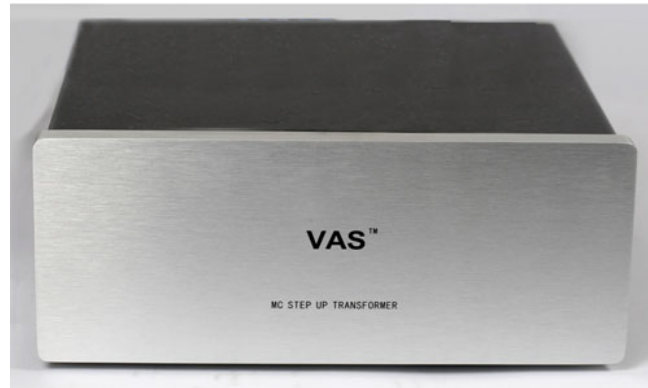


VAS Audio MC One Step-up Transformer

VAS Industries is the company that's bringing Harman/Kardon's Citation tube electronics back into production, building them in China to exceedingly high specs. I can't wait to hear the Citation Sound 1 preamp, but for now, all I've got is this absolutely sweet-sounding, beautifully built moving-coil step-up transformer that provides about 11dB of gain into its high-impedance tap, 17dB of gain into its low-impedance tap, and costs \$700.



ANALOG CORNER

Moving-coil input and did some listening. Then I inserted the VAS MC One between the turntable and the Manley's moving-magnet input. I used Hovland Music Groove phono cable from the turntable to the VAS MC One, and Cardas Golden Reference interconnect from the VAS to the Steelhead's MM input. With the MC One's 47 ohm and 100 ohm taps, you should be able to get a satisfactory match with most cartridges.

I know the bad rap on step-up transformers: although they produce gain without adding any noise, they sound bright and hard. Well, some of them do, but the MC One was one sweet, delicate-sounding step-up. While the Manley's built-in transformer sounded somewhat tighter and more detailed (or brighter and harder, if you've so inclined), the VAS was harmonically richer and somewhat more supple, while having no deleterious effects (such as opacity) at all.