

TECH VESTAX VMC-004FX

Yes, it really does feel as sexy as it looks

The EQ offers full kill and useful boost across three bands

The assignable FX section offers everything you could want

Each channel has its own LEDs for perfect levels every time

All the faders are firm and well-graded for careful mixing

The assignable crossfader is fast and smooth

GEEK SPEAK

- ★100% cut and 6dB gain EQ
- ★24bit/96kHz DSP effects
- ★Line frequency response 20Hz-20kHz +/- 3dB
- ★Line S/N ratio 70dB≤
- ★2x stereo RCA/phono output & 1x balanced XLR
- ★Adjustable LFO on three parameters
- ★Dimensions: 264 x 105 x 260 (mm)
- ★2x 1/4" jack mic input

CREAM OF THE CROP?

With Zidane now in retirement, is the world ready for another flawed genius?

And speaking of clicks, turn off your amp before the mixer as it utters an ear-splitting noise that sounds like it's the obscene brainchild of some Mossad interrogators.

FINAL WORD

All in all, it's impossible not to love the VMC-004FX. Like a beloved partner, its flaws are quirky yet attractive oddities. And if Vestax can sort those clicking issues, then the sound and build quality could easily handle small club or bar duties too. In the end it's all about the feeling you get from using it. Whether it's the perfectly graded faders, lush EQ, cool effects, great sound or the way it feels under your fingers, it just makes you want to keep on mixing.

SPECS

PRICE

£389

CONTACT

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TECH

- ★Four channels
- ★Two output controls (one with duplicated outputs)
- ★Three-band EQ
- ★Five-LED meter per channel
- ★Seven-LED output meter
- ★Assignable crossfader
- ★16 assignable effects types
- ★Two effects controls plus tap-tempo button
- ★Six line, two phono and two mic inputs
- ★Two crossfade curves

WHAT happens if you take a proven mid-price four-channel mixer, give it an ivory makeover and then add some sexy effects? It's not something we'd ever wondered about, but Vestax obviously have, so that's what now sits proudly amidst our decks. From the moment it arrived we knew we weren't going to want to return it...

IN THE MIX

This mixer really is great to use. Each channel is assignable to the crossfader or master output and boasts its own LED level meter and trim, so there's no excuse for overdriving signals. The finish feels incredibly sexy. All the faders are reassuringly firm, except the crossfader, which is smooth and fast, while the three Isolator (EQ) bands feel great and sound fantastic, offering 100% kill and 6dB of musical sounding gain. It's not perfect though, as it's impossible to see where the EQ and other knobs are set unless you're up close and staring. What's needed is a black line on each to contrast with the white knobs and fascia, but if you want this you'll have to draw your own.

Monitoring is clear, allows us to preview mixes and drives our HD25-1s to suitably tinnitus-inducing levels. Unfortunately, while every other parameter is on the top panel, the crossfade curve selector is inexplicably tucked away

underneath on the front edge panel, rendering it out of reach when the mixer is mounted.

IN EFFECT

So what of the effects? Reverb, delay, pitch-shifter, auto-pan and more are offered, each controlled with two well-assigned parameter knobs, a tap tempo button and five buttons for specifying rhythmic timing settings. Sound quality is great, as you'd expect with 24bit/96kHz DSP processing, but it's the style and character of the effects that shines, comparing well with those on far more expensive models. Particularly useful are some LFO driven filters, the phaser, the flanger, the regular filters and the vocoder. In fact, the only real omission is a BPM read-out. The effects assignment system needs rethinking, though. You can assign the effects to either side of the crossfader or to the Master but, strangely, setting the effects to Master only affects channels assigned to it. It's therefore not possible to assign two channels to the different sides of the crossfader and apply effects to them both at the same time – you'll need to re-assign them to Master. Also, the FX section has an inexcusable habit of clicking when you change its assignment or switch it on and off, so you cannot safely do either in the mix. As one visitor to our studio put it "so you can't use the effects in a club?"

VERDICT

BUILD QUALITY	4.0
SOUND QUALITY	4.5
EASE OF USE	4.0
FEATURES	4.5
VALUE FOR MONEY	4.0

HYPE

Fully featured despite its compact size, this offers one of the best mixing experiences you'll find no matter the cost, complete with some great effects and incredible sound quality.

GRIPE

There's no excuse for some of the clicking issues, inexplicable routing decisions and unclear knobs, especially at this price.

A few irritating flaws keep this bad boy from scoring perfect marks, but it's gorgeous nonetheless

4.0

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