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Phil Brown
returns with a new
studio recording
spanning 5 years
in La La Land, Texas,
Colorado, New Mexico and
Germany

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vintage Marshall 8x10
cabs,
the Hiwatt,
Squire 7-string,
Strats with Lollar Specials,
Jeff Beck signature,
the Black Mesa,
Clements,
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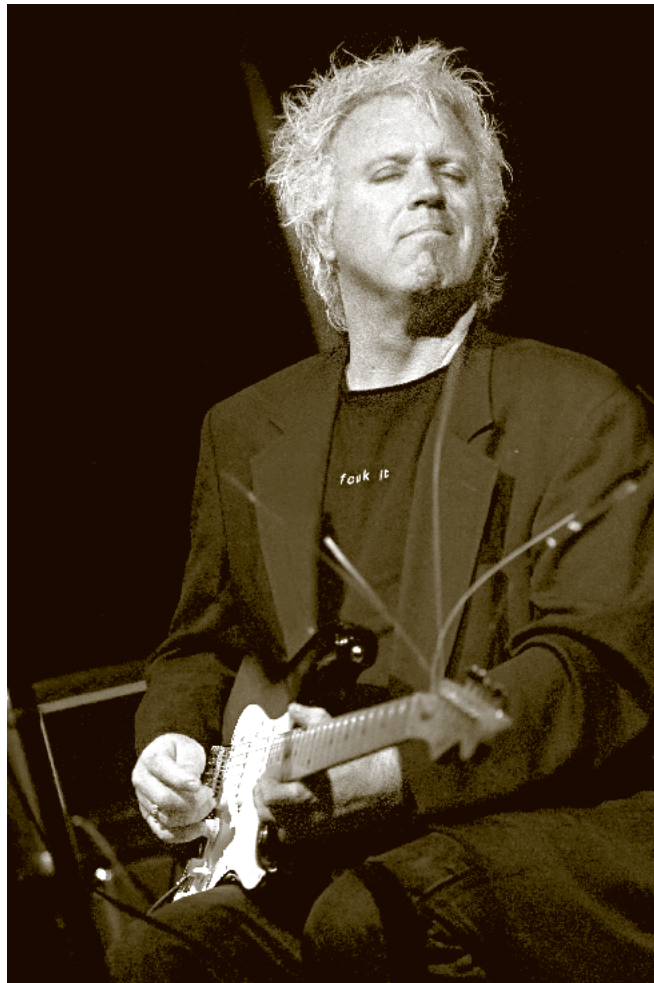
the ToneQuest

The Player's Guide to Ultimate Tone **Report™**
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Imagine This

"If you want to change your life, change your mind." – Phil Brown

The title of this edition of the *Quest* is also the title of Phil Brown's latest recording, and since Phil has provided the featured cover story for our September visit, borrowing his title kinda makes sense. There is just one little problem... Having free-fallen into the midst of Brown's latest one



hour and ten minute opus la chitarra now for a few weeks at appropriately high decibel levels, we're not at all sure that you can indeed 'imagine this.' Nah, we're being too kind at the expense of honesty. You can't. Not yet, anyway. Our job is to shake you loose from the somnambulant torpor of late summer; an unfortunate by-product of eeking out a livable living in the USA while perhaps snatching a week or two off. Livin' in the USA... It didn't used to feel quite so hard, did it? How did Sting put it? Too much information...

We like to believe that we thrive on multi-tasking and being perpetually connected, but we really don't, because when we are connected, we really aren't. It's a seductive, addictive illusion. So, imagine what, you ask? Well, who knows? Just use your imagination. No, no, no, it's not in that zombie maker you're

clutching... You can't paint a picture or write a song with a Droid, an iPhone, an Apple or a PC. Shapes, colors and melodies can only be conceived in solitaire using the hardware that sits between your ears. Unlike acquiring another vapidly stupid cry for help tattoo, it came with your body as original equipment, a bundled hard drive packed with billions of neurons of unfathomable capacity and potential, driven by the most elegant software in the universe – the imagination. Imagine that.

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Think for a moment of all your favorite artists from decades past that couldn't seem to write a bad song and now can't seem to write much of anything. We'll excuse the dead. Phil Brown is the opposite – the guy that has been playing guitar the entire time that some other players were making it, while Phil never quite did, commercially speaking, but now at the age of 60 he is still writing and

playing music that captures the fresh energy and infectious melodic hooks that made our heroes worthy of the name. Lots of people can play the guitar, but damn few can write a song that clings to your soul. You could say that Phil is peaking now, eyes closed in blissful concentration with a wide open, hyperactive mind working overtime while everyone else in the room is coming down, going down slow. How can this be? Many 'mature' guitarists are happy to spend their sunset years cuddled with a sugar momma, wistfully strumming songs on the porch for the dog (present company excluded, of course). To quote a line in Brown's "It's Good To Be Back", 'I am much older now, but my heart is still young...' Perhaps an older Phil is peaking now because he still can't conceive of anything else to do but write and play music, and there are few laurels upon which he can comfortably rest and grow complacent. We've known Phil for a while now, and we can promise you that there have been plenty of years in which he has lived on what some people spend in a month. Less, even. Doesn't matter. Music matters. What do I have to do to play? Where do I need to go to play, Lord? Imagine that. We're not going to suggest that every song on his new recording will complete you, but there are more than a few that do it for us, spanning breezy, jazzy R&B, funk, '60s British pop, and hallucinogenic rockers that sound as if they could have been salvaged from a midnight session with Hendrix, Beck, Keith Moon, Jack Bruce and Jack Nitsche circa 1967. The point is, Phil Brown is an unusually gifted guitarist, writer and



arranger who also happens to play things on the guitar that no one else seems to have heard, yet it all sounds familiar, as if the music were pouring from your speakers from a distant, mystical place once visited in a dream or a past life, when suddenly a voice panned left beneath a 7-string B-tuned guitar whispers, "Imagine this!" And suddenly, you can.



We were first introduced to Phil's music through the ToneQuest post office box. He called one day completely out of no where, introduced himself

and asked if he would listen to his music. How he found us is another mystery, but we have learned over the years that certain kinds of players do – mostly curious and open-minded types like you, for instance. Why would people that believe they already know everything have any need for a ToneQuest? Phil was living in an apartment in Santa Monica, recording bits and pieces of songs on his Roland VS-880 8-track digital machine using drum loops to get a beat. The fully produced, studio CD he sent us as an introduction was titled "Apaches from Paris: Cruel Inventions" and it still stands as one of the most uniquely captivating recordings we have ever heard by a guitarist, although that description would be selling it short by a mile. Phil is also blessed with a tremendous voice, but his greatest asset is not so easily described. He simply hears and writes melodic hooks that don't let go, influenced by his personal heroes from the '60s like Hendrix, Clapton, Jack Bruce and Leslie West, yes, but a different kind of sophisticated R&B and jazz influence emerges as well. It's hard to categorize someone with such a slippery, well-tuned ear, and equally difficult to describe in print.

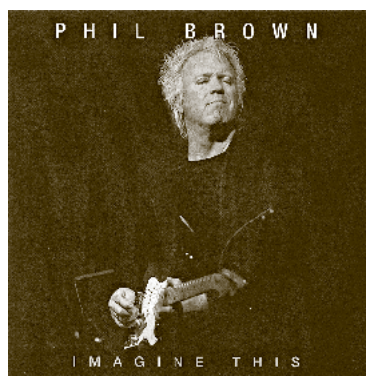


Phil's original cover story appeared in the May 2004 issue of TQR, and copies of "Cruel Inventions" flew out of here for the next year while a track titled "It's All Over Now" auto-

played on our web site. We would receive e-mails, sometimes anonymous, sometimes not, asking, "Who is the guitar player playing on your web site?" They had to know, because they had heard nothing like it. Ever. In 2008 Phil released "The Jimi Project" – a compilation of original Hendrix songs

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recorded with an A team consisting of Yellowjackets bassist Jimmy Haslip and Gary Novak (Chick Corea) on drums, mixed in New York by Phil and Frank Filipetti. Who could possibly do justice to Jimi at this point? Brown, Haslip and Novak did better than that, lending their brilliant comprehension of Hendrix' blues, R&B and acid influences to songs that honor and reveal his true roots. The Jimi Project is a classic work that will rock your world, and an inspiring clinic for musicians and tonefreaks.



"Imagine This" simply further validates Phil Brown's talent. As Buddy Whittington remarked after hearing "Cruel Inventions", 'I don't understand why this guy isn't a household name.' Imagine that. We can't explain why the music world hasn't gone Ga Ga over

Phil, either, except for the obvious fact that the masses do not generally crave, comprehend or value quality, and the masses must be served. On the other hand, the absence of press in the music media these days can be worn as a badge of honor. Nonetheless, "Imagine This" is indeed getting airplay on independent radio stations, and there was a time when "Paper Doll" would have been eating up the charts. So here's what you must do... Log on to www.philbrownrocks.com, crank up yer speakers, and enjoy the entire album streamed as we offer our personal introduction to Phil Brown. Perhaps there are advantages to being connected afterall...

ToneQuest Phil Brown

TQR: How did you record your guitars on this project, Phil?

As usual, all the guitar tracks were recorded on my old Roland VS-880 and later transferred either to Digital Performer or ProTools, and I used my Ampeg Lee Jackson VL-1002 amp on most of the tracks.

TQR: With the usual 8x10 Marshall cabinet?

I actually used five different speaker cabinets on this record. I have two different 8x10 Marshall cabinets – the original 1970 cab that Robin Trower used on Bridge of Sighs, and another one from '71. I always place them on the floor facing the ceil-



ing when I record because it affects the way the speaker functions as it moves through its excursion in a good way that I can hear. I used the 1970 8x10 cab for "Blessings in Disguise" but I also used my old '65 Marshall 4x12 cabinet loaded with Celestion 65s from 1980 and Eminence Private Jacks, and I just love that speaker. They really got it right. I also really like the Eminence Ramrod 10s a lot.

I also used a 1972 Hiwatt 4x12 cabinet that had supposedly been left in Florida by The Who in '72. Nothing sound likes that cabinet... It weighs about 90 pounds and I use the same combination of two '80s Celestion 65s and two Eminence Private Jacks in it.

TQR: We love the Ramrod 10s, too, and the Private Jack 12 is their take on a Greenback. Are you using the distortion channel #2 on the Ampeg VL-1002? Lee mentioned that he had built the clean channel to replicate the sound of a blackface Twin...



Yes, I use the distortion channel and the clean #1 channel sounds like

glass when I play through it. I used it with the low guitar on "All Roads Lead to Rome" – a Squire 7-string made in China with 7-pole humbucking pickups that Jason Lollar made for me. I often use the distortion channel on the VL-1002, but it's got overdrive more than distortion, and I'm looking for a tone. I'm looking at the amp right now and I have the Preamp volume set at around 1 o'clock and the Gain volume at about 2 o'clock, and then I back off on the Preamp volume and add the distortion because it creates this ambient sound you just can't get unless you turn the guitar up, and I don't record at high volume levels. The guitar is never turned all the way up. That's also why I use a 100 watt amp, because I need the headroom.

TQR: Which Lollar Strat set are you using?

Specials. I probably get a brighter sound because I don't play with a pick. I'm kind of clawing the strings, and when you don't turn the guitar all the way up, the Q of the amp isn't crushing the preamp and those special transformers, so it doesn't sound so compressed. I also used a Black Mesa guitar

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that was built by a guy I went to junior high school with, Clint Daugherty. He makes these incredible guitars out of really exceptional wood.

TQR: You also mentioned a 7-string tuned down?

Yeah, tuned down to B. It sounds unreal (laughing). It's a trick playing it because you have that extra bass string, but it's really something to hear. While I'm thinking about it, let me be sure to thank Curt Mangan for his excellent guitar strings. Where I would be without him I don't know.

TQR: What other guitars did you use?



There is a builder I met in Florida, Jeff Clements, who puts parts together and uses really interesting and unique wood types.

So I have what is sort of a copy of the Jeff Beck Strat, lime green, rosewood fingerboard and those roller nuts that you can't get anymore. It has a titanium bridge that adds a luster to the sound that you don't get from normal steel.

TQR: I would think titanium wouldn't be good for everything, though...

It's not good for everything, no, but I used it for the solo on "Bridgitte's Blues" with the Octavia that Lee Jackson built for me.

TQR: Lee built an Octavia for you with a few twists?

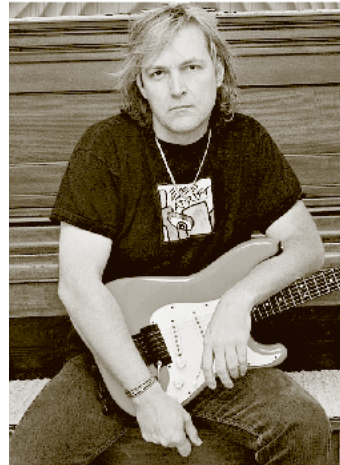


Yeah, of course. He added a switch with Tone and Mode settings, so you get a wave form or an analog form. You know how on "Purple Haze" you hear that high octave at the end of the song? I could never tell if that was the tape speeding up or what... Well,

Lee's Octavia gives you that incandescent middle frequency effect that you normally don't get in an Octavia. It has a Volume and Distortion control, but the two switches are Tone and Mode. You can add a low sweep to it or middle, and it

sounds like it's out of phase, but it's not. I've had it for years and as far as I know it's the only one he ever made.

Editor's Note: We asked Lee to explain:



Like a lot of my earlier stuff that started with something Phil wanted, the coolest stuff did turn into products, and his custom octave divider did turn into the AtomSmasher.

Because Phil wanted a pedal that did both the Jimi Hendrix style Octave divider and the Jeff Beck Octave divider sound, it was a challenge to get both sounds in one pedal because both guitarists used different pedals with completely different circuits. Jimi used the Tycobrahe Octavia and Jeff used the Colorsound. So I figured out a way to get them both in the pedal, and that is what the extra switches are for. I didn't copy the circuits – I copied the theories behind the designs.

I remember when Phil came by the shop to pick it up, he played through it creating the most amazing Jimi and Jeff riffs, and I realized I had nailed what he was looking for. I'm always concerned when I design new products, because what I love might not be what others love. Like the old adage "the best sounding speaker cabinet is the one you design yourself". So to see him happy made all the hours of the work worth it. And yes, I would make them again if there was an interest. I still have circuit boards and parts in stock for the AtomSmasher.

Phil: I also used a Distortion pedal made by the guy that builds the Zen Drive, Alphonso Hermida. It's just called Distortion. It has a Volume control, Gain, Tone, and then his deal, which is a Voicing control that allows you to move the peaks around within different frequency ranges. It's just an



extraordinary piece of gear. I also used Lee Jackson's Gain Booster – man, do I love that pedal because it doesn't change your tone.

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of distortion out of it, but you do so in combination with gain provided from the amp...

Well, yeah, it's a boost... I also used another pedal he built that is a compressor for guitar, and I experimented with a Zen Drive 2 that has a 12AX7 tube in it.

TQR: What about modulation effects like delay?

I use the same Line 6 DL4 – the green one, and I still use the old Boss Chorus Ensemble CE-1. Lee added a High Sensitivity control that gives me a little more high end ambience. I



also use a compressor for clean sounds made by Jim West, a physicist from Los Alamos who has

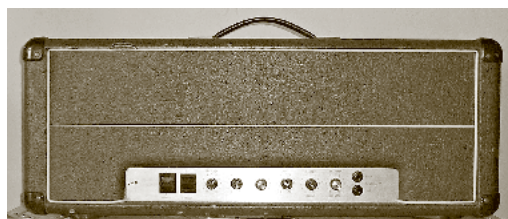
this company called Bonepicker, and the compressor is called a Bone Squeeze. Oh, and Electro-Harmonix makes this thing called a MicroPog, which is a polyphonic octave generator. You can play chords with it an octave below with a 12-string thing on top. These are all just custom things I use for different songs.

TQR: Did you add more effects after the guitar tracks were dumped into ProTools or Digital Performer, or were all the effects there when you cut the original tracks on your Roland VS-880?

With the exception of a few things, yes, the effects were there when I cut the tracks. I didn't use an amp when I cut "Crossroads." I cut that with a red Line 6 Pod, and the bass went through a Line 6 amp with an SVT setting played on an Ibanez 5-string bass with Bartolini pickups, and I still use my little DBX 164 compressor when I record. But listen... There are ADA converters in that Roland VS-880 that you just can't simulate or replicate in the digital world today, and I still use a cheap AKG 1000 microphone for vocals. I have some expensive mikes, but if it ain't broke... I also used one vintage amp that Lee worked on – a 1978 Marshall JMP MK2. It's old and

Lee replaced the caps, but it really roars at about 120 watts.

TQR: Does it have 6550s in it?



It does. I used it on "Paper Doll" for the rhythm

tracks and the solo was played through the Ampeg VL-1002. For guitars on that song I played a cheap Les Paul Studio loaded with Lollar humbuckers. One thing about Lee Jackson – he designs amps that have a sound within a sound. That song was kind of a happy accident. The solo was one take, the vocal was one take, and the rhythm guitar has those Joe Pass descending chords in the middle of a rock tune that really work well. This was my take where I wanted to pay homage to Cream and The Who. I mean, Ginger Baker wrote "Those Were the Days" with Martin Barre, and then "Deserted Cities of the Heart" was also written by them. Stupid me, I always thought they were written by Jack Bruce and Pete Brown. And then as far as The Who, Pete Townshend has just always written amazing, powerful music on the guitar. So "Paper Doll" was my nod to them, and I was scared to death because I'm used to playing with a lot of vibrato from the trem arm on the Strat, and I was thinking, "God, I hope I can pull this off." (laughing)

TQR: Well, you did better than just pull it off. That's an amazing song, utterly classic, melodic '60s at its best with great guitars and singing, only better, because it's all yours. You own it. Who played the drums?

That's Mark Clark, a drummer from Santa Fe who is really well known and a great player. I had a simple loop that I had played with that song live and there is a little roll with a bar of 6 in it because I like to be a little challenged. I just asked him to give me a Tony Williams thing on it and he did a fantastic job. Pat Mastelotto, who played with King Crimson and Mister Mister also played a lot on this record, and when he heard Mark's playing on "Paper Doll" he said, "I can't beat that, Phil." Of course Mark and Pat are great friends now.

I should also mention that there are some keyboard lines played by Mark Jordan. He was the musical director for Tom Jones, played with Van Morrison on "Tupelo Honey" and "Moon Dance" and he was with Bonnie Raitt for 15 years and helped her get her Grammy. He was listening to "Paper Doll" and asked if he could do something on keyboards like The Who would do but not sequenced. Very cool. What were some of the other songs you liked?

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TQR: “Trouble” – an acoustic confessional with brilliant lyrics that reminded me of something you would play if you were reduced to singing on the street.

(Laughing) Oh, yeah, that was live. That was Mark and a stand up bass player from Santa Fe. I used my little 1949 Gibson B29 Gene Autrey guitar and the slide parts were done on the 7-string with a slide I was given back in the ‘70s at the Toad in Boston, and I used the Line 6 green pedal on a setting called ‘automatic volume echo.’ That Line 6 is probably the work-house of all the stuff I use.

TQR: “Love Will Find a Way” is also a favorite because I always loved the scratch version of that you did.



That is a B-tuned Mexican Strat with Lollars and the 7-string guitar, and on top of that is my infamous pink guitar put together by this guy named Michael Mollenhauer. He said, “We need to build you a Philocaster.” He got one of those big fat Strat necks from AllParts, and there is a tremolo on it that was designed by a guy named Don Ramsey. It basically sits on two roller bearings so when you hit the dive bomb there is an equal amount of tension going down. It’s made from solid steel and it is an amazing tremolo rig.

TQR: What did you do on “All Roads Lead to Rome”? You have to listen to that opus more than once to get everything that’s going on the way you have woven percussion, strings, vocals, keyboards and layered guitars together. It slides off the earth...

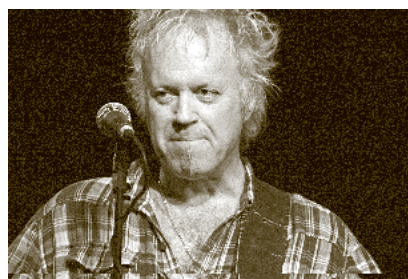
The strength of similar tonalities. The beginning piece that’s orchestrated is a combination of orchestras from Hamburg and Vienna sampled into individual notes and then performed as single lines built up on a Yamaha Workstation keyboard into the orchestral movement you hear throughout the piece. Joannie Mitchell’s great record where she did all those old standards also influenced me... It’s such an amazing thing to hear the music from those days, like Nelson Riddle and the way those guys arranged. I wanted the lyric to be conversational. It’s about religion, but not in the obvious and familiar sense, but how that the things you believe in should expand you, and not limit you. There is the 7-string in there for a kind



of U2 The Edge jangly part. He is such a brilliant guitarist... But I want to go beyond A/F#m/D/E – the typical 4 chord 8 bar phrasings we have all grown up with and outgrown. I want to be challenged, and you’ll notice that there are chords within chords on that song. “Paper Doll” is that way, too. As a 60 year old man, come on. I wanna go

to different places and take you with me. We should talk about “Imagine This.” There are five drummers on that track, and the great bassist Rich Neville... Pat Mastelotto who I mentioned before, Jerry Marada plays on the verses, and Larry Thompson, who was with Otis Redding, didn’t get on the plane with him, wound up with James Brown for 5 years and then Dizzy Gillespie for 13 years. He’s also the drummer featured on “Crossroads” and “California Zen.” Another drummer is Brian Austin, who I met in Austin, and the engineer’s wunderkind 13 year old son, Royce Quintus, who plays on the choruses. And then, best of all, the engineer who helped me put all of this together is Walter Quintus. He has worked with everyone from Miles Davis to Jack Bruce. I met Walter 20 years ago, he was formerly a violinist who won the International Violin Championship in Moscow when he was a teenager and became the concert master of the Hamburg Symphony before he became such an amazing engineer and producer.

TQR: Whoa... We just went from Dizzy Gillespie to Miles Davis, Otis Redding, Jack Bruce, Moscow and Hamburg... Let’s back up the truck for a minute, please. Where does Walter live now?



In Germany. It took me about 5 years to put this record together, and I worked on it in Los Angeles, Santa Fe, Albuquerque, Denver, Austin and

Zerkal, Germany. I had demos of all these songs on a disc, but it all needed to be re-recorded. I replicated some of the keyboard stuff and drum loops from the demos, the guitars weren’t that much of a challenge, but the vocals were because over the years I’ve been become known as a singer. You know, I’ve spent ten thousand f’ing hours slowing records down

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from 33 1/3 rpm to 16 to learn how to play the guitar, and now I'm a singer (laughing). Anyway, I was in Germany for 6 weeks and we mixed 5 songs in January of this year with Walter. On "One Teaspoon at a Time" I had originally simulated the sound of a French horn, which is very regal sounding. Walter went out and got one of the premier French horn players in Europe who lives in Zerkal. He teaches 50 students a week and plays in the Hamburg Symphonic Orchestra. So he's playing the lines and if you listen very carefully you can hear vibrato, but it isn't vibrato... At one point we stopped the session and I asked Walter if he would ask Hans, who didn't speak English, why he was putting vibrato on the horn, and he said that he wasn't trying to, but that he was nervous, because he had never played such an immaculate arrangement in his life, with so much space. We all laughed, but it was so nice to hear a classical musician feel that way about a rock song. I'll never forget it. **to**

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Lee Jackson

We asked Lee Jackson to describe what first inspired him to begin working with guitar amplifiers, and how Phil's Beast of Luv, the Ampeg VL-1002 came to be. You can still find them occasionally, by the way, for about \$600...

It all started when I was playing guitar in bands on the Sunset Strip in Hollywood, and I was looking for more out of my equipment. At the time, the best thing you could do was get a master volume installed in your amp, and either turn it toward the wall or put a moving pad over the top of the cab to keep from melting the first two rows of fans in the audience. I started modifying my own equipment, which motivated me to look around and see what other people were doing, and that led me to Paul Rivera, who worked at Valley Arts at the time. Later on I wound up working at Rivera Research when Paul moved his business to his home. Paul and I both eventually worked for Fender at the same time.



After working at Fender I started Metaltronix. I had an idea for a new kind of amplifier and Fender was not into making 'over the top' amps. They have a very 'safe' design philosophy, where you must design an amp in which you can turn all the controls to 10 and not have any feedback or uncontrollable, face-peeling results. But rock & roll is also very much all about uncontrollabil-

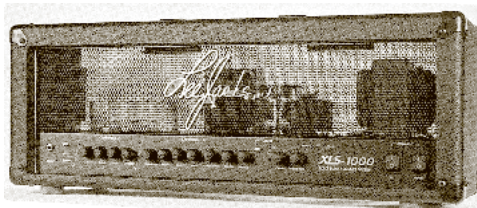
ity... Can anyone say Jimi Hendrix?



So I first started modifying existing amplifiers like Marshalls Fenders and Hiwatts to get the sound I was hearing in my head. I developed the Metaltronix GP-1000 preamp to serve the growing market of players that were using rack systems in the '80s, and that is why there are two versions of the GP-1000 in existence. One is fashioned after modifications I had done with Fender amps, and the

second version captured my Marshall mods. With Metaltronix I was working with just about every guitar player coming out of Hollywood at the time, including George Lynch, Steve Vai, Eddie Van Halen, Warren Di Martini, Randy Rhoades, Akira Takasaki, and the list goes on. I was very lucky to work with and design for some of the best players in the world.

What I found out very quickly however, was that I was promoting Marshall's name more than my own. I'd go see an artist and there would be rows of Marshalls on stage, but no



one would ever know that I had modified all of them. So from that

realization grew the idea that I needed to create my own amp – the Metaltronix M-1000

The M-1000 reflected my desire to build an amp that was completely over the top, super high gain, and extremely LOUD. We made thousands of M-1000's for players all over the world, until there was a problem with the investment team that caused me to close Metaltronix at the end of the '90s. Within weeks of closing Metaltronix, I got a call from the president of Ampeg asking if I would like to fly out to the factory in St Louis and talk with them. They had just finished building a large high tech design facility, and they were interested in Ampeg moving to the forefront in guitar amp design.

Of course they were very well known for the SVT bass amp design, but they really needed some new guitar amps. They felt that if I would design their new guitar amps, they could populate the entire stage instead of just one corner. They were a great group of guys – smart, and they would give me full run of design and engineering, so how could I refuse?

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The first amp I designed was the VL-1001, a single channel amp with no reverb (I really do not like reverb in amps, they are great to play in your bedroom, but useless live). Spring reverbs are acoustic, so when your drummer starts beating his drums, you will find a lot of his sound coming through your amp,

which is not desirable, I promise...

The next amp was the VL-1002. We found that players wanted at least two channels, and Ampeg was adamant that they wanted it to have reverb. So I worked on adding reverb without wrecking the original tone. Both the VL-1001 and VL-1002 were designed to be over the top in sound and gain, and that is why I designed the Tachometer setting on the Pre-amp and Gain controls. I wanted to design an amp that would work for every kind of musical expression and guitar type. If you had a low output guitar, you could turn the Preamp and Gain up, and if you had a high output guitar, you could trim them back. The concept of the two controls was to pre-set as much distortion as you wanted that would be immediately accessible when you needed it. The Preamp control set input sensitivity, which enabled you to set the clean/distortion threshold, allowing you to roll your guitar volume down and get the amp to cleanup, and roll it up for more distortion. Of course, if you peg this control it is hard to get the preamp to cleanup when you turn your guitar volume down. This control really sets the feel and touch of the amp, while the Gain control just gives you more of everything.



Over the years I had discovered that tube types (6550, EL-34, 6L6 etc.) made such a huge difference in the sound of the amp that I made sure I designed transformers that would work with all of them. Back in the Metaltronix days I built the first amp to feature switchable bias, where you could change your tubes from EL-34s to 6550s with a click of a

switch. I retained that feature in the VL series because I felt it was so useful.

Here's a funny side story... After I finished the VL-1002, I get a call in my office from Jimmy Page. He had received his VL-1002 and loved it, but he said he had blown it up when he shifted the bias setting from 6550s to EL-34s. He thought the switch merely switched the sound of the amp from EL-34s to 6550s... When he switched the Bias switch with the 6550's shipped with it to the EL-34 bias, which was much lower than the bias for 6550s, his amp went into thermal runaway and melted the output tubes. If the amp had been loaded with EL-34s, it would have just sounded really mussy instead of melting, because a high bias only brings down the current. I explained it to him and sent him a new amp. Duh!?

Because Ampeg gave me free reign to do anything I wanted, I bought the finest German components, including paper wrapped transformers. At the time everyone in the industry had moved to plastic bobbins, and I found out that a small company in Korea had bought a bunch of the old transformer winding machines. When I called them, they didn't think I'd be interested because they only had the old machines, and I told them I'd be on the next available flight to Korea. They had exactly what I wanted – paper bobbins. It is funny how so many boutique amp companies have finally discovered that paper bobbins are the key to a great sound. I just figured it out 30 years earlier. I have always been known for building the highest quality products possible at an affordable price, and that is why I never produced small runs of amplifiers. It drives me nuts to see companies selling amps for thousands of dollars either because they are making small (expensive) production runs with a high parts cost, or they are making a ridiculous profit... You can make a high quality amp in large numbers if it is designed right, and with large production runs your parts costs are extremely low. None of our amps have ever sold for more than \$1500.00 retail, and they are easily built to the same standard as any \$4000 amp they have been compared to. The VL-Series comfortably fit that model, built with the best parts available and never more than \$1500. I was a working artist for many years and I know how important a buck is. My design philosophy has always been to look forward rather than back, learning new technologies and implementing them in my designs. My latest is a Recording Preamp that is 100% analog and sounds amazing plugged directly into a recording board or DAW. If you are constantly thinking that the only product that is worth anything is 50 years old, you're missing the chance to create new possibilities.

On Phil Brown:

Phil came to me early on with his Marshalls and Hiwatts. He was in a band with Katy Sagal (Married with Children), which was an awesome band, and Katy is a great singer.

-continued-



(I laugh every time I see an old episode of Married with Children knowing what an awesome artist she is, and I think few know it.) Phil was looking for a sound to complement his playing style, and I had several amps in my sound room that he could play and choose what he liked. Phil is an amazing player with an incredible range of styles and influences, and he fuses

them all together to create his own unique style and sound. Phil moved with me over the years, first using modified amps, to using the Metaltronix M-1000s. When I designed the Ampeg VL series, he really loved the VL-1002 because not only did the hot channel of the VL-1002 produce the distortion he loved, but it also had the clean channel that I fashioned after a blackface Twin, and that was the clean sound he was looking for. After the VL amps he started using my Lee Jackson XLS Series, which is the next level of design following the Ampeg VL Series. **To**

www.leejackson.com

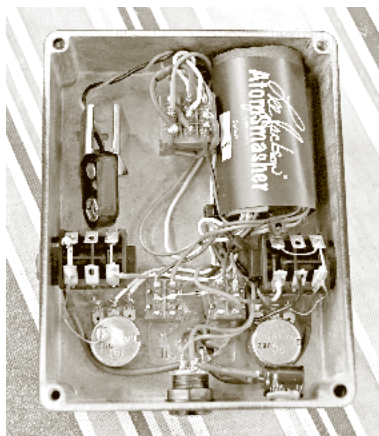
REVIEW

Lee Jackson AtomSmasher



We'll begin our adventure with the AtomSmasher by quoting directly from our review notes... "Results achieved are in direct proportion to the player's skill, touch and quality of listening." Translation: the AtomSmasher is fully capable of delivering jaw-dropping

sonic effects that will infect your bandmates and audience with lasting memories of your majestic ascension into the rare air of legends, or, in the wrong hands, it will quickly end the gig. As the name implies, this is no kiddie toy, but for those who are up to the challenge, the rewards are great indeed. First and foremost, the AtomSmasher is a distortion pedal



of immense range and intensity. How intense? If you could hear our '66 Deluxe Reverb with the volume set on 3-4 with our '60 Strat you would be deceived into perceiving a much, much bigger, angrier amp, and certainly not a Fender. In addition to the distortion levels set with

the Volume and Push controls, Tone is managed with a toggle switch that renders two settings – 'up' being full and deep, and 'down' more scooped, clear and defined, accentuating upper midrange and treble (better for humbuckers). The Wave control changes dynamic response to pick attack, depth, string definition, and how the octaves unfurl as you hoist your freak flag ever higher. Imagine single notes singing and sustaining with white-hot intensity as harmonic octaves rise and fall in the style of Jimi. As you move through different positions on the neck from low to higher notes and frets, alternating harmonics and octave intervals seem to twist off the strings as you play with an intensity and volume controlled by your left and right hand technique. For example, if you are adept at using the edge of a pick or your finger tips to pop pinch harmonics off single strings, deep bends, or bending the B and G or E, B and G strings together and raking the strings with the edge of the pick, octaves spool off the harmonics you are creating with your hands. A fine example of this can be found on "Machine Gun" from the live *Band of Gypsies* recording where Hendrix used a Roger Mayer Octavia and a UniVibe to stunning effect.

The AtomSmasher responds differently to a wide range of settings, and it is important to experiment with both moderate and extreme, setting the Volume below 12 o'clock with the Push control above 12 o'clock, and the reverse. Phil Brown also emphasized that it was important to try using the AtomSmasher with the volume on your guitar set below 10, in fact, he reminded us that he *never* plays with his volume up all the way. Try playing with the guitar volume on 7-8 – you'll hear the difference, especially with effects and when playing with gain and distortion. We also discovered some amazing sounds with Volume and Push set below 12 o'clock playing full chords with fingerpicked transitions. Magic. Natural overtones created by chords splitting off into octaves will put you on a path traveled by few, and a trip to be relished for its ability to inspire new songs. Should you assume that the AtomSmasher is only appropriate for soloing, you'll be missing a lot. It is essential to patiently experiment with different pickups, pickup combinations

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and volume and tone settings on the guitar, running through alternate settings on the pedal, while also varying volume and pick attack. No, you wouldn't want to feature this sound on every song, but used wisely for the proper effect, the AtomSmasher makes a bold statement like no other pedal on the planet, and the good news is that Lee Jackson will make more! *Smash forth...TQ*

REVIEW

RedPlate Amps

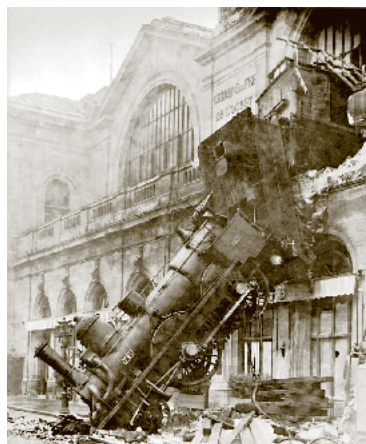
We told you this was coming... Yes, when readers ask us to review something, we do our best to respond, and thanks to Red Plate founder Henry Heistand, we received two Red Plates for review. We'll start this episode by telling you that Henry Heistand appears to be a very clever fellow who is not working in the shadows of the past, which is to say that he builds feature-rich amplifiers that in no way pretend to be vintage knock-offs. Play a Red Plate and you're firmly treading in the present, rather than mining tone out of a dusty box built by a dead man (or woman – sorry Lily). And that's fine. There is certainly ample space in these pages for the living, and Red Plates are in fact very lively tools indeed. We asked Henry to give us a glimpse into his background and motivation, and our reviews of the Tweedy Verb and BlackVerb follow...

TQR: How and when did you initially become involved in electronics and amplification?

Starting around age 12 playing to the radio and jamming with friends, my first build attempt was a speaker cabinet made out of 1/2 plywood and covered with yellow carpeting. It had a leopard (spotted) grill cloth and contained 6 speakers recycled from various old TV's and Stereo's. My first real amp repair was replacing a screen resistor in a Fender Bassman in 1970. I went to college for a year and then played guitar full time until 1979 when I attended electronics school (they still taught tubes). To pay for school I got a part time job at a church organ repair shop that had a "Combo" repair department and still played in club bands on weekends. Attending electronics school in the morning and repairing gear in the afternoons was a great way to instantly translate the classroom to the real world. Compared to tube TV's and tube broadcast transmitters, the tube musical amplifiers were relatively simple. Besides Fender and Marshall, tube amps by Sunn, Ampeg, Gibson, West, Park, Hiwatt, Sound City and all of the Supro/Kalamazoo/Dan Electro stuff. If I only had a nickel for every good tube I tossed in the trash back then. Many of those same companies had solid state amps too along with companies like Acoustic, Kustom, Peavey, Randall, Lab, SG and Roland. It seems like the '70s was the golden era of guitar amp designers. Although most tube amps have a similar topology, the

differences between brands in those days ranged from truly innovative to laughable. On a few occasions when a solid state repair would come in that was totally fubar, one of the church organ repair guys would show me how to design a new circuit right over the top of the problem area, teaching me the value of having a few simple circuit designs at the ready for emergencies. In late '82 I got a career job in the computer field, and by '86 purchased the part of the church organ repair shop that repaired the "combo" gear. The new company was named Music Mechanix and kept the warranty contracts with all the majors for amps, keyboards and P.A's.

TQR: As you became more familiar with various amp designs of the past, what were your favorites and why?



Thinking back to the tonal memories accumulated during those years spent repairing amps, the most musical of all of them were probably the early '60s Fender tube amps. In addition to repairs, Music Mechanix did all the popular mods of the day (anyone remember the original Train-

Wreck Mod pages for Fenders?), many times we would redo almost everything inside but keeping the exterior unchanged. Most of my playing back then was strictly radio cover songs so the quest was always to find the one amp that could imitate everything. Music Mechanix was continuing the warranty station status from the previous owner (established in the '50s) so every original manufacturer's amplifier schematic ever released was available as a reference source, residing in 16 large file cabinets. On the side, I kept a little notebook of circuits and mods of interest to use as building blocks.

TQR: Can you describe the lasting impressions created by your study of and experiences with classic amps



that have most affected your own design philosophy and preferences?

As a service to friends and regular customers Music Mechanix would take a classic amp (at the time it was

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easy to get something like a used Bassman for \$100) and do Frankenstein amps that were Fender this, Marshall that with a sprinkling of Vox and Ampeg thrown in depending on the customer needs. On the weekends I was doing gigs using a pair of modified Ampeg VT-40 s in stereo until somehow I ended up with a Mesa Boogie S.O.B. that had a really innovative phase inverter section controlled by a "LIMIT" knob. A bizarre variation of a PI section's constant current source, the circuit was not in the RCA manual or on any other schematic. It sparked something in me and from then on I started doing creative amp mods that were not copies of things I had seen on schematics.

TQR: When did you first begin to sketch out the concept for RedPlate amps, and what did you want to accomplish that would be unique and different?



I had always been fascinated with "sleeper" amps that looked small but sounded big. After

selling the repair business I used my free time to do a lot of experimentation on point to point builds in a Fender Champ sized chassis, eventually working out how to do a 7 tube, large transformer build in a Champ chassis without noise or oscillation. My favorite guitar tones were the recorded sounds of the Mesa Boogie/Dumble ODS type amps (even before I even knew what a Dumble amp was). A clean singing tone with a hint of character that sustains and blooms is my idea of the ultimate tone and the design goal of all the RedPlate models.

TQR: Can you briefly describe the unique features and differences among the current line of Red Plate models?

RedPlate probably has too many models because we treat the sections as modular building blocks. We start with one of 3



chassis sizes: CH1. 15" width w/four 9 pin sockets and two 8 pin sockets,

transformers up to the 50 watt size.

CH2. 17" width w/six 9 pin sockets and two 8 pin sockets, transformers up to 80 watt size.

CH3. 19" width w/five 9 pin sockets and four 8 pin sockets, transformers up to 160 watts.

Then we use different combinations of the building blocks with the only limitation being the number of controls (physical knob space) and the number of tube sockets available. Building blocks currently in use:

BB1. PREAMP1 - Tweed - A single tone knob preamp (Tweed Style).

BB2. PREAMP2 - BlackFace - A Treble, Middle, Bass Pre-amp (BlackFace style).

BB3. DRIVE1 - A three knob overdrive section (Gain, Drive, and Level).

BB4. DRIVE2 - A six knob overdrive section (Gain, Drive, Level, Treble, Middle and Bass).

BB5. REVERB - A single knob tube reverb with medium decay tank.

BB6. EFFECTS LOOP - A fully buffered serial loop, return level is the master volume.

BB7. PHASE INVERTER - Standard Long Tail pair, very similar to the early '60s designs.

BB8. POWER AMP #1 - 40 watts cathode bias (6L6GC).

BB9. POWER AMP #2 - 50 watts fixed bias / 40 watts cathode bias (6L6GC).

BB10. POWER AMP #3 - 80 watts fixed bias (KT-88).

BB11. POWER AMP #4 - 45 watts fixed bias / 18 watts cathode bias (6V6GTA).

BB12. POWER AMP #5 - 100 watts fixed/ 50 watts fixed (6L6GC).

TQR: Both of our review amps are loaded with Warehouse speakers from Kentucky, which we have reviewed before. How extensive are your evaluations of various speakers when creating a new model? Does the same process apply with transformers, tubes, or other components?



The current lineup is using the WGS Retro 30, WGS British Lead 80 and Eminence Swamp Thang speakers in the combo amps. The decision to use these was based on side by side comparisons

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with other brands (an ongoing process).

Tube selection is mostly based on reliability (as long as the tone is still there). The current production amps use Svetlana 6L6GC, SovTek 12AX7LP (PI tube), and Electro Harmonix 6V6GTA and 12AX7s (preamp).

Selecting individual signal path components is more difficult because side by side comparisons can be misleading (no 2 amps are exactly alike). The signal path in current production amps use PS series Orange Drops capacitors and carbon film resistors based on low noise and musical warmth in the tone. RedPlateAmps has a good relationship with Mercury Magnetics and like to use their transformers in most models.

TQR: How does the half power switch function in your amps, as well as the 'mode' control and various voicing controls?



Depending on the output section, 3 methods are used:

1. 6L6GC 100 watt/ 50 watt – The switch lifts two of the four tubes by 10k so they are

effectively out of the circuit yet the impedance selection is still valid.

2. 6V6GTA 45 watt/ 18 watt – Full power runs two of the tubes in cathode bias and two in fixed bias, the switch lifts the fixed bias tubes by 10k to effectively remove them without changing the output impedance.

3. 17 Watt (Hi/Lo power) – This switch just lowers the voltage to the phase inverter tube so the amp breaks up sooner. There are two different styles of mode switches. On the Tweed style preamps the 6 position mode regressively reduces midrange and preamp output to imitate a BlackFace style amp. On the BlackFace style preamp the 6 position mode switch



progressively fattens the midrange to imitate a Tweed style amp. Most of the models also include a Humbucking/Singlecoil switch to set the amount of bass gain in the input stage.

TQR: How much individual customization or voicing do you offer for specific models when working with an artist?

Unlimited customization is available, although most of the professionals that use RedPlateAmps are content playing standard models.

TQR: We noticed that you include the owner's name on the back panel, correct? A nice touch...

Yeah, the front and rear panels are done in-house, we could even put pictures of your dog on there.

TQR: What do you want to accomplish in the future? New models?

"Amps that sing" behind every guitar player! Going forward, curiosity and customer feedback will continue to drive the evolution of current designs and the development of new designs. For example, there will be a "shredder" amp in the near future (The ShredPlate) and possibly a bass amp. As RedPlate continues to gain name recognition with the music industry, models like the BlackVerb, MagicDust and TweedyVerb will hopefully be taken for granted as standard amplifier types. www.redplateamps.com

www.redplateamps.com

REVIEW

RedPlate Black Verb

The front and rear panels on the BlackVerb reveal an impressive array of controls, push/pull-knobs and switched pots. In fact, the printed operation guide includes a signal path diagram on the front page with a welcoming invitation to skip an in-depth review of the manual and just set all the knobs at 12 noon and play, which we did, consulting the manual as needed as we spent more time with the amp. So, is the BlackVerb too complicated for you 'plug & play guys? Not really, but the



control panel is best reviewed in sections. You're essentially working within a clean preamp circuit and a Drive section that includes Gain, Drive and Level controls for variable levels of distortion and

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overdriven tones, but there are still many more additional tweakable features lurking within...

The first control adjacent to the single front input jack is the miniature Bright switch toggle with the center position OFF, Down producing the sound of 'new strings' (an accurate description we might add), and Up rendering a brighter tone that will be familiar to those of you with a Fender blackface amp with bright switch. We usually use the bright switch to put a little extra shimmer and spank on humbucking pickups, or neck pickups on single coils.



The Volume control includes a pull switch to engage a midrange boost that increases upper mids.

The Middle control does what you'd expect, with a pull switch for a 'Deep' setting that scoops mids and boosts bass frequencies – an excellent change-up for clean tones. The bass control handles low end quite well, and it can be clicked OFF to be removed from the tone stack. Try that with a neck pickup and it produces the odd and very different EQ found in some old Valco and Gibson amps.

The Mode Selector is a 6-position rotary EQ switch that gradually produces a fatter, thicker tone as you rotate left to right from the 'Funk' setting, to 'Normal' and 'Fat' (tweed). All this pulling and turning may sound complicated, but you'll have it thoroughly digested in 5 minutes, and most importantly, these extra EQ controls expand the tonal capabilities of the BlackVerb in a clever and creative way that really is worth using and exploring. We have bitched about such bells and whistles on other amps having limited value, but no such questionable affectations plague the BlackVerb. Like we said, Henry is a clever fellow. On to the Drive section...



This is where you mine and manage overdriven tones and distortion. The Gain control can be bypassed by clicking fully left, otherwise, you're setting the amount of signal being sent to the first gain stage, which produces variable levels of

smooth growl and grunt. The Drive control further ramps up distortion through two gain stages, and a pull switch on the knob serves as an afterburner for maximum burn and rip. At this point you will be channeling Metallica at full husky, so hide the dog. The Level control sets the output volume for this section, resulting in a progressively bigger, thicker, bolder voice. Of course, the big selling point for the BlackVerb is how all of your clean, moderately busted up and filthy dirty tones can be deftly tweaked and the volume managed with the Volume and Master volume controls. At the full power setting, you really can get this thing to sound like a 100 watt high gain amp on '7' at low decibel levels suitable for home recording and friendlier sound pressure levels.

The reverb control is what it is, and you can turn it off fully left and it's out of the circuit. The Presence control is described as using "global negative feedback to remove low frequencies which frees up bandwidth for more midrange and highs," and it can also be turned off when rotated fully left. Frankly, the appeal of this control escaped us, but we can imagine how it might be useful in a live situation where you may want to avoid too much low end muddying up the mix with bass and drums. The Master volume works very well without producing the dreaded master volume/low volume faux zizzz when you're trying to light a fire at low volume levels.



One of our favorite features is the 50 watt/40 watt switch on the back panel that changes the bias from fixed to cathode for a completely different feel. With the 40 watt cathode biased setting you can also change the 6L6 output tubes to 6V6s,

transforming the Black Verb into an 18 watt cathode biased flame thrower, or bypass the Gain section for a more tweedy character and voice. The Hi/Lo power switch changes the voltage on the input stage and the threshold for clean headroom.

The back panel Smooth switch is just that, adding slight compression in the clean preamp, and the Humbucker/Single



Coil setting sets the amount of bass gain in the input stage, relieving you of perhaps resetting EQ when switching from single coils to humbuckers.

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Additional utilitarian features on the back panel include a handy bias adjust and test point, speaker impedance selector, main and extension speaker jacks, FX send and return, and footswitch jack. The footswitch gives you the capability to get in and out of the Tweed, Drive and Boost circuits. Tweed boosts upper mids while lifting the midrange control on the front panel for maximum push in the frequencies where the guitar really lives on stage. Drive engages the Drive feature, bypassing it when off at the footswitch. Boost makes everything sound bigger with a partial tone stack lift.



And now for the bottom line... It seems to us that the intention of the BlackVerb is to be as tonefully versatile as a 1x12 combo amp can possibly be whether you are playing small clubs, bigger rooms or wide open outdoor stages. You could play nothing but smooth, clean jazz through this amp without ever venturing into the gain stages and be perfectly happy. Or you could do nothing but feast off the considerable gain and distortion lurking in the heart of the BlackVerb and be equally happy. Most gigging musicians will want to range between such extremes living somewhere in the middle, and you can do that, too. Like most feature-rich amplifiers, you'll find certain favorite settings that will be revisited with specific guitars, and after a few days you'll have no trouble quickly accessing those settings, although the control panel is a bit difficult to read until you no longer need to read it at all.

The standard Warehouse Retro 30 speaker is a brighter version of the Veteran 30 we have favorably reviewed in the past. Given the considerable range of overdrive and distortion available in the BlackVerb, the Retro 30's clear, articulate character and exceptional capacity to handle low frequencies makes it an excellent choice for this amplifier. Even at extreme gain and drive settings, the BlackVerb produces a rich and musical burn that does not mask or obscure essential overtones and harmonics. The clean tones are equally strong, powerful and clear, and the amp will nimbly spill into overdrive played clean at higher volume levels that can be managed with the volume on the guitar. The BlackVerb impressed with its ability to embody many different styles of amplifiers in one compact box, limited only by your capacity for experimentation and your imagination. Imagine that.

REVIEW

TweedyVerb

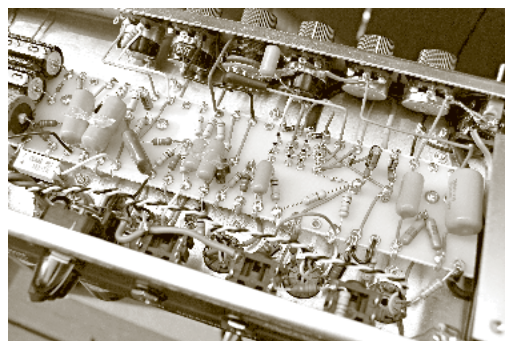


We were particularly anxious to experience the TweedyVerb because it seems to fit the power and volume requirements of so many players today, and it is a very straightforward and versatile 1x12 combo that is a breeze to hump to

the next gig. Got your attention there, didn't we? We finally figured out why vintage blackface Pro Reverb amps have remained relatively underpriced... just pick one up.

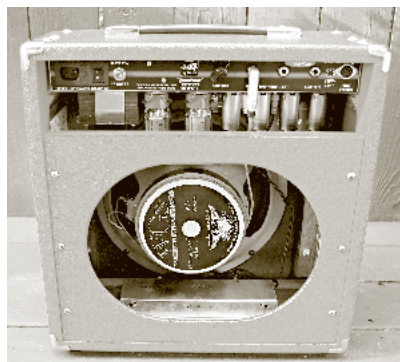
The TweedyVerb is a cathode biased dual 6L6 amp with reverb, loaded with an 80 watt Warehouse British Lead 12" speaker. You won't find a bad tone in this amp, and the controls are very intuitive, delivering outstanding 'blackface', 'brown' and 'tweed' tones via the 6-position Mode switch. The Bright switch is identical to the BlackVerb (you'll love the 'new strings' setting), with a single Volume control, simple Gain control, and a Tone control that can be clicked off fully left to bypass the tone stack for a very heavy and thick dose of overdriven tones with excellent dynamic feel and touch sensitivity. The spring reverb is good – delivered from an original new old stock Accutronics pan made in Cary, IL, and the Presence control is identical to the BlackVerb, using global negative feedback to remove low frequencies and emphasize mids and highs. It also seems to decrease volume and gain, best used in our opinion for clean tones.

The 40 watt/17 watt switch on the back panel changes the voltage on the phase inverter. We preferred the sound and girth of the 40 watt setting, which still allows plenty of room for managing volume and variable distortion with the gain and Volume controls, but the 17 watt setting is fine, too for



close quarters. 6V6 power tubes can also be used at this setting

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without re-biasing for lower power output and volume. A footswitch is included to access both the fat Tweed setting on the Mode switch on the fly, and the Boost function, which acts a tone stack bypass. Despite it's com-

compact size and relatively light weight, the TweedyVerb is a big-sounding amp that produces outstanding clean tones at usable stage volume, yet it can also be gradually pushed into the familiar sound of a Deluxe Reverb on '6' or even a vintage Marshall head at higher volume and gain settings. It's a right fair chameleon, this one.

The Warehouse 80 watt British Lead 12 gracefully handles the power output of the TweedyVerb with excellent clarity, solid bass, vivid mids and a sweet and chimey top end. Like the BlackVerb, the TweedyVerb offers the sound and feel of several distinctively different amps in one box via the Mode switch, and we liked them all, from the rough and tumble Tweed, the slightly less raucous, smooth upper mid voice of the Brown, and the more scooped, open and airy Black settings. Both RedPlate models reviewed here clearly share the same DNA, which is to say that they possess a remarkably rich and musical character, whether you choose to stroke big clean tones through them or dial up a tone that would make Billy Gibbons proud. Douse that light, and *Quest forth...to*

REVIEW

Magic Coils — Jim Weider's Big T

When a talented and experienced player like Jim Weider gives us a tip on something that has gotten him excited after, oh, four decades playing the guitar at his level, we listen...

TQR: What inspired you to work on a different design for the rhythm pickup in your '52 Tele? A lot of people would never consider swapping out an original pickup from a '52 blackguard unless it was broken...

I had always been frustrated with the sound of the original rhythm pickup in my '52 and I wanted to design a better one, so back in 1995 I got together with my guitar tech for many, many years, Dominic Ramos in Catskill, NY, and we designed a Tele rhythm pickup with longer magnets. We went back and forth for maybe a year, and we pretty much nailed what I



wanted, which was the rhythm pickup to be louder, with better clarity and a more open sound than a standard vintage Tele pickup. It was a definite improvement over any other Tele rhythm

pickup I have ever heard. Then a year or so ago I began to wonder if it couldn't be improved even more, so I contacted Lindy Fralin and described the pickup Dominic and I had originally come up with in '95. I didn't know anything about what kind of wire Dominic used originally, but I described to Lindy how the magnets were longer, and over a period of about 6 months he sent different prototypes to me. At first the magnets weren't long enough, so he sent another set, and then another with longer magnets and we finally came up with a rhythm pickup that sounds even better than the original – really big and clear with great definition on the bottom and top. We're calling it the Big T, Lindy winds it and it is being sold by Mike Piera at his Analogman site for \$125.00.

Review



Our review of the Big T rhythm pickup seemed like a good opportunity to reacquaint you with the Telecaster we have been playing and

using for reviews exclusively since 2004 – the Nash 'TQ' Tele painted in what we affectionately call 'pawnshop gold.' Prior to the Nash, we had owned a vintage '56 Telecaster bought stripped and fully resurrected in 1999, two Fender Custom Shop Nocasters (one modified for a Lollar 'Charlie Christian' rhythm pickup), an early '90s blonde Japanese Tele (excellent, bought for \$395 in 2001), and we have also bought and upgraded a couple of Mexican Teles, including a Classic model with Bigsby, all featured in past issues.

As we began developing our first cover story on Bill Nash in August 2004, we consulted with Bill on a review guitar to be featured in the article. At that time he was working solo in his basement, and he would develop unique web pages with detailed photographs for every guitar he built throughout the entire building stage. That's true 'custom' building, and

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yeah, he actually created a photographic record of each guitar until the computer time and extra hand-holding cut too deeply into his productivity. We wanted to do something that would

capture Bill's unique approach and vision, so we sat back one night and mentally sketched out the 'TQ Tele.' We would ask for a bound alder body heavily aged and painted gold with a big maple neck, rosewood slab, aged pickguard and Lollar Special Tele pickups. Our mental image of the guitar we had imagined was tantalizing enough, but Bill completely trumped it. We watched the TQ Tele take shape on the web pages Bill posted, from raw wood to paint and final assembly, but it wasn't until the guitar actually arrived that we were able to fully appreciate Nash's artistry and talent. Our Tele was like nothing we had ever seen or played – a truly exceptional 'one-off' that oozed a played-hard, classic character shouting 'Play me' with a visual statement that was half invitation, half threat. And yes, it was a player's player.

Nash's subtle hand could be found everywhere, from the slightly bent pickup selector switch, the heavy aging and fine checking of the finish, the yellowed binding, and the vintage water slide decal of a bronco buster just below the bridge. Granted, it was a Telecaster in style, but the Nash presented the appearance of an old Telecaster that had been gradually 'personalized' and played for decades until the guitar had completely taken on the identity of its owner, or in this case, the builder. There was a time when such old guitars could

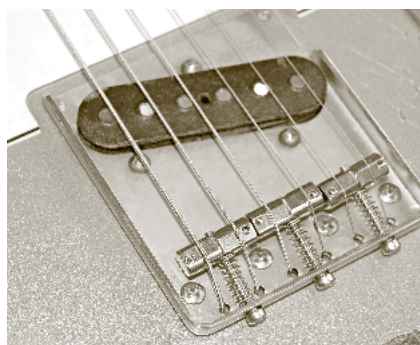


be found, transformed by players for whom the concept of 'originality' was a work in progress, and every one of those old guitars held the mystery of a life lived on the road. Whenever we crossed paths with such a guitar, we would hold the body close, bend down and breathe in the unmistakable dry, oily smell of a Chevy trunk, Lucky Strikes, tarnished steel, sweat, mildew and beer. The Nash Tele merely smelled of fresh nitro lacquer, but the visual vibe was all there in spades.

The TQ Tele also afforded us an introduction to Lollar 'Special' Tele pickups – fat, lush, strong and bright but lacking the harsh, shrill edge of a thin Telecaster, we routinely recommend these pickups to this very day without hesitation. If you're not sure what you want, you want the Lollar Specials, and the same can be said for the Strat set used by Phil Brown. There just isn't anything in them not to like, and they get along extremely well with all kinds of amps and effects.

"Hey, wait a minute... I thought you were reviewing the Big T?"

And you thought we forgot? This is the set up piece, Steinway... See, we know that you probably read reviews on all kinds of crap all the time. La, di, la, di, dah. In one ear and out the other. Oooh, a new pickup! What's it called? The Changeling... *"Play it and you will be changed..."* Of course you will. Well, how can you really know until you buy it? This is why we consult with people like Jim Weider, who is probably unwinding his Tele with Levon Helm somewhere right now. If you can't bring yourself to trust us, you might wanna trust Jim. There is a reason why the title of his ToneQuest cover read "The King of Tone." And should this all be news to you, may we suggest that you perhaps revisit our December 2002 cover story, and then log on to www.jimweider.com and acquire some of his music. It's the best way to appreciate an amazing player with a fine ear and a Phd. in tonefreak. We'll get to the Big T in a minute...



Over the years we have done a few things to the Nash Tele that may interest you... Aside from countless pickup swaps for review, we have played around quite

a bit with various saddles, and our current favorites are a compensated steel set from Bill Callaham. You might not want to use these on a super-spanky ash Tele, but for our alder Tele with rosewood fingerboard, the steel saddles really add another dimension of vivid harmonic textures and tone. The all-important bridge plate has also been replaced with a Callaham... The microphonic character of the Telecaster bridge assembly makes the bridge plate a key contributor to the tone of your bridge pickup, and we hear the difference in enhanced harmonics. We also use a vintage style paper-in-oil .05mf tone cap from Slider – the exceptional Australian pickup winder we profiled a few years ago. We recently went back to a stock 3-way switch from a 4-way, simply because we grew tired of modifying neck pickups we received for review by

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adding an additional ground wire for the 4-way rig. We also recently replaced the pots with John Sprung's AstroGlide pots – 250K CTS that he personally and painstakingly modifies to be super smooth and easy rolling with a perfect taper for flawless volume swells and control. That's about it – the Nash has remained otherwise as received, now loaded with a Jim Rolph bridge pickup and the star of tonight's show... the Big T.



As brilliant as Leo Fender was, the standard neck pickup on the Telecaster has always been a bit of a sleeper with a curiously unspectacular,

muted tone. Back in the day when Tele players were playing country western through tweed amps it was good enough to get by for the some things, but as music changed, the Tele rhythm pickup kinda got left behind. Who keeps the stock Nocaster neck pickup wiring for that pinched, nasally tone? No one we know. You often see Teles opened up for humbuckers, which is just an OK sound for us. Others have tried mini-buckers (better), P90s (better) and Strat pickups in the neck position, but let's face it, getting someone to carve a new hole in your Telecaster is a poor strategy. What if you don't like the new pickup you just planted in that new hole? Plug it up and dig another one? Nah, that ain't it.



The Big T solves all that mess in our opinion, because as Jim described, it produces a much bigger sound that matches the bridge in volume and tone, with exceptional presence

and clarity on the treble strings, and equally fine clarity and definition on the wound strings. It's a big, lush, colorful pickup that sounds like it belongs in a Telecaster – a vast improvement over a stock rhythm pickup that can fully keep up with the bridge in volume, presence, tone and attitude. Lindy Fralin has also thoughtfully included a second black ground wire, insuring that the Big T can be wired in phase with any bridge pickup you may use, plus hum-canceling when both pickups are used. The only thing we haven't confirmed is whether or not an 'aged' cover is available for those who don't have the time to age their own naturally. In all respects, the Big T is the Tele player's dream, effectively opening up the other half of the guitar literally and figuratively. Get yours now. **T**

www.analogman.com

www.jimweider.com

www.partsisparts.com (AstroGlide pots)

www.callahamguitars.com

On Cheese, Trout and...

Confessions of a Crackhead



Once you've tasted authentic Parmigiano-Reggiano fully aged for two years, inspected and stamped by the Consorzio Parmigiano-Reggiano, going back to 'parmesan' in the shaker can is a revolting indignity. Truly, no comparison can be made between the two – Reggiano being the 'King of Cheese', which is a damn serious appellation considering the

source (Italians), while the powdery stink foot American version was originally created as a condiment for Chef Boy-ardee ravioli in the can, coveted by gimcrack trailer chefs, hobos and fly fishermen who spend their weekends chasing trophy trout in catch-and-release mountain streams. If your fishin' rig doesn't include a sharp blade, peanut oil, corn flour, cayenne pepper sauce and a 10 inch cast iron pan, that ain't fishin', and you cannot make a respectable Alfredo sauce with anything but Parmigiano-Reggiano. Yes, it's \$14.00 a pound, and worth every penny. Still, plenty of folks will dust their pizza with the stink foot, either because they don't care, don't know any better, or they are too cheap to spoil themselves with one of the finest aromatic indulgences created by man, which is, in many respects, analogous to buying guitar pickups.

We shared a laugh with a reader who called recently when the conversation turned to pickups – vintage Gibson humbuckers, specifically. When we mentioned that we had just bought an early 'patent number sticker' Gibson humbucker from late '61



or '62 on eBay, he logically asked how we could possibly know what we were getting? *"With absolute certainty? You don't."* Knowing that our reader happened to be a former New York City cop, we suggested that buying PAF or early patent number pickups from unfamiliar sources was not unlike being given a room number at the Chelsea Hotel to score drugs in the '70s. You might get what you came for, you might get something that

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resembled what you came for but wasn't, or you might get robbed and be given nothing at all but a good scare and a chance to live another day. If you recall, the latter was exactly what happened to us during our first 'PAF buy' on eBay, although we were eventually made whole by the PayPal police.



So... having been burned once already at the eBay Hotel, so to speak, why would we ever consider returning to make another buy? It's pretty simple. When it comes to pickups, we be crackheads. Sure, we kicked the habit for

over two years, hardly thinking about PAFs after binging on them throughout 2008 as described in the April '08 Spanish Castle issue. Armed with an extraordinary working knowledge of all the subtle variances in early Gibson humbuckers we had noted in the 6 Spanish Castle bursts, the dozen or so PAFs and patent number sticker pickups we had been sent by Kim LaFleur, plus a pristine set of T-Tops with original covers, we were quite satisfied with evaluating contemporary humbuckers for review in these pages. In case you've forgotten, we concluded that most of them failed to approach the exceptional clarity, depth and 'bloom' of vintage pickups, with Jim Rolph and Tom Holmes taking the prize for getting close in terms of clarity, harmonic depth, tone and bloom. You can add Dave Stephens and Wolf's Dr. Vintage pickups to that list as well. Still, there are far too many random variances among old PAFs in terms of magnet composition, wire size, and the number of turns on each bobbin to ever truly know why one may be magical and another less so, but when you get a good one, they definitely possess a sound that new pickups can't quite crack. The point is, you have to be willing to try. Take a leap of faith... Make a speculative investment in tone...

Working late one night we took a short break, impulsively logged on to eBay and entered a PAF search. Several PAFs came up, including an early patent number dating to '61 or '62, identifiable by the two black lead wires tucked inside the tape at one end of the pickup. Later versions reveal one black and one white wire. The L-shaped tooling marks were present on the feet, the correct patent number sticker remained intact, and the original cover was also included for a price of \$995. We checked the seller's 100% positive feedback rating and scanned his completed transactions, all for vintage guitar parts and pickups, hit the Buy It Now link, ponied up the payment from PayPal and went to bed, satisfied with the prospect of experiencing another early patent number Gibson humbucker on your behalf... The next morning we pulled the auction up again and surveyed the pictures that had been listed one more time to be sure we

hadn't overlooked anything. We had. Wait a minute... are the polepiece screws narrowly spaced for a rhythm pickup from a Gibson jazz guitar? We read the auction description again which made no mention of narrow spacing, but the longer we looked at the pictures, the more we suspected that this was a 'jazz' pickup. We wrote to the seller, who by now had already shipped the pickup, and he confirmed that the polepieces were narrow-spaced for a Gibson jazz box like the Byrdland. 'Why wasn't it mentioned in the description?' *It seemed pretty obvious...* Well, not to us at midnight. Sorry, but it will have to go back. To his credit, the seller, Kyle (www.vintagecorrectparts.com) was very cooperative, and mentioned that he had the 'mate' to the narrow-spaced patent sticker rhythm pickup, but without a cover. Pictures were sent and we agreed to an exchange with a small refund in lieu of a cover. Three days later both pickups arrived, we returned the jazz pickup and broke out the soldering iron. Of course we looked over the patent number with about \$900 worth of care and attention. The long lead showed three different solder points along the length of the shielded wire, a sure sign of having been pulled from the wiring harness of a hollowbody or ES model. In all respects the pickup appeared to be authentic and in excellent condition.



Our humbucking pickup mule is an extraordinary 2010 Goldtop we've mentioned before, and it just keeps gettin' better. We re-

moved the '58 Rolph bridge, installed the patent sticker with Rolph's neck pickup remaining and waited for the tubes in the '66 Deluxe to come alive with the volume set on '4'. The first chords were bright, with shimmering harmonics dancing around the fundamentals in the high frequencies, string definition exceptionally clear from top to bottom, and the tone was powerful and vocal, just as our handwritten notes on the early patent number pickups indicated from 2008. Once again we were captivated by the subtle harmonic overtones dancing around the treble strings that mimic the depth of a 12-string, and the percussive dynamic presence and bloom of the patent number humbucker. After a few minutes we switched to both pickups, alternately dialing back the bridge and neck pickup, when suddenly the volume pots seemed to misbehave, volume dropping with both controls on '10,' only to jump up when one pickup was backed off. Worse (and that was bad enough), the sound of the pickups combined was strangely honking, thin, hollow and... What? You got to be kidding... OUT of pHASE. "How can you possibly know what you're getting?" You don't.



"When the going gets weird, the weird turn pro."
— Hunter S. Thompson

At this point we enjoyed

a laugh, knowing full well that we had willingly rolled the dice with no illusions as to the dodgy nature of the vintage pickup market. Flipping the magnet would be easy enough, the bigger nagging question circling our brain was why the magnet had been flipped in the first place? We sent an e-mail to Kyle informing him of the pickup being out of phase, and he responded with genuine surprise. We asked him if he knew what type of guitar the pickup had come from, and he did – an early '60s Barney Kessel electric archtop. Ah, now pieces of the puzzle began to fall in place... The Barney Kessel 'Regular' model (regular denoting nickel hardware) was introduced in 1961 with dual humbuckers. A Varitone was not included, but a quick web search turned up a special factory-ordered example with a Varitone and factory installed Bigsby. You can reference various books as a guide to Gibson models, but Gibson frequently built special order guitars with custom features requested through dealers. Perhaps our patent number pickup dating to 1961 or '62 had been installed in a Kessel with Varitone. We also spoke with TQR advisory board member at the Gibson Custom Shop, Ernie King, who reminded us that in a factory as big as Kalamazoo in the early '60s, a worker could have simply oriented the magnet improperly. Could have happened once, or for an entire shift or an entire week if someone



new or a sub was working in pickup assembly. It's not as if they were plugging every electric they built into a Gibson Skylark for testing in final assembly... We both laughed at the prospect of something like that happening, because it does happen in all kinds of factories. You don't shut production down because one person was sick or went on vacation... The idea that someone flipped the magnet later for a 'Peter Green tone' seemed least likely. What jazz player would want that crappy tone (don't believe the ridiculous bs about it

sounding cool – it's retchedly lame) plus, when we grabbed the end of the magnet with needle nose pliers to remove it from beneath the bobbins, it didn't slide out easily as if it had been out of the pickup in the past – it kinda broke free only after we gave it a solid tug. We'll never really know why the magnet was flipped, but properly oriented the patent number humbucker now sounds spectacular alone and with the rhythm pickup. Measuring 7.8K, we noted that power and volume were extremely sensitive to polepiece height adjustments – typical of PAFs. 'Closer' is not always better.



As we played the gold-top, we were surprised by something unique to the sound of the patent sticker bridge pickup playing on the wound strings below the 7th fret that we hadn't fully appreciated before – a smooth and open vocal quality possessing an utterly magnificent timbre and responsiveness to pick attack that literally caused us to stop playing, seized in contemplation. We had been playing chords and

focusing on the choir within, but as we unconsciously began playing a bluesy solo in G on the bottom four strings, we realized that what we were hearing was nothing less than extraordinary, unimaginable perfection in the voice of the wound strings – not just in tone and timbre, but in the way the notes formed and expanded in response to the pick with a smooth, reedy fidelity and depth that rivaled that of a baritone guitar, saxophone and violin. We're struggling to find the right words now, because there is more there than we can adequately describe. How can one pickup make a smallish solidbody guitar like the Les Paul that can often sound compressed and narrow, now sound so lush, 3-dimensional, woody and huge? "You don't know until you know." Now we know. Again. Confirmed. Imagine that. To be fair, it's easy for us to imagine that you can't – that the idea that such a significant, meaningful difference could exist between 'the best' or most popular contemporary humbucking pickups and the patent number. The very idea flies in the face of everything you may have experienced, read in advertising, on the web sites of modern 'boutique' pickup winders, or in forum threads. We get it. It's a big leap to make mentally and financially... Is there really a \$700 difference between the sound of one old '62 Gibson humbucker and a \$200 boutique 'PAF'? Really? To a lot of players, yes, to just as many or more, perhaps not. We can't presume to speak for anyone else, but for us, the difference is impossible to minimize, dismiss or ignore. Like Parmigiano-Reggiano, going back to an imitation (except for review) seems pointless. *Quest forth... To*

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Analogman TQR readers are invited to save \$25 on the Surface NKT with Sundial Fuzz, or receive free shipping on all handmade Analog Man brand pedals, Foxrox, Teese wahs, and the PedalPower2: Mike Piera is one of the premier guitar effects dealers and manufacturers serving professional players worldwide. Analogman is unique, since it manufactures, modifies, buys, sells, and repairs vintage and new guitar effects. Specializing in vintage and high-end effects, you won't find cheap Taiwanese "happy meal" style, toy effects there. Analogman is dedicated to helping you successfully pursue your quest for tone, and every customer is treated as a prospective friend. Analogman can meet all your effects needs, including: Buying and selling vintage, new, and custom built effects, and modifying pedals to sound and function better. A full repair service, including referrals to specialists. Creating the best new effects with vintage values, schematics, and original owner's manual copies. FREE help with effects problems by e-mail or in our Web Forum, plus professional consultation and technical services. Analogman specializes in pedal modifications for the Ibanez and Maxon Tube Screamers and several Boss pedals (SD-1, DS-1, BD-2, DD5, etc). They also modify Fuzzfaces to vintage

germanium specs. Analogman hand-built pedals include the Clone chorus, Comprossors, and Sun Face fuzz pedals. There are 3 versions of the Comprossors available, based on the Ross style and/or the Orange Squeezer style of compression. Other hand-made pedals available from Analog Man include the FOXROX Captain Coconut and TZF flanger, Teese RMC wahs, Z Vex, Black Cat, Tubester, Ultravibe, Pedaltrain and George L cables. Jim Weider recently collaborated with Mike on the King Of Tone overdrive pedal, which is being introduced in December 2003! Please check the web site for more information, and e-mail if possible. If you must call, please mention ToneQuest and they'll make time to help you.

Analog Man, Bethel, CT
www.analogman.com 203-778-6658

Callaham Vintage Guitars & Amps New from Callaham! Check out the new billet steel ABR-1 style 'tune-o-matic' bridge: Bill Callaham is a builder of exceptional electric guitars that exceed the original quality, tone, and beauty of the vintage models that inspire his work. "Better than vintage" is an apt description for the Callaham "S" and "T" model electric guitars that feature premium lightweight ash and alder bodies, custom hand-shaped rock maple necks, and cryogenically treated Lindy Fralin pickups specially wound to Callaham's specifications for true vintage tone. Bill also offers cryogenically treated, pre-wired vintage pick guards for Strat style guitars, and his exclusive formula for cold-rolled steel alloy tremolo blocks continue to delight players around the world with improved resonance and sustain. Callaham vintage saddles also improve sustain while minimizing string fatigue and breaks. Additional Strat parts include stainless steel trem arms, string ferrules, bridge plates and mounting screws, and string retainers. Attention Tele Players! Callaham now offers a complete line of custom Tele parts. Please visit their web site for information on pre-wired control plates with premium pots, capacitors, and cloth-covered wire, specially wound and cryogenically treated Fralin vintage Tele pickups, compensated brass bridge saddles, bridge plates, knobs, jacks, tuners and string trees! The only thing better than Callaham parts is a Callaham guitar. We said that, and you can take it to the bank.

Callaham Guitars, Winchester, VA
www.callahamguitars.com 540-678-4043

Carr Amplifiers Check out the ALL NEW Carr Artemus! The is a single-channel 30-watt combo featuring a 15-watt setting, four EL-84 power tubes, three knobs (Volume, Bass, Treble), two mini-toggle switches (Mid, Edge), and an Eminence Red, White, and Blues speaker.

The Artemus offers a wide range of tones from the crunch of Classic AC style British amps to

the glassy mid-scooped blackface sound. The asymmetrical, open-sided, Howard Roark-inspired cabinet design measures 24.25" wide by 17.75" tall by 9" deep, top to bottom.

Carr Amplifiers is a small company located in downtown Pittsboro, NC. With six dedicated full-time craftsmen Carr Amps kicks out some of the most well-made, professional and dimensional-sounding tools a guitarist can have, whether that means onstage or in the bedroom. All Carr models are:

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Carr Amps is one of the few (if not the only) amp manufacturer to make all its cabinets in-house. The intense quality control afforded by this alone has not been lost on the thousands of players who've bought and kept their Carr amp over the years, as well as those to come.

Do you want to stop buying amps that have no tone? Do you want to stop worrying about your tone altogether? Construction, playability, portability, lush tone, high-quality customer service, lifetime warranty for the original owner---Carr Amps has all that taken care of for you.

Carr amps are professional tools and works of art that will inspire you for a lifetime. Check out the many stellar reviews and dealer locations for Carr amps at their web site, and contact the boys at Carr for more information about which Carr model is best for you.

Carr Amplifiers, Pittsboro, NC
www.carramps.com 919-545-0747

Celestion Ltd. Nobody knows more than Celestion about guitar loudspeaker design and manufacture. Think of your all-time favourite guitar riffs and solos, chances are, they were played through Celestion guitar loudspeakers. For the last fifty years - since the birth of the Celestion Blue (the first ever purpose-built guitar loudspeaker) - our magical mix of metal paper and magnets has formed an essential part of the sound of guitar music.

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Collings Guitars: Bill Collings' story provides a classic example of what can be achieved with an engineer's brain, a machinists' hand and an experienced repairman's eye. After dropping out of medical school in Ohio to work in a machine shop, Collings moved to Texas in the mid 1970's where the experience he gained repairing and restoring guitars guided his design of the first Collings guitars. His understanding of the flaws and shortcomings found in production instruments was instructive, and he set out to eliminate those shortcomings with the very first Collings guitars

Today, Collings has 50 full-time employees working in a new, 22,000 square foot, state-of-the-art facility, and Bill Collings remains hands-on, building all the tooling used throughout the shop and personally working on guitars at his bench whenever time permits. As the

business has grown and processes refined, there is one thing that has not changed...Bill Collings' commitment to building the finest handmade acoustic steel string instruments in the world.

Collings instruments have grown to include 32 different acoustic guitar models including the famed dreadnought and OM models, seven award-winning mandolin models in both lacquer and varnish finishes, three archtop guitars, and a new line of seven electric instruments crafted to inspire rock, blues, jazz, country, and your music, too.

Bill Collings work is respected by professional and amateur musicians alike... anyone on the quest for quality. Some of these include artists: Keith Richards, Lyle Lovett, Pete Townshend, Emmylou Harris, Joni Summers, David Crosby, Chris Hillman, Andy Mitchell, Don Felder, John Sebastian, Lou Reed, John Fogerty, Tim O'Brien, Pete Huttlinger, Kenny Smith, Brian May, Joan Baez, John Prine, Nigel Tufnel of Spinal Tap, and Steven Spielberg to name a few. We invite you to play a Collings today.

For more information on the complete line of Collings instruments and dealer locations, please visit our web site.

Collings Guitars, Austin Texas
www.collingsguitars.com, 512-288-7776

Dave's Guitar Shop: Dave's Guitar Shop offers guitars by Fender, Gibson, PRS, National, Taylor, Gretsch, Ernie Ball, Rickenbacker, Martin, Santa Cruz, Suhr, Collings, Tom Anderson and many other fine new and used instruments, plus new and used amplifiers such as Fender, Line 6, Matchless, Victoria, Bad Cat, and Dr. Z, plus hundreds of guitar effects, and aftermarket pickups from Joe Barden, Seymour Duncan, and more. Due to their inventory of over 1,000 guitars, amps, and accessories, Dave's is an excellent resource for top of the line Custom Shop and Historic reissues, to intermediate new and used gear. Unlike some dealers' out of date stock lists on the web and in print, Dave's inventory is updated daily. The selection of new and used instruments is truly exceptional, and you can often select among several models of the same new guitars to find that special instrument that was meant for you. Dave's staff is friendly and extremely knowledgeable about the instruments and gear that they sell, because they are players, too. Please check the web site for current inventory, and you are welcome to call for more information or an accurate, in-hand description.

Dave's Guitar Shop, LaCrosse, WI
www.davesguitar.com 608-785-7704

Eastwood: Since 2001, Eastwood has been creating some of the most exciting Electric Guitars the world has ever seen. Our RADICAL

VINTAGE REMAKE series feature a variety of models based on popular sixties designs - from the classic Mosrites to our top-selling AIRLINE - they capture the excitement and style of the originals. Each year the prices of the originals skyrocket - getting harder to find and harder to play! Eastwood's focus is to make top quality replicas - that cost less and play better - so the average musician can experience the excitement of playing one of these beautiful vintage guitars as their every day player.

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VALUE: All Eastwood Models are subjected to extensive research and development to continually raise the level of performance. At the same time, we are very careful to maintain an affordability level that our customers expect. These elements combine to deliver peak performance and higher quality than the originals at a much lower price.

SERVICE: A product is only as good as the people who stand behind it. Eastwood Guitars service is second to none in the industry because we simply treat customers the same way we would expect to be treated. All guitars come with a 3 Year limited Warranty. Guitars purchased directly from us receive a no-questions-asked return policy. Or, if you are located near an Eastwood Dealer, you can buy from them at the same direct price we offer online.

THE FUTURE: We continue to bring new models to the Eastwood line-up. Our goal is to introduce 3-5 new models each year, available in a wide variety of colors and of course, including left-hand versions. Please feel free to email us directly if you have some suggestions for models that we should consider developing in the future!

Eastwood Guitars, Toronto, Canada
www.eastwoodguitars.com, 416-294-6165

Eminence Eminence is proud to present the Patriot and Redcoat series of guitar speakers. Incorporating both British and American cone technology into speakers that we manufacture in the USA gives us the ability to provide you with virtually any tone you desire. Be it British or American, clean or dirty, big bass or screaming highs, we have a speaker that will allow you to "Pick Your Sound." Choose from one of seventeen new models! Eminence has been building speakers to custom specifications for nearly every major manufacturer of guitar amplifier and sound reinforcement products since 1967. Their new Legend Series of guitar speakers captures the essence of the vintage American and British speaker designs that are held in such high regard today by so many discerning players. The Legend Series includes

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classic British and American designs for 6," 8," 10," 12," and 15" speakers utilizing ceramic and AlNiCo magnets, British or American cones, and Kapton polyamide voice coils for superior heat dissipation and durability. Best of all, because Eminence has been successfully competing for years with other speaker manufacturers as an OEM supplier, the Legend Series speakers are priced far below those of many other popular manufacturers of "reissue" and custom speakers. The Eminence Legend Series delivers all of the tone and durability you need, at a lower price, with no compromises in quality. To locate genuine Eminence dealers in your area, please visit their web site or call Eminence Speakers.

Eminence Speaker LLC, Eminence, KY
www.eminence.com 502-845-5622
Contact: Chris Rose

Evidence Audio: was founded in 1997 by Tony Farinella to supply the MI and Studio community with performance-based cables at reasonable prices. The most well-known cable is the Lyric HG (High Gain) guitar cable. Readers of Guitar Player Magazine voted the Lyric HG as "Best Accessory of 2004" supporting the opinion drawn by editors of magazines from around the world.

In simple terms, cables from Evidence Audio are built different; as a result, they sound different. The Lyric HG features two solid core high grade IGL copper conductors and a braided shield that is grounded at the amp end only. This is the correct way to "drain" spurious noise. By using solid core conductors strand interference is eliminated as well. Designed to be neutral and honest, the cables don't actually "improve" your tone, they simply replace a cable in your signal path which was likely destroying it. What you hear is a tighter more muscular bottom end, a clearer more complex mid-range and a sweeter more detailed high end. Dynamics and harmonics are improved and sustain is no longer masked. Overall the guitar becomes more three-dimensional sounding, cuts through clearer and at the same time takes up less space in the mix.

The Siren Speaker Cable and The Source AC Power Cable compliment the Lyric HG. They offer a solution to distortions cause by cables in other areas of the signal path and power supply. The effects of the speaker and power cable are consistent with that of the Lyric HG: you hear the guitar and amplifier, not the cables. While not inexpensive, cables from Evidence Audio are still one of the most cost effective ways of improving your tone. It's like changing pickups or a bridge – a small detail with big results. Please visit the Evidence Audio website to locate a dealer near you and demand a demo!

Audionova Inc., <http://www.audionova.ca>
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Fishman: Widely recognized as the premier designer and manufacturer of acoustic amplifi-

cation products, Fishman is committed to making acoustic musicians heard while faithfully maintaining their own natural tone, for the best possible sound.

The Fishman product line began with the BP-100(tm) acoustic bass pickup, originally developed to meet founder and president Larry Fishman's own jazz performance needs. With a track record of quality engineering, reliability, functional simplicity and - most importantly - the natural tone it enables, Fishman firmly established a reputation of excellence that consumers have come to expect from the brand.

For acoustic guitar, Fishman offers the flagship Acoustic Matrix(tm) Series active pickup system, the Rare Earth(tm) Series active magnetic soundhole pickups, and the Neo-D(tm) magnetic soundhole pickup, as well as passive undersaddle, classical, archtop, and resophonic guitar pickups. Fishman's new Ellipse(tm) series combines the Acoustic Matrix(tm) pickup with our industry leading preamp design. Designed to fit in the guitar's soundhole, the Ellipse(tm) system provides volume and tone control at your fingertips and easily installs without any modification to your instrument.

Fishman pickups are also available for banjo, mandolin, harp/piano, violin, viola, cello and acoustic bass. In addition, the Concertmaster(tm) amplification system for violin and the Full Circle(tm) upright bass pickup offer two elegant and cutting-edge string amplification solutions.

Utilizing cutting-edge Acoustic Sound Imaging(tm) technology, Aura(tm) features the most innovative acoustic amplification technology available today. This stompbox-sized unit captures your instrument's true acoustic sound with stunning, studio microphone quality. Anytime, anywhere, Aura(tm) eliminates the boundaries of conventional acoustic amplification and gives the most natural, realistic amplified acoustic instrument sound available - both on stage and in the studio.

Joining the award-winning Loudbox(tm) and Loudbox Pro(tm) acoustic instrument amplifiers, the new Loudbox Performer(tm) completes Fishman's popular, highly-acclaimed family of acoustic amplifiers and represents the size, power and features that musicians demand. Setting a new standard in acoustic amplifiers, the Loudbox(tm) series feature a powerful tri-amped system that delivers sweet highs and undistorted lows-even at tremendous volumes. As Fishman celebrates its 25th year as the leader in acoustic amplification, the company continues to redefine the benchmark of acoustic sound. For more information, please visit www.fishman.com.

Fishman Transducers Inc.
Wilmington, MA
www.fishman.com 978-988-9199

Germino Amplification: Greg Germino's passion is in recreating and optimizing the sound

of Plexi-era amplifiers using the highest quality components and attention to detail born from decades of experience as an amp tech and guitarist. Germino amplifiers are designed and built to enable guitarists to acquire the classic sound of the Plexi amps again, while avoiding the significant inconsistencies and reliability issues found in expensive, vintage examples.

Models include:

The Classic 45 – A finely tuned, faithful replica of the JTM-45 using a custom wound version of the Radio Spares output transformer. Works well with 6L6GC/5881 tube types and KT-66s, or EL-34s after re-biasing. Rated at 35 watts, the Classic 45 can also be fitted with 6V6s when using a 5Y3 or 5U4 rectifier. The Club 40 reprises the early sound of the JTM-50 and JMP-50 Bass 50 watt heads. A GZ-34 rectifier and solid state rectifier are selectable by a switch allowing for the softer rounder feel of a JTM-50, or the quicker pick attack and response of a JMP-50 Bass head.

Lead 55 & Lead 55LV – The Lead 55 models use a classic dual EL-34 output section and 'lead' circuit values. Both models are voiced the same with the only difference being the power transformer in the LV model supplies lower voltage at the output stage. Additionally, the LV model is delivered stock with optional tube/solid state rectifier switching.

Monterey 100 – Based on the original 'Super Amplifier' from 1966, also known as the JTM-45/100, the Monterey is a faithful re-creation of the JTM-45/100 in every way with extreme attention to detail in both build quality, parts used and the incredible sound.

Fillmore 100 – Lets roll back in time to 1967, the year that Marshall made the switch from KT-66 tubes to EL-34's with new transformers for this tube type, and a steel chassis All of these early amps used a Bass circuit derived from the JTM-45. Steel chassis made their debut in early in 67 as well.

Headroom 100 – The Headroom 100 specifically emulates the sound and construction of the very early '68 100 watt plexi panel Super Lead and Super Bass amplifiers to exact detail. Available with either a "Super Lead" circuit for the ultimate in singing sustain or, Super Bass circuit values for those wanting a cleaner amp with a more rounded tone.

For more information on Germino amplifiers, cabinet options, dealers and prices, please visit our web site.
Germino Amplification
Graham, NC
www.germينوamps.com, 336-376-8354

GHS – The String Specialists Who plays GHS strings: Artists as diverse as Eric Johnson, Martin Barre, Charlie Sexton, Will Ray, Warren Haynes, Tom Morello, Ritchie Sambora, Steve Howe, Brent Mason, Junior Brown, Zakk Wylde, Tommy Castro, Rene' Martinez

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Resource Directory

and TQR advisory board member and AC30/Telecaster stud Mr. James Pennebaker, to name just a few! GHS has been manufacturing guitar strings since 1964, and whatever your musical tastes, GHS has the right string for you. You're invited to try a set of GHS classic Boomers, brilliant Nickel Rockers, Burnished Nickel strings for a warm, vintage tone, Compound Nickel strings for electric arch tops, and the recently introduced Infinity Bronze coated acoustic strings for extended tone and brilliance. All GHS strings are available in a wide range of gauges to appeal to every player. Refer to the GHS "Brightness Bar" found on select packages of strings and at our web site. It's your guide to determining which strings will produce the specific range of tone you're seeking.

Please check out the all new GHS web site at www.ghsstrings.com for expert information about GHS strings, including technical documentation on the entire GHS line of strings for fretted instruments, tech tips, string tension calculations, the "Brightness Bar," and a comprehensive list of the top artists who play GHS strings. All GHS strings are manufactured to continually exceed your expectations.

GHS String Corporation
Battle Creek, MI
www.ghsstrings.com
1-800-388-444

Gibson Gibson Repair & Restoration
World Class Repair of Stringed Instruments:
Over the years, Gibson has received countless requests from players needing work on their guitars, mandolins, etc. These players all say the same thing: "I don't trust anyone but Gibson to work on my instrument!" Until recently, these folks had to rely on whoever was available in their local area and hope they had the skills and experience to do the required work.

All that has changed now. Gibson has opened the doors of its in-house repair facility and is accepting stringed instruments of all types and all brands for repair or restoration. Offering a state of the art, temperature and humidity controlled environment, as well as a full staff of highly skilled and experienced luthiers, Gibson is fully equipped to perform any and all operations required in all phases of repair and restoration.

Among the services offered are:

Pro Set Up – Acoustic or Electric
Fretwork – Fret Dress to Plane & Refret
Custom Wiring/Pickup Installation
Structural Repairs – Body Cracks, Bracing,
Broken Headstocks
Neck Resets
Custom Paint/Finish Repair/Relics
Total Restorations

So whether it's an acoustic or electric guitar, mandolin, banjo, ukulele or oud, if it has strings and it needs attention, we can help. It doesn't even have to be a Gibson – we're an equal opportunity Repair Shop! Call, write or email. We'll guide you through the process and we'll help with shipping and insurance infor-

mation so your instrument gets here and back quickly and safely. We'll tell you upfront what your costs will be and no work is begun before what is to be done has been explained and approved by you.

Gibson Repair & Restoration
Nashville, TN 615-244-0252
www.gibson.com/Products/Places/Repair/

Jescar Fretwire Securely pressed into the fingerboard, the fret wire is the gateway between the musician and the instrument. It is one of the most critical components in the playing quality of the guitar. The interaction between the strings and frets determines the feel of the neck as much as the neck contour, fingerboard material, or finish.

There are many different fret wire profiles available, from small to large, low to high, narrow to wide, oval to round to triangular, all affecting the playing characteristics and feel of the instrument. Brass frets from days past have given way to today's standard material, 18% nickel silver, also called "German Silver." Our highly refined nickel silver consists of 62% copper, 18% nickel and 20% zinc. But even with 18% nickel silver, there are differences in hardness, tensile strength, surface quality, grain size, and other metallurgical properties that influence a fret's quality, performance and feel.

Beyond 18% nickel silver, new alloys have been employed in the production of modern fret wire that dramatically improves the performance and aesthetics of the guitar. Our stainless steel, with its greater hardness and tighter grain structure has much higher wear resistance for greater fret life. In addition, string bending is much smoother without the friction or grinding felt with traditional fret material. We have selected a stainless steel alloy that provides the best combination of fret life and installation ease.

Most fretwire is manufactured in coils for ease of installation. Our FW39040 and FW37053 are only offered in 24" straight lengths to prevent twisting if coiled. Pricing is based on orders of one pound minimum quantity per size, plus shipping via UPS, FedEx, or USPS. Gold colored EVO wire is available on selected sizes only. Individual frets cut to size, straight cut or cut and notched tangs, are available upon request. Minimum order quantity for pre-cut frets is 2000 pieces.

CAUTION: Jescar Fretwire will improve the tone and playability of your guitar.

www.jescar.com 877-453-7227

Just Strings.com: Now more than ever, guitarists are reaping the benefits of technical innovations in string making that have led to the widest selection of guitar strings ever available. JustStrings.com is dedicated to providing

guitarists with the largest selection of acoustic, roundwound, and flatwound strings, complemented by exceptional personalized service and outstanding value. Trying different types of strings often results in amazing new discoveries that not only improve the sound of your instrument, but dramatically enhance your playing enjoyment. From traditional hand-crafted strings to high-tech exotics, **JustStrings.com exists to help you get the most out of your instrument. Try a new set today, or order your favorite acoustic or electric sets and SAVE!** Juststrings.com offers the best prices on all of the major and specialty brands, promptly delivered to your door. Shop online at JustStrings.com, or place your order by fax at 603-889-7026 or telephone at 603-889-2664..

JustStrings.com, Nashua, NH
[www.juststrings.com info@juststrings.com](mailto:info@juststrings.com)

Keeley Electronics – Check out the new Keeley Katana Preamp! ToneQuest subscribers receive 10% off on all pedal mods and the Keeley Comp, Java Boost and Time Machine boost: Keeley Electronics recently won a Guitar Player Reader's Choice Award and Keeley is now the exclusive distributor for Framptone! Robert Keeley's Time Machine Boost, Keeley Compressor, and his custom, state-of-the-art modifications for vintage pedals continue to receive rave reviews from guitarists around the world. Keeley pedals are used by Aerosmith, Abbey Road Studios, Steve Vai, legendary producer Bob Rock, George Lynch, Peter Frampton, James Burton, and many, many more guitarists and music pros around the world. The Time Machine Boost is a versatile 2 channel, 3 mode pre-amplifier designed to drive your amplifiers into overdrive or saturation. The two channels are labeled "Vintage," and "Modern," with the "Vintage" side inspired by rare germanium boosts like the Dallas Rangemaster. The "Modern" channel is a new +23dB gain, dual JFET transparent signal amplifier. The Keeley Compressor is a superb audiophile and studio grade compressor with true bypass switching and premium metal film resistors and capacitors for the cleanest Ross clone compressor ever available. Available with a standard Ibanez/Boss style adapter jack and/or battery power, you can say goodbye to that old red Dyna Comp!

Robert Keeley pedal mods include 2 versions for TS9's – the TS808 mod, and the "Baked TS9" for searing hot Tube Screamer tone. Keeley uses the original TI RC4558P chip that appeared in the early TS808's, while increasing the bass response and overdrive range. The result is a perfectly voiced 808 that's cleaner when turned down and produces twice the drive/gain when turned up, with all of the stock 808 character in the middle. The Keeley modded BD-2 is not a fuzz pedal but has the best characteristics of a fuzz pedal, and it's much smoother and more realistic sounding. Other exclusive Keeley modifications include the Boss Blues Driver BD-2 Tube Mod, the PHAT Switch BD-2 Mod, Rat Mods, Boss DS-1

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Resource Directory

Seeing Eye Mod, Boss SD-1, and Boss Chorus CE-2. For detailed specs, user comments, dealer information, sound clips, and ordering information, please visit the Keeley Electronics website.

Keeley Electronics, Edmond, OK
405-260-1385, www.robertkeele.com

K&M Analog Designs:

Two Rock K&M Analog Designs, LLC, was formed in northern California in 1998 by Bill Krinard and Joe Mloganoski. The company brings a combined 70+ years of experience in tube amplification and guitar tone to the boutique amp market. As talented designer/engineer and seasoned guitarist (respectively), Bill and Joe have developed a uniquely toneful, dynamic and affordable line of hand built vacuum tube amplifiers that are instruments designed to completely complement your individual playing style. Each amp is equipped with proprietary custom transformers and coupling caps, the best available new and NOS tubes, and each model has unique build architecture and layout not found in other modern hand built designs. Early K&M customers such as Carlos Santana helped launch the company to the forefront in its earliest days. Current K&M and Two-Rock devotees include John Mayer, Steve Kimock, Mitch Stein, Barney Doyle, Mark Karan, Michael Kang, Volker Striffler, and Matt Schofield, among others. The company launched its line of Two-Rock amps in the summer of 1999. Current models include the Custom Reverb Signature, Overdrive Signature, and the affordable and portable Jet and Jet Signature head and combos. The Classic series of amplifiers have become by far the most popular of any Two-Rock series to date. The line features single channel clean amps with reverb, and several dual channel platforms with different lead voicings, tube or solid state rectifiers, and other tone tailoring options. Power levels of 20 to 150 watts are available. Two-Rock is also celebrating their 10th Anniversary this year, commemorating the event with a 10th Anniversary Limited Edition amp/cabinet package as well as 2 production amps, including the just released 10th Anniversary J-2 head and combo. A number of extension cabinets equipped with special design speakers by Eminence and Warehouse Guitar Speakers are available, as well as an all-tube buffered effects interface (mono or stereo). A number of customized versions of the aforementioned have also been built for players seeking the ultimate personalized tone machine.

Joe Mloganoski, Joe@tworock.com
K&M Analog Designs LLC,
www.two-rock.com 707-584-8663, In Japan,
www.two-rock-jp.com

Lollar Custom Guitars & Pickups: According to Jason, he never really set out to become a custom pickup designer and builder. Jason Lollar is a guitar builder on Vashon Island, Washington (near Seattle) who originally began building pickups for his own guitars and a few friends when he couldn't find the tone he was

after. The word spread, and now Jason custom builds over 30 different pickups, including Strat, Tele, humbuckers, P90's, custom steels and Charlie Christian-style pickups, all personally designed and wound by Jason. He is especially well known for his P90, Imperial Humbucker and Tele replacement pickups, but he has also designed pickups for many unusual applications...

Recently, Jason was acknowledged by gonzo pedal steel player Robert Randolph for having wound the pickups in his two custom Fessenden pedal steels. And the list doesn't end there – Jason has wound pickups for guitar greats such as Billy F Gibbons, Peter Stroud, Kevin Russel, Rick Vito, Elliot Easton, Duke Robillard, and the Beastie Boys, among others.

Jason is always happy to personally consult with his clients via phone and e-mail to determine the pickups that are right for each player, and TQR recommends Lollar pickups without exception. His Lollar Special Strat pickups are standard equipment in our custom built ToneQuest guitars. Call Jason or check out all the options available on his web site.

www.lollarguitars.com, 206-463-9838

Mercury Magnetics: The basis of every tube amp's characteristic sound is the unique design of its transformers. Mercury transformers are legendary for their stunning tonal superiority, build quality, consistency, and reliability. We believe in old-world customer service and single-minded focus. Transformers are our only business, allowing us to concentrate on providing you with the best-sounding guitar amplifier trannies in the world.

If your amp is suffering from bland and unexciting tone, then it's time for a transformer upgrade or repair. Here are your options:

ToneClone™: Best-of-Breed Series Transformers: Behind every great-sounding vintage guitar amp is a piece of transformer history. Within any amp line there are usually a large number of transformer variations, inconsistencies and just plain ol' building errors that affect their sound (good or bad). At Mercury, we seek out, study, blueprint and replicate only the best-of-breed transformer designs (including their all-important anomalies) and add these discoveries to our catalog. And we make these incredible tonal selections available to you through our ToneClone™ line.

Axiom® Series Next-Gen Transformers: Next-generation guitar amplifier transformers. The Axiom series are in a class by themselves. We've taken our advanced knowledge of modern transformer design and mated it with historically best-sounding designs of the past. Axiom trannies are hybrids that take vintage tone to the next level! More bloom, more overtone color, and awesome tonal depth. If you ever needed convincing as to how outstanding transformers affect your sound, Axiom trannies

will astonish you.

Mercury Vintage™ Transformer Service: Most vintage transformers have already outlived or are nearing the end of their life expectancies. That's the bad news – now for the good... Mercury will restore, rebuild or rewind your valuable original transformers. Or, we can clone your originals so that you can continue to play your old amp without fear of further "wear and tear."

Free Transformer Testing And Evaluation Service: Do you think there might be something wrong with your transformer? Send it to us. We'll test it in our lab and report back to you. Our evaluation procedures are thorough, complete and reliable, and always free. The only transformers that come with a 10-year Manufacturer's Warranty and a Money-Back Tonal Guarantee. Made entirely in the U.S.A.

Mercury Magnetics
www.MercuryMagnetics.com
Sales@MercuryMagnetics.com
818-998-7791 404-325-0515

Mojo Musical Supply is your essential source for vintage amplifier and guitar parts, specializing in vintage pre-1980 reproduction cabinets and replacement components. Whether you are restoring an older amp or building your own design or a vintage reproduction, we offer a full professional range of combo and speaker cabinets, speakers, grill cloth, baffleboards, chassis, transformers, components, tubes and hardware. The in-house cabinet shop at Mojo specializes in building authentic Fender and Marshall reproduction amplifier cabinets, custom cabinets from your own design, as well as expert cabinet repair and re-covering. Mojo stocks over fifty different amp coverings and grill cloths to insure that vintage enthusiasts and custom amp creators have a large palette to choose from. For restoration projects we also stock vintage-correct replacement faceplates, knobs, hardware, back panels and reverb parts. Mojo has also become one of the largest vacuum tube importers in the world, stocking over 20,000 tubes. Because we buy tubes in such large volumes, our prices are always very competitive. We also stock professional amplifier test equipment for the home or commercial bench.

NEW! We now offer pedal repair parts and complete kits, plus René Martinez' "Texas Guitar Whiz" Signal Splitter.

For guitarists, builders and pro techs, Mojo has expanded our line of premium guitar components and parts to include bodies and necks, a full line of custom-wound single coil and humbucking pickups and parts, pickup covers, wiring harnesses, caps and potentiometers, hardware, tuners, bridges and tremolos, fret wire, knobs, nuts, switches and more...

Most importantly, you can depend on our knowledgeable and experienced staff here in Burgaw, North Carolina to help you make the right choice the first time! Be sure to access

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Resource Directory

our online Knowledge Base, videos and blog at mojoshout.com.

ToneQuest readers receive an exclusive 10% discount on all Mojo products! Just reference the "MojoQuest" discount code when placing your order.

Mojo Musical Supply
Burgaw, NC
www.mojotone.com
1-800-927-MOJO

Nash Guitars: Have you ever thought, "If they would just make a Tele with....", "I love my Strat but it just doesn't...." "Why don't they make a Jaguar that could...." Well, you've come to the right place. From exotic woods, custom paint, unlimited neck types, custom designed logos, pickup selections, Timewarp aging, or any other feature imaginable — Esquires with hidden neck pickups, Strats with interchangeable pickup assemblies, Custom Shapes — whatever... If you can dream it, we can build it.

Each guitar is a unique work of art, handcrafted by me. The use of 100% nitrocellulose lacquer, high quality vintage hardware, superior woods and a wide variety of pickups and options produce magical instruments that have thus far not been available "off the rack". The level of aging on our Timewarp guitars can be adjusted from "played it once a month at church" to "used to break open a window during a fire in a Louisiana roadhouse."

Bill Nash is an Olympia, WA based builder of aged vintage guitars inspired by Leo Fender. Available through Nash Guitar dealers in the US and Overseas. Please see Nashguitars.com for information and a dealer near you.

Nashguitars
Olympia, WA
www.nashguitars.com
1-877-484-8276

PLEK: The brand name PLEK stands for a technology which allows the best fret dress and setup work, based on a computer controlled scan.

The PLEK is a computerized tool that scans an instrument strung to pitch, generating graphic views of the fret plane, fret heights, fret shape and placement, fingerboard relief radius, humps and bumps — basically everything that luthiers and repair pros have wanted to see well but couldn't, until now. Besides having measurement and dressing capabilities many times more accurate than the human eye allows, the PLEK has two particularly great advantages over manual fretwork.

First, it scans and dresses a guitar while it is tuned to pitch. This is a major breakthrough, since necks are subjected to approximately 100 pounds of string tension. This string tension invariably affects the shape of the fret plane, creating curves and humps that change when the strings are removed for a fret dress. The

PLEK identifies precisely what needs to be done for perfect results when the instrument is re-strung, whereas even the most skilled luthier or repair professional must guess about how to compensate for the effect of string tension when dressing the neck with the tension released.

Secondly, the PLEK applies very sophisticated formulas for optimum neck curve or relief, adjusting the calculations for the actual string height and individual string gauge from the treble side of the fingerboard to the bass. Achieving these same results by hand would be lucky and extremely rare at best!

The Plek is now in use by some of the top repair and restoration experts worldwide. We invite you to contact the Plek repair shop nearest you, or learn more about Plek technology at

www.plek.com
Plek, Berlin/Germany
+49 30 5369-6339, custom@plek.com
Joe Glaser, Nashville/TN
(615) 298-1139, glaserjoetoo@aol.com
Gary Brawer, San Francisco/CA
(415) 621-3904, gary@brawer.com
FretTek, Los Angeles/CA
(310) 474-2238, plek@frettek.com

Philtone, Baltimore/MD
(410) 783-0260, philtone@erols.com
Peekamoose Guitars, New York, NY
(212) 869-2396, www.peekamoose.com

Suhr Guitars, Lake Elsinore/CA
(951) 471-2334, johnsuhr@suhrguitars.com
Charlie Chandler's Guitar Experience
London, UK +44 20 8973-1441
sales@guitarexperience.co.uk

GuitarLabs Scandinavia, Stockholm, Sweden
Phone: +46 8 644-9480, info@guitarlabs.se

RS Guitarworks: You can depend on RS Guitarworks as your source for the finest custom guitars, expert guitar finishing, refinishing and aging, complete guitar assembly and repair, custom electronic upgrade kits, pickups, pickup covers, hard-to-find hardware, and more.

Located in Winchester, Kentucky, RS Guitarworks began as a small repair and shop in 1994. As the word spread among guitarists, business rapidly grew for RS, and today they receive guitars from around the world for restoration, finishing, aging and custom voicing with specialty components and exclusive pickups wound to RS specs by Lindy Fralin.

RS's Old Friend, SolarFlair, Stepside and custom guitars can be seen in the hands of many top players, and offer build quality and hardware second to none. Every guitar RS Guitarworks builds is meticulously crafted with wood personally selected by RS, finished in nitrocellulose lacquer, assembled with premium components, and individually voiced in final assembly as a true custom instrument.

RS Guitarworks also offers many hard-to-find aged, vintage replica parts and other specialty accessories for vintage Fender, Gibson and many other guitars that in many cases are exclusive to RS.

The RS Guitarworks Premium Wiring Kits offer a dramatic improvement over the factory electronics found in even the most expensive guitars. During extensive research and development in creating RS Premium kits, they tested over 20 different tone capacitors and nearly every type of potentiometer made before developing the RS SuperPot™. All the RS upgrade kits feature measured RS SuperPots™, that have a 5% tolerance for volumes, and CTS™ audio pots within 10% of their specified value for tone controls. Also in the RS kits are a wide variety of tone caps for single coil and humbucking pickups made by Jensen and vintage-correct replica caps by Luxe. RS Guitarworks™ also feature caps made here in the USA exclusively for RS called GuitarCaps™. RS Guitarworks wiring upgrade kits impart a fuller, clearer tone than standard factory components, with a smoother, more even and responsive taper from each pot. Additionally, each potentiometer is tested on a digital meter, checked for the proper sweep pattern, sorted and labeled as a neck/volume, neck/tone, bridge/volume or bridge/tone control.

Wiring Upgrade Kits are available in Vintage, Modern and Reissue styles for various Les Paul type guitars, as well as 335/345/355, Telecaster, Stratocaster, PRS guitars, and Explorer and Flying V types in both kit and pre-wired versions. Custom wiring and nearly any other configuration can also be built by calling RS Guitarworks™ directly at (859) 737-5300.

Please call or visit the RS Guitarworks web site for complete information on finishing, refinishing, restoration and aging of new and used guitars custom wiring kits, vintage repro parts, pickups and repairs.

RS Guitarworks
859-737-5300, www.rsguitarworks.net

Stewart MacDonald: Stewart-MacDonald offers a complete line of hard-to-find tools, parts, accessories, instructional videos and books for building, repairing, setting up, and optimizing the playability and tone of stringed instruments. Whether you are just getting started or you're a seasoned luthier, you'll find everything you need in the Stew-Mac catalog, including: fret wire, finishing supplies, glues and adhesives, wood, bodies, necks, binding, tuners, nuts and saddles, inlay, bridges, tailpieces, electronics, pickups, and free information sheets and professional advice! Their friendly customer service and technical support staff are trained to help you make the best product choices, and they also offer an Unconditional Return Guarantee. If you're not satisfied with an item for any reason, simply return it.

Stew-Mac is the leading supplier of innovative products for guitarists and repair pros, and every thing they make is guaranteed to work

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Resource Directory

well, because every product is tested by the professional luthiers at Stewart MacDonald first! The master builders and repairmen on staff include Dan Erlewine – well-known author of guitar repair books and magazine articles, member of the ToneQuest Report advisory board, and a regular contributor to TQR. Dan and all of the experienced luthiers at Stew-Mac personally develop and test every product the company offers, and they are also dedicated to education. The Stewart MacDonald catalog is packed with helpful tips, and the company produces an extensive series of training videos at their facility in Athens, Ohio.

For more information on the entire range of products available, please visit the Stewart MacDonald web site. In addition to their free online help service, your telephone call is also always welcome.

Stewart MacDonald
www.stewmac.com,
1-800-848-2273

Swart Amplification: Long before the first Swart amp ever appeared, Michael Swart had been playing through vintage amps for decades at live gigs and recording sessions as both a guitarist and recording engineer in Wilmington, NC.

Despite his access to countless vintage Fender, Vox, and Ampeg amps, Swart always felt the quintessential small recording/home use amp had yet to be built, thus begin the quest for the best tone via a small, manageable package. After a slew of suitcase amp wannabees, emerged the original Space Tone 6V6se, a Class A, 5 watt, Single-Ended, tube rectified beast with an über simple circuit revolving around the soulful 6V6. The amp delivered big sound with unmatched musicality along with amazing distortion. The 18w Atomic Space Tone soon followed to wide acclaim, and Swart amplifiers were quickly embraced by working pros and guitarists who shared Swart's appreciation for truly exceptional guitar tone.

Today, six different Swart models are hand-built to serve the needs of guitarists for live performance and recording:

Space Tone 6V6se - The amp that started it all. 5w, Class A, Single-Ended, Tube Rectified, 8" Weber, finger-jointed, lacquered tweed pine cab. Amazing
STR-Tweed - Another BIG Class A, Single-Ended 5w w/extra stage, Swart reverb, and 12" speaker.

Atomic Space Tone - Perhaps the amp that REALLY put Swart on the map. Considered one of the finest made. 18w 6V6 or 6L6 with tube reverb & tremolo

AST Pro: AST circuit w/slightly larger cab, recessed knobs, 12" of choice
AST Head MKII - AST in a head w/defeatable master volume and choice of cabinets
Super Space Tone 30 Head (SST-30) 30w of soulful 6V6/6L6/EL-34 mother of tone beauty. Richer than chocolate. Matching, custom tweed

2 x 12 Space Tone Cabinet

Head to Swart Online for the latest news, rants, photos, raves, artists, events, and dealer locations. Michael answers every call. Kelly responds to every mail. Personal service is #1 priority.

Swart Amplifier Co., Wilmington, NC
www.swartamps.com, 910-620-2512

Toneman: Veteran working guitarist Don Butler is an experienced tech who specializes in servicing, restoring JMI-era and modding Korg era Vox Amps to vintage specs. These, of course would be valve (tube) amps. As well as servicing & upgrading any '62-'89 era valve Marshall amps. He also services most other Golden era British valves amps like HiWatt, Selmer, Orange, Laney's and Sound City's. Also included are Tweed, Blonde, Brown and Blackface era Fender Amps.

Don offers a number of standard mods for reissue Vox, Fender and Marshall amps to bring them into "Vintage Spec" and achieve that original tone/sound that reissues sadly lack. These have earned him a solid reputation throughout the country for dramatically improved, authentic Vintage Tone from reissue amplifiers. Don has used the hand-made Mercury Magnetics Axiom/Tone Clone transformers for over 20 years along with vintage spec Sozo Premium caps (both the Iskra/"mustard caps" replicas and Blue Molded Fender types) and Carbon Comp resistors in the signal path to bring reissue amps to Vintage specs. We also mod reissue Vox and Cry Baby Wah Wah's to original 1967 specs, Ibanez TS-9's and Upgrade Vox "Valve Tone" pedals.

Don is equally at home working on Gibson Historics and Standard Production guitars, Fender guitars, Rickenbacker, and of course, Gretsch Guitars. This applies to both Vintage models and current production guitars, electric and acoustic. Anything from re-frets & fret dressing, rewiring, etc. to simple set-ups and adjustments.

Don was also the first dealer for German made Pyramid Strings, starting in 1995. Don does attend the NAMM Show and the Frankfurt Musikmesse for Pyramid. Providing his input, Pyramid has re-introduced the Round Core, pure nickel flatwound "Pyramid Golds" and the exceptional Round core/round wound "Nickel Classics". All Pyramids use a silver plated core of German Steel and pure nickel wire wrap. All plain strings are pure silver plated German Steel.

Also available now are the Bronze Wound/Round Core Acoustic "Pyramid Western Folk". These strings are reminiscent of the strings from the '50's & '60's before most manufacturers went to Hex cores and smaller wrap wires. Strings can be ordered securely online through the website!

Toneman is open 10 am to 6 pm (Pacific Time),
Tuesday thru Saturday!
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www.tone-man.com

TonePros Sound Labs & Marquis Distribution:

Since our first published review article, The ToneQuest Report has enthusiastically recommended the patented TonePros system of guitar components.

TonePros tailpieces feature a patented locking design. For years, guitars with stop tailpieces and wrap-around bridges have been cursed by "lean" or tilt on their stud mounts. Since string tension was all that held tailpieces on, the only contact area was just a bit of the edge of the bottom flange, just a bit of the lip of the stud top, and often just as little contact with the intonation screws. TonePros® Locking Studs provide 100% of the contact area of the bottom flange, 100% of the contact area of the stud top, no lean, and dramatically improved sustain, resonance and tone.

TonePros bridge and saddle components feature the "patented pinch" - the lateral pressure that is applied from the strategically placed "tone screws" that greatly reduce the play or wiggle of the bridge posts in their inserts. The posts are frozen in place, resulting in a solid connection between the strings, bridge, and guitar top, transferring more string vibration and resonance to the guitar body, resulting in an audibly stronger, sweeter, woodier type of resonance and sustain. And once your guitar is set up, it's locked. Bridge height and intonation settings remain intact and exact, even after restringing. TonePros® System II Components are found on the worlds best guitars, played by the world's best artists.

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Marquis Distribution: At Marquis Distribution, we offer the highest quality guitar parts to fit your needs. We specialize in guitar replacement parts, and hard to find, vintage-inspired and vintage replica parts, including aged TonePros and TonePros Kluson parts, emphasizing your desire to achieve a vintage look and tone at an exceptionally high level of performance. Whether you need to replace one part on your guitar or outfit many guitars with whole new setups, our focus remains on the individual customer and your unique needs. Be sure to request the 10% ToneQuest Discount when ordering!

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Visual Sound: Founded in 1995 by guitarist Bob Weil, Visual Sound is pleased to announce the expansion and renovation of its Spring Hill, TN headquarters is now complete, as the company continues to meet the ever-growing demand for its ever-growing product line!

Next on 'tap': the Dual Tap Delay pedal, which will be making its debut in late September. Visual Sound unveiled the pedal at the Winter

-continued-

Resource Directory

NAMM show in January, and again at Musik Messe in Frankfurt, Germany in April.

Visual Sound's previous release of the GarageTone series of effects pedals continues to "wow" players of all stripes. No longer does a musician on a budget have to sacrifice tone and reliability. The GarageTone series of pedals have been designed to have boutique quality sounds and superior construction at amazingly low prices. Each circuit was designed by Weil and chief engineer R.G. Keen with all the time and care that players have come to expect from Visual Sound. The pedals include: the Oil Can (Phaser), the Drivetrain (Overdrive), the GarageTone Tremolo, the Axle Grease (Delay) and the Chainsaw (Distortion).

We're also happy to say that we've recently gotten rave reviews from Guitar Player and Vintage Guitar magazines

The GarageTone series joins the already critically-acclaimed V2 Series of pedals: Jekyll & Hyde, Route 66, H2O, Double Trouble, Son of Hyde, Comp66, Liquid Chorus, Route 808, Angry Fuzz, as well as the 10th Anniversary edition of the Visual Volume pedal.

Also, the Van's Warped Distortion pedal was featured in this summer's Van's Warped Tour, Visual Sound's third year in a row as a Tour sponsor.

To find out more about all of the pedals and ISPO power supplies, and for more information about Visual Sound, sound samples, videos, artist endorsers and product information, please visit the Visual Sound web site, new Facebook page, MySpace site, Twitter, or contact Bob Weil personally.

Visual Sound
www.visualsound.net
www.facebook.com/visualsoundpedals
931-487-9001

Wampler Pedals: There are a lot of pedal makers around that are just very ordinary. An overdrive, a distortion, maybe a fuzz thrown in, but nothing that really stands apart from the rest of the gear world. Maybe there's nothing terrible about being ordinary. Ordinary is safe and ordinary is comfortable, but the cost of being ordinary is living inside a box with all the other ordinary companies and builders who are doing the same old ordinary things and selling you the same old ordinary tones. But who wants to be ordinary? More importantly, who wants to sound ordinary?

Wampler Pedals makes effect pedals that are anything but ordinary. Guitarists like Wampler Pedals because they want to sound extraordinary. They want something that inspires them... to play better, create music better, and sound better.

While other builders play it safe selling products they've been making for decades, some of them reissuing designs that deserve the label

"antique," Wampler has constantly pushed the envelope with new and exciting products designed to inspire guitarists to break out of the safety of the ordinary and into true excellence. Providing extremely high quality components and genuinely forward-thinking designs at prices that compete very well with anybody in the boutique industry, Wampler Pedals has a product to fit virtually every need.

Brian Wampler didn't invent the distortion pedal, but anyone who has used a few of his products can tell you he has done at least as much as anyone to make sure that the sound in your head can come out of your speakers. Best of all, it doesn't stop with what's available. With Brian Wampler continuing to wield the soldering iron like an artist's paint brush, the future has some serious tone in store. Wampler Pedals rocks today, and will rock tomorrow as new tonal options continue to be made available: definitely affordable, certainly competitive, and tonefully extraordinary.

Wampler Pedals
www.wamplerpedals.com
Brian Wampler
brian@wamplerpedals.com

Warehouse Guitar Speakers® LLC: is an Internet-based retail speaker supplier and manufacturer based in Paducah, KY – an area of the country with a long history in speaker manufacturing that includes the original CTS company, Credence Speakers, Voice Communication Coil, and Hawley Products – the oldest cone manufacturer in the world. When an OEM speaker manufacturer needed to clear warehouse space in 2006, WGS was born and began manufacturing and selling American-assembled guitar speakers to the public.

Today we build a wide range of high-quality and reasonably priced 10 and 12-inch Alnico and Ceramic magnet guitar speakers that celebrate and reprise the golden era of speaker manufacturing in the USA and England during the '60s and '70s, including the 15 watt Alnico Black & Blue™, 50 watt Alnico BlackHawk™, 60 watt Veteran 30TM, 25 watt Green Beret™, 80 watt British Lead™, 65 watt ET65™, 30 watt Reaper™, and 75 watt Retro 30TM, among others. WGS also builds high-power bass and PA speakers, and we are constantly developing and adding new speaker models to meet the demands of today's guitarists.

Why should you consider buying WGS speakers? At a time when speaker manufacturers have moved production to Asia, compromising quality and reliability while prices continue to increase, our speakers are proudly assembled in the USA by a team with decades of speaker design and building experience, at a reasonable price. Our employees take pride in building the very best speakers available anywhere. Selling direct via the Web enables us to keep prices low without compromising quality. You buy direct from the manufacturer, and we proudly stand behind our products with fast shipping and exceptional customer service.

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