

Questyle QP1R £699



If Cartier made DAPs they might look something like this, but is the sound equally high-end?

DETAILS

PRODUCT
Questyle QP1R

ORIGIN
China

TYPE
24-bit/192kHz & DSD-capable Digital Audio Player

WEIGHT
225g

DIMENSIONS (WxHxD)
70 x 137 x 17mm

FEATURES

- Quoted battery life: 8-10 hours
- 32GB internal storage
- 2x MicroSDXC slots (400GB max)

DISTRIBUTOR
SCV Distribution

TELEPHONE
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WEBSITE
scvdistribution.co.uk

For anyone under the impression that all premium DAPs look like previous-generation smartphones or as close as you can get to an Astell&Kern without triggering legal proceedings, say hello to a rebel force. The QP1R from Chinese company Questyle Audio rolls to a different agenda that gives Android the swerve for a comparatively bare-bones interface with scroll-wheel and hub-click controller and just a touch of touchscreen functionality below the modestly sized display for some of the control commands. It's a nicety made possible by the tough Gorilla glass that forms a protective sandwich for the elegant 'pinched waist' design of the QP1R's bead-blasted and CNC-machined casework, available in either space grey or, as here, a rather more extrovert gold anodised finish.

The stand-out design flourish, however, has to be the volume control,

an intricately knurled knob on the top right-hand edge of the casework protected from accidental nudging by two raised structures. On the right edge of the player is a simple power up/down button, while the bottom edge hosts all the slots – two for MicroSD cards to supplement the player's 32GB of built-in memory, giving a potential maximum of 432GB with the latest 200GB cards, and a mobile universal Micro USB socket for uploading music files and charging.

But all that's just a distraction. Top of the Questyle's priority list is sound quality, pure and simple. To this end, the amp section uses a pure Class A circuit with discrete components and Questyle's proprietary CMA (Current Mode Amplifier) topology lifted from the CMA800R-series headphone amplifier. The DAC section has the 3x clock design found in the company's best-game CAS192 DAC. It's used in conjunction with Cirrus Logic's top-line CS4398 DAC chipset to handle native decoding of DSD64 and DSD128 files as well as PCM up to 24-bit/192kHz.

Sound quality

Listening to the Questyle, it's hard not to feel a bit sorry for the other DAPs in the group – even the superbly transparent and musical AK300. The QP1R is simply in a different league.

The player is capable of exposing nuances of technique and the recording acoustic unheard on most models here. The astonishing transparency and talent for capturing subtle ambient cues comes into its own with densely produced material such as Stuart McCallum's *Vital Space*, a languid meander through a cinematic, multi-sampled, ambient soundscape that's opened up with little effort and strikingly unforced perspectives. You don't have to listen hard to hear what's going on. Simpler tunes are handled just as sympathetically, Barb Jungr's velvety vocal on *Long Road Home* being portrayed with just the right degree of fragility and warmth. While the QP1R is sensationally resolute, it doesn't put the freeze on music's emotional heart ●

OLD-SCHOOL SCROLL

The standard QP1 and the QP1R model (R for Reference – featuring upgraded and hand-picked components) forego the touchscreen and feature-rich functions of similarly priced players to create an experience that focuses on quality pure and simple, embracing both the physical look and feel of the unit and, crucially, cutting-edge sonics.

Anyone that has ever used an iPod Classic, or even those who haven't, will find the QP1R blissfully easy to learn and operate in the good old scroll and click fashion. No, not particularly slick, but charmingly simple and effective nonetheless. It's not all stripped-back hot rod, though. Very usefully, there are selectable master gain settings for accurate headphone drive matching, variable as well as max output gain for the line output and user-definable EQ settings via a 10-band graphic equaliser to delight twiddlers.



Forget the looks, it's the sound that impresses



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OUR VERDICT

SOUND QUALITY ★★★★★ **LIKE:** Top-notch sound with all file formats; ease of use

VALUE FOR MONEY ★★★★★ **DISLIKE:** Track info can clash with album artwork

BUILD QUALITY ★★★★★ **WESAY:** The best-sounding hi-res audio player we've heard at the price

FEATURES ★★★★★

OVERALL



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