

GIANT STEPS

WITH THE KRELL EVOLUTION AMP AND PREAMP, YOU DON'T JUST HEAR MUSIC, YOU FEEL IT. BY STEVE GUTTENBERG

It does not get any better than this: Dan D'Agostino and I are listening to the Allman Brothers Band, Stan Getz, Henry Mancini, Metallica, Barry White, and the London Symphony Orchestra over his newest creations, the Krell Evolution One amplifier and Evolution Two preamplifier. Over the years, I have owned many of D'Agostino's best works, so I am no stranger to the Sound of Krell. The older designs are rigorously accurate, have resolution to spare, and are stupendously powerful. The Evolutions build on those strengths and yet they are very different—and dare I say it, they are the first sweet-sounding Krells. The Evolutions are the masterstrokes of D'Agostino's 25-year quest to design the world's ultimate electronics.

The man's design techniques are a little unconventional: D'Agostino sometimes scrutinizes his behemoth power amplifiers with a set of specially calibrated headphones to evaluate their sound through their most "non-linear" operating range. You see, the headphones only require a tiny fraction of a watt to play; the head-

phone gambit is the audio equivalent of creeping through city traffic in a 600-horsepower Ferrari Enzo. D'Agostino explains his methodology this way: "With the headphones, we're eliminating the variability of room acoustics, and I'm just listening to tonality. I also think the secret to making great solid-state amplifiers is paying attention to their low-level resolution." By focusing his talents on revealing sonic subtleties, he gets a more realistic sound.

D'Agostino not only oversees all aspects of Krell engineering, he also handles the industrial design of his products. The back-illuminated electric blue slits and the Evolutions' 1.5-inch-thick faceplates' undulating curves hint at the über technology lurking inside. Don't worry, I will not bore you with detailed descriptions of the Evolutions' multiple-output current mirrors, zero feedback topology, gold-plated and hermetically sealed switching systems, 40-megahertz power transistors, or that the transistors always operate in full Class A mode. I would not dream of bogging down this review with such technobabble, but I will sum up by declaring that the

Evolutions' miraculous amalgam of science and art can resuscitate the soul of recorded music and make it live again.

The Evolutions' full regimen of system integration features includes RS-232 ports for interfacing with Crestron and AMX touchscreens, plus 12-volt triggers and IR input and output jacks for use with other control systems. The Evolution Two preamplifier's headquarters have room for four RCA inputs, three professional-style XLR inputs, and three proprietary CAST (Current Audio Signal Transmission) inputs for use with Krell tuners, CD players, and DVD players. Two analog or digital audio recorders can be accommodated, and you can listen to one source—say, your XM satellite radio—while making a copy of a favorite CD for your car.

The Evolution One is a 450-watt, single-channel amplifier and will no doubt be

Machined faceplates, a large LED readout, and intriguing blue panel lights lend the Evolution Two preamplifier a distinctive retro aesthetic. A separate power supply is provided for each preamp.



AUTHORIZED **D-BOX** DEMO LOCATIONS

ARIZONA	NEW! Showcase Home Entertainment	Scottsdale (Qx2)
	L&M Custom Home Electronics	Tempe (Q)
	Lancaster Entertainment	Tucson (Q)
CALIFORNIA	NEW! B.W.E. Enterprises	Clovis (Q & Q)
	NEW! Media Concepts	Glendale (Q)
	NEW! California Home Theater	Newport Beach (Qx2)
	NEW! Tweeter	Palm Desert (Qx2)
	Audio Arts	Saratoga (Qx2)
	Cinema Wizards	*Selma (Qx2)
	Skycourt	Thousand Oaks (Q)
	Audio Images	Tustin (Q)
	Bliss Enterprises	*Westlake Village (Q)
	E/S/O	Aspen (Q)
	NEW! The BIG Picture	Englewood (Q & Q)
	Lighting Designs	Fort Collins (Q)
	NEW! Telluride Sound & Vision	Telluride (Qx4)
	Overture Ultimate Audio/Video	Wilmington (Q)
DELAWARE	NEW! Sound Advice	Altamonte Springs (Qx2)
FLORIDA	NEW! Sound Advice (Biscayne)	Aventura (Qx2)
	NEW! Sound Advice	Boca Raton (Qx2)
	NEW! Sound Advice	Clearwater (Qx2)
	NEW! Sound Advice	Orlando (Qx2)
	NEW! Sound Advice	Fort Myers (Qx2)
	Digital Lifestyles	Fort Lauderdale (Qx2)
	Genesis Automation	Fort Lauderdale (Qx2)
	NEW! Sound Advice	Fort Lauderdale (Qx2)
	NEW! Sound Advice	Miami (Qx2)
	NEW! Sound Advice	Naples (Qx2)
	NEW! Sound Advice	North Palm Beach (Qx2)
	NEW! Sound Advice (Colombia)	Orlando (Qx2)
	NEW! Sound Advice (Sandlake)	Orlando (Qx2)
	NEW! Sound Advice	Pembroke Pines (Qx2)
	NEW! Electronic Specialists	Sarasota (Qx2)
	NEW! Sound Advice	Sarasota (Qx2)
	NEW! Sound Advice	St. Petersburg (Qx2)
	Audio Visions South	Tampa (Q)
	Music and Cinema	Tampa (Q)
	NEW! Sound Advice (Dale Mabry)	Tampa (Qx2)
	Armor Systems	Venice (Q)
	CWB Technologies	Wellington (Q)
	Audio Advisors	West Palm Beach (Q)
GEORGIA	Home IQ Tech/Atlanta Custom Cinema	Alpharetta (Q)
	NEW! HiFi Buys (Buckhead)	Atlanta (Qx2)
	NEW! HiFi Buys	Kennesaw (Qx2)
	NEW! HiFi Buys	Roswell (Qx2)
ILLINOIS	Premier Sound & Design	Chicago (Q)
	Absolut! Sight & Sound	Chicago (Qx2)
	NEW! Tweeter (Clark St.)	Chicago (Qx2)
	Abt Electronics	Chicago (Qx2)
	Elite Audio/Video Systems	Highland Park (Q)
	NEW! Tweeter	Oak Brook (Qx2)
	NEW! Tweeter	Schaumburg (Qx2)
	NEW! Tweeter	Wilmette (Qx2)
INDIANA	Audio/Video Revolution	Avon (Q)
	Premier Custom Audio & Video	Carmel (Q)
	NEW! King's Great Buys Plus	Evanston (Q)
	Audio Video Lifestyles	Evansville (Q)
	Ovation Audio/Video	Fl. Wayne (Qx2)
	Audio/Video Revolution	Indianapolis (Q)
	NEW! Digital Home Design	*Indianapolis (Q)
	Ovation Audio/Video	Indianapolis (Q & Qx2)
	Advanced Home Technologies	*Michigan City (Q)
	Audio Video Solutions	Muncie (Q)
KANSAS	NEW! Nebraska Furniture Mart	Kansas City (Qx2)
	Applause Theater	Overland Park (Q)
KENTUCKY	NEW! Jent's Elite Home Brands	Bowling Green (Q)
	Cockcock Appliance & Electronics	Cincinnati (Q)
	Barney Miller's	Lexington (Q & Qx2)
	NEW! Ovation Audio/Video	Lexington (Qx2)
	Corrigan Home Systems	Louisville (Q)
	Digital Lifestyles	Louisville (Q)
	NEW! Ovation Audio/Video	Louisville (Qx2)
	Precision Audio Video	Paducah (Q & Qx2)
LOUISIANA	Audio Resource	Metairie (Q)
MARYLAND	NEW! Crystal Castle	Baltimore (Q)
MASSACHUSETTS	NEW! Tweeter	Frammingham (Qx2)
	Connect-Techs	Longmeadow (Q)
	Reemer Home Installations	*Shelby Township (Q)
MICHIGAN	Manny's Electronic Interiors	Edina (Q)
MINNESOTA	Halsten Entertainment	Golden Valley (Q)
MISSISSIPPI	McLeland's	Hattiesburg (Q)
MISSOURI	Primus Audio Pleasure	Kansas City (Q)
NEBRASKA	The Sound Environment	*Lincoln (Q)
	NEW! Nebraska Furniture Mart	Omaha (Qx3)
	The Sound Environment	Omaha (Q)
NEVADA	Mack Design Group	*Henderson (Q)
	Creative Home Theatre	Las Vegas (Q)
	Vision Control Associates	*North Las Vegas (Q)
	Tweeter Entertainment Architects	Summerton (Q)
NEW JERSEY	NEW! Tweeter	Lawrenceville (Qx2)
NEW YORK	Entertainment Technologies	Bedford Hills (Q)
	J&J Home Theater	New Hampton (Q)
	A/V Science	Rochester (Q)
NORTH CAROLINA	NEW! Anderson Audio & Video	Morehead City (Qx2)
	NEW! Tweeter	Pineville (Qx2)
OHIO	Ovation Audio/Video	Cincinnati (Q)
	NEW! Audio Etc	Dayton (Q & Q)
	NEW! Extreme Audio & Video	Lebanon (Qx2)
OKLAHOMA	selectSystems by Contemporary Sounds	*Oklahoma City (Q & Q)
OREGON	Audio Video Environments	Tualatin (Qx2)
SOUTH CAROLINA	Whole House Audio & Video	Aiken (Q)
TENNESSEE	Automated Interiors	Nashville (Q)
TEXAS	NEW! Sound Systems Ltd.	Amarillo (Qx2)
	NEW! Hillcrest High Fidelity	Dallas (Qx2)
	HomeTronics	Dallas (Q)
	The Patricia Group @ WTC	*Dallas (Q)
	HPS Audio Video	El Paso (Q)
	NEW! AD Systems	Houston (Q)
	Audio Concepts	Houston (Q)
	Starpower Home Theater	North Dallas (Q)
	NEW! Hillcrest High Fidelity	Plano (Qx2)
	HomeTronics @ Robb & Stucky	Plano (Q)
	J & L Audio/Video	San Juan (Q)
	Home Cinema & Sound	Southlake (Q)
	Starpower Home Theater	Turtle Creek (Q)
UTAH	Central Home Systems	Layton (Q)
	High Definitions	*Oakley (Q)
	Reed's Built-Ins	Provo (Q)
	Media Home	Washington (Q)
VIRGINIA	Executive 411	Burke (Q)
WASHINGTON	NEW! Audio/Video by Design	Williamsburg (Q)
	Definitive Audio	Bellevue (Q)
	Home Technologies	Bellevue (Q)
WEST VIRGINIA	Sound Ideas	Beaver (Q)
WISCONSIN	Sound World	Appleton (Q)
ALBERTA, CANADA	K & W Audio	Calgary (Q)
ONTARIO, CANADA	The Sound Choice	Nepean (Q)
	Audio Excellence	Richmond Hill (Q)
QUEBEC, CANADA	NEW! Exact Audio Video	Lawal (Q)
	NEW! Germain Larivière	Lawal (Q)
	*By Appointment Only On Display: (Q) Odyssey, (Q) Quest	

NEW REVIEWS HIGH-END AUDIO

the Evolution Two's most likely partner in state-of-the-art music and home theater systems. They will be connected via Krell CAST cables that allow the two components to work as a unified design. The Evolutions are the first "low feedback" Krells, and without going into a technical description of what that implies, D'Agostino believes his new design approach is partly responsible for the radical change from the classic Krell sound. Perhaps as a tip of the hat to Krells of days past, the Evolution One is emblazoned with a large oval power/wattage meter. It is pretty unlikely you will ever come close to pegging that meter, but it looks really cool bathed in blue light from the internal lamp. An Evolution Series universal Super Audio CD/DVD-Audio player will join the ranks by the end of the year. All models are available in gleaming diamond-cut silver or luxurious black finishes.

As you can see from the pictures, these form-follows-function designs separate each Evolution channel into two separate chassis; do the math and you wind up with a stereo set of preamplifiers and power amplifiers deployed over eight chassis. The preamplifier resembles an audio totem pole, stacked four boxes high, or if space permits, its four pieces can be laid side by side. For convenience sake, any number of preamplifier channels can be linked and controlled from a single Evolution Two. The amplifiers are designed for two-by-two stacking, but make sure they are not starved for a supply of fresh air. They can run hot.

If the prospect of listening to the Evolutions over D'Agostino's home system is not tempting enough, I am also granted an audience with his brand-spanking-new Krell LAT-1000 speakers. Sonically, these extruded aluminum beauties are in the league of the world's best specimens—such as the Wilson Audio Alexandria and JMLab Grande Utopia Be, both of which I have had the pleasure of reviewing for this magazine. Incredibly enough, the LAT-1000s are



Although Krell takes the unusual step of providing each Evolution One monophonic amplifier with its own separate power supply, what's more likely to capture your attention is the delicate power meter gracing the front panel of each amplifier. The look—and the character of the amplifier's sound—are both new for Krell.

smaller, more domestically friendly designs, but their room-shaking extreme deep bass capabilities exceed those of the mammoth JMLab and Wilson Audio speakers. The all-Krell system will blast your blues, make your jazz swing, and bathe you in majestic orchestral splendor—and best of all, the system is always a joy to listen to. That is what makes the Evolution electronics, in the truest sense, state-of-the-art designs. The Krells bypass my curmudgeonly analytical reviewer brain and won my heart.

Of course, no one needs a Hummer H2 to go to the grocery store, a Cartier watch to know what time it is, or a set of magnificent Krell Evolution amplifiers to listen to Louis Armstrong. But if you are like me and still have a real passion for music—and share my fascination with artisans like D'Agostino who render their visions in resistors, capacitors, and integrated circuits—the choice among those guilty pleasures will be an easy one. These newest Krells magically bring my favorite music to life, let it breathe, give it color and shape, and make it real. [RE]

■ PRICE: Evolution One power amplifier, \$50,000 (stereo pair); Evolution Two preamplifier, \$40,000 (stereo pair)
 ■ CONTACT: 203.799.9954, krellonline.com

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