

Gear

RECORDING TOOLS

AEA Nuvo Series N8 and N22

BY BUDDY SALEMAN

IF YOU'RE A RECORDING NERD AS MUCH as you are a guitar-gear geek, then it's big news that AEA offers affordable ribbon microphones based on the classic 1930s RCA 44. Far from costing multi-thousands for a vintage ribbon, the N8 (\$1,098 street) and N22 (\$899 street) are within striking distance of most home-studio budgets. In addition, these evolutions of the classic ribbon design are crafted by AEA co-founder Wes Dooley, who started servicing RCA 44s after RCA closed its microphone division in 1976. In other words, the dude knows what he is doing.

TEST ARENA

The varied signal paths for the N8 and N22 included a Manley VoxBox, a Universal Audio

2-610, an API 3124, a Digidesign Mic Pre 8, and a Focusrite Saffire Pro 40. Test tracks were piano, 6- and 12-string acoustic guitars, solo female vocals, and a male a cappella group.

**N8**

Although the N8 (pictured left) is designed more as a room mic, it sounds very smooth on vocals and guitars when using close-mic positions. You get clarity without any harshness or stridency, and the warm, relaxed tone presents every instrument it records in glorious detail.

N22

The N22 (above right) was maximized in price and performance for singer/songwriters. It



definitely records acoustic guitar with an organic sparkle—as if the performance was in a hushed coffee joint—and vocals are reproduced with clarity without being overly aggressive in the mids.

GO FOR TWO

Blending the “room” personality of the N8 with the articulation of the N22 produces truly delectable results. The vocals were captured in a modified X/Y configuration, and they sounded deep and dimensional. Subtleties in vocal phrasing are clearly audible amidst the textures, and room reflections are captured with enough subtlety to add ambience while diminishing annoying flutter echoes or other glitches. The acoustic piano and acoustic guitars were glorious—every sound had impact, shimmer, and girth. This is perhaps the best “dynamic duo” since Batman and Robin.

Kudos Beautifully organic sounds with dimension and clarity.

Concerns None.

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