

# aX Visits Burning Amp '07

The Burning Amplifier Festival did not live up to its name. No amplifiers or any other equipment burst into flames during the event. What did burst into the open was a vibrant, very alive community of audio DIY enthusiasts of true global proportions, presenting completed designs and research projects that could hold their own against many professional products.



PHOTO 1: The focus at the BAF was, of course, listening to music.

**Y**ou know how it is. Bring together a few people sharing the same hobby and before long they will plan a get together, an "event." The online audio DIY community of diyaudio.com tested the water with its first last summer in the UK.

Not to be outdone, a group of moderators of diyaudio.com put an organization together for a US-based event, the Burning Amplifier Festival (with a wink to the Burning Man Festival at Black Rock Desert). Held in the old firehouse of San Francisco's Fort Mason, against the spectacular backdrop of SF bay and

Alcatraz, BAF07 opened its doors on Oct. 21 at 10:00, and closed down 12 hours later. The event was organized around group demos.

Participants were assigned to five groups, each with a 2 hour slot to demo and explain their projects. Each group had several speaker systems, amplifiers, sources, cabling, and so on, which were swapped in and out during the listening session, which gave a very good impression of differences (or not) between components. The show was a good mix between an organized event and group interactions.

One highlight of the show was the

visit of Nelson Pass, pulling up with a pick-up truck literally full of "goodies" to give away. But the main focus was on listening and discussions about the usual subjects such as sound quality, tube versus solid-state engineering, and speaker building (Photo 1).

## HIGHLIGHTS

Amplifiers, of course, abounded, although I didn't see many single-ended designs. Several participants demonstrated Pass-based DIY amps, including a towering version of the F4. The amp was still being finished at the show and Nelson Pass wasn't above lending a hand (Photo 2). An interesting hybrid FET/tube amp was shown which sported a switched-mode high-voltage supply. Because of that, the amp was unusually small in size (Photo 3).

The trend in speakers was toward full range, simple but high quality. One speaker, the BOFU BIB (where BIB stands for Bigger Is Better) drew a lot of attention with an excellent sound quality and a build price of just \$100 a pair. It used a Pioneer full-range unit with a tiny tweeter (Photo 4).

Iain McNeill showed a very professional DSP crossover, based on an AD Blackfin DSP evaluation board and Matlab software. The system drove three-way speakers through six dedicated power amps (based on Doug Self's Blameless amps). The sound was well

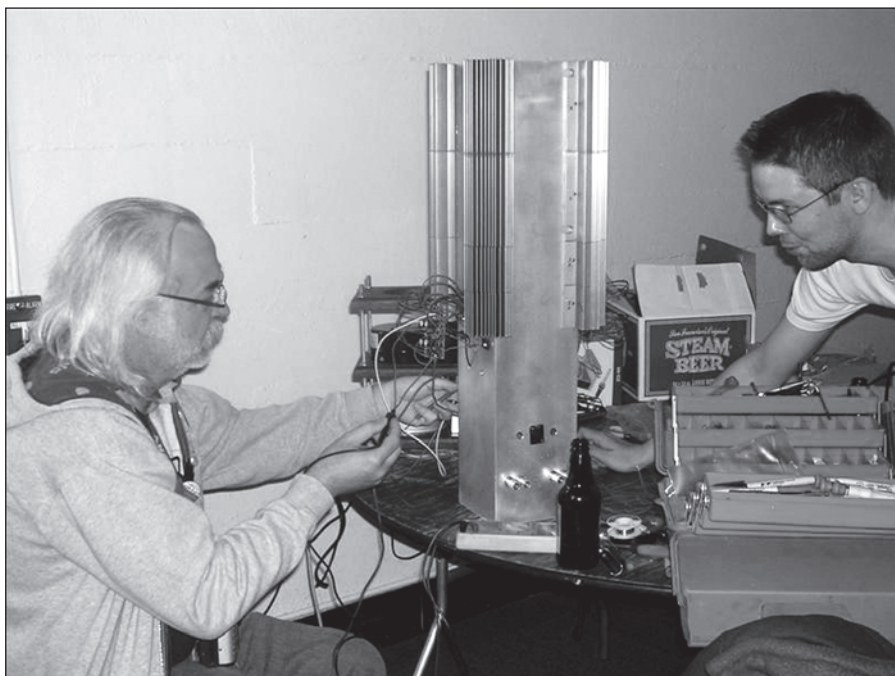


PHOTO 2: Nelson Pass (left) helping out to finish Mark's DIY version of the Pass F4.

integrated and the driver takeover appeared seamlessly. This was clearly an advanced project.

In the side rooms two sets of test equipment were set up. Jack Hidley of NHT demonstrated a complete Klippel speaker driver test bench, complete with Audio Precision hardware and a laser interferometer. Folks who brought drivers with them had no trouble finding him! The laser interferometer was used to track cone movement as a function of drive level and frequency (Photo 5). The demo showed all kinds of interesting

things, such as a cone that "jumps out" at a certain drive level and then vibrates around a new neutral position which is actually away from the mechanical rest position without drive.

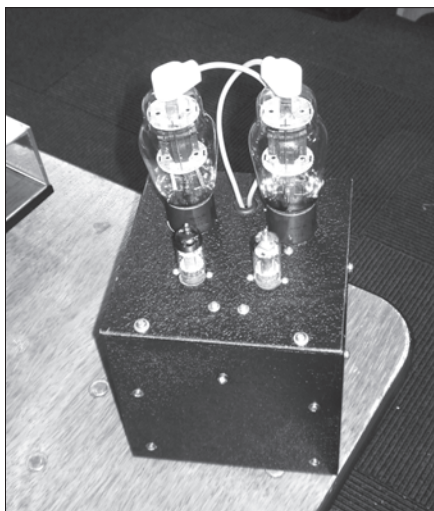


PHOTO 3: Richard's compact hybrid amp with a switched-mode high voltage power-supply.



ELECTRA-PRINT  
AUDIO CO.

#### AUDIO TRANSFORMERS

- Single Ended
- Push-Pull
- Parafeed
- Cathode Follower
- Interstage
- Line Level Outputs
- Audio Chokes
- Moving Coil
- Step-up/down
- Low level input
- Phase splitting
- Silver windings
- Nickel core designs

#### POWER TRANSFORMERS

- High Voltage
- Filament
- Filter Chokes

Custom transformers built to your specifications.

Custom Amps and Pre-amps of our design.

*Visa, MC & Amex*

#### ELECTRA-PRINT AUDIO COMPANY

4117 Roxanne Dr., Las Vegas, NV 89108  
702-396-4909 Fax 702-396-4910  
electraudio@cox.net www.electra-print.com

## Precision Acoustic Measurements Require Precision Microphones



### PS9200KIT™ USD

A complete IEC and ANSI traceable Type 1 Measurement Microphone System 2 Hz to 40 kHz, 15 dBA to 160 dB SPL  
\*1/2 inch capsule \*4012 Preamp \*PS9200 2 Channel PS  
\*AC adaptor \*WS1 windscreen \*SC1 die cut storage case.  
Options: 511E Calibrator; 1 & 1/4 inch mics; and Gain for DRA's MLSSA and other board level products.

### ACO Pacific, Inc.

2604 Read Ave. Belmont, CA 94002 USA  
Tel: (650) 595-8588 FAX: (650) 591-2891  
e-mail acopac@acopacific.com

ACOustics Begins With ACO™



**PHOTO 4: The BOFU BIB \$100/pr speakers were a full family project.**

In another corner Kent Leech had an Audiomatrica Sofia tube curve tracer hooked up to his laptop and ran curves for people's tubes.

By all accounts, Burning Amp 2007 was a resounding success. Participation ranged from a sizeable Californian

group to enthusiasts coming all the way from Denmark, The Netherlands, Lithuania, Canada, and Serbia. For anyone reading this magazine or following the online communities, it's clear that amateur audio is alive and well. I'm looking forward to BAF08! **aX**



**PHOTO 5: Klippel driver measurement system.**

## Esoteric 3D-X

CD-SACD-DVD Optical Disc Enhancer

*from Jena Technologies LLC*

Specially formulated for polycarbonate, the new Esoteric 3D-X is designed to dramatically enhance surface transmittance and refractive characteristics of CDs and DVDs. It also protects discs from common contaminants such as oils from your hands and accidental contact with water.

When a disc is treated with Esoteric 3D-X, an optical coating is created that acts similarly to the lens coating of a fine camera. The optical signal-to-noise ratio is improved, and there is less jitter in the original datastream off the disc causing less frequent activation of your player's error-cancellation circuitry.

Although not designed to restore damaged discs, it will clean mild filth and most previously applied coatings from CDs, DVDs, and most SACDs.

Available in a 4 oz. standard kit featuring a handy metal carry case. Includes disc enhancer cream, non-latex applicator sponges, lint-free optical quality polishing pads, and a plastic box to hold applicator sponge when not in use. Also available in 2 oz. mini kit packaged in a cardboard box.



|                |                    |                |                |
|----------------|--------------------|----------------|----------------|
| <b>KE-3DXS</b> | 4 oz. Standard Kit | Sh. wt: 2 lbs. | <b>\$80.00</b> |
| <b>KE-3DX</b>  | 2 oz. Mini Kit     | Sh. wt: 1 lb.  | <b>\$40.00</b> |

Old Colony Sound Laboratory PO Box 876  
Peterborough NH 03458-0876 USA

Toll-free: 888-924-9465  
Phone: 603-924-9464  
Fax: 603-924-9467

E-mail: [custserv@audioXpress.com](mailto:custserv@audioXpress.com)  
[www.audioXpress.com](http://www.audioXpress.com)

▶ To order call **1-888-924-9465**  
or order on-line at  
**[www.audioXpress.com](http://www.audioXpress.com)**