

## Press release

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*Above Quad Vena II Play integrated streaming amplifier*

## Quad makes Play for the streaming generation

**By incorporating Play-Fi within the Vena II integrated stereo amp, Quad adds hi-res Wi-Fi streaming and multi-room capabilities – meet the remarkably versatile Vena II Play**

*Cambridgeshire, England* -- Quad, the distinguished British audio brand, is launching a new version of the acclaimed Vena II integrated amplifier, one of its most popular current products.

The new Vena II Play adds Wi-Fi connectivity via the Play-Fi platform to the Vena II's specification, delivering a compact amp that covers all bases from traditional hi-fi sources to wireless streaming via Wi-Fi and Bluetooth. In doing so, it becomes the first Quad product to embrace Wi-Fi streaming.

The Vena II Play looks almost identical to the 'standard' Vena II, which launched 12 months ago – a compact design just 313mm wide; smart and contemporary yet still distinctly 'Quad'. Apart from the word 'Play' to denote Play-Fi integration, the only change to the front panel is a 'NET' button and an array of white LEDs around the rotary control to indicate volume level.

All the facilities of the already well-stocked Vena II are included – an integral hi-res DAC with USB, coaxial and optical digital inputs, aptX Bluetooth reception, a range of analogue inputs including a phono stage for turntables, and dedicated headphone amp circuitry. The Vena II Play's addition of internet/home network connectivity via Wi-Fi or Ethernet cable is provided in return for a £150 premium over £649 Vena II, which remains current.

By adding the Vena II Play alongside the existing Vena II integrated amp, Quad offers customers a useful range of options. For those who regularly stream from internet music services, or store music on a computer or NAS drive on their home network, or want to build a wireless multi-room set-up, the integration of Play-Fi provides a convenient way to add these facilities to a high-performance audio system. However, not everybody requires these features; for those who don't, the existing Vena II remains a superb integrated amp at an excellent price.

## Digital circuits

Aside from the addition of Play-Fi, the Vena II Play's circuitry mirrors that of the Vena II. At its heart lies the ES9018K2M DAC chip from the Sabre32 Reference family, applying the benefits of ESS Technology's 32-bit HyperStream architecture and Time Domain Jitter Eliminator to deliver ultra-low noise and high dynamic range.

Though technically excellent, Sabre32 Reference DAC chips can be challenging to implement effectively. If the circuitry that surrounds them is not of a sufficient standard, the resulting sound can seem a little on the 'cool' side; but treat them right and the level of musical expression that these chips dig from the digital signal is captivating. One such critical element is the post-DAC active filter; Quad has paid great attention to this circuit, using op-amps selected for their synergy with the ES9018K2M.



*Modern classic* The tidily proportioned Vena II Play maintains Quad's classic style and quality of sound despite its cutting-edge versatility

## Analogue circuits

Like the Vena II, the Class AB power amp section draws on Quad's many decades of amplifier design experience. A 200VA toroidal transformer is followed by 2x15000uF reservoir capacity, helping the amp to maintain firm control of the music whilst enabling excellent dynamic range. Whilst the power output of 2x45W into 8 Ohms may appear quite modest by modern standards, in practice the amp will drive any speaker it is likely to be partnered with to high volume levels with consummate ease.

Vinyl lovers will appreciate the inclusion of a phono stage for MM cartridges – a high-quality, low-noise, JFET-based circuit with precise RIAA equalisation. Headphone users are also well catered for thanks to a dedicated amp stage with current-feedback circuitry, its gain bandwidth and high slew rate delivering a dynamic, detailed and engaging performance with all manner of headphone types.

The signal path is short and direct to maintain purity, with volume adjusted via a stepped resistor network under microprocessor control – this differs from the motorised ALPS volume pot in the Vena II, delivering enhanced accuracy and integration with the Play-Fi app. Much effort has gone into the amp's circuit layout in the pursuit of sonic excellence, protecting the sensitive preamp section from interference and utilising independent low-noise power supplies for all critical stages.

## Copious connections – analogue and digital cables, Bluetooth and Wi-Fi

Around the back, the Vena II Play reveals some key differences to the Vena II. Analogue RCA cable connections are the same – two line-level inputs and the MM phono input, plus pre-out sockets to allow the addition of an external power amp – but the digital connections differ.

The Vena II Play incorporates an Ethernet port, in line with its network capabilities, providing the option to connect a router via cable instead of Wi-Fi. To make room for this, one of the Vena II's three S/PDIF inputs has been removed – the Vena II Play sports one optical and one coaxial input, while the Vena II has an extra optical socket. The Vena II also has optical/coaxial digital outputs, which are absent here.

The USB inputs are the same as the Vena II – a Type A port for software updates and a Type B port for asynchronous audio data. The latter can receive and process hi-res PCM audio up to 32-bit/384kHz, as well as DSD up to 11.2MHz (DSD256).

A further change is the number aerials, increased from one to three – the Vena II has a single aerial for Bluetooth, while the Vena II Play adds two more for its dual-band Wi-Fi receiver. The inclusion of Bluetooth, with support for the aptX and AAC codecs as well as 'plain vanilla' SBC, enables convenient, high-quality streaming to both the Vena II and Vena II Play from any smart device. Adding Play-Fi with Wi-Fi and Ethernet connectivity ensures the Vena II Play is extensively equipped for the streaming age.



*Let's connect* Three aerials plus a plethora of analogue and digital cable inputs provide a class-leading array of connectivity options

## Adding Play-Fi – hi-res streaming and multi-room

Developed by DTS, Play-Fi is an app-controlled platform enabling high-quality, whole-home wireless audio, capable of streaming hi-res music up to 24-bit/192kHz and supported by a greater range of established audio brands than any other wireless platform.

The Vena II Play combines Play-Fi's versatility with Quad's sonic know-how to deliver a great-sounding integrated amp with built-in Wi-Fi streaming that is simple to set up and use. Play-Fi provides access to a wealth of internet music services – Spotify, Tidal, HDtracks, Deezer, Qobuz, Amazon Music, Napster, TuneIn, iHeartRadio and SiriusXM, to name a few. Users might choose to browse a radio guide listing thousands of internet radio stations and podcasts – favourite stations and playlists can be assigned to preset 'buttons' within the app – or stream from a DLNA-compatible NAS drive or media server.

Play-Fi also enables users to create a fully synchronised wireless multiroom set-up by connecting up to 32 Play-Fi-equipped devices across a home Wi-Fi network. All this functionality is accessible via the

Play-Fi app, available for iOS, Android and Kindle Fire smartphones and tablets, as well as Apple and Android smartwatches and Windows PCs.

A wide variety of file formats are supported, including MP3, MP4A, AAC, FLAC, WAV and AIFF. In standard mode, which is optimised for multi-room bandwidth, audio is streamed at up to 16-bit/48kHz – akin to CD-quality. By engaging Play-Fi's Critical Listening Mode, hi-res audio up to 24-bit/192kHz may be streamed to the Vena II Play over Wi-Fi or Ethernet cable, without transcoding or down-sampling.

WWA (Works With Alexa) enables voice control by linking with any Alexa-equipped device, such as an Amazon Echo or Echo Dot – all fully integrated within the Play-Fi app – while Spotify Connect allows users to stream directly from Spotify's servers using the Spotify app.



With its clean, uncomplicated design and compact footprint, the Vena II Play is an exceptionally neat and convenient way to bring true high-fidelity sound to the varied nature of modern music collections, from vinyl and CD to digital streaming over cable, Bluetooth and Wi-Fi.

Whatever the music source, the amp's sound is richly imbued with the infectious musicality for which the Vena line is famed. Crisply defined detail reveals the character of voices and instruments, impressive dynamic range conveys natural impact and the amp's transient ability keeps feet tapping with rhythmic music. For all its versatility, this is an amp that always puts the music first.

Finished in Quad's classic Lancaster Grey, the Vena II Play is on sale from November at an RRP of £799.



## SPECIFICATIONS – QUAD VENA II PLAY

Preamplifier Section	
Analogue Inputs	2x line-level RCA / 1x MM phono
Analogue Outputs	1 x RCA (pre-out)
Analogue Input sensitivity	450mV (line-level) / 4.1mV (MM phono)
Analogue Input impedance	10k $\Omega$ (line-level); 47k $\Omega$ / 100pF (MM phono)
Frequency Response	20Hz-20kHz (+/- 0.5dB)
Total Harmonic Distortion (THD)	< 0.002%
Signal-to-Noise	> 110dB (A-weighted)
Power Amplifier Section	
Power Output	2x 45W RMS (8 $\Omega$ ) / 2x 65W RMS (4 $\Omega$ )
Frequency Response	20Hz-20kHz (+/- 0.5dB)
Total Harmonic Distortion (THD)	< 0.005% (30W, 8 $\Omega$ )
Signal-to-Noise	> 108dB (A-weighted)
Digital Section	
DAC Chip	ESS Sabre32 ES9018K2M
Digital Audio Inputs	1x USB Type B / 1x optical / 1x coaxial / 1x Ethernet
Wireless Streaming	Wi-Fi / Bluetooth
Max Sampling Frequency – USB	PCM 384kHz / DSD256
Max Sampling Frequency – Wi-Fi, S/PDIF	PCM 192kHz

# 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".

[www.quad-hifi.co.uk](http://www.quad-hifi.co.uk)

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