
Subject: Cassette ramblings...

Posted by [hurdy_gurdyman](#) on Fri, 03 Dec 2004 14:56:50 GMT

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I've been on epy looking at cassette decks for a week or so now. I'm replacing my Tascam 133 with another just like it (mine had the right channel go garbled a while back). I've been a bit amazed at how popular cassette decks still seem to be. Lots of bidding on the better models. I seen a Teac 6000 sell for \$175, which I think is great considering it's \$1200 original price. I almost bid on a Yamaha deck with all four noise reduction types and response above 20 kHz. It went for around 43 dollars. There were over a thousand decks of various makes on epy, all of them getting bids. You'd think, in this day of well established digital dominance, that cassette would be completely dead. Evidently some, like myself, think there may be a use for these things yet. Mine, with my faithful DBX-150 type I noise reduction unit, is used to record my bands rehearsals regularly. It also was used to record my last CD on. If I hadn't mentioned it to a few people, most would never have guessed it was recorded on cassette. Man, I hope high quality cassette tapes are available for a long while yet! Let's hear it for old-fashioned cassette! When used in a great deck, they are hard to beat! Dave Oh, BTW, I won another Tascam 133 for \$42 plus shipping and handling. Not bad for a deck with a list price of \$1200.

Subject: Re: Cassette ramblings...

Posted by [Wayne Parham](#) on Fri, 03 Dec 2004 18:37:03 GMT

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Hi Dave, Man, that's great that you're finding such good prices! I still like tape too. I've been a long time user of Hi-Fi cassette. Some might consider cassette Mid-Fi, especially since most cassette equipment was. But there were some very high end tape decks made in the seventies and eighties. Your Tascams were a great example. I stayed with cassette because I used them in cars. Back in the eighties, I ran Concorde cassette decks in my cars, which sound better than most CD players I've heard. These things were statement products. So I wanted to make good quality tapes for them, and found an Onkyo deck that had a bias adjustment. Not just the switch for tape type, but a variable knob for fine adjustment. I found that certain tapes worked best at certain settings, and without an adjustment, you really couldn't get the best sound from any given tape. That bias adjustment knob has been a mandatory option on all tape decks I've purchased ever since. Now days I still maintain tape for the same reason. My Cutlass uses a cassette deck, and I wanted to keep the stock dash trim which precludes my upgrading to a CD unit. Later models mount a CD player, and it's really a simple matter of using trim that had a larger cutout. But I wanted to stay stock, so I have a cassette deck in the car. Most thieves aren't old enough to remember cassette, so it thwarts them too. Naturally, with a cassette deck in my car, I needed a good home deck to record with. So a few years back, I went on a search for a good unit. Most of the new units are of the old mid-fi variety anymore; I guess the thinking is that most people aren't using them. That's made availability of high quality decks even scarcer than it was two decades ago. But I did find the Sony KA1ESA. It's a great sounding high-quality deck and it has the requisite bias adjustment knob. I guess if I had thought about it, I could have searched for a good cassette deck on eBay. What stopped me from trying was that I purchased a used Tascam

cassette deck, thinking it was the old studio deck like you're undoubtedly talking about. I really like the pro decks made for doing four track recording. Great sounding decks, durable and nice sounding. But what I mistakenly bought was the Taskam 202 MKII, thinking it would be more like the "real" pro units. It's not. The 202 is Tascam in name only, and is like a \$59.95 discount store special. Terrible. So I didn't try the used deal again, and instead decided to search for a good new deck. If I hadn't been successful, I would have most certainly gone back to Tascam and purchased a good professional deck. Anyway, I'm with you on this Dan. The sound quality of a good high-quality tape formula in a good tape deck is surprising. At 1.875ips, it's pushing the edge of magnetic media technologies, but it's convenient and good sounding. Wayne

Subject: Re: Cassette ramblings...

Posted by [hurdy_gurdyman](#) on Fri, 03 Dec 2004 18:47:48 GMT

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Wayne, Here's the unit I won.

<http://cgi.ebay.com/ws/eBayISAPI.dll?ViewItem&rd=1&item=3764933829> The nice thing about this unit is it has high speed option (3 3/4 IPS) and a loop for whatever outboard noise reduction I want. Also, the 3rd channel. This works great use as a vocal close-up mic channel. I use it on a mic that is close to the vocalist's mouth, then blend it into the rest of the music on the other two tracks, thus making the vocals less likely to be lost in the rest of the music. It works well for this. Very rugged and pro quality throughout. Dave

Subject: Re: Cassette ramblings...

Posted by [Wayne Parham](#) on Sat, 04 Dec 2004 21:32:00 GMT

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Hi Dave, That's one sweet deck. Has it arrived yet? How does it sound? What tapes have you tried and what works best for you? Wayne

Subject: Re: Cassette ramblings...

Posted by [hurdy_gurdyman](#) on Sun, 05 Dec 2004 01:09:42 GMT

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Hey Wayne, The Tascam probably won't be here until the middle of next week at the earliest. I have another identical deck that I've been using for about four years now. The right playback channel went garbled and I figured it would be cheaper to get another deck than to fix that one. Besides, this way I have a parts deck. As for the sound, it's great. I recorded my last CD on it (three years ago). I've had a couple of audiophile friends comment on the good fidelity. I'm

planning to start a new CD project later this month or in January.Dave

Subject: Re: Cassette ramblings...

Posted by [Wayne Parham](#) on Sun, 05 Dec 2004 01:49:57 GMT

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Gotcha. It will be good to be back in good working order again, and I'm glad you'll still have a parts deck. That will work out nicely. I think some that aren't familiar with a real good cassette deck are quite surprized when they hear one. It's a great format, "user friendly" and good sounding when the tape and deck are of high quality. When I use a deck with no bias adjustment, I usually find one of two brands that work best. Teac and Maxell CrO2 or metal tapes are usually best. But when I have adjustable bias, I can usually make most any tape but the ultra cheap ones sound pretty good. Of course, Fe2O3 tapes always have a little more bass and less treble, but with the right bias setting, I can make them really sound pretty good, flat out to probably 16kHz. The metal tapes are easy to get dead flat out past 20kHz.

Subject: Re: Cassette ramblings...

Posted by [hurdy_gurdyman](#) on Sun, 05 Dec 2004 03:17:35 GMT

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I've had several decks with user bias fine adjustment on them. Still have a Technics dual-well that sounds pretty good (needs some new belts and rollers, though). The Tascam outperforms any of the others I've had, probably because the basic quality of the parts and the construction is better than the others I've had. A high quality unit without bias fine tuning might outperform a lesser deck that has bias tuning. However, a high quality deck with bias fine tuning would be like icing on the cake... I used to have a Pioneer CT-f900

<http://cgi.ebay.com/ws/eBayISAPI.dll?ViewItem&rd=1&item=5734457662&ssPageName=STRK:M EWA:IT>This was my favorite stereo cassette deck. I think it's the coolest looking component I've ever had. Mine finally died (record stopped working and most of the rubber needed replacing). Someday I may just get another one just for the cool looks. The three head design sounded good, too. I think it had user adjustable bias fine tuning. I like TDK's top chrome (type II) tape when I can find it (getting scarce around here). Maxell's top chrome is next on my list. These sound great on the Tascams. Sony's CD-IT tapes are ok, but not quite as perfect sounding. I haven't seen Denon tapes around here for a while. I used to use them in my pre-Tascam days and liked them.Dave

Subject: Re: Cassette ramblings...

Posted by [hurdy_gurdyman](#) on Sun, 05 Dec 2004 03:31:11 GMT

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>When I use a deck with no bias adjustment, I usually find one of two brands that work best. Teac and Maxell CrO2 or metal tapes are usually best. But when I have adjustable bias, I can usually make most any tape but the ultra cheap ones sound pretty good. Of course, Fe2O3 tapes always have a little more bass and less treble, but with the right bias setting, I can make them really sound pretty good, flat out to probably 16kHz. The metal tapes are easy to get dead flat out past 20kHz

Subject: Re: Cassette ramblings...

Posted by [Wayne Parham](#) on Sun, 05 Dec 2004 04:26:41 GMT

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I agree with you about the Tascams and about the quality of transport. The transport and the tape head are the most important things, and Tascam pro deck transports are built like tanks. Very good stuff.

Subject: Re: Cassette ramblings...

Posted by [Manualblock](#) on Fri, 10 Dec 2004 09:00:32 GMT

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I have an Onkyo now that I use; it has the bias adjustment I wonder if it is the same one you had? The best deck I ever had was a Denon top of the line 3-head bias adjust but not auto reverse. I hate auto rverse but nowadays they all have that feature. The Denon had a time remaining feature. Not a counter but a circuit that read the tape spool and totaled the remainig time on the tape then read it out in actual minutes and seconds. It was so accurate I could make tapes that followed the song times to the 2/3 second mark. I could make recordings where The tape would end at 5 sec. after the final song. Great sounding tapes with perfect time signatures. The deck got old and I contacted every Denon guy up to the North American rep. But no one would repair that aspect of the unit when it failed. Now I can't find that feature.

Subject: Re: Cassette ramblings...

Posted by [Wayne Parham](#) on Fri, 10 Dec 2004 09:50:18 GMT

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Yeah, I never liked auto-reverse either. Too much to go wrong, and usually difficult to maintain alignment. I don't recall the Onkyo's model number, but I sure liked it. Denon made great gear, so I can imagine your deck must have been really nice. I think cassette tapes were pretty

length-accurate, so you could depend on the counter on good brands.

Subject: Re: Cassette ramblings...

Posted by [Manualblock](#) on Fri, 10 Dec 2004 14:24:17 GMT

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True but then you had to transcribe the counter digits to real time. With this feature I would add all the times of the songs leaving out the last one. Then after they were all recorded whatever time was left I would find a song that fit exactly into that spot. No more 2 minute exit silence.

Subject: Re: Cassette ramblings...

Posted by [Wayne Parham](#) on Sun, 12 Dec 2004 00:22:44 GMT

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Yeah, when I said counter I really didn't mean to make a distinction whether the readout was in seconds or reel rotations. I just meant that it seemed like better tapes were made with very consistent lengths. Some cheaper tapes weren't as consistent, but the better ones seemed to be the same length from tape to tape. I know what you mean about the 2 minute exit silence. It was always important to me too, to fill the tape as nearly completely as I could.
