

"Saving the Digital World"

**Surf Watch**  
Southern California: 72°  
four to six foot west swell,  
glassy ocean surface, good shape.

### Day One

SAN CLEMENTE, CA - Welcome to the Avalon Times. This is Avalon's first newsletter bringing together local and world talent to share information and technology on recording and music making. In talking with Avalon customers every day, I thought it would be informative to present how others are creatively using Avalon equipment, and to discuss frequently asked questions. I hope you find the Avalon Times entertaining and educational. If you have any comments or suggestions please send me an email or fax. In the meantime, enjoy life and remember: "Rock and Roll Ain't Noise Pollution!" (Vt-737sp's on AC/DC 2001 World Tour)  
- Brad Zell, Editor (brad@avalondesign.com)



Avalon "abuser" Devin Powers proudly in front of his AD2022 and Vt-737sp's.

### AD2022 "Powers" Devin

Greatly influencing the sound of reality TV, Devin Powers is Music Supervisor/Composer for the relationship television productions "Blind Date" and "Chains of Love". Devin has written and produced music for the television series Providence, Ed, and Third Watch. Devin is frontman for The Vents and has toured extensively as lead guitarist and co-writer with The Who's bassist John Entwistle and Stray Cats' bassist Lee Rocker. Devin has been a happy Avalon user for years and recently added an AD2022 to his studio.

*"The AD2022 is the most powerful preamp I have ever used. I use it on everything: Mics, keyboards, sound modules, synths, guitars and bass. I have never heard a bass sound so controlled and big... Amazing!"*

### AD2022 Shines On

"I'm rediscovering my mic collection with the AD2022! The impedance selection is extremely effective!"  
- Steve L., NY

"I first listened to the F... and I didn't like that at all. I then listened to the Vt-737sp and it sounded much better. Really a great sound. Then I listened to the AD2022 and it blew me away. I had to buy it." - Mark S., CA

"Lowering the input impedance on the AD2022 for recording electric guitars (SM57 mic) gave me a low mid-range presence that was unbelievable! - John B., CA

"For years I have been using an M5 exclusively for vocals. Half way through a session with Alanis we replaced the M5 with an AD2022. Alanis immediately noticed a difference in her headphones. The AD2022 sounded bigger and better (which I thought was not possible). The AD2022 just replaced my M5 as the best mic pre I have ever heard."  
Rob J., CA

### Reviewers Buy AD2022

The new AD2022 Pure Class A Dual Mono Microphone Preamplifier has now been reviewed by four industry magazines. Two reviewers purchased the unit and said that it is the best mic pre that they have ever heard and couldn't live without it. Another reviewer loaned it to a leading mix engineer for his feedback. The engineer used it on the entire project and begged to keep it... Check out the reviews on our website: www.avalondesign.com.

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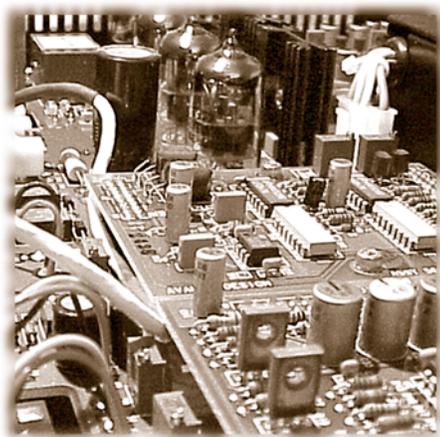
Avalon AD2022 Pure Class A Dual Mono Microphone Preamplifier

## The Avalon Sound

### Part 1

**Why does Avalon recording equipment have that exciting, big, rich sound?** Is it the Class A operation? Is it the fact that the amplifier stages are made of discrete components and not IC op-amps? Why does Avalon cost more than the "colored variety" of consumer level processors? These are a few of the questions asked over the years as Avalon has reached a more diverse range of clients including high-end music recording studios, live sound reinforcement and project studios, and all seeking "that special sound."

Many of our customers are not electrical engineers and don't know the difference between a transistor and a diode (and don't care to learn.) However many would like to know in layman terms how Avalon breathes life into each and every product. The underlying principle behind the Avalon sound is a cumulative effect of many decisions made by Avalon's founder Wynnton Morro. At every stage of development Wyn makes his decisions based on sonic performance and musical integrity - not cost. This "no compromise" design approach enables

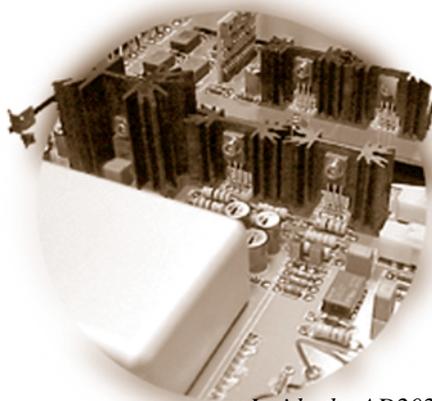


*Military tubes and discrete components*



*Wyn weilds the axe in Australia - circa 1982*

Avalon's carefully engineered systems to enhance the creative senses and become one with the music itself.



*Inside the AD2022*

There are three design principles that form the foundation for all Avalon products.

- 1. Pure Class A, 100% discrete topology**
- 2. High voltage, high current design**
- 3. The best components available**

### **Pure Class A, 100% discrete**

Class A operation (voltage biased at optimal level), **delivers a smoother sound** than Class A/B designs where voltage jumps between optimal and non-optimal levels producing non-musical crossover distortion. Class A amplifiers are more expensive to manufacture and are inefficient in regards to electricity

usage and heat dissipation. This results in larger and more expensive transformers as well as custom designed heatsinks to dissipate the heat.

"100% discrete" means that Avalon uses individual electronic components in the primary audio signal path. Special metal film resistors, transistors, capacitors and military spec tubes are utilized in the audio stream. Avalon does not use integrated circuits (IC's) in the audio path. IC's and op-amp's have

distinct characteristics of undesirable coloration, distortion, or a muffled sound. **Well designed, Class A discrete electronics ensure a pure and dynamic sound.**

*To be continued in next issue...*



## **Win a Vt-737sp!**

Each future issue of the *Avalon Times* will include an "Avalon Story" written by an Avalon user. The story will be chosen based on content and entertainment value. **The writer of the best "Avalon Story" will win a Vt-737sp!**

To enter: email ([avalon@avalondesign.com](mailto:avalon@avalondesign.com)) or fax (949) 492-4284 an article approximately 150 words or less about an Avalon experience, unique recording technique(s) or how Avalon has improved your sound. Please be sure you include your phone number so we can notify you if you win. Entries must be received by September 1, 2001. The first winner will be announced at AES in New York on September 24th. Good luck!

# FAQ

**Q: Is the mic preamp in the Vt-737sp the same as the AD2022 or M5?**

**A: No.**

The Vt-737sp and the AD2022/M5 are completely different microphone preamps based on alternate design theories. The Vt-737sp is a vacuum tube preamplifier and the AD2022/M5 are 100% discrete transistor based solid state preamplifiers (no tubes). The AD2022 and M5 use the same base preamplifiers - a dual cascaded symmetrical twin gain block. The AD2022 is a third generation microphone preamp based on the M5. All Avalon microphone preamps run in Class A mode and use discrete electronics for amplification. Tube preamplifiers provide an alternate selection of harmonic tones in comparison to solid state designs.

Wynton Morro, Avalon's designer uses vacuum tubes to achieve a very unique and "easy" sound. However, to get 100% pure sound, the preferred design is solid state.

## Vt-737sp Vacuum Tube



Now, all of the Vt-737sp owners might be thinking that they may have bought the wrong preamp. On the contrary, the Vt-737sp is a fabulous unit. It was the first and is still the best "Direct Recording Channel" or "Channel Strip" on the market for any price!

The Vt-737sp was specifically designed as a tube preamp and has the unique sound that only tubes can deliver. The Vt-737sp has the most clarity, power, and control of any tube preamp available. It is, "the swiss army pocket knife for recording."

The Vt-737sp has the necessary, high performance functions built-in to handle real-world recording demands: preamp, compressor and parametric equalizer.

Should you trade in your Vt-737sp for an AD2022 or M5? No, but you might need both preamps in your arsenal. Try both preamps and experience for yourself the real difference in their sonic personalities.

Below is a table comparing the Vt-737sp and AD2022/M5.

## AD2022 Pure Class A Discrete

Avalon believes that the AD2022/M5 is a higher performance and more transparent microphone preamp than Vt-737sp. The AD2022 has more detailed highs, better low-end extension and is lower noise.

The sonic differences between the Vt-737sp and the AD2022/M5 can be compared to a spot light for the Vt-737sp, and a flood light for the AD2022/M5. The Vt-737sp has a more "close-up" round sound, while the AD2022 has a detailed, open sound that includes more of the subtle sub-harmonics and room reflections.

### Comparison Table

	Vt-737sp - vacuum tube	AD2022 & M5 - discrete Pure Class A
<b>Topology</b>	Vacuum tube mic and instrument preamp (Class A), tube opto-compressor and discrete parametric EQ (4 tubes).	Pure Class A, 100% discrete solid state mic and instrument preamplifier (135 discrete transistors - no "op amps").
<b>Unique Features</b>	Mono "channel strip" - dual tube preamp, classic tube opto compressor, four-band discrete parametric EQ, frequency dependent compression, link jack for stereo operation.	Dual mono, selectable input impedance, +64dB gain in 4dB steps with variable output fine trim, variable high pass filter, ultra high voltage power supply, low noise -126dBu EIN.
<b>Sonic Character</b>	"close-up" sound, EQ delivers smooth highs and deep powerful lows, compressor is transparent and musical.	Extreme clarity, smooth extended highs, liquid mid-range, controlled deep bass, captures everything in the room.
<b>Applications</b>	Vocals, guitars, bass, keyboards, synths. Flexible compressor and EQ for a variety of vocalists and instruments. Can be used as a compressor/equalizer for mixdown and mastering. "The swiss army pocket knife for recording."	Exceptional for vocals and acoustic instruments to capture the entire sound image including the room. Use with all types of microphones including ribbons. Achieve different tones from microphones using variable input impedance.
<b>Users</b>	Christina Aguilera, Orgy, Motley Crue, Snoop Dogg, Bob Dylan, The Crystal Method, Michael Jackson, Phil Collins, Puff Daddy, Crazy Town, AC/DC, Disney Productions....	Celine Dion, Whitney Houston, Abby Road, Babyface, Alanis Morissette, Stevie Wonder, Don Henley, Hit Factory, Blue Man Group, Chung King Studios, Mariah Carey...

## Analog Plug-ins

Many producers and engineers are using their Avalons during mix down/mastering for equalization and compression rather than digital plug-ins.

**Here's How:** During mixdown or mastering, send a track out of the computer or hard disk recorder to an Avalon EQ / compressor. Take the output from the Avalon and simply record a new track. Some software programs offer an "insert" feature for outboard gear.

**Michael James,** Producer and Mix Engineer for Jane's Addiction, Hole and AJ Croce relies on his Avalon AD2055 for every mix.



"Whether I'm recording to analog tape or direct to hard disk, I usually wind up mixing digitally using Pro Tools. On every song I mix, I use the AD2055 on the main elements that hold a song together - lead vocal, kick drum, snare, and bass. The AD2055 is magical. I can be very economical with the amount of cut or boost and it just seems to do the right thing. The highs are smooth and lows are huge."

**Michael Mangini,** two-time Grammy Award winner of Mojo Records does the same thing. "I have three Pro Tools 882 interfaces and use Logic software. I record most everything through my Vt-737sp's" says Michael, "then I run my most important tracks out of my computer and through my two AD2055's and four Vt-737sp's for EQ and compression/EQ. Plug-ins just don't compare to the Avalon sound and control."

*we receive many calls from a wide variety of users who prefer the sound of their analog outboard processors over the "easy" digital alternatives.*

## Avalon Secrets

**John Gass,** lead engineer at Brandon's Way (Babyface) has recently purchased his ninth AD2055 equalizer for the studio. He now has 18 channels of Avalon EQ. Brandon's Way also has five AD2044 compressors.

**Sear Sound** has purchased a second Sony MXP 3000 console and is loading it with 24 channels of Class A Avalon M3 microphone preamps and E3 equalizer modules.

**Rob Jacobs,** Mix Engineer for U2's Rattle and Hum, Don Henley, and many hit records is currently recording and mixing Alanis Morissette's new album. Rob records vocal tracks with the Avalon AD2022 and uses the AD2055 EQ. Bass guitar is recorded directly through the U5.

**Mark Knoffler** recently purchased twelve U5's for his current tour. The U5's are being used on guitars, keyboards, and bass guitar.

Mix engineer **Robert Collins** recently purchased two U5's for **Eric Clapton's** acoustic guitars, while **Nathan East** added a U5 to his bass rig for the Clapton tour.



## Bass Player Digging U5

The U5 circulated through the offices at Bass Player Magazine for a recent review. Five editors at Bass Player bought the U5 after hearing it. Terry Budding the writer of the U5 review says, "you haven't heard your bass until you've heard it through a U5."



## Sony Adds Five AD2077's

Sony Japan purchased another five AD2077 Mastering Equalizers to add to their existing collection of five AD2077's. Sony is expanding their current mastering facility by adding five new rooms all built around the AD2077's.



## Avalon Employee Spotlight

**Eric Guarena**

**Title:** Quality Control Technician

**Start Date:** February 1999

**Born:** San Clemente, California

### Job Description

Brings freshly assembled Vt-737sp and Vt-747sp to life. Listens to every single Vt-737sp and Vt-747sp we build. Calibrates and performs quality control tests for all Avalon products.

### Interests

Bass Player for Stormy Seas. Bass Rig: Fender '51 P-Bass Reissue, U5, GK800RB Amp and Ampeg 8x10 cabinet. Surfing and motorcycle riding.

### What's the best part of your job?

"I get to work on and play with the best gear on earth."