

Lejonklou HiFi Giella & Giella Π Headphone Amps



Giella and Giella Π: No sooner did Lejonklou HiFi release their first headphone amp the Giella (hard G) than Fredrik came out with a second, more powerful and musical one, the Giella Π (Pi for Power infusion).

Giella was designed to be the most musical headphone amp available and to drive any dynamic headphone. As such it is a Lejonklou Reference level product. It is exceptionally musical and dynamic, making headphone listening so enjoyable as to even convert non-headphone music lovers. The Giella uses Fredrik's Level 2 circuit design first seen in the SINGularity and then in the Entity. This circuit has lots of gain and very low noise giving it great flexibility but requiring careful tuning. It is also housed in a new compact case that was designed by Fredrik. It is 30mm longer than the current compact units (Slipsik 7.1 and Giao 2.4) and is more robust with thicker aluminum panels and a higher quality finish. A completely analog product is constructed in this case, the first Lejonklou unit using a volume pot (a specifically chosen Alps Blue Velvet unit) and a knob. Feeling that a headphone amp didn't need remote control, and designing for only one input, allowed the removal of any digital circuitry to accept remote commands and convert them into signals to drive the precision resistor ladders used in the Lejonklou Sagatun preamps and Boazu integrated. This allowed for a very clean and simple yet powerfully musical design. The Giella also has a pair of volume controlled RCA outputs that are muted when headphones are plugged into the back panel 1/4" jack. This allows it to act as a preamp in a system with a single source driving both headphones and a power amp. And this preamp should not be underestimated, as it is musically competitive with preamps in the \$5000 range, yet the Giella is \$2495!

So what's with the **Giella II**? Well, even though the Giella does a great job of driving things like the HIFIMAN HE-560 and Abyss headphones, a customer who is big into Hip-Hop found that when playing quite loud with really demanding headphones and very deep bass the Giella could be made to clip. While I'm not sure how the hearing of that person is holding out, still Fredrik was concerned once he verified it. So after more research Fredrik found the power bottleneck, and found a solution to it that not only significantly improves power capacity, but also "kicks the circuit of the Giella into a higher level of performance" both with headphones and as a preamp. This is the Giella III. However to achieve this level of performance and power requires some very expensive parts and they must be chosen to such tight tolerances that they become even more expensive. So the Giella III runs \$3395. Because of the significant price difference, and because the stock Giella is already so good, both products will remain in the line for the time being. However, the other good news is that any Giella can be upgraded to Giella III for the price difference between the two models and that can be done here in the US.

I can't leave the Giella without mentioning that it is the first Lejonklou product with a bit of bling! (Although not a lot of it.) The volume knob was made about the thickness of a pencil so as not to dominate the front panel, and this required it to be long so you could get a grip on it. So Fredrik came up with a very cool solution. The knob is made out of silver with a tiny, brilliant cut, cubic zirconia inset as a position indicator. They are custom made by Fredrik's mother, Kerstin Ohlin Lejonklou, a famous Swedish silversmith. All in the family and very snazzy looking.