



HEAR – AND SOAR

Audia Flight has thoroughly reworked its entry-level model and increased its performance. It can also be upgraded.

Italian manufacturer Audia Flight has been in business for more than 20 years, and is a company with great vertical integration, including component selection and circuitboard assembly: Jan Sieveking of the German distributor assured us he's witnessed the design

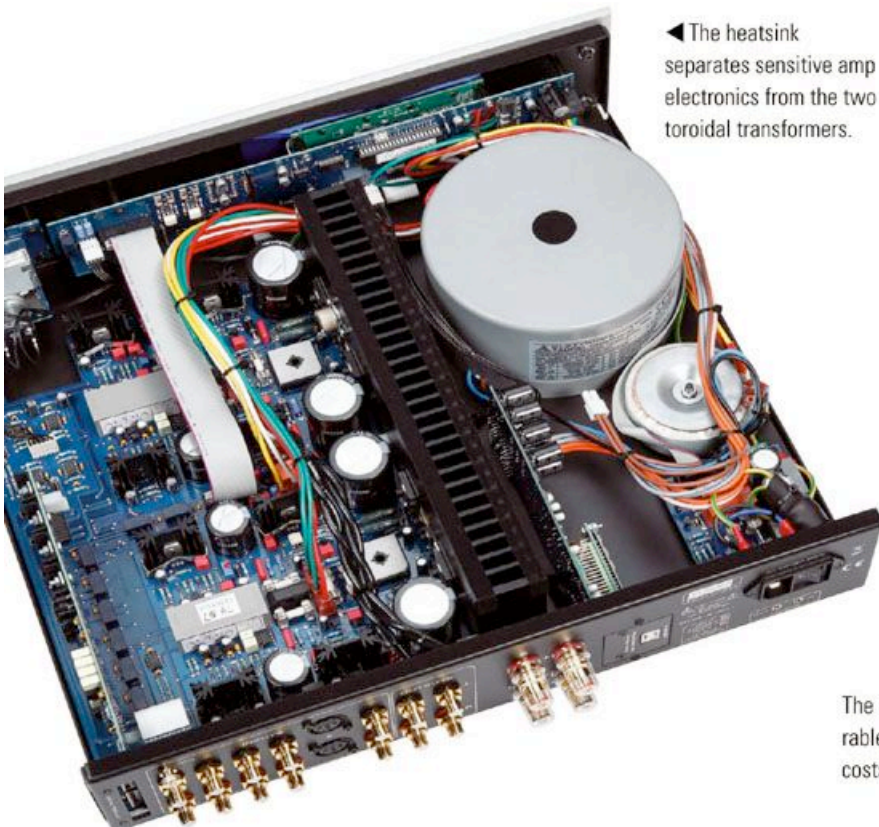
process during which individual components had been played against each other to win their place on the boards.

The Audio Flight „Three“ was for many years a sales success, officially, the Three S is a carefully modernized, performance-enhanced, but subtle revision.

However, in addition to a solid power increase, some deeper changes have also been made to the circuit design.

A striking catchphrase used for the Audia Flight is trans-impedance amplification: this is described as a kind of current-controlled voltage source, or current-voltage converter, in which an amp converts an input current into a proportional output voltage.

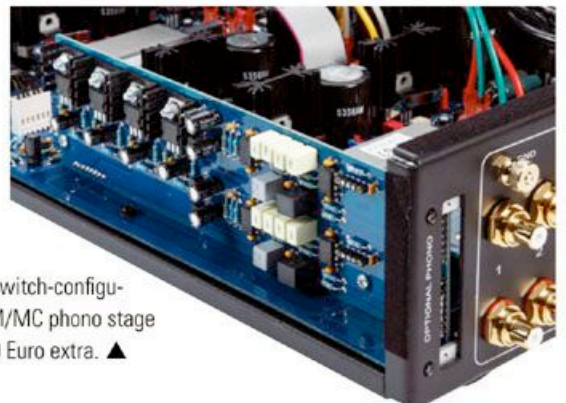
The inputs of the Audia Flight can be named arbitrarily and the display dimmed, and when turning off the device reduces its volume setting to a minimum, which will avoid surprises when turning it back on.



◀ The heatsink separates sensitive amp electronics from the two toroidal transformers.



▲ With the optional USB circuit board, the Audia Flight becomes an external sound card.



The DIP switch-configurable MM/MC phono stage costs 320 Euro extra. ▲

What's more, as well as a significant overall performance upgrade as part of their thorough reworking of the Three, the Audia Flight designers have also fitted a high-quality headphone amp – a sensible move in view of the current popularity of 'personal listening'.

Good, expandable equipment

Home theater fans will be happy that one of the four line-level inputs can be configured as a direct input for the power amp, bypassing the preamp and volume control, for instance to accommodate the front left/right preamp outputs from a surround processor or receiver. The Three S also has a preamp output to feed active speakers, an external power amp or a sub-woofer and, in addition to Rec Out sockets, has a these days less and less usual monitor/read-after-write setting for analog recording fans.

The Audia Flight also permits the installation of a high-quality MM/MC phono input board, selling for € 320 either at the time of purchase or as a later addition, and offering very flexible configuration via dials including both impedance and capacitance. As an alternative, or for another € 360, a USB DAC board is available to turn the amp into a 24 Bit/192 kHz-compatible, high-grade sound card for the Mac/PC if so desired.

The double-mono construction of the device is striking, even though this is not carried through to symmetrical layout, as is the case in the other Italian amplifier

here, while the amp is also available in a choice of black or silver finish on the thick aluminum fascia.

The Audia Flight turned out to be the sonic surprise of the test group, despite its quite moderate price. It created a soundstage that extended past the speakers in width, depth, and even height, the image breaking free from the enclosures in impressive fashion. That's how it should be, but the sound is certainly impressive for just € 2600, as is the way it delivers very fine detail despite an overall presentation defined by power, extremer speed.

Meanwhile the amp's way with rhythms made us prick up our ears: its interpretation of Sacred Spirit's „Legends“ had us on the edge of our seats with ultra-deep bass, astonishing spatial effects and wild harmonica. The bass was effortlessly nimble, but underpinned by solid foundations, and despite the enormous playfulness, we weren't even annoyed by the rare, almost overly transparent HDCD version of the debut album „Come Away With Me“ by Norah Jones, whose existence continues to be a mystery.

At its base price, this amp's way with music is pure magic, and its highly developed musicality makes it a firm recommendation. We'd also suggest anyone interested should equip the amp with the phono or digital option, either right away or later as an upgrade: together, these options complete the Italian device and, while this pushes the price over the € 3000 mark, it is easily worth it.



▲ We received the Audia Flight with full equipment: the phono (left) and USB-DAC (right) inserts are easy to recognize.

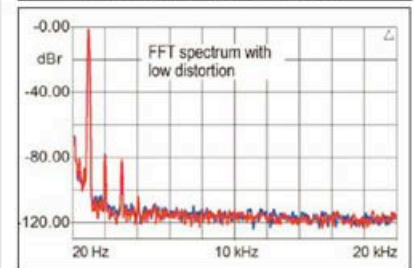
AUDIA FLIGHT THREE S



starting at € 2,600
 Dimensions: 45 x 12 x 48 cm (WxHxD)
 Warranty: 5 years,
 Contact: AudiaFlight,
 Phone: +39 766/24387
 www.audia.it

Full, rhythmic, colorful, and swift as an arrow, the Three S sounds even better via its balanced input. An upgradable music machine of the top grade – for an affordable price!

MEASUREMENT RESULTS



Continuous power at 8 4 Ω	104 152 Watt per channel
Impulse power at 4 Ω	223 Watt per channel
Distortion at 50 mW 5 W Pmax -1 dB	0.03 0.14 0.2 %
Intermodulation at 50 mW 5 W Pmax -1 dB	0.04 0.03 1.7 %
Signal-to-noise ratio CD at 50 mW 5 Watt	75 87 dB
Signal-to-noise ratio Phono MM MC 5 Watt	79 76 dB
Channel separation at 10 kHz	46 dB
Damping factor at 4 Ohm 63/1k/14k (Hz)	11/10/10
Upper cutoff frequency (-3 dB, 4 Ω)	>80 kHz
Load ratings	practice-oriented
Crosstalk tuner/CD (10 kHz/5 kOhm)	83 dB
Timing error volume control up to -60 dB	0.2 dB
Power consumption On Standby Idle	0 / <2 / 58 Watt

LAB COMMENTS: Great performance with room to spare, overall very good values, the non-peak distortion and damping values indicate low degenerative feedback.

EQUIPMENT

Remote control, four RCA phono and one balanced high-level input, power amp input, headphone amp, phono MM/MC and USB upgradable..

STEREO-TEST

SOUND QUALITY	85%
PRICE/PERFORMANCE	
★★★★★	
OUTSTANDING	