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Subject: Amp Camp Amp

Posted by [Jensen](#) on Sat, 03 Apr 2021 14:28:40 GMT

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I'm looking for a fun project amp to drive my 4pi speakers. Thinking of building a pair of Amp Camp amps to run as monoblocks.

<https://diyaudiostore.com/collections/frontpage/products/amp-camp-amp-kit?variant=7072933085218>

They're 15 watts of class A power and supposed to be able to generate "sufficient" volumes when paired with "sufficiently sensitive" speakers. Would these be a good fit? Any feed back or alternate suggestions are appreciated.

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Subject: Re: Amp Camp Amp

Posted by [Wayne Parham](#) on Sat, 03 Apr 2021 20:18:56 GMT

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I think that'll work very nicely. I run a pair of four Pi loudspeakers on an Audio Note SET amp that has about the same output drive level. It doesn't shake the house but gets loud enough to enjoy just about anything, even action scenes for home theater.

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Subject: Re: Amp Camp Amp

Posted by [tom-m](#) on Sun, 04 Apr 2021 18:23:36 GMT

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Hi,

Here is my feedback and alternate suggestions.

I had ACA mono blocks about 1 year ago. I purchased the kits new, and had a qualified professional build them. His labor cost was about \$325. Worth it for me. I am not a builder and wanted them done right. They were built as mono blocks, not stereo that can switch to mono. I had them built differential, balanced. I have a balanced preamp. I never thought they would be my only amps, but wanted to try them out. And not too pricey for class A.

I sold them after about 1 year of ownership. I have efficient speakers, much like Pi 3 or 4. But the amps did not provide the kind of dynamics I wanted. I like some punch and a big sound, in a medium big room. Overall, just too mellow, or laid back for me. They did sound good. Very smooth. But in the end, I just wanted more head room. I always wondered if the laptop style power supply was limiting some of the amp's dynamics and punch. I don't know.

Two alternatives come to mind, but not kits to build.

After I sold the ACAs, I purchased a used Ayre V3 amp. This used amp was priced just \$200 more than I had in the kits with build cost. Totally different amp sound. Very big and dynamic. Also

very quiet with he chokes Ayre uses in the power supply. The V3 is fully balanced. And some class A output.

The other suggestion is a Schiit Audio Aegir. This is a low power class A amp. The new price is about the same a 2 ACA kits. And if someone wanted more power, buy 2 and run mono. I have not heard these, but they look interesting at a good price.

In the end, you may enjoy building the kit. I am a big fan of N. Pass, and all the First Watt designs. I had a F5 about 10 years ago.

Tom

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Subject: Re: Amp Camp Amp  
Posted by [Jensen](#) on Mon, 05 Apr 2021 12:12:47 GMT  
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Thank you both for the replies. As a reward for my indecisiveness, this topic has become irrelevant. The ACA's a now sold out. I'll look into the Ayer and my be back with more questions. Cheers, J

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Subject: Re: Amp Camp Amp  
Posted by [tom-m](#) on Mon, 05 Apr 2021 14:56:17 GMT  
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One more I just thought of, for DIY build, is Neurochrome Modulus. Lots of positive reviews. <https://neurochrome.com/>

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Subject: Re: Amp Camp Amp  
Posted by [docjrev](#) on Thu, 08 Apr 2021 18:58:00 GMT  
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Hi Jensen,  
Here is my experience. I have 2 ACA amps configured in mono driving my Pi 4s with JBL woofers and B&C 250 tweeters. Contrary to what Tom stated above, my ACA monos can drive my Pi 4s brilliantly. I listen around 80-85 db 8 feet from my Pis. There is no loss in dynamics and I can drive the Pis louder if I wanted.

However, I also built an Aleph J and an M2x Pass amps. These 2 amps sounded different on the Pis. Better than the ACA? Definitely, but they are also bigger amps with 25 watts power per channel.

I think you will enjoy the ACA in your Pis if you will build them. You absolutely need to configure

them as monos (bridged or parallel). If ever, try building the ACA amps with premium parts. In my ears, the ACA amps with premium parts sounds way better than the ordinary ones.

Godspeed.

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Subject: Re: Amp Camp Amp  
Posted by [Jensen](#) on Thu, 08 Apr 2021 20:35:26 GMT  
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Thank you for the feed back. Its appreciated. I'll let the board know where I net out. Cheers, J

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Subject: Re: Amp Camp Amp  
Posted by [Jensen](#) on Fri, 09 Apr 2021 16:51:12 GMT  
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Any feed back on the Hypex NC400s? Very reasonable price and more of a Lego than a diy project. If you listen to the science crowd, they approach "perfect".

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Subject: Re: Amp Camp Amp  
Posted by [pjanda1](#) on Sun, 09 May 2021 16:10:54 GMT  
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While there are folks in the high efficiency community who think all amplifiers are essentially equal, many of us are here to have speakers that use what we'd perceive as the best amps--the tiny ones. If class D amps are interesting to you, you could start worse places than a TPA3116 amp that would run \$30-40 including shipping.

I've never heard the amp camp amp, but keep in mind it was designed to be simple and safe to build--not as the highest-end First Watt design that ever was. Though, many also say that within its power limitations, it is very similar in sound to the other Pass single ended designs.

Before committing, you should also consider the F5 and Aleph J, both of which have PCBs available at the DIYAudio store. Think about whether you want more detail and dynamics at the expensive of some warmth (F5) or something more laid back (Aleph J, ACA). I've got a bit of both with F5 monoblocks and separately, an 845 SET amp. The background music systems in our house are both class D (a TK2050 driving LXminis and a TPA3116 on my wife's desk).

Paul

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Subject: Re: Amp Camp Amp  
Posted by [Wayne Parham](#) on Sun, 09 May 2021 16:43:50 GMT

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There may be some high-efficiency speaker users that think "all amps are equal," but I think high-efficiency speakers are actually the kind most likely to expose the differences between amplifiers.

A speaker that generates over 95dB/W/M is going to be usually run under a watt in a home hifi setting. So, for example, zero crossing distortion from some push-pull amps is going to be much more obvious than an 80dB/W/M speaker running at 30 watts for the same SPL. The zero-crossing distortion on the low-efficiency speaker gets "lost" because it's proportionally smaller. But the dynamic range gets lost in the low-efficiency speaker too, which is what tends to draw people to high-efficiency speakers. They sound "bigger" and more "open."

So I do think you need an amp that's clean in the "first watt." You really notice the ones that aren't.

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Subject: Re: Amp Camp Amp  
Posted by [Rusty](#) on Sun, 09 May 2021 22:06:27 GMT  
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I'm not technically proficient enough to say. But my ears and mind have said a really nice preamp, can bring out the best of an amplifier going through Pi speakers. Solid state or tubed. I use both. And they are equally graced with better sound using a really good preamp. Watts and what's feeding it? Great design. Really makes a difference to me. I use Transcendent Sound preamps and either Hafler or Transcendent Sound OTL tube amps.

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Subject: Re: Amp Camp Amp  
Posted by [pjanda1](#) on Mon, 10 May 2021 00:09:18 GMT  
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Excess gain is a frequent problem with high efficiency speakers the dramatically shortens the list of possible preamps. But if you are going to drive SS subs other than from the speaker output (or especially a DSP for the sub(s), some of which have nasty low input impedance), you generally need not just something more than a passive pre, but something with some oomph. The First Watt B1 buffer is a great option for something that sounds great, has no gain, and will drive anything.

I really, really like looking at tubes. But I am very frustrated by how good the B1/F5 combo sounds. Not to mention being dead quiet and entirely trouble free for years (while my tube amps hum, burp, fart, and engage in various other shenanigans).

The B1 also leaves you confident you are comparing amps and speakers, as it isn't adding or detracting much of anything on its own.

I'm not a fan of the idea of a tube buffer, which generally means a cathode follower, but I've never

played with one. I do like 12B4 preamps, which have moderate gain and can drive SS loads, especially with a constant current source on the plate. But see the above comment about noise and shenanigans, as 12B4s can be troublesome in that regard.

Paul

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Subject: Re: Amp Camp Amp  
Posted by [Wayne Parham](#) on Mon, 10 May 2021 13:40:43 GMT  
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You're so right about low-level amp noise and high-efficiency speakers. I can't tell you how many times I've been to an audio show and let someone swap in their favorite amp or some new amp on the scene and heard noticeable hum. The owners would be embarrassed saying it was quiet on their systems, and start looking for ground loops and what-not. But that wasn't it - It's just that their speakers weren't as efficient - so the hum wasn't as noticeable in their system. Their amp sounds great, maybe, but in between songs you can hear a little hum on efficient speakers.

An amplifier has to be dead quiet when used with high-efficiency speakers.

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Subject: Re: Amp Camp Amp  
Posted by [Jensen](#) on Mon, 17 May 2021 16:05:56 GMT  
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Glad I could precipitate an interesting conversation.

I went with a pair of Hypex NC400 "kits". The face plates weren't to my liking (especially next to my super pretty 4pis. So I worked up some replacements in Wenge. Just like w/ my 4pis, didn't know what I was doing, struggled about but survived in the end. Couldn't be happier with how they look and sound.

With a 10Tb of hi res lossless plugged into a raspberry pi, out to a Topping D50s, I feel like I have a pretty hot, low buck set up. Again, couldn't be happier.

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## File Attachments

- 1) [IMG\\_1086.jpg](#), downloaded 137 times
  - 2) [IMG\\_1087.jpg](#), downloaded 142 times
  - 3) [IMG\\_1088.jpg](#), downloaded 146 times
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Subject: Re: Amp Camp Amp  
Posted by [Wayne Parham](#) on Mon, 17 May 2021 16:32:51 GMT  
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That really looks great!

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Subject: Re: Amp Camp Amp  
Posted by [Rusty](#) on Mon, 17 May 2021 17:28:51 GMT  
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Very minimalist modern look. And power out the yin yang. Bet your very pleased.

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