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# Denon AVR-X4500H

The AVR-X4500H is a talented AV amp, but that should come as little surprise to anyone familiar with Denon's family history

It is often said that those who crave power are the least deserving of it, but Denon doesn't seem to adhere to that tenet. Having produced a long line of home cinema amplifiers with more kick than a donkey with a drum kit, the multi-Award-winning manufacturer sated its power-hungry customers yet further when it released this range of products last year.

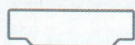
The AVR-X4500H is no exception to the rule. It echoes that jump up, not only in power but across the board, since its last iteration earned this particular Denon family two further *What Hi-Fi?* Awards at the end of 2018.

Just like the AVR-X4400H before it, the AVR-X4500H boasts 125W of amplification (into 8ohms with two channels driven) across each of its nine channels, giving you native access to speaker configurations up to 7.2.2 or 5.2.4, while the 11.2-channel processing means you can go right up to 7.2.4 if you're prepared to add an extra two-channel power amplifier.

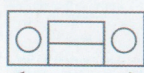
## KEY FEATURES

### 125W

Max power into  
8ohm (two  
channels driven)



8x HDMI inputs



Dimensions (hwd)  
17 x 43 x 38cm

Premium 32-bit AKM AK4458VN digital-to-analogue converters also serve each channel, while the AVR-X4500H is also capable of decoding lossless files including ALAC, FLAC and WAV up to 24-bit/192kHz, as well as being compatible with up to 5.6MHz DSD files.

## Typically Denon

The front of the unit is typically Denon; a pair of large dials, for source selection and volume, bookend the amp's information screen and flap concealing a range of control buttons, singular HDMI and USB connections and headphone output. But the rear is also typical of the manufacturer; a glance at its dense population of connections hints at what's going on inside to justify that price tag.

Among the impressive specs are seven additional HDMI inputs and three out, five RCA terminals and a further phono one for connecting a turntable, and a pair each of optical and coaxial digital inputs.

But Denon is not selling the AVR-X4500H solely to power your home

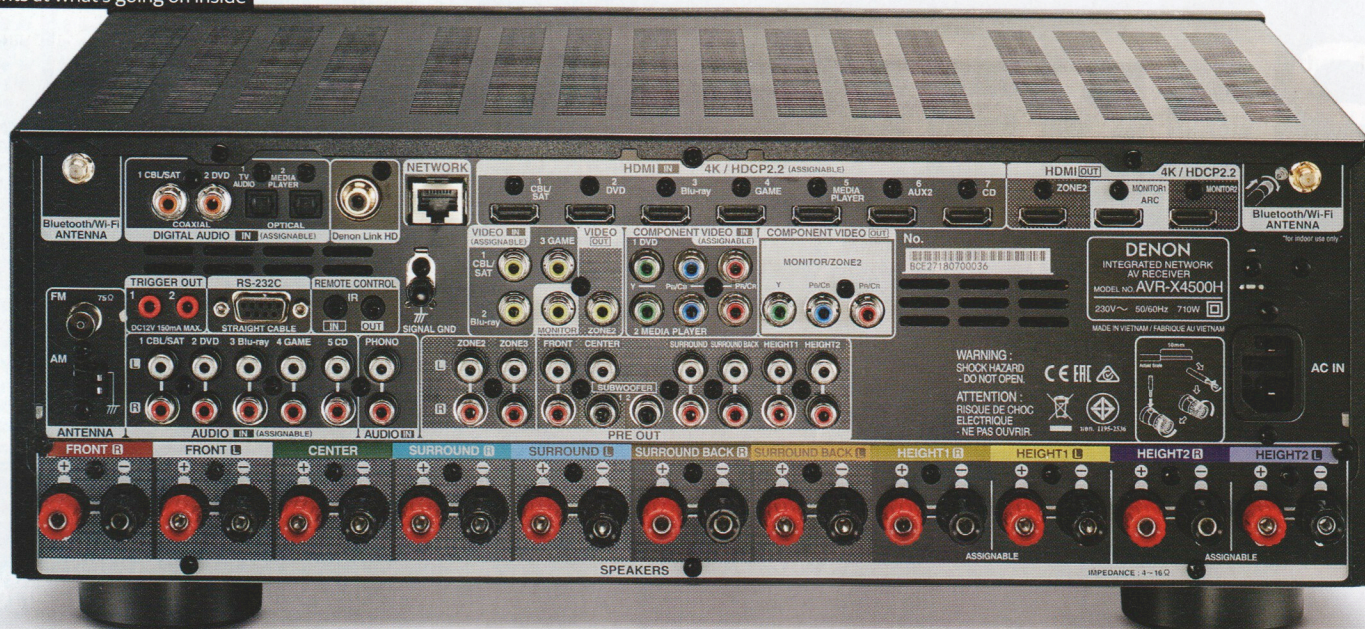
cinema set-up; it intends it to be an entertainment hub, at the heart of all film and music playback in the house. This means the inclusion of a second zone, whereby you can assign certain connections to feed a two-channel system elsewhere in the house.

But it is also about being part of Denon's HEOS multi-room ecosystem. That means you can link your home cinema and potential second-zone hi-fi system to be controlled alongside any other HEOS speakers you might have around the house - kind of a more audio-serious version of Sonos.

The recent addition of Apple AirPlay 2 to Denon's AV receivers also facilitates its control via Siri, while the addition of an Amazon Echo speaker or Google Home component would mean those companies' voice assistants are also compatible with the AVR-X4500H.

Their superior sound quality is our main reason for holding Denon's home cinema amplifiers in such sustained high regard, but the ease of their set-up is

The crowded rear of the X4500H hints at what's going on inside





"Every other aspect of the AVR-4500H's performance is so natural that it is easy to be impressed with how much power you're getting for the money"



**WHAT HI-FI?**  
★★★★★

another major selling point - especially for those new to the concept, perhaps upgrading from their TV speakers or a soundbar for the first time.

Set-up is simply a case of plugging the included microphone into the front of the unit and running the Audyssey software built in to the amp. It guides you through a range of positions and locations where you will need to place the mic, and then does the rest for you via a series of test tones. You may wish to experiment with a little fine-tuning afterwards, but rarely do we find ourselves straying too far from the levels the Audyssey software has discerned.

### Sonic signature

Not only does that make life easier, it also allows you to enjoy Denon's Award-winning sonic signature sound sooner. Though it was the amps either side of the AVR-X4500H in this range we celebrated at the end of last year - namely the AVR-X3500H and AVC-X6500H - again Denon can claim a class leader at this midway price point.

Unashamedly pugilistic in nature, the AVR-X4500H devours those scenes in which it is able to flex its muscles. But it boxes clever, with a series of sharp jabs working its way to a knockout blow, rather than slugging away and tiring itself out.

The Denon comes with a handy remote control



The power is undoubtedly the first thing you notice about the amp's sound, but it's unfair to say that is its defining characteristic. It's more that every other sonic aspect is so natural that it is easy to be impressed with how much power you're getting for the money.

There is a substantial helping of bottom end, designed to put you in your seat and hold you there, but it never dominates what is a clean and even balance, with little to provoke any fragilities elsewhere in your system.

### Drawn out expression

With audio, though, what is most imperative is always that combination of timing and dynamics that draws out the expression in a film or a piece of music - and in this regard, Denon has long excelled with its home cinema amps.

It is responsible for the emotion in actors' voices, the snap of an action

scene and the apt scoring of a soundtrack. It is also why, while it doesn't reach the peaks of a class-leading stereo amplifier at even a third of the price, we could back anyone using the AVR-X4500H's second zone option to power their hi-fi, or simply using it to play music through a surround package.

Slack timing in particular is more readily highlighted when a component grapples with rhythms over scenes in a film, and is why many otherwise decent receivers aren't so suitable for that dual purpose - but Denon has nailed it.

Even given its family pedigree, the AVR-X4500H is every bit as good as we hoped it would be, which is surely reason enough to spend some time celebrating it.

If you have a budget of £1199 to spend on a nine-channel AV receiver, this Denon should be underlined right at the top of your list.

**WHAT HI-FI?**

**SOUND**  
★★★★★  
**FEATURES**  
★★★★★  
**BUILD**  
★★★★★

**FOR**  
• Lots of power and presence  
• Expressive and punchy  
• Plenty of features

**AGAINST**  
• Nothing at this price

**VERDICT**  
The AVR-X4500H's talent won't be a surprise to those familiar with Denon amps, but it's still hugely impressive

**RATING** ★★★★★