Reviews

"Casio has created a high-quality digital piano that provides real bang for your buck, and it's managed to do it with a certain level of sophistication and style": Casio AP-750 Digital Home Piano review

Casio blends innovative features and traditional looks as it aims to create another mid-range winner

(Image: © Casio)

MusicRadar Verdict ★★★★

With its varied selection of high-quality tones and comprehensive feature set, you'd be hard pressed to get more for your money than the AP-750 gives you.

Pros
- Diverse range of piano sounds
- Great speaker system
- A sleek - if traditional - design
- The light bar adds a touch of futurism

Cons
- The touch controls won't be to everyone's liking
- A lack of labelling means you'll need the manual
- Only one colour option

CASIO AP-750 DIGITAL HOME PIANO REVIEW: WHAT IS IT?

If you exclude the company's Grand Hybrid models, The AP-750 is Casio's flagship 'traditional' home digital piano. We've added that caveat because the striking PX-S7000 is just a little more expensive - given its funkier design, though, this will almost certainly appeal to a different kind of player.

Conversely, the AP-750 looks like what someone might conjure up in their mind if they were asked to imagine a typical home digital piano. It looks as much like a piece of furniture as a musical instrument but, in terms of specs, isn't quite as staid and predictable as you might think.

For a start, you'll notice a conspicuous lack of buttons - controls are on a touch panel that becomes invisible when you're not using it. There's also a 'Visual Information Bar' that sort of reminds us of the light strip on the front of Kitt, the car from Knight Rider. This can show velocity, sustain pedal depth or tempo as you play.

(Image credit: Casio)

The AP-750's innovations aren't simply visual, either. Inside there's a so-called Grandphonic Sound System that features eight speakers and four amp channels, and opening the lid is supposed to project the sound towards you and add another level of acoustic authenticity.

You might also have noticed the "Developed in collaboration with C Bechstein" badge that's slapped on the front. This relates to the Berlin Grand sound that's included - a carefully sampled version of the Bechstein D282 - but that's not the only classic piano tone onboard. There's also the Hamburg Grand (a Steinway, we're guessing) and the Vienna Grand (we assume a Bosendorfer), giving you the promise of plenty of tonal variation.

In fact, you'll find 29 tones in here, plus a further 10 'Classic Piano' presets, along with a Smart Hybrid Hammer Action keyboard to play them on. The keys themselves are made of Austrian spruce wood and covered in "the finest" resin, another nod to the AP-750's premium pretensions.

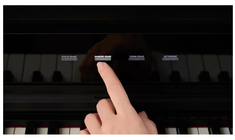
Wireless MIDI/audio connectivity, meanwhile, is covered off by the inclusion of the WU-BT10 Bluetooth adapter, and there are 1/4-inch jack outputs if you want to take the audio from the AP-750 out to an external speaker setup or a recording device. There are reverb, chorus, flanger, delay and 'surround' effects - plus the option to adjust the piano's brightness level - and both MIDI and audio recorders. In fact, with the Instant RePlayer feature turned on, you can always access the last 270 seconds of your playing so you should never miss that moment of inspiration.

(Image credit: Casio)

CASIO AP-750 DIGITAL HOME PIANO REVIEW: PERFORMANCE & VERDICT

Our AP-750 arrived fully assembled, so we can't comment on how easy or difficult it is to put together. At the time of writing, Casio UK is currently offering a free delivery and assembly service, but depending on when and where you buy, you might have to pay extra to have the instrument built for you if you're not confident enough to do it yourself. Our sense is that it wouldn't be too taxing, though.

Press the power button and it gets a nice blue light surround to show that the piano is on - then it's time to start playing those sounds.



(Image credit: Casio)

As you'd hope, each of the main piano tones has a slightly different character. It would be hard for us to pick an outright favourite, as each would be useful in different circumstances, but the fact that we can't choose a 'worst' sound either is reassuring: whichever variety of piano you're playing, the quality is high.

As is the case with most home digital pianos, it's the acoustic instruments that are the star attraction. You even get specific presets for playing preludes, waltzes, sonatas, etudes, etc, but there are other potentially useful sounds in here, too. Strings and acoustic bass, for example.

The ability to layer these sounds and split the keyboard (so you can play one lower tone and one upper) adds to the flexibility, as does a duet/teaching mode that gives you the same keyboard pitching to the left and right of the split point.

The keyboard itself definitely feels like a step up from what you'd typically find on a budget digital piano. In fact, in terms of touch and construction, it has more in common with what you'd expect from a premium piano.

Special mention, too, should go to the speaker system, which does a great job of presenting the AP-750's sounds and is arguably one of the piano's best features. The ability to lift the lid is a nice touch, and does indeed help to direct the sound in the player's direction.

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The decision to go with touch controls feels like a relatively bold move on Casio's part, and it certainly helps to keep the lines clean and add to the sense of acoustic piano authenticity. Both the upper and left-hand panels are responsive enough, but the lack of buttons and labelling means that adjusting deeper settings inevitably requires you to dive into the manual to find out which combination of touch panel/key pressing is required. The better option here is actually to use the Bluetooth capabilities to sync to the Casio Music Space app, which makes things a lot more straightforward.

(Image credit: Casio)

We certainly like the look of the polished front panel, though, which does a nice job of reflecting your hands when you're playing. The light bar is fun, if inessential; you can turn this off if you find it distracting.

It seems slightly strange that the AP-750 is only available in black - particularly when you consider that the AP-550 and AP-S450, which sit below it in the range, can also be had in white and brown - but, for the price, you'll struggle to find anything that matches its feature set. Once again, Casio has created a high-quality digital piano that provides real bang for your buck, and it's also managed to do it with a certain level of sophistication and style.

CASIO AP-750 DIGITAL HOME PIANO REVIEW: HANDS-ON DEMOS

Merriam Music

Bonners Piano Centres

Kraft Music

CASIO AP-750 DIGITAL HOME PIANO REVIEW: SPECIFICATIONS

- Designed in collaboration with C Bechstein
- Hamburg Grand Piano tone
- Smart Hybrid Hammer Action Keyboard with resin / Austrian spruce wood key materials (white keys)
- 29 Tones, including 3 European Grand Piano tones PLUS 10 Classic Piano presets
- Grandphonic Sound System with 8 speakers and 4 amplification channels (10W x 2) + (10W x 2)
- Opening Acoustic Lid
- Continuous damper and soft pedals
- Visual Information Bar
- Touch Panel Controls
- Bluetooth Audio and MIDI included (with WU-BT10 USB adaptor)
- USB Audio Record and Playback (WAV & MP3)
- USB and line-out connectivity
- Dimensions (mm): 1401 x 440 x 929
- 5-year on-site warranty
- Contact: Casio

Ben Rogerson
Deputy Editor

I'm the Deputy Editor of MusicRadar, having worked on the site since its launch in 2007. I previously spent eight years working on our sister magazine, Computer Music. I've been playing the piano, gigging in bands and failing to finish tracks at home for more than 30 years, 24 of which I've also spent writing about music and the ever-changing technology used to make it.