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Sonic Farm Tantra 2500w Bass Amplifier Review



By Jake Wolf

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Review of the Sonic Farm Tantra 2500w Bass Amplifier

Have you ever wondered what would happen if a highly respected pro audio company designed and built a bass amp from the ground up? Have I got an answer for you. The Sonic Farm Tantra is the brainchild of pro audio sorcerers and childhood friends Zoran Todorovic and Boris Drazic, who have been

designing and building professional audio equipment together for more than 30 years.

In the engineering and mastering community, Sonic Farm is held in the highest regard for the build quality and incredible fidelity of the equipment they make. Their award-winning gear can be found in the hands of the finest and most demanding audio engineers on the planet.

I first learned about Sonic Farm when my friend and bass amplification big kahuna Mike Arnopol (of Michael Arnopol Soundworks) hipped me to their 2Di4 Tube Direct Box, which I reviewed for Bass Musician Mag a handful of years ago, and have been using faithfully and without fail ever since. The 2Di4 is my go-to DI/preamp for stage and studio and it always sounds exceptional, regularly acquiring praise from engineers and FOH soundpersons for its wonderful tone.

In that review I gushed over the 2Di4, remarking how “*without a trace of brashness or harshness, it was effortlessly present, warm and articulate*”. I remember thinking, man if these guys ever design a full-blown amp for bass, its gonna kill. Well folks, here it is. Designed in conjunction with Mike Arnopol himself, initially, the Tantra was sold as a preamp, then as an integrated head with a 1000w Pascal Class D amp module. This newest version includes an option for a 2500w Pascal Module and boy does it deliver the goods.

Upon first glance, the Tantra is a LOT to take in and is quick to catch people’s eyes with its bright red chassis and cream-colored knobs.

When asked about it, I like to joke that it was ‘pulled from a space shuttle cockpit’. Its front panel is loaded with more features and controls than most of us are used to seeing in a bass amplifier, and even as someone who thinks of themselves as fairly technologically savvy, I initially found it quite complicated. The good news is that despite its somewhat overwhelming layout, most of its features and options are defeatable and can be bypassed, making the Tantra a very simple and straightforward bass amp.

The audio purist in you wants just a Gain control and Master Volume? Done. Need to add a little compression? You got it. Maybe a little bass boost? Sure thing. Playing in a funky sounding room that needs some surgical parametric EQ maneuvers? Say no more. You can actually make this amp as simple or intricate as you want or need it to be.

The Tantra includes much of the 2Di4's feature set up front, with a gain knob, switches for Hi and Lo boost and its wonderfully useful Pentode/Triode tube mode switch.



The Hi and Lo boost have trim pots on the front panel to control the amount of low or hi boost they provide, and the Tube Mode switch chooses between Triode (less gain and cleaner, more polite sound) and Pentode (more gain and subtle saturation) tube operation from the amps EF-86 preamp tube. I mainly found myself using the more full-throated Pentode mode, however, on my 2Di4 I have found a number of uses for both Pentode and Triode mode, depending on the bass, the rig and the band. At the top left, you'll notice the H2 and H4 knobs. These are the Tantra's "Harmonic Generators".

The H2 and H4 controls are particularly unique and interesting, adding in 2nd and 4th harmonics to your sound. In a nutshell, the H2 knob adds in some subtle low mid growl, and the H4 knob imparts some mid/upper mid push to your sound. Neither are earth-shatteringly potent, but they do shift the overall voicing of the amp in some very neat ways, and I found myself putting a little of either or both on my sound from time to time to make things cut through or pocket in the right ways.

The Tantra's exceptional 1-knob compressor delivers very smooth compression, is great at fattening up your sound, and adding presence while gently reigning in the transient peaks. I never heard it pumping/breathing and

found a great 'always on' setting at around 30–40%. Sonic Farm notes that the compressor has a 'fixed compression threshold', so it's important to drive the input gain to an optimal level in order to get the best results with the compressor. I agree, as lower input gain settings resulted in a noticeable noise floor increase with the compressor engaged, but with the gain knob set just below where the input was clipping, the comp was dead quiet and functioned beautifully.

The Tantra's EQ section really shines and deserves an honorable mention. In addition to Bass and Treble shelving style controls, the Tantra offers a lovely fully parametric 3 band EQ, allowing you to surgically carve up your tone. I was impressed by how powerful and accurate the parametric EQ was, and that it introduced hardly any noise when boosted.

One of the Tantra's more interesting features is its Overdrive circuit.

This one gets a little complicated with its numerous controls, however, the OD Gain and Blend controls allow you to blend in a variable amount of overdrive with your clean signal. A 3 position OD high pass filter switch delivers 3 distinctly different overdrive profiles with different amounts of high and low-frequency content, allowing you to further tailor the grit to your liking.

One feature that's not new to pro audio gear, but is relatively new to bass amps is the Tantra's Variable High Pass Filter (HPF).

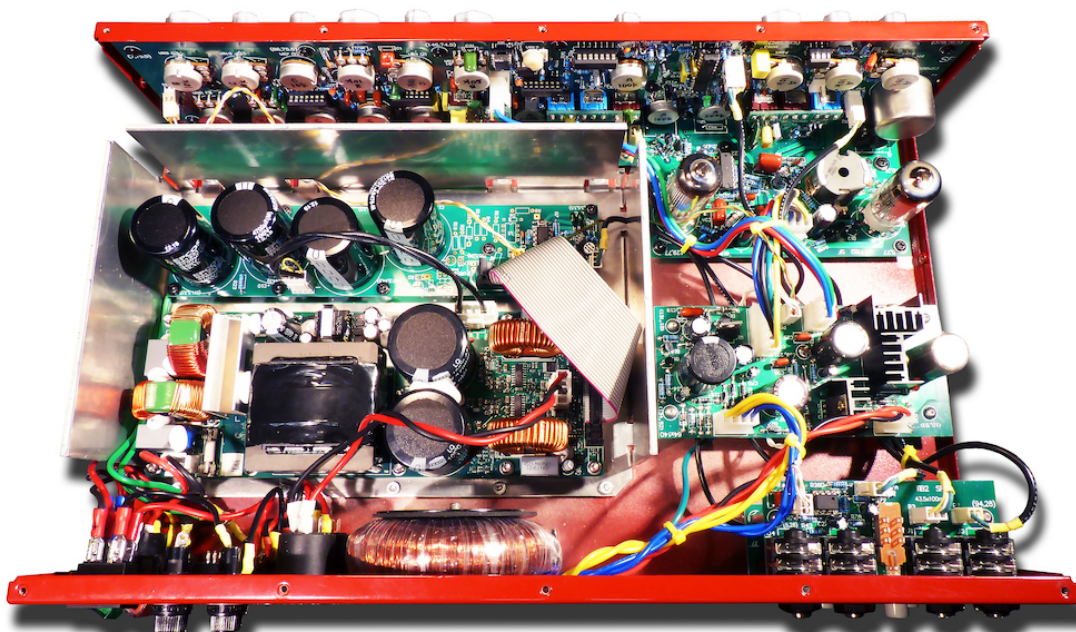
It has 3 fixed frequency points, beneath which it sharply attenuates signal, cutting subsonic boom and helping to curb speaker excursion. Users can choose between 28, 40 and 60 Hz via the 3-way switch, or defeat the HPF altogether. I have found that an HPF is a crucial ingredient in solid, fat bass tone, and the Tantra's works great. I mostly set it at 28 Hz, but occasionally used the higher settings in boomier environments and it helped tighten up the low end and reduce the rumble thunder that can sometimes occur in those rooms.

The rear panel of the Tantra is pretty feature-rich as well, with separate power switches for the amps preamp and power amp section, dual Speakon connectors, a 1/4" effect loop, XLR power amp input jack, and dual XLR outputs for DI out (mic level, transformer balanced), and line out (line level), as well as a dedicated tuner output and a footswitch jack (1/4") for toggling the amps overdrive circuit.



I had a real blast testing this amp, and can say with conviction that every feature and option on the Tantra is very well thought out, supremely executed and musical in nature.

With its studio-quality tube preamp/DI, exceptional EQ section, onboard compression, variable overdrive, harmonic generators and (prepare for understatement) massively powerful 2500w Class D amplifier module, the Tantra is a bass amp for those who demand precisely zero compromises.



Now that I've said that, I will say that this amp may not be for everyone.

Between the price point, its massive power payload, and the complexity of its layout, this is a lot more amp than a lot of players need or want. But for many of us, it checks a lot of necessary boxes. For example, I have a compressor, parametric EQ and overdrive on my pedalboard, and the Tantra has all 3 features built-in, and then some. The coolest thing to me is that none of these features is an afterthought or add on. Everything is designed and implemented with the highest degree of audio fidelity and design integrity in mind. There is something really rewarding about that, and it makes the Tantra feel like the wonderfully illegitimate lovechild of a boutique pro audio channel strip and a really ballsy bass amp.

My only gripes with the amp have to do with layout and usability.

Granted, I am mildly colorblind, but the thin red lines that connect each parametric EQ band to its corresponding gain, freq control and Q knobs didn't jump out at me when making adjustments. I found the layout and labeling confusing, but I submit that if each control was labeled fully and accurately, it would be a lot of wording to take in. Similarly, the knob layout is a function of the amps incredible amount of componentry elegantly squeezed into its chassis. Ultimately, this is an amp that a user has to spend some time getting to know and becoming familiar with. The good news is that said user will be rewarded handily for their time and energy with one of the most flexible and great sounding amps on the planet. I played several gigs with the Tantra, and features and options notwithstanding, it just performed beautifully, with tons of clarity, warmth, articulation and depth.

The 1000w Tantra sells for roughly \$2,250 USD, and the 2500w version clocks in around \$2390 USD. Check out [Sonic Farms website](#) to learn more!

