

AUDIO FILE

Integrated amplifier. Rated at 100W/8ohm  
 Made by: Sound United/D&M Holdings, Kanagawa, Japan  
 Supplied by: D&M Audiovisual Ltd, UK  
 Telephone: 02890 279830  
 Web: www.marantz.com/en-gb  
 Price: £2899



# Marantz Model 30

To launch two products with seemingly similar features at much the same price might be seen as inviting customer confusion. Yet that's just what Marantz chose to do, releasing the £2700 Model 30 amplifier within just weeks of its PM-12SE [HFN Nov '20], which costs £2999.

Yet it's not quite as baffling as it may look. The 30 Series models have a whole new look, albeit one Marantz says is influenced by classic designs of the past, while the price of the Model 30 amp undercuts that of the '12SE by a healthy 10%.

Rated at 100W/8ohm, the '30 is based around tried-and-tested Hypex Ncore NC500 Class D power

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amp modules. Feeding that power amp section is a preamp design in many ways similar to the one found in the PM-12SE. It's analogue-input-only, having five line-ins, a pre out/power amp in, and a proprietary MM/MC phono stage.

The latter uses the 'Marantz Musical Premium Phono' EQ circuit, a two-stage affair with a low-noise J-FET input combined with the latest example of the company's, by now, very familiar HDAM (Hyper-Dynamic Amplifier Module) op-amps.

Meanwhile, the line preamp section has its own power supply, fed from a double-shielded toroidal transformer to reduce interference, while the circuit also makes liberal

use of Marantz's in-house designed HDAMs. Outputs extend to one set of speaker terminals, plus line and preamp outputs, plus a headphone socket. Finally, the front panel sports physical tone controls, unlike the PM-12SE which has them hidden away in its menu system.

**WINNING WAY**

One of the most attractive elements of the 30 Series products is that the well-established Marantz presentation hasn't been lost along the restyling path, and that's exceptionally clear as soon as you fire up the Model 30. What's more, you don't have to resort to audiophile jazz or 'girl with guitar' recordings to hear just what this amp is capable of.

With the *Live At The Roundhouse* set from Nick Mason's Saucerful Of Secrets [Legacy/Sony] streaming via a partnering Marantz

SACD 30n SACD/network player, it's easy to realise what a remarkable recording this is. It's live, but it's also weighty and crisp with no shortage of detail and punch to go with the superb musicianship.

The same goes for the rather more intimate opening of Eric Johanson's recent *Below Sea Level* album [Nola Blue], the Marantz 30 series player/amplifier pairing having a winning way with the close-up sound of the more downbeat tracks and the driving slam of those bluesier rock-outs.

Even really bustling mixes don't throw the amp off its stride, as is clear even from the opening moments of Keith Urban's *The*

**ABOVE: The Model 30 does something different while retaining classic Marantz cues, such as the amp's 'porthole' display. Note the front panel phono selector and conventional tone controls**

*Speed Of Now, Vol. 1* [Capitol Nashville/Keith Urban]. This album is a glorious mash-up of country, soul and R&B with a stellar supporting cast, and the Model 30 opens up the often busy mixes to bring out the performances, for example in the Urban/Pink duet with bar-room backing vocals on 'One Too Many'.

In fact whatever you play through this amp, be it via disc, streaming or even LP through that excellent on-board phono stage, the Model 30 makes it a complete blast. What's more, chances are you're going to find all kinds of music you may have dismissed delivered in a manner that's involving and sonically satisfying.

When you do play 'audiophile' – or at least exceptionally well-recorded – jazz, the Model 30 amplifier really shines. The Espen Eriksen Trio's set, *End Of Summer* [Rune Grammofon], has that almost tangible sense of soundstaging and image focus we've noted with the band's previous recordings.

With the Model 30 again hooked up to the SACD 30n player and driving Neat Iota Xplorer speakers [HFN Jul '18], the amp cast a superbly three-dimensional image, with all the dynamics and speed you could want. This is a group some of us have seen live several times in small, close-up venues, and their free-flowing playing, yet with quartz-locked precision, is absolutely nailed by the Model 30.

**VERDICT**

It's a bold step, taking the familiar Marantz look and re-defining it completely, but the Model 30 amp has got what it takes to succeed with its attractive blend of flexibility, performance and – yes – style. ⬇

**HI-FI NEWS SPECIFICATIONS**

|                                     |                           |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Power output (<1% THD, 8/4ohm)      | 199W / 329W               |
| Dynamic power (<1% THD, 8/4/2/1ohm) | 240W / 445W / 577W / 315W |
| Output imp. (20Hz–20kHz/100kHz)     | 0.006–0.015ohm / 1.3ohm   |
| Freq. resp. (20Hz–20kHz/100kHz)     | +0.0 to –0.60dB/–5.7dB    |
| Input sensitivity (for 0dBW/100W)   | 22mV / 220mV              |
| A-wtd S/N ratio (re. 0dBW/100W)     | 81.3dB / 101.3dB          |
| Distortion (20Hz–20kHz, 10W/8ohm)   | 0.031–0.073%              |
| Power consumption (Idle/Rated o/p)  | 40W / 260W (1W standby)   |
| Dimensions (WHD) / Weight           | 440x123x453mm / 14.8kg    |