
Subject: Re: 12AX7s

Posted by [James Christopher](#) on Fri, 18 Jul 2008 06:13:06 GMT

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Evaluating old stock (NOS) 12AX7s is subjective, too much so, as it all depends on the system, music played, individual preference, etc. It would run to thousands of words just evaluating USA made 1947-1970 12AX7s.... and then there are the Eastern European, Western Euros, the surprisingly good Japanese made 12AX7s etc etc. As far as readily available, modern stuff.... that's simpler. None really compares to 90% of the old production, period. In the 1990s, the Ei/Yugoslavian copies of the smoothplate Telefunks were fantastic; they had 95% of the Telefunken magic for \$7 a tube. Even in 2001-2004, when Ei was in financial trouble and quality control went out the window, when you got a good Ei 12AX7 it was a great tube-- better than many of the humbly worshipped NOS types. I like the "Mullard reissue" 12AX7 sold by Groove tubes (it's a Chinese Shuguang). Likewise, what is known as the "C9, or 9th generation 12AX7B" by Shuguang is an OUTSTANDING 12AX7, with almost Mullard-like midrange (REAL British Mullard not Russian) and good soundstaging. I'll post a link to this and another version Chinese 12AX7-- best available. I like the LPS Sovtek, but DO NOT like the Electro-Harmonix/TungSol shortplate 12AX7s. I don't care for JJ 12AX7s. The Sovtek LPS has good sonic balance, but makes my gear sound like solid state. Flat, no texture to the mids.
