Subject: DYI Ecomonics
Posted by GarMan on Fri, 18 Feb 2005 21:17:55 GMT
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Just though I'd toss this out for discussion on the topic of DIY economics. For myself, there are various reasons why I'm a DIY'er. I enjoy the learning and building process, the pride of saying "I made that", and of course, the economics aspect of it. I tend to select projects that compete with commercially available units that I would never be able to afford. There very little sense in trying to duplicate a set of speakers or an amp that I can purchase for $200 at BestBuy. Probably end up spending more than the $200. However, I strongly believe that $500 to $1000 in parts, plus a lot of labour, can net you an amp or speakers that compete with commercial units costing $2000 plus.My friends think it's pretty cool that I build my own and (not to toot my own horns) are impressed with my results. However, they often point out that DIY tends to have very low resale value, so brand name products are better investments.Here's my line of thinking. And comments are welcome. The $700 I spent in parts and material for my 3PI gave me a set of speakers that sound as good if not better than speakers I've heard in the $3000+ range. From what I've seen, audio equipment tends to lose 1/3 of their value in the resale market after a few years. Therefore, the use of these $3,000 speakers would cost me $1,000 over the course of 4 years (if I decide to resell). As for the 3PI, even if I can't give it away (unlikely) and end up tossing it out into the trash, it's still just $700 spent.Thoughts?

Subject: Re: DYI Ecomonics
Posted by Manualblock on Fri, 18 Feb 2005 21:58:21 GMT
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The investment aspect is shakey at best. Audio equipment has a very low return rate in the best of circumstances. You have to add the intangibles such as the ability to custom tailor the equipment to suit your particular needs and the economic benefit of having the expertise to do your own servicing. Determining the cost benefit by deciding what the DIY stuff is worth in terms of sound quality is also dicey. There are plenty of very good loudspeakers from the past 30 yrs that will perform as good as you could possibly want and are avialable for fair prices. The real trade-offs occur to my mind in the trends that designers follow concurrent with musical styles. As music changes it is recorded in ways that follow the trend. This results in design descisions that compliment those musical styles. The speakers are then built to flatter the music recordings. So buying new eqiupment means you are shaping the sound in those directions. This may mean they are not as suited for other types of music.What you build; you build for the satisfaction. A pair of Snell Type III two ways from ten yrs ago cost 200$ A Fisher or Scott reciver upgraded is 500$ and a Thorens table with a decent cartridge is 250$ Thats 950$ and the sound is 90% as musical as anything you can build or buy.So unfortunately we do this for the personal satisfaction; because lord knows we don't save any money on it.

Subject: Re: DYI Ecomonics
Posted by GarMan on Sat, 19 Feb 2005 03:27:46 GMT
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You bring up an interesting point about second-hand equipment. If economics is my primary deciding factor, I would not bother with DIY at all, but build my system entirely from second-hand equipment. So the learning and building process is pretty important for me.I'd argue your point about not saving any money. The amount spend is not chump change and I'd have to admit that I always end up spending more than planned. But compared to what you'd have to spend on brand name equipment to get equivalent performance, the gap is huge.Let me phrase it another way. I've been following the preamp group build on and off. Very impressive with the quality of parts selected. At what price point would you begin to see brand name equipment with components close to that quality level (for example, capacitors the size of a six pack)? I can't see myself being able to afford that level of manufactured equipment, but with the proper know-how, it can be DIY'ed for a fraction of the cost.I think second-hand is probably the best way to go if cost is the primary factor. However, like you said, you're stuck with a vintage design. On the other hand, DIY makes it very affordable to upgrade and change the system every few years to follow the latest trend.

Subject: Re: DYI Ecomonics
Posted by Manualblock on Sat, 19 Feb 2005 12:37:02 GMT
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You are correct; to build a pre-amp of that calibre would in fact run plenty. The upgrade status however; well change might be a better term since hopefully this will sound so that upgrade is no longer a factor!I think most older tube stuff sounds good enough that the average music lover would be happy ad infinitum. The features are probably the real sticking point since many like the convienience of remote and such. But again you must want to do this; just wanting good sound, well that is available fairly priced. Your points are good ones and understand I am just playing devils advocate here because after all I do this because it is worth it to me. And a guy like yourself who does good work has that as it's own reward.

Subject: Re: DYI Ecomonics
Posted by wunhuanglo on Sun, 20 Feb 2005 13:29:15 GMT
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I have been very successful at resale, but I don't count the cabinets I have bought and resold dozens of drivers and horns in trying various combinations. If I buy used drivers, I usually come very close to selling at the price I paid at resale. If I buy new, I have usually gotten 60% or so of the original price.