

***iCombo, Best Buy 2010 at magazine-audio.com***

We introduced last February Trends Audio TA-10.2. Class-T amp.

Trends Audio iCombo recurrence with a complete system that will be of particular interest owner of the iPad, iPod and iPhone, which did not stretch a budget or a lot of desk space without sacrificing audio quality while providing flexibility, modularity, performance and use of a tube for the preamp, that's the fancy side that appeals to audiophiles and more DIY user



## iCombo by Trends Audio

You dreamed, Trends Audio has done

We present this week iCombo for iPhone or iPod.

To begin, please note that we did not get the same performance from one system to another, it is with the Trends TA-10.2 amp or use the headphones that we had the best results. It appears that the preamp often does not sit by



him will be associated amplifier, NAD or of Jacques Coda is a good example. This was reflected by background noise and distortion when they tried to climb a bit too high volume.

Jacques, what are your impressions of your test?

"Test Innovative Trends Hi-Fi Audio Tube Headphone / Pre Amp, PA-10 Power Supply Unit PW-10 Hi Mark, Yep! My column throughout Trends will be both very good and sometimes worse. This little preamp is totally amazing with headphones, but on my system it does not always play correctly. In terms of total Amp / Power Supply I have no complaints, it's really good compared to my base system, there is a little more in the spectrum which is not bad but is always this lack of punch (gut, torque) vis-à-vis my amp, but sound side wow! this little kit is really extra. Jack has tried it connected to my preamp and me alone also because it is already pre-amplified and in two cases the quality was identical to the rendezvous. A small set I would have no difficulty to suggest to anyone with a modest budget who wants to buy a sound system of audiophile quality worthy of the name. Regarding the Preamp / Power Supply, then there is the plunge, this little device to look outside with his little lamp on top, was ineffective connected to an external amplifier with speakers and not for lack of trying several attempts to make him play, but not with me he could never rise above the tier of the volume (a bit less than half) that it is past that distortion you hear. By cons with a headset, whew! Then there is day and night on the other, what sound quality, incredible listening pleasure. I do not get tired of listening to my records that way For me this whole Pre Amp / Power Supply Unit Trends has really behaved in an exemplary manner with my headphones. With the built-NAD 3020A sound was correct without more, the NAD amp is probably not enough power and with this little preamp gain only works up barely half volume and it still happens nothing, which is odd in there is that with the internal preamp NAD gain skyrocketing continuously. With the amp CODA, a very full, unfortunately there was a background noise (biz) is obnoxious even closed volume, the amp even clipped to a point where I was playing with the volume of pre by-cons I had a presence and a superior image quality with NAD. By this, I still realized that with a better preamp, my system would be fantastic.

The system of Jack includes:

- CD Player Rotel RCD 855
- Integrated Amplifier NAD 3020A,
- Speakers Nuance shelf model, bi-wired.

**In contrast, covers the entire iCombo Trends, preamp + power supply + amplifier Trends, No. 1 it works.**



**What he has in the box ?**

If you choose just the preamp

I. Trends PA-10 SE for iPhone / iPod Tube Headphone / Pre Amplifier. List price US\$299 The system consists of a PA-10 Trends SE Tube Headphone / Pre Amplifier, Apple Line Out to RCA Audiophile cable

Option 2, the amplification Trends Audio

II. Trends TA-10.2 for iPhone / iPod Mini Stereo Class-T Amplifier. List Price US\$225

The system consists of an integrated amplifier Trends TA-10.2 Class-T + Apple Line Out to RCA Audiophile cable

Option 3, with the iCombo SE, our trial

III. Trends iCombo Hi-Fi System for iPad/iPhone/iPod US\$630

Trends iCombo SE Hi-Fi System includes:

1. Trends TA-10.2P Class-T Power Amplifier
2. Trends PA-10 SE Tube Headphone/Pre Amplifier -incl. Chinese 6N11 Tube
3. Trends PW-10 PSU 220V or 110V
4. Trends QB-773 Audiophile Audio Cable
5. Apple Line Out to RCA Audiophile cable
6. Power Cord
7. Cables x 3 (Red, Yellow and Blue)
8. User Guide(English)



### **iCombo by Trends Audio**

As you can see, everything is modular and if you wear your choice version iCombo all inclusive, and well aware that EVERYTHING is truly inclusive and it takes only minutes to implement because the process is oversimplified. Concerns about the tube preamp, there are 3 degrees in terms of price and of course the desired quality:

- Standard Edition: Chinese 6N11 Tube
- SE Edition: Russian 6H23n
- GE Edition: USA 12AU7 Tube

#### **First observation**

The simplicity of installation is a model of its kind.

The supplied cables are very good in terms of manufacturing and materials, do not rely on the ridiculously low price is by far one of the best value price you find on the market, people Trends in Audio has acquired over time some experience and they do not do things randomly.

I particularly liked the RCA cable with the pin location for my iPhone, finally, someone who thinks we do not need a special dock, you take this cable, you

connect the iPhone and you are now able to you go to plug into any audio device with RCA inputs to play music, it's as simple as that

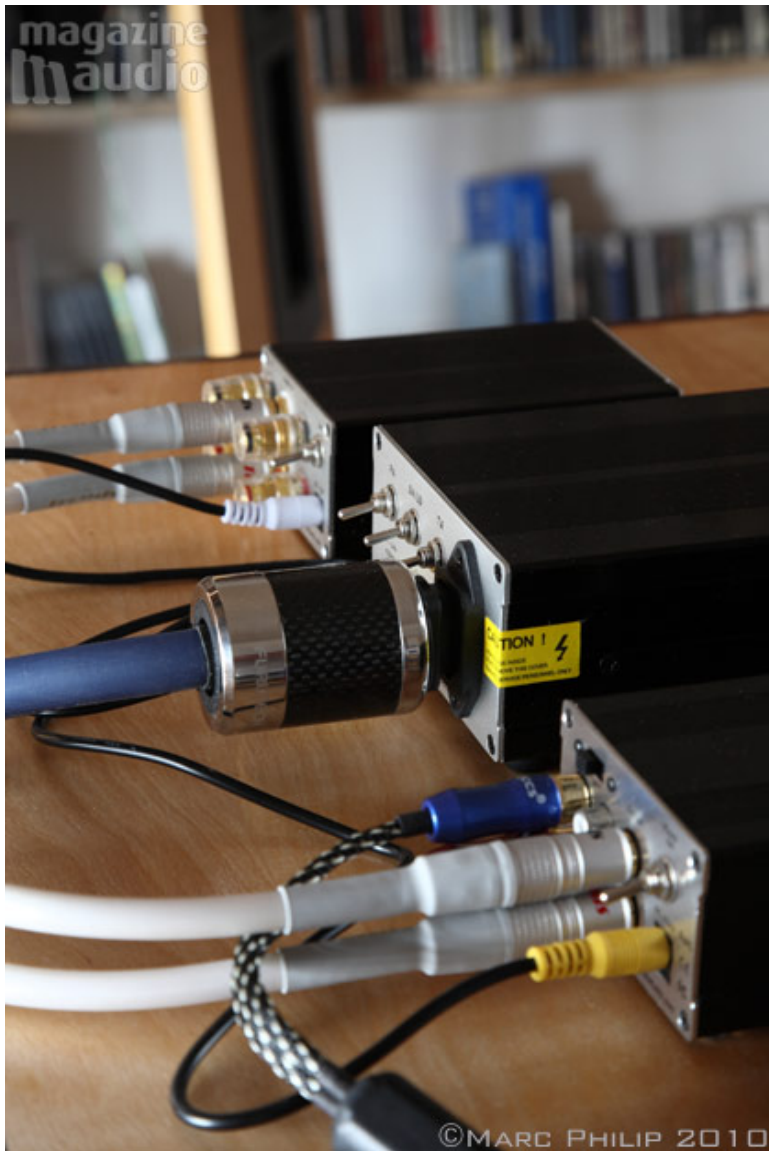


iCombo situation in my usual Hi-Fi system

Of course, if you want better audio quality, I recommend you go through the external power and preamp Trends PA-10 SE, which incorporates a CCD better than that currently implemented in the iPhone, even an use an external DAC for the more adventurous types among you.



For these tests, I used an iPhone 3G 32 GB with music files more or less compressed, something the average person uses on a daily basis in order to put us in a basic, accessible to the greatest number. I began by using the power cord comes home to finish with my usual reference a Silver Triton fitted with a power Furutech FI-50, in order to realize well, again if you treat the Check your electrical appliances, you will come out on a winner, with the iCombo that was the case.



Rear view of the AC cord iCombo Furutech FI-50  
Second good surprise, the fact of using the separate supply operations simplifies electrical connection between each device, in fact, only the box that receives an external power cord on AC IEC socket, the other units are connected directly via a small thread of different color and distinct mark



#### Preamplifier with tube function

As the tube comes home is a current model, nothing prevents you from change in the future by something more powerful, the system is of great versatility and should please most audiophiles as to music lovers.

My favorite heart goes to the headphone output, which is far superior to my usual reference which is clearly not "crap" and that costs almost three times the price of full system iCombo Trends!



The best editing is in headset mode, here with my AKG K340  
I appreciated the fact that there is almost no background noise with a stunning dynamic is from my point of view the highlight of this system beyond the fact of a wiring ultra full, the external power supply handy and sound quality that you will become a full foot in the fascinating world of music "portable" who knows gentrification permanently on your desktop or elsewhere in your room, you decide. The system with which I obtained the best result was in association with Stereolith Version 232 "Audiophile" great designer of Switzerland Walter Schupbach. Lecteur CD / DVD / SACD Cambridge DV89 and iPhone 3G 32 GB





The iCombo associated Stereolith Audiophile 232

### **Conclusion**

My advice would be to combine this with iCombo active monitor, or a kind Audioengine Stereolith using the Trends TA-10.2P amp Class-T to obtain a coherent and long.

I have found no equivalent product on the market, but we'll talk about another method is simpler and less expensive if you're only a user of iPhone or iPod. Also note that I am content to try iCombo standard, I have not replaced the tube by another, or tried the SE version which seems more promising.



### **Strengths / Strengths:**

- Price: \$ 630 is our second "Best buy in 2010" at Magazine Audio
- The modularity, you can buy the machines one by one if you wish,
- The external power supply multi-channel,
- The cable for the iPhone, very good quality
- Very low noise on the headphone,
- The dynamics on the headphone,
- Headphone premium for a ridiculous price.



### **Weaknesses / Flaws**

- Incompatibility with some other devices, at least in our tests,
- User Guide in English,
- No remote control.

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Accessories and peripherals used in these plays

- Mac Book Pro 2.2 GB, Intel Core 2 Duo, 4GB RAM, 250 GB HD, screen calibrated LEDs, low profile aluminum keyboard externally;
- Headphones Shure SE 420-ear;
- Headphones Audio Technica ATH-ANC3 equipped with noise canceling;
- Semi Open Headphones AKG K340 Electrostatic Dynamic Systems;
- A model Stereolith 232 "Audiophile" setting great Walter Schupbach.

To learn more about the rest of the equipment used, I refer you to my system

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