



ALBERTO GUERRA

AGD PRODUCTIONS

Interview conducted by Laurent Thorin

The brand AGD Productions was born in Los Angeles some years ago, but this American location doesn't reveal that it is a brilliant Italian engineer: Alberto Guerra, the founder and CEO of the company. Passionate about audio, Alberto has been living in California since 1997. He boasts an extraordinary experience in matter of electronic components, having occupied positions of high level in R&D and Marketing at International Rectifier, Vishay, Infineon and Semtech. He holds several patents, among which four are related to the Gallium Nitride Mos-Fet technology. We had the opportunity to have a conversation with him, and we like to share with you here the result of his precise and enthusiastic reflections.

How long have you been in hi-fi; can you tell us about your background before AGD?

Well, I have been a passionate HiFi and music lover all my life, but I finally decided to start AGD in 2015 after a long career in the semiconductor industry. These last several years were dedicated to the development of the new technology of power MOSFETs and the GaN.

How many roles do you have in AGD?

I am the CEO and the chief designer.

Which one do you prefer?

Both are extremely important, and I enjoy both responsibilities because I can deploy all my professional experience gained after so many years in the semiconductor market, both in business and technology. But when I finally get to the moment when I can start listening to a final product (new one or a new revision), then the role of “listener in chief” is the real one I love, because I can enjoy the music and rest!

How is AGD a different brand?

I have always been driven by my passion to merge perfection and beauty in the art of audio reproduction. That was the motivation behind AGD Productions, Inc., a company of innovative talent with the commitment to channel that incredibly strong drive into something tangible that all audiophiles can experience.

In the Hi-End Audio market, many giant designers have created wonderful products, with the aim to deliver the best possible experience in the reproduction of music. With the launch of its unique products, I hope AGD has made its own mark in the technological progress of this field with a unique design.

What positioning does the brand want to have?

We at AGD will continue to offer innovative designs and new products with the same passion and love for audio for many years to come. The goal is to deliver an emotional and fully immersive and realistic Audio experience to all the audiophiles that are willing to trust our message and the quality of our products.

Some manufacturers say it is utopian to want to get closer to the real sound experience. What do you think?

Well, I think they should change job and do something else. Ultimately HiFi means the vision and search of a more perfect sound reproduction. A search that is not only materializing in numbers, but also in the possibility of transcribing the realism of a live performance.

Can you give us an example of a correlation between the perception of music and technical study?

Absolutely, and it is about our core technical knowledge that has driven my decision to embark into this new adventure.

We design an ideal power amplifier with an intrinsic unmatched speed (in electrical terms), which translates in the possibility to amplify and deliver to the load (speaker) the most complete harmonic spectrum of the original source.

A powerful sound filled with all vector information of the recording, immediately detected by the listeners, and perceived as a holographic representation. Ultimately delivering to the loudspeaker nothing more, but equally important, nothing less than what was present in the music content at the time it was captured in the recording media.

That is what the AGD GaNTube technology is all about.

Do you use any favorite pieces for the final tune?

Yes of course, I use pieces that I love and pieces I know are excellent to test specific element of the frequency and time domain spectrum.

I also have the advantage to play unique pieces recorded by my friend Allen Sides, genius sound engineer, winner of 6 Grammy's. With Allen I found a true inspiration to push even harder my paranoia for perfection. Besides, using time to time his pro-speakers made at Ocean Way Audio, as a load-test for my designs is a truly incredible experience.

What are the major axes of the AGD personality? In terms of philosophy, and in terms of technology?

As I said, the commitment to channel AGD's strong drive for unique design and perfection into something tangible that all audiophiles can experience.

Of course, 2020 has been the "annus horribilis" because the Pandemic, and that has impacted the life of all people on this planet. All has been shattered, and among many things also the possibility to live events and of course Audio Shows. But during the previous two years I had the opportunity to present the superb Ocean Way Audio speakers by Allen Sides at THE SHOW 2019, AXPONA 2019, and TAMPA 2020. At HiFiDeluxe 2019 and RMAF 2019 I presented the speakers from Sigma Acoustic Design by Aldo Zaninello.

The experience of offering the visitors of those shows the novelty technology of the GaNTube sound has been one of the most rewarding of my professional life.

Our philosophy is simple: combining refined design and technology to achieve the goal of seeing a large smile on

the face of all audiophiles. If we will be able to continue on this path, then I guess the AGD personality will be associated to a joyful memory in the HiFi/Hi-End community.

What kind of technology are you using?

All my amplifier designs are Class-D and are all based on GaN MOSFET technology.

How did you come to develop this particular type of technology?

A combination of serendipity, intuition, and inspiration, on top of many years of technical researching work on electronic circuits. Of course, other elements like the right moment in terms of time and experience helped too.



What do you think are its advantages?

Speed, efficiency, linearity all fundamental characteristics for any advanced electronics, even more important in audio.

And other equally important factors are making products that can also be environmentally savvy, and at the same time removing the boundaries and limitations of old and over-used topologies and design.

The goal is to obtain products that are smaller, lighter, with an innovative industrial design, and a magnificent sound. All of it is possible using (in the right way) the GaN technology in Class-D amplification.

Does placing the amplification circuits in tubes have technical or only cosmetic virtues?

Well, it has both virtues. The original reason was to create a product that could finally eliminate the stigma of “bad sound” from the Class-D topology. As if all class A/B or A amps really sounded good.

So, I needed a product that could intrigue anyone enough to stop and listen. If I had placed the amplifier in a coffee-can, or in an uninspired boring rectangular shaped box (as 99% of all amps around), it would have sounded quite the same, but few would have stopped to pay attention to AGD.

But placing the power amp inside a Glass tube was a classic moment of “Eureka”, it is only feasible because of the size and the efficiency I can achieve with my design based on GaN, and at the same time deliver a modularity that customers can appreciate and leverage, upgrading the power stage. The fact that it looks cool, and it is darn difficult to package in that way, well, that shows once again that this design has been wisely chosen.

How is your personal system made up?

100% AGD of course, ANDANTE Pre-DAC and AGD Gran Vivace mono-blocks. But I also use two additional fantastic examples of technology and design, a 40-year-old open-reel Technics 1506 and equally old Denon automatic Turntable DP47-F. Truly a pinnacle of Audio Engineering design of 1979-1980.

What type of speakers are you using?

Magnepan 1.7, the most incredible Price/quality ratio for a loudspeaker system on the planet (and beyond, I am convinced).

And cables?

Verrastar” Grand Illusion EVO” series for the speakers, and AGD power AC cables (the same that we offer as standard with all AGD products).

