Subject: High End, What's Different?
Posted by Samuel on Wed, 12 Feb 2014 10:44:14 GMT
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High end equipment is supposed to give a better hi-fi sound. But I'm curious. What is it that they do differently to make this happen? Is it a matter of using better quality materials?

Subject: Re: High End, What's Different?
Posted by Wayne Parham on Wed, 12 Feb 2014 18:32:05 GMT
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Some high-end is just what I call "audio jewelry." It sounds no better, and often times sounds worse that good commercial equipment. Other high-end gear is designed with less compromises, and it sounds much better.

One thing though, there is a ton of truly low-fidelity gear out there these days. So many MP3 players out there with nasty circuitry, fed with lossy, hacked-up digital copies of the source material. Most equipment out there is at an all-time low, worse than I've seen at any other time of my life. I think the reason is customers these days are looking for features and convenience, and they've settled on very low quality in the trade. It's weird to me.

So the reason I say all that is you will see a major improvement in sound just going from the little "home theater in a box" or phone/pod player up to a decent receiver and set of speakers. That is a night and day better improvement. This would be going from low-fidelity to what some of us call mid-fi. Then if you were to chose a really nice amplifier and speakers someday, with a good source, this would be another step up, to high-end hifi.

Subject: Re: High End, What's Different?
Posted by gofar99 on Thu, 13 Feb 2014 03:43:41 GMT
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I agree as well. Lots of junk parading as quality equipment. My thoughts tend toward...if you can get it a big box store it will not be high end regardless of price. I have run into a few exceptions. On occasion Fry's Electronics has some decent stuff. I haven't seen anything at Best Buy for years that I would consider taking home. Do not be fooled by vintage brand names on new equipment either...most are now owned by companies that have nothing to do with the original companies.

All that said you can get some really fine equipment without going broke. Check out the various forums incl this one for ideas. There is a lot of vintage gear available that can run circles around new stuff at several times the cost. Still beware that not all sellers are up and up and just because something is "old or vintage" does not guarantee it will be great.

Subject: Re: High End, What's Different?
Posted by Samuel on Thu, 13 Feb 2014 19:22:21 GMT
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So other than avoiding the big name stores (and seeking advice here), how do you go about finding the better equipment? Are you better off shopping in a mom and pop type store, where they are in the business because they are passionate about it?

Subject: Re: High End, What's Different?
Posted by Headphones on Mon, 17 Feb 2014 03:05:11 GMT
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With some high-end equipment, manufacturers just try to make it look fancier and it doesn't have an affect on the equipment's sound or performance. It is better to try out all equipment before you buy it.

Subject: Re: High End, What's Different?
Posted by gofar99 on Mon, 17 Feb 2014 03:20:53 GMT
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Hi, Yes, The car manufacturers have been doing it for years.....more chrome = greater value. At least that is what they try to convince you of. Same is now rampant in audio. Lots of glitz, little of quality. So how to sort the good from the bad. Check out the forums. If you see something you like ask about it. DO NOT rely on the reviews on the site that has the item. Many are now faked. It is really best to listen to things before you buy. Hard to do sometimes as there are few brick and mortar stores that carry quality audio gear. Check about a return policy, if it is really good then the likelihood that the product is good increases. Pay with a credit card. You have more rights and are more likely to get resolution if the sale is a bummer. Something to watch out for in audio gear is what I call the horsepower race. More does not equate with better and much of it is inflated. Rampant in the consumer level goods. I have seen mini speakers rated at things like 1000 watts. It would become incandescent at that level. A sonic light bulb. Also in amplifiers. 1000watts of peak music power is a meaningless term. Continuous power is better but not really a measure of quality. Distortion and frequency response quoted at a single frequency at one watt is somewhat more useful, but really doesn't tell you how something sounds in your system. The best thing is use your ears to judge, but next best is someone you trust that either has or is familiar with the item.