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## Buying a car stereo . . .

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General Manager Alex Romanov. "Of the 260 different brands that were available on the North American market, 90 per cent of the models retailed for less than \$350. Ten or so sold above \$500, and one or two for as much as \$1,000."

Today, the high-end market is well established. Alpine has seen its sales increase from \$1.1 million during its first year of operation to \$15 million in 1983. Projected sales for the 1984 are in excess of \$20 million.

Now that the drive toward quality sound is here to stay, for many of us the wealth of new equipment presents the dilemma of what to buy. Alpine offers the following guidelines:

**Do Some Research:** Find out as much as you can about the basic components of car audio systems. Learn how receivers, equalizers, amplifiers, speakers and woofers function. Similarly, find out how the acoustics of a car affect audio systems. This knowledge will help you know what to look and ask for when shopping for a system.

**Do Some Comparative Shopping:** Take advantage of dealer display equipment to listen to as many different systems as possible. Better yet, listen to systems in their proper environment—cars. Because acoustics vary, systems will not sound the same in cars as they do in showrooms.

**Decide on What Quality Sound You Want:** If you're accustomed to a good home system you won't want to settle for anything less in your car. Moreover, people can spend as much as two or three hours a day in their cars. Thus, a car stereo may ultimately provide even more use than a home system.

**Decide on Features:** Alpine suggests you buy with the future in mind. If you're on a limited budget, or interested in building up your system gradually, you might want to invest in a cassette deck with bi-level capability. This allows you to add additional speakers and amplifiers in a more powerful

range without reducing the quality of sound.

**Concentrate on Design:** According to Alpine, design should be clean, uncluttered and pleasing to the eye. Cassette decks should be sophisticated but simple, with a minimum of easily accessible buttons, to help eliminate inconvenience while driving.

**Look for Safety and Convenience:** Certain features help reduce distractions when you're behind the wheel. Radio digital tuners, for example, can seek and find stations at the push of a button, thereby eliminating a lot of needless dial turning. Auto reverse cassette decks enable both sides of a tape to be played without having to remove it from the machine.

**Look for Compatibility With Home Noise Reduction Systems:** Dolby and DBX electronic circuit systems that reduce the background noise of tapes are standard features on home cassette decks. Select a car deck that has the same system as your home deck, so that full listening enjoyment can be obtained from both machines.

**Maintain the Correct Speaker Balance:** According to Alpine, four full range speakers, located in the front and rear, provide the ideal sound coverage for any size car. Anything more requires special knowledge about the acoustical environment of the particular car, and may be redundant.

**Tailor the Sound System To Your Car:** Certain components can make up for your car's acoustical shortcomings. Equalizers, for example, help offset the over-emphasis of certain frequency levels that is caused by the dimensions of any automobile. Full range speakers and separate amplifiers may be necessary to handle the increased power requirements of your system.

"Top of the line equipment, manufactured by a company that stands behind its products and provides servicing, will give you the best value and maximum listening pleasure," he says.

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