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Bound for Sound

The first audio magazine to have reviewed the **NHB-108 model one** was **Bound for Sound**. We reprint the **complete review** here, with the permission of Martin G. Dewulf, Editor.

HIGHLIGHTS

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If you are a Stereophile reader, you may have already heard of Hervé Delétraz.

Hervé's development of the darTZeel NHB-108 model one power amplifier was covered in those pages, and a nice set of photos of Hervé and the amp were included on Stereophile's web site (though the appearance of the amplifier has changed noticeably since then).

Hervé also contributed to that magazine a somewhat controversial article on wires and cables, wherein he espoused the significance and importance of impedance matched interconnect connections. On a personal level, I would characterize Hervé as a perfectionist that finds no detail too small for consideration and analysis. As you read this review, remember what I just said, this power amplifier is the result of an almost maniacal search for perfection through the examination and re-examination of relevant details.

The amps have balanced inputs for each channel, but at this time the input is not truly balanced, the cold pin being loaded with a 13 kOhm load instead of being tied to ground. Output impedance is 0.33 Ohms.

The design uses no negative feedback at the outputs. The amplifier is a full open loop design at the input and output. The amp uses only two bipolar output devices per channel. All input stages are biased to class A, and the output section is biased to about 20 wpc class a - so it runs pretty hot. Power draw at idle is 150 watts with a maximum of 1000 watts at 4 Ohms. Dual transformers are 300 VA each, but the cores are normally used in 450 VA designs, that are fully resin impregnated and molded for inclusion in non magnetic casings.

Tale of the Tape.

The model one presently retails for \$9,898.98. Hervé indicated to me that his ability to hold the line on the price will depend largely on monetary fluctuations. Right now, he anticipates the above price being more of an introductory price than a long term retail. The specs are: 100 wpc into 8 Ohms, and 160 wpc into 4 Ohms. The amp has an internal switch which is activated when using loudspeakers of less than 4 Ohms. Input impedance for RCA inputs is 100 kOhms, and 50 Ohms for the BNC input. Yes, that's fifty Ohms for the BNC connector. This input is present for use with 50 Ohm interconnects and a preamp capable of driving a 50 Ohm input.