Subject: Need recommendations on which solder to use
Posted by gumby1 on Wed, 24 Nov 2004 08:40:25 GMT
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I will be building a Seal Electronics SS amplifier next month and I'm seeking advice on which solder to use. I am considering Kester 44, Cardas Quad Eutectic, or Wonder Ultraclear. I bought a Weller temperature controlled soldering iron for this project, but I'm an inexperienced kit builder so I'm looking for advice.

Subject: Re: Need recommendations on which solder to use
Posted by Wayne Parham on Wed, 24 Nov 2004 08:47:24 GMT
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I like good old Kester 44. I've used it on everything for years, no complaints.

Subject: Re: Need recommendations on which solder to use
Posted by colinhester on Wed, 24 Nov 2004 16:00:51 GMT
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I really like Radio Shack's 2% silver bearing (64-035 E). It's 0.015" in diameter, which really helps in tight places when mounting on PCB's with lots of traces.....Colin

Subject: Re: Need recommendations on which solder to use
Posted by BillEpstein on Wed, 24 Nov 2004 23:12:44 GMT
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I had trouble as a novice with the RS 2% silver. I've used a lot of Kester 44 the past year. It melts at a lower temp and flows very freely. Only drawback is that it cools down to a not-so-shiny grey and might cause you to think it's a cold joint. Or worse, make you go back and apply more heat and fry a component. I've done both! Cardas Quad Eutectic melts and flows beautifully. It leaves a shiny joint that even acetone on a Q-tip rarely shows flux deposits. Buy it from M Percy much cheaper than elsewhere.

Subject: Re: Need recommendations on which solder to use

Posted by gumby1 on Thu, 25 Nov 2004 07:58:07 GMT
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Thanks for the recommendations everyone. I may end up going with the Kester 44 as most people seem to like it very well and it is about 1/4 the cost of Cardas.

Subject: Absolutely.
Posted by Poindexter on Sat, 01 Jan 2005 04:31:08 GMT
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The old RatShack 62/36/2 with the red label was pretty good solder, except that it was so skinny that it took a foot of it to make a joint. The current one with the purple/magenta label is just rubbish. Literally; it's just dirty. If you keep your tip really, really clean you can get an okay joint from it, but why?The Cardas is just beautiful. Easy to melt, good active flux that's easy on the surfaces, wets readily, leaves a clean shiny joint, just the right gauge for electronics (though a little skinny for, like, speaker wires). I've been building a lot this last year, and I've hardly put a dent in that half pound spool.Listen to ya Unca Poinz; go on down to the sewing store, and get a lump of beeswax. Make sure it's real 100% beeswax. With your iron, sweep over one flat side of the lump, and stick it to your stand, right next to the sponge. Not too close to the iron holder, now. No cheating, each and every time you pick up the iron out of the stand, touch it to the wax, wipe well on the sponge, and give it a little tin with the Cardas. Perfect joints every time, and no overheating of the circuit.Prosperous New Year, guys,Poinz

Subject: Kester, Cardas
Posted by Poindexter on Sun, 09 Jan 2005 20:19:28 GMT
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The Kester works okay, but it depends on how long you want it to work. When I was hanging out at the local hi-fi fixit shop, Mark gave me two old suitcase-style tube testers; one a Heath, and the other I can't remember, but a good brand. I hadn't used either of them more than a few times when they started to go intermittent on some sockets and tests, and then bad. I opened them up, and was horrified to find that all the solder joints in there were gray, crusty, granular. You gotta dig that there are literally hundreds of solder joints in a commercial tube tester. I got my nine-pin socket working again for some tests, but ultimately, those things defeated me and ended up in the big brown file cabinet. I've also seen the same thing in a lot of old tube hi-fi gear I'm pulling apart - horrible crusty solder joints all over the place. I don't know if that was specifically Kester 44, but certainly an equivalent.I've been using first the old RatShack and then Cardas for about fifteen years now. I take that gear apart, and those solder joints look just like the day I put them in there. A lot of my gear is either made on commission or sold after the fact to appreciative pals, and for the difference in cost (maybe two bits for a piece of gear), I just can't conscience the supposed economy. These guys trust me.It's certainly your call, but that $20 half pound of

Cardas will last you for years (probably your career as a hobbyist) , and you'll never have to think about it again. Respectfully,Poinz