

# WHAT HI-FI?

TEMPTATIONS

EXPENSIVE, YES. BUT YOU KNOW YOU WANT THEM

## Moon 371

- Streaming amplifier
- £6250
- ★★★★★





You need only add a pair of speakers to the Moon 371 to create a neat system

### WHAT HI-FI?

#### SOUND



#### BUILD



#### FEATURES



#### FOR

- Fluid, refined presentation
- Expressive dynamics and rhythmically coherent
- Lovely build and finish

#### AGAINST

- No USB DAC input
- Streaming app feels a little clunky in use

#### VERDICT

The Moon 371 is one of the most capable streaming amplifiers we have heard, and it has build quality to match

**Hi-fi enthusiasts** have traditionally shied away from multi-function components - and for good reason. Such products may be convenient and reduce clutter, but there is usually a large price to pay in terms of performance compared with separates alternatives.

Over the past few years, however, we have noticed that things have been changing. Manufacturers are definitely becoming better at integrating multiple functionality into a single chassis while still achieving good sound quality.

When it comes to the premium audio space, Moon has gone further along that path than most, in our experience. Its Neo Ace from 2016 was a great building block, but for us, the new Moon 371 streaming amplifier takes a significant step forward into a world where 'all-in-one' doesn't mean obvious sonic compromise.

This is the first product in Moon's new Compass Collection. Perhaps even more importantly, the 371 introduces a much-evolved form of the company's clever power-supply technology, MHP (Moon Hybrid Power). But more on that later.

### THOROUGHLY MODERN TAKE

It's fair to say that the Moon 371 is a thoroughly modern take on what a premium streaming amplifier should be. That smart and relatively slim casework houses Class A/B amplification, a moving magnet/moving coil phono stage, digital-to-analogue conversion circuitry and a streaming module. You simply need to add speakers to create a neat system.

Though the sleek visuals don't really hint at it, this is a surprisingly powerful unit that is claimed to deliver 100 watts per channel into an 8-ohm load, and twice that as impedance halves.

That ability to double power output with a halving of impedance is rare among amplifiers, and pretty much unheard of among those that also stream. In practical terms, that means the 371 is likely to drive pretty much any speakers you like to high volume levels.

Beyond muscle, what we have is a well-equipped unit. The 371 packs Moon's latest MiND 2 streaming platform, which means it plays music files from any server or storage

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on your home network, as well as providing access to streaming services such as Spotify, Qobuz, Tidal (all in Connect form), internet radio and more. It also features AirPlay and is Roon Ready.

Streaming file compatibility is good, with up to 32-bit/384kHz PCM and DSD256 files on the menu. This should be more than enough to cover most people's needs.

Physical connectivity is generous, and includes balanced and single-ended analogue inputs, two coaxial, one optical, USB-C for attached storage, and HDMI ARC. There is also a 6.3mm headphone socket on the front panel and a preamplifier-out on the rear.

Interestingly, the HDMI isn't specified as eARC. When quizzed about this, Moon claims that the advantages of eARC don't really translate into a stereo product like the 371.

Fans of vinyl records haven't been ignored. This streaming amplifier has a switchable moving magnet/moving coil phono stage built in. The switching is done via the on-board set-up menus. The moving-magnet gain is set at 40dB, and 60dB for moving-coil cartridges. These are fairly typical values for such inputs and should work well for most partnering cartridges.

### UPDATED LOOK

Moon's designers have taken the opportunity to update the company's distinctive look, and to our eyes it works. This product instantly dates some of the older products in the company's portfolio, while retaining all the elegance and curves that are part and parcel of Moon's DNA. Finish options are either black or the company's distinctive two-tone look.

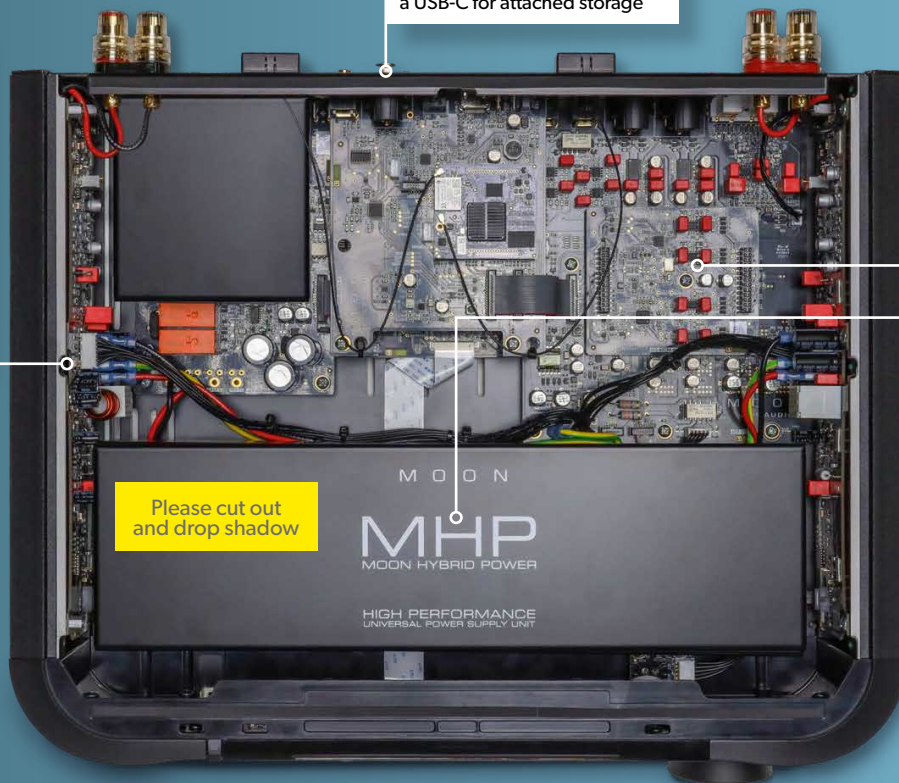
# IN DETAIL... MOON 371

Moon's engineers have designed a neat heatsinking arrangement to keep the power amplifier circuitry cool. It works well, with this streaming amplifier staying at a reasonable temperature even when pushed hard

The 371 has a good range of physical connectivity. It has balanced and single-ended analogue inputs, two coaxials, one optical, an HDMI ARC and a USB-C for attached storage

Moon takes the build quality of its products very seriously. It is unusual among small specialist manufacturers in being able to populate its own circuit boards with surface-mount components rather than have to buy them in from a specialist sub-contractor

MHP (Moon Hybrid Power) technology is a clever blend of a traditional linear design and switch-mode. Moon claims advantages in terms of stability and low noise. This is the first time MHP has been used for something as demanding as an amplifier. Expect to see this new version of MHP in future products



The large 17cm front-panel colour display is crisp and easy to see from a distance. It helps that the text font increases in size as the volume level changes, making it easy to read from the other side of the room, even in low light conditions.

The 371 is well put together. In the metal, the unit feels solid and is beautifully finished. We particularly like the newly designed heatsink on each side, a design that manages to look discreet and elegant while losing nothing in terms of efficiency.

## SIGNATURE TECHNOLOGIES

Take a look inside the elegant casework, and you will find a neat and clean circuit layout. This streaming amplifier features two of Moon's signature technologies, MHP (Moon Hybrid Power) and MDCA (Moon Distortion Cancelling Amplifier).

We have come across MHP before (it was used in the 681 network streamer we reviewed back in early 2024), and it combines elements of a switch-mode design with those of a traditional linear power supply. However, in the 371 streaming amp, its use marks a major landmark in the technology's development.

Until now, an MHP supply has been used only in the company's streamers and digital-to-analogue converters,

components that have fairly consistent and relatively low power requirements.

That, though, is certainly not the case with an amplifier, which has to work from whisper quiet to party levels, while driving a pair of speakers (with their demanding and inconsistent electrical loads). Moon's engineers have put around two years of development into bringing the new MHP design to the market.

The claims for this new generation of MHP over conventional switch-mode or linear power supply designs are improved stability, low noise and reduced vulnerability to mains-supply issues. Moon is really proud of this development, so don't be surprised to see it spread to future amplifier products. MDCA is a clever amplifier circuit design that reduces distortion to very low levels by comparing the input signal to the output and correcting any errors.

While that description makes it sound like a conventional feedback circuit, the configuration is cleverer than that, and our experience with the 371 shows plenty of benefits.

A high-end streaming amplifier such as this Moon deserves good-quality speakers. Most of our testing is done using ATC's SCM50 monitors and Epos's ES-14N standmounters, though



we also try it with the new Acoustic Energy AE1 40th Anniversary edition and the Award-winning PMC Prophecy 1. We're pleased to report that the 371 performs admirably and consistently with all of them.

### REFINEMENT AND FLUIDITY

Moon's sonic DNA is based around refinement and fluidity. Its products don't remind us of valve-based equipment or anything like that, but they invariably seem to deliver a clean, smooth balance that's hard to dislike.

It's a spacious and uncluttered sound that is packed with detail and organised with care. These are ideal characteristics to allow Holst's *Mars* (streamed from our Naim NAS) to shine.

The 371 captures the menace of this Holst composition beautifully, delivering the piece with the authority and muscle it deserves. Dynamic shifts come through with force, yet there is never a sense that the Moon is working hard. There is a stress-free ease about this product's presentation that is easy to like, particularly as it still communicates the energy and excitement in the music well.

Refinement levels stay high even when we push volume levels northward, and there is little sign of edge or undue hardness when we do so. We note that the 371's casework remains at reasonable temperatures even when the amplifier is forced to work hard, which speaks well of the internal heat management.

"Prince's *Gett Off* can easily sound messy, but the Moon isn't having any of that. It renders the song with attitude and drive intact"

The 371 paints a broad and deep soundstage, locating instruments with impressive precision and stability. As the music builds, we are impressed with the Moon's composure and its ability to keep a firm grip on the various instrumental strands while still allowing the music to flow organically.

Detail levels are great, giving the sense that the Moon is communicating every last piece of information in the recording. This feeling remains in place when we switch to Prince's *Diamonds And Pearls* set on Tidal.

Here, the 371 reinforces our positivity by proving impressively cohesive when playing *Gett Off*. This song can easily sound messy, but the Moon isn't having any of that. It renders the track with attitude and drive intact. The mass of instrumentation is arranged with care and underpinned by a firm understanding of rhythmic drive.

*Gett Off*'s chunky bassline comes through with weight and power, yet remains surprisingly articulate. The 371's presentation is superbly balanced, where no part of the frequency range gets undue attention.

We can't help but be pleased by the midrange clarity on offer and the way this unit conveys the texture and sass of Prince's distinctive vocals well.

### SKILLED DESIGN

We like what the 371 does, irrespective of the input chosen. The company has shown itself to be skilled at DAC designs in the past, and that carries through here. The 371's digital inputs retain everything we admire from the streaming section, from balanced tonality to the surprising degree of insight. The internal DAC switches between a 24-bit/192kHz recording of Shostakovich's *Symphony No.4* to Aimee Mann's *Lost In Space* on DSD without issue.

The phono stage is good too. We feed it with our reference Technics SL-1000R with either the Kiseki Purpleheart moving-coil cartridge or Vertere's Dark Sabre moving magnet, and it works well with both. The circuit is quiet and hum-free while delivering a decent dose of transparency and balance.

If vinyl were our main source, we would still consider a dedicated outboard unit such as Cyrus's 40 PPA or Vertere's Phono-1 MkII L, but for occasional users or those who simply don't want to add the clutter of another box, the 371's phono stage works well enough.

We are more enthusiastic about the 371's headphone output. It sounds clear, clean and composed whether we connect the lively Grado RS1x or the technically accomplished though analytical Austrian Audio The Composer headphones. There is plenty of drive and a good range of adjustment on the volume control.

Moon has done a great job with the 371 streaming amplifier. It is a neat and stylish package that ticks all the boxes as far as features go, while being a pleasure to use. Add the excellent sound quality into the equation, and it becomes a proper alternative to the best streamer/amplifier separates combinations on the market.

Style, build and ease of use without sonic compromise? The Moon 371 shows it is possible.