AVM Inspiration CS 2.2

It’s a new name to the UK, and among its first products is this very appealing all-in-one network audio system.

German manufacturer AVM has been in business for over 30 years, but has only just made it to the UK, courtesy of loudspeaker company PMC, which has just taken on distribution here. And as a result of that three-decade history, AVM comes in with an extensive catalogue: there are 30 products, arranged in three ranges, and within those line-ups there seems to be quite a bit of duplication. AVM kicks off with the Inspiration range, moves up through Evolution and finally arrives at its flagship Ovation offering. But looking at the smallest part of the range, the entry-level Inspiration from which the CS 2.2 we have here is taken, there seems to be a trio of similar models.

Ask AVM chief Udo Besser what’s going on here, and he’ll explain that a lot of this is down to the way the company builds its products, all of which are hand-assembled in Germany. Modular construction is the key, allowing different models to be designed around the same building-blocks, each aimed at a slightly different market.

Thus the CS 2.2 is a compact all-in-one system combining a CD player, FM tuner, DAC and network player, partnered with an amplifier delivering a healthy 165W per channel, which should be more than adequate for most needs. Take a step down to the CS 2.2 and you get a similar specification but minus the network capability and the option for remote control using a phone/tablet app, move even further and you have the CS 2.0, which drops the CD player and power amplifier.

Modular construction is the key - different models are designed around the same building-blocks, each aimed at a slightly different market. The Inspiration CS 2.2 is a compact – just 34cm (WxHxD) 34x8x35cm – all-in-one – just add speakers and some storage.

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While multifunctional ‘soft’ buttons below the display have their operation modified by the menus. The standard finish is natural silver aluminium, but black with silver controls is available to order. As well as all the flexibility within, which extends to access for streaming services including Tidal and Qobuz, along with network stored music and internet radio, the CS 2.2 has optical and coaxial digital inputs, a phono-stage switchable for moving magnet and moving coil cartridges, and three line-ends. Fixed and variable analogue outputs are provided, as well as a single set of speaker connections and – should you need them – both optical and coaxial digital outputs. Network connectivity is via both wired Ethernet and Wi-Fi, for which a stubby antenna is included.

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