

MAVIS M-100 - A Review of a Unique Hybrid Amplifier

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This time we have one of the most unique amplifiers on the market, the MAVIS M-100, for review. It is such a unique amplifier that even we have a hard time defining it. What is so special about it? Let's find out.

We thank Vivaldi Audio , the official importer of the MAVIS brand in Israel, for providing us with this amplifier for review.



Bottom line

The MAVIS M-100 offers a unique amplifier system configuration and is a wonderful value for the price



Points for improvement

It is necessary to turn on !
both parts of the amplifier
separately.

It is not possible to !
determine which speaker is
amplified by the box that
includes the preamplifier and
to which the sources are
connected.



What we liked

Romantic retro design and ✓
excellent build quality

Powerful amplification with ✓
a significant bias towards
Class A, which will easily drive
most speakers on the market

The use of two boxes with ✓
separate power supplies
significantly improves the
cleanliness and separation of
the channels.

Maintains MAVIS' warm, ✓
emotional sound signature

Very fair price ✓

About MAVIS Company

We told you about the MAVIS brand and its parent company, ThivanLabs, in [the article summarizing our visit to Vivaldi Audio](#) , their official importer in Israel.

Here's a quick reminder, ThivanLabs is a high-end audio company from Vietnam, officially established in 2010. The three key figures of the company are: Mr. Nguyen Hoang Thi, the founder and chief engineer, Mrs. Joe Nguyen, the CEO, responsible for marketing and sales and Nguyen Hoang Thi's wife, and Mr. Nguyen Anh Van, the chief engineer, responsible for the transformers area.

ThivanLabs manufactures complete audio systems including speakers, amplifiers, converters and music servers. Each of the company's products has an original approach and a clear line. In the speaker field, the company offers a variety of configurations including open baffle, 2-way and 3-way speakers. Despite the diversity, there are still common lines, which are mainly expressed in the use of large woofer units and high-quality tweeters. Regarding amplification, the company has a central line that they believe in, and that is Class A - Single Ended tube amplifiers with powerful power supplies, manual point to point connections and zero feedback.

Alongside the ThivanLabs brand, the company also has another brand called MAVIS. While ThivanLabs products, mainly in the amplification field, appeal to a very specific audience, MAVIS products appeal to a wider audience and also offer more accessible prices. MAVIS amplifiers are in the popular hybrid amplifier configuration, i.e. a tube preamp and a transistor power amplifier. In addition, there are several models of converters, music servers and speakers, which integrate perfectly with the amplification products.

The one under test: MAVIS M-100

The MAVIS M-100 is the flagship amplifier of the MAVIS Master series and is positioned above the M-40 entry-level amplifier, the MAVIS M-60 intermediate model, which we reviewed last year and at the end of that year we also awarded it two awards: [Amplifier of the Year 2024 in the Hybrid Amplifier category](#) and [Surprise of the Year in Audio 2024](#) ([for our full review of the MAVIS M-60](#)) and finally the M-90 model.

Unlike the M-40, M-60 and M-90 models, which are hybrid integrated amplifiers, the MAVIS M-100 model is a different type of product and, as we have already mentioned, unique. The MAVIS M-100 comes in two separate boxes, with one box containing the preamplifier and power amplifier for the right speaker. In the second box you will find the connection for the left speaker and a unique connection to the first box. In other words, the first box is an integrated amplifier that includes a monoblock amplifier for one of the speakers, while the second box is another monoblock amplifier that is fed in a unique way by the company from the preamplifier section located in the first box. Each box is fed from its own power supply. This is an original and unique design and I don't think I have ever seen a product similar to this from any other company.



The back of the monoblock amplifier's cabinet

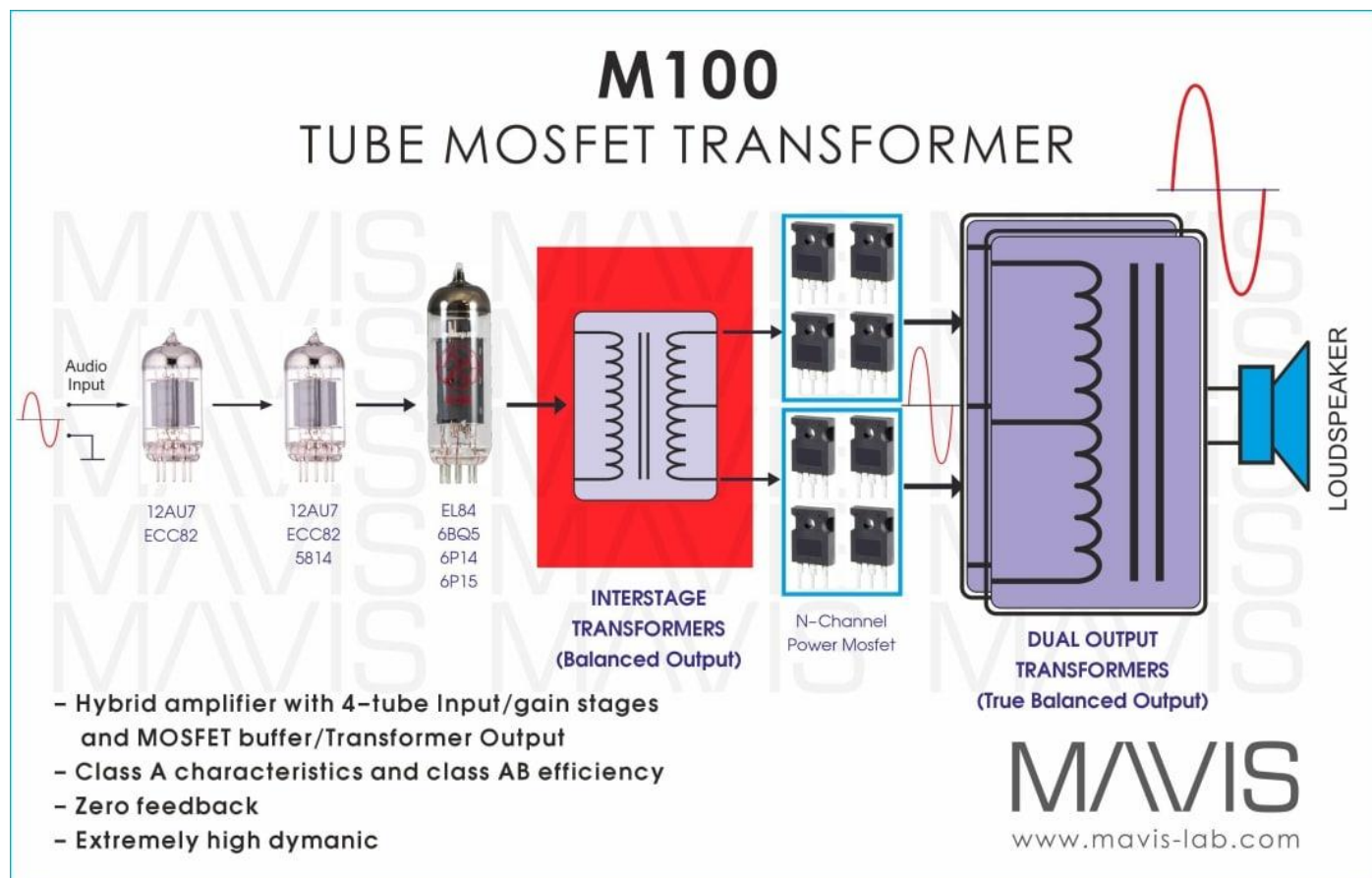
The cable connecting the two boxes is a special cable from the company and comes in a length of one meter. A cable of double the length can be ordered for an additional fee, but according to the importer, a length of one meter is the most ideal in terms of sound performance.



I asked the company owners about the reason behind this original design and the answer I received was that the idea behind this design was to provide a more compact alternative to a complete system that includes a preamplifier and two monoblocks, with minimal sacrifice in sound quality.

Similar to the MAVIS M-60 and other models in the series, the design of the MAVIS M-100 is also based on a hybrid topology in which the preamplifier stage (input and drive) is tube-based in a Single-Ended Class A configuration, while the power amplification stage (located in both boxes) is designed in a balanced manner and includes MOSFET transistors and an output transformer. Between the drive stage and the power stage, you will find another transformer, known as the Interstage transformer. The tubes in the M-60 are two 12AU7 tubes and two EL84 tubes.

Here is the description of the circuit as it appears on the MAVIS website:



The amplification topology is Class A/B with a large bias for Class A. The amplification power of the MAVIS M-100 is 120W into 8 ohms with the first 40W being in Class A and 160W into 4 ohms

with 60W being in Class A. So for most playback volumes and most speakers, the amplifier will actually work in full Class A.

Another key design element of the MAVIS M-100 (and other MAVIS models) is a zero-feedback design. According to the company, this design maximally preserves the naturalness and emotion of the sound.

The assembly process of the M-100 amplifier is done manually with point-to-point connections, without the use of printed circuits.

Like the M-60, the MAVIS M-100 also features a modular design. As standard, the M-100 comes as an analog-only amplifier, with two RCA inputs and one balanced XLR input. In addition, converter and phono input modules can be added, of course for an additional fee. We received the standard version for review without the optional modules.



Another feature shared by the M-60 and M-100 is two switches, which allow you to change the character of the amplifier's sound. The first switch allows you to choose between two bass modes, Soft and Strong. According to the company, the Soft Bass mode is suitable for music that focuses on vocals, gentle music, and music without drums. In contrast, the Strong mode produces a deeper, more powerful bass, which is suitable for more epic music, with drums, or large symphonies.

The second switch allows you to choose between Standard and High Dynamic modes. The company's explanation here is that Standard mode is suitable for most types of music, while High Dynamic mode is suitable for rhythmic music, rock, and cinematic sound.

The dimensions of the two MAVIS M-100 boxes in cm are: 45 width, 35 depth and 22 height each. The weight is 32 kg for the unit that includes the preamplifier and 30 kg for the unit that includes only the monoblock amplifier part.

Design and build quality

Also in terms of design, the MAVIS M-100 of course continues the line of the MAVIS M-60, in fact the box that includes the preamplifier part looks identical to the M-60 except of course for the model's inscription.



The box has a black finish with a low gloss finish, but one that still makes it difficult to photograph the amplifier. The front panel is divided into three sections, on the left and right there are fairly large analog VU Meters. In the center you will find a transparent window, through which you can see the tubes and above them a label with the MAVIS logo.

Below the window are two classic switches, one for the volume and the other for switching between inputs. Next to each switch are switches that toggle between the audio modes, which we mentioned above.



When the amplifier is on, the LEDs glow a warm red and the VU Meters feature an orange backlight. This emphasizes the amplifier's retro-classic design and creates a cozy, romantic atmosphere.



The second box has a much simpler design, as is common with monoblock amplifiers. Its front panel is also divided into three sections, but they all feature a smooth black finish. The central section has the model number written on the bottom and a matching MAVIS label on the top. When the amplifier is on, there is a small red LED light that lights up in the center.

If you want to further emphasize the retro design of the MAVIS M-100, there is an option to add magnetic panels on the side walls, the panels are available in two finishes: Walnut or Ebony. We received one pair of panels in the walnut finish.



Both boxes are placed on fairly large isolation feet, which provide proper isolation from the surface on which the amplifier is placed.

In terms of build quality, the heavy weight and manual construction demonstrate the high level and serious approach of the company's products. The finish is high-quality and impressive. At the same time, there is a very practical and industrial approach here, which is expressed, for example, in the fact that on all sides except the front side you can see the connecting screws.

Control and usability

Let's start with the initial connection, the special cable that connects the two boxes connects easily. Although I understand the issue of the short length of the cable, which is designed to ensure a high-quality and interference-free signal transfer, in my opinion it makes it a little more difficult to place each of the amplifiers as close to the speakers as possible. This is usually the recommendation for monoblock amplifiers. Another issue that can make the placement of the amplifiers a little more difficult is the fact that the part with the preamplifier in it necessarily connects to the right speaker, so if your sources are on the left side (as in my case), you will need longer connecting cables.

The two devices are turned on by a large red switch located at the bottom of each of the amplifiers in the center. It is a slightly large and bulky switch, and I would have liked to see a slightly more refined switch and perhaps a slightly more convenient location for it. Also, if the intention here is to refer to the MAVIS M-100 as a complete product, consisting of two boxes, it would be nice if it were turned on and off using a single switch and not having to turn each of the amplifiers on and off separately.



After turning on both amplifiers, the control experience is easy and convenient. Select the appropriate input, the desired volume level, and if you want to adjust the appropriate sound tone using the two switches on the front panel, and you can start listening to music.

The MAVIS M-100 comes with a small plastic "clicker" remote that only allows the main function of changing the volume. The remote can be upgraded to a full-size metal remote, which also only includes the ability to change the volume.

I personally like the company's possible cosmetic upgrades. It is clear that MAVIS does everything to make its products accessible, and therefore focuses on providing the best value for money in terms of reliability, build quality, and sound quality. If a consumer is interested in some cosmetic upgrades, they provide these options, without "forcing" all consumers to pay for them, for me this is an admirable approach. The same approach also continues with the optional converter and phono modules, which only consumers who are interested in them can add.

Listening test

For the MAVIS M-100 listening test, I used my personal system, which includes YG Acoustics Carmel 2 speakers, an MSB Discrete DAC with two external power supplies, and the Nagra Streamer as the source. Since the XLR cable I had was too short to connect to the M-100, I borrowed a longer XLR cable from Shimon, the owner of Vivaldi Audio, from the brand No Nonsense Cables, which was Vivaldi Audio's in-house brand and is no longer available.



First impression

The device came to me from a display, so there was no need for a long break-in process. The experience I had while listening to the [MAVIS M-60](#) amplifier last year is still fresh in my mind, I remember how I sat down with my notebook to take notes and at the end of that evening I wrote down nothing but the title because the sound was so exciting and enchanting, that it simply sucked me in. This time I knew much more what to expect. The first evening I got home late and just wanted to make sure the connections were correct and that everything was playing properly, so that I could sit down and listen the next day. I was again sucked into listening for about an hour,

which already taught me a lot about the capabilities of the MAVIS M-100 and also about the differences compared to the sound of the M-60.

Although I didn't directly compare the devices, three features immediately caught my attention in the M-100's sound, and they are not something I remember from the M-60. The first feature is the power, the M-100's ability to push/drive my YG speakers was much more impressive than the M-60, and in fact, compared to most of the amplifiers I've tested in my home. The feeling of effortlessness is very noticeable. This is a feeling I'm used to getting from much more efficient speakers, so the power of the M-100 made my speakers sound like they were much more efficient. This was expressed in a more airy, very natural sound, which seemed to easily burst through the speakers.

The next two features that I noticed are somewhat related to each other. First, the noise floor is extremely low and second, the channel separation is at an exceptionally high level. The noise floor is easy to explain, it is expressed in dynamics and the ability to hear details even in the quietest parts. The issue of channel separation is more difficult to explain, it is something that is felt as a cleaner transfer, a clearer placement of objects on the sound stage and a more natural transfer. Each channel here is fed from a separate power supply and this absolutely makes a significant difference that is easy to notice. Therefore, for me, these two features are related to the fact that there is actually a system of monoblocks here, and both of these features lead to a wonderful feeling of cleanliness, airiness and naturalness.

Audio samples

So after the first evening I noticed the outstanding features of power and separation, in the remaining evenings I spent with the MAVIS M-100 I wanted to examine whether, alongside these features, it manages to maintain the features that I found so exciting in the MAVIS M-60, how the M-100 copes with music from different genres and whether there are any weak points in its sound. In order to ensure that I was listening to the optimal result of the M-100, I made sure to turn it on a full hour before starting to listen.

I described the sound of the MAVIS M-60 as warm, particularly exciting, with excellent vocal separation and a smooth and natural feel. Ostensibly, the M-100 is an amplifier from the same series and therefore necessarily should maintain the same sound profile, in reality there are often differences even between amplifiers from the same series and sometimes when the power increases, of course certain features are spaced out, but sometimes it changes the character. In my opinion, MAVIS has largely succeeded here in preserving all the magic of the M-60, and only upgrading it even further.

Perhaps the genre in which the MAVIS M-100 excels the most is emotional music, thanks to the wonderful and warm vocal delivery. This is music that you simply cannot stop listening to through the M-100. In emotional ballads like Looks Like The End Of The Road by Alison Krauss, from the new album Arcadia, I got great dynamics with a very quiet black background, the guitar seemed to burst out of nowhere thanks to that low noise floor, the vocals are centered, clean and delivered with a lot of emotion. The power of the amplifier is completely clear, in order to fill my entire listening space with a big and clean sound, I needed much less than a quarter of the power and the sound was smooth and effortless. In this piece, I also tested the different sound modes, although the High Dynamic mode does add a little more dynamics, but as with the MAVIS M-60, I found the Standard and Soft Bass modes to be the most exciting, warm, natural and pleasant combination on the M-100

The performance in such ballads was so good that I just wanted to hear more and more songs like this, so I also listened to the section [The Human Heart](#) by one of my favorite singers, [Sophie Zelmani](#), from her new album, Lake Geneva. Here there is a combination of electric and acoustic guitar. While the electric sounds meaty, warm and caressing, the acoustic sounds delicate and

soft, there is excellent instrument separation, alongside centered vocals with excellent dynamics and micro-dynamics, creating a calm and smooth presentation.

I also got a similar result in Sting's ballad Practical Arrangement, the vocal delivery in this section was at an extremely high level, with a feeling of complete separation from the rest of the music, which gently envelops Sting's voice alongside a warm and pleasant bass. The level of detail in Sting's voice was extremely moving.

I learned about another impressive feature of the MAVIS M-100 when I moved on to rock pieces, such as Jonathan Hultén's ballad Riverflame from the album [Eyes Of The Living Night](#) . First, there is tremendous and very precise dynamics here, alongside micro-dynamics that allow you to clearly feel every slight change in the intensity of Jonathan's singing. The feature that impressed me most here is the M-100's ability to simulate a scale - or scale of sound, when there is a transition section of keyboards only, the sound is small and only the keyboards are on the stage, a moment later the vocals and the rest of the music return again and the sound stage becomes huge. This transition between small and large sound is carried out with the most impressive immediacy and naturalness. Also in the piece [Future Is a Child](#) by the British rock band, Mostly Autumn, from the album [Seawater](#) , I felt this extreme change in the size of the sound, from a precise, warm and small guitar solo to dramatic rises and an impressive outburst. Again, there was great vocal separation and a very natural transfer of both the male and female singers of the band. In this piece, I also tested the M-100's performance at very low volume. Of course, the stage is reduced, but the dynamics are well maintained, so this is an amplifier that plays beautifully at low volumes, but in my opinion, you won't be able to resist it and you will want to go up to at least medium volume.

From here I continued with two instrumental pieces that revealed perhaps the only point of criticism I have towards the sound of the MAVIS M-100. In the theme song for the album [Old Style](#) by guitarist Estás Tonne, I got a wide and enveloping stage, with a homogeneous feel of the guitar, spread across the entire stage, a meaty and delightful sound, but to be really critical I noticed in this piece that the high frequencies on Estás' guitar were a little too rounded and soft, and I really lacked a bit of sharpness there. I felt a similar phenomenon in another string instrument, on Angèle Dubeau's violin in the piece Human from the album Immersion. Here the violin's transmission is powerful, and you can feel the entire orchestra positioned behind Angèle, it's a presentation full of emotion, but again I feel there is a slight tendency to round the violin's highs excessively. I allow myself to describe these points of criticism, because no product is perfect, and every sound tone is a choice. The MAVIS M-100 is such a good amplifier that its sound character compliments almost every piece I tested, and to find any drawback, I had to go down to these resolutions.

I played many other instrumental pieces through the MAVIS M-100, including jazz and blues. For example, Adam Ben Ezra's [Heavy Drops \(from the album of the same name\)](#), the energy of this piece is conveyed wonderfully, there are layers of depth across the soundstage and a warm and pleasant bass wrap, clean and dynamic delivery.

In the piece Essência by Portuguese trumpeter and singer, Jéssica Pina (from [the album of the same name](#)) there was a wonderful level of detail in the bass and accurate delivery of small effects, the trumpet was delivered dynamically, smoothly and excitingly. The delivery of the drums highlighted the M-100's ability to deliver accurate and tight bass alongside warmth, although these are sometimes contradictory qualities. Another piece in which the M-100 managed to convey seemingly contradictory qualities was the [Blurred](#) guitar piece by Swiss guitarist Noah Beatz. Here, alongside the big sound and dynamics, the phasing was powerful and soft at the same time.

A genre I haven't mentioned so far is electronic music and the piece I chose this time was Intervals by Boris Blank. In this section too, the MAVIS M-100 proved to be a real chameleon. The transfer of this piece through the M-100 included tight and precise effects, stage control and especially a very impressive center. Some of the effects are simply a punch in the center of the stage.

Although there is a little pleasant softening here, it does not harm the dynamics, detail, or separation at all, so the result is a clean, effortless and impressive transfer.

To end the test, I had to return to another of my favorite pieces of a moving ballad. This is one of the performances that always manages to move me, John Martyn's rendition of Glory Box. It's been a long time since I've heard this piece so full of power and dynamism. The vocal separation, as throughout the test, was wonderful, along with the cleanliness and warmth. The result was extremely moving and a wonderful way to end the test.

Value for money, are two better than one?

Does the unique structure of the MAVIS M-100 – two boxes with separate power supplies – contribute to superior performance? For me, the answer is unequivocal: **yes**. The clarity, separation and power that the amplifier offers are exceptional.

While I tend to prefer integrated amplifiers, as I wrote in the article "[The Complete Guide to Integrated Amplifiers, or the Heart of the Modern Audiophile System](#)," I still believe that this is a cost-effective and convenient solution for most consumers. However, the MAVIS M-100 offers something completely different: an original configuration that includes a preamplifier and two monoblocks, all in a more compact and accessible package - and without compromising on sound.

What sets the M-100 apart is not just its performance, but also its price. At most high-end brands, this price tag would barely suffice for an integrated amplifier – here you get a complete amplifier system. In other words, it's an exceptional offering in a world where each individual component is often priced sky-high.

Of course, a system of a preamplifier and two separate monoblocks will give you greater flexibility – the possibility of different combinations, cable experimentation, and more – but in the price range of the M-100, you will be hard-pressed to find another solution that comes close to the level of performance it offers.



Summary

The MAVIS M-100 managed to surprise me, despite my early familiarity with MAVIS products and extremely high expectations. This is a unique amplifier, combining the advantages of a preamplifier system with monoblocks, but in a more compact and unique configuration, including only two boxes.

The amplifier's performance is characterized by wonderful cleanliness, clear channel separation, and an extremely low noise floor. All of this adds up to great dynamics and a warm, exciting sound – just as I remembered from the MAVIS M-60, but here it is upgraded to an even higher level.

One of the key advantages of the MAVIS M-100 is its ability to adapt to a wide range of music styles – from intimate ballads to rock pieces and even electronic music. It is a flexible, exciting, yet powerful and precise amplifier.

When you add to this the elegant retro design and impressive build quality, you get a product that provides exceptional value for its price.

The MAVIS M-100 is one of the most impressive amplifiers I've reviewed so far in my listening space, and it is a worthy and innovative alternative to the world of integrated amplifiers and complex monoblock systems with separate preamps.

Price : 36,000 NIS

Warranty : Two years (3 months on the tubes)

Importer : [Vivaldi Audio](#)

The system I used for the review:

Speakers : YG Acoustics Carmel 2

Converter : MSB Technology Discrete DAC with two external power supplies

Streamer : Nagra Streamer

Cables :

XLR cable between the converter (MSB) and the amplifier: No Nonsense Cables

Coaxial cable between the streamer and the converter: Nordost Blue Heaven

Speaker cables : QED XT25

Power:

Power cables for the streamer and MSB Converter: Nordost Blue Heaven

Power splitter : QBASE QB8 Mark II (to which the MSB and streamer were connected)

Power cable for the splitter: Nordost Red Dawn