Subject: Re: tubes vs designs
Posted by Bill Bittle on Wed, 08 Dec 2004 00:46:01 GMT
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Your ultimate goal should be to get as wide a frequency range out of each component as you can. You want to reduce as many limiting factors as you can. Let's take distortion as an example. A person might wonder why a designer would create a preamp with a .01% distortion figure when the power amp has a figure of .2%. But, if everything, from the source device to the speaker has a little distortion, when you add them all together, the sonic quality of the final end product is diminished. Now, if you can fix even one source of distortion, it will improve the over all sound quality. The same is true for frequency responce, sound stage etc. I can take a poor quality bookshelf speaker with a frequency responce that is 100hz to 12Khz with peaks and valleys in it's frequency response curve and believe me, you can tell the difference between it's sound when driven by some cheap modern IC laden receiver and something like a Fisher 800C. Obviously the 800C would sound better through a better speaker, but even with the described elcheapo speaker, the 800C will still be an improvement over the budget priced modern receiver with it's IC opamp power amps. As for designs. big factors in tube amps are the quality of the parts. You can have a real fine electronic design but hamstring it with a cheap output transformer. Then there are designs that not only use sub par parts, but are also designed with maximum corporate profit and a devil may care attitude toward sonic quality. In the "Gloden Age" of hi-fi, there were some pretty wild power, frequency bandwidth and distortion figures bantered about by manufacturers. Some were true, many were not. I can assure you that a $59 Arkay stereo amp will not perform like a Scott 299C no matter how high they rate the amp. Also, test data only tells a part of the story. An amp may look good on the spec sheet, but sound worse then an amp that may have shown higher distortion figures and a lower high frequency roll off. Then there is power. For a real good example of how this figure can be manipulated take a listen to a 70's vintage Marantz 2200 series 'Blue Face" receiver and then compare it to any modern amplifier rated at the same power. Believe me, I do not have to elaborate any more. So there are a lot of variables and such in audio. Design, tube vs Transistor vs IC, as well as the ever confusing array of amplifier specs. The bottom line is this. Do you like the way it sounds? if so then it is the setup for you. If not,then you will probably join the ranks of millions of audiophiles who are on the never ending quest for sonic nirvana.