Subject: Best Websites To Find Bargain Audio Equipment
Posted by woodfree on Fri, 31 Dec 2010 05:18:57 GMT
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What are the best websites you can recommend where you can find bargain audio equipment? I need some advice so I can make an informed decision when I make a purchase sometime down the road. Thanks in advance for your help!

Subject: Re: Best Websites To Find Bargain Audio Equipment
Posted by AudioFred on Fri, 31 Dec 2010 14:38:40 GMT
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Saturday Audio Exchange and Audio Advisor are authorized dealers for some entry level brands including NAD, Cambridge Audio, and several speaker brands. Their contracts with these manufacturers require them to charge the full MSRP, but the models are frequently upgraded, and they are able to sell the remaining stock of discontinued models at a significant discount. For example, I bought a Cambridge Audio Azur 540A integrated amp MSRP $499) from Audio Advisor for $299 when that model was replaced by the 550A MSRP $549).

If you happen to live in a large metropolitan area, local dealers are also required to charge the full MSRP, but when sales are off and the rent is due prices can become negotiable. So if there are any dealers nearby, get to know them and let them know what you're interested in, and something may give. But also keep this in mind: It is so wrong to audition a product at a dealer's shop and then to buy it from an internet seller at a discount.

The best place to find bargain audio equipment is on Audiogon. This is especially true of products that aren't the most recent model. For example, right now there are two NAD 325BEE integrated amps (MSRP $499) being offered for $295 and $275. This amp has been replaced by the 326BEE (MSRP $499).

This answers your question about where to find bargain audio equipment, but not about how to make an informed decision. Ask any seller, and they will tell you without hesitation that their product is the best value in audio and is significantly better than its competitors in oh so many ways. You can ask about a product on any internet audio forum and you'll get lots of opinions, often contradictory, from people who have never owned or even heard that equipment. Also, comments from owners are often subject to owner bias, which is almost always positive. I realize this sounds cynical, but it does reflect my experience.

If you can narrow your interest to two or three brands or models, it's sometimes helpful to ask for comments from people who are familiar with both or all three. For example, here's a question that might produce some useful responses: "I'm considering the NAD 326BEE and the Cambridge Audio 550A integrated amps. I would like some opinions from people who have had an opportunity to compare both these components". This will still get you lots of "Both are crap, and I recommend a Happy Audio Chinese tube amp instead" but you can politely ignore these.

Hope this helps

Subject: Re: Best Websites To Find Bargain Audio Equipment
Posted by GuitarStrings on Sat, 01 Jan 2011 14:13:50 GMT
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If you want to take the chance, always consider eBay.  Don't buy something huge and expensive from there unless you really trust the seller, but I've always bought extra speakers, cds, and headphones from the site with no problem.  I don't mind used stuff though, since it's a lot cheaper than to buy something brand new.