Foreplay III

Model and Bottlehead badge are not included. Order a badge here.

delivery status

skill level 1

Our most popular kit for ten years was the original Bottlehead Foreplay stereo tube line stage. Thousands of Foreplays are making sweet music in the homes of audiophiles who otherwise might never have experienced the delight of making one's own tube audio gear. The outrageous success of the Foreplay allowed it to stay relatively unchanged for ten years, with only a small upgrade to Foreplay version 2.0 few years ago. But we're experimenters, and we've come up with so many cool ideas since the original Foreplay that we just had to incorporate them!

Enter Foreplay III

The layout

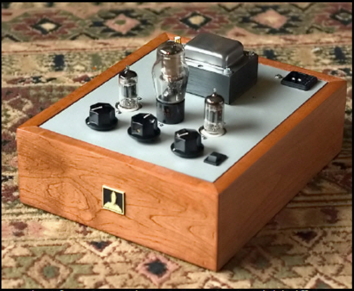


photo of prototype - production version may appear slightly different
Bottlehead badge not included (order one here)

Versatility was a major consideration in our design of Foreplay III. The enlarged 8 x 10" chassis is now twice as thick - laser cut .080" brushed aluminum - and big enough to accommodate an extra tube socket, an IEC power cord and the oft requested rear mounted jack field. The wood base is made from beautiful Pacific Northwest alder like our other kits, which you assemble and apply your favorite finish to. The power transformer is our own Bottlehead PT-3 as used in the S.E.X. integrated amp kit. This large transformer with dual high voltage secondaries gives plenty of current headroom, for experimentation will all sorts of neat tubes and even shunt regulation. Tube socket holes are designed for octal sockets and will take special octal size four pin sockets as well as our Bottlehead hole shrinkers, which allow the installation of nine pin miniature sockets. The kit is supplied with two 12AU7s and a 0D3, but the combination of these new features opens the door to all sorts of interesting experimental circuits using nine pin miniature tubes like the 12AU7/T7/X7 family, 12BH7, 6DJ8/6922/7308 family, 6N1P, 5687/7119, octals like 6SN7, 6DN7, 6EM7, even antique four and five pin tubes like the O1A, 26, 27, 37, 56, 76 - the list is huge! There's even enough room for the clever homebrewer to drill holes to squeeze in some parafeed output transformers.

The circuit

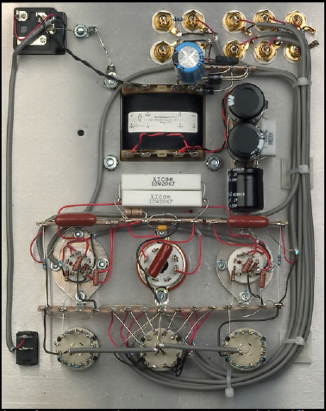
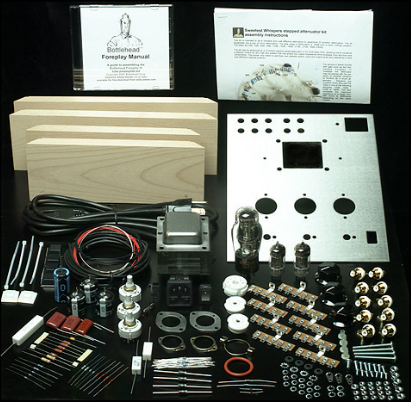


photo of prototype - production version may appear slightly different

The classic Foreplay circuit has been favorably compared to much more expensive circuits. The new design reaches an even higher level of sonic pleasure and quiet operation. The original Foreplay's 12AU7 operating points were somewhat limited by the small power transformer used. The new Foreplay III uses 12AU7s running at optimized operating points for lower distortion and beefier output drive - 10V rms before clipping! DC is now supplied to the heaters for super quiet operation. And the most visible change is the addition of a OD3 gaseous shunt regulator tube. This shunt regulator gives a more quiet background and a sense of extended response at both ends of the frequency band. The combination of these new features yields a line level zero feedback all triode tube preamp with a 90dB signal to noise ratio at 2 volts output. It's an excellent choice for use with our Seduction Phono Preamplifier and our Paramour and Paramount amplifier kits.


Bottlehead
Foreplay Manual
Sweetest Whispers stepped attenuator kit assembly instructions

Components

Wiring is all point to point with Teflon insulated wire and solid core shielded twisted pair cable. The high voltage power supply is an efficient solid state ultrafast soft recovery voltage doubler feeding a C-R-C-R-C filter, which in turn feeds a 0D3 shunt regulator in parallel with the preamplifier circuit. The DC heater supply is a full wave bridge of super quiet Schottky rectifiers feeding a resistor input cap filter that can be adjusted for the heater current draw of various preamplifier tubes. The preamplifier circuit is 1/2 of a 12AU7 voltage amplifier direct coupled to 1/2 of a 12AU7 as a cathode follower output. Only one output coupling capacitor is in the signal path of each channel - a metallized polypropylene type. Resistors are a combination of high quality metal film, carbon film and carbon composition resistors, each chosen for optimal performance in the intended application. Filter capacitors are overrated for long life. Switches are enclosed for protection from contact corrosion. Tube sockets are high quality ceramic. Knobs are phenolic, with the feel of classic studio console knobs of the last century.

The input circuitry has been improved as well. Three gold plated RCA inputs are available, and both the hot and ground connections are switched for quiet operation. The stock dual mono attenuators are now our tried and true Bottlehead Sweetest Whispers 11 position stepped shunt attenuators, which come with padding resistors to allow you to get all mismatched source levels nearer to the same volume settings. There are two sets of gold plated RCA outputs, to allow one to feed a subwoofer without the need for a loop through the sub amp to feed your speaker amps, or to allow one to set up a tape monitor loop.

Performance

Maximum output is 10V rms (28V pk-pk) before clipping. Gain is 10 dB. Signal to noise ratio is 90 dB at 2V rms output (a typical CD player max output level), and 114 dB at 10V rms output. Input impedance is 33K ohms-48K ohms (variable shunt attenuator). Output impedance is 700 ohms - recommended output load is 10K ohms or greater. Frequency response is +/- 0.5 dB from 2Hz to 50kHz. Phase is inverted.

Assembly can be accomplished in a few evenings, and is tailored for the builder with little or no kit assembly experience. A very thorough assembly manual is included in printable Adobe PDF format on CD ROM. It contains step by step instructions you check off as you go, detailed photographs of the assembly that can be blown up for great detail, and a detailed checkout procedure, along with tips on soldering and tool selection. All the builder needs to supply is solder. You will need a copy of the free Adobe Reader software to use the manual.

Foreplay III Tube Line Stage Kit **$489 plus shipping.**

Your pre-order will be charged the day the kit is ordered. We do this to allow cash in advance payment to our vendors to keep the price you pay as low as possible.

Before ordering, please read: About Ordering

Foreplay III Tube Line Stage Kit plus UPS shipping ($25) to US address

order

Foreplay III Tube Line Stage Kit plus Priority Air shipping ($35) to Canadian address

order

Foreplay III Tube Line Stage Kit plus Priority Air shipping ($55) Worldwide

order

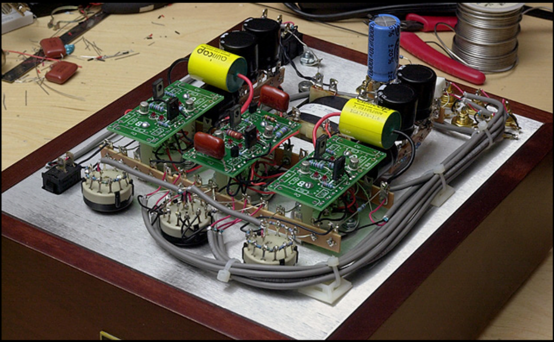
Notes for Our Customers Outside the U.S.

Foreplay III kit is now available in a 240V mains version for an additional $25. Email Eileen to adjust your order to the 240V version.

or call us at 360-697-1936 M-F 9-5 PT

Extended Foreplay

Upgrade Kit



Everyone knows that Foreplay is best when given your most lavish and prolonged attention, yes? Here's our our our recipe for a most delightful Foreplay experience. The Extended Foreplay upgrade kit takes your Foreplay III to new levels of ecstasy, with the addition of the following new toys:

Dual mono power supplies fed from separate high voltage Bottlehead PT-3 power transformer secondaries, ultrafast soft start full wave bridge rectification and Panasonic CRCRC filtration

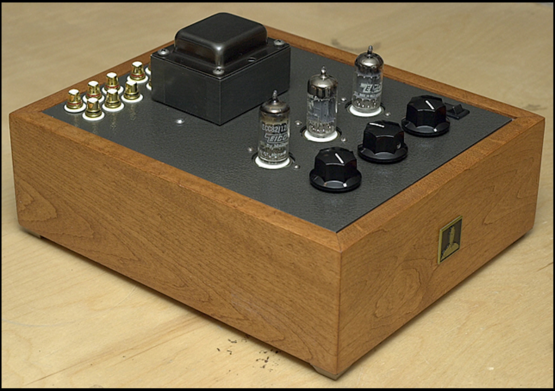
Paul Joppa designed dual hybrid 12AU7 tube/TL431 shunt regulators with Camille Cascode Constant Current Source active loads

Camille Cascode Constant Current Sources (C4S) on each stage of the direct coupled, buffered output preamplifier circuit

Auricap 2.0 uF polypropylene film and foil output capacitors.

The standard Foreplay III kit with it's gaseous shunt regulator is generally recognized by the Bottlehead community to be a significant improvement over the most heavily modified of the earlier versions of Foreplay. We feel that this new dual mono hybrid shunt regulator and constant current source upgrade takes the Foreplay III to an even higher level of resolution and sonic realism. The extensive upgrade package sonically equals or exceeds every previous line stage design we have published. The audible improvements over the stock Foreplay III include increased resolution; more articulate and dynamic bass performance; a sense of greater extension at both ends of the audio frequency spectrum; and a sense of a complete lack of electronic artifacts during quiet passages, often called a "black background" in audiophilespeak.

The kit is installed after the stock power supply, shunt regulator, and plate and cathode load components are removed from the standard Foreplay III. Two new power supply filters are installed, a new tube socket is installed for the dual triode shunt regulator, and three circuit boards are populated and installed, which contain the constant current source and hybrid shunt regulator components.



Queen Eileen's personal Extended Foreplay III, showing the centrally mounted dual triode shunt regulator. Chassis plate is finished in Charcoal Hammerite spray and power transformer bell end has been polished and blued with Birchwood Casey Super Blue.

(Yes, she built this herself! We welcome women and men alike to the Bottlehead DIY audio community!)

We consider the Extended Foreplay kit to be a skill level two kit. Perhaps not for the first time builder, but eminently approachable by a builder with a kit or two under their belt, including the stock Foreplay III. Detailed instructions with high resolution photos will be included in Adobe Acrobat .PDF format, on CD-ROM.

Price is $349 plus shipping. The discounted package price for the standard Foreplay III kit with the Extended Foreplay upgrade kit together is $754 plus shipping, a savings of $84 over the kits purchased separately.

Extended Foreplay III Upgrade Kit **$349 plus shipping.**

Your pre-order will be charged the day the kit is ordered. We do this to allow cash in advance payment to our vendors to keep the price you pay as low as possible.

Before ordering, please read: About Ordering

Extended Foreplay Upgrade Kit plus UPS shipping ($15) to US address

order

Extended Foreplay Upgrade Kit plus Priority Air shipping ($25) to Canadian address

order

Extended Foreplay Upgrade Kit plus Priority Air shipping ($30) Worldwide

order

Package deal - Foreplay III kit and Extended Foreplay upgrade kit **$754 plus shipping**

Foreplay III Kit and Extended Foreplay Upgrade Kit plus UPS shipping ($25) to US address

order

Foreplay III kit and Extended Foreplay Upgrade Kit plus Priority Air shipping ($35) to Canadian address

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or call us at 360-697-1936 M-F 9-5 PT

Is Foreplay III really good enough for your system?

If your system is more exotic and complex than the one below, give us a call and we can discuss compatibility. Otherwise, we're pretty sure Foreplay III will fill the bill.

Photo of a biamped surround sound system showing three of five TAD Reference One loudspeakers driven by five Pass Labs amps and four Bottlehead Extended Foreplay IIIs, fed by three synced MSB DACs for digital sources and a Tape Project reel to reel player for analog, at CES 2007.

Foreplay III vs. earlier versions

Some commentary by Bottlehead's circuit designer, Paul Joppa-

Posted by Paul Joppa on April 28, 2005 at 11:22:35

In Reply to: Foreplay 1/3 posted by naimman on April 28, 2005 at 10:20:16:

How good is the ForeplayIII over Foreplay1 or 2?

I think it is a significant improvement, as it incorporates many of the community's "lessons learned" over the 10 years the previous version was in production. The improvements are incremental - it's still the same classic topology and tube.

...can they stand-up on their own without "field modifications"- those not sold by the manufacturer?

Certainly. Many of the custom modifications are simply parts replacements; boutique parts can make a difference but it is not a deal-breaker. Often it is a matter of tuning the sonics to one's personal taste, like tube rolling. (I know I'll get some argument here!) The Foreplay, by virtue of its simplicity and low price, has always attracted extensive modifications; Bottlehead has generally supported those we thought most worthwhile.

What is the purpose of the OD3 gaseous shunt regulator?

The Foreplay uses a cathode follower output stage, like many tube preamps. In a cathode follower, all of the output signal current flows through the power supply. The shunt regulator is a superior power supply, more stable (especially at lower frequencies) and more linear. It contributes probably the largest part of the improvement over the previous versions. Better shunt regulators are possible, but this one is inexpensive, reliable, and gets the job done.

Also seen owners posting problems with hum - is this a design or construction problem?

Hum and buzz make a never-ending battle, which is especially difficult in the absence of negative feedback. The original Foreplay (versions I and II) have been perfectly quiet for a large majority of users, but it did not have a large performance margin - it originally sold for $99, after all! Given the large number sold, there were inevitably a number of situations where the hum or buzz was audible, and those are extensively discussed in the archives. It does lead to an unbalanced perspective! These are typically cases where the following amplifier/speaker is especially sensitive, or the environment has an unusually large amount of radio-frequency interference, or the associated equipment induces a ground loop, or the particular tube is prone to heater-cathode hum coupling.

In the new Foreplay III, we have reduced the hum and buzz considerably, probably 20dB, so that it will work well in a much wider variety of situations. The heaters are powered with DC, and the heater supply bias adjusted for optimal operation; all the signal lines are shielded; the power supply is regulated; source grounds are switched as well as signal lines; a new power transformer is used which has a form of self-shielding for external electrostatic fields and produces a smaller external magnetic field.

Any fine tuning involved?

The gain for each input in the Foreplay III can be adjusted by choosing the right resistor, so that all the various sources will use pretty much the same volume setting. Depending on the signal output of your source devices, and the sensitivity of your amplifier/speaker combination, choosing the right value may take an iteration or two. Some source devices produce enough ground loop current to create "pops" when switching due to the switched grounds; there is a modification to alleviate this problem, at the expense of slightly increasing the chance of ground loop hum. The preamp comes with serviceable old-stock tubes, but many - probably most - will try a few different brands to optimize the sonics for their system and ears. Those are the only "fine tuning" items that I am aware of.

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Having said all that, I would like to note that the Foreplay III was intended from the outset to be amenable to extensive modification and experimentation. The power supply has a very large margin so that different tubes can be easily used, and the tube sockets are designed with adapters so that larger octal sockets can be used. One of the most popular modifications is swapping output capacitors; the "capacitor of the month club" has many members! So the output capacitor and its solder lugs are readily accessible.

Impressions

Foreplay III complete - WOW!

Posted by GlynnW (A) on February 04, 2007 at 19:24:47

This weekend I assembled my new Foreplay III and it is MUCH better than my Foreplay II with all the standard mods. Anyone who has been on the fence should pony up the dough and get in line now. And by the time I am used to this, my extended kit will show up and off we'll go again. Thanks to Doc and Paul for continuing to raise the bar.

Foreplay 3 Extended Musings

Posted by John EH (A) on June 30, 2006 at 14:43:01

Well, I've built 3 Foreplay 2's, a set of Paramours, a SEX amp, and now 2 Foreplay 3's, the latest with the Extended version. Tack on the Whispers, Sweetest Whispers, Anticipation, and just about all the popular tweaks makes me not a total novice to this.

I really enjoyed building this kit. Even though it's designed to be built into an existing, built Foreplay 3, it's certainly easy enough to build it in from the beginning. It only requires the builder just looking at the "Extended" manual and highlighting the stuff in the "Regular" manual that gets torn out during the upgrade.

When you get to that step.......Just don't do it and move on. Finish the Foreplay kit. Then start with the Extended. In many respects it's easier to build it all at once as you get sweet access to the tube socket and you don't have to take apart the old power supply.

I'm an easy sell on Bottlehead gear but I'm floored with the sound of the Extended kit. Just to convince myself I've swapped the Foreplay 3 original in and out a couple times and there's almost no comparison.

The Doc has time and time and yet time again proven that GREAT sound need not come at ridiculous expense. And that boutique parts, while nice, aren't absolutely required to get some of that great sound. And he's certainly proven that tubes are nice but solid state power supplies and rectifiers and constant current sources have a place. Total tube purists are going to get an education after listening to this gear.

I think I've heard Dave Brubeck "Take Five" a thousand times but I think I just heard it for the first time here today. What an amazing preamp. Sometimes I think there's such a thing as "break in" and sometimes I think there's no such thing. All I know is that if this kit "breaks in" and gets any better then I'm in for a treat. And if it doesn't. I'm still in for a treat.

What a great bargain, what a great deal of fun, and what great sound.

John

Posted by John EH (A) on June 30, 2006 at 19:19:17

I've been running this thing non stop and have been impressed but I've got to tell you again that the improvement over the first incarnation of the Foreplay 3 is NOT SUBTLE.

In my opinion this is an incredible upgrade. I'm really impressed with all the aspects of it's performance and I hate to get too specific for fear of sounding like an audiophool but this is simply amazing and not a small improvement.

One of my favorite CD's is Bia "Sources", it's a pretty obscure CD and I'm not sure what you'd call the genre, it's a Latino gal with a silky smooth voice but I swear she's singing in French or one of the other Romance Languages, and she sings in English as well. It's a great CD for putting your gear through the paces and this Foreplay 3 Extended is passing with flying colors. I figure my LS3/5A's may have something to do with it as well but wow. Everything is in clear focus. Bia is right in the middle surrounded by instruments There's some harmonica and accordion stuff going on and it's freaky amazing with some Spanish guitar licks going on and I haven't been this excited about my gear in a while.

There's only one problem. Doc will improve this design and I'll have to spend more money.

John

Extended Foreplay III upgrade is up!

Posted by nweiss on May 17, 2006 at 19:50:38

"...I still don't have much time on it yet, but so far I have been particularly taken with the noticeable improvement in the texture of acoustic bass and plucked electric bass. There is a "feel" to the notes that almost feels as though *I* played them myself...and I don't play! I cant wait to get more run-in time on it for more serious and extended listening sessions..."

Foreplay 3: What a great kit!

Posted by dth31 (A) on October 23, 2005 at 18:28:34

Got my Foreplay 3 about 3 weeks ago and did several things I hadn't been able to do until now:
--spray painted the chassis and transformer bell and then
--took my time
--built the FP3 stock.

REALLY looks nice--much nicer than I thought I could do.

I only have 2 hours of break-in on it now, and I am sure it will continue to improve, but already I can appreciate several differences compared to my FP2.

First of all, my FP2 is slightly modified: anticipation C4S boards, pseudo dual mono power supply, snubber network, Riken resistors, Sweet whispers, and Jensen PIO aluminum foil output capacitors. I love this preamp. Really musical. Made me sell my CAT SL-1 Signature Mk3 preamp once I built a Seduction :) THAT'S how good my FP2 is!

Already, the stock FP3--well, I lied a little bit. It isn't quite stock--I used 2 BlackGate Power Tank capacitors in the power supply. Otherwise it is stock. OK. This preamp is quite dynamic with great pace and rhythm. Personally, I don't care too much about soundstaging, but the FP3 has more width and depth compared to the FP2, which I already thought was quite good. Hall ambience is better captured and there is more "air" around instruments. Really quite impressive.

Too soon to say much else about the sound. We'll have to see how it changes with break in, but it is very encouraging so far!

I also want to congratulate Doc and PJ on the new manual and kit. It is outstanding. The instructions are the most clear instructions I have seen so far (FP2, Seduction, and now FP3) and the color pictures are really helpful. The wiring also seemed easier. Except for terminal 28 (!), no terminals or pins had very many connections, and the extra room helps, too. The FP3 is still a good "starter kit"--I would say even easier than the FP2. Plus, the layout is going to make mods easier, too. You guys outdid yourself on this one, and that is saying ALOT.

Next on tap: Paramount 2A3. Hopefully for Christmas.

Thanks so much, Doc and PJ! Now it's back to the "Pastorale".

Dave

Just received FP III. First impressions (pre-build)

Posted by PureAudio (A) on October 06, 2005 at 09:00:20

Peek ... peek ... peek ... out the window watching for the UPS truck. It's here!!! My new FP III. Temper my enthusiasm so my beloved FP II doesn't feel quite so hurt ;)

First impressions:

- The Art Khu CD. Wonderful! Just in time for dinner, too; my wife loved it. (I enjoyed it again this morning before breakfast).

- Raytheon OD3w. What an odd tube! Cute in its own way and well regarded per a quick search of the web.

- Sylvania 6189's. These tubes look like they have some interesting stories to tell about their past life. Can't wait to try em'! Don't think I have any of these in my stash of who-knows-how-many pair of 12au7's for my FP II.

- The assembly manual on CD. Verrry nicely laid out and presented. Sets the standard as far as I've seen.

- PT3 transformer. Totally changes my perception of what a FP transformer looks like. Heavy iron for the III.

- Everything else well packed and in great condition.

Thanks Doc, Eileen and everyone else who had a part in getting this from design into my home!

I had decided to not even start the build until winter sets firmly in. Fat chance!!!

First time

Posted by Maxdd on August 23, 2005 at 07:58:02

I finished my Foreplay III last night (first stab at DIY).
Everything tested perfect on the first try (I'm glad I took my time).
I hooked it up to my old system (a restored Quad II and a Phillips CD player) and was floored!
The sound was amazing. I thought my old Quad II/Dynaco preamp were far past their expiration date, but apparently it was just the preamp.

It's an amazing feeling to build something of such great quality.
Can't wait to start an amp and some loudspeakers!

A big Thank You to Doc and his crew for releasing such an excellent product that concentrates on what a well designed audio product should do. You guys are excellent designers, can't wait to see what turns up in the future.

Foreplay II vs. Foreplay III... as great as the FP II is...

Posted by fjhuerta on June 01, 2005 at 12:19:55

... the FP III is even better ;)

I've been listening to it for two days now. The only mod I did was using Solen caps all around, and using a 4.3 uF coupling cap (and some cosmetic ones, irrelevant for now).

I'm comparing it to a tricked-out FP II, with Vitamin Q caps, the C4s upgrade, metal film resistors, oversized transformers, etc... which in turn beats an original FP II with C4s and Auricaps.

I wasn't really expecting the FP III to beat this preamp, just because of the parts used. The fact that even my wife commented on how much *better* the III sounded speaks volumes about my impressions. It's cleaner, faster, more detailed... while listening to Henry Mancini's SACD, I just couldn't believe my little 12W amp could sound so dynamic and powerful. It had never sounded so good with the old FP... bass lines are surprisingly detailed and rhythmic. The midrange is positively gorgeous.

The only thing that needs a bit more refinement is the top end, and I suspect this is because the unit needs to be broken in. 3 or 4 hours of listening isn't really enough... and even now, the highs are sparkling clear and detailed, just a bit metallic sounding.

Now I'm beginning to wonder whether I'd like to build another Foreplay, for my second system... heh. Could be. This thing has the most bang for the buck of any audio equipment I've ever owned!

Once again, thanks to all who were involved in the design of this little gem. My jaw hasn't yet recovered from hitting the floor so hard.

Oh, did I mention the manual was so expertly written the unit worked correctly on my first try? Given that a complete newbie like me built it, that's a testament to the overall excellency of this kit.

:)

Time to take a crack at the Foreplay III review....(long)

Posted by John EH on May 07, 2005 at 07:55:04

I'm probably not all broken in yet but I'd say I have about 50 hours on the Foreplay 3 and almost 24 hours on the Auricap.

I did have one incident where I was getting some serious tube rush. I put her on belly up and took a look at all the tube sockets and came to the conclusion that absolutely nothing was faulty with the kit or my soldering.

Swapped out my 12AU7's and put in a pair of Telefunken Smooth Plates.....No more tube rush.....must have been the preamp tubes. I should note that the tubes that had rush were not the tubes Doc shipped with the kit. They were Mullard box plates. Doc sent me a pair of RCA clear tops which I thought was real cool considering that there have got to be a lot of tubes out there much cheaper to get your hands on.

Also just to play it safe I bought a couple OD3's from eBay for spares. 1950's Hytron JAN tubes. Don't know if they're good or bad. I just know I have some spares now.

Anyway, back to the review...........

My first impression is that it's clearly superior to the Foreplay 2, even one completely tricked out. Maybe superior is a bad word.....because the Foreplay 2 is no slouch, especially with those C4S's. Maybe I should say it's "different" in a good sort of way.

One thing that is apparent is that human voices are much more........something.....maybe focused, maybe correct.........not sure I can describe it. Great vocal songs like Roseanne Cash "Western Wall", Sarah Vaughn "Key Largo", Alison Krause...."insert Alison Krause song here", or one of my favorites Bia from the "Sources" CD the song "Golden Slumbers"....it's actually got some other name on the CD but make no mistake....it's Golden Slumbers by the Beatles.

Again, the human voice reproduction is no joke here. It got nailed.

My reference CD seems to be Tony Rice "Unit of Measure". I popped it in and there was friggin' music all over the place. Crystal clear separation of instruments. Just the way I like it.

Had a friend over and popped in some Johnny Cash. He said it felt like Johnny was in the room and standing right in front of him. He was amazed and started asking questions about where to get a stereo like mine. I'm going to give a little credit here to my Spendor LS3/5A speakers. They image like nothing I've ever heard.

The top end of the Foreplay 3 is sweet. The cymbal hits in Dave Brubeck's "Take 5" are jazz nirvana, and the bass got a whole lot better when I put those monster 3.3uf Auricaps in.

I think things are going to get better the longer it breaks in.

I think the best thing I can say about the Foreplay 3 is when I had Foreplay 2 I couldn't wait to tweak, Whispers, Caps, C4S, Snubber.,.....you name it, If it was out there I wanted to try it. I don't get that with Foreplay 3. I'm content to never turn this thing upside down again.

Now we all probably know I'll play along when the tweak game gets rolling but I'm not kidding here. Things are great just the way they are.

Here's how things are:

Completely restored (original circuit) Dynaco ST70 (only the iron and bias pots are same)
Foreplay III with Auricaps and input 1 padded to 180K (or is it 182K?)
Elekit Tube CD player
Spendor LS3/5A's biwired
All interconnect and speaker cables are MIT Terminator 4

I'm guessing (and it's just a guess) that I have just over $2000 wrapped up in this stereo and it's a great bargain.

One last comment and it's something that probably doesn't make sense but hooking the Foreplay 3 to the SEX amp is a worthwhile endeavor as well. I did an A/B yesterday. SEX.....SEX with Foreplay (wow this is getting good).....ahem.......the Foreplay III on the SEX amp was stunning.

It doesn't sound bad with the Paramours either but I've only heard a couple songs on the Paramours and that was pre-Auricaps.

Enjoy your Bottlehead experiences. I'm sure enjoying mine.

John

Foreplay III - Sweet!!! Sweet!!! Sweet!!!

Posted by tonyb (A) on April 03, 2005 at 11:41:24

Ya know, it takes something extraordinary to impress the wife after 30 years of marriage. And the Foreplay III has done just that...
This unit is QUIET! No hums or buzzes; nothing other than pure music.

Thanks again to the Bottlehead crew. You're all such good people.

TonyB

Foreplay III sounding sweet

Posted by Nervous Novice on April 02, 2005 at 20:18:40

I got my Foreplay III up and running tonight on the first try. Wow, what a great sounding preamp. No hum, no hiss just great sounding music. It went together very easy even for a newbie like myself. The instructions were very easy to follow except for a few errors that were talked about earlier in the forum *(these have been corrected in the current production run - Doc B.)*. It sounds even better than my modded Foreplay II. It's not that my II sounds bad, it doesn't. It's just that the III has more of everything, more detail, more bass, more depth.
I want to thank everyone on the forum that, in the past, has helped me to build and understand (sort of) these kits. I especially want to thank Doc for the cleartops. What a generous and great addition to this preamp.

N.N.

Foreplay III + Paramour = Musical Ecstasy

Posted by Posternutbag on March 28, 2005 at 15:17:22

Being new to this whole world of tube-based glory and having spent loads of money in the past on various SS receivers, amps, etc., I figured it would be a good time to share with you my experience this past weekend getting to really enjoy the fruits of my labor...Due to some poor Bay Area weather all weekend and a head cold I've been nursing, I had a nice chance to spend many hours going through some of the favorites of my live music collection...My current setup is a pair of slightly modded paramours (built Jan/Feb 05) and my recently completed Foreplay III (finished last week)...I'm using a Tosh 3960 (unmodded) as my source and a pair of Experience Music Life Monitors for speakers paired with a Pinnacle Baby Boomer sub....DIY interconnects (Belden 89259) and DIY power cables (Belden 19364)...Anyways, I was blown out of the water by the wave of music emanating from my new system this weekend...Jerry's voice and guitar from some late 70's JGB was unreal, downright emotional...with your eyes closed, you'd swear he was 10 feet in front of you...same with some more recent live phish recordings, the attack and edge were vibrant/bone-chilling and you could hear everyone in the mix so well...My wife and I spent 6 hours juggling discs, lying on the couch relishing the music...

Thanks Doc and everyone who's helped...I'm a happy convert! This weekend alone was worth all the money and effort...The iron and cap upgrade is next...then some DIY speakers...then a tubeDac...what a fun journey!

Scott

Posted by fc_harry on March 15, 2005 at 00:57:28

Halfway thru my first CD. This FP III is amazing, bone stock this out performs my modded FP II, very little of the hum and buzz, nice crisp highs with a fair amount of bass response.

Foreplay III mini review

Posted by Mossback on January 09, 2005 at 20:48:33

This afternoon I was able to spend some time listening to the new Foreplay III prototype at Casa Bottlehead. Doc played a mixture of music off a master tape. I've spent many hours listening to Doc's gear and have a good handle on how it sounds, including both his RTR rigs. I must say that the new Foreplay III is a clear upgrade over my tricked out original Foreplay. PJ and Doc have reason to be pleased with this baby!
What I noticed was more dynamics and depth. It just seemed closer to live music. The human voice was just right!
Once Doc has this kit on the market I plan to build one stock then mod it in steps. I will post my progress here. Once I'm done it will be far from stock with a twist. ;^)