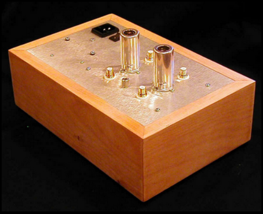
Seduction

delivery status

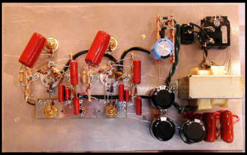
Seduction Phono Preamplifier Kit - skill level 2

Looking for a tube tape head preamp? Just modify a Seduction! Here's how

Two years in the making, here's the phono preamp kit you have been asking us to do. A design by Paul Joppa, the Seduction is a two stage stereo phono preamplifier (one 6DJ8 tube per channel) with passive RIAA equalization. Special attention has been given to low noise operation, and this kit features one of our most advanced, clean and simple layouts yet.



The solid state high voltage supply uses fast recovery soft start rectifiers and our unique Reverse Recovery Spike Filter that makes our rectifiers as smooth sounding as tube rectifiers without sacrificing speed or dynamics. The heaters are supplied with filtered DC from Schottky rectifiers, which do not exhibit the switching spikes of lesser rectifiers, and the heaters themselves are bypassed with wide bandwidth ceramic capacitors to filter out interference. The passive RIAA components are high quality Vishay Dale 1% metal film resistors and Panasonic EPCQ(U) polypropylene capacitors with copper leads. Carbon composition grid and plate stopper resistors round out the RFI filtering that lets this 6DJ8/6922/7308 based preamp perform without the edginess sometimes associated with this fast, articulate tube. Tube bias is set via Agilent LEDs, a special model that has excellent noise and linearity characteristics for this application.



The kits assembles on a 10"X6" .040" laser cut brushed aluminum chassis plate like our other kits and comes with a beautiful Pacific Northwest alder wood base that you can assemble and finish to taste. RCA jacks are high quality gold plated, and the ceramic sockets feature bayonet mount shields for additional RFI protection. This kit also employs a new feature you have been asking for, a power entry module that allows the use of IEC terminated power cords. A standard IEC type cord is included and you can try out boutique and your experimental power cords as well. Wiring is point to point and an easily installed ground plane serves as the tie point for all of the sensitive low level signal wiring. For those who live in RFI rich environments, mounting holes for a die cast Hammond aluminum box (PN 1590J) that you can modify slightly with a file to fit are provided to allow you to shield the entire preamplifier circuit from RFI. Most of our customers never find a need for it, but hey, we try to take care of every contingency!

The phono preamp has a gain of approximately 36 dB at 1 kHz and is intended for use with phono cartridges of 2.5mV and higher output, with 5mV output being the design center. Higher than 5mV output is certainly fine, and one may also use lower output cartridges with a suitable step up device. Input impedance is 47.5K ohms, input capacitance is 50pF. Remember that your phono cable's capacitance will add to this figure and increase your cartridge's capacitive load somewhat. Performance specs (+/- 0.3dB RIAA accuracy) courtesy of Bottlehead Craig Lewis can be found here. The Seduction is designed to operate into line stages with 50K or higher input impedance through interconnects of 1M or shorter length. The Foreplay III line stage is the best possible match, and the combination of the two will make for a most satisfying two-chassis full preamp setup.

Assembly is a one or two evening affair, designed for the builder with minimal level soldering experience in mind. Having constructed our Foreplay III line stage kit is an excellent way to get this experience (and of course Seduction is always the best thing to come before Foreplay). A very thorough assembly manual is included, containing step by step printed instructions you check off as you go, detailed photos of the chassis underside and components. All the builder needs to supply is solder. As with our other kits the Bottlehead Forum serves as the builders online tech support resource, with literally hundreds of experienced builders participating to help you with your questions.

Recommended Cartridges:

Here are some phono cartridges that should perform well with the Seduction, listed more or less from highest output level to lowest. This is certainly nothing close to an exhaustive list. Please understand that we are listing these cartridges because they have an *advertised* output level that will work well with the Seduction's gain factor, not because they have any other specific sonic characteristics. In theory a cartridge with a higher output level will give a better signal to noise ratio than a lower output cartridge, so bear this in mind if you are sensitive to the potential noise problems typical of phonograph setups - cable/cartridge/tonearm hum pickup, ground loops, electromagnetic interference, etc. We have done our best to minimize the noise level of the Seduction itself, and to accommodate the best approaches in turntable/tonearm/cartridge/preamp grounding, but we cannot predict how all of the myriad turntables, tonearms, cartridges and phono cables out there will perform together.

Rega cartridges

Roksan Corus Black

Grado Reference Series, Prestige Series

Goldring Elan, Elektra, 1000 Series

Reson Reca cartridge

Audio Technica moving magnet cartridges

Ortofon moving magnet cartridges

Shure cartridges

Sumiko Oyster, Black Pearl, Pearl, Blue Point

And here's a great Bottlehead Forum thread about what bottleheads are using as reasonably priced turntable setups with their Seductions

Seduction Phono Preamplifier kit $369 plus shipping. Delivery averages four to five weeks.

Your pre-order will be charged the day the kit is ordered. We do this to allow cash in advance payment to our vendors to keep the price you pay as low as possible.

Before ordering, please read:

About Ordering

Seduction Phono Preamp Kit shipped UPS to US address

order

Seduction Phono Preamp Kit shipped Air Parcel to Canadian address

order

Notes for Our Customers Outside the U.S. - at this time Seduction is available for 120VAC mains only.

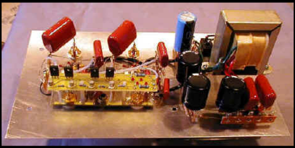
At this time our shopping cart is unable to process orders from outside the US and Canada. E-mail us at the link below for assistance in ordering:

Orders outside the US and Canada

or call us at 360-697-1936 M-F 9-5 PT

Seduction C4S Kit - skill level 2

delivery status



Now the same benefits of increased dynamics, more quiet background, better bass control and added gain found in our Anticipation C^4S upgrade kit for the Foreplay line stage can be had for the Seduction phono preamp. Four Camille Cascode Constant Current Sources (C^4S) replace the stock plate load resistors, dramatically increasing the load impedance for greater Power Supply Ripple Rejection (PSRR) and the extraction of the full gain available from the tubes (up from about 36dB in the stock form to about 40dB). The components are all mounted on a PC board which then snaps onto the Seduction ground plane and connects to the circuit with six wires, for a simple one evening installation. The upgrade board has even been designed to allow clearance for use of a Hammond 1590J die cast box if you desire to add additional shielding to your Seduction. Instructions come with clear color photos.

Seduction C^4S kit \$75 plus shipping

Before ordering, please read:

About Ordering

Seduction C4S Kit shipped USPS to US address

order

Seduction C4S Kit shipped Air Parcel to Canadian address

order

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or call us at 360-697-1936 M-F 9-5 PT

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IMPRESSIONS

Thank you, thank you, thank you Bottlehead!

Posted by dogwan (A) on March 16, 2008 at 22:04:54

H! MY! GOD!

Just finished my Seduction and sat down to play some music. WOW. I ordered the "all at once" package so I now have the Foreplay feeding Paramounts and finally the Seduction. All stock builds. Had been using the Pro-Ject Tube Box SE running a Denon DL 301 lomc and thought the Seduction would be on par. NO, it blows it away with my other deck which has a vintage AKG P8E mm cart.

Started out with some jazz and blues and all was good. Then I put on a clean copy Fleetwood Mac Rumors. Not a reference album for me but I wanted to hear female vocals and it was the 1st thing I came across. It brought a tear to my eye it was so beautiful. I heard things I had never heard before and I grew up with this music. I kid you not I literally had goose bumps going.

Great job Bottlehead team. A whopping 9.75 out of 10 on the satisfaction scale.

Holy S&*^!!

Posted by Blooze (A) on November 04, 2006 at 20:43:41

Worked up the nerve to hook the Seduction up. So as a trial I've got it on the old Kenwood KA6100 amp on the tape loop (aux is taken by the CDP and tuner and of course it already has a phono stage).

Got my POS Technics SL5 linear, which is all I have for the moment, and I've got to say this is just amazing! Got Buddy Guy's Stone Crazy playing and the soundstage is definitely wider with more depth than the stock Kenwood phono stage and this is just in the first few minutes of being on!

I've stopped the LP and raised the volume up to where I typically listen at and no noticeable hum on my old Polk monitors unless you put your ear to the front of the speaker (they are only 94 dB speakers though, my Klipsches or Pi's may reveal more).

Now I know what all the fuss is about even on my below budget setup. I'll burn it in for a while on the Kenwood, then put it on my NAD320Bee or 12B4 amp.

Gotta get the base finished before it turns too cold in the garage.

Gobsmacked AGAIN

Posted by Aural Robert on April 23, 2006 at 07:49:52

Just when you think things can't get much better...

Finally got around to putting the C4S in my Seduction about a month ago. Around the same time I built a set of 89259 ic's with Eichmann bullets for Sed > FP2 path. Yesterday I put Joe Jackson Look Sharp on the TT. I was trying to get some work done, and was stopped dead. I was stunned at the sound. Placement of instruments, depth, clarity, right across the board I heard a noticeable and dramatic improvement. It's like the break in hit critical mass all of a sudden. Went through a bunch of new wave era stuff just to make sure. MAN OH MAN soooo good.

Today I'm going to spin some of my reference material and really blow my mind!!!

Aural Robert.

This can't be right!

Posted by xcortes (A) on October 04, 2005 at 08:13:46

My new Seduction is more silent than my Black Cube!

selected posts from a Vinyl Asylum thread in Reply to: Best Phono Preamp under $4000 posted by mitch s. on July 25, 2005 at 17:48:45:

I can't answer that question, but I'm rapidly coming to the conclusion

Posted by olddude55 (A) on July 25, 2005 at 18:34:33

that a good phono stage just might be the heart of an analog system.
I built one of the more popular kits available earlier this spring. It's my first experience with a separate phono stage and the results just continue to amaze.
I can't even imagine going back to the old pre-amp.

Posted by SteveBrown (A) on July 25, 2005 at 18:37:20

Which kit?

Bottlehead Seduction.

Posted by olddude55 (A) on July 25, 2005 at 18:52:05

Box stock, even down to the tubes supplied with the kit.
I'm not saying that the Seduction is in the same league with some $4,000.00 superbox, but it's a quantum leap ahead of anything I've ever heard.
Right now, since my daughter is home from college and has the main stereo in her room, I've been running the TT through the Seduction out to a Headsave Classic headphone amp, using Sennheiser HD-600 cans. In nearly forty years of hi-fi mania, I've never heard vinyl playback like this.

Re: Bottlehead Seduction.

Posted by rob mac (A) on July 25, 2005 at 20:42:47

Old dude,
Mine gets better every day. I put the c4s in right of the bat and put Auricaps for the output. I may change and put some Wima caps in there. I have a modded Counterpoint sa3.1 preamp that I and run the Seduction into it, and I prefer the detail from the Sed. But the the sa3.1 is no slouch either.

Cheers,Rob.

Re: Bottlehead Seduction is swell

Posted by jonb (A) on July 25, 2005 at 19:51:56

I have to agree- I have a seduction that I completed 18 months ago and it still blows me away daily. These are really good if you are up to some soldering.

Re: Bottlehead Seduction.

Posted by SteveBrown (A) on July 25, 2005 at 19:14:00

Actually, I'd say the Bottlehead can go up against units in the thousands of dollars. May not be as sexy looking, but the guts are what counts, and the Seduction has them in spades!

Re: Bottlehead Seduction.

Posted by Pierre Leblanc (A) on July 25, 2005 at 21:56:29

I put the C4S in my Seduction 6 months ago and it is definitely a major step up. I will probably put better caps inside this winter.
The nice thing with those kits is that you hear the evolution done with each modification. Have anybody have try Sed with those famous CCa tubes?
Pierre.

Seduction with C4S

Seduction finished, Ya Baby!!

Posted by rob mac (A) on June 14, 2005 at 08:55:30

I've got about 5 hours playing time so far and I like what I hear. Took my time with the build, and kept looking at Wardsweb's layout to keep things neat and tidy. I used WBT silver solder for the build and found it great to work with, nice shiny joints.
I put the c4s in instead of going back and doing it later, and it's a great feeling when you ace all the resistance and voltage checks from the start, and when you see all theLEDs light up strong!! The only other upgrade done is Auricaps for the output.
The sound so far is very fast with great bottom end. I am running it into a modified Counterpoint sa3.1 and I think the music is more articulate and focused than the sa3.1. Having said that the sa3.1 is no slouch either.
I had the chassis copper plated and stained the box with a dark cherry stain and a couple of coats of clear, looks awesome.
This is a superb sounding phono stage for the price and a blast to build.
Thanks Doc and Paul for a great product!!

Cheers,

Rob mac.

Posted by Steve Culton (A) on April 28, 2003 at 07:16:26

To cut to the chase, yet another Yahtzee! for Bottlehead.

I built the board Thursday night, then did the install Friday. The directions are great, and the photos really help. I did struggle a little with the PC board soldering, only because I was a little bit of a soldering doofus that night (sleep deprivation does wierd things to your hand-eye coordination), and because the work space is a little tight. Doc recommended some smaller soldering tips for the job that I wish I'd had. In any case, I needed to desolder some spillover in a few tight spots, and had the usual "Rats! I just KNOW I fried that LED and that transistor" agita. Not to worry. (I would advise erring on the side of not heating too much when building the boards; there's really no room for heat sinks.)

Plugged it in, and all LEDs come on. Voltages are all pretty good. Let's give it a listen.

Like any new install, Seduction C4S needs a break-in period. Let's just say that the sound is a little muddy right out of the box — totally to be expected. Again, not to worry. Let it play for six hours and...

...Yahtzee! This little giant killer delivers as advertised: more gain (I'm potting my amp up only slightly higher now for vinyl than CD). Noticeably better, tighter, more prominent bass. On quality recordings, the detail and instrument separation is wonderful. Examples: On "Doctor My Eyes", you can really hear David Crosby's background vocals as two distinct tracks. Yummy. On "Lay Lady Lay", you can very clearly hear that there are two acoustic rhythym guitars, each strumming a different rhythym, and you can almost feel the musicians' fingers on the strings. Warm, detailed, rich, luxurious reproduction...all the good stuff we love about SET and vinyl...are there in spades.

Congratulations, guys. You've done it again.

Posted by **vrgard** (A) on April 28, 2003 at 11:59:20

In Reply to: Seduction C4S review posted by Steve Culton on April 28, 2003 at 07:16:26:

For what it's worth, I found soldering the C4S board to not be too difficult. Yeah, there were multiple little parts all having to be soldered in close proximity to each other. I followed the instructions about bending the leads to keep the parts from falling out. Then, while soldering, I used an alligator clip on the end of each part, one at a time, as a heat sink to protect these little parts. And I did not leave the soldering iron on each part/connection for very long - just enough to get the solder to flow. Then after each "group" of parts was soldered I clipped off the extra lead length. Then I used a magnifier glass (did I mention that these parts are tiny?) to check the appearance of each solder joint (shiny, proper shape, etc.). Then I used my multimeter to do a simple continuity test on each one of that group of parts. After all parts were soldered on the board, I did as many different continuity tests as I had patience for across the entirety of the board. Oh, and I kept double checking the great pictures from the instructions against what I was doing just to be sure.

As you can probably tell, I really took my time. Ultimately, it was a simple project (certainly easier than those darn litle filament caps in the Seduction itself) and still took me about two hours to do. I know everyone says this but I'm finally starting to understand it - take your time and enjoy the process. I think I've finally gotten past the stage of "gotta get it built so I can hear it" and am truly enjoying the building process. And the end result is showing - my work is certainly not master grade, but it's a definite improvement over when I started with the Foreplay.

Good luck, have fun, and as they used to say on Hill Street Blues, "be careful out there!" (smile)

-Randy

Posted by KGW (A) on April 28, 2003 at 14:59:11

In Reply to: Seduction C4S review posted by Steve Culton on April 28, 2003 at 07:16:26:

I didn't find the board difficult. The Jr Pana-vice and soldering station helped. I had the board done in 10-15 minutes. Installing it took a little longer because I actually unsoldered the old resistors (in case I needed them again). I also had to relocate one of the film caps. All in all, about an hour to install.

I agree that there is a break in period, but I noticed a huge improvement right off. My impressions were posted a few weeks ago.

I listened to side one of Sgt. Peppers (UK stereo pressing) over the weekend. I stuck the CD in afterwards. I used to think the CD version was pretty good for a remaster. It sounded dull lifeless and flat compared to the LP. The LP was the best I can remember hearing that album.

Happy Happy Joy Joy

KGW

Posted by eanderson on April 28, 2003 at 16:45:39

In Reply to: Seduction C4S review posted by Steve Culton on April 28, 2003 at 07:16:26:

I finished my Seduction C4S in about 2 hours. Took my time, used some nice silver wire and teflon tubing that a friend gave to me, a and made sure that everything was nice and clean.

On my P3/Super Elys/ST-70 kit, the sound was fuller and deeper and just damn better. When Milt "Bags" Jackson plays, you realize that the vibes really are a percussive instrument, crisp and clean and...just right. A $300 phono stage should not sound so good.

I used a small el cheapo Rat Shack solder gun that always has seemed too small, but it was perfect for the board. No issues with over-heating and I did not use any heat sinks. Just be aware, and don't leave the iron touching too long. After soldering wire to terminals, soldering a board is damn easy. The instructions were perfect and the photos were a huge assett.

I also ordered and installed the Mouser Alloy box/shield. I have had no RF 'issues' but figured that I should go all the way with the Phono Stage. It fit in perfect, just needed to file a groove for the cables to fit under, as per Doc's email a few days ago.

Thanks again to Doc and Eileen and the Bottleheads on this board for making me love listening to music again.

ea

Seduction

Here's a review by Mike Knapp of Hometheatertalk.com

Seduction up and running - I'm speechless

Posted by John Swenson (A) on May 26, 2003 at 16:40:39

I just got Woody's Seduction finished up today and plugged it all in, turned up the volume and heard nothing, no hum, hiss or buzz, I thought "Oh no, I did something wrong!" What the heck, I put a record on and got blown across the room. After getting the volume down to something reasonable (and this is with 1.5 watts) I realized this was the best reproduced sound I'd ever heard, period, and it didn't even have any burn in yet!!

This is so amazing I can't come up with anything to say that conveys what I'm hearing. I listened to a few LPs and had tears streaming down my face, the music was so overwhelming. I'm still in awe.

Doc and PJ, I don't know how you did it, but the Seduction beats anything else I've ever heard, including the $8k Thor. This should wind up in the Smithsonian. And this is straight stock, I can't image what the C4s'd version sounds like.

I built Woody's Seduction because he said he'd let me keep it for a couple weeks so I could determine if I wanted one or not. It took all of 5 seconds to make that decision!

My wife wants me to come BBQ some steaks now so I guess I'll have to leave the listening for a little later, oh well.

Thanks again Doc for making this wonder available.

John S.

I finished my Seduction kit and it works!

Posted by hutmacher on April 26, 2003 at 21:14:35

I had my doubts considering those tiny caps and led's. It replaces a Musical Fidelity XLP in my system. With no time on it at all it is much more detailed and musical than the XLP. I have listened to it for a couple of hours now and I am very pleased. My Sumiko BPS cartrige sounded a little thin and bass shy with the Seduction. I switched to a Grado Reference Platinum and it sounds great.

Thanks Doc for another great kit!

Posted by Thermio (A) on October 24, 2002 at 06:01:41

Seduction Review

Well, I have been farting around with it for two weeks now. It went together well and with only two minor boo boos caused by my ham fisted, impatient nature. "I'll make it fit!" Nothing that I could hear but I wanted it to be 100% before I started being critical. Eileen fixed me right up with replacements but I still haven't put them in as once I got it plugged in it sounded too right to mess with. That is something I have learned the hard way, if is sounds right, leave it alone, why must I mess with it? But I still do and will this time too eventually because I have to try, I just have to. It is in my nature it seems as it probably is in yours if you are reading this. So thank you Eileen, I will use those replacement parts when I next have it on the bench but for now the Seduction has been on the system rack and not powered down for two weeks. I put it together in three, three hour sessions and, other than the few minor typos we beta testers were tasked with finding, things went according to the well laid out and detailed instructions. A joy it is to build from a kit this well thought out. Thank you Doc, Paul and Eileen.

So how does it sound? Well, it is all a contextual thing isn't it? It doesn't sound at all unless you put it into a system and supply it with AC both from the wall and from a Turntable and then feed what it combines into something else. In this case the source is Micro Benz high output Glider bolted to a Kuzma StabiS/StogiS. The rest of the system is a 6N1Peed Soul Sister, Excites with Emission Labs 45s running straight into some PM4Aed Oris 150s, Paraglows with TJ perfplates through a low pass active crossover into La Scala bass bins. I won't mention CD source because I haven't been using it lately. So in this context the Seduction has found a voice.

Critics always make you drag through the entire article before they tell you what you want to know, which is what they actually thought about the device in question, but I won't because I hate wading through justification prior to a statement. The Seduction has caused better sound in my home than I have ever had, even with all my farting around and spending over the years of which there has been considerable rest completely assured. It is better than my Groove Thang with an elaborate and expensive external PSU. The little battery powered rat has disappeared since first comparison and has not been found since. In short, I am gob smacked how much the little kit can do but you probably want details so I should stop going over the top and tell you why the waxing gibbous.

I had suspicions that Doc was up to something good with this as it was taking sooo very long to be released and I have had tremendous good fortune with the sound of his other kits I have gotten: Foreplay, Paramours, Paraglows, eXcites, Straight 8s, and from some of his published schemos: Groove Thang and Soul Sister. So I had high expectations. Then there is the context of my system coming together as a whole despite a lot of careful planning. I have been building it and rebuilding it for several years now and am finally getting close to a resting place (yea, right!). I must temper your interpretation of my enthusiasm with the thought that I have built this entire system with Vinyl in mind and the missing link has been the phono section. Now that I have put a rather good one in place my system is giving me at last what I want: the sonics a good turntable can yield and even an excellent compact disk player cannot, at least not to this listener.

I waited a year since hearing the Seduction prototype at VSAC last September. I did try a few other things in that year but they were all well over a thousand dollars (some four times that) and I wasn't going to bite until I got to hear the Seduction in my system. I remember the first time I left a slack jawed group after bringing over my humble Foreplay to compare with an Audible Illusions and an AR LS16. I loved that feeling of simple/cheap/built by me getting away with murder right in front of the audio police. En flagrante delicto! I wanted more of that so I waited. I want it good, I want it cheap and I want to fart with it under the hood. It's in my nature.

The first thing I noticed about the Seduction is a lack of it's own sonic signature. Things sound unaltered and the richness of texture and tone do indeed seduce. After a break in period of 15 to 20 hours this richness increased and I noticed a great deal more decay space. The ambient data increased and the stopping of a sound becomes a thing to see space with as it is easy to follow the decay. There is a black background: like being in the country at night and looking at the stars. Things stand out boldly and easily. CD definitely sounds like a grey city night sky in contrast (where you can see the stars but they don't matter as much). I mean by this that high frequency detail comes easily and when it goes away there nothing there: the ear relaxes. Bass is full, rhythmic with no bloat and it goes deep effortlessly. Midrange is haunting with texture and emotion and the upper registers offer the beauty of cymbals and ambient space in a relaxing manner that belies the amount of detail which comes naturaly to the ear.

I could go on and still never get it right because it is elusive. The Seduction gets music right without calling attention to itself. So how does one describe it? It keeps the music alive tonally and rhythmically as well as offering resolution. It does this quietly while the music plays vivid, dynamic and in three dimensional space so I feel as though I am describing the music and not the box but this is as it should be. After being Seduced I am hearing more music and less HiFi and that is what I am up to with my soldering iron and wallet. I think there could be some little space added to the sound stage which current regulated filaments and/or perhaps better output caps might effect but then I am always going to tweak something and double the cost of a kit in so doing. More on this later.

I had one of the best guys I know for turntable setup come in and tweak the Glider/Kuzma. Doing this is one of his professional mainstays. The differences in fine tuning the cartridge setup were so obvious it took very little time to get things completely right and he commented on how good the system must be to effect this, especially the phono preamp. My feathers all started fluffing up until I realized I had just followed Doc's directions and this kit was still box stock. Then I tipped my hat to he and Paul.

How all this is done for the price point is another mysterious stroke of Bottleheaded wizardry. I think a lot of knowledge, common sense and hard work have something to do with it though. I would underline that the price of this kit is in no way an indication of it's performance. There is a ratio of sound to money that makes no sense until you listen, compare to high ended holy grail stuff and then remember the price. I always chuckle here, envisioning Doc pointing out the proudly waving audio emperor's lack of cloth as he marches through the industry's belief of what things should cost and sound like. With nothing on but a wreath of pomp, he covers his privates and goes scampering off every time I fire up my Bottlehead system and show him the bill. Damn Doc, this is too much fun!

Seduction, listening part 2 (or rockin' record party at Bill's house!) SUPER LONG AND RAMBLING

Posted by **Brad Brooks** **(R)** on October 23, 2002 at 20:18:43

What a great night we had at Bill Barrett's house. Since I have packed up all of my "messy unsightly not-friendly-for-staging-your-house-for-sale" tube equipment, I lent Bill my hacked up Foreplay and the Seduction amp I stole...er...took from Phil last Dixie Bottlehead meeting. Bill invited me over to listen to "his new preamp". Since I had a bunch of records to clean anyways, and he has a VPI vacuum cleaner, I thought, "even trade--he uses my gear and I get to clean some records."

Bill has a Linn turntable with a Linn arm and an Ortofon MC25 moving coil cartridge. He had some Sowter 1:20 MC trannies in his old preamp that he put in another box to attach between his TT arm and MY seduction. This was connected to MY (got that Bill?) modded Foreplay into his Parabees, pushing some Altec Model 19s.

We played a bunch of stuff, audiophilly quality to extremely lo-fi. We had mono, stereo, simulated stereo, you name it. Flimsy 80s vinyl to 180 gram audiophile grade. Pristine and well-worn. In any case, It was a blast to hear a bunch of my favorite records again! And what a wonderful little phono amp.

Bill had an op-amp based battery preamp that we put in the line for kicks. You know what? It did not sound that bad at all! I noticed some noise, however, at what would be normal listening levels. Once music started playing, it was not bad. When we put the Seduction back in line, however, the music openned up, was much much quieter, and to my ears had better bass and tone. It had a nice open presentation. By the way, my Foreplay measures about .25mV of noise at last quickie measurement (AC on the filaments. You guys need to double check your wiring and soldering :^)

Here were some great sounding records:

Violent Femmes - Violent Femmes
David Bowie - The Rise and Fall of Ziggy Stardust and the Spiders from Mars
Donald Byrd - Cat Walk
Miles Davis - Milestones
Beatles - Rubber Soul (British release, Mono, loved and played to death but still sounds good!)
Knitters - Poor Little Critter in the Road
Kenny Dorham - Blue Spring

The night burned out before we could get to the Gregorian Chants, but we were headed there and towards the Puccini and Listz. I can't wait until I get situated back in Seattle, and setup the TT, and spin records again.

When me and my wife J9 first met, we would stay up all night and play records and neck and stuff. When we married, every Sunday morning we would play records from the time we woke up until about noon, when we would run out for more coffee and a slice of pizza, look at magazines and records. Thank you Doc and Paul for helping me remember that playing records has been some of my favorite times in life.

This is a beautiful phono preamp. It is engineering genius, and it sounds wonderful. Thank you guys.

Seduce me babee! (babbling about ET Seduction Beta ver.)

Posted by Quest (A) on October 03, 2002 at 16:22:25

Greetings fellow Bottleheads!

After some grueling midnite soldering sessions it wasn't until an hr ago that I finally finished up one of the beta ver. of Seduction...still a bit light-headed due to lack of sleep but what the heck! I love building these things!

Without further ado here's what I've found so far:

(construction-wise):

Here's a warning to those who are interested in building this kit: while I personally do not discourage any skill level-1 daredevils from trying, subjectively I found this this kit posed more challenge to even the "seasoned" ones like yours truely and a few others too. It is great to see that Doc and co. has come out with a well thought out and detailed construction manual with the kit, frankly speaking this is a skill level 2 kit(so all you newbies beware!)

For those who has never build an electronic kit before, built one or 2 back in the Dynakit/Heathkit days some 30 years ago or similar: please! practice by either building a skill level 1 kit (such as Foreplay preamp) first or get some rat shack kits and practise!!!!! This is no joke I tell ya!

(observations):

While most of the parts arrangement are well thought out, at times I found that it would necessitate the use of my trusty tweezer to get things done.

All the components are of excellent quality. Coupled with a clever, 2-stage no feedback design (both stages are anode loaded),R-C networking, with RRSF and DC'ed filament snubbers, etc. this baby is sweet and noise-free! hum cannot be perceived with my pair of Epos!

(time consumed):

This baby takes 3 times longer than what it would normally take me to build a typical FP + Anticipation, or 2.5 times longer if you also throw in the Sweet Whispers kit to the FP package. AGain, word of wise: pace yourself and if you are tired, rest well before you carry on with this project. A dizzy brain will guarantee you bugs, and loads of it too!

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So, how does it sound? Before I give my subjective impressions on the sonics of Seduction let me give you a glimpse of my setup:

-turntable: Linn LP-12, stock

-arm: Audio Technica ATP-12T medium mass

-cart: Ortofon OM-10 (elliptical stylus, MM type)

-RIAA phono: (1) Seduction, using Doc's stock ECG 6DJ8 tubes,
(2) ESP ver. of SolidState OP amp RIAA preamp (as mentioned a few months ago)

-line pre: Stock FP with Tone Factory oil in paper coupling caps(Japanese made, 3.3uF), RCA cleartops , Sweet Whispers (-20~-50dB), no Anticipation upgrade (I used it elsewhere)

-pwr amp: "Buddhafied" Loftin-White 2A3 SE amp(direct-coupled with Svetlana 6N1P), all Tango transformers (opts, choke, power transformer), Sino/Shuguang 2A3 bi-plate, 3.2Watts per channel

-speakers: Epos ES-11, KEF 35.2 (revised Xover)

- wires, interconnects: Kimber shielded ver. of PSB/PBJ, Taiho Denko "Space Challenger" PCOCCs, Furukawa "Mu" speaker wires and RS-1 interconnects.

Software: George Benson "Breezin"(Warner Bros), Keith Jarrett "The Koln Concert"(ECM), Franck Symphony in D Minor by Carlo Maria Giulini (Angel Stereo), Rimsky-Korsakov Sheherazade by Sir Thomas Beecham (Angel Stereo), Dire Straits "Brothers in Arms" (Vertigo)

Here are my subjective observations:

Seduction has only been up and running for 1 hr so this cannot be a very "objective" observation so please weigh my comments carefully.

*Seduction itself: straight out of the box from 0 hrs it has a very neutral sound, almost as if it lacks of any form of "character" of it's own (and to me that is really good!!). From lowest low to the highest high (anything reproducible by my Ortofon MM) , freq. response is very even, without any kind of sonic exagggeration like peaks or dips of any kind perceivable. Moreover, with the lack of NFB done to it's gain stages, the resulting sound is so much more relaxed and easy to anybody who has sensitive hearings (Honestly speaking I fall into the group of listeners who are fairly sensitive to NFB or ultrasonic "crap").

How does it compare to my ESP OP amp RIAA phono? Here are my observations:

"Bro in Arms": Seduction brings out the sweetness inside the Mark Knofler's voice in "The man's too strong", "Your latest trick" and also "Why worry". Sweet but not too subtle, the ambience is properly shaped and the air surrounding Mark's voice and guieetar is just the right amount. The saxophone part in "Your latest trick" didn't reveal any harshness nor any "brashness" that some poor preamp might have. What's more? Compared to my ESP Op amp based pre which is a little hard and cold on the high freq., Seduction brings out the warmth that one ought to expect from playing vinyl (compared to digital source).

"Breezin": I simply love George Benson's gieetar! With Seduction playing "The Masquerade", George's soulful voice with his harmoniously tuneful guitar sweeps, Seduction beats my ESp by a large margin! Not too "warm" nor too "sweet", everything is just the right amount for me. Seduction draws you into the music, just like FP does, so at-ease, so tuneful and yet relatively lack of sonic "character", Seduction reveals the emotional side of George, not just some electrical strings and a guy humming along....(*grin*)

"Sheherazade": as I spend most of my time listening mainly to 2nd movement "the story of the Kolender Prince", I'm well aware of how the tonality of the bassoon and the violin and the harmonics a properly designed RIAA preamp should be capable of rendering. With Seduction, the overtones of the violins is right. As the prince almost "see the battle" session, the attack speed and Seduction's capability in rendering the entire orchestra's soundspace with ease surprised me! My ESP just sounded a tad cold and "hard" on the high part, while all else being equal.

Others such as "Franck's Symphony in D-minor" and Keith Jarett's "The Koln Concert" reconfirmed my subjective findings of the Seduction Beta: all the sweetness you ought to expect from playing vinyl are there w/o any additives added to it. Sonically it's neutral, at ease, always and willing (when the attack music passage comes downstream from your cartridge). With amazingly good headroom and excellent PSU section, Seduction brings out the "soul" in the music.

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Way to go Doc and pj! You 2 evil scientists teamed up together and created something this evil (you should be proud of yourselves dudes!), the DIY world owes you some form of recognition....at least a beer from me.

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Most important of all, thanks for sharing this wonderful little amp with us Doc! While most of the newcomers simply "whine" about the waiting , I totally understand that it takes a lot of hard work and sleepless hours and many, many audition sessions to get this baby right (and you got it damn right!). No more waiting folks, this is it!

For you newcomers onto this BBS and those who whined in the past while waiting for Seduction, this is it! The waiting is over!

Cheers folks! I'm gonna dig out all my dusty vinyl and listen to them all over again with Seduction!

Quest;^>

- Seduction proto

Re: Anyone built the Seduction by Bottlehead yet?

Posted by **Ed Fallon** (A) on October 01, 2002 at 16:40:45

In Reply to: Anyone built the Seduction by Bottlehead yet? posted by kdy on October 01, 2002 at 13:22:02:

Hi kdy,
You're in luck. I just finished building one of the evaluation kits over the weekend and have been listening to it for a couple of days. I can give a quick preliminary impressions so far.

The seduction is a fairly straight forward 2 stage passive eq RIAA preamp that uses the 6DJ8 family of tubes. While fairly simple, it does use some innovative circuit ideas and very careful component layout. For example, both tube stages are biased with special grade hp leds that lock in the bias of the tube and eliminate a cathode resistor and electrolytic cap. Filaments are heated with dc for low noise. Rectification is SS with reverse recovery snubbers to reduce diode noise. It is designed for a moving magnet cartridge and I've heard of plans to offer a possible MC option later. Specs on Seduction can be found on the bottlehead.com site.

These evaluation kits were sent out to a few people to debug the manual and evaluate consistency between kits. I was lucky enough to be one of these people. Construction was straight forward but took the better part of a day to complete so it is a little more time consuming than say a foreplay preamp to build. The manual is very well written and most folks should have no problems building it.

Once finished, I installed it in my system which admittedly has a mid level vinyl front end as I usually listen to CD. It consists of a music hall mmf-5 tt with a shure v15vxmr cartridge. This sits on an air isolation platform. The seduction connects to a fully loaded foreplay line stage. The amps are homebrew SE2A3 parallel feed which are similar to bottleheads paraglow II. Speakers are ca 1966 Altec Magnificents with custom crossovers, these are basically walnut wrapped A7-500's.

I was surprised at how neutral and balanced this sounded on the first disc played with no break-in. Frequency response seems very balanced with no portion drawing attention to itself and yet it is very extended and clean sounding. I forgot how fluid music can sound on vinyl compared to CD. After a few of hours of jumping around between classical, jazz, and even some grateful dead, the dynamics began to improve and bass response got even better. This change is probably mostly from the cartridge being used again as I hadn't played the table in at least 9 months due to lack of a decent phono pre-amp. The noise is very low with very little tube rush heard. I'm running Amprex PQ 7308's which were not supplied with the kits. The kits come stock with tested 6DJ8 type tubes but I had collected a stash of 7308's from years ago for a previous preamp so used them instead. Gain is adequate but with the 3mV Shure, I have to turn up the pre amp a little to match the volume of other input sources. This is no problem as long as you have a little extra headroom in your linestage. The Foreplay usually has plenty of extra gain.

Even with the short time I have had the Seduction preamp in my system, I can without reservation, recommend this for anyone looking for a reasonably priced tube phono preamp. For $225, I don't think I could have scratch built anything close to sounding this good. I was considering building a copy of an arthur loesch phono stage but I gotta say that this thing sounds so good that I don't see the need anymore.

-Ed Fallon

Seduction - review

Posted by pRC **(A)** on October 01, 2002 at 12:24:35

Well, it's here. I got a beta kit last Friday and built it yesterday and this morning (I'm on vacation this week to, supposedly, get some work done around the house. Thanks a lot Doc, I've got some 'splaining to do now...). Took about 11 hours to assemble. Really good instructions per usual Doc B. standards, but I'd say it's about twice as much work as a Foreplay, maybe more.

Anybody who says this is not a good value has never tried to source all of these parts and should be dunked in a solder pot! Carbon comp stopper resistors, 'Buddha' snubber, sheilded filament and B+ wiring, DC filaments, Dale RIAA resistors, nice Matsushita film caps, and all the nice little bits you need. This is a pretty amazing selection of parts for the $$, to say nothing of how hard it would be for anyone to figure out how to put all of this together without howling hum. Anyway, it is complicated because of the number of parts, but no step is especially tricky to perform. Just follow the directions and things should go well, mine checked out first try and powered-up ready to go.

The ground plane PCB is really nice, thanks Paul!

So, pRC, enough yammering, how does it sound?
OK, I've only had it running since 11am.

Lets see, that's 4 hours now, so I'm still in the burn-in phase, but it's already better than my Musical Surroundings 'Phenomena' phono amp, a $600 unit hereafter to be abbreviated as 'MSPh'. I run a Grado Platinum on my restored Empire 208 turntable with a Rega arm, so I've got that moving magnet output level (5mV). The MSPh was running at it's lowest amplification, 40dB, and 50K Ohm input impedance. The Seduction is listed as 36dB, and it needed some extra oomph from my preamp to play as loud; but what is there is just plain more lifelike than the MSPh - strong female vocals are powerful with a natural edge, not grainy. Complex music is handled without complaint, it comes cooking along. Spare jazz has atmosphere, pace, complexity. It's good, it's damn good.

Heard so far:
Delbert McClinton - The Jealous Kind
Eurythmics - Be Yourself Tonite
Sarah Vaughn - At the Blue Note (Mercury MG20094)
Ella Fitzgerald - The Gershwin Songbook (Verve VE-2-2525)
David Bowie - Ziggy Stardust and the Spiders from Mars
Miles Davis - And Milt Jackson Quintet/Sextet (Prestige HiFi LP7034)

Now playing:
Dinah Washington - I Wanna Be Loved (Mercury MG20729)
[this just kicks ass. Wow!]

I also tried swapping the Sylvania 6922 tubes Doc sent with the kit (nice tubes Doc, is that what everyone will get?) for some JJ E88CC tubes I had around and got a little more 'pop' from the JJ tubes. But I think that this shows how good this thing is in another way - when a brand-new unit with almost no burn-in shows clear differences between tubes I think that means that the circuit is not the limiting factor, that the RIAA filter is pretty transparent and gets out of the way. It's also very, very quiet. Nothing but a little tube-rush when I crank the preamp with nothing playing.

Now, at this price it's not the end-all, be-all of phono stages. It will overload on hot recordings, and it doesn't have gobs of amplification - you better have a lot of drive available in your preamp if you stray far from 4mV output from your cartridges, but I look forward to the fully broken-in sound, and to reading about other folks' mods. Heck, at this price, I may order another one to customize and try shoe-horning in a pair of Peerless 4722 input trannies for additional gain, and a few other things I can think of...

So kudos to Doc and Paul - this is the only DIY phono kit out there that I know of, and Doc could have had it out sooner if he and Paul weren't so hard-headed about noise, but I'm happy that they are on our side. This thing should slay mid-priced SS phono sections, but more than that, it's lively and fun and involving.

Apologies for the length of this and any grammar or spelling errors, but I wanted to get something out here after all of the questions. Now, I've got a lot more vinyl to listen to!

Thanks/pRC

I needed some Seduction in my life

Posted by Smoothplate on September 30, 2002 at 09:13:55

Well I've been one of the fortunate ones to be on the Beta list for the Seduction phono pre. I got my kit last week and couldn't wait to get started on it. The manual was up to Doc's usual level of clarity and easy to follow detail. I spent about a day getting the top plate painted, base assembled and circuit put together and tested.

I certainly wasn't prepared for what came out when I hooked it up! I have a pretty nice vinyl set-up (Audiomeca J1 table, Linn Ekos arm, Linn Klyde cartridge and Koetsu step-up transformer) and the Seduction sounded as good as anything I've had in my system and better than most. To my ears the RIAA sounds spot on and it is very well balanced from top to bottom. Bass is very solid and well controlled and those oh so sweet highs that only good vinyl can give you. There are going to be many long nights now revisiting my vinyl collection.

Paul and Doc are to be commended again for their efforts. As far as I'm concerned it has definitely been worth the wait. I think that it will prove to be at least as good a value as the Foreplay has been. If you're thinking about an excellent vinyl set-up, the Seduction will be hard to beat even for many times the price. I'm sure that the usual level of support will develop from the forum members and that an already outstanding unit will be provided with exciting tweaks and enhancements!

John Tucker, eXemplar Audio