



Onkyo tx-nr809 review what hi fi

DESCRIPTION If youre serious about home entertainment, you should seriously check out the TX-NR809 from Onkyo. This 7.2 channel receiver has all the advanced features you can't wait to give you the highest-quality audio and video that's possible for years to come. It supports Full HD 3D, upscaling to 4K video, and the latest uncompressed HD audio standards. There are plenty of inputs to handle all your sources and its even network enabled! home theater receiver 7-channel amplifier; 135 watts per channel with 2 channels powered ,eight 3D-ready HDMI inputs and two HDMI outputs for connectivity flexibility [Jan 28, 2014] tim pascale AudioPhile Introduction to Onkyo TX-NR809 Network Receiver Onkyo TX-NR809 network receiver models in recent years, I have come to expect an excellent product that is both packed with features and performing extremely well. The NR809 falls on top of Onkyo's mid-range receiver, and may even be able to be put at the bottom of its high-end with everything it can do. It's a THX Select2 Plus certified receiver that features all the latest digital audio decoders (DTS-HD MA, Dolby TrueHD, Pro-Logic IIz, and Audyssey DSX), an excellent set of video processing chips (HQV Vida and Marvel Qdeo) as well as DAC (192Khz/24-bit Burr-Brown) and the superb Audyssey equalization and configuration system. But the most exciting thing about the receiver, in my opinion, is the range of network features it offers. ONKYO TX-NR809 NETWORK RECEIVER SPECIFICATIONS Design: 7.2 Wireless Network A/V Receiver Codecs: All, including Dolby TrueHD and DTS-HD Master Audio Wireless Connection to Your Home Network Power: 135 Watts RMS x 7 THX Ultra2 Select Certified 1080p Scale via HQV Vida, 4K Scale-up via Marvell Qdeo 7 HDMI 1.4a inputs with Audio Return Channel Support Dimensions: 7.8H x 17.1 W x 17.1 D Weight: 40.3 pounds MSRP \$1,099 USD Onkyo SECRETS Tags: Receivers, Wireless Networks, THX, Marvell Qdeo Design and setup by Onkyo TX-NR809 and getting it plugged in was a cinch. I noticed it was significantly lighter (specs tell me 10 pounds) than my older TX-SR875, weighing in at about 40 pounds. Onkyo has also moved to a more discreet look - the front blind panel is mostly flat, bent just on top as it meets the main body. It hides a plethora of controls as well as an additional input. Looking at the back panel, it's amazing to me that a few short years ago we had an abundance of A/V connections, and only a few speaker connections, but now the speaker connections are starting to outnumber their A/V counterparts. The NR809 has eleven sets of speaker terminals to facilitate left, front, center, surround back, surround back, surround right back, and then two more that can be used for either wide front or height front channels. Unfortunately, I am not yet in a position to hire that many speakers, so I linked a standard 5.1 set and moved on to the rest of the connections. There are 7 assignable HDMI ports, which made it easy to quickly plug in all my sources (Xbox 360, PS3, Blu-Ray player, DirecTV satellite box) without worrying about where I connected them. There is also a conveniently placed HDMI connection at the front designed for quick connections such as a video camera. Also, there are two HDMI monitor outs, though I only needed one. I connected the Ethernet port up to a switch I hold in my A/V rack to facilitate the powerful network features of the NR809 (hence the NR in the name -Network Receiver). I rounded out the setup by connecting the subwoofer out along with my single component source (Wii) and a single audio-only optical digital source (Apple Airport Express). After assigning the HDMI ports I connected in the included microphone and allowed the Audyssey MultEQ XT system to go to work. Unlike my previous experience with an Audyssey system, this time I was actually asked to use my powered subwoofer own volume bud to set it to reference 75db. In doing so, it became apparent that I had been underusing my subwoofer for some time; a happy discovery for me; not so much for my cohabiting people. Continuing on, I used three listening positions to calibrate the system. For the smaller patient and itching to begin, there is a guick start mode that only reguires measurement from a single position. The results were interesting. It configured crossovers at 50Hz for my front speakers (which are only rated at 51Hz per manufacturer), 80Hz for my center (65Hz per spec). and 90Hz for surrounds (80Hz per spec). Although I usually restore these values to 80Hz around being in line with THX standards, I decided to give it an attempt that was detected by the system (more on this later). The distances were spot on as usual. The NR809 also has some advanced video processing thanks to hav vida vhd 1900 chip. The NR809 can scale video to all your typical resolutions, but besides, thanks to a Marvell Qdeo chip, it can also exclusive to 4K (good on you if you already have such a display). Each video input can be configured independently for both resolution and processing settings. There are several preset video configurations to choose from, including an ISF Day and ISF Night setting that have been developed in concert with Imaging and Science Foundation recommendations. Also included are cinema, games, streaming, through, and direct modes (both of which refrain from video processing – but through scales while directly not). If you select the custom configuration for a source, you can adjust the video view settings such as hue, hue, brightness, but can also get even more granular with settings such as individual color contrast and brightness, gamma and noise reduction. This allows a professional calibrator to calibrator to calibrate each input independently, maximizing video quality on a per-source basis. I did as the two ISF presets, but for most of my trial period, the setting kept on 'through' and only used the receiver to scale any video that wasn't built-in 1080p. Remote control For those who don't use a universal remote control or other advanced control systems, the included remote control is a decent device. It feels good in the hand, is well weighed, and has a nicely organized layout. The source buttons are located at the top, the transport and navigation controls in the center, and the bottom. Because the device itself is designed to be a basic universal controller, it includes buttons that perform functions dedicated to other sources, such as the Blu-Ray player color buttons. The remote control is capable of learning commands from another component's remote control, but can also control protocol (Onkyos calls its proprietary solution RIHD). In addition, if you use the multizone capabilities of the receiver, the remote control can control can control these zones as well. Perhaps one of the best features of the remote control is that it can be easily configured with both basic and more advanced macros perform a series of simple steps to get other components to play (Onkyo components work out of the box, while other components can also be used if the remote control has been programmed with their product codes). For example, you can press the My Movie button and it will turn on the Blu-Ray player, change the receiver source to BD/DVD, and the disc will start playing. If you want something a little more advanced, you can program these task buttons to perform a series of up to 32 commands. This is easily programmed right on the remote control itself. The main drawback of the remote control is the lack of full backlight. I particularly believe in a receiver approaching the upper end of the midrange in Onkyo's lineup, this should be a standard feature for the remote control. While the buttons vary in shape so you can recognize the feeling in the dark, it's not a foolproof solution. I would much rather guarantee that I get the button right rather than accidentally changing an input while watching a movie. Still, there are much better options to control your A/V system, so maybe this isn't as big negative as it seems. Features NR809 is chock full of features, so much so that I've picked out a handful to discuss that I found most compelling. Some things I didn't go into details though be of interest to some readers include 2 additional zones, a dedicated input, bi-amping of the front channels, an RS-232 port for serial control and iPod and other USB MP3 player compatibility IPod compatibility is further improved if you use the not-included docker, but it plays iPod files directly through the USB port as well. Almost everyone will find what they need with this device in terms of capacity and features. The first interesting feature of this receiver is the support for audio return channel (ARC) for HDMI. The HDTV I recently purchased includes several network-based content sources, including Netflix, Amazon Instant Video, MLB. TV, and many more. Being a great baseball, I was excited to watch live streams of all MLB games live on my HDTV rather than on my laptop, but the caveat with my standard setup was that I had to listen through HDTV as well if I didn't want to run another cable back from the TV to my gear rack. Since the TV is professionally mounted on the wall, it would not be an easy task to simply pull a new cable. Enter ARC. This feature allows you to use the hdmi connection that is already distributed to send video from the receiver to HDTV to send audio back from HDTV to the receiver. The result is that I can watch one of these sources like MLB games on HDTV using its built-in streaming services, but still take advantage of the audio capabilities of my system. This turned out to be one of the most useful features of the receiver. But there are three very small nit-picks that I have with this. First, you need to leave the HDMI control setting on, which consumes more power than with it turned off. This can be a concern for those who are obsessive about preserving electricity. Secondly, every time the system is powered up, by default, the audio is sent to the TV instead of the receiver. A simple up or down adjustment of the receiver volume allows the sound to return back to the receiver, but there is a minor annoyance. To be fair, this is documented in the handbook. The last minor annoyance I had was that since the HDMI control protocol needs to be activated for arc to work, if you also have an HDMI control function enabled on your source devices, it will automatically switch inputs when you power the source on. For example, if my Panasonic Blu-Ray player has VieraLink enabled (Panasonic's version of the HDMI control protocol), the moment I turn on that player, the nr809 switches to the input assigned to that device. This expected behavior for the HDMI control protocol, but it would be nice if the ARC functionality was independent of this. As NR in NR809 suggests, network-based features in the receiver are a central part of the experience. For starters, as the device is connected to use rs-232 rs-232 ports on the back of older receivers, which required to have a computer with a serial port (which is increasingly rare, especialized software, and following intricate instructions. Being able to download and install these updates directly from the recipient's graphical user interface makes it extremely easier to keep the recipient up to date. During the time I reviewed the device there were at least two firmware updates available. They took me a very short time to complete. A more interesting network-based feature than software maintenance (at least for most) is the ability to access popular services, including (but not limited to) Pandora, Slacker, Rhapsody, SiriusXM, Last.FM, Napster, Mediafly and v-Tuner. After applying one of the above mentioned firmware updates, new service (which actually requires its premium subscription to use on the NR809). For many of these, you have the option to sign in to your accounts and access your custom stations and saved playlists. While you can safely navigate the audio services from the front LED panel of the receiver, it is much easier to do so using the video output on your monitor. As I've mentioned before in other reviews though, I'm still amazed at the arcane practice of making your customers enter text one letter at a time with a remote control. The receiver is networked! You should be able to do any text input via a web interface or mobile app (more on this later) that would allow the use of a keyboard. Fortunately, you can do this for public Internet radio stations. Also included in the network sources menu of the receiver is a DLNA certified client, which allows nr809 to access and standard network media share on a Windows computer (among others). For example, I have a Windows Home Server that hosts all my music, and I can simply navigate to this library directly from NR809. The unfortunate thing here again is that with large collections, navigating to the music you specifically want can be boring. You can either page through folders, artists, songs, etc., or you can do a search using the text input remote. Less than ideal, to be sure. I still prefer other more tailored streaming products to access my networked music library (such as iTunes with the iOS remote app), but on the other hand, being able to do this right from the receiver without having another device that consumes power is a good option. Aside from accessing content, being connected to the home network opens up a vast world of opportunities for integration and control. For me, such a standout feature Onkyo offers in the form of a free mobile application, currently on both Android and iOS, which allows you to control the system via your smartphone or tablet. Smartphones are are increasingly common. If your phone or tablet is already nearby while you're using your home entertainment system, why not have a program that can run on that device? With an Android phone, I used that version of the app for this review. The app enables fairly advanced control of the system. You can do almost anything you would normally need to do, such as changing volume, input, and surround mode, but you also have access to the configuration and home menus to make configuration changes directly from your handheld device You'll be greeted with a main screen that has the most commonly used features, including the receiver's power switching, source selector, and audio mode. At the bottom of the screen, tap the speaker icon to access the master volume. One negative I will point out is that if you don't have HDMI control enabled, after powering the receiver off, you won't be able to power it again with the app. You would need to use the standard remote control or power button on the device itself. It seems that with the HDMI control enabled, it keeps the network interface powered up even when the device shuts down, and thus, it remains available. When the protocol is disabled, the network interface appears to be turned off when the receiver is turned off. Once the recipient is back on, it must re-enlist an IP address before it becomes available again. Swipe to the left takes up the screen where you can enter the home and setup menus (home is basically a mini version of the main on-screen setup menu that runs on top of whatever video you're watching at that time). The navigation controls are performed by swiping in the direction of the arrows, while pressing problems with the enter command. This makes for a very fluid, easy way to interact with the controls. A swipe to the right of the main page gives up level controls for the center channel, subwoofer bass, and treble. By clicking the source button, you get a menu of sources to choose from. Selecting the Net option lists the aforementioned services, along with the DLNA client as an option. Having the ability to navigate these services in this way is a great improvement over using the standard remote control and whatever display device is connected to your receiver. This way you can have that display off, and still navigate to your favorite Pandora channel. You might ask yourself, this is all really cool, but what about the little Android icon in the bottom left corner of the screen? Clicking on that icon brings up perhaps the most interesting feature of the mobile application, which is the ability to stream your local music library (by which I mean located on your mobile device) directly to your NR809 without having to use a Bluetooth adapter or a USB cable. What I was most surprised about about this was how easy and it was – almost Apple-esque. There was no need to configure anything. You simply choose the song or album you want to play, and so does the rest. In this example, you'll see Me playing the song This Love from Maroon 5's Songs With Jane, which is a file on my smartphone. Furthermore, if you want more detailed information about the track, simply tap in the icon in the upper right corner. At first I thought that this control would be very basic, and a little gimmicky. But after immersing myself in it and finding all the functionality it offers, I am convinced that this is a sign of a paradigm shift in the way we interact with our A/V gear. I've since found an Android application to control my DirecTV receiver as well, so my phone quickly becomes my universal remote control. Unlike my normal universal remote control (a Logitech Harmony One), there is no IR or RF range to worry about as these are Internet Protocol (IP) based applications; it is limited only by the range of your home network. Going forward, I would consider this feature almost a must on all network-based receivers. The Onkyo TX-NR809 Network Receiver I Bruk NR809 impressed, as I expected it would. Onkyo has long made some excellent receivers, and this one is no different. Starting with the video part, I found scaling and processing to be really top notch. I don't watch much content on TV that isn't already Hi-Def at this point, so I tested with a couple of DVDs on my Blu-Ray player with scaling deactivated in order to allow NR809 to handle that task. I dived into Harry Potter and the Wizard's Stone. I was surprised at how close the HD DVD looked. Make no mistake; I can safely say that this is still not true HD material, but what I saw was a DVD that seemingly had new life. The opening scene where Dumbledore arrives to help deliver Harry to Privet Drive is very dark, and contains some smoke moving through the image - two things that are historically difficult to render without pixilation and digital artifacting. I can't honestly say that this was completely absent, but if I wasn't very close to HDTV, it was very difficult to detect. I couldn't see any noticeable judder because of de-interlacing; movement was smooth as it could be. Lighter scenes, such as when Hogwarts' invitation letter begins flying into Dursley's home, or when Harry and Hagrid stroll through Diagon Alley show excellent color reproduction and contrast. I also tested with two episodes of Star Trek: The Next Generation DVDs. These DVDs are always a good test for de-interlacing and scaling not only because it is a 4:3, 480i video-based source, but also because many episodes contain scenes with sharply contrasting colors and levels. Again, I found that the NR809 did excellent job with scaling and processing. Watch in a dark dark room at night, I decided that I liked the ISF Night setting quite a bit more than any other of the preset options. The episode Schisms features some dimly lit scenes, as Riker is kidnapped in some aliens laboratory in another universe. The NR809 preserved shadow detail and contrast quite well. Of course, 4:3 is material, the video includes black bars on the sides of the image. It was telling that these bars basically blended into my HDTV's bezel. I realize a lot of it depends on the plasma display itself, but I can say that after seeing several scenes both with and without the NR809 managing the reading, it definitely did a better job of preserving black than the Blu-Ray player was on its own. Sound performance was what I've come to expect from Onkyo - in a word, stellar. The configuration and leveling of Audyssey contributes significantly to this, as well as the quality of the sound processing components (DSPs, D/A converters, etc.). In addition, the quality of the actual amplifier components (including the power supply) and the overall design result in crisp, clean sounds that lack any audible noise and excellent low volume performance. As I have said in previous reviews, being able to watch later in the evening with others in the house sleeping while keeping the details of the soundtrack is very important to me. There are three technologies that enable this in the NR809. First there is the new THX Loudness Plus, which is part of THX Ultra2 Plus and THX Select2 Plus certifications. Then there is the Audyssey Dynamic EQ feature. I prefer to use Audyssey

Dynamic EQ for late night movie watch as I find it works very well. When my Blu-Ray set of Star Wars movies arrived, I immediately had to keep Episode IV: A New Hope in testing it. As any home theater enthusiast knows, the combination of orchestra score and sound effects makes it a perfect movie to test a receiver performance, even more so now that there is a DTS-HD Master Audio version. With my Blu-Ray player connected via HDMI and output bitstream, the NR809 gets to do decoding work as well. Again, the receiver did not disappoint. The initial Fox fanfare leading to John Williams' brilliant main theme was lovely as the film began. Death Star escape and last Death Star battles onslaught space looked and sounded excellent. I was wrapped in the explosions of Alderaan and the Death Star as the house to myself). Dialogue was clean and well balanced. Of the countless times I've seen the movie, this may have been one of the funniest times. Conclusions About Onkyo TX-NR809 Network Receiver Onkyo TX-NR809 is a fantastic value in its It offers excellent performance and a plethora of features that will make any home theater enthusiast happy. An MSRP of \$1099 may sound high, but when you consider that it can take place in at least 2 components you would otherwise have, it is well worth the price. Once again, Onkyo has put out a first-class product that I enthusiastically recommend. Recommend.

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