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Subject: Re: Opinions please-New EL34, 6CA7, KT88 and 6550  
Posted by [Wayne Parham](#) on Sun, 31 May 2009 17:24:14 GMT  
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I have just about all of the 6550 / KT88 tubes available. I also have a handful of EL34's.

6550), although the original issue Tung Sol 6550 tubes are even better. Those are my top choices. I kind of like the Electro-Harmonics, they sound good and I'm not afraid of running them (i.e. easily replaceable). That's a second choice for me. Same with new issue Tung Sol 6550 tubes. Those would probably be my third choice tubes, and I like having a bunch of them and the EH 6550's on hand for daily use. Sound good, no worries.

I have a pair of RCA 6550 tubes that are absolutely wonderful, but you know, it may be that I know they're supposed to be wonderful. I tend to save them anyway, like precious jewelry. I've been told they're rebranded original issue Tung Sol tubes, purchased by RCA and relabeled.

The last ones on my list are the Svetlana (no flying C) and the JJ KT88's. I'm not as thrilled with those. The Svetlanas are probably OK, but they seem a little grungy to me and I've popped one, not 100 hours out of the box. The JJ's are definitely a grunge tube, novel 'cause the glass is tinted blue but not nearly as good as any of the others.

My selection of EL34's is a little more limited, just blue JJ's, Electro-Harmonics and

can't say which I like better. I will say that each of those tubes are still available, so I'm not as concerned about audio jewelry (irreplaceable tubes). If I find one I like better than the others, I can always buy more for my personal stash.

I gotta put in a plug or two, while I'm here. I've done business with a lot of the internet tube companies and BOIAudioworks is my hands-down favorite. They're a sponsor, but it isn't just that. We solicited them because we liked them, not the other way around.

Aki (at BOI) is always friendly, and honest to a fault. Many (if not most) of the tube vendors out there are not. You may already know this, or maybe not. Ebayers are notorious for claiming any garage find as being NOS, but I've found this is also true of some of the biggest most popular internet tube sellers.

One, in particular, sold me a "NOS" tube that was obviously used hard for many years. You know, I expect a tattered box, or a plain white box even. But a NOS tube should not have scratches on its base, insertion wear on the pins and weak conductivity. That doesn't even pass as a good used tube.

Who was that? I'll give you a hint: They advertise aggressively on various forums, and they sell at prices that are way above the norm.

So deal with Aki, if you can. If the tube is still current production, definitely get it from BOIAudioworks.

If you need an old radio tube, something used in a television or old tube radio, I suggest Antique Audio Supply. They sell used tubes, make no pretensions and have reasonable prices.

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