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Ruark RIS



As close to hi-fi as
a small radio can get

WHAT HI-FI? ★★★★★

The walnut grille
adds to the RIS's
sophisticated
aesthetic



Ruark Audio's smallest entry-level radio has a strong history at *What Hi-Fi?*, with a slew of five-star reviews praising its stylish design and impressive sound quality. The new RIS smart radio has built-in wi-fi for the first time and includes music streaming support to cater to today's listening habits and demands.

Elegant, stylish, gorgeous - we have used many superlatives to describe this lovely radio over the past decade or so, but this current generation's design is even more elegant and premium than before. The dimensions remain compact enough for it to perch on kitchen counters, work desks or bedside tables, while the front panel boasts a sleeker fascia that hides the driver and looks classy, with a larger, crisper full-colour display.

The acoustically damped cabinet is smooth and solid with nicely rounded edges, and the slatted wood grilles (hand-crafted, fused walnut, just as on the more premium R410 system) look sophisticated. The mid-grey lacquer finish (the only one) as seen in our review sample is smart if a little unexciting.

Ruark's RotoDial is responsive and easy to use for changing volume, selecting music sources, controlling playback, recalling presets, scanning radio stations and accessing various menu options.

Whether you view the RIS as a radio with streaming powers, or a wireless speaker with radio functions, this versatile unit lets you play music in a variety of ways. Love radio? FM, DAB/DAB+ tuners are built in, and a telescopic aerial is fitted as standard. The RIS also has internet radio thanks to the built-in wi-fi - giving you

TECH SPECS

- **Radio**
FM, DAB, DAB+, internet
- **Bluetooth?**
Yes
- **Connections**
3.5mm aux, USB-C, 3.5mm headphone
- **Dimensions (hwd)** 17.5 x 13 x 13.5cm
- **Weight** 1.6kg

access to thousands of global stations. While a radio's quality relies on the signal strength and proximity to a transmitter, the Ruark has no problem accessing all of our local FM and popular digital stations.

Streaming from mobile devices is easy, with Spotify Connect, Amazon Music and Deezer on board. You won't find any hi-res capabilities, but those wanting to play any other music source can connect to the RIS using Bluetooth. There is a USB-C port for charging your phone and playing MP3 files from compatible devices, a 3.5mm aux input for connecting other audio sources and even a 3.5mm headphone jack.

Articulate and neutral

Under the hood is a single full-range driver powered by Class A/B amplification. We have often described Ruark's products as having a rich, full-bodied sound with a strong, lush midrange. These are ideal sonic characteristics for a small radio. The RIS is different. It sounds so articulate, neutral, precise and authoritative. It's surprisingly clear and crisp, with plenty of detail revealed. Its timing is terrific: precise and

agile, with ample solidity underpinning every note to sound satisfyingly tethered and natural. There are physical limitations to how much bass you can eke out of a small cabinet (with a downwards port) but the RIS delivers just enough bass that is pulled deliciously taut to land with impact and drive a song's momentum.

We play a variety of music genres and stations, from Agnes Obel and Disturbed to Waxahatchee and Run The Jewels, from Kerrang to Scala Radio, and the radio's punctuality combined with a good sense of authority is unusual to hear. From DJs and presenters to podcast hosts and radio plays, voices are all projected clearly and sound characterful. There's dynamism and emotion in spades, all delivered with a confidence and organisation that is rather impressive for a product of this type.

Appealing aesthetics and versatility aside, the sound quality is sophisticated, nuanced and precise from a product of this size and price. If you are after a talented do-it-all wireless speaker and internet radio that has modern streaming talents, this is one you should consider.

"There's dynamism and emotion delivered with a confidence and organisation that is impressive for a product of this type"

WHAT HI-FI?

RATING ★★★★★

SOUND



FEATURES



BUILD



FOR

- Impressive sound quality
- Pleasing clarity, detail, precision and agility
- Smart design

AGAINST

- Only one finish

VERDICT

A sophisticated, versatile radio with an impressively articulate and authoritative sound and stylish design