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## Rotel RSP-1068

Sub-£1000 AV processors are very thin on the ground, so does the RSP-1068 have a clear run, asks Paul Miller

### Rotel RSP-1068 AV processor

PRICE £995

**T**opping its radical RSP-1098 AV processor [AVTech, Nov '03] was always going to be a tough act for Rotel so, by way of commercial good sense, it has decided not to bother trying. Instead, many of the lessons learned in its development have been trickled-down to the replacement for its baby brother, the RSP-1066. This is the £995 RSP-1068, a model that clearly takes its cues from the older RSP-1066 but that beats to the tune of latest Crystal CS494003 Dolby/DTS decoder debued on the RSP-1098. This single-chip solution supports all the standard 7.1 channel formats, including Dolby EX and

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DTS ES, but brings added compatability with other standards like DTS 24/96.

In line with the affordability of the RSP-1068, it's fitted with four stereo AK4395 DACs instead of the more advanced CS43122 DACs used in the RSP-1098. Nevertheless, the flexibility of the product has been enhanced with an additional component video input

and a zone 2 composite video output. Similarly, the multichannel analogue inputs have been increased from 7 to 8 channels and assignable 12V triggers are now included to assist in custom install projects.

And, for anyone who has suffered the annoyance of a slight lipsync error with their plasma or display (caused by a delay in the video scaling DSP), Rotel offers a 'Group Delay' of up to 500msec in 5msec increments. A useful feature that addresses other product's shortcomings.

As you might expect, the RSP-1068 passes all the requisite Dolby decode tests with flying colours and even locks onto incoming bitstreams about a second quicker than previous models. It's also worth noting that changes to the speaker configuration (size, delay and level) are executed on-the-fly, making it very much easier to tweak your system setup. Some DVD players and processors still require you to exit the menu before changes to the configuration are implemented, but the RSP-1068 is rather slicker.

Some of the more advanced DSP features introduced on its RSP-1098 have also found their way into this '1068 model. For example, go to the 'Other' menu and you'll discover the 'Slow', 'Mid' and 'Fast' volume speed options that were developed for the '1098, allowing the hysteresis of the volume control to be adapted to your spinning technique! There's also a 'Contour' tone control accessible via the OSD and front panel, permitting a broad but gentle increase (or decrease) in output above and below 1kHz. This is a mild contouring effect of about 3dB/decade, realising a

