

ELECTRONIC HOUSE

October 2009

TECHNOLOGY IDEAS FOR YOUR HOME

GREEN GIANT

Can a huge house be eco-friendly?

#BXNJKW *****CAR-RT LOT**C-024
 #0490100000156104# 0906 J/A10 ELH1
 NICOLL RELATION PD81
 1502 BOSTON PROVIDENCE TPKE
 NORWOOD MA 02062-4643
 022423

9 Energy-Efficient TVs

AWAY FROM HOME
Remote Monitoring

ENERGY CREDITS
The ROI of Solar Power

Take a Power Trip

Adding conditioners like Tributaries' T100 can give your A/V system a friendly lift. *by Arlen Schweiger*

AT A GLANCE

Specs:

- > 1,800 watts, 15 amps, 4,320 joules
- > 4 isolated always-on digital outlets
- > 2 isolated switched-on analog outlets
- > 2 isolated delayed-on high-current outlets
- > 1 always-on convenience outlet (front)
- > Reset on front panel
- > 2 DSS CATV/SAT inputs with surge protection
- > 1 in/2 out phone/data with surge protection
- > 12-volt DC trigger in and out
- > Front panel volt meter with status LEDs
- > Dimmable front panel
- > USB charge with goose-neck light
- > 17 x 2.125 x 9.125 inches
- > \$350

Pros:

- > Compact form factor with convenience and flexibility.
- > LED indicators and voltage readout.
- > Provides A/V performance boost.

Cons:

- > Price is more in line with an A/V component than a surge suppressor.
- > Nine outlets may not be enough for some.



I've always been skeptical of power conditioners—could they really make that much difference in an entertainment system's performance? It didn't take much time with the Tributaries T100 Power Manager, which conditions and protects power, to answer yes, they really can.

Setup was simple. The slim black box took the place of a Monster PowerCenter HT700 surge protector, and I followed basic guidelines suggested in the T100 manual while transferring power cords. The T100 includes nine outlets, divided among four digital "always-on," two analog "switched," two high-current "switched," and one "always-on" unfiltered front-panel outlet.

The always-on outlets are designed for components that should rarely be rebooted, such as cable TV boxes and digital video recorders (DVRs) so I plugged mine into one of the digital outlets. The high-current outlets feature a 5-second turn-on delay ideal for protecting your power amplifiers and A/V receivers, so that's where my Sony receiver went. I connected an LG Blu-ray player into one of the analog switched outlets, so it wouldn't draw any power when turned off. My Hitachi TV is plugged into a wall outlet behind its wall mount, so no worries there, but I did route the coaxial cable connection into and out of the T100, as I had with my Monster product.

To my pleasant surprise, the addition of the T100 to my modest system was noticeable. Feeding clean power to the components made the overall performance, well... cleaner. Maybe "clearer" would be slightly more appropriate to describe the differences, as I tested Blu-ray discs, CDs and cable TV.

I started with CDs, playing a few that I was extremely familiar with: Assembly of Dust's *The Honest Hour*, Phish's *Junta* and Sting's *Nothing Like the Sun*. They're well-recorded discs to begin with, and perfect to test my skepticism. Listening through Morel speakers, I heard an improvement in bass right away—fuller with grooves more defined. I also found the high-end snappier on percussion, while background sounds became more prominent.

The differences weren't quite as pronounced for video, but the T100 did enhance images. I popped in *Lost Season 2* on Blu-ray, which runs the gamut from bright blue skies and water to lush green jungle to dark industrial interiors. Dark images appeared less grainy, and the bright scenes a little less harsh. I found similar improved smoothness in cable TV programming, especially standard-definition content like animation. Viewing a Yankees-Red Sox game in high-def, the black levels on pinstripes, batting helmets, and umpire's uniforms were punchier than before.

The T100 also features energy-friendly aspects such as the switched outlets and under/over voltage—if the line voltage goes below 80V or above 135V the unit will disconnect to combat brownouts or spikes. The LED status indicators can be dimmed, and the unit itself consists of RoHS (Restrictions on Hazardous Substances) compliant materials, including the circuit boards, wiring and soldering.

The T100 quickly turned me into a fan of power conditioners. As much as a power conditioner enhanced my setup with little equipment connected, I'd say no advanced system deserves to be without one. **EH**

Arlen Schweiger is Electronic House's managing editor.