

Denon AVR-X2200W REVIEW - A Sound Performer -



THE GOOD: The [Denon AVR-X2200W](#) has very good dynamics with crystal clear sound reproduction and fantastic surround sound capabilities. Dolby Atmos and HDCP 2.2 support means the 2200W is well equipped for the future.

THE BAD: Low frequencies could use a little more punch

SUMMARY: The Denon AVR-X2200W has a lot going for it. Dolby Atmos works as advertised and creates a very engaging sound stage. Built-in WiFi and Bluetooth make it easy to stream music to the receiver. Plus, it also features full HDCP 2.2 support which means this amp is ready for future 4K video. The biggest obstacle facing the 2200W is the stiff competition its up against this year. For example, [Onkyo's new TX-NR646](#) has nearly the same feature set, but costs a little less.

Denon AVR-X2200 Review



Appearance and Design

I would love to say that the [Denon AVR-X2200W](#) is a beautiful example of industrial design, but that would be a stretch. Like nearly every receiver on the market its big, black and boxy. The front is clean, simple and well laid out. Although, you'll rarely have any need to use any of the buttons on the front of the receiver



The included remote is basically the same as last years x2100. In fact, I'm pretty sure it is the same. Overall, it's one of the more intuitive AV remotes you'll come across. While it's not as simple as Sony's, it does have less button clutter than Yamaha's or Onkyo's and is quite easy to use.

Power wise, the X2200W pushes about 95 watts to each of its 7 channels. (a generous estimate by the way). It can handle a variety of audio formats including Dolby Atmos and DTS:X. For music playback it can also decode a variety of high-res audio formats such as DSD (2.8 MHz) and FLAC lossless.

Dolby Atmos and DTS:X

Dolby Atmos and DTS:X are the newest audio formats to hit home theater. Both are object based formats which allow sound engineers to place sounds at specific locations in the listening area. The result is a 3D-like audio experience. Out of the box the Denon AVR-X2200W is Atmos ready however, DTS:X won't be available until later

this year as a firmware update.

Connectivity



The Denon AVR-X2200W offers up an impressive supply of HDMI inputs with a total of 8. It also gives you 2 outputs one of which is ARC (Audio Return Channel) capable. All of the [2200W's](#) HDMI inputs feature the latest HDMI 2.0 standard and support HDCP 2.2 copy protection which you'll need to play copy protected 4K (ultra HD) video in the future. Above the HDMI ports you'll see dual WiFi antennas which should result in a more stable WiFi connection.

Despite the growing trend of eliminating analog inputs on receivers, the 2200W still manages to give you a decent amount of analog connectivity options with 4. It also has 3 digital inputs (2 optical / 1 coaxial). For bassaholics, the Denon AVR-X2200W also features 2 subwoofer preouts.

The Denon X2200W is also pretty well setup for custom installations. It includes an RS-232C serial port for home automation systems and is Control4 SDDP certified so it should integrate easily with Control4 automation control systems.

Calibration & Setup

Setting up and calibrating the [X2200W](#) is a painless process. Upon boot-up, the 2200W will walk you through the initial setup with step-by-step instructions from connecting your speakers to calibration. If this is your first receiver you'll find the on-screen prompts especially helpful.

The Denon X2200W uses Audyssey's Silver Calibration package which includes MultEQ XT, Dynamic EQ and Dynamic Volume. Most AV companies recommend placing the calibration microphone on a tri-pod for the most accurate readings. In the perfect world this is the best way to calibrate your receiver however, most of my buddies use the old stack three boxes on the couch and slap the microphone on top method which, curiously, I haven't seen mentioned in any instruction manuals for AV setup. I can't imagine why.



Denon evidently has realized that most people's "ahem" calibration methods are flawed so they've included a handy cardboard tri-pod with every X2200W to assist with calibration. Once you slap the tri-pod together you slide the calibration mic on top and then you place the mic at 8 locations in your room as prescribed by the on-screen instructions. The entire process takes about 15-20 minutes and is well worth it.

Like all calibrations I still recommend going in and checking your settings. After the initial calibration I noticed that Audyssey had my center channel level waaaay too low for my liking. However, after a quick tweak we were off to the races.

The onscreen menu system of the [Denon AVR-X2200W](#) is serviceable. It's relatively intuitive and easy to use. It won't blow you away with fancy icons or graphics, but everything is organized and easy to find.

Internet Radio, Bluetooth and WiFi

I could bore you by spouting the normal mantra about dual RF antennas and ethernet lan ports, blah blah blah. And yes the X2200W does have all of these, but what you really want to know is do they work. The answer is yes. Getting my iPod connected via bluetooth took only a few seconds. AirPlay also worked flawlessly. I experienced no WiFi issues during my time with the receiver, so if you normally listen to Pandora, Spotify, SiriusXM or internet radio in general, I don't think you'll experience any major

issues. Of course if you do, you can always use the ethernet port on the back to make a “hard-wired” internet connection.

Performance

When I sat down to listen to the Denon AVR-X2200W it was immediately apparent that its strengths lie in its ability to produce a detailed, clear and wide sound field. Watching *The Maze Runner* on blu-ray, the 2200W managed to amplify the terrible claustrophobic feeling of being trapped in the grizzled stone maze. As the characters are being hunted by the creatures within the maze, the click-clacking claws of the terrifying monsters appeared at different locations in my listening area heightening the feeling of terror.

[Interstellar](#), which was nominated for a sound mixing oscar, seemed like another good candidate for testing the [Denon X2200W](#). For the most part the receiver performed admirably. *Interstellar*'s sound track is relatively bass heavy so I expected to be brutalized by some serious low frequency goodness. However, the 2200W, while having good punch seemed just a tad light in the bass department. On the other hand, dialogue was crystal clear. Overall, it's performance was balanced although I would have personally preferred a little more aggressiveness with the low-end. Cranking the sound on the 2200W revealed little distortion so it should be able to play well in fairly large rooms.

I've slowly begun warming up to Dolby Atmos. The initial blu-ray releases that incorporated Atmos were a little underwhelming however, they showed the potential of the format. *Jupiter Ascending* really highlighted the benefits of Dolby's new format. In my listening room, ceiling speakers aren't an option so I went with the Dolby Atmos speaker modules. My modules of choice were the [Onkyo SKH-410 speaker modules](#) which fit nicely on my floorstanders. These work by reflecting sound off of the ceiling and down into the listening area. In my experiments with Atmos, ceiling speakers are probably the ideal solution, but these speaker modules work pretty well.

The one thing with Atmos, is it has the ability to put you in the thick of the action. *Jupiter Ascending* allowed the Denon 2200W to really demonstrate what the future holds with Atmos. The gravity boot scenes were especially impressive as they appeared to zoom over my head and to the back of the room. The ability of Atmos to “place” sounds in space made watching *Jupiter Ascending* far more engaging.

Conclusion

The [Denon AVR-X2200W](#) is a great amp. Feature wise, it seems to check off all the right boxes, HDCP 2.2, Dolby Atmos and DTS:X (eventually), Bluetooth and WiFi. It also boasts crystal clear & detailed sound. On the downside, I do wish it was a little more

forceful with its low-end. The AV playing field is getting crowded this year and the 2200W is going to face some stiff competition from the likes of Onkyo, Pioneer, and Yamaha. It will be interesting to see if it's up to the challenge.