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Subject: Biggest waste of money?

Posted by [Leot55](#) on Tue, 21 Jan 2020 21:46:03 GMT

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Some changes offer more bang for the buck than others, so which do you think are the biggest waste of money? Maybe the gadget/addition/treatment/improvement enhances the audio, but the return is minuscule when compared to the cost. Personally, I don't think those foam acoustic panels do much, but they're often recommended as a first step. At least they aren't terribly expensive though.

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Subject: Re: Biggest waste of money?

Posted by [Taurus](#) on Wed, 22 Jan 2020 07:24:42 GMT

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The one thing I can think about now is buying a cabinet for my speakers. Since my family couldn't afford the great surround speakers, we decided to use this trick. It turns out that we don't get any significant boost in sound experience.

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Subject: Re: Biggest waste of money?

Posted by [Rusty](#) on Wed, 22 Jan 2020 16:41:59 GMT

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I listen pretty exclusively to vinyl records. The common consensus you read about on forums and advertising is that LOMC, (low output moving coil) cartridges are the pinnacle of achievement for the highest sound quality with vinyl record playback. I'm no different than most blokes and wanted to find out about all this nirvana awaiting with one of these critters. Keep in mind that some of these things can go for multiple thousands of dollars. Which is what the high end audio is know for. Not being a man of such means, my entry would have to be one of the lower end models. What I ended up with was a cartridge historically known for being a good return on investment. The Audio Technica OC9 II. When the model came on sale after a newer model of the same was introduced, I jumped on a sale that made it no more expensive than some higher end MM, (moving magnet) types of cartridges. The most commonly used type of phono cart. With a LOMC cartridge, the output from it is so low that it must be boosted by what's known as a SUT or step up transformer. Or a phono preamp that can boost the signal up to a usable level. So, your investment is dependent on acquiring at least one of the two before the use of the cartridge is made. My set required the SUT. I built one from plans on the internet. Longish story short, I can say that the cartridge sounds good. But, no better really than my good MM cartridges, and not as good as a couple of my vintage MM cartridges that I acquired for less money. All I can say is that this foray into the threshold of high end phono cartridges didn't instill any faith that investing stupid money into one of these greater, finer little do-dad's would make me roll my eyes back in my head in audio ecstasy.

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Subject: Re: Biggest waste of money?

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Posted by [Madison](#) on Sat, 25 Jan 2020 19:05:10 GMT

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Oh man, did you tell that story well, Rusty. I felt your pain and frustration. Does it ever make you wonder why some folks will swear that it's a great buy and fantastic, then you get it and realize it doesn't create the amazing experience you thought it would? I've felt that disconnect many times. I know it's subjective, but I still scratch my head when it happens to me.

Leo, I've heard that about the panels, but I swear by them. It's an easy fix.

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Subject: Re: Biggest waste of money?

Posted by [Rusty](#) on Sat, 25 Jan 2020 19:44:43 GMT

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Quote:Sat, 25 January 2020 13:05

Madison

Oh man, did you tell that story well, Rusty. I felt your pain and frustration. Does it ever make you wonder why some folks will swear that it's a great buy and fantastic, then you get it and realize it doesn't create the amazing experience you thought it would?

Yeah, it was just a continuation of my audio education by means of trying something out. It's not a loss by any means. Just a reminder that what most of the noise you pick up on in advertising, reviews and forums is to be taken with a large grain of salt. It's a nice cartridge to be sure, and for the price paid a bargain really. Like mentioned, you can spend thousands on these things. And high end audio always equates your path to that end is perpetuated by that greater expense. Your equipment is just not up to snuff to realize those subtle nuances without the upgrade.

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Subject: Re: Biggest waste of money?

Posted by [Taurus](#) on Sun, 26 Jan 2020 04:14:53 GMT

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I'm sorry to hear about your not-so-fun adventure, but it's a good lesson nevertheless. Thank you for sharing! I suppose that's one of the challenges in this hobby. Many times it needs heavy investment, but nothing guarantees the results.

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Subject: Re: Biggest waste of money?

Posted by [Azuri](#) on Wed, 27 May 2020 02:10:01 GMT

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Some people will tell you something is great, and it turns it's anything but. Those people are either hard of hearing or don't want to admit they made a bad buy.

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Subject: Re: Biggest waste of money?

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Posted by [The Noise](#) on Fri, 23 Oct 2020 01:23:07 GMT

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Most audiophiles will improve upon something just to brag that they did. The change may be minuscule to most people, but to a true audiophile it means the world.

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Subject: Re: Biggest waste of money?

Posted by [Clint](#) on Fri, 03 Apr 2026 05:15:40 GMT

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Azuri wrote on Tue, 26 May 2020 21:10 Some people will tell you something is great, and it turns it's anything but. Those people are either hard of hearing or don't want to admit they made a bad buy.

It is also important that we come to a conclusion that at this stage, what is very okay for person A might not meet the expectations of person B. It even happens in sound production at studios. So, it is normal to see some recommend what worked for them, but at the end of the day, it might not be what you are looking for that can elevate the sound quality of your musical instruments when placed in a room.

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Subject: Re: Biggest waste of money?

Posted by [Wayne Parham](#) on Fri, 03 Apr 2026 14:45:52 GMT

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Any audio hifi purchase made for something without reliable support documentation is a waste of money, in my opinion.

Specifically what I mean by that is measurement data or at least known benefits.

For some reason, there is still a lot of snake oil in audio.

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