HOMECINEMA MAGAZINE

REVIEW: PRIMALUNA EVO-300 TUBE INTEGRATED AMPLIFIER

EL34
12AU7
PrimaLuna
EvoLution
MIN
MAX
VOLUME
EVO 300 Tube Integrated Amplifier
AUX1
AUX2
AUX3
AUX4
AUX5
HT
SELECTOR

Review: PrimaLuna Evo 300 Tube Power Amplifier- The EVO 300 Integrated sets a new world-class standard for a tube integrated amp, while offering one of the greatest price-to-performance ratios

☆☆☆☆☆

Introduction

In this comprehensive review, we dive deep into the PrimaLuna EVO 300 Tube Integrated Amplifier, a product from the distinguished Dutch tube specialist, PrimaLuna. Notably, PrimaLuna has recently joined forces with Besser Distribution GmbH to broaden its reach in the DACH region, signifying its commitment to delivering high-quality audio equipment to a wider audience. Priced at 4,890 euros, the EVO 300 promises a blend of exceptional features and performance capabilities that set it apart in the realm of high-end audio gear.

The collaboration with Besser Distribution GmbH not only expands the reach of PrimaLuna's products but also enhances the support and service available to customers. This partnership signifies a strategic move to ensure that the PrimaLuna EVO 300 and other offerings can be readily experienced and appreciated by a more extensive community of audio enthusiasts.

Price	$4,695
Power Ultra-linear	42 watts x 2 (EL34) (8Ω, 1% THD)
Power Triode	24 watts x 2 (EL34) (8Ω, 1% THD)
Inputs	5x Stereo RCA Stereo RCA HT Bypass
Outputs	4 & 8 Ω RCA Stereo/Mono Subwoofer Stereo RCA Tape Out 1/4" Headphone

Freq. Response	10Hz-65kHz +/- 1dB
THD	< 0.2% @ 1W < 2% @ Rated Power
S/N Ratio	86 dB, 95 dBA
Input Sensitivity	270 mV (EL34)
Input Impedance	100kΩ
Power Consumption	290 watts (EL34) 300 watts (KT88) 330 watts (KT120) 340 watts (KT150)
Standard Tube Complement	6 – 12AU7 4 – EL34
Dimensions (WxHxD)	15.2" x 8.1" x 15.9"
Weight	68.2 lbs

Setting Up with Besser Distribution GmbH

Before we embark on an exploration of the amplifier's features and sound prowess, it's worth acknowledging the role played by Besser Distribution GmbH. This partnership facilitates the availability of the PrimaLuna EVO 300 and other PrimaLuna products to a more extensive customer base in the DACH region, making top-tier audio equipment more accessible to enthusiasts and audiophiles alike.

Visual Appeal and Build Quality

Upon unveiling the PrimaLuna EVO 300, its aesthetic appeal immediately captures one's attention. The amplifier's design reflects meticulous attention to detail. The silver metal front panel creates a striking contrast against the dark gray to slightly bluish, fully ventilated steel chassis. As the vacuum tubes begin to glow, it adds an enchanting visual aspect to the amplifier's charm. Every aspect of its construction is evidently crafted with precision, from the five-layer coating on the steel chassis to the seamlessly integrated removable cage, which serves to protect both the tubes and users.

Notable Features and Technology

The PrimaLuna EVO 300 boasts an array of features that elevate its desirability. A substantial metal remote control provides convenient access to input selection, volume adjustment, and muting functions. One standout feature is its ability to seamlessly switch between Triode and Ultralinear modes, offering distinct tonal profiles that are readily discernible. The amplifier delivers an impressive 42 watts of output power per channel in Ultralinear mode and 24 watts per channel in Triode mode, leveraging EL34 tubes renowned for their musicality. A distinctive feature is its capability to indicate which tube may require replacement in the event of a failure, adding a layer of convenience and user-friendliness.

Sound Performance: Bass and Dynamics

When it comes to sound performance, the PrimaLuna EVO 300 makes a resounding impression from the outset. It delivers a robust and deep bass response that defies expectations for an amplifier equipped with EL34 tubes. This bass quality is not only present but also meticulously controlled and well-defined. The amplifier's dynamics are truly remarkable, handling music with an energy and speed that are often associated with amplifiers in a higher price range.

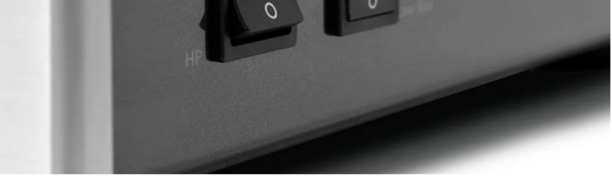
Sound Test: Bass and Dynamics

When it comes to sound performance, the PrimaLuna EVO 300 makes a resounding impression from the outset. It delivers a robust and deep bass response that defies expectations for an amplifier equipped with EL34 tubes. This bass quality is not only present but also meticulously controlled and well-defined. The amplifier’s dynamics are truly remarkable, handling music with an energy and speed that are often associated with amplifiers in a higher price range. This combination of deep, controlled bass and dynamic prowess ensures that the amplifier can faithfully reproduce a wide range of musical genres. Whether it’s the thunderous low-frequency impacts of electronic music or the nuanced bass notes of a double bass in a jazz ensemble, the EVO 300 delivers with aplomb.

Switching Between Triode and Ultralinear Modes

A standout feature of the PrimaLuna EVO 300 is its seamless ability to transition between Triode and Ultralinear modes on the fly, allowing listeners to choose their preferred tonal characteristics. In Triode mode, the sound takes on a sweeter, softer, more intimate, and less detailed quality. The bass response becomes gentler, and the highs assume a more subdued character, creating a distinct listening experience compared to Ultralinear mode. This flexibility in sound signature empowers listeners to tailor their listening experience to the mood and genre of music they prefer. It’s akin to having two amplifiers in one chassis, each offering a unique sonic perspective. Whether you crave the warmth and mellowness of Triode or the dynamic punch of Ultralinear, the EVO 300 accommodates your sonic preferences with ease.

OUTPUT
BIAS SWITCH
LS



Fine Dynamics and Precise Detailing

The PrimaLuna EVO 300 excels in reproducing fine dynamics, ensuring that even the subtlest volume gradations are rendered with precision. Musical details are presented with a level of clarity and precision that makes listening a delight, even at lower volume levels. The amplifier retains its composure, enabling extended listening sessions without listener fatigue. It breathes life into the quietest moments of a classical piece, where delicate orchestral nuances and the gentlest piano keystrokes are brought to the forefront. This capacity for fine detailing allows listeners to rediscover their favorite tracks, uncovering hidden layers and subtleties that may have previously gone unnoticed.

Tonal Balance: Warmth and Richness

The amplifier's tonal balance leans toward warmth, featuring a rich midrange with a velvety texture. Voices and instruments assume a weighty and emotionally engaging quality, making it an excellent choice for those who prioritize musicality over analytical precision. It imparts a sense of intimacy to vocal performances, enhancing the emotional connection between the listener and the artist. This tonal character is particularly well-suited to genres where the human voice takes center stage, such as jazz, blues, or singer-songwriter ballads. The EVO 300 adds an organic and inviting quality to vocals, allowing listeners to savor every vocal inflection and lyrical expression.

RIGHT OUTPUT
8 Ω
4 Ω
SUB OUT
TAPE OUT
MONO

Soundstage and Spatiality

The PrimaLuna EVO 300 extends its prowess to soundstage presentation. In Ultralinear mode, it conjures a spacious and three-dimensional soundstage that stretches far forward, immersing the listener in a captivating auditory experience. The depth gradation enhances the sense of immersion, with instruments becoming palpable in the listening space. This expansive soundstage adds a layer of realism and spatiality to recordings, transporting the listener into the recording venue or studio. It's akin to sitting in the midst of a live concert, with musicians positioned distinctly in space. For audiophiles and music enthusiasts seeking an immersive listening experience that transcends traditional stereo sound, the EVO 300's spatial capabilities make it a compelling choice.

Impressive Headphone Amplification

In its role as a headphone amplifier, the PrimaLuna EVO 300 continues to impress. Whether paired with headphones like the Focal Clear MG or the Hifiman Arya Stealth, it delivers an engaging and spatial listening experience that competes favorably with standalone headphone amplifiers. This versatility provides an appealing option for headphone enthusiasts who may consider using the amplifier as their primary headphone driver. It ensures that the amplifier's exceptional sound quality extends to personal listening sessions, offering a degree of intimacy and immersion that elevates the headphone listening experience.

EVO 300 Tube Integrated Amplifier

Why Choose the PrimaLuna EVO 300?

Choosing the PrimaLuna EVO 300 Tube Integrated Amplifier is a decision driven by a passion for music and an appreciation for audio quality. This amplifier stands out for several reasons. Firstly, it offers an exceptional blend of aesthetics and build quality. Crafted with precision, it not only sounds remarkable but also looks the part, adding a touch of elegance to any audio setup. Secondly, its dynamic prowess, bass control, and the ability to switch between Triode and Ultralinear modes make it a versatile companion for a wide range of music genres and listening preferences. Whether you're in the mood for intimate acoustic melodies or energetic rock anthems, the EVO 300 adapts effortlessly.

Furthermore, its capacity for fine detailing and the richness of its midrange make it an excellent choice for audiophiles seeking a deeper emotional connection with their music. The spacious soundstage and immersive spatiality take the listening experience to new heights, recreating the magic of live performances within your listening room. Additionally, its impressive headphone amplification capabilities make it a valuable addition for those who enjoy personal listening with high-quality headphones.

In summary, the PrimaLuna EVO 300 stands as a remarkable amplifier that marries aesthetics, versatility, and sonic excellence. It transcends the ordinary and invites music enthusiasts to explore the depths of their favorite tracks, revealing nuances and emotions that elevate the listening experience to a level of profound musicality. If you're in search of an amplifier that embodies the fusion of artistry and technology, the PrimaLuna EVO 300 is a compelling choice that promises a musical journey like no other.

POWER
ON
OFF
AUX3
HT
PHASE
TRI/UL
AUX2
AUX5
MUTE
REPEAT
VOLUME
AUX1
AUX4
SELECT
PrimaLuna
Evolution RCU

Switching Between Triode and Ultralinear Modes

A standout feature of the PrimaLuna EVO 300 is its seamless ability to transition between Triode and Ultralinear modes on the fly, allowing listeners to choose their preferred tonal characteristics. In Triode mode, the sound takes on a sweeter, softer, more intimate, and less detailed quality. The bass response becomes gentler, and the highs assume a more subdued character, creating a distinct listening experience compared to Ultralinear mode.

Fine Dynamics and Precise Detailing

The PrimaLuna EVO 300 excels in reproducing fine dynamics, ensuring that even the subtlest volume gradations are rendered with precision. Musical details are presented with a level of clarity and precision that makes listening a delight, even at lower volume levels. The amplifier retains its composure, enabling extended listening sessions without listener fatigue.

Tonal Balance: Warmth and Richness

The amplifier's tonal balance leans toward warmth, featuring a rich midrange with a velvety texture. Voices and instruments assume a weighty and emotionally engaging quality, making it an excellent choice for those who prioritize musicality over analytical precision.

Soundstage and Spatiality

The PrimaLuna EVO 300 extends its prowess to soundstage presentation. In Ultralinear mode, it conjures a spacious and three-dimensional soundstage that stretches far forward, immersing the listener in a captivating auditory experience. The depth gradation enhances the sense of immersion, with instruments becoming palpable in the listening space.

Impressive Headphone Amplification

In its role as a headphone amplifier, the PrimaLuna EVO 300 continues to impress. Whether paired with headphones like the Focal Clear MG or the Hifiman Arya Stealth, it delivers an engaging and spatial listening experience that competes favorably with standalone headphone amplifiers. This versatility provides an appealing option for headphone enthusiasts who may consider using the amplifier as their primary headphone driver.

CE
CAUTION
MODEL :
EVO 300 Tube Integrated Amplifier
SER. NO:
XA3834598AU

Conclusion: A Remarkable Amplifier with Versatility

In conclusion, the PrimaLuna EVO 300 Tube Integrated Amplifier stands as a testament to the fusion of exceptional build quality, feature-rich design, and captivating sound performance within its price range. It marries aesthetics with functionality, creating an amplifier that not only exudes visual elegance but also delivers a profoundly engaging listening experience. Whether you're a music lover seeking emotional connection or an audiophile appreciating nuanced musicality, the EVO 300 offers a compelling choice that elevates your audio journey. For those who value the convergence of musicality and technical prowess, the PrimaLuna EVO 300 stands as a standout option in its category, offering a musical experience that transcends the ordinary and invites you to explore the depths of your favorite music.

PrimaLuna EVO 300 profile:

- Very deep, powerful, voluminous bass that goes beyond what you would expect from a tube amplifier and is more reminiscent of powerful solid-state amplifiers. Very demanding listeners could miss Only the last bit of clarity.
- Emotionally exuding, tonally slightly emphasized lower mids, not least deeper voices, fascinate with their mellowness and body. However, the velvetiness and melting do not take over, so the impression is not too soft and woolly.
- In ultralinear operation, surprisingly high resolution and lively highs, tonally more on the fresh than the defensive side.
- Jumping coarse and fine dynamics, the EVO 300 always leaves a confident impression at both low and high levels.
- Not least because of the warmer tuning (bass, fundamental tone, lower mids), it is a case for pleasure listeners, but analysts can also feel attracted by the high resolution – at least in ultralinear mode.
- Stage image appropriate to the price range, extending slightly beyond the speakers at the sides, and in ultralinear mode also far to the front, but not extending to the rear. Clearly defined, three-dimensional instruments and voices that are beautifully tangible in space.
- Very good workmanship, elegant appearance and, ultimately, an outstanding price-performance ratio for high-end standards.

Facts:

- Model: PrimaLuna EVO 300 Tube Integrated Amplifier

- Concept: tube integrated amplifier
- Price: 4,890 euros (without phono module)
- Tubes: 4 x EL34, 6 x 12AU7
- Dimensions and weight: 385 x 205 x 405 mm (W x H x D); 31kg
- Inputs: 5 x high level RCA, 1 x home theater input
- Outputs: speaker terminals for a pair of speakers, subwoofer, tape, 6.3 mm jack
- Output power: 2 x 42 watts
- Other: Metal remote control (including “triode/ultra-linear” switching), optional phono module, home theater pass-through circuit, stereo-mono switch, adaptive auto-bias circuit
- Warranty: 2 years (tubes: 6 months)