



Vita Audio | R4i | £550

It may look like a 2008 vintage Vita R4 (there was no 'i' on the box or the device) but its limited edition 'Sparkling Graphite' finish (which costs £80 more) confirms this as an updated R4i. Maple, black and white options are available too, at £550.

Features remain similar - iPod dock, CD player and a tuner now supporting DAB+ - but internal changes include revised audio circuitry, a new CD suspension and an upgraded power supply.

The question, of course, is whether these changes have improved sound quality. The answer is yes. Voices are projected from the unit with maximum clarity, so you never miss the vocal, even when the rest of the band is going bonkers. There's impressive width and space to the soundstage, and a degree of

stereo separation that defies the closeness of the two drivers. The woofer is impressive, too, proving well-integrated and punchy.

We have a couple of minor complaints. If you opt for the soundstage-widening 3D Sound mode, there's some distortion at very high volumes. And the disc-like remote, which docks in the top of the unit, isn't as intuitive as it might be.

Even so, the R4i would be near the top of our list if we were looking for a dedicated iPod dock. So the added CD player and radio make it something quite special.

Rating ★★★★★

VERDICT Bridges the gap between dedicated dock and full-on micro system



Vita Audio | R2i | £280

Vita Audio's new R2i replaces the older R2 DAB radio and, like its forebear, it's available in either a walnut finish or, for an extra £20, glossy white or black. Elegance and good build quality really are hallmarks of any Vita Audio unit.

Internally, the R2i boasts a revised tuner compatible with DAB/FM and DAB+ broadcasts (as and when they emerge), plus a flexible suite of inputs and outputs. But it's the addition of an iPod dock that cements the new model's appeal more than anything.

Operated via Vita's 'RotoDial' controller (plus a tiny, less tactile remote), the nifty dock transforms the R2i, turning it into a compact alternative to the more traditional micro hi-fi systems.

It's tonally affable, with a warm sound that's engaging, even with

lower-quality AAC files. With Lossless or WAV, however, the Vita is transparent enough to make the differences plain. Plus, the R2i can go loud with confidence and ease.

The only slight issue is that, while it charges them, the R2i doesn't work directly with iPhones. All you need to do, though, is set your iPhone in flight mode and you'll be in business.

Couple its sonic quality with a good tuner - articulate and low on sibilance, even via the internal aerial - and you have a winner in performance and price. And those good looks are a bonus, too.

Rating ★★★★★

VERDICT This is a great alternative to a less convenient, fussier mini set-up



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