



**Ampeg®**

Knowledgebase

## Dating your Ampeg

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### **Question: When was my Ampeg built?**

Answer: In dating Ampeg Amplifiers, there are several different schemes to be used. The good thing about Ampeg is that when they changed their models, they all changed at the same time. This means that it is fairly easy to determine the range of year by just looking at the outside of the amp. Like all U.S.A. made amps, the speakers, transformers, and potentiometers have date codes on them. This along with the serial number on the amp can help narrow down the year of manufacture.

There are six distinctive periods in the Ampeg line. Each period has a different way of identifying the year made. Note that each different period is approximately during each different ownership. The chart here should be of some help.

**Pre 1953** - These amps can only be dated by the EIA (Electronics Industries Association) codes on the speakers and other parts. No serial numbers were used during this time.

**1953-Mid 1965** - In 1953, the first Serialization system was introduced. This was a six-digit number like this: YMMNNN, which was the last digit of the year, month, and number of production. Since there is a possibility of overlap here, cosmetics are a huge factor in determining



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the year. The year 1953 could be 1963 since only the last digit was used. Ampeg changed their cosmetics several times in the late '50s and by determining whether the amp is black, blue, grey, or tan will identify the year.

**1965-1969** - In early 1965 a new serialization system went into effect. The old one lasted on certain models for about six months. This system was also six digits. This system here was strictly numerical and started at 000001. It ran for about five years and ended with 092000. This chart is fairly accurate:

000001-020000 - 1965

020000-049000 - 1966

049000-075000 - 1967

075000-080000 - 1968

080000-092000 – 1969

The EIA date codes of original components should be used to confirm an approximate date of manufacture.

**1970-1979** – The third serial number system was implemented in 1970. Not enough information is available to determine the year of manufacture by serial number. An added variable is that during the Magnavox years, Ampeg may have used separate serial number systems for each model or for models that shared the same chassis, like the VT-22 and V-4. The features of the amps from this period can be



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used and compared to the following table.

<b>Feature</b>	<b>Years Used</b>
Blue control panel graphics	1968-72
Black control panel graphics w/square corners	1972-75
Black control panel graphics, horizontally split w/rounded corners (solid-state amps)	1973-79
Black control panel graphics, horizontally split w/rounded corners (tube amps)	1976-79
Distortion control knob	1976-79
White rocker switches (solid-state amps)	1973-79
White rocker switches (tube amps)	1976-79
Black rocker switches	1968-75
Metal "A" logo	1968-75
Plastic "A" logo	1973-79

**1981-1985** – The MTI-era amplifiers cannot be dated by serial number. Sorry, buddy!

**1985-2005** - These are the amps during the St. Louis Music period. A new serialization system was developed and it became a code used for many years. This is the best way to identify the date of manufacture during this period. A 10 digit number is used as a serial number, which contains lots of information. The number is set up like this:

**LLLCYMNNNN**. LLL stands for the model, C stands for the country. (U is U.K., Y is Europe, W is Worldwide, and D stands for domestic or U.S.).



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The Y is a year code that is a letter, starting with A as 1988, (see chart below). What happened before 1987 for the year is unclear as very few amps were made because of bankruptcy for MTI. The M is a number code for January-October. (Jan is 1, Feb is 2, Oct is 10, fill in the blanks.) For November and December the letters A and B were used respectively. The last 4 numbers (N) are the actual serial number for the instrument.

A= 1988	G= 1994	M= 2000
B= 1989	H= 1995	N= 2001
C= 1990	I= 1996	O= 2002
D= 1991	J= 1997	P= 2003
E= 1992	K= 1998	Q= 2004
F= 1993	L= 1999	R= 2005

**2006-Present** – In 2006 Ampeg was purchased by Loud Technologies Inc. The serialization scheme continued from the SLM era, with recent crossover and slight changes.

XXXXBBYMNNNN, where XXXX is model, BB is build location, Y is year (see chart below), M is 2-week period (A is first week of January, B is second week of January, C is first week of February, you can figure out the rest), and the last numbers (N) are the actual serial number.

S= 2006	C= 2010	G= 2014
T= 2007	D= 2011	H= 2015
U/A= 2008	E= 2012	I= 2016
V/B= 2009	F= 2013	J= 2017



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\*This document borrows HEAVILY from the website <http://www.bluebookofguitarvalues.com> and the book "Ampeg: The Story Behind the Sound" by Gregg Hopkins and Bill Moore. Thanks guys!