



## Like the Micro iCan, but much, much more so

By [XjunkieNL](#) Posted 11/14/15



### Review Details:

Audio Quality

Design

Quality

Value

By [Turrigan2](#)

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**Pros:** Covers most peoples input/output requirements. Bags of power!. Has lots and lots of buttons and features, extremely configurable.

**Cons:** Remote control is a bit 'cheap' and sometimes doesn't respond well. Maybe too much configuration for some? (stretching here....)

Firstly, many thanks to iFi for the loan of this amp. I am not affiliated with iFi, just a regular Head-Fi addict to happens to be lucky enough to get loan units now and again from the generous iFi team. As I've had this for a few weeks now it's time to jot down some brief thoughts and observations.

Up until very recently, my main desktop rig consisted of iFi Micro iCan, Micro iDAC and Micro iTube housed nicely in the iRack. I've been using this for a couple of years to drive my HE500s (now sold), AKG K3003 and laterally my Beyerdynamic T1 Gen 2 so I'm familiar with the iFi sound. These days I own the HUGO and Beyerdynamic A2 as my desktop rig and Lotoo PAW5000 with Mojo as my portable setup..

### Package

The iCan Pro comes in the same type of packaging as the other iFi gear, just larger! so same great unboxing experience and enough accessories to get you going. The unit itself is satisfyingly weighty and looks to be very well made. I like the size and design quite a bit, everything is machined well, no rough spots and you immediately get the impression this thing is built to last. This amp also has some power, 14,000 mW @ 16 Ohms! Also included in the

package is a fairly basic remote which is not really the quality I'm used to compared to the Beyerdynamic A2's remote but it'll do the job. If you plan to use the remote a lot you might be a little dissatisfied as I found it didn't always respond if it's not in perfect line of sight but YMMV. The volume knob itself on the iCan feels luxurious and smooth, no worries there!

## Front Panel

On the front you have an array of outputs, single ended 3.5mm, Balanced 3.5mm, Balanced 4-pin xlr and twin single-ended 6.35mm sockets, so plenty of options.

There is a large input selector on the left (mirroring the Volume knob in the right). The amp accommodates 3 analogue inputs and a balanced input.

Also on the front are what really sets this amp apart from others, knobs to tweak in the form of XBass and 3D settings. These are extremely well implemented on this amp, quite subtle but effective. If you have a neutral source or bright cans, the XBass can provide a nice balance to the audio. It jumps in 3 increments, 10, 20 or 40 Hz depending on how much you need.

Similarly the 3D has 3 'stages' depending on your preference. Similar to my experience of the iCan (which has a 2 stage 3D switch) I found for acoustic tracks it works noticeably better at bringing the audio to the forefront (like speakers) but it doesn't always work so well with other tracks, in fact it makes some tracks sound 'off', you need to experiment but when it works I like it a lot.

There are also 2 slider switches on the front:

- Gain - 0db, 9db or 18db. I personally found 0db to be fine with the T1 (600ohms).
- AMP selector switch - Here you can select purely solid state amp, the tube stage or Tube+ mode which is a bit of a hybrid mode. As I am used to the iTube and iCan in combination this is great to see. In my experience the iTube does not provide an immediate wow factor, but if I remove it from the chain, my enjoyment of the music appears to lessen. It's difficult to quantify but noticeable to me never-the-less. For this reason I chose to use the Tube+ output the most.



iCan Pro feeding the Beyerdynamic T1 Gen 2 using the 4-Pin XLR Balanced output. Source is Lotoo PAW5000 and Mojo.

## Rear Panel

Here you will find everything you need:

L + R Balanced 3-Pin XLR female input

3 x RCA Stereo inputs

L + R Balanced 3-Pin XLR Male output

1 x RCA Stereo output

Energiser output for 'stats (sorry no more info on this).

Power Passthrough ( I assume for the energiser module?)

## Form Factor

This unit is a good size for desktop needs, fairly shallow and not too wide. It's actually almost identical in width and height to the Beyerdynamic A2 amp, less deep however:

## Sound

The first time I used the iCan (and most amount of time I spent with it) I had it paired with a Chord Hugo connected to my



Gaming PC. I also had a Jitterbug in the chain to attempt to compensate for USB noise.

Immediately I felt at home. This has the familiar sound I am used to with the Micro iCan/iTube only much, much more so. Sound stage is a little fuller and it really drives the T1's well. I would never call the sound I achieved from the 'Micro' set-up 'thin', but this is a richer sound with more weight and more space. I'd love to try some HE-6 on this, I have a feeling it would do them justice. After some time listening I settled upon my desired xBass setting, 20Hz, this seemed to sound about right with the T1/Hugo combo. I tend to keep the 3D off until I know I need it (acoustic mainly).

I think the Beyerdynamic A2,

to my ears has a slightly more detailed presentation and more 'real' bass tonality but I'm being super critical here,



there is nothing wrong with either of these aspects on the iCan Pro. It's really nice. The problem with comparing this with most other amps is the you can make a big or small difference to the sound just by tweaking some dials. On the A2, aside from Gain control, you get what it offers, period. If you want to add flavour or change the presentation you need to add a warmer DAC or a Tube stage. With the iCan it's almost too configurable, too tempting to keep pressing stuff! which can distract from the ultimate goal here, enjoying the music. Maybe it's just me but I found it hard to stop playing with it, I guess that urge would lessen the longer I used it.

If I didn't already have a top shelf amp, this would be on my shipping list. Even though it's expensive, if you think about all the technology and configurability this brings to the table in one unit, it's pretty much in the right place.

Thanks again to iFi for the loan, it was a great few weeks. I would recommend this amp if it's within your budget. Very flexible, well designed and great sounding amplifier capable of driving hungry Cans or sensitive IEMs.