

Common questions on XR Series

Can I upgrade? And if not, is there a trade-in programme?

We offer a comprehensive range of upgrades, including QXR which offer considerable performance benefits, however as the XR Series are all-new ground-up designs, it is not possible to upgrade to them from Classic range products.

You can mix and match XR and Classic units though, as they're all 'voiced' to deliver similar sonic characteristics, albeit, the XR range provides a substantial improvement.

There is no official trade-in programme as these units are not replacing the 'Classic' ranges, although a couple of products in the Classic range will become EOL. You are, of course, free to discuss any trade-ins with your dealer.

Will there be upgrades available in the future within the XR range?

Yes, as new features and technologies become available, we will develop various options to further improve the performance of the XR products. We always design products with one eye on the future – trying to anticipate where advancements might offer future improvements.

When will the streamer be launched?

It will not be until the latter part of 2021. There are significant movements in technology within this field and we're determined not to launch 'me too' products just because there is a demand – but to offer a substantive improvement on the 'Status Quo'.

When will the new power amps be launched?

It will be later in 2021. We're unable to give clear guidance yet on timing. There are several amplifier technologies and configurations currently in development. Again – until we're further down the track, we can't say which will finally be used. There will be more than one model.

Will they be available in silver?

There are no plans for a silver option on the XR range. Silver is currently less than 5% of our total sales and is also considerably more expensive to produce, not only because of the smaller numbers involved but because of the additional treatments required in the casing manufacture.

We will continue to offer silver as a 'paid' option in the classic Classic (including Signature) range to support customers who have invested in and prefer the silver finish.

Why haven't you used a colour display?

The new Display is LCD. In development, we tested numerous display options including OLED, e-ink, TFT and a mix of black & white B&W and colour displays. All of the alternatives either were not suitable for this type of product, or suffered from life degradation issues, or added unacceptable levels of system noise. Our priority in XR is the cleanliness of the signal path and the reduction of noise.

Why are the new units at higher price points?

This is the first set of ground-up designs in over a decade. In their development, our R&D team have been given almost 'Carte-Blanche' in terms of component choice and design. As such, the performance of XR is a level significantly above any previous Cyrus product.

We are one of only a handful of audio companies still to manufacture almost entirely in the UK. We also use the finest quality 'single primary' transformers – dedicated to specific country voltages. Whilst this is significantly more expensive, the sound quality justifies it. Furthermore, we are one of an even smaller number of companies to use a 'hand-finished' cast aluminium chassis, and we maintain a programme of continuous development and upgrades.

Why is the Pre-XR not a balanced design?

The fully-balanced DAC XP is certainly a very competent design, but it's an approach which is slightly incongruous with our current knowledge and recent advances.

The philosophy of XR is about noise reduction, cleanliness of signal path, outstandingly clean power and exceptional components. Balanced designs have benefits where signals are running over longer paths, the trade-off is an increase in thermal noise from the additional signal path components.

In XR we have focussed on signal path management within the box to ensure short paths and reduce noise. These design philosophies favour a single-ended approach and in both laboratory measurement and listening trials, the Pre-XR has outperformed the DAC XP on every metric.

Is the PSU-XR backwards compatible?

Technically yes, but in practical terms, Classic and Signature products will not be able to take full advantage of our PSU-XR developments. Whilst they will provide a very stable, quiet and robust power supply and these supplies are separated (no common grounds) in the PSU-XR, the host products don't contain the same communications microprocessors. Whilst they will provide a step up from the PSX-R2, the increase in performance is not as significant as it is when used with an XR series host product.

Why does the CD transport cost more than the CD player?

The Cyrus CDt-XR is a development on the philosophy of the Cyrus CD-XT Signature. Although the DAC has been removed, components have been improved throughout. A brand new, extremely high specification transformer and completely new 're-clocking' and power supply circuits have been applied to this design.

How is the reliability of the CD players?

Cyrus CD players are the best you can buy – and are 'premium' products. As such, they are designed to extract every tiny detail of information from a disc. We don't use multi-speed, or DVD transports...our solution is unique and extremely precise.

Throughout the years of CD, standards of manufacture have varied to a certain degree – sometimes, outside the 'Red-book' standards established when the format.

Why do the power ratings look low for such high-priced products?

Our Power ratings are honest and use RMS (Root Mean Squared) data. That doesn't mean they're underpowered. Power is not just about Watts, it is the ability of the amplifier to deliver high levels of peak current to enable it to control and drive the speakers when the music becomes demanding. Even our i7 Integrated amplifier can drive big and difficult load loudspeakers to uncomfortable listening levels.

The Cyrus difference is in the quality, clarity and the lack of distortion, even at higher volume levels.

When will there be a matching phono stage?

There are many products in development for the XR Series. It's entirely conceivable that a new phono stage will arrive in due course, but it's not the priority. Phono-stage technologies move much slower than DAC and amplifier technologies and our existing Phono Signature model is far ahead of most competitors already.

Why not a completely new design?

XR is a completely new design, with ground-up approaches for every part of every product that can be improved. Cyrus is almost unique though in using a 'Cast-Aluminium' chassis – the benefits of which are very significant – as well as being absolutely core to the Cyrus DNA of being outstanding in performance, yet practical to live with.

What is happening with the Classic series?

The Classic (including Signature models) range will be mostly unaffected. We are, however, tweaking the range, with two products ceasing production going forward.

These will be the CD-XT Signature as one of the key components is now very difficult to source and the DAC XP Signature which, due to changing 'thermal efficiency' regulations in many global markets, is no longer possible to manufacture in the numbers required.

All Cyrus models from the Classic and XR continue to offer outstanding performance and value in their price category.

Why can I only get the power amps from the Classic range in Phantom Black?

The Phantom Black finish is not intended to be an additional colour option for Classic products. We are only offering power amps in Phantom Black for the sake of precise system matching with XR sources and the Pre XR

Why is there no separate DAC or streaming preamp?

There are many products in development for the XR Series.

Are the CD players are using the same slot loader design?

The CD loader and mechanism is brand new. The players still benefit from our bespoke CD SE engine design, but we have taken the opportunity to upgrade the mechanical parts to ones with tighter manufacturing tolerances.

Will there be an upgrade path within XR?

The most obvious upgrade is the addition to a product of a PSU-XR. While not available on initial launch, it will be arriving in 2021.

All Cyrus systems are designed to be modular, so adding additional products to your system, as they are developed, will improve performance.

Within the products themselves, we will always aim to offer upgrades wherever technology has taken a step forward. Our products are designed so that areas such as DACs, which are faster moving technologies, can be updated relatively easily.

Can I upgrade my current QXR to the 2nd gen QXR?

No, The original QXR was designed as an upgrade to the DACs within the Classic range. The Gen II QXR is a very different beast with many differences in filtering, power supply and layout.

Will the new 'Hark' rack fit my older Cyrus equipment?

Yes – the footprint is the same.

Which DAC filter setting is the best for my music or format?

There is no 'hard and fast' rule. The biggest factor is 'how was the music recorded?'. For example, classic, dynamic 80s recordings tended to be recorded with 20k brick wall filters, and in playback will tend to sound best with the 'brick wall' filter reapplied.

The differences are subtle and will have less impact on some types of source material than others.

Will the Hark rack be available in different colours?

Yes, Both Black and Silver variants are planned

Will Cadence be updated when the new Cyrus streamers come?

Our aim with the new (and existing) streamers will be to take a different approach and make them largely 'appless'.

What we mean by this is that you will not need a dedicated App to make them work, they will integrate directly with the music streaming apps of your choice, be that Roon, Tidal, Spotify, MConnect etc.

Most customers will have already decided on their preferred streaming app and will have invested time in learning exactly how it works. We want to be able to fit in with that, and not drive the customer to load up a different app to be able to listen to music. That, in our view, can only detract from the overall user experience.

By integrating with a whole host of 3rd party platforms, we can focus our attention on what we're good at – making great-sounding hardware.

How do new products measure against the older equivalents?

In both objective measurement and, in subjective listening tests/competitor comparisons, the new XR Series products offer a substantial performance advantage.

Why is the new PSU-XR so expensive?

PSU-XR is a brand-new approach to power management. It is not just a dumb huge transformer, it's an intelligent unit that adapts itself to suit the host. As well as being able to power three different circuits in the host product, it does so very differently to other external power supplies. The host microprocessor and the PSU micro talk to each other and the exact voltage demands are fed back to the host via digitally addressed power rails. It's advanced engineering and provides the 'stiffest', most 'robust' power possible – specifically tailored to the needs of the host.

High-quality, expensive components are used throughout to achieve this and hence the price delta to previous external power supplies.

Streaming is not built into integrated amps, why?

XR Series integrated amplifiers are class AB, and hence generate heat. The extremely sensitive circuits behind streaming circuits are easily disrupted and are thermally unstable in such designs.

A secondary issue is system 'noise' as the high-frequency operation of streaming devices can adversely affect the purity of delicate analogue signals. This is fundamentally why hi-fi 'separates' exist – to separate circuits and prevent them from inducing noise into each other.

Whilst the benefits of built-in streaming are obvious in 'all-in-one' solutions, they are too much of a compromise in high-end systems.

Why do CD players not support SACD or HDCD?

The cost/benefit analysis for SACD just doesn't stack up for Western markets. There's a limited choice of transports that would not be able to use our customised CD solution. The acoustic benefit we can deliver for CDs would be significantly compromised for the sake of SACD compatibility which most customers would rarely use.

No MQA support, why?

MQA is essentially a compression algorithm. It allows high-quality files to be streamed over lower bandwidth connections. Our house view is that bandwidth is not an issue for 99% of our customers. If you can stream movies, you won't have an issue with any music file.

To implement MQA compatibility restricts the type and configuration of the DACs that can be used. Whilst we might gain a performance edge with some tracks that have been specifically mastered to work brilliantly with MQA, we would lose our flexibility and innovative DAC technologies that work brilliantly with everything else. In short – too much compromise and not enough advantage.