



NEW TOYS

BY BARRY RUDDOLPH



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Mojave MA-200 Condenser Microphone

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Mojave is David Royer's nascent condenser microphone company and based on his fine line of ribbon microphones, I was intrigued to discover the MA-200 cardioid-only condenser. This vacuum tube microphone weighs one pound, is seven and 5/8-inches long and has a one-inch in diameter capsule with a three-micron thick gold-sputtered diaphragm. The tube is a military-grade JAN 5840 pentode (wired as a triode) that helps to achieve the mic's self-noise specification of just 14dBa (very quiet). Other specs are: Frequency response rated at 20Hz to 20kHz +/- 3dB; less than 1% distortion at 117dB SPL; 200-ohms output impedance; and output clip point measured at 132dB at 20Hz.

The MA-200 comes in a handsome attaché carrying case with a 115/230-VAC power supply, pro shock mount, the mic itself in another carrying case, and all required cables. Each MA-200 microphone, power supply and cable set is burned in for 24 hours and then carefully tested and evaluated before shipment.



I received a MA-200 and put it to work recording acoustic guitars and vocals in parallel with a vintage Neumann U67 condenser. I have to say the MA-200 beats the old Neumann in a couple of ways. While the Neumann was much warmer, fatter and thicker in the low frequency range, it was all mostly useless--frequencies I would have to equalize out when mixing. The differences narrowed when I used my direct-coupled mic-preamp (as opposed to my Neve 1272 with transformers) and I heard a clearer picture of the high frequencies. The MA-200 is clearer and only very slightly brighter than the 30-year old U67. While the Neumann might "help" to mellow out a shrill sound source, it would not be painting an accurate "sonic picture". Compared to the U67, the MA-200 portrays the transients better, had a lower noise floor and did not overload as easily.

With a little maturity, the MA-200 is a classic in the making and definitely a new asset in my mic cabinet. It makes an excellent, all-around workhorse microphone suitable for any application from vocals to backing vocals to acoustic guitars to pianos or string instruments.



The MA-200 sells for \$995MSRP and for more information, go to: www.mojaveaudio.com.



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[Back To Home Page](#)

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