

Universal Audio UAD API 550A & 560 500 Series EQ Plug in Collection

BY ALAN BRANCH FOR AUDIO MEDIA WORLDWIDE

The Universal Audio UAD API 500 EQ plug-in collection (\$299. download) has two iconic EQs from years gone by: the 550A EQ, renowned by so many producers and engineers as a killer tone shaper for drums and guitars; and the API 560 10-band graphic, noted for its quick wave shaping and the same characteristic API sound.

The UAD API 550A plug-in is a three-band parametric EQ with five pre-selected frequencies, and bell/shelf filters on top and bottom. The front panel graphic uses the distinctive dual-concentric gain controls (± 12 dB), and a 50 Hz to 15 kHz bandpass filter switch. The UAD 560 is a 10-band graphic EQ, with API's 'Proportional Q' filter and ± 12 dB of gain. Both feature a bypass as well as

a power button; the EQ bypassed signal still travels an API path. Both also have a master output knob providing +12 dB or -24 dB of gain.

The stepped frequency and gain controls on the 550A might seem strange and somewhat limited to a new API user, but the sound is something special. They have an immediate effect on practically any sound—very musical changes, giving great punch or warmth in the low end, whilst the top end remains smooth and rounded without sounding harsh.

Even with no EQ switched in, the UAD API plug-ins have an analog effect. The 550A 50 Hz to 15 kHz filter can really help clean up a mix by getting rid of frequencies you really don't need on a lot of tracks. The 550A jumps in huge 2 dB chunks, but using it on drums and guitars, great results are relatively simple. The 550A bands overlap, ensuring you



UA's API 550A and 560 module GUI's, authentic to the worn paint.

can reach every frequency range, and the selected frequency centers are limited but work just fine. The 560 covers a slightly higher and lower frequency range and it still has that API tone when shaping the sound; it is a bit quicker due to the graphic controls.

UAD has excelled once again by bringing accurate and excellent emulations of classic hardware. This historic API design can often dial in more tone and musicality quicker and better than most EQs can dream of. Universal Audio
uaudio.com