

Press release

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Above iFi ZEN One Signature – one DAC, universal connectivity

iFi says: be at One with your sound

One DAC with universal connectivity – iFi’s ZEN One Signature delivers exceptional sound from every digital device in a home audio environment

Southport, England – Award-winning audio specialist iFi expands its ZEN Signature range – enhanced, premium-grade devices based on the acclaimed, entry-level ZEN Series – with the ZEN One Signature.

Described as a ‘universal DAC’ owing to its all-encompassing input options, the ZEN One Signature takes the DAC stage from the ZEN DAC V2, adds S/PDIF inputs (optical and coaxial) alongside the USB port, stirs in Bluetooth technology from the ZEN Blue V2 and seasons the pot with Signature-grade circuit enhancements to create a delicious audio brew. The result is a pure DAC (no built-in headphone amp or volume control) that serves as a home audio hub for all your digital devices, from smartphones and tablets to PCs and Macs, disc players and audio servers to TVs and games consoles.

The ZEN One Signature’s singular purpose is to take the digital audio signal from any device, via cable or Bluetooth, and convert it to analogue to feed an external amp and speakers (or headphones). Coupling high-quality internal components with iFi’s class-leading circuit design, it delivers a brilliant

boost to sound quality however your devices connect to it. For many, the ZEN One Signature is the one and only DAC they will ever need in their home.

DAC's the way to do it

The ZEN One Signature's 'digital engine' is based around a Burr-Brown DAC chipset that iFi uses extensively, selected for its natural-sounding 'musicality' and True Native architecture. iFi's experience with this IC means it knows how to make the most of it; but whilst intrinsic to the resulting sound, the creation of an exemplary DAC stage involves much more than the selection of a particular DAC chip.

One such critical component is the XMOS chip that processes the audio data received via the USB and S/PDIF digital inputs. The ZEN One Signature uses a low-latency, 16-core XMOS microcontroller delivering enhanced processing power; iFi's in-house digital development team has programmed the XMOS firmware to optimise sound quality and ensure a perfect partnership with the Burr-Brown DAC. Extensive jitter-eradication technologies are also applied to the digital stage, including the latest generation of iFi's GMT (Global Master Timing) femto-precision clock and intelligent memory buffer.



The ZEN One Signature's hi-res audio credentials encompass 32-bit/384kHz PCM over USB (192kHz over S/PDIF), all levels of DSD to DSD256, and single- and double-speed DXD. Thanks to the Burr-Brown DAC chip's four-channel True Native design, PCM and DSD take separate pathways – this enables DSD, as well as PCM, to remain 'bit-perfect' in its native form right through to analogue conversion.

MQA – the hi-res streaming format – is also supported, with full decoding of MQA files up to 384kHz. This means that the complete 'three unfold' decoding process is performed internally, as opposed to just the final unfold in the manner of an MQA 'renderer' – ideal for subscribers to Tidal's 'HiFi Plus' tier, where Tidal Masters (MQA) content can be found.

Bluetooth done better

While Bluetooth's wireless convenience and wide device compatibility is well recognised, many people don't realise how good Bluetooth audio can sound because they've only experienced it at base-level quality via rudimentary SoC (System on Chip) implementations. iFi has gone to great lengths to ensure its Bluetooth technology is state-of-the-art, earning it a class-leading reputation.

Making full use of Qualcomm's latest four-core QCC5100 Bluetooth processing chip, every current high-definition Bluetooth audio format is supported, including aptX Adaptive and aptX HD, LDAC and HWA/LHDC. Other codecs covered include regular aptX and aptX Low Latency, AAC and SBC (the 'plain

vanilla' Bluetooth codec). This means that every possible source device is handled at the highest audio resolution its Bluetooth specification allows.

The ZEN One Signature is Bluetooth v5.1-compliant, ensuring the best possible range, stability and performance. Up to eight paired Bluetooth source devices can be stored in memory, making it easy to switch from one device to another.

Purity is paramount

While the 'regular' ZEN devices introduce the benefits of balanced circuit design – lower noise, greater sonic purity – at remarkably affordable prices, the Signature-level ZENs, such as the ZEN DAC Signature and ZEN CAN Signature, further up the ante with their enhanced true-differential balanced topologies.

The ZEN One Signature is no exception – from input to output, every element of its circuitry is designed for pure performance. Key surface-mounted components have been upgraded to high-end devices, including Panasonic OS-CON and Elna Silmic II capacitors, and the design has been refined to ensure short, direct signal paths. This results in even greater sonic detail and expression.

Power can be supplied over USB from a connected device – a laptop, for example – or directly from the mains via an AC/DC adapter. Optimum performance is provided by iFi's ultra-low noise iPower2 DC power supply, included in the price (£69 when purchased separately).



External affairs

The ZEN One Signature sports the same 158x35x100mm aluminium enclosure as the rest of the ZEN range, finished in Deep Space Blue – the colour iFi uses to differentiate its Signature-level models – rather than the grey finish of the regular ZEN Series devices. This is complemented by dark grey front and rear panels (silver-coloured on the standard versions) and blue controls.

At the front are buttons for powering up/down and switching between the USB, S/PDIF and Bluetooth inputs, alongside colour-changing LEDs to indicate the incoming audio format and sample rate. A further button switches the LEDs on or off, as well as activating the Bluetooth pairing mode.

Around the back resides an asynchronous USB Type B port, alongside two S/PDIF inputs – optical and coaxial, the latter doubling as a digital output. RCA analogue outputs are joined by a balanced 4.4mm output, enabling fully balanced connectivity with a suitably equipped amplifier. iFi makes a balanced 4.4mm to stereo XLR cable, ideal for connecting the ZEN One Signature to an amp with XLR inputs.

Performance-tuned for captivating sound with all forms of media, from hi-res music to movie and video game soundtracks, the iFi ZEN One Signature is available from 14 January at an RRP of £349.



iFi is the sister-brand of Abbingdon Music Research (AMR) and is headquartered in Southport, UK. The two brands respectively design and manufacture portable, desktop and lifestyle audio products and high-end hi-fi components. Combined in-house hardware and software development teams and a 'music first' approach enable iFi and AMR to create advanced audio products that deliver new levels of design, functionality and performance at their respective price points. Since iFi's formation in 2012, its products have earned many awards around the world, helping it to become one of the fastest-growing brands in its field.

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