

TEAC – The History of Recording and Sound

TEAC Corporation was originally founded as Tokyo Television Acoustic Company on August 26th, 1953 by two brothers, Katsuma and Tomoma Tani. In 1956 the two brothers founded Tokyo Electro-Acoustic Company, finally merging those firms in 1964 to form today's TEAC Corporation.

TEAC's very first original production model, the TD-102, went on sale in April 1957. And here's the story behind it:



Every legend started here

TD-102

In 1957, two Americans came to visit the newly established Tokyo Electronic Acoustic Company. They were the CEO and the chief engineer of a big radio manufacturer called Lafayette Radio Electronics. When Tani showed them the prototype for the TD-102, they said "Add a playback amp, turn it into a tape player and change the casing to a cabinet and we'll take it!". And with that, they ordered 25 units. While happy to receive such a great bulk order, there wasn't anyone at the company at the time to configure the amps... So according to legend, staff had to work flat out for 72 hours straight to complete the order in time. But their hard work paid off: The TD-102 crossed over into the US market and quickly became a favorite amongst audio fans. (Picture showing TEAC's founder, Katsuma Tani, with the TD-102

However, even after that first big order from Lafayette, few new orders came through. At the time, the extremely high price of a TD-102 (JPY60,000 in a time when the starting salary of a graduate bank clerk was JPY15,000) coupled with the fact that vinyl records were the standard of the day – meant that TEAC was slightly

too far ahead of the curve that would one day see tape as the default playback and recording format. But nevertheless, this was not the end of the story around the TD-102.

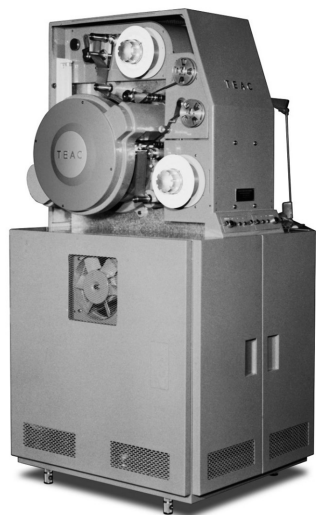
Sewing the seed for expansion

In April 1958, an engineer from the radio manufacturing firm, Philco called Bretz heard about the TD-102 and came to visit the factory. After exclaiming, “You’ve got such amazing products! Why don’t you tell anyone about them?”, Bretz invited TEAC to perform a demonstration of their products at the Far East Audio Club that he managed on the Tachikawa military base. So TEAC brought 50 TD-102 units to demonstrate and in the end they were all bought with cash on the spot. Tani said later, “It was so busy at the factory after that, there would be fancy imported cars parked outside the shabby factory in Sumida day after day, paying in advance for the TD-102. Mr Bretz really was like a God of Fortune for TEAC. He taught us what it meant to do business. He also gave TEAC a vote of confidence for overseas buyers, sewing the seed for future overseas expansion.”



After the TD-102’s initial success, TEAC’s open-reel tape decks gained wide commercial notoriety when an influential American consumer magazine, Consumer’s report, listed it as no.5 out of 17 tried and tested audio products. When Tani heard this he said, “No matter how difficult it is, if you make a technically superior product, it will gain recognition”. It was this strength of conviction that

formed the backbone of TEAC's mission statement "It is from our ability to produce the best products in the world that we derive our reason for being".



1964 - TEAC Slow Motion

The world's first slow-motion VTR for the 1964 Olympic

Japan had a world first with the Tokyo Games in 1964, the first Olympic Games to be held in Asia, and TEAC Corporation was at the helm of those legendary games with technological innovations that still resonate today. The Tokyo Olympics pushed television sports viewing to new heights with all-new slow-motion VTR, overseas satellite feed, color broadcasts and live broadcast of the full marathon course. They called it the 'Television Olympics'. Today's vibrant sporting coverage would be incomplete without slo-mo shots, and we owe all this to NHK's broadcast technology department and TEAC corporation, who jointly developed this ground-breaking new technology. The technology first used over 50 years ago is still bringing the joy of sport into people's homes today. We look forward to seeing what the athletes have to offer on the Games held in the same city, Tokyo!

1968 - A tape deck for everybody, TEAC A-4010

In the 1960s, the average household could enjoy music using various different formats, in line with the technological booms of record players, radio and then tape.



TEAC's A-4010 was a 4 track tape deck that matched American interior design while being robust and easy to operate for a price that the average family could afford, according to it's designers at the time. This consumer-driven concept helped the A-4010 to gain popularity and sell over 200,000 units, becoming one of TEAC's best selling products, as well as signalling the beginning of the audio tape era.

Subsequent open-reel tape decks, such as the A-6010, helped to secure TEAC's position as one of the best tape deck makers in the world. At the TEAC Headquarter in Tokyo, the very last A-4010 series model produced is on display at the entrance, with a special commemorative badge. If you are ever in Tokyo, come and check it out!



1968 heralded the A-20

The first stereo cassette tape-recorder made in Japan

“The post-war era is already over” was the famous phrase used to describe the high-speed growth era of Japan in the 1960s. Regarding the music industry in Japan at that time, Kyu Sakamoto’s hit “Ue Wo Muite Aruko” (lit. ‘I look up as I walk,’ but titled “Sukiyaki” in English) was No.1 not only in Japan but also in the US and several other countries. And when the Beatles visited Japan for the first time in 1966 it created a sensation which many people still talk about even now!

In the 1960s, people used open reel decks for Hi-fi recording. But at JPY100,000, these were very expensive compared to the average monthly salary of JPY30,000 for newly employed University graduates. Katsuma Tani, the President and founder of TEAC corporation, passionately stated “TEAC must produce a good quality audio deck at a reasonable price, because our audio company has a mission to provide music for peoples’ daily lives.” TEAC developed the A-20, based on our magnetic information recording technology, which was Japan’s first stereo Hi-Fi quality cassette tape deck. As the sale price was just JPY35,000, the A-20 made a great contribution in helping people to enjoy music in their daily lives.

1977 - The 8 track tape recorder spreading sound across the galaxy



Did you know that the TEAC 80-8 tape deck, also produced as TASCAM 80-8 for professional audio use, was used to record the voices of R2-D2 and C-3PO in the making of the first Star Wars movie, A New Hope, in 1977?

The TASCAM 80-8 was an 8-track ½ inch reel-to-reel tape recorder, a big hit with professionals at the time, with an easily accessible front panel design allowing all

controls to be adjusted on the recorder unit.

When Star Wars was released in 1977, there were life-size R2-D2 promotional cardboard cutouts in all movie theatres, stating that all voice and sound effects were recorded on TASCAM equipment. However, due to the film's instant success, within a week of release adoring fans had stolen all of them!

The TASCAM 80-8 was also used by many famous recording musicians of the 70s, such as Boston and Kansas.

1979 and the TEAC-144

Huge contribution to popular music history of

the world

In 1979, TEAC had released the world's first 4-track cassette MTR, the TEAC 144, that employed compact cassette tape, achieving high-quality, easy-to-use, compact design, and affordable price for any musicians, and the major magazines of the music industry such as the Billboard magazine and the Pro Sound News reviewed it as "The most innovative product ever!"

The 144 also provided opportunities of music production to many musicians, as it significantly contributed to popular music history of the world. It is a famous story that Bruce Springsteen had recorded his album "Nebraska" with the 144 at his own home in 1982.

The spirit of the 144 still lives in modern products, especially in the TASCAM PORTASTUDIO series, a favourite among musicians around the world.



1987 gives rise to ESOTERIC

In 1987, TEAC's persistent technological endeavors in the audio field gave rise to a new high-end audio brand: ESOTERIC. 10 years after ESOTERIC was founded, they released the P-0 CD transporter.

ESOTERIC channeled all the technical know-how they had amassed over those first 10 years to produce the P-0. It was said at the time that “CD software can bring out hidden sounds that were hitherto unknown”. With that in mind, the P-0 was the first CD player to be equipped with a unique "Lossless Sled", an optical pickup mechanism providing extremely accurate data retrieval, which at the time made it the highest spec CD player available.

ESOTERIC is also famous for its VRDS mega system (Vibration-Free Rigid Disc-Clamping System, which is used in not only the P-0, but TEAC's VRDS-50 and TASCAM's broadcast CD player, CD-701. For detailed explanation, click here https://www.esoteric.jp/en/technology/vrds_neo

ESOTERIC continue to strive to deliver “The joy of the highest levels of musical elation”. Find out more about ESOTERIC here: <https://www.esoteric.jp/en/>



TASCAM and the Emmy awards

The Emmy Awards are given in recognition of a significant contribution to the American broadcasting industry. TASCAM has played an integral role in broadcasting not only in Japan but also in America, and for this they have had the honor of being awarded 2 Emmy Awards for our digital multi-track recorders.



The first award was for the DA-88 in 1995. The DA-88 is an 8 track digital multi-track recorder that uses Hi8 video cassette tapes. Its low running costs and the ability to connect up to 16 machines together simultaneously made it a vital new addition to

broadcast recording systems.

The transport on the DA-88 is the same as the one used on NASA space shuttles. NASA was shocked by the fact that it could survive a 9g impact, exclaiming “My God we only needed to be able to salvage the data from it, we didn’t expect it to still work!”

Then in 2000, the multi-track recorder and player MMR-8 and MMP-16 won a second Emmy Award. An Academy press release stated at the time, “The MMR-8/MMP-16 and DA-88 are two of the very few such audio offerings to ever win this award. TASCAM is literally the only pro audio equipment manufacturer in the world to have ever won an Emmy twice within such a narrow time frame.”

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**SIGN UP FOR OUR NEWSLETTER
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