Subject: Will there be a time when tube amps are rarely used?
Posted by AdrianG on Mon, 26 Mar 2012 00:17:35 GMT
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I think most of us would agree that solid state amps have improved in recent years. Since they are generally cheaper, do you see a point where the market for tube amps becomes extremely small? Or will there continue to be a demand for both types of amps?

Subject: Re: Will there be a time when tube amps are rarely used?
Posted by Shane on Fri, 13 Apr 2012 21:16:01 GMT
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As long as there are audiophiles there will most likely be a demand for tubes in the near future anyway. I've found that the SS amps that I prefer tend to be more expensive than the tube amps I like. YMMV though.

Subject: Re: Will there be a time when tube amps are rarely used?
Posted by audioaudio90 on Wed, 18 Apr 2012 14:53:26 GMT
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I think there are enough tube aficionados to keep tube amps in business for quite some time. I wouldn't be surprised if the market did get a little smaller as time goes on, but not to the point where it's a niche market.

Subject: Re: Will there be a time when tube amps are rarely used?
Posted by steve f on Sun, 02 Sep 2012 05:00:48 GMT
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Guys, it's already a niche market. I'm amazed that a couple of new tubes have been developed. I still like 'em though.

steve

Subject: Re: Will there be a time when tube amps are rarely used?
Posted by gofar99 on Sun, 02 Sep 2012 22:01:21 GMT
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Hi, I sure hope they won't die out. It is what I design...high performance tube amps. Plus musicians tend to like them. I figure they will be around for a long time. Trying not to be commercial here ... Oddwatt sales are continuing to grow every year - some one is out there buying the gear. This is a similar situation to LPs going away. With at least two new LP plants started in the past year and more than that CD plants closing the demise of vinyl was obviously

false. I saw an article from 1980 a little while ago that said "buy you last turntable now" ...as they will not exist in 2-5 years. Another demise that didn't happen. So since tubes are still here and while the companies making them have changed the products are doing well.

Subject: Re: Will there be a time when tube amps are rarely used?
Posted by Clint on Mon, 14 Sep 2026 18:51:16 GMT
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steve f wrote on Sun, 02 September 2012 00:00Guys, it's already a niche market. I'm amazed that a couple of new tubes have been developed. I still like 'em though.

steve
I agree with you that solid state amps have come a long way. The modeling ones especially sound way better than they used to. A lot of players I know use them now because they're lighter, cheaper, and you can get a ton of different tones without hauling a bunch of gear around.

That said, I don't see tube amps disappearing anytime soon. There's still something about the way a good tube amp feels under your fingers and reacts when you dig in. It's hard to fully copy that, even with the best solid state stuff. A lot of guys just prefer the real tubes for recording or playing live when they can.

I figure both will stick around. Solid state will keep taking more of the everyday and budget side of the market, but there will always be people who want the tube sound and are willing to pay for it. The market for pure tube amps might get a bit smaller, but I doubt it ever becomes tiny. There's just too much history and feel tied up in them.

Subject: Re: Will there be a time when tube amps are rarely used?
Posted by Rusty on Wed, 16 Sep 2026 16:53:50 GMT
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Unfortunately for the DIY kit crowd for tube gear thought up and made for sale here in the US. The market has been very tough on these people. I don't know what's left of Kit audio made in the USA. But the one I used went kaputs soon from when the tariffs started. Like so many things made in the USA, it's a thing of the past.

Subject: Re: Will there be a time when tube amps are rarely used?
Posted by Wayne Parham on Wed, 16 Sep 2026 17:26:04 GMT
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I think tube amps are here to stay.

I think Rusty has a point - that business is tough - which has a huge effect on what's available. But from a technical standpoint, tube amps truly are better than solid state amps in certain specific ways.

Not knocking solid-state amps: You can make those great too, you just gotta compensate for their specific weaknesses to benefit from their strengths. They do have a lot of fantastic strengths. Size, weight and power: All those benefits can be realized from a solid-state amplifier provided you implement global feedback and ensure the amp never clips.

But tube amplifiers excel when run in certain "purist" topologies. A single-ended bipolar solid-state amplifier without global negative feedback cannot perform as well as a single-ended tube amplifier of the same topology, for example.

There are a handful of other topologies that really exploit the linearity benefits of tubes, and I think all those are here to stay because people promoting tube amps have done a good job of educating those interested in high-fidelity what these particular benefits are.

So I think tube amps for hifi are here to stay!

Subject: Re: Will there be a time when tube amps are rarely used?
Posted by gofar99 on Thu, 17 Sep 2026 01:45:37 GMT
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I certainly agree. I have several high quality solid state devices. Two vintage Marantz receivers and one of their console amps. All are really nice and certainly well made. They are heavy. I'm sure that the one receiver is nearly 50 pounds. But....I prefer the sound of my tube gear. It is not better but has some sort of quality that I like. This argument has been kicking around from the time the first solid state amps were made. At that time they were generally inferior to the available tube amps. Now they usually measure better. If it was that easy to determine which is best life would be easy. I would have lower power bills as well. Four Oddblocks (running a total of 8 KT120s in class A), a preamp and two phono preamps are no where as efficient as one of my receivers. So I tell everyone to get and use what they like.

Subject: Re: Will there be a time when tube amps are rarely used?
Posted by Kurt on Tue, 22 Sep 2026 04:39:13 GMT
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Rusty wrote on Wed, 16 September 2026 11:53Unfortunately for the DIY kit crowd for tube gear thought up and made for sale here in the US. The market has been very tough on these people. I don't know what's left of Kit audio made in the USA. But the one I used went kaputs soon from when the tariffs started. Like so many things made in the USA, it's a thing of the past.

I totally understood what you are saying about the DIY tube kit market getting hammered with tariff that have made them struggle a lot. It is not a good scene at all, and I fear that it affects productions in different ways.

However, I am confident that demands for tubes will always come because there are many of us who would always prefer that warm glow and the hands-on build no matter the cost. The demand is not going to vanish overnight in spite of the challenges so far.

Subject: Re: Will there be a time when tube amps are rarely used?
Posted by gofar99 on Wed, 23 Sep 2026 01:27:56 GMT
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Hi, unfortunately I know all too well of the problem of kits. Oddwatt Audio inc still exists,but is dormant. We have been unable to find any business model that makes a profit. All our fabricators and suppliers have either gone away or raised the prices to us so much we can't see a way to continue at present. As I said we are dormant now, but retain hope for the future.

Subject: Re: Will there be a time when tube amps are rarely used?
Posted by positron on Wed, 14 Oct 2026 04:20:13 GMT
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I hope not. Seems, on other audio forums, so many
are pushing average quality as ok. I tried to help
with a tip, and responders rejected even a tip.
Amazingly, some/many are against improving naturalness.

Vacuum tube amps are the only type that can be designed to
perfection (through specialized listening tests to verify).
SS, especially, have inherent flaws and/or restrictions.

cheers
pos

Subject: Re: Will there be a time when tube amps are rarely used?
Posted by Kurt on Wed, 14 Oct 2026 07:35:47 GMT
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I am so sorry to hear that.

It is painful to see a company with a lot of passion, having to go dormant as a result of increasing coats and suppliers not responding.

I know how tough it can be to keep moving a business when the figures no longer make any sense. I really want things to improve for Oddwatt Audio, and you figure a way to make it work better in the future.

I'm just asking. How about trying to sell kits in smaller batches to reduce the upfront costs?

Subject: Re: Will there be a time when tube amps are rarely used?
Posted by gofar99 on Fri, 16 Oct 2026 01:58:54 GMT
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Hi, That is where the economy fails the worst. Suppliers and fabricators want large quantities and not the modest ones we needed. In the beginning we could get lots of 25 powder coated, punched out and labeled chassis or PCBs. Now the same companies want a minimum of 100s. The only way we could function was to out source the builds and such to Asia. Not what we desired. We keep looking at alternatives, but nothing has surfaced yet.

Subject: Re: Will there be a time when tube amps are rarely used?
Posted by Wayne Parham on Fri, 16 Oct 2026 13:36:11 GMT
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I will discuss this with some of the LSAF regulars. Seems some cooperative ventures might be in order.
