

SET Asylum

Response Audio Ultimate Dared SVP 845

68.47.93.236

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Posted by [thomasj \(A\)](#) on January 15, 2005 at 19:02:22

Last year I got caught up in the "Is Dared a bunch of junk foisted off on well-knowing audiophiles" debate when I took a chance and bought an 845 SET amp. I actually found it to be most musical and was even more impressed when I substituted NOS input tubes and SuperTNT 845B output tubes. Now it really began to cook, and soon took on a quality I hadn't enjoyed that much since owning a BAT tubed amp. I had recently bought, owned, and sold a pair of Cary 805 C's which were wonderful but way too expensive for the sound they produced.

I had found out about Bill Baker at Reponse Audio through Dan Wright, who had done a complete upgrade and tube mod to my Philips SA 1000. The bottom line is that I sent my Dared to Bill Baker for what he calls the Ultimate modification. In essence, he stripped it of resistors and capacitors and replaced them with Reikins (sp) and V-Caps, broke every solder connection and resoldered with silver solder, rewired that entire amp with custom wire and rerouted it for most quiet, and repalced inputs and speaker terminals with Cardas and WBT. I would have had it months sooner if UPS had not dropped it and broke some of the solder connections (quite a feat as it came triple boxed and encased in foam). I sent it back to Bill to put it back together, and now have it for about a month. The V-Caps are still breaking in, but I have to say that this is the most musical tube amp I have ever had (including C-J MV75, Bat Vk-60, VTI 85, Mesa Baron, AR VT 100, and Cary 805C's). It images like a bandit, and throws as deep and detailed a soundstage as I could ever want.

I am using it with a pair of Response Audio Ultimate Usher 718's (No this is not a hidden ad for Bill Baker, I just love his work) which together yields a better sound in my music room than my Cary's did powering Reference 3A mm De Capos. Bass is deep enough that I don't long for my old subwoofer, and the highs are sweet, clear, and not rolled off in the least.

All is all, this is the "cheapest" system I have owned in years, yet it yields the most musical satisfaction. I have truly come to believe that decent equipment (Philips SA 1000, Dared 845, Usher 718's) bought at near bargain prices, then carefully modified with parts that OEM can't afford to put in their high end equipment due to the 5 to 1 ratio, yields amazing sound and much, much musical satisfaction.

In the end, the Dared 845 was a great buy at near \$1,100, to which I added tubes \$150, and the Response Audio upgrade at about \$1,000, whci gives me a solid, very musical amplifier. To say



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the least, I am a happy camper.

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