

On Sunday, February 8, 2009, the monthly meeting of the Audio-Video Club of Atlanta was held ~~at a conference in the training~~ room of the ~~Georgia Land and Commercial Solutions~~Virtual Properties Realty offices in Duluth, Georgia. There were 25+ members and prospective members attending to hear the presentation given by Mike Powell, President and CEO of the Darkstarr Group. Two of the businesses in this Group are Veristarr (high end amplifiers and audio accessories) and Hot Rod Audio (which specializes in modifications of existing equipment).

First up at 2 PM was John Morrison, who handled the business meeting of the club before the presentation began. He made several announcements. First was that the first "non-founding" member of the club was Ed Scruggs (our host last month), and that an honorary membership has been given to Bob Levy, president of the LA and Orange County Audio Society who for years was an audiophile here in Atlanta. Second, John said that Paul Tarver is the interim membership chairperson, as well as treasurer. Paul announced that we have about \$482 in the club treasury. The next meeting is scheduled for March 8, 2009, to maintain the monthly schedule of meetings which are normally held on the second Sunday of each month.

Next up was Nick Arroyo, the program committee chair, who asked for volunteers to help him put together programs for the club. He emphasized that the more folks help, the better the ideas are for programs. Some of these include an HD radio presentation and tour, a concert at a local synagogue where members could arrive early and see how recording is done at these types of events, and a tour of public radio and TV studios.

Next up was Mike Powell. He described the product line of Veristarr, including the SSA 6400, a 400 watts by 6 channel amplifier (for a total of 2400 watts!) we were going to listen to at this meeting. This amplifier is built in California. Veristarr also has high-end interconnects, power cords, and speaker cables in its lineup. Many of these products have received excellent reviews and compare favorably against other more expensive products. Hot Rod Audio modifies "Asian" electronic equipment, and the typical modification time for a stock CD player is about 3 to 5 days. The modifications void the manufacturer warranty, but Hot Rod Audio supplies a two year warranty to replace that. They also will modify more vintage equipment.

At this meeting, we auditioned a Cambridge Azur 840C upsampling CD player that retails for \$1800, and the same player with Hot Rod modifications that added about \$400 to that price. We used the SSA 6400 amp, a Xindak preamp (built in China that costs about \$1200), and Dyna Audio Contour 1.4 speakers. The speakers, preamp, and stock CD player were supplied by Gateway Sound. The interconnects, power cords, and speaker wire were all Veristarr products. We listened to several tracks of CD's with the stock CD player and the modified CD player at the same volume, and there was no contest. The modified player sounded (as one member noted) "more real~~er~~" (more lifelike or in other words more like the live concert).

At the end of the comparative listening session, Mike took questions and we all took a closer look at the equipment used. There was also a raffle of CD's and an interconnect generously donated by Mike for the raffle. Also, two new members were "approved" by acclamation vote. The members then settled in for some more listening using CD's brought in by the attendees.

The club thanks ~~John Morrison~~Virtual Properties Realty for ~~hosting,~~hosting and Mike Powell for an "ear opening" presentation.

Thomas Horner
Interim Secretary, A-V Club of Atlanta