

Portable Pure broadens digital radio's appeal

Pure Evoke-1

Portable digital radio
£99

★★★★★

FOR

Easy to use; retro design; good sound

AGAINST

Mains powered only, so not truly portable; second speaker for stereo costs extra

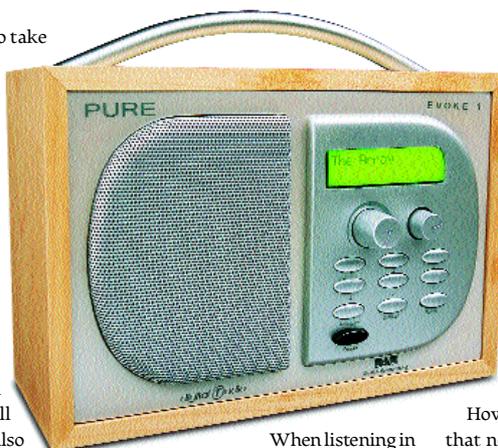
VERDICT

At last – an affordable, compact digital radio

DIGITAL RADIO HAS been slow to take off in the UK because early hi-fi tuners were expensive, but Pure's cut-price portable Evoke-1 unit should help broaden its appeal.

One of the major advantages of digital radios is that they're easy to tune. In the case of the Evoke-1, all you have to do is plug it in, switch it on and it will automatically search for all the DAB stations in your area. Once done, just turn the tuning knob on the front panel and the station names will scroll across the LCD display. When you see the station you want, push the knob in and it will automatically be selected. There are also nine preset buttons to give you instant access to your favourite stations.

The Evoke-1 is a mono design in its standard form, but there's a stereo output on the back panel for hooking up an optional second speaker, the ST-1, which costs £30. There's also a 3.5mm headphone socket, and a line-out for connecting the unit to an amplifier or a recorder.



Pure's Evoke-1 is the first portable DAB tuner and is simple to use

during quiet passages that can afflict FM. Pop stations inevitably suffer from the compression used by the broadcasters, but the Dynamic Range Control option allows you to increase or decrease the DRC scaling to suit your tastes. On one or two occasions we did suffer signal dropout, resulting in a strange squelching noise, but this usually passed after a couple of seconds.

However, it's important to remember that not all parts of the country can yet receive digital transmissions, so check our DAB coverage map on p103 before you buy.

This isn't the loudest radio in the world, but then it's likely to be used in a study, bedroom or kitchen, for which it's ideal. The Evoke-1 is just what digital radio needs – an affordable, easy-to-use tuner that sounds good in mono and can be upgraded to stereo.

When listening in mono, the first thing you notice is the lack of interference on every station (at least in our listening room in south-west London). Speech stations are crystal clear, especially sports ones such as BBC Radio 5 Live, which is a big improvement over their analogue AM transmissions. Tune in to classical music on Radio 3 or Classic FM and there's none of the hiss or crackle