

Producer Ross Hogarth on Edgar Winter's latest album *Brother Johnny*

# RECORDING

The magazine for the recording musician®

## RECORDING GUITAR!

- Marc Urselli: Sessions with Les Paul
- Joe Albano: Reamping Ins and Outs
- Mark Hornsby: All About That Bass

## 18 New Reviews

Akai • Apple • Austrian Audio • BABY Audio • Cloud Microphones  
EarPeace • Fluid Audio • IK Multimedia • KRK • Positive Grid  
PSPaudioware • sE Electronics • Somnium Guitars  
Universal Audio • Vanguard Audio Labs

VOL. THIRTY-FIVE NUMBER NINE

\$5.99US \$5.99CAN



JUNE 2022  
USA \$5.99  
CANADA \$5.99





## REVIEW



# Vanguard Audio Labs V4 gen2 & V44S gen2

*Two popular mics, now even better!*

### REVIEWS BY PAUL VNUK JR.

Three years ago in our May 2019 issue, I reviewed a pair of microphones from Vanguard Audio Labs—the V4 and the V44S. Essentially these were mono and stereo offerings of the same microphone, with a “smooth yet open natural sound, that will do well on most any source.” Now three years later Vanguard has update these mics to gen2 status. Lets revisit the V4 gen2 and V44S gen2.

### Vanguard

Vanguard showcases the microphone designs of noted mic-master Ken Avant.

All Vanguard products are designed by Ken in the US and manufactured overseas with final assembly and QC at the company's Montclair, CA headquarters.

### Like a Fine Wine

All Vanguard mics feature a classy, high-gloss, deep burgundy, Pinot Noir finish with polished nickel head baskets, trim and a winged logo badge. All metalwork

is a mix of brass, aircraft grade aluminum, stainless steel and zinc. The look, fit and finish on Vanguard mics is wonderful.

### Two Sides of the Same Coin

Both models are actually the same mic, housed in the same 4" x 1.82" body. The V44s gen2 stereo mic packs two independent V4 circuit boards inside with a pair of stacked adjustable independently rotating microphone capsules on top. The single-capsule V4 gen2 stands 7.25" tall, while the V44S gen2 is 9.41".

Both models use a 34mm dual-membrane capsule(s) with a 3µm thick, 26.4mm diameter gold-sputtered Mylar diaphragm. This is married to a cryogenically treated low-noise, JFET circuit with a transformerless, electronically balanced output. The gen2 models make use of upgraded components, including US-made resistors and Neutrik® Group connectors, offering an even lower noise floor.

### The Kit

Each mic comes in an appropriately sized aluminum briefcase, along with a wooden storage box, a microfiber storage bag/cleaning cloth and a VLSM Heavy-Duty Shockmount. The V44S gen2 also ships with a thick multi-pin cable and a unique stereo/mid-side breakout box.

### The V4 gen2

The V4 gen2 is a multi-pattern microphone with omni, cardioid and fig. 8 options. The mic also includes a three-position pad switch (0, -10, -20dB). This differs from the either/or combination high-pass/pad option found on the original V4.

### The V44S gen2

The V44S gen2 as mentioned is two V4 microphones in a single body. Each mic retains fully independent multi-pattern selection, but does not offer an onboard pad.

The stacked capsule assembly features a seven-position rotating disc marked in degrees from 0 to 120°. Rotating the top capsule alters the width of the perceived stereo field 15° at a time making sure each capsule remains in phase with each other. The V44S gen2 adds an extra 30° of rotation to the 90° found on the gen1, offering on impressive 120° for extra-wide stereo options.

Thanks to the independent pattern options and wide range of capsule rotation, the V44S gen2 can perform XY and Blumlein stereo techniques, as well Mid/Side (M/S) miking. This is where the ingenious V44S gen2 breakout box comes in.

### Breaking Out

Where most stereo mics simply split the outputs into a left-right breakout cable, the V44S gen2 breakout box offers

three XLR outputs, one for the bottom capsule and two for the top, with one being phase reversed. This allows for on-mic M/S decoding right to your DAW with no further phase/polarity flip necessary. On the flip side of the box are two additional XLR inputs flanking the multi-pin input that allow the box to be used as a stand-alone M/S decoder with appropriate mic setup.

### Revisiting the Classic FET sound

Comparing my previous V4/44S sessions with the gen2 offerings, I can report that the sonic signatures of the new models remains nearly identical to the originals offering a gentle, non-harsh top end, an open yet present mid capture, and an extended, non-hyped low end capture. Looking at the specs, the gen2 mics appear to offer an even lower self noise, making an already respectively clean mic even cleaner.

As Vanguard bills both mics as offering a classic FET sound, I was happy to revisit both mics alongside a few well-known FET classics. Once again I found both mics to lean more toward the AKG side, rather than the Neumann end of the spectrum, in tonality and capture. However I found the V4 gen2 to be a touch more open in the mid-range and not as forward as a current production C414 XLS. I also found the upper end of the mic to be smoother and less bright than a few similar priced transformerless FET mics in my collection. The V4 gen2 is a great choice for capturing any source with a smooth, natural openness. This makes it well suited to vocals, acoustic guitar, violin, cello, piano, drum overheads and more.

### Dimensional Stereo Sound

Even more than I enjoyed having the mono V4 gen2 in my studio, I had forgotten how handy and creative a great sounding stereo mic can be. The V44S gen2 makes it easy to dial in the perfect width on drum overheads, piano, vocal ensembles, string trio and more. I especially like using the mic in M/S mode on acoustic guitar. I can also confirm that both the V44S and V4 gen2 mics sound identical, so you can even use a single capsule from the V44S gen2 and get the same results as the V4.

### Conclusion

Whether you love mono or stereo, the Vanguard Audio Labs V4 gen2 and V44S gen2 are great sounding, versatile microphones that can easily find pride of place in your studio on a wide range of sources and musical styles. ➡

<b>Output Impedance:</b>	..... 200Ω
<b>Max SPL:</b>	..... 135dB (155dB w/ Pad - on V4)
<b>Frequency Response:</b>	..... 20 Hz-20,000 Hz
<b>Equivalent Noise Level:</b>	..... ≤12dBA
<b>S/N Ratio:</b>	..... ≥80dB (Ref. 1Pa A-weighted)
<b>Sensitivity:</b>	..... ≥82dBA

**Price:** V4 gen2 \$599; V44S gen2 \$1,099  
**More From:** [vanguardaudiolabs.com](http://vanguardaudiolabs.com)