Audient iD44 £499

Featuring four high-quality microphone preamps and extended digital options, Audient's iD44 looks like great value – but is it? **Jono Buchanan** investigates...

CONTACT **WHO:** Audient **WEB:** audient.com **KEY FEATURES** **Connector:** USB-C; 4x analogue preamps, 2x DI input channels, 2x headphone outputs; **Sample rates:** 44.1–96kHz; **Digital I/O:** ADAT 16 channels: 44.1-48kHz; ADAT 8 channels (SMUX): 88.2-96kHz; Stereo S/PDIF: 44.1-96kHz; **Weight:** 1.75kg **Dimensions:** 276mmx51mm x174mm (d); Mac OSX 10.7.5, Windows 7

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The iD44's full capability is not immediately apparent at first glance. Designed to sit on your desktop, its upper surface is dominated by four preamp channels, which use the same technology as Audient's acclaimed ASP8024-HE.

Each channel offers its own phantom power toggle switch, -10dB pad and a high-pass filter, while a prominent Gain dial at the top adjusts channel sensitivity with up to 60dB of gain, with green and red LEDs displaying signal present and peak warnings: a nicely arranged surface.

On the right, there are two more rotaries to control independent headphone feeds and a larger one for output monitor levels. Onboard Talkback is provided, while configuration of cue mixes, channel labeling and other tasks can be done within Audient's iD Mixer software.

However, it's round the back where it becomes apparent that iD44 packs a more significant punch. As per its name, it can support 20 input and 24 output channels and this potential expansion is largely offered via digital connections. Two independent Optical input/output connectors lie in wait, which support both ADAT and S/PDIF compatible mic pres, offering an additional 16 channels for larger recording tasks.

There are also four analogue 1/4" outputs here, while the combi input channels 1-4 are squeezed in too, with channels 1 and 2 even managing to offer an insert send and return system, so you can facilitate your recordings with your favourite hardware. Fortunately, the headphone sockets are along the front edge of the unit as the power switch takes up the last of the rear-edge space. At the front, you'll also find JFET DI inputs, designed to model the input stage of a valve amplifier; guitars or hardware synths can be connected here.

In use, the iD44 sounds wonderful and offers quality comparable with much more expensive interfaces. While the software helps configure settings seamlessly, the upper panel design means that for recordings of up to four channels, you can comfortably run a session directly from the interface without clutter.

If you have grander ambitions, this interface is ready to respond with digital expansion aplenty. Note, though, that Audient and others cater for more modest requirements at cheaper price points. But with impressive stats through the microphone pres and digital conversion stages, flexibility while monitoring and more, iD44 offers high quality at a 'mid-range' price. **FM**

FM VERDICT

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Four high quality analogue microphone pres, oodles of digital expansion capability, monitoring options aplenty… There's a lot to like