

Eton GA 2 + GA 4: Modern Sound Quality Power Amps

Luxury amplifiers



► Last year Eton delighted us with the MA amplifiers, finely made Class D power amps that are sit at the top of the product range. Now come the GA 2 and GA 4, two new models positioned above them.

„Advanced SQ Class D Power Amplifier“ is proudly emblazoned on the housings of the two new Eton amps, so that we know exactly where we are headed. In presenting the GAs, Eton has a new top series that closely resembles last year’s MA series, but which aims to raise the bar in terms of internal features. The external similarity is naturally no accident — why should you drop great ideas like the reversible lid and stackability? Actually, the GA housings are the same as for the large MAs, namely the MA 1 and the MA 6. And again we find the yellow „screwdriver“, the nice adjusting tool stowed under the lid for the pots. As

for active crossovers, there are individual on-off high and low pass filters up to 6 kHz; otherwise there are no frills. The filters, which are the same for all channel pairs, are complemented by a switchable subsonic filter at 30 Hz. Particularly complex is the adaptation to the vehicle system; here Eton provides both switchable sensitivity and switchable input impedance — perfect for vehicles with speaker diagnostics. Cable remote controls are standard, and even they can be switched off for optimum signal fidelity. As is already the case for the MA, the power supply and speaker connections are pluggable, which should please some installers.

Coming to the internal features, here we see that the GA 2 and GA 4 are almost identical. Even the layout is largely the same: both power supply units work with a very generous push-pull transformer and use the well-known TL494 as a PWM controller for regulation. Buffering consists of 4 x 3300 microfarad capacitors, then comes the amplification. And that is state-of-the-art at its best. All channels have an IRS20957, the digital counterpart of the IRS2092 popular as a Class D driver chip. The output transistors are located under the circuit board on the housing lid; This is where the GA 2 reveals itself more powerfully dimensioned than its 4-channel sister. Whereas the GA 4 has one transistor pair per channel, there are 8 working in the GA 2, that is four instead of two per channel, which means the GA 2 can



The power supply units for both GAs are also largely the same; the GA 2 (right) also has 8 output transistors, which are mounted on the underside of the circuit board



The GA amps are stackable, and the connections for power and speakers are pluggable for quick disassembly

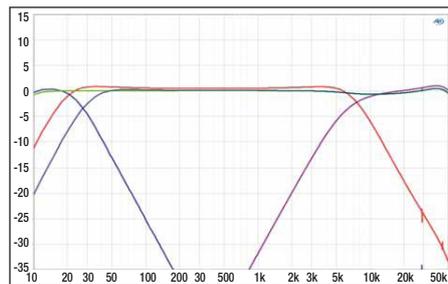
push double the amount of current. Accordingly, the Class D filter coils in the GA 2 are also a size larger. Both types are naturally first choice: heavy-duty encapsulated flat wire coils, as found only in the top amplifiers. Inside the GAs therefore look at least as good as they do from outside, and we are eager to see how they work in practice.

Measurements and Sound

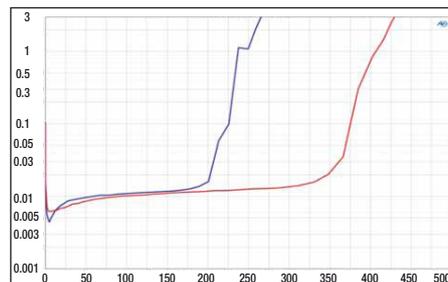
With a modern Class D circuit power is not really an issue. Today we have amplifiers on the market which the old car audio enthusiasts never dared dream about. The GA amps also naturally offer power in abundance, but with the declared focus on sound quality that is not the end of the story. Rather the challenge, especially in the case of an amplifier with high peak power, is to keep distortion down even at low output levels. Normally, the amplifier needs a bit of power until the minimum of the distortion-power curve is reached. But sedate music listening (SQ?) takes place below 10 watts, and exemplary behavior in this region was also a declared design goal at Eton. Our results show that the GA amplifiers achieve this goal: readings of only 0.005 and 0.007 % distortion at 5 watts are quite outstanding. That the power output

then remains so good over the whole output range is icing on the cake. At maximum power the GAs don't hang back. The GA 2 pushes out a really big 250 and 407 watts into 4 and 2 ohm load impedances, With the GA4 it is 218 and 350, and hence in total quite

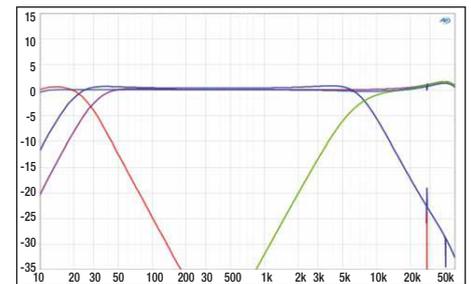
a lot more than with the two-channel version using the same power supply unit and double transistor configuration. In terms of sound with a normal speaker system there is practically no difference to discern between the GA 4 and GA 2. The GA 4 even offers more reserve than you will need. Both are supreme at working equally well at loud and soft volumes, while maintaining their sound character. The wide dynamic range during monumental entries is breathtaking. The dynamic attacks of well recorded drums will make you jump. On the other side, quiet vocal passages come across very beautifully,



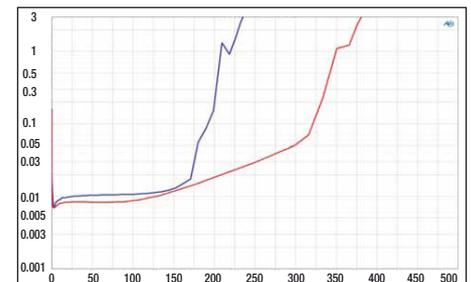
The GA 2 runs up to over 50 kHz; while the high-pass and low-pass filters extend to 6 kHz in case anyone wants to operate a tweeter with 250 watts.



The GA 2 shows outstanding performance for a powerful 2-channel power amp, even at low output powers.



GA 4 and GA 2 have the same features and hence similar frequency responses; at 30 Hz a subsonic filter can be switched in.



With a channel output of 220 or 350 watts the GA 4 is very close to the GA 2. In terms of system performance it is even significantly ahead.

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The aluminum lids also fit when reversed so that they always look good

and the proverbial triangle in the last row of the orchestra sounds as if these Eton units were just waiting for it. Together with the modern precision that one is now used to, that definitely makes sense. That can be really good and, unlike pling-pling high-end, also a lot of fun.

Summary

Admittedly, the GA amplifiers are not exactly cheap, but for that you get engineering at its best for true audio enthusiasts. If you want to treat yourself to something high-end, the Eton GA should be on the shortlist.



Under the lid we find the controls with the same filters and input level adjustment switches for all channels

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Amps		Eton GA 2	Eton GA 4
Price		about 600 Euro	about 650 Euro
Distributor		ACR CH-5330 Zurzach	ACR CH-5330 Zurzach
Hotline		info@eton-caraudi.com	info@eton-caraudi.com
Internet www.		eton-audio.com	eton-audio.com
Summary			
▶ Sound quality	40 %	0,9	0,9
Bass foundation	8 %	0,5	0,5
Pressure	8 %	1,0	1,0
Transparency	8 %	1,5	1,0
Accuracy	8 %	1,0	1,0
Dynamics	8 %	0,5	1,0
▶ Lab	35 %	1,0	1,0
Power	20 %	1,0	1,0
Damping factor	5 %	1,5	1,5
Distortion	5 %	1,0	1,0
Signal/Noise Ratio	5 %	0,5	0,5
▶ Practice	25 %	1,0	1,0
Features	15 %	1,0	1,0
Workmanship electr.	5 %	1,0	1,0
Workmanship mech.	5 %	1,0	1,0

Technical data

	GA 2	GA 4
Channels	2	4
Power @ 4 ohms	250	218
Power @ 2 ohms	407	349
Power @ 1 ohms	0	0
Bridged power	814	698
System power	814	1140
Sensitivity max mV	390	530
Sensitivity min mV	4,6	6,3
THD+N (<22 kHz) 5W	0,005	0,007
THD+N (<22 kHz) half load	0,012	0,011
Signal/Noise Ratio DB(A)	94	93
Damping 20 Hz	257	483
Damping 80 Hz	261	492
Damping 400 Hz	253	486
Damping 1 kHz	219	484
Damping 8 kHz	43	421
Damping 16 Hz	7	326

Features

	GA 2	GA 4
Lowpass	30 – 6k Hz	30 – 6k Hz
Highpass	15 – 6k Hz	5 – 6k Hz
Bandpass	15 – 6k Hz	15 – 6k Hz
Bass-boost	–	–
Subsonicfilter	fix 30 Hz	fix 30 Hz
Phaseshift	–	–
High-Level inputs	•	•
Autosense	• DC or signal	• DC or signal
RCA outputs	•	–
Start/Stop compatible	– (7,2 V)	– (7,2 V)
Dimensions (L x W x H in mm)	270 x 160 x 51	270 x 160 x 51
Other	remote, EBS load	remote, EBS load 2 or 4 channel input

Abs. Top-Class 1,0

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Price/performance: excellent

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“Beautiful amplifiers (not only) for sound quality.”