind of amplifier, however, isn't bought to save money, but to enjoy music with an extremely high quality sound. This makes Magnat's RV 3 a real highlight for us at i-fidelity.net!

