

PARASOUND ZAMP QUATTRO MULTI-ROOM AMPLIFIER REVIEW



RECOMMENDED
PRODUCT

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The Zamp Quattro from Parasound is a versatile four channel dual-zone amplifier designed for use in a multi-room audio system. It's one of a range of distinctive half-rack sized components from the highly-regarded US audio brand, which also includes the Zdac, Zcd CD player, Zpre2 preamp, Zamp v3 two channel power amp and the Zphono phono stage preamp. It can be used with any receiver that offers a preamp output.

Weighing a modest 2kg, the Quattro is available in the UK in black finish with a rack-mount faceplate. It measures a modest 241mm wide and stands 51mm tall with feet attached. If required, these boots can be removed, reducing the height of the unit to just 45mm. The unique form factor of the Quattro means that 16-channels of amplifications can be accommodated in two rack spaces. The Zamp Quattro employs cool running class D amplification, with apparently high fidelity DNA.

Parasound Zamp Quattro: Design

Build quality is excellent. The Zamp's brushed metal fascia is plain for a quartet of illuminated channel icons and power switch, while the rear is all business: here you'll find phono inputs for zones one and two, which connect to your source. There's also the option of a high impedance speaker level input for channels 1/2, should you not have access to a line-level source. Like the line level input, speaker level audio is routed to phono Loop Out jacks which can be used to daisy-chain additional amplification, as required.

Parasound Zamp Quattro: Installation and Specification

While the Zamp Quattro only occupies half a rack, it can be accommodated in a standard equipment rack through an optional accessory Zblank panel extender. Alternatively, integrators could fasten a second Parasound Z component using a Side-by-Side mounting kit (also optional). This kit comes with bolts and shoulder washers to isolate the component from a metal equipment rack, thereby negating any possibility of metal-to-metal induced hum.

Speakers connect via fiddly terminal blocks which need to be unplugged for connection then returned when laced up. It's important to note that the terminal speaker bindings are very small, and appropriately thin speaker wire will be required. Parasound recommends 2mm, or no larger than AWG12. We found even standard AWE Europe Kinetik loudspeaker cable to be a little too intransigent for the Quattro

That said, it's easy to appreciate Parasound's attention to detail. While the fascia channel indicators will most likely remain green, they highlight red when one or more of the channels is in protection mode, which could be caused by the speaker outputs shorting or general overloading. Similarly, there are several ways in which the Zamp Quattro can be turned on: manually via the front facing button, automatically when an audio signal is sensed or via a 12v trigger.

To aid the Audio Turn On/Off mode are two sensitivity settings. Quieter is the most sensitive and activates the amplifier when a very low level signal is detected, typically 1mv. In most installs this would be the default setting and control method. However, as this can be triggered by errant noise on the line, a Louder setting is also provided. This is less sensitive and boots the amp from its slumber only when a signal of around 10mv is detected. When in either Audio auto-turn on mode, the front power switch is rendered nonfunctional. To avoid false shut-downs, the Quattro utilises an eight minute grace window before turning off. This avoids any unwanted narcolepsy between prolonged quiet passages.

Similarly, if the installer wants full system control via a trigger, then other control options are switched off. The package comes with a 3.5mm to 3.5mm lead to hook the amp to a

preamp offering 12v control. It also ships with a 3.5mm to 2.5mm lead, allowing the Quattro to be used with components that offer a 2.5mm sub-trigger.

Parasound Zamp Quattro: Performance

The Zamp Quattro over-delivers when it comes to performance. The amp is rated at a generous 50w RMS x 4 (into 8Ohms), and certainly provides plenty of volume for any less than cavernous room zones. It's also extremely fast and dynamic. We rate it ideal for multi-room audio duties. Couples with some snappy architectural speakers, the Parasound is unlikely to disappoint.

Individual channel level controls are provided on the box. Variable between Max and Min, these extremely useful controls can be used to level-match throughout a multi-speaker environment. They also allow the volume in a specific zone to be limited to a preset, controlling output no matter how enthusiastic the system owner.

A Zone select switch determines what signal is output to the second room. There's the option of mimicking the first zone, or taking a separate stereo feed.

Parasound Zamp Quattro: Verdict

Overall, we rate the Parasound Zamp Quattro a powerful, unique multi-room audio component with a unique form factor. It offers a giddy level of performance relative to its tiny footprint and packs a wealth of CI-friendly control options. Easy control, bullet-proof operation and high-quality output make it an easy solution to recommend - although take care with your choice of loudspeaker cable.

The Parasound Zamp Quattro retails for £650, and is distributed by AV Distributors BV. More details can be found at www.avdistributors.eu.

Gallery





- See more at: <http://www.insideci.co.uk/reviews/parasound-zamp-quattro-multi-room-amp-review.aspx#sthash.wmakHS1z.dpuf>