



## Creek A50iR stereo amp £550 EXCLUSIVE

➤ The £475 A50i and £550 A50iR integrated amplifiers are the very latest entry points into the world of Creek. But, instead of attempting to compete with cheap new products by stealthily switching mass production to Asia or Eastern Europe, Creek's new A50i still says "designed and made in the UK" on its front panel. Damn the price-tag and shout 'Huzzah' for Blighty!

Creek's new A50i/iR is a reworking of the popular 4330SE that preceded it. It's a more powerful design compared to its 40-watt predecessor, but the new 50-watt MOSFET-based model still comes with four line inputs (three if you take the turntable option), a single tape loop and a pair of preamp outputs. The two optional extras are plug-in MM or MC phono modules and the remote control. The former is retrofittable, the latter means stumping up the extra £85 for the A50iR version reviewed here and – despite a handset that suggests it can switch sources and adjust balance – the natty silver remote simply controls volume level and muting.

The external changes are the most obvious – the old green-on-black

### KEY FEATURES

- Integrated amplifier
- 50 watts per channel
- Four line inputs
- Tape loop
- Optional MM/MC phono modules
- Standard (A50i) version without remote
- A50iR includes remote to operate volume and muting
- Size (WxHxD): 65x43x25cm
- Weight: 6kg

effect has gone, replaced with a shiny silver alloy front and black lettering. But elsewhere Creek has stuck to its minimalist guns. There are no tone controls, no loudness or home cinema direct bypass button, not even a channel balance. Sadly, there's no provision for a headphone socket either, but Creek does make an excellent little headphone amplifier called the OBH21, which seems a natural and logical partner for those with private tendencies.

Creek has stuck to its musical guns, making a sound that's as big as it is fun to sit in front of. Musical enjoyment is paramount here – you can't help tapping your foot along with the music and naturally gravitate toward genres of music which match the Creek's character. Bach's Mass in B Minor leaves the listener cold and slightly bored after a few minutes, but play Gorillaz or Buena Vista Social Club or The Datsuns or Stan Getz and you find yourself playing everything with a big smile on your face.

This is not the most analytical of amplifiers – you get the distinct impression that the Creek is somehow bored or disinterested in frilly or fluffy

detail. This is more of a 'down the pub with its mates, boogying along with the latest CD releases' type of amp, the sort that would pour scorn on the 'genteelly nodding and politely following along with the libretto' sort of presentation pursued by amplifiers of a more reserved nature.

So, if you favour the cerebral and believe music went downhill after Mozart, the A50iR will not be for you. The rest of us however will be trading discs and tapping our feet to nasty music with a beat... and quite possibly playing it on the Creek A50iR.

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### CREEK PEAKS

Creek has always been capable of fighting far above its weight. It is a small amplifier from an undoubtedly small company, yet the A50iR continues to affirm that Creek has consistently turned out products with giant-killing performance. In fact, a quick trawl through the internet chat sites (such as [www.ezboard.com](http://www.ezboard.com)) shows there is still a following for the original Creek CAS4040 amplifier, despite it using DIN plugs and being a design that dates back 21 years. Those with an original CAS4040 still in good working condition can congratulate themselves that they can fetch significantly more than their original £99 price tag on eBay.

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