

MAINS REGENERATOR

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# PS Audio Power Plant 3

**P**S Audio's Power Plant P3 mains regenerator is the most modest in its range, offering three outlets in three zones providing 750VA capability, plus a further outlet in a fourth, high-current zone that is not regenerated but just filtered.

So if the 250VA capability of one of the regenerated zones isn't sufficient for your power amplifier, you can plug it in here and still obtain some potential benefit while having three regenerated outlets free to provide low distortion, low source impedance mains voltage to signal sources and a preamp. Note that, whereas PS Audio once extolled the virtues of a balanced mains supply, the P3 generates unbalanced mains voltage.

*'John Gorka's "Italian Girls" suddenly sounded like a high-res recording'*

There's an alphanumeric LED display and you do lose a little of the functionality that the larger models provide. But you can still enable/disable the different zones, vary the output voltage, switch between Sinewave and Multiwave output waveforms and degauss connected equipment using the Cleanwave function, all via the supplied infra-red remote. The P3 also features an internal web page

so that if it's connected to a local area network via the Ethernet port you can access advanced features such as naming of the P3 and labelling of outputs.

Given that the P3 is, in effect, a fan-cooled high-voltage power amplifier, there's an obvious concern over whether transformer noise or fan noise will intrude, particularly when listening at low levels. Well, the fans *are* loud at full chat. But so long as you don't work the P3 so hard as to need assisted cooling, its noise level is inconsequential.

### ADDING SUBSTANCE

Reasoning that the regenerated outputs of the P3 will mostly be used to power source components and headphone amplifiers, we decided to use exclusively headphones for the listening assessment. The P3 was tasked with powering the Teac

HA-501 headphone amplifier [see page 79] and the Chord QuteHD DAC feeding it, each connected to a regenerated output of its own.

Searching for a description of what the P3 brings to the sound, the best we can come up with is that it adds flesh to the bones of what you hear via the wall socket. The sound filled out tonally and elements within it became more substantial and better organised.

**ABOVE:** Three of the four rear output sockets carry regenerated mains, the fourth provides higher current capability for larger power amplifiers but is only filtered. The P3 has internal heatsinks cooled by twin fans, so there are ventilation holes top and bottom

With some items of music we tried, like Free's 'I'll Be Creepin'' [Island], there was a sense of the change not being exclusively positive: that is, some of the energy of the performance could seem diminished. But on other items the change was transformative.

On Todd Rundgren's *a cappella* 'For Lack Of Honest Work', for instance, it wasn't merely that Rundgren's solo voice became warmer and weightier but, more remarkably, that we grasped for the first time precisely what some of the voices in the chorus (all Rundgren's, multi-tracked) were singing. We were also made more aware of just how harmonies were constructed.

With the '501 connected to the wall socket and the QuteHD moved to and from the P3, the effect was if anything greater, albeit of similar character. On Nat King Cole's *Welcome To The Club* [88.2kHz/24-bit SACD rip] the sound gained in substance, became a little cleaner on trumpets and vocal sibilants, and conveyed a greater sense of ease and authority.

Plugging both the '501 and the QuteHD into the P3 had the hoped for synergistic effect. John Gorka's whimsical 'Italian Girls', ripped from an AIX DVD-A, suddenly sounded like a real hi-res recording, the vocal and the acoustic guitar both gaining in clarity, dynamics and sheer plausibility. And the macho stomp of 'I'll Be Creepin'' was unreservedly superior to the version without the P3 in circuit.

### VERDICT

If you've never tried mains regeneration, you should – and the P3 provides a relatively painless way to do so. It represents great value for a product that is capable of transforming sound quality, particularly of source components, as the P3 so clearly can. ⚡

### HI-FI NEWS SPECIFICATIONS

Harmonic	Mains	P3
3rd	0.63%	0.17%
5th	2.37%	0.39%
7th	0.90%	0.25%
9th	0.38%	0.10%
THD (2nd-14th)	2.66%	0.51%