

Press release



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Above Quad Artera Pre analogue preamplifier

Quad tilts the balance

The Artera Series' first dedicated preamplifier sees the return of Quad's much-admired analogue sound tailoring controls

Cambridgeshire, England – The new Artera Pre from Quad, Britain's original high-end audio company, draws upon the company's rich technical heritage whilst being a design firmly of the present. The first dedicated analogue preamplifier to join Quad's Artera Series, the company's flagship range of solid-state audio electronics, the Artera Pre reintroduces a famous Quad feature – the Tilt control.

First available in 1982 on the classic Quad 34 preamplifier, the Tilt control was created by Quad founder Peter Walker as an audiophile-quality answer to tone adjustment. He believed that in the real world, the ability to adjust tonal balance on an amplifier was useful to cater for different rooms and recordings, but that typical tone and EQ controls were clumsy and inadequate in their effect.

While conventional tone controls adjust bass or treble individually, the Tilt control adjusts both ends of the frequency spectrum together – either attenuating the bass and lifting the treble, or lifting the bass and attenuating the treble, in steps of 1dB. In effect, it rotates – or tilts – the audible frequency range

on a 700Hz axis, adjusting the overall balance of the sound to make it 'warmer' or 'cooler' without affecting the apparent volume or 'colouring' the sound.

The Tilt control is unique to Quad and is a subtle, precise and consistent way to adjust sound to compensate for different recordings and the acoustic anomalies of different rooms. Though much acclaimed when it was introduced and still admired to this day, it hasn't featured on a new Quad product for a decade – the Artera Pre is the perfect opportunity for its return.

The new Artera preamp adds further analogue bass filters to the Tilt function for additional sound tailoring, which may be useful for a variety of reasons. For example, optional bass lift (of +4.5dB around 60Hz) may be used to give smaller speakers a little more extension, while bass cut (-4.5dB shelf response) can help to deal with unwanted room resonances. These filters are engineered for precise and refined adjustment, and their effect is much more sophisticated than typical bass controls.

The Tilt and bass filters can be combined to create individual EQ profiles to assign to each source input. In this way, each input can be configured to suit the connected component, be it a turntable, a CD player, a tuner, a DAC or streamer, or any other playback device with an analogue output. Individual adjustment may also be made in real time, to suit whichever recording is being played.



Contemporary design With its sleek glass top and clean, minimalist front panel in black or silver, the Artera Pre sports the same modern twist on the classic Quad aesthetic as other Artera components

Classic Quad – redesigned for the modern age

While the inclusion of these facilities echoes the classic Quad 34 preamp, the Artera Pre is otherwise a very different beast both inside and out. The Quad 34 is known for its 'velvety' tone, in line with the times when it launched but falling a little short of the steadfast transparency and neutrality required of the best audiophile preamplifiers today.

The Artera Pre's electronics design team was led by Jan Ertner, architect of many acclaimed audio components. His goal was to create a preamplifier that exemplifies state-of-the-art design, transparency of sound and fidelity to the source, whilst also providing those classic, expertly engineered sound tailoring options for an ideal balance between sonic purity and versatile control.

The circuitry is exceptionally well specified, including a low-noise toroidal transformer, numerous reservoir/smoothing capacitors and an impressive number of regulators. The power supply incorporates 11 regulated supply rails including multiple ultra-low-noise regulators, with extensive

measures against contamination and cross-coupling. The core signal path is short and direct to preserve signal purity, and volume is adjusted in the analogue domain under microprocessor control.

Vinyl lovers and headphone users are well catered for with dedicated, high-quality circuitry. The Artera Pre's low-noise, Class A phono stage is configurable for both MM and MC cartridges, while an integrated headphone amplifier features a discrete, Class A output stage with low output impedance to drive even the toughest of loads.

Four stereo RCA inputs are provided – three line-level and one phono – plus one balanced XLR. All inputs can run in direct mode if preferred, bypassing all other circuitry to provide the shortest possible signal path from input to output. Unlike many preamps with balanced inputs, the Artera Pre's four-channel volume control enables the audio signal to remain fully balanced throughout.

The gain (sensitivity) of each input can be controlled in 0.5dB steps between -8dB and +8dB, enabling users to precisely match levels between different sources. To add further flexibility, one of the line-level RCA inputs can be configured in AV bypass mode, enabling it to be used with an external AV processor.

Preamp outputs are provided in both balanced XLR and single-ended RCA flavours, together with a fixed-level RCA output. A pair of 12v trigger outputs is also included, to switch connected equipment on/off in line with the preamp.



Well-connected A full complement of balanced and single-ended connections resides around the back

Quad Artera – music in the blood

The Artera Pre joins the Artera Play+ CD player/DAC/preamp, Artera Stereo power amp and Artera Solus all-in-one system in Quad's flagship range of solid-stage audio electronics. The Artera Pre and Stereo are perfect partners – the latter sports the latest version of Quad's famous Current Dumping topology to deliver a captivating combination of dynamic power, vice-like grip and sumptuous sonic detail from a compact, cool-running power amp.

All Artera Series components share the same compact 32x32cm footprint, with a crisp, clean aesthetic that both evokes Quad's past and looks forward to the future. The housing provides a rigid structure that exudes quality and resists interference from external vibrations, with a textured aluminium front panel, thick glass top and CNC-routed heat sinks on either side. The minimalist appeal of Artera components is further enhanced by touch-sensitive controls built into their circular OLED displays. A fully featured remote control is also provided.

The Quad Artera Pre is available from October, priced at £999 with a black or silver front panel.

QUAD

Of all the British high-end hi-fi brands, Quad boasts the longest and most distinguished history. The company has been at the cutting edge of audio since 1936, continually pushing back the boundaries of performance with technologies both new and established. In 1953, the Quad II valve amplifier was launched, setting new standards for audio amplification, and three years later Quad invented the first full-range electrostatic speaker – later known as the legendary ESL 57.

Throughout the ensuing years, Quad products have continued to win worldwide acclaim, building a reputation for excellence that bears comparison with the most distinguished brands in any field. Quad has been part of the International Audio Group (IAG) since 1998, following its acquisition from the Verity Group (alongside Wharfedale). The company's design and technical support teams and much-admired servicing department continue to be based in Cambridgeshire, England, supported by key personnel who have worked with Quad for decades.

IAG's exceptional resources and unrivalled audio manufacturing facilities ensure that Quad's current range boasts many award-winning products, including the latest generation of ESL electrostatic speakers, class-leading valve amplifiers, dynamic 'box' speakers, planar magnetic headphones and a range of solid-state audio electronics that fuse high-end performance with elegant, versatile design. More than 80 years after its formation, Quad continues to be driven by the philosophy of its founder, Peter Walker, to produce "the closest approach to the original sound".

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