

Courtesy Frank I <http://www.head-fi.org/products/vioelectric-hpa-v200/reviews/6280>

# Vioelectric V200 The Smooth Operator

German made products always spike my interest. When I think of products manufactured in Germany usually what comes to mind are precise products that are well designed and usually built well. The Vioelectric V200 is one such product. Developed and designed by Freid Reim and manufactured in Germany the V200 is a superbly built and designed headphone amplifier. The company Lake People has been building both professional and home use amplifiers since 1986 in Germany. Freid told me he hires educated employees and pays them well so his products are always manufactured to high standards. He only uses high quality parts and from the look of the casing you could see this is not a run of the mill design. All manufacturing is done in Germany which makes the cost of this amplifier higher than many others that are outsourced to China. 1K buys an amplifier that is not only built to last but sounds very good as well.

After reading other reviews and impressions of this amplifier I asked Robert from Aphrodite if I could get a unit to listen to and give some impressions and Robert graciously sent me a new unit for the review process. Robert is a first class guy and someone you want to do business with. A better person you will be hard pressed to find. My preference in high end audio design has always been biased toward tube amplifiers. Some say the V200 is tube like in performance. I figure if so many solid state designers are trying to design solid state amp that sound like tube amps then tube amps must indeed be special. In my 35 years of experience I have yet to hear any product to sound more real or live than a tube based product. Tube amps in my opinion are hard to beat in what they do with tonality. Focus and sound stage is always better in my tube based products than in my solid state counterparts. I was curious if the V200 could compete with my Decware Tube Amps as well as my other solid state options like the vintage Pioneer SX650 and the newly acquired RSA Hr-2.

The equipment used for evaluation is my usual assortment of top tier headphones, the Beyer T1, Denon D7000 and the HE500. The source I used for this review was the Marantz SA8004 SACD/CD player. All interconnects were audio quest diamondback. Also other amps compared were the Ray Samuels Audio Design HR-2, Pioneer SX 650 and the Decware tube combination of the Taboo and CSP2 preamp. Music used ranged from Classical, jazz, vocals and pop recordings and folk. The only music not used was metal and Electronic. Female vocalists recordings used were from Eva Cassidy, Holly Cole, Gillian Welch and others. Male vocalist include Harry Connick and Frank Sinatra

The first thing that strikes you about the V200 is the build quality and you can see where there were few compromises in the design philosophy. The amplifier is described as a hybrid op amp and discrete transistor design. Parts used are all of the highest quality. The power section of the amplifier has 16 total transistors all discrete. The amp will put out a maximum of 2.7W into 50 ohms. The volume control is an Alps 27 in steps. The design is a class AB design. The amplifier is a well built piece of kit and leaves little to be desired in build quality. You can understand why the retail price is 1K when you see the detail put into the build and the casework. The name Vioelectric is silk screened to the front panel and makes this an amplifier many would be proud to own.

The V200 was a new unit and I heard no changes either at the 100 hour mark or after. The V200 is a smooth performer. The sound is very easy sounding. The music just flows in a quiet jet black velvet background. There is no trace of any harshness or grain I could hear. The V200 is dead silent and would qualify as the quietest solid state amp I have yet experienced. Signature of the amplifier is different than most other solid state amp designs that I have experienced. Cold and Sterile this amp is not. It also is not analytical or boring. When listening to music you forget there is a solid state or any amp in the performance chain. There are some adjustable gain switches in the rear of the amp that will allow you to adjust the gain of the amp to pretty much tailor the sound to any headphone in use. The

T1 required 12DB or 4X gain to sound best while the other two headphones used unity gain stock no gain added was best and also has the smoothest presentation on the V200. Tube like is not a term I like to use describing solid state amps it's either a tube amp or it not. The v200 is a solid state amp that has a touch of warmth but not an overly warm or syrupy sound. Musicality and tonality are part of the strength of this product.

The midrange is excellent on this amplifier. Instrument tonality is accurate in this amplifier. The V200 is not what I would consider to be a balanced and neutral amp. Bass is very noticeable with the V200 so much so that it has to be considered a strong point but it also make the amp a little restricted as it is more extended than the treble and reduces the sound stage size in both width and depth. The music is addictive enough to keep you involved. You can hear clearly the guitar notes and piano keys being struck. Piano sounds very realistic and violins have that delicate sound and you can also tell differences from a viola. The midrange is very liquid. The vocal presentation is done in a very clear precise manner with good detail of both male and female vocalist. The sound is sibilant free with no favoring of either male or female vocalist. Instrument tone is nicely presented with musicality and details something many amps fail to deliver. This amp gets it. The midrange is very good.

Treble is nice and easy to listen too. It is neither hard nor harsh and extension is good. The tube amps have more extended treble with a more natural sheen to it and the RSA HR-2 treble is also more extended than the V200. The V200 is better than my Pioneer SX650 in treble extension and the clear winner here for sound stage is the RSA HR-2. Drum cymbals are not as extended in comparison to the other amps used for this review. They do not have the crisp sheen also that I hear on the HR-2. Treble while very good is not as extended as the other amps but still acceptable.

The bass is very extended and deep. It is very fast with good texture and hits very hard. The V200 is black. It is the quietest amp I have ever experienced. Music just seems to come from everywhere when called for. I would hear passages with dead silence and then music just appears. The best part is listening to a classical orchestra is when the orchestra stops and then starts again. The dynamics of the V200 is excellent and competes with most any amps I have heard to date. It is exciting and enjoyable to listen too. I never experienced any fatigue and even after some 14 hr sessions I always looked forward to my next session. Acoustic bass and drums sound very extended. I can feel the drum pedal hitting drum skins.

Comparison to the Ray Samuels HR-2 is fair since the 875.00 price is close to the cost of the V200. The HR-2 has the wider and deeper soundstage with a more extended treble. The bass on the V200 is more extended and deeper but the RSA is no slouch in the area. The tonality of the amplifiers is different. RSA is livelier and a touch brighter not as warm sounding but it also is neither cold nor sterile. Musicality with more soundstage is what the HR-2 does better than the V200. The V200 is more quiet but only slightly so. The Decware amps are not really a fair comparison. They are a step up in every direction from all my solid state amps. The V200 has less focus and a more restricted sound stage and does not exhibit the transparency of the Decware taboo or CSP2. The Decware combo with good tubes is a 2400.00 combination so it's more than twice the price of the V200. The Pioneer SX650 is as good and in some ways better than the head amps that I have but many will not like the size and weight plus the maintenance that will be required as this receiver is 35 years old and starting to show signs that it will need to be rebuilt at some point. Most noticeable the SX650 has more power and a wider and deeper soundstage than either the V200 or HR-2. Most people will appreciate the size of the headphone amplifiers and more appreciate the idea of using less real estate.

The V200 is a well built amp. The time spent listened to this amplifier has been very enjoyable. It is well made and manufactured to high standard and pleasure to listen to and have in my possession. Is it worth the asking price? If I had the money for the unit and I was looking for a primary headphone amp I could honestly say I could be happy with this amp. If you have limited funds and want an amp that will play well with any headphone the V200 could be your end all amplifier. I have enjoyed my time

with it and it is one of the best solid state amps I have heard and it is the quietest. If I did not own the HR-2 and the Decware amps I would have seriously considered the purchase of this amplifier. If you are looking for a great solid state amp that does most things well the V200 can be your solution. The V200 will handle both high and low impedance headphones and do it musically. If musicality is what is most important and you do not want a tube amp look no further than to call Robert and order the V200. This amp is highly recommended for its build quality and simplicity and most of all its majestic sound. Sadly this is on its way back to Robert and I will miss it but will fondly remember it. If you are looking for a top tier product and want one headphone amp that will play well with all headphones you need to consider the V200. It definitely can play in the big leagues and is made by a seasoned veteran of high end design that can swing the bat with anyone. This amplifier will certainly please most and is an easy recommendation. I want to thank Robert for the loan of the amplifier and Fried for being so available to answer my questions. The V200 is highly recommended for anyone looking for a fantastic solid state design.

Disclaimer:

The above review are my impressions of this amplifier and in context with my headphones and other gear, It is one man's impression and others may be either more impressed or disagree with my impressions. The best recommendation I can give is to always audition a product in your system to see if you like it. Hopefully it's a starting point for some and gives some insight. Robert's website is at [aporoditecu29.com](http://aporoditecu29.com) for additional information regarding this amplifier.