

Denon AVR-X6400H

Denon has invited all 3D audio formats to an AV party
– plus **Richard Stevenson**



EVOLUTION, NOT REVOLUTION, is a good way of describing Denon's AVR-X6400H. This £2,100 AV receiver takes last year's very fine AVR-X6300H, adds a few features, sprinkles in some new components and ices the cake with Auro-3D support straight out of the box.

The engineering and cosmetic design are untouched. On the outside it's a black box, with two big knobs, blue-tinted display and a flap concealing buttons and sockets. That'll be an AVR then. Inside is Denon's Monolithic amp layout, custom transistors and a power output claimed to be 140W for all of its eleven channels into an 8 ohm load.

Around the back of the receiver's full-width, full-height chassis are Bluetooth and Wi-Fi 2.4/5GHz aerials, as well as an Ethernet port for networked features. These naturally provide full integration with Denon's HEOS

multiroom hardware. The X6400H also proffers AirPlay, 'net radio and built-in streaming services including Deezer, Spotify and Tidal.

HDMI connectivity is outstanding. With eight HDMI inputs and three outs you are unlikely to be left wanting. All are HDMI 2.0/HDCP 2.2.

Dolby Atmos 7.1.4, DTS:X and Auro-3D are all catered for by an incredibly flexible speaker positioning setup. In fact, from 7.1.4 to triple-layer Auro, there is quite a bewildering array of speaker combinations in between. You also get AuroMatic upmixing, which takes channel-based and object-based formats and re-maps them to an Auro speaker config.

Dolby/DTS and Auro have different 'best' speaker setups for your 11 channels. Atmos is 7.1.4, a traditional 7.1 plus four speakers in the ceiling. Auro here uses a traditional 5.1 setup, plus four speakers placed above the surround and main pairs, angled down to the listener. A further single ceiling speaker (Auro's 'Voice of God') acts as a top layer. You need one or other speaker setup, as the twain does not meet easily. It is an either/or thing, really.

The AVR's setup and processing should make the best of whatever speaker config you have, yet you need to tell the amp you have an Auro layout to use Auro-3D or Auro upscaling. Tell it you are all Dolby and it gives you Auro-2D.

Sonically, there is not much difference between the AVR-X6400H and last year's X6300H. That is no bad thing at all. The sound is quick-footed, detailed and articulate. Unlike Denon AVRs of old that crafted action movies with Uzi gusto and steroidal bass, this latest generation is more refined, more spacious and probably more faithful to the director's intent.

Lucy (Blu-ray) is a visual and aural delight, even if saddled with a 5.1 mix when it was

SPECIFICATIONS

DOLBY ATMOS: Yes **DTS:X:** Yes **THX:** No
MULTICHANNEL INPUT: No **MULTICHANNEL PRE-OUT:** Yes. 11.2 phono **MULTICHANNEL OUTPUT (CLAIMED):** 11 x 205W (into 6 ohms)
MULTIROOM: Yes. Zones 2 and 3 **AV INPUTS:** 5 x composite; 4 x digital audio (2 x optical and 2 x coaxial) **HDMI:** Yes. 8 x inputs; 3 x outputs **COMPONENT VIDEO:** Yes. 2 x inputs; 1 x output **VIDEO UPSCALING:** Yes. To 4K/60
DIMENSIONS: 434(w) x 393(d) x 167(h)mm
WEIGHT: 14.5kg

FEATURES: Auro-3D; AuroMatic upmixing; HEOS multiroom; Audyssey MultEQ XT32; dual-band Wi-Fi; Bluetooth; Ethernet; USB; 192kHz/32-bit DACs; AL32 Processing Multichannel; FLAC, WAV, ALAC and DSD hi-res audio support; AirPlay; Spotify Connect; TuneIn radio; Bass Sync

Atmos in the cinema; there is no shortage of sonic fiesta. When a drug-fuelled Lucy bounces around her prison cell, the sound is dramatic and filled with well-placed effects. Bass thunders along from my twin-sub setup but never drowns or overbears the details.

Switching straight to Morgan Freeman's monologues at chapter breaks is a jolt. The large lecture theatre really highlights the Denon's skill at crafting ambience. You are moved seamlessly from drama in a cramped cell to open, spacious and relaxed academia. Morgan's voice has a pleasing bassy tone, yet remains lifelike.

With native Atmos sound the Denon simply goes up a notch in its spacious presentation and precision detail. It renders *Gravity's* stunning mix with consummate ease, not merely pulling you into the narrative but right into the atmosphere. Or lack thereof – the sheer sonic sense of open, vacuous space is thrilling. Switch to *Deadpool's* all-action opening sequence, complete with immaculate slow-mo car-crashes and our hero's to-camera quips, and the gunshots, blades, crashes, ricochet bullets and general mayhem are exquisite, backed by LFE effects with a very tight and forceful, if not seismic, punch.

At which point I reckon my Marantz processor and stack of power amps are looking nervous. The Denon is very good, a fraction of the cost and delivers Auro-3D for free. Yes, its detailed and articulate balance feels like it could do with just a little more grunt and body, but the feature set is peerless at the price. In fact, for just over £2k, this is on its own in terms of skills and performance ■

HCC VERDICT



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→ £2,100 → www.denon.co.uk

WE SAY: Denon's latest offers unrivalled features and Auro-3D out of the box, and delivers immersive, hyper-realistic sound. A cracker.

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