



Newsletter

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Dear Brian,

One of the things I like about the hi fi industry is that good equipment has a long lifetime. I am regularly servicing turntables that are 30 or more years old, and amps and speakers of similar vintage can often be restored to good working condition for a fraction of what equivalent replacements cost. My speciality is turntables and I am very pleased when customers are amazed at how good their 30+ year old unit sounds after being serviced, and set up properly, usually with a new cartridge. I'm not trying to say that new equipment doesn't have some advantages over classic units but when you consider the prices there's a strong incentive to refurbish old top end gear. In an era of throw-away products it's a pleasant change.



Rotel is one of the industry's stalwarts, I have an RA-611 amp that is going strong after nearly 40 years and I'm pleased that at the moment there are some great offers available for this long respected brand (see below).

Another company that has a mission to build products which will last a lifetime is Icon Audio. The first amplifier I ever had was a valve amp built from a kit, but there haven't been any valve products in our product range. Due to many enquiries I have decided to take on the highly regarded Icon Audio range of products. More info below.

A reminder about The Australian Audio & AV Show to be held at the Marriott Hotel in Melbourne from October 21st to 23rd. We've booked a room and look forward to meeting lots of existing and new customers.

Musical regards

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Rotel promotion

Till the end of June there are some excellent prices available on many Rotel products. Discounts range from 17% to 39%. We aren't able to accept online orders but you can phone or email. Most models are available in black or silver. There's a special page on the website where you can access the details - [Rotel Promotion June 2011](#)



Rotel is one of the industry's most trusted names having been in business for more than 45 years. Audio critics around the globe have come to recognize Rotel as one of the best performance/value manufacturers in the industry. So if you've been wanting to upgrade to a new amplifier this is a unique opportunity. To find out more information about the various models the [importers website](#) has downloadable brochures and reviews.

A couple of suggestions are the RA-1520 integrated amplifier and matching RCD-1520 CD player. And the popular entry level RA-04 integrated amplifier is now only \$499.

If you need some assistance choosing which model best suits your requirements please phone (07 3344 5756) or email me (enquiry@decibelhifi.com.au).

New supplier - Icon Audio

Valve amplifiers have many advocates due to their sound quality which is often described as "warm" compared to solid state amplifiers. But they tend to be heavy because of the transformers, and expensive, plus the valves need to be replaced occasionally.

The Icon Audio philosophy in this "throw away" world is to create audiophile products that sound good, look good, are easily affordable and will last a lifetime.

Everything in an Icon Audio amplifier is serviceable and replaceable from the valves themselves to substantial components such as the transformers.

Icon Audio are neither anti-digital nor anti-solid-state, but firmly believe that a good analogue signal fed through a good thermionic valve amplifier has a great deal to offer.

Icon Audio make no secret of the fact that their amplifier chassis are manufactured in China, but rather than being branded OEM products, they are designed in Leicester by Icon Audio's founder, David Shaw, who also regularly travels to China to manage final production and quality control thereby ensuring that the performance and quality upon which Icon Audio have built their reputation is fully maintained. This arrangement allows their pricing to be very competitive.

Initially only a few models will be listed on our website, but the whole range is available and full details and PDFs are online at www.iconaudio.co.uk. If you are interested in a particular model please contact us for a quote as the freight component is a significant factor in the Australian price.



In the Groove vinyl record cleaner

Since we started selling the ITGRC late last year we have sold dozens of units, so I recently surveyed purchasers about their experience with it.

The general response is that it cleans dusty records very effectively. There were several comments about its very strong stickiness lifting the record off the platter, and a couple of people said it was leaving rubbery deposits on the records. This feedback is consistent with comments from the USA where hundreds have been sold, and as a result the formulation of the roller has been changed so that it is not quite as sticky but still very effective. Anyone who has already purchased one can get the new roller free of charge. Please email to let us know you would like one, we are expecting stock in a few weeks. We still have some units from the original shipment, and if you buy one and would like to change to the new formulation roller there's no extra charge for doing so. [Link to Vinyl Record Cleaning.](#)



T-amplifier news

T-amps have been a successful product for several years now and their sound quality and value for money is widely confirmed. There's now several brands on the market including Dayton and Trends.

When combined with a USB DAC they enable high resolution digital files on a PC to be played at audiophile quality.

Now we have an innovative product, the Topping TP30 which is a T-Amp and USB-DAC in the one unit.

It is in a stylish metal case with proper RCA sockets, decent speaker terminals, plus the USB connector on the back. The front panel has the power switch, an input source selector (USB or RCA), headphone socket, and volume control. I have been using one of these with a PC in our living room for several weeks now and can confirm it sounds as good as any of the T-amps I have tried. The convenience and cost saving of having the USB-DAC in the one unit makes it a very desirable little product for many applications. Price is \$220 and they are in stock. [Link to PC Products.](#)



At the same time as this unit was installed I trialled a new digital TV tuner USB stick that also has DAB+ and FM radio. Previously we had a digital TV tuner PC card inside the computer, then a separate DAB+ radio tuner and used a switchbox to switch between computer, radio, and other sources. Now we have all the functions we want from the computer. Like most computer products the latest drivers and application software have to be downloaded and installed to get it working reliably, and a strong digital TV signal is essential. This Kaiser Baas product has been added into the [PC Products](#) category. At just \$77.00 I think it is a bargain. There's also a DAB+ Radio Tuner and Dual TV Tuner USB sticks at \$44.00 and \$93.50 respectively.

Origin Live news

I mentioned last time that Origin Live had introduced a new cartridge. It is the first to carry the Origin Live name and is made for them by SoundSmith, a USA cartridge specialist. The Aladdin is a moving iron design which works with normal moving magnet phono preamps. It is claimed to have lower moving mass than most moving coil cartridges and to outperform many cartridges costing much more. It is quite heavy (10.5g) so a heavier counterweight may be needed on some tonearms, and tracks securely at 1.4g. It is particularly easy to set up in a headshell because of the threaded screw holes and easily visible stylus tip. I have now auditioned the cartridge on several different tonearms and with a wide variety of music, and rate it very highly. One reviewer said "The most musical, clean, focused and fast sounding cartridge I've ever used!" It is in stock now at \$770 and I'm happy to offer it on a money-back guarantee basis. [Link to Origin Live page.](#)



EJ JORDAN News

The [EJ Jordan range of drivers](#) has been substantially revised. The most popular model JX92 will now be available in 3 versions. The JX92HD has an improved high frequency impedance giving better response from 3KHz upwards. Otherwise its parameters are very close to the JX92, so existing enclosure designs can be used. The JX92HD+ is similar to the JX92HD but has slightly higher sensitivity and a lower Qts figure. All these drivers are unshielded but shields can be purchased if required for \$11.00 per driver.

The 2" JXr6HD driver has been replaced by the JX60. Changes include a new spider, and open chassis with normal gold plated terminals instead of flying leads. The frequency response now extends to 45KHz and has lower distortion, while the resonant frequency is now slightly higher at about 105Hz. Pricing has risen by about 6%.

The JX125NG and JX150NG are now Mark II versions, with new customized aluminium chassis and upgraded rims and spiders. The 125 now has a frequency range of 35Hz - 19KHz. We have one demo pair of the JX150NG MkII available, and a few pairs of the JX125NG MkII at special pricing.

Although there are many examples of commercial loudspeakers that use the various Jordan drivers these are mainly aimed at the DIY market. If you've never considered building your own speakers have a look at the [enclosure kits](#) in the DIY Speakers category. The assembly instructions are also there so you can see how easy it is to DIY and save \$100s!



Agora Acoustics MagicHexa vibration absorbers

New vibration absorption products seem to be popping up every week and I was recently approached by a South Korean company regarding a device they call the MagicHexa. They claim more than 10,000 sets (of 4) have been sold to Korean audiophiles.

These are made from a special proprietary visco-elastic polymer that combines shock absorption, vibration isolation and vibration damping characteristics to create the ideal acoustic damper and absorber. Its specially formulated vibration dissipating aerodynamic honeycomb configuration has almost 1000 times higher damping coefficient than metal, thus reducing the transmission of various vibration energies into whatever surface the component is sitting on.

They sent me some samples and I am quite impressed. When placed under a quite heavy direct drive turntable I thought they made a noticeable improvement. They are 73mm in diameter



and 23mm thick and soft and slightly tacky to touch to prevent slipping. Being translucent white there should not be any problem with the marking of furniture. Each one can support 3 to 18Kg, so that makes them very versatile for a wide range of equipment. Price is \$44.00 for a set of 4 and we sell them with the same money-back guarantee as Vibrapods. We will also split packs, so if you want just 3 or any other quantity we're happy to do so. [Link to Vibration Absorbers category.](#)

New supplier - Isonoe

One of our customers enquired about Isonoe isolation products. It is not a brand I was familiar with as they have mainly targeted the DJ market, but many people have Technics SL1210 turntables for their hi fi systems and the Isonoe audio isolation system will enable them to easily upgrade to superior anti-vibration feet. The system includes the Isolation Feet which simply screw in in place of the existing feet. There's also Sorbothane Boots which can be used with other equipment like CD players as well. And Instrument Glass Discs complete the system. These are beautifully machined professional products. You'll find them in the [Vibration Absorbers category.](#)



A universal version which can be used under any turntable or CD player will be available soon.

Power Protection

Power fluctuations and interference are a fact of life in many locations. Providing clean power to your hi fi system enables your equipment to perform the way it was designed to. Uninterruptible Power Supplies (UPS) are widely used with computer installations but most aren't suitable for hi fi. The best type of UPS for hi fi is a double conversion UPS. This type of UPS takes the mains power in AC, converts it to DC and then converts the DC back to a pure sine wave AC to run your equipment. In this way, your equipment is completely independent of fluctuations in the mains grid. Regardless of the power fluctuations, your equipment is fed by a stable power source. This is especially important if you have generators present, are in remote areas or near industrial areas. There is also battery backup in the event of total power loss, but as this is usually only for a short time it's not a very important feature for hi fi.



These double conversion UPS units are quite large, heavy, and expensive, but we have managed to source a high quality unit at a reasonable price. The Centurion 1000 UPS is a 1000VA unit, which will be big enough for most installations, and at \$880.00 is affordable. It weighs 13Kg and we have negotiated direct courier delivery to anywhere in Australia for just \$25.00.

I have a separate power circuit for my hi fi equipment and I did not notice any change when using one of these units, and the internal fan was unacceptably too loud to have it in the listening room. A modification so that the fan only comes on if the unit gets hot will solve that problem. In the meantime if it is feasible to locate the unit outside your listening room it is a worthwhile investment if you have power problems. In fact when you consider that updated power supplies for many hi fi items tend to cost \$400 or \$500 this unit could save you money. I see it being particularly of interest to customers in country areas where the power supply is unreliable or industrial areas where interference is common.

The Centurion 1000 is in the [Power Products](#) category.

LP releases

Recent releases from Stockfisch Records (\$60) include:

Sara K. - In the Groove

Dennis Kolen - Northeim | Goldmine

From Mobile Fidelity, Silver Label LPs (single LPs \$45, double LPs \$70):

Stevie Wonder - Talking Book

The B52's - Wild Planet

Elvis Costello - Get Happy (2 x 45rpm LPs)



Please email us if you would like to order any of these or any others from the Rockian trading catalogue www.rockian.biz

[Forward email](#)



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