

# PRO AUDIO REVIEW

The Industry's Equipment Authority

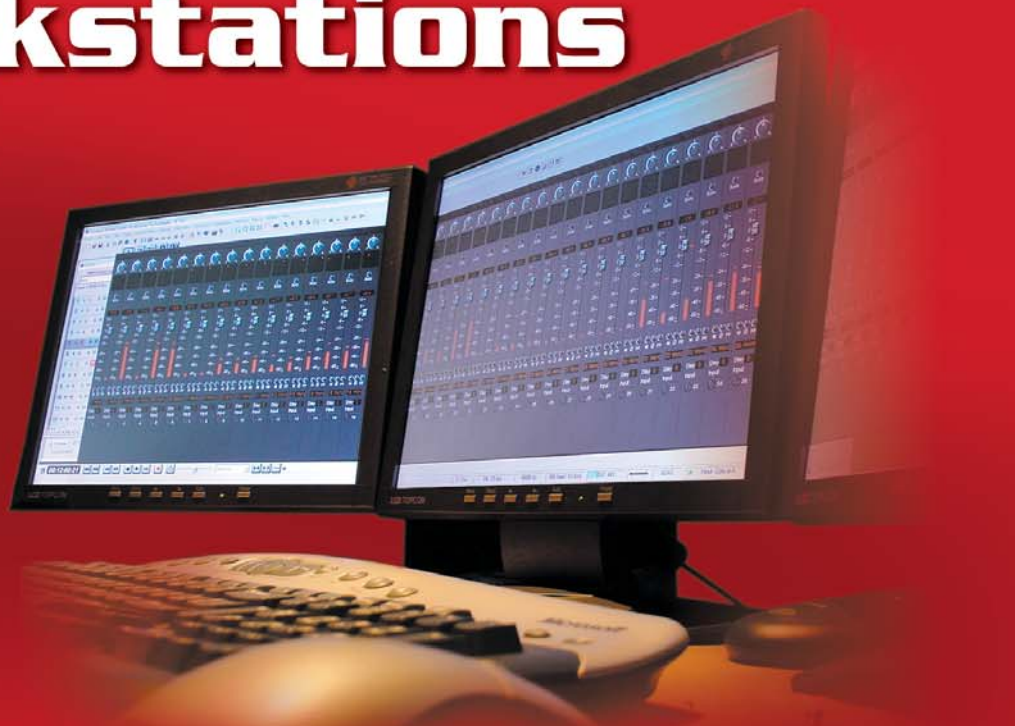
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Live

BY WILL JAMES

For many years, Crest amplifiers were the leader of the pack, offering highly roadworthy, high-output power amplifiers. Crest now offers a new line of power amps for the pro sound industry, appropriately named the Pro Series.

## FEATURES

The Pro Series 8200 (\$2,630) is a two rack-space amplifier, weighing in at 25 pounds, but having a rather hefty output. Crest rates the 8200 at 825 watts RMS at 8 ohms; 1,450 watts RMS into 4 ohms, 2,250 watts RMS into 2 ohms (all ratings at both channels driven simultaneously); and 4,500 watts at 4 ohms bridged mono. Crest rates the slew rate (a power amp's speed at which it can process changes in volume and frequency) at 15 volts per microsecond. Crest offers two other power amps in this product line, the 7200 and the 5200.

The 8200 is a clean-appearing package, with a succinct presentation of controls and connections. The front panel's most notice-

## Crest Pro 8200 Power Amplifier



able feature is the good-sized cooling port, which draws fresh air in through a perforated section that occupies about one-sixth of the total front surface area. There are two separate recessed rotary level controls that click-stop at even intervals between -80 dB to 0 dB input sensitivity.

Immediately above the rotary controls are a series of attractively colored LEDs that indicate different levels of operation and speaker protection activity such as clipping and overheating.

For protection the amp has AutoRamp soft start, DC and short circuit to keep problems to a minimum.

The front panel also contains a solid rocker switch for on/off control.

The rear panel's most impressive features are the dual three-inch cooling fans that draw fresh air through the aforementioned intake grilles. Air is drawn directly across the heat fins of the amplifier stage of the 8200. The input connections are Neutrik concentric 1/4-inch TRS/XLR connectors,

with an operation selector switch that allow the left and right input connectors to be run independently as stereo inputs or as parallel inputs requiring only one connector to be used, or to switch the 8200 into bridged mono mode.

The output connections are both Neutrik NL4 and standard binding post/banana plugs. The power cord is a large IEC-type locking female cable, with a 20 amp/125 volt Edison male blade connector for wall connection.

## IN USE

The relatively large output wattage of the 8200 would suggest that it would be a perfect subwoofer power amp, so that was our first test.

My company provided full production (sound, lighting, stage and roof) for a 5th of July Beach Boys show at an outdoor venue. I figured this application would also see how well the Crest 8200 handles very hot days, with the Arizona desert offering a

## Fast Facts

### Applications:

Professional sound companies, installations.

### Key Features:

Two-channel; dual cooling fans; bridgeable

### Price:

\$2,630

### Contact:

Crest Audio at 201-909-8700, [www.crestaudio.com](http://www.crestaudio.com).

modest 117 degrees at soundcheck time. We wired the 8200 to a pair of our Yorkville TX9 subs, offering a 4 ohm load to both sides of the amp, thus producing a power output of 1,450 watts per double 18-inch cabinet, or 725 watts per 18-inch woofer. The 8200 cruised along very smoothly, providing full, well-rounded sub-bass. The power amp did get warm, in fact very warm, but performed without flaw at highly punishing temperatures throughout soundcheck and the actual show.

Further tests of the 8200 were conducted at several fair and festival settings, where

we used the power amp in a variety of applications including other bandwidths of the main speaker systems, and as the woofer amplifier in biamped monitors. In each case, the Crest amplifier performed exceedingly well, with smooth signal replication in all frequency groups. It seemed to be right at home though, with the subwoofer application and the double 15-inch woofers of our three-way speakers. Obviously, this amp is a little in the overkill department for mid driver and tweeter applications, and could damage the smaller components if proper attention is not applied.

## SUMMARY

The Crest Pro Series 8200 is a highly reliable power amp that can withstand the harshest of heat conditions, and the seismic activity that takes place when transporting racks of power amps from gig to gig. I found the Crest amp to be very good at processing all frequency groups with clarity and sufficient speed. All in all, I like this power amp, and it lives up to the Crest name.

*Will James, owner and chief engineer of Atlantis Audio and Lighting, is a contributor to **Pro Audio Review**.*