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FUTURE

Powering a Studio in an 1820s Home

Rethinking his facility's power requirements gave Pete Morse's studio a new lease on life

Pete Morse *is* Red Vault Audio. The owner-operator does a little bit of everything in his Portland, Maine facility, from mixing, mastering and music production, to sound design and voiceover recording. He just wants to make things sound better.

The studio—a 540-square-foot, 2016 addition to Morse's 1820s home, one of the oldest historical buildings in South Portland—gets its name from the simple fact that it's painted bright red. "I had a commercial space," Morse says, "but I wanted to be able to work near my family and mix into the night."

The home is old, and naturally it has been through several renovations over the years. The basement, for example, has a stone foundation, later covered by concrete. "There is a crazy electrical system down there that I'm still trying to figure out, weeding out the old wiring and replacing it with new," Morse says. "The electricity was definitely affecting what I was hearing in the studio, where I have a pretty nice Hi-Fi system, with EgglestonWorks speakers, an expensive cabling system, and Jones Audio amplifiers.

"I have this thing called Hi-Fi disease," he continues. "It's a very serious thing. It has led me to experiment, and one of my biggest revelations was trying out different interconnects and even power cables."

Morse consulted with Anthony Chiarella, who had previously worked with him on the purchase of his EgglestonWorks speakers and cabling options. Chiarella told him that one of the most significant things he could do right away to "breathe life into the system" was to add a Torus Power toroidal isolation power transformer.

"I have some unusual equipment, like Jones amplifiers that run off 20-amp circuits," Morse explains. "Also, the amount of juice I was getting to my studio was a challenge. I don't think the amps were seeing what they should and were starved a little bit."

Morse shows off his Torus Power RM60 isolation transformer, among his EgglestonWorks Vigintis monitors and Jones amplifiers.

The studio's equipment list dictated a Torus Power RM 60 BAL, a 60-amp isolation transformer with three 20-amp output circuits. Morse used two of the banks on the RM 60 to power each Jones amplifier.

"The amps before were fantastic, plugged directly into the wall, but they had a little bit of noise in them," Morse says. "I did a bunch of tests, plugging them into the wall and then the RM 60 and back again, and the results were amazing. The impact of the bass with the RM 60 was just so riveting. With wall power, the transients weren't popping out the way they did with RM 60, it was unbelievable.

"You get an unbelievable amount of separation between instruments, the stereo image increases, and transients in the lower register are able to hit hard, freeing up space....I could hear the dynamics come to life. Initially, I noticed the power it brought to my speakers and playback system, which blew me away. Then I noticed improvement on the audio processing side of things, too, when mastering and mixing. Dynamics became clearer, the high-end smoother and a slight increase in perceived loudness. I think this had to do with the transient response really allowing more punch and separation within the elements of the mix. Therefore, the imaging became much more refined and lifelike, almost 3-D." ■

Pete Morse, owner-operator of Red Vault Audio

Red Vault Audio Gear List

Red Vault Audio's power transformer needs were determined based on the equipment he uses every day, which includes:

Amplifiers: Jones PA M300s
Speakers: EgglestonWorks Vigintis
Preamps: Juggernaut JT656; Groove Tubes Vipre; Millennia STT-1; Great River MP2; Focusrite ISA 428; API Lunchbox
Outboard gear: Dangerous: Master (separate power supply), Bax, Liason and Dangerous Compressor, 2-Bus +; Knif: Eksa (separate power supply); Vari-Mu II (tube compressor); Soma (tube EQ); L2M Mark III (separate tube power supply RTS-4A); Manley Massive Passive (tube EQ); Bricasti M7 reverb
Converters: Crane Song Hedd Quantum; Dangerous Convert 8; Apogee Symphony; Avid HD IO
Power Cables: Pangea
Interconnects: Silver; Nordost; Shunyata
Power: Torus Power RM 60 BAL