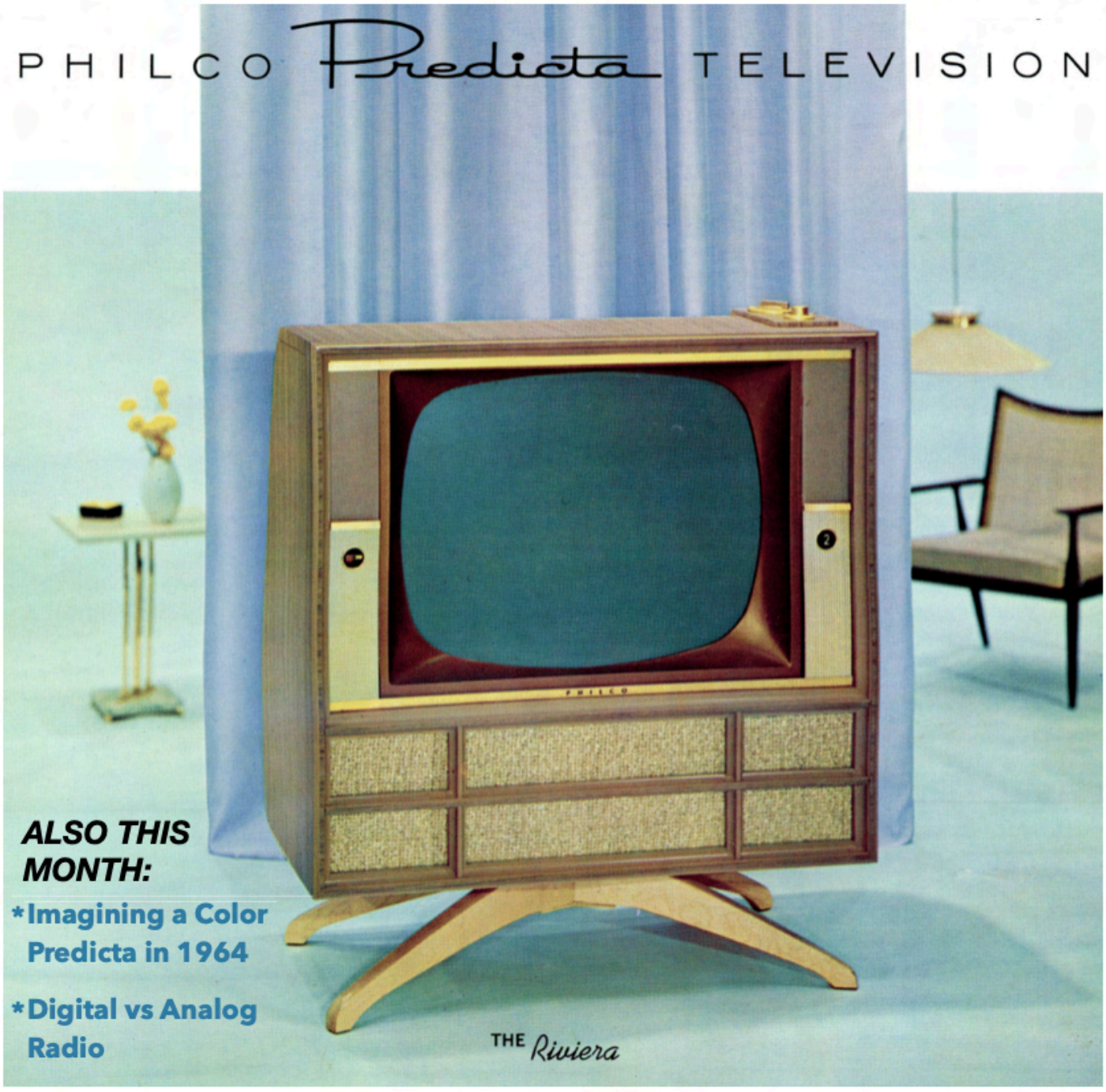
TEXAS BROADCAST MUSEUM

RETRO TECH

THE RARE PHILCO PREDICTA CONSOLES



ALSO THIS MONTH:

- *Imagining a Color Predicta in 1964
- *Digital vs Analog Radio

ALWAYS FREE EACH MONTH | SEASON 2 | EPISODE 12 | OCTOBER 2026

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OUR COPY EDITOR

Mike Shannon joined *Retro Tech* last year as copy editor, bringing decades of interest in broadcasting history to the publication. An early supporter of the Texas Broadcast Museum, he donated two vanloads of vintage equipment in 2016 and later helped establish the Museum as the permanent home of the Texas Radio Hall of Fame while serving on its board from 2012–2020. Shannon's fascination with broadcasting began while growing up in Dallas and eventually inspired **dfwRetroplex.com**, the broadcasting-history website he launched in 1998.

A longtime collector and researcher, his own broadcasting experience includes work at WFAA-TV and WBAP-AM, as well as developing and co-hosting the syndicated oldies program *The Hi-Fi Club* from 2006–2025. Shannon says the greatest reward from documenting DFW radio and television history has been the friendships he has formed with many of the broadcasters he once listened to on the air.



Tele-Fashion for 1960:

Inside Philco's Sprawling Predicta & "Fringe" Predicta Lineup

When people picture the Philco Predicta today, they usually picture one thing: a picture tube perched like a goldfish bowl on a slim pedestal, swiveling to face wherever you're sitting. That image — the Continental, the Tandem, the Pedistal/Barberpole, the Debutante, the Princess, the Siesta, or the Holiday — is the one that ended up in design museums. But the 1960 Philco dealer folder tells a much bigger story.



By its second and final model year, Philco had built an entire universe around the Predicta idea, spreading the name and its underlying technology across three distinct merchandising tiers: the swivel-tubed Predicta sets proper, a furniture-forward Mastercraft Collection, and a more conventional Philco Deluxe console line. All three shared the same DNA — the 10L30/10L40 or 10L31 "Cool Chassis," Perma-Circuit wiring, cascode tuners, and in many cases the Directa wireless remote — even if only the true Predictas kept the signature detached, swiveling tube. Here's the 1960s lineup, cabinet by cabinet.

The Predicta Line

The Continental (pictured to the right) (models 4730 / 4730-W) was the flagship, and it's the image most people conjure when they hear "Predicta." A full 350-degree swivel screen sat atop a slender four-legged mahogany or walnut pedestal; its picture tube housed in an aluminized "SF" safety case. At nearly 26 inches tall with a 21-inch screen, it was designed to be looked at as much as watched — a genuine piece of sculpture that happened to receive UHF and VHF.



The Penthouse (pictured to the left) (4710 / 4710-L) took the detached-screen idea even further. Its picture tube sat on its own small stand and could be placed up to 25 feet from the receiver chassis, which was built into a compact end-table-style cabinet with the tuning knobs on top. The pitch was right there in the catalog copy: "Keep the set beside your chair. Put the picture anywhere."

These are Predictas?

PHILCO Predicta® TV

The two sets you have read about and seen on the preceding page, are what Philco Predicta fans and collectors are used to seeing. But believe it or not, the 1960 "Philco Predicta Television" catalogue listed the models below as one of them! But you will ask, how could they look so different than the space-aged models that people saw on showroom floors in 1958 and 1959?

Well, it is that art-deco, space age look that was one of the things that kept the masses from buying a traditional Predicta. As cool as they looked, they often appeared very out of place in the family living room (family rooms had not been invented yet in the 1950s). Homeowners wanted a piece of furniture that would blend with their mid-century decor. So, Philco added an enormous number of models to the lineup that borrowed components from the traditional Predictas and surrounded them with wood (mainly) to satisfy the desire for an entertainment device that blended-in well with the other furnishings of the house.

Here are those models that were added to the Predicta lineup (and identified by Philco as Predictas):

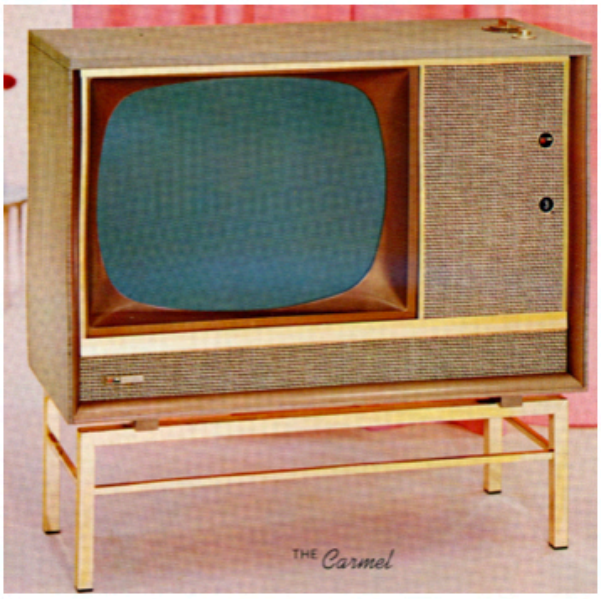
The Riviera (pictured below, left) (4682-S / -SL / -SW) abandoned the pedestal look for a full swivel console "finished all around," meaning it could sit in the middle of a room without an ugly back. Its three-speaker front sound system and hairpin-legged stand gave it a more traditional console silhouette than the Continental, despite sharing the same 10L40 chassis and cascode tuner.

The Warwick (pictured below, right) (4680 / -R / -W / -WR) dressed the Predicta idea in Queen Anne–style cabriole legs and a horizontal four-speaker cabinet, with Philco's Directa electrostatic wireless remote offered on the "R" models. It was Predicta technology wearing traditional furniture clothing for buyers who wanted the swivel tube without the space-age styling. The Birth of the Porthole: Technology Meets Design.









The Westwood (pictured above, left) (4678 / 4678-W) put the swivel screen on a rolling three-speaker console with casters, letting the whole cabinet — not just the tube — be repositioned around a room. At just over 33 inches tall, it split the difference between the pedestal Continental and a full-size furniture console.

The Carmel (pictured above, right) (4680-L / -LR) was the Warwick's blond-walnut twin — same horizontal four-speaker cabinet and Directa remote option, same 10L40 chassis, just finished in lighter wood for buyers who wanted a more contemporary look in the living room speakers, tapered brass-tipped legs, and an illuminated channel window. It's one of the most overtly "atomic age" designs in the catalogue.

The Brentwood (pictured, right) (4674 / -L / -W) leaned into brass-accented, high-styled Danish-modern looks, with twin speakers, tapered brass-tipped legs, and an illuminated channel window. It's one of the most overtly "atomic age" designs in the catalogue.



The Capri (4676-S / -SL / -SR / -SLR) offered a twin-speaker swivel console with the Directa remote and push-button "at set" channel selection on its R models, wrapped in a mid-century tapered-leg cabinet finished in mahogany or blond oak. **(See photo of this set on page 9)**

The Carousel (4254-S / -SL) was the most compact and playful of the true Predictas: a centered swivel screen mounted on a decorative wire-legged base with an open shelf underneath, clearly aimed at smaller rooms or a second set in the house. **(See photo of this set on page 9)**

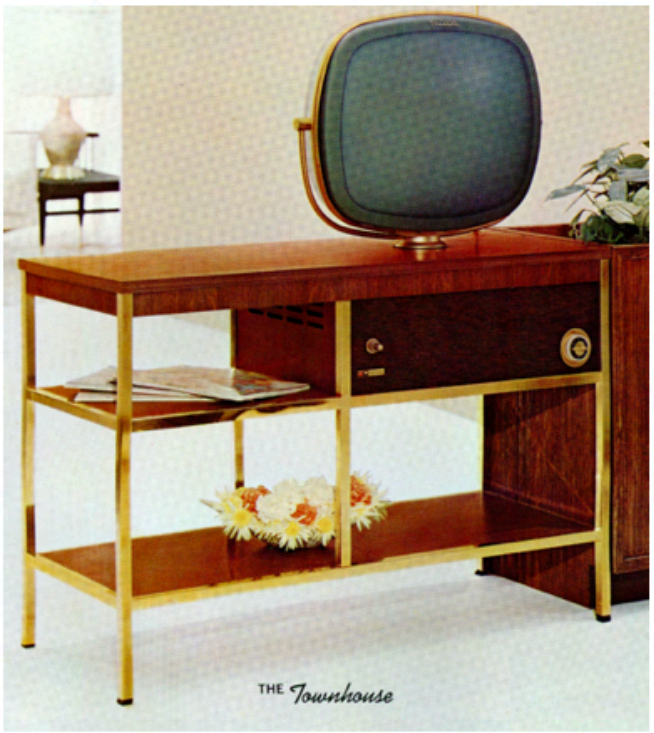
The Mastercraft Collection*

The Philco Mastercraft Collection was a line of luxury, fine-furniture television consoles and swivel-screen sets introduced by Philco in the late 1950s. They featured a fine-furniture design and were marketed as "America's most beautiful television sets," as the collection focused on high-end cabinetry styled to match traditional through contemporary home decors. This was a distinctly separate tier of television sets that featured traditional cabinetry and built-in consoles.

This part of the 1960 Philco television collection were not exactly Predictas, but sets like the Townhouse clearly were modeled after a hybrid Predicta Tandem and Predicta Princess concept. Philco NEVER referred to them as Predictas, but they are presented here for historical interest.

The Townhouse (right) (4744) swapped screen-in-a-box styling for a genuine brass-trimmed room-divider table, with the 21-inch swivel tube sitting on top of an open shelving unit that could hold books or magazines — TV as furniture, quite literally. This one sure looks like a Predicta Princess installed in a rack.

The Miss America (24" pictured below), offered in 21-inch (4686 series) and 24-inch (6636 series) versions, was the glamour piece of the Mastercraft Collection, its name borrowed from Philco's sponsorship of the Miss America pageant. Both sizes featured a dramatically contoured wraparound speaker cabinet on brass-tipped swivel-caster legs, with Directa remote control and wrap-around multi-speaker sound.





The Parkwood (4696 series) offered "classic wood-panel design" in a swivel console, with a 14-inch oval front speaker and the option of Directa remote and push-button tuning on its "R" models — a more restrained, traditionally styled alternative to the Miss America. **(See photo of this set on page 9)**

The Rittenhouse (4698-R / -PR) was the most furniture-like set in the entire catalogue: a breakfront console with an inlaid top, paneled sides, and a faux drawer front hiding the speaker grille, available in mahogany or Provincial maple. **(See photo of this set on page 9)**

** Mastercraft collection were NOT Predictas or Predicta-Badged, but clearly used Predicta components (the 10L30/10L40 "Cool Chassis)*

The Monterey (right) (4692-W) was styled as a Danish-tradition lowboy, its swivel screen flanked by woven cane-look speaker grilles and set on slim tapered legs with an open lower shelf — Scandinavian modern applied to television furniture.



The Normandy (4690 / -P / -PR / -R) offered French Provincial styling on swivel casters, with hand-crafted cabinetry, three-speaker front sound, and Directa remote on its "R" models, aimed squarely at more traditional or formal living rooms. **(See photo of this set on page 9)**

The Cambridge (4662 / -P) solved a real design problem: where to put a swivel-screen TV in a corner. The hardwood corner console angled the cabinet into the room while keeping the wraparound three-speaker sound system and pop-up top tuning of its Mastercraft siblings. **(See photo of this set on page 9 AND in the Texas Broadcast Museum)**

The Philco Deluxe Line

In 1960, Philco organized its television product lineup into distinct tiers, with the Deluxe line serving as their mainstream, high-quality family television series. It sat alongside their ultra-futuristic Predicta line and their premium-furniture Mastercraft line. By marketing the Deluxe line (which included basic consoles and the Slender Seventeener portables), Philco kept their futuristic swivel-screen models strictly isolated under the Predicta banner.

While the Predicta line captured headlines for its radical "space-age" detached swivel screens, the Deluxe line featured more traditional, reliable cabinetry aimed at everyday consumers. Key featured for the Deluxe Line included:

- **Slender Profiles:** Philco heavily marketed "slender" chassis designs during this era. They engineered shallower cathode-ray tubes (CRTs) to keep the cabinets from protruding too far into living rooms.
- **Printed Circuit Boards:** Following Philco's push for modernization, these sets utilized early printed circuitry rather than the traditional hand-wired chassis common in older sets.
- **Traditional Aesthetics:** Unlike the stark plastic and metal aesthetics of the Predicta, the Deluxe line heavily utilized warm wood finishes and classic mid-century furniture styling designed to blend seamlessly into a standard 1960 living room.

The Belmont (4673-R / -LR) moved into the more conventional Deluxe tier: a full-to-the-floor console on swivel casters (the cabinet rolled, though the screen itself was fixed in place), built around the shorter-neck 10L30 chassis and Directa remote. **(See photo of this set on page 10)**

The Amherst 4670 / -L / -W) paired a horizontal cabinet with a distinctive wire-mesh speaker grille and twin speakers, running the same 10L30 chassis as the rest of the Deluxe line but without the swivel-tube mechanism of true Predictas. **(See photo of this set on page 10)**

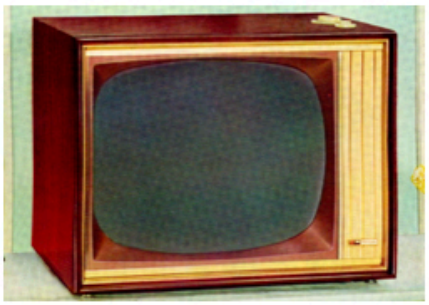
The Bristol (4672 / -L / -W) offered a "bow-front" console on swivel casters with twin-speaker front sound — one of several Deluxe models clearly styled to echo Predicta's futurism without the cost of the detached tube. **(See photo of this set on page 10)**

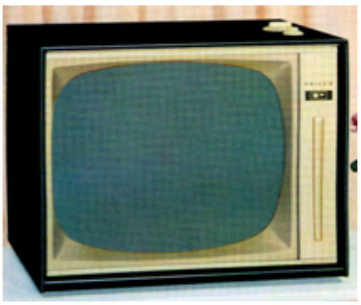
The Fairfield (4668 / -L) was a horizontal console raised on tapered brass legs, giving it a lighter, more open look than its Deluxe stablemates, with a single 5¼-inch front speaker and the standard cascode tuner. **(See photo of this set on page 10)**

The Mayfair (pictured below, left) (4253 / -L) was a compact tabletop set with a bright brass shadow-box frame around the screen and an extruded brass speaker grille — small enough for a bedroom or den, dressed up enough for the living room.

The Abington (pictured below, middle) (4248-E) was sold in a smart ebony cabinet "equipped for optional legs or swivel base," meaning dealers or buyers could configure it as a tabletop or a stand-mounted set — a flexible, budget-conscious entry in the Deluxe range.

The Oxford (pictured below, right) (4250 / -L) closed out the line as another optional-leg tabletop set, grained in mahogany finish, built on the 10L30 chassis with the same cascode tuner and aluminized picture tube as the rest of the Deluxe family.







Why the Whole Family Was Gone So Fast

For all that variety, none of it survived long. Philco had announced the original swivel-screen Predicta in the summer of 1958 and discontinued the entire concept — Predicta, Mastercraft, and the Deluxe companions alike — by the end of 1960, just two model years later. A few forces converged to kill it:

It was rushed to market. Philco pulled designers from across the company to hit an aggressive timeline, and the engineering underneath the striking cabinetry wasn't given the same runway as the styling. The catalogue itself is almost unintentionally revealing here: its own features section boasts that the new "Cool Chassis" design "beats the heat, the major cause of all TV failures" — effectively admitting, in its own sales copy, what was about to become the line's biggest liability.

Heat and reliability problems persisted anyway. The Predicta's swivel tubes and densely packed cabinets ran hotter than Philco's marketing promised, and the custom-built, shortened "SF" picture tubes needed for the low-profile swivel design proved considerably more failure-prone than the conventional tubes used across the rest of the industry. Warranty repairs piled up fast.

Color television was already changing the conversation. Predicta, Mastercraft, and Deluxe were all black-and-white technology, arriving just as RCA and others were pushing color sets as the future of the living room. A "TV of Tomorrow" built around a monochrome tube had a much shorter runway than Philco had hoped.

The costs never balanced out. Between the custom tooling for so many distinct cabinet designs, the expensive Directa wireless remote system, and mounting warranty claims, the Predicta family is widely believed to have never turned a profit for Philco. The company slid toward bankruptcy within two years of the line's cancellation and was acquired by the Ford Motor Company in 1961, later operating as Philco-Ford.

In the end, the sheer scale of this lineup — 22 distinct cabinets across three tiers, each with its own finish options and floor-standing personality — was as much a symptom of the problem as anything else. Philco was trying to out-style its way past a shaky technical foundation, and for two brief years in 1959 and 1960, it very nearly worked.

More of the Forgotten Predicta Line from 1960





More of the Mastercraft Line from 1960*







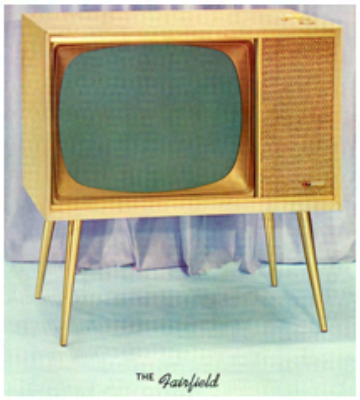


** Mastercraft collection were NOT Predictas or Predicta-Badged but clearly used Predicta components (the 10L30/10L40 "Cool Chassis).*

Item In The TEXAS BROADCAST MUSEUM

More of the Philco Deluxe Line from 1960









The Rest of the Philco Deluxe Line from 1960**



The Wickford



The Hollandale



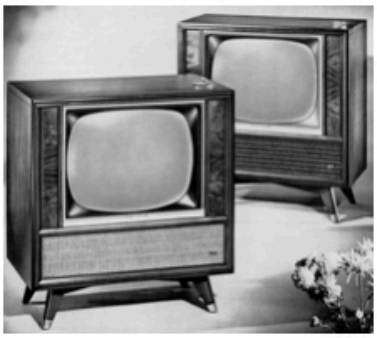
The Winfield



The Brookhaven



The Danbury



The Hemington

*** NOTE** - *The Philco Deluxe Collection were NOT Predictas or Predicta-Badged and typically had the non-Predicta "Cool Chassis" layouts (such as the 10L31 or highly related baseline 10L series variations).*

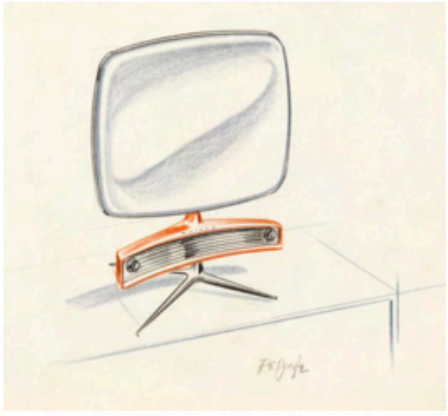


WAS A COLOR PREDICTA EVER IMAGINED?

There's no solid evidence that Philco planned a production color Predicta between 1958 and 1961.

What is documented is that Philco continued exploring new Predicta styling. A circa-1959 concept by Philco designer Robert E. Doyle survives in the Cooper Hewitt/Smithsonian collection, and the museum says Doyle was assigned to develop a more "mellow" successor after the 1958–59 models disappointed commercially. A prototype/mock-up was apparently made, but the concept never entered production, and the Predicta project ended around 1960.

Importantly, the surviving documentation identifies the Predicta as a black-and-white product. Philco's own 1959 company publication describes the engineering behind the Predicta—



Robert E. Doyle's 1959 Concept Drawing (See page 14 for more details)

particularly its special shallow 21-inch "SF" monochrome picture tube—but says nothing about a color version. The Early Television Museum likewise describes the production run as the 1959 and 1960 model years.

That said, the idea of a color Predicta would have made considerable strategic sense. Color television was becoming the premium technology just as Philco was trying to sell an expensive, futuristic black-and-white receiver. Retrospective accounts specifically identify the arrival of color as one of the factors working against the Predicta.

The major obstacle was probably the CRT itself. The Predicta's appearance depended on Philco's unusually shallow monochrome CRT mounted in that distinctive separate pod. A late-1950s color CRT was considerably deeper, heavier, more complicated and generated substantially more heat. Simply putting a contemporary 21-inch color tube into the existing Predicta head would have destroyed much of the slim "floating screen" effect—and created a formidable weight problem for the swivel support.

So, one should separate the historical claim into three levels:

Documented: Philco developed additional Predicta concepts and prototypes around 1959, including Doyle's proposed successor.

Plausible: Philco engineers/designers almost certainly understood that color represented the future and may have discussed how Predicta-type styling could eventually accommodate it.

Not presently documented: A Philco engineering prototype, model number, dealer announcement, or production proposal for an actual color Predicta during 1958–61.



The Imagined 1964 Philco Princess Color

Philco had already sold a genuine 21-inch color television before the Predicta. In 1955 it built the 22D5100/22D5102, using the TV-123 chassis and a conventional RCA-type 21AXP22 shadow-mask color CRT. The Early Television Museum says roughly 500 TV-123 sets were made before Philco discontinued that version; surviving examples are known today. The TV-123 was a very complex receiver, with separate chroma circuitry, convergence controls and the large round 21AXP22 color picture tube.

That means when Philco began developing the Predicta around 1957–58, the company absolutely possessed working color-TV receiver technology. The problem was that the color hardware did not fit the Predicta concept very well.

The original Predicta depended heavily on Philco's special shallow monochrome tube. Philco's own 1959 corporate history says that the Predicta was made possible by its shorter 21-inch "SF," or semi-flat, picture tube, together with a specially contoured chassis. That shallow tube is a major reason the Predicta screen housing could look so thin and detached from the electronics.

A contemporary 1957 technical survey makes the contrast particularly clear. It reports that Philco's production color receivers were then using the 21AXP22 shadow-mask CRT, while Philco's more experimental beam-indexing "Apple" color tube had been returned to the laboratory. A 21AXP22 was a huge, deep, heavy round tube. Putting one into a Predicta-style swivel head would have resulted in something much bulkier than the familiar Predicta.

The most fascinating part of the research is Philco's Apple color system. Philco was trying to develop a fundamentally different color CRT that used phosphor stripes and electronic beam indexing rather than the conventional three-gun shadow-mask arrangement. Philco technical literature describes a 21-inch rectangular Apple tube with red, green and blue vertical phosphor stripes and a special indexing system for determining where the electron beam was crossing the screen.

The Imagined 1962-63 Tandem Replacement and Pedsetal Color Evolution (bottom)





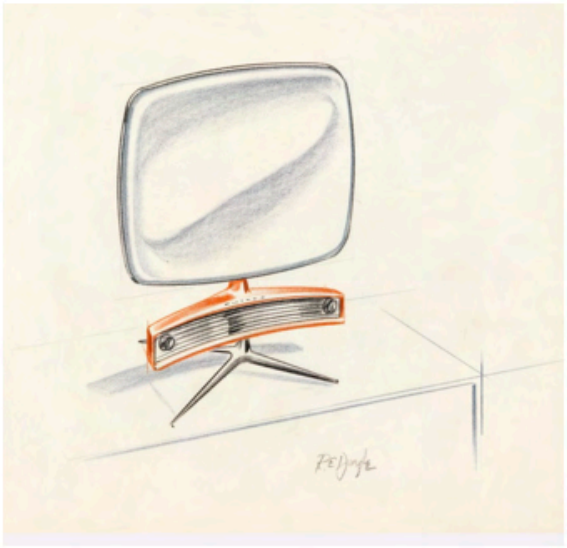
That technology is much more relevant to a hypothetical color Predicta than Philco's conventional TV-123 chassis.

Philco did not abandon beam-index color when the Predicta appeared. Its patent trail shows that development continued directly through the Predicta years. Philco filed a patent application for "Color television receiver indexing apparatus" on March 6, 1959, right in the middle of Predicta production. Another Philco indexing-system application has a priority date of November 23, 1959, and was subsequently filed internationally.

THE 1961+ FUTURE OF PREDICTA COLOR?

THE SURVIVING PREDICTA CONCEPT DRAWING

There is a particularly important surviving drawing.



This is Robert E. Doyle's approximately 1959 Predicta concept sketch, now held by the Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum. The Smithsonian identifies Doyle as both designer and draftsman and Philco as the client. His concept sketch (right) for the famed Philco Predicta television (1958–60), stands out for its red tuner that recalls the dashboard of a 1950s automobile. Doyle was a member of the Predicta design team that was led by Herbert Gosweiler and Severin Jonassen.

This is not simply fan artwork or a later reinterpretation. It is an actual Philco industrial-design study.

Doyle joined Philco in late 1957 and worked as part of the Predicta design group. Cooper Hewitt says that after the 1958–59 Predictas failed to perform as hoped commercially, Doyle was asked to develop a more "mellow" version. His concept shows a large rounded rectangular screen floating over a very thin horizontal tuner/control unit supported on a tripod-like stand.

Even more significant is what Cooper Hewitt reports about a lost or inaccessible photograph from Doyle's personal archive: Doyle and a colleague are shown in front of the concept drawing while Doyle holds a prototype mock-up of the plastic housing. In other words, this design got beyond the pencil-sketch stage into at least a three-dimensional styling mock-up.

The Smithsonian dates the sketch to about 1959 and identifies the medium as colored pencil on tracing paper. But there is a crucial limitation: nothing in the Smithsonian documentation describes this design as color television.

That distinction matters.

COULD DOYLE'S 1959 CONCEPT NEVERTHELESS HAVE BEEN INTENDED FOR FUTURE COLOR?

Possibly—but that would presently be inference rather than history. The drawing is intriguing because the screen housing is visually larger and rounder than some production Predictas. But Doyle reportedly envisioned an injection-molded plastic tube housing, tuner and base, technology that Cooper Hewitt describes as ahead of what could practically be manufactured in that form at the time.

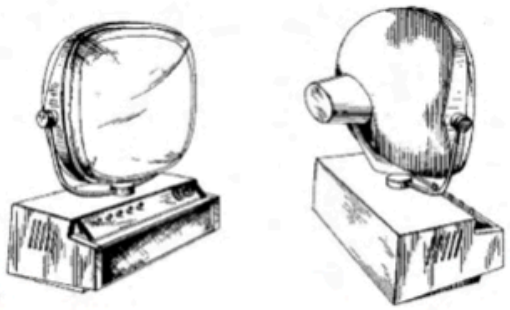


FIG. 1.

FIG. 2.

1958 Patent #183779 - The Predicta that never was - shows that Philco had a lot of concepts that never made it to production.

So, I would not label the Doyle design a "color Predicta concept."

It is better described ASCA documented second-generation Predicta styling study that happened to be designed while Philco was simultaneously continuing major color-TV research. That is a much stronger historical claim because it can be supported.

THE POSSIBILITY THAT IS MOST INTERESTING

There are really two possible ways Philco could theoretically have produced a color Predicta circa 1959–61.

The first would have been to use the existing 21AXP22 shadow-mask CRT. Technically that would have been straightforward because Philco already knew how to build a receiver around it. Aesthetically, however, it would have been terrible for the Predicta concept. The tube would have required a very deep housing, and the swivel structure would have needed to carry far more weight.

The second would have been the Apple beam-index tube. That is where the alternate history becomes genuinely plausible.

Philco's Apple was a 21-inch rectangular color CRT, rather than the big round color tubes dominating the market. It was specifically intended to simplify some of the complications of conventional color reproduction by using a single beam/indexing approach.

If Philco could have successfully commercialized Apple around 1959–61, it would have given its industrial designers a much more suitable basis for a futuristic color television. And we now know Philco was still filing beam-index patents in 1959, while Predictas were being sold.

That coincidence is tantalizing, but the physical proof is thus far elusive. Specifically, after searching Smithsonian/Cooper Hewitt records, period technical literature, surviving-set databases, Philco publications and Philco's patent trail, none of the following were found:

- a photograph labeled "Color Predicta"
- a Philco color Predicta chassis number
- a dealer announcement for a color Predicta
- a Predicta fitted with an Apple tube
- a Predicta fitted with a 21AXP22
- a Philco engineering drawing explicitly combining the Apple system and Predicta cabinet
- a surviving color Predicta prototype
- a statement from Doyle, Jonassen, Whipple or another Predicta designer saying that color was planned for the line

That doesn't prove no one at Philco ever discussed it. In a company developing both technologies simultaneously, informal consideration would be entirely believable. But there's an enormous difference between that and an actual product program.



THE CLIFF EDGE:

Why Digital Radio Doesn't Fade, It Falls

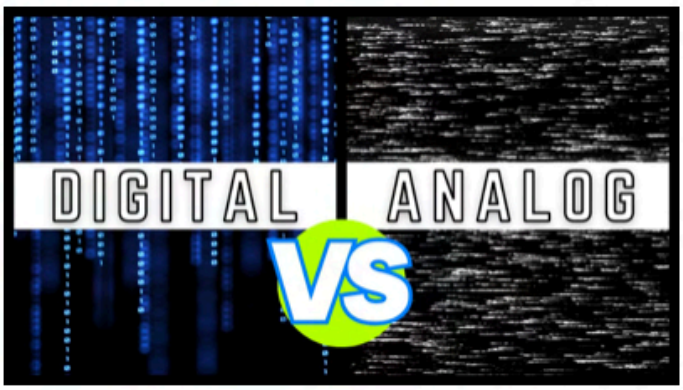
The Difference between Digital and Analog Radio

Drive far enough from an analog FM station and you know the drill: the music gets a little hissy, a little crackly, and eventually dissolves into static soup. Push a digital station (like DAB or HD Radio) to the same distance, and something stranger happens — it sounds crystal clear right up until it doesn't. One moment you have a perfect broadcast; a hundred meters later, silence or a stutter. Radio engineers call this the "cliff effect," and it comes down to a fundamental difference in what these two technologies are actually sending through the air.

Analog: A Wave That Wears Down Gracefully

Analog FM works by shaping a continuous radio wave to mirror the sound wave of the audio itself — louder passages produce bigger swings in the signal, quieter one's smaller swings. Your radio's job is to reconstruct the original waveform from whatever it receives.

The problem is that "whatever it receives" always includes noise: interference from other electronics, atmospheric static, weak signal strength from distance. Because the receiver can't tell your intended waveform apart from the noise riding along with it, it just reproduces both. Close to the tower, the signal is so much stronger than the noise that you barely notice it. Farther away, the signal weakens while the background noise stays roughly constant, so the ratio between them shifts. The static doesn't appear out of nowhere — it was always there, just drowned out. This is why analog degradation is gradual: a slow, audible slide from clean to garbled as the signal-to-noise ratio erodes.



Digital: Numbers Either Arrive or They Don't

Digital radio takes a completely different approach. Instead of sculpting a wave to match the sound, it converts audio into a stream of binary data. — a long sequence of

1s and 0s—and transmits that. Your receiver's job isn't to reconstruct a delicate waveform; it's to correctly identify each bit as either a 1 or a 0.

This is a much more forgiving task, up to a point. Digital systems also use error correction — extra redundant data that lets the receiver detect and fix small numbers of mistakes, essentially reconstructing bits that got corrupted in transit. So, as you move away from the transmitter and noise creeps in, the receiver keeps quietly correcting errors behind the scenes. You hear nothing different at all. This is the flat top of the cliff.

But error correction has limits. Once the noise overwhelms the signal enough that too many bits arrive corrupted, the correction system can no longer keep up. And here's the key: there's no "partially correct" data the way there's "partially audible" static. A packet of digital audio either decodes successfully, or it doesn't. When it doesn't, the receiver has nothing usable to play — so it mutes, skips, or freezes rather than producing a degraded but recognizable version of the sound.

Perfect, Then Nothing

That's the whole story of the cliff effect: digital error correction hides small amounts of noise so effectively that you get no warning at all, until the noise crosses a threshold and the whole signal collapses at once. Analog has no such safety net, but that weakness is also why it degrades so predictably — you can always tell when you're approaching the edge of a station's range, because it tells you, one crackle at a time.

Both systems have real trade-offs. Digital delivers a cleaner listening experience within its service area but demands a stronger backup plan (or a bigger antenna) at the margins. Analog will never sound pristine at a distance, but it will always sound like something — a signal fading into the horizon rather than dropping off the edge of it.

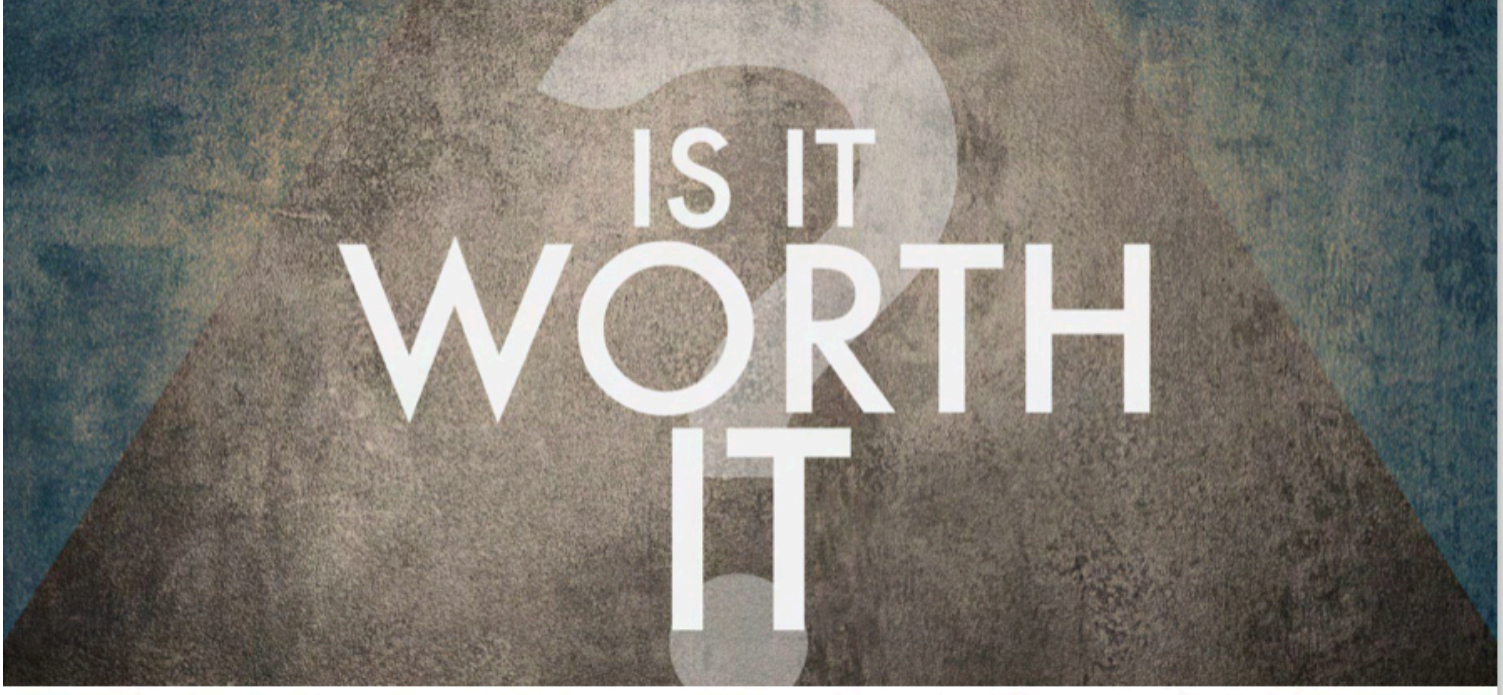


Analog Radio

Item In The
TEXAS
BROADCAST
MUSEUM



Digital Radio



ebay

TESTED ANTIQUE 1940S ANDREA RADIO VK12 "SHARP FOCUS" TELEVISION



Item Description from the Seller

The collectible 1940s Andrea Radio VK12 is a vintage television radio with a unique "Sharp Focus" design, embodying the Art Deco style popular in that era. Made in the United States, this collectible piece reflects the craftsmanship and aesthetics of the mid-20th century.

Perfect for collectors of vintage radio, TV, and phone memorabilia, the Andrea Radio VK12 offers a glimpse into the design and technology of the past, making it a valuable addition to any collection.

ASKING PRICE: $1,795

Appraiser's thoughts: This 1948 TV is in rough condition cosmetically, and while it does have a raster on the CRT, it clearly has not been fully restored. Because Frank A. D. Andrea's post-WWII "Sharp Focus" television-radios are rare, high-quality, and feature the historical "Channel 1" VHF tuner, they are highly sought after by vintage TV collectors. An Andrea VK12 (specifically the T-VK12 table model or C-VK12 console model) is generally worth between $150 (unrestored) and $600 (fully restored). This one is likely worth about $400-$500.

VERDICT: THREE-FOLD TOO HIGH

it's NOT worth it!

IS IT WORTH IT?

Industrial Artifacts

1950 SALESMAN SAMPLE DAHLBERG COIN-OP PILLOW RADIO IN CASE



Item Description from the Seller

This mid-century Dahlberg coin-op radio was produced for hotels, hospitals, and motels offering timed, private listening through the brand's signature pillow speaker. Housed in a glossy cream Bakelite shell with streamline detailing, the unit features the classic dome-top coin mechanism labeled "Deposit 1 to 5 Dimes", red dial and volume wheels, and a horizontal station readout typical of postwar commercial radios.

When activated, the built-in timer powered the radio for a set period, sending sound exclusively through the small under-pillow transducer-an early solution for quiet, individualized audio in shared or sensitive environments.

This example retains its matching Dahlberg pillow speaker and comes stored in a fitted carrying case, an uncommon configuration compared to wall-mount units. The plastics display expected surface wear from age and use, and the case shows patina to its hardware and covering. This piece is likely a salesman sample radio given its' carrying case. The case has overall dimensions of 15"W x 7"D x 11"H.

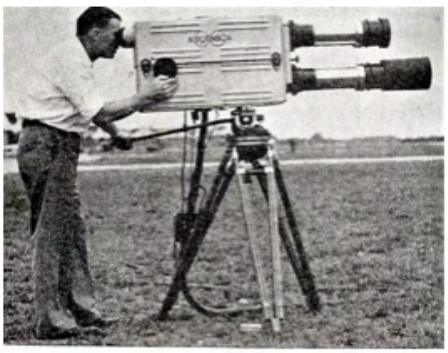
ASKING PRICE: $2,790

Appraiser's thoughts: A fully restored, working 1950s Dahlberg Coin-Operated Pillow Radio typically ranges in value from $180-$330, depending on cosmetic condition and whether it includes the original pillow speaker and working coin keys. However, this is a rare portable Salesman's Sample version housed in fitted carrying cases with accessories and can list significantly higher. This unit is in good, restored condition, with the desired case and is a salesman's sample. A price of $2,000 or more is not unreasonable, and this one is priced at a retail store (order it online) and is likely within the range of a market (not bargain) price.

VERDICT: MARKET PRICED FAIR DEAL

FUN FACTS ABOUT BROADCAST TECHNOLOGY

EARLY PORTABLE FIELD CAMERA DEVELOPMENT: Outside broadcasts needed enormous vans with generators, control equipment, and multiple crew members. Weather was a major problem—cameras couldn't operate in rain and extreme temperatures affected their performance



WHERE'S THE TAPE? Unlike consumer cameras, broadcast cameras typically do not record footage internally; they send their feeds via cable to a central control station for live switching and recording.

WHERE DID YOU COME FROM? Stereo LP records debuted in 1948. The first 12-inch, 33 ⅓ RPM "Long Play" (LP) record was produced by CBS in 1948, allowing for full albums on a single disc.



BUDDY, CAN YOU SPARE A QUARTER (MILLION)? The most expensive turntable: The Goldmund Reference turntable is often cited as one of the most expensive ever made, priced at over a quarter of a million dollars.

MIC CHECK: In the early days of microphones, performers had to stay very close to microphones (6-12 inches) for adequate pickup. Moving away from the mic created dramatic volume drops that couldn't be easily compensated for.



COMING BACK FOR MORE: The first animated series made specifically for TV was "Crusader Rabbit." The original episodes about a cowboy rabbit and his sidekick, Ragland T. Tiger, began airing in 1950 and were only four minutes long. In typical cartoon form, each episode ended on a cliffhanger, ensuring audiences would return for more.

MUSEUM OF THE MONTH

MEDIA TECH MUSEUM IN KANSAS

The Media Tech Museum is dedicated to the art, history, technique, and technology of the electronic communications devices in many forms. The Museum is a one-of-a-kind destination for teenagers to Seniors, and is a cultural collection of electronic communication devices from the telegraph machine to our cell phones. From BELL TO CELL.

It's an extensive collection that will evoke the fascination of people of all ages. The is collection of multiple analog and digital formats through exhibits and educational displays. By preserving technological devices from the 1860's to 2020, it fosters appreciation for technological advancements in telephones, film,
television, photography, and radio, analog and digital recording devices. Personally, and professionally.

We will host events that stimulate the curiosity of people of all ages and give guided tours to senior living communities, high school and colleges, ensuring the history of communication is accessible to all. Bartle Hall convention center attendees and many other organizations, clubs and groups.

The Media Tech Museum is a cultural collection of electronic communication devices and the evolution of multiple formats through exhibits and educational displays. Located in the Crossroads Arts District in downtown Kansas City, Missouri, Media Tech Museum is a space for exploring innovation, preserving history, and engaging audiences with the dynamic world of media and technology, both in our personal and professional lives.

mediatechmuseum.com







900+
ARTIFACTS IN THE COLLECTION

146+ yrs
MEDIA TECHNOLOGY

50+ yrs
COLLECTING ARTIFACTS

The Media Tech Museum
1600 Baltimore Ave.
Kansas City, Mo. 64108

HELP US PRESERVE HISTORY



Help us Make a Difference - The Importance of Monetary Donations

Monetary donations to help us pay the bills at a not-profit are welcome and necessary. While we own the building and real estate for the Texas Broadcast Museum, but insurance, utilities and maintenance are expenses that you can help us fund. The modest admission fees and occasional facility rental of the Museum for special events is not enough to cover the annual operating expense. You'd be surprised how much even small monetary donations can help. To donate financially, please click the button below to contribute via PayPal.



DONATE - PAYPAL

Donate Your Vintage Broadcast Equipment

The museum is bursting at the seams with exhibits and treasures these days, and that is a good thing. But we must be selective on what we accept now, as without the floor space to display everything, we rue the thought of your treasures sitting in storage. However, we are always on the lookout for this item:

The Holy Grail

We will always be looking for both an authentic pre-World War II television set and a real mechanical television set (before 1930). If you donate one of these items, we will make you a lifetime member with free entrance for life, and a guided, hands-on tour of the Museum with up to 20 of your friends.

TAX EXEMPT 501 (c)(3) DONATE TODAY

Chalk Hill Educational Media, Inc - dba "Texas Broadcast Museum" is an IRS recognized 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization