

Simaudio Moon Evolution 600i integrated amplifier



Most manufacturers design their integrated amplifiers like budget-oriented products. Not Simaudio! They always attempt to create exceptional products, as you can tell from the many great integrated amplifiers they have made over the years, often superior to their competitors in build-quality, features, and most importantly, musical performance. Now they have created the Moon Evolution 600i, so here is our opinion on it:

In terms of design, fit and finish and overall build-quality, it is a winner: It is impeccably made in every way, from its fully balanced, dual-mono architecture (unusual for an integrated amplifier) down to the look of its dimmable screen and to the feel of its remote control, which is made out of a solid block of aluminum and is still gracefully curved to fit nicely in the hand. The entire unit exudes luxury and refinement.

The Moon Evolution 600i is software-controlled; which gives the amplifier tons of convenient features. For example, you can adjust the gain of each input independently so that there are no volume jumps when switching sources; you can also select any input as a “theater bypass” when using it with a multichannel controller; you can even name each input for viewing on the large front-panel LED display, and set the maximum volume for each input.

When it comes to its sound, based on our knowledge of Simaudio’s other products, we had very high expectations for the Evolution 600i, but we were still surprised by just how great this amplifier sounds. Its sonic attributes and sheer ability to communicate musical expression are simply stunning. Put simply, with its very dimensional, layered sound that create a great sense of musical vividness, it does not sound like an integrated amplifier; instead, it sounds better than many expensive separate pre-amp and power-amp. For example, many amplifiers, among the expensive ones, tend to obscure the timbres of quiet instruments while louder ones play. But the Evolution 600i’s resolution of low-level instruments and its outstanding clarity of timbre, gives a full sense of richness, density and vibrancy. The Evolution 600i easily has the biggest, best defined, and most realistic soundstage of any integrated amplifier we have ever listened. It was not just the soundstage size that was impressive; it was the resolution of all fine spatial cues.

In terms of timber purity, the upper mid and treble have no grain and edge, giving the sound an inviting warmth and richness. And the bass and mid-bass are extremely dynamic, weighty, yet nuanced and detailed.

Even while playing the most demanding music, the Evolution does not have the signs indicative of an amplifier reaching its dynamic limits and running out of power – strain on peaks, diminished dynamic contrasts, soft bass, hard treble and so on: Even at very high volume, the Evolution 600i maintained its tonal purity and dynamic impact.

All in all, the Evolution 600i is simply great in every way: Design, build, feel, ergonomics and musicality. It is a compact, very well built product that rivals or exceeds the sound quality of separate preamplifiers and power amplifiers with outstanding dynamics and bass, low levels of timber coloration and a spectacular soundstage which result in a very compelling music experience. If you want the sound quality of an expensive separate preamplifier and power amplifier at a lower price and in a compact, beautifully engineered package, the Moon Evolution 600i is simply your best choice.