

Equipment Report



Devialet Astra Integrated Amplifier/ Streaming DAC

One Box to Rule Them All

Rives Bird

The Devialet Astra is one of the most versatile and forward-thinking audio components I've encountered—an elegant, compact device capable of serving as a streaming DAC, phonostage, stereo integrated amplifier, and stereo or monoblock amplifier. Its design philosophy pushes the boundaries of what a modern audio component can be, combining DSP sophistication, noise-floor engineering, and an unusually flexible configuration system. Before diving into the listening impressions, it's worth examining how Devialet approaches both form and function.

A Brief Look Back

My entry into high-end audio began with a Bang & Olufsen Beomaster 2400 receiver. I was drawn to its beauty but also to B&O's willingness to rethink the conventions of the time. No clutter, no knobs or visible buttons, everything neatly hidden in a form completely different from any receiver of that period. Instead of having programmed FM presets, it incorporated five separate tuners. Devialet adopts a similar spirit—except instead of bending the rules, the Astra rewrites them entirely. The company has been forward thinking since its inception in 2007. Devialet's first product was visually and functionally different from anything on the market, a trend that continues with the \$20,000 Astra reviewed here.

Design and Build-Quality

At first glance, the Astra is strikingly modern looking. Its brushed metallic finish, low profile, and minimalist design evoke a sense of understated luxury. One might mistake it for a Scandinavian product, but it is purely French. The top has a round, soft glowing dial that displays the active input along with the volume. The rear panel is tucked under the unit to further enhance its clean sophisticated look. The Astra does come at the expense of not being able to use those giant power snakes so popular with many audiophiles. Though visually petite, its internals reveal a component engineered for serious performance. Every detail—from the recessed back panel to the circular top-panel indicator—reflects Devialet's aesthetic elegance.

Remote and Interface

The remote matches the Astra's design elegance. With a square base and silky-smooth circular top dial, it communicates via two-way Bluetooth. A small central display eliminates the need to see the Astra's top panel. The remote

The Astra stands as one of the most compelling options available today.

gives you the ability to change volume, advance tracks, play, pause, and change the active input. (I will say it was not the most intuitive device when changing the active input. It took me a minute to get used to the process of holding the play button until the input selection appeared on the remote and then using the track forward or backward to scroll through the inputs.) The remote worked extremely well. No connection dropouts and immediate responsiveness. However, because it is built on Bluetooth, it is unlikely that you can get a third-party remote to work in its place.

The Configurator—Making the Astra What You Want It To Be

It all starts with the online configurator. One must first create an account, select the product, and then configure that product accordingly. The

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connections consist of six RCA inputs, two optical TosLink, one USB, one Ethernet, and two stereo pairs of binding posts. There are no balanced inputs or outputs, most likely due to the limited space for connections. The RCAs can be configured as a stereo analog pair with fixed or variable output, or they can be configured as SPDIF inputs. You can also have any combination. The options on how these connections can be configured are extensive, as I'll describe. Once a configuration has been created in your computer, it can be saved and later uploaded to the Astra through Devialet's app.

Configuration #1—Streaming/DAC and Phonostage

I set the output as fixed and ran the Astra's analog output to my linestage preamplifier. The Astra is Roon Ready, so there's really nothing to do in terms of setup. The phonostage offers the unique feature of being able to select your cartridge in the configurator, which has pre-loaded settings appropriate for your device, which you can override if desired. There is also the ability to choose whatever equalization curves you wish to use. You can choose a range of curves in the configurator and then select them on the fly.

Configuration #2 — Integrated Amplifier with Subwoofer Management

My second configuration placed the Astra into service as an integrated amplifier in the family room with main speakers and a subwoofer. The system included Talon Hawk speakers and a JL Audio f110 subwoofer (reviewed March 2024). The Talons roll off around 35–40Hz, so integration benefits greatly from precise crossover control.

The presentation leaned toward smooth and relaxed, with excellent imaging.

Here the Astra shined. I applied a 60Hz high-pass filter at 12dB/octave to the speaker outputs and a 60Hz low-pass at 6dB/octave to the pre-outs feeding the subwoofer. Relieving the Talons of deep-bass duties allowed the f110 to take command of the lowest octaves, dramatically improving dynamics, clarity, and sound-stage focus. Few integrated amplifiers offer crossover flexibility at this level.

Devialet was founded on a technology the company calls ADH or Analog Digital Hybrid. This topology features all Class A audio circuitry up to the Class D (switching) output stage.

Speaker Active Matching (SAM)

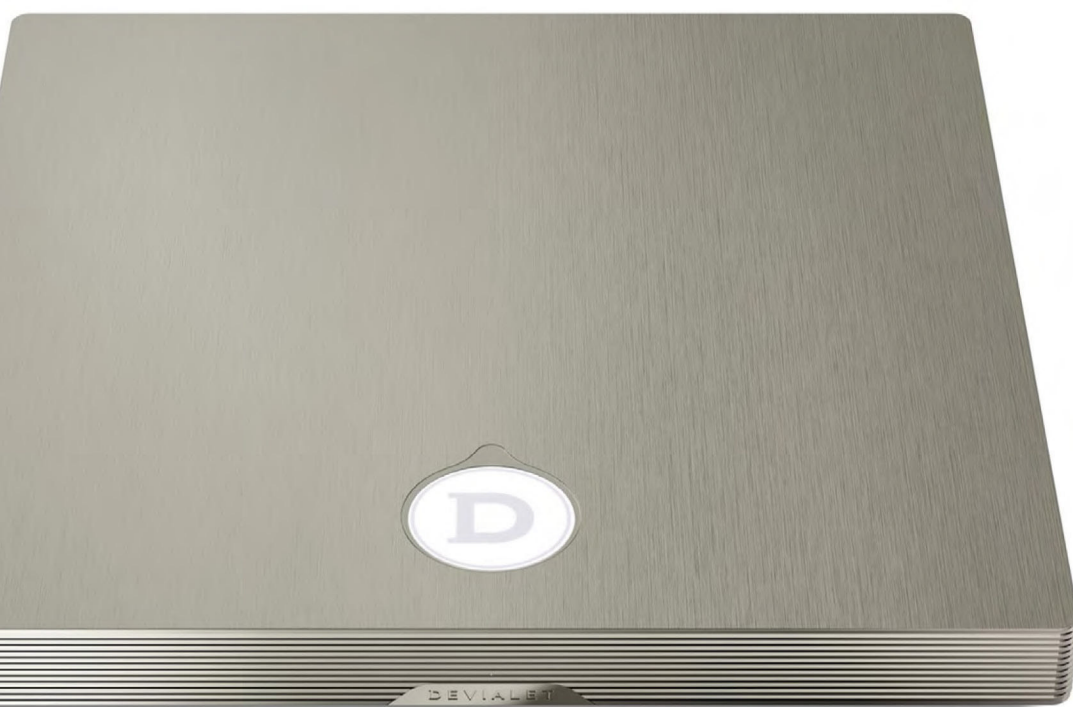
Devialet's SAM technology combines time-alignment and driver-specific correction filters, derived from measurements of individual loud-speaker models. Although my Talon Hawks were not in the database, experimentation with other profiles made the sonic impact of SAM unmistakable. When matched to the correct speaker, SAM promises improved low-frequency extension, better timing, and reduced distortion—all without sounding artificial or DSP-heavy. The user also can determine how much SAM involvement he would like with a "trim" level setting of –15dB to +15dB. The list of speakers that have been tested for SAM optimization is available on Devialet's website. (See Robert E. Greene's extensive evaluation of SAM in Issue 298.)

Monoblock Mode

Most amplifiers offering monoblock functionality simply combine their channels. The Astra approaches this differently. After programming monoblock mode through the configurator, a unique cross-linked interconnect layout transfers channel-specific information between the two units. This unconventional architecture reflects Devialet's broader philosophy of treating the signal path as a fully optimized system rather than a modified stereo topology. Though I was unable to complete full monoblock listening due to time constraints, the implementation is noteworthy.

Listening Impressions—Streaming DAC Performance

As a streaming DAC in my main system, the Astra was revelatory. Its noise floor



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Specs & Pricing

Output power: 150Wpc into 8 ohms, 300Wpc into 4 ohms	Output impedance: 0.004 ohms (1kHz)
Peak power: 1000W (1ms)	Damping factor: 2000 (1kHz)
Streaming services: Airplay, Google Cast, Spotify Connect, Tidal Connect, UPnP, Roon Ready (RAAT)	Crosstalk: 100dB (300Wrms, 4 ohms, 1kHz)
Digital inputs: Up to 192kHz/24-bit; network up to 192kHz/24-bit; USB up to 384kHz/24-bit	DSP processing: 192kHz/32-bit
Phonostage: Moving-magnet/moving-coil	Dimensions: 386mm x 47mm x 386mm
Distortion at 10V: 0.001% (10Wrms, 4 ohms, 1kHz) 0.0006% (100Wrms, 4 ohms, 1kHz)	Weight: 7.2kg
Signal-to-noise ratio: 117dB	Price: \$20,000
	DEVIALET devialet.com

was exceptionally low—“blackier than black”—allowing fine micro-details to emerge effortlessly. Cymbal decay was among the best I had heard from a digital format. But I also noted subtle transient and spatial cues were rendered with uncommon clarity.

Despite the detail and clarity, the Astra maintained a subtly romantic sonic signature: gentle edges without harsh transients and never anything that would contribute to listener fatigue. It is a DAC one can listen to for hours without strain. Low-frequency performance was strong, though not the absolute deepest I have heard. On Boz Scaggs’ “Thanks to You,” extension was slightly lighter in the lowest octave compared to state-of-the-art DACs, but still highly satisfying.

Listening Impressions—Phonostage Performance

Configured as a phonostage, the Astra retained its silent background—a critical advantage when amplifying low-output moving-coil cartridges. As mentioned most high-end cartridges have pre-selected settings. My exact cartridge, the Airtight PC-1 Coda, was not in the database, but the PC-1 was, and I expect their settings would be the same. The loading was 400 ohms and max-level output was set to 200uV RMS, with no capacitance as this is a moving-coil cartridge. The presentation leaned

toward smooth and relaxed, with excellent imaging and a wide, coherent soundstage. Dynamics were slightly polite, particularly compared to dedicated high-end phonostages known for explosive transient response. Still, the inclusion of such a capable phonostage is a genuine value-add within a component already excelling in multiple roles.

Listening Impressions—Integrated Amplifier

As an integrated amplifier, the Astra was transformative in the family-room system. The precise control over crossover point and slope allowed the Talon Hawks and JL Audio f110 to operate in perfect synchronicity. Imaging, clarity, bass extension, and mid-range openness all improved dramatically. The Astra maintained its ultra-low noise floor and provided ample power and control. In this configuration, the Astra outperformed my expectations and delivered one of the most cohesively integrated two-channel/subwoofer systems I’ve assembled.

Longer listening revealed two differences from the main system: deeper bass (due to crossover optimization and a different source) and a slight upper-midrange grain. The latter was not present in the media room, suggesting that the family room’s standard household power—versus the media room’s dedicated balanced power—was the likely culprit, not the Astra.

Daily Use & Reliability

In day-to-day operation, the Astra was responsive, stable, and predictable. The Bluetooth remote connected instantly; app control was reliable; and configuration uploads were quick. Heat output was minimal, and the unit remained stable during extended listening sessions. The overall user experience aligns with Devialet’s premium positioning.

Summary and Final Thoughts

The Devialet Astra is one of the most unusual—and most capable—components I have reviewed. Its mix of configurability, Roon-Ready streaming, phono capability, integrated amplification, DSP tools, and monoblock potential is a unique combination I have not encountered previously in a single component.

The streaming DAC is a star performer, offering refinement and resolution typically reserved for stand-alone units. The phonostage is highly competent, if slightly relaxed dynamically. As an integrated amplifier, however, the Astra truly excels—particularly when leveraging its advanced crossover tools and DSP in the SAM technology.

For listeners seeking an elegant, modern, single-chassis solution with extraordinary flexibility and genuine audiophile sound, the Astra stands as one of the most compelling options available today. Highly recommended. **tas**

