

# HIDDEN AGENDA

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**Imagine being so into car audio that your installer hooks you up with a set of custom built amplifiers?**

It's said that music sets the mind free and calms the soul; and I agree, music has helped me get through some of my darkest moments – and I'm sure most of you felt that. It probably also rings true if you happen to work for a secret organization like our good friend 'Agent G' does – of course; you need some sort of release. One good way to let off steam after a rough day at work is positively HOONING your mighty BMW M4; but before you floor it, a 'driving' playlist is mandatory. While the stock Harman Kardon audio system isn't entirely shabby; when your used to listening to high fidelity sounding systems,

"stock" simply wouldn't cut it – so to remedy this problem, he boosted over to Bespoke Audio.

In true secret agent form, looks can be deceiving; especially in the case of this build. It might appear simple and straightforward; but trust me, it's anything but. Grant from Bespoke really went to town with the OCD-like meticulous planning; every detail was carefully thought out, right down to how the amplifiers would be built... Wait, did I mention the amps were hand-built specifically for this install?

More on this in a second; but first, let's dive into how the MOST-enabled source unit integration was achieved.





MOST (Media Oriented Systems Transport) is basically a hi-speed fiber optic network for integrated media systems, and is becoming increasingly popular in newer, technology-laden vehicles. Seeing as the M4 is fiber optics-rich, one cannot simply tap into the speaker outputs and install a hi-low converter. Enter the Mobridge MOST interface; which provides a full-range signal directly to the JBL MS8 processor. This DSP then feeds the audio signal to the amps – speaking of; these custom-built bad boys are well up there in my 'Top 5' most expensive car audio amplifiers I've ever seen! They're Audiowave UK bespoke items, and were commissioned to be hand-built specifically for this install. That's a wicked bragging right!

While the amplifier housings are identical; there's actually three 2-channel amps, along with a monoblock split between the housings. One casing holds dual 2-channels of amplification, while the other holds the 2-channel and monoblock circuitry. Because these are Class AB amps; when it came to

installation, Grant had to get pretty creative to get these bulky brutes sitting pretty without sacrificing boot space. The final iteration was a stacked design, running up the back seat. Fun fact: no holes were drilled into the chassis – instead, the frame was welded together and bolted in using the OEM points! The aesthetics were tidied up with the addition of stack-fabricated end caps, which neatly join the side panels. Visual appeal is further bolstered by the 8mm back-lit acrylic piece, incorporated with the amp rack to provide ambient boot area lighting.

For the bass system, an AudioFrog 10" woofer is homed in a solid 0.7cu. ft sealed enclosure, constructed in the trunk floor compartment. It's covered by a loading floor, so very little boot storage space was lost. Up in the cabin, the M4's magnificent front stage features an A-pillar build which saw more planning than most complete systems! The super hi-fidelity Focal Utopia M-series midrange drivers and matching tweeters are housed in trick custom-fabbed

**Up in the cabin, the M4's magnificent front stage features an A-pillar build.**



A-pillar panel pods; which are finished in material sourced from Germany – purely to match the roof lining. I promise you that Grant spent countless hours, taking every possible step and using every trick in his little black book to ensure the perfect speaker placement.

Grant also ditched the OEM plastic under-seat midbass driver enclosures; and fabricated his own custom pieces to accommodate the AudioFrog GB60 midbass drivers. Not only did this give him

the required enclosure volume, but the OEM look and feel was retained. When you're packing this level of audiophile-grade components, tuning the system to play in perfect harmony is akin to an experienced tuner conducting a dyno session with a high-powered drag car. Days were spent individually tuning each set of channels; carefully working on seamless integration with each other, while sounding as ultra-realistic as possible.

After a few months of continuous fine-

tuning, I think Grant and his team are finally happy with the results – and so is Agent G, judging by his smile every time he turns it up! The way it's set up right now, if you popped in a Jazz CD and closed your eyes, you'd swear you were experiencing a live performance. Agent G mentioned a special thanks to Shaheen Kalla from AudioFrog/Audiowave SA and Focal SA for the top quality products; and of course, Grant from Bespoke Audio for the amazing craftsmanship.



# BEHIND THE BUILD

## QUICKSPECS

OEM head unit / Mobridge MOST interface / JBL MS8 DSP / 2x custom-built Audiowave amplifiers / Focal Utopia M-series midrange drivers & tweeters / AudioFrog GB60 midbass drivers / AudioFrog 10" subwoofer / 14v Lithium battery / Installed by Bespoke Audio



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