Subject: Re: New to Car Audio
Posted by Head_Unit on Wed, 17 Feb 2010 04:10:29 GMT
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It is true you can save substantially, and get a lot of satisfaction, installing it yourself.

I strongly suggest logging onto Crutchfield.com; their site can show you exactly what will fit in your car, and they have an extremely comprehensive selection of brands. If you do decide to install it yourself, they give very detailed instructions and if needed I believe phone support. If you still don't feel comfortable, that's fine, but you'll have learned a lot about what fits in your car.

As for dealers, it is most important that you feel comfortable. Don't give your money to a place that seems poorly run, is condescending, or seems fixated on selling you what THEY want to sell you instead of what is right for YOU.

I'd go to Alpine1.com to look up independent Alpine dealers in your area. Alpine is tops in car audio for lo these many years, so their dealers tend to be the cream of the crop. That doesn't mean they'll all be right for you, but it's a start. As for Best Buy, big chain installers used to be a joke, but BB is a good and serious company and have probably improved this a lot. Visit some dealers, ask for proposals, look at their install bay, ask "why should I buy here?" and go with the place that makes you most comfortable.

For really good bass in a car, you generally need a subwoofer. If you like your sound except for the bass, you might leave the stock speakers alone for now. The woofers will not really make so much difference for the low bass, because with a subwoofer there should be a crossover to cut the bass out from the woofers.

For the sub, there are standard boxes all the way up to custom fiberglass. AudioForms and similar are premade custom fits for certain vehicles. To avoid boom, insist on a sealed box. No ports, no bandpass. Those are for SPL and boom. Yes, you can make tight sounding ported boxes but that's rarer than living dinosaurs in car audio. Forget it. Explain and repeat and insist that you want TIGHT sound (but by the way, are you SURE you don't care how loud it is? A 12" etc will provide very strong and pretty loud bass, but won't be heard 3 blocks away).

It is indispensable that your amp have crossovers INDEPENDENTLY adjustable for sub, front, and rear. Also, the frequency adjustment should be continous, or in steps of 10%. This is absolutely necessary for proper system tuning. If you're keeping the stock radio, your best bet might be a 5-channel amp that can just feed from the stock radio and then derive the subwoofer output, so your fader still works. The fader should be mostly set forward. Forget those rear speakers, this is not surround sound, those rear speakers are a historic legacy from when car amps had 3 watts and the rear passengers couldn't hear without a speaker by their head.

Your budget should be more than fine for what you want to do.

If your stock system is amplified, you need to re-post and explain that, because it could make things more complicated and need different advice.

Do post back and tell us what you do, we're curious.