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Mike Campbell

*"There's an edge to real rock & roll. It's all that matters."
– Neil Young*



Have you ever wondered what gives music the ability to age gracefully without sounding dated? An obvious answer is "good songwriting", but it goes beyond that. A good song recorded with the help of "the latest technological 'advances' will age a song before it's time, and pin it to a specific decade. A few examples of these technologies include the Linn drum machine and the Fairlight synthesizer, which gained prominence in the 1980s. Guitar trends that prematurely dated a song include the reliance on a prominent effect such as chorus, or the two-hand tapping approach to guitar playing first popularized by Eddie Van Halen. By the end of the decade, both of these had become as commonplace in modern music as big hair, spandex and cocaine abuse.

Certain music stands the test of time over the ages because of melody and composition and within rock and roll music, longevity is measured by decades, not centuries. While highly subjective, it is easy to see why The Beatles music (the newest of which by next year will be 40 years old) is considered great and has stood the test of time. It has melody, rhythm, great arrangements and interesting "parts,"

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played mostly within the context of a three minute song.

Despite the greatness The Beatles achieved,

just a few short years later many artists had shifted from this concise song approach to the creation of long epic instrumental pieces which often demonstrated the player's virtuosity to play long solos (wow, he's good!). Although the rock and roll that influenced The Beatles came out of the South, by the early '70s, a new wave had come ashore in Dixie in the form of The Allman Brothers' Band., which broke new ground and certainly has its place in rock and roll greatness. But as with any successful bands, there will be dozens of second generation groups that magnify the qualities of the archetype while often lacking the soul of the original.

While all of this jamming was going on down South, a group out of Gainesville, Florida named Mudcrutch set out to get back to the essentials of rock and roll; great catchy melodies with clever lyrics and interesting guitar parts, all crafted within the confines of a three minute song. Led by a talented and confident young Tom Petty, the group headed out to L.A. in 1974 and within a week had several record offers. Although Mudcrutch soon split, Tom Petty and The Heartbreakers emerged with an eponymously titled album which is now recognized as one of the classic debuts of all time. This record set the blueprint for The Heartbreakers 30-year career, featuring strong songs with great hooks, classic guitar tones and a band that played for the song instead of themselves. On lead guitar and also sharing some of the songwriting was 26 year old Mike Campbell, whose respect for both his instrument and the rock and roll founding fathers has served as his musical compass for the length of his career. Always seeming to play exactly what each song calls for, Mike is truly Tom Petty's perfect foil and secret weapon. In watching the new Peter Bogdanovich directed DVD boxed set entitled "Runnin' Down a Dream," one gets the feeling that Mike is a very loyal lieutenant to his bandleader. His many contributions include the straight-forward melodies that have served as the cornerstones of many rock and roll classics including "Breakdown", "American Girl", "Refugee" and "Runnin' Down a Dream" and his understated playing has given these songs eternal freshness.

As a co-author, Mike has been responsible for some of the Heartbreaker's biggest hits, as well as two of Don Henley's biggest songs "The Boys of Summer" and "Heart of the

Matter." Time and time again, he has demonstrated that great songs are all about melody, construction, and great guitar sounds. And no matter what guitar tones he is applying to a tune, be it 12 string, slide, acoustic or electric, Mike reminds us that most important thing is to always respect the song, much like George Harrison before him.

From the beginning, Mike Campbell has always preferred to play vintage guitars and amps, and in our discussion he tells us why with great candor. Mike was equally sharing as he covered his influences, recipes for good tone, his new side project "The Dirty Knobs," and those things he holds dear.

TQR: Congratulations on the new DVD... We understand you have a new side group "The Dirty Knobs"... What can you tell us about the band?



Jason Sinay

Well, The Dirty Knobs is myself, another guitar player that I've known for several years named Jason Sinay who lives in L.A., and the rhythm section is Matt Laug on drums, and Lance Morrison on bass.

It started out as a little fun recording project, and we liked playing so much that we started playing out on the outskirts of L.A. like Santa Barbara, Long Beach, and occasionally we'll play in L.A.. It's a great place to kind of go off on the guitar a little bit more and try out new songs with a great little band and we have a ball.

TQR: Going way back to the beginning, what drew you to the guitar initially, and what type of music were you listening to?

My Dad was a big Elvis and Johnny Cash fan, and he always played those records and I always seemed to key into the guitar playing, either Scotty Moore or Luther Perkins... I just loved that stuff. And then, like most kids my age, when The Beatles happened in '64, I was mesmerized by the whole thing, and picked up the guitar and started learning off of records.

TQR: What age were you at this point?

I got my first guitar kind of late as we were kind of poor; I was about 16 I think when I started fiddling around with it, and it was like everything else in my life became unimportant at that point... it was all about the guitar.

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TQR: In the “Runnin’ Down a Dream” DVD, some great early Mudcrutch film shows you playing what I believe to be a Firebird VII. Do you still have that guitar?

I wish I still had it (laughs)...We got a gig up in Alabama and drove up there, and went into a pawn shop and asked “Do you have any guitars?” and the guy said, “No... Oh, yeah, we’ve got this one in the back but it’s really ugly,” and he came back with this Firebird VII for \$120 bucks. It was red, with the three pickups, and I played that for many years. And then one day, we had gotten out to L.A. and were in the studio, and it was sitting on a folding chair, and Tom sat on it and it broke the neck off (laughs). It was never the same after that!

TQR: It seems amazing that Mudcrutch left Florida and within a few days of arriving in L.A. had a record deal. Then shortly after, Mudcrutch split and The Heartbreakers sort of emerged from the ashes... What was the scene like in L.A. at the time?



Mudcrutch went into the studio and we were green, and as with most bands, different guys are struggling and it kind of falls apart. They kept Tom on the deal, and he kinda kept me on, and we kinda kept (key-boardist) Benmont (Tench) in a corner and we stuck it out. Eventually, we met up with Stan and Ron and got The Heartbreakers together for the first album. For us, there was a big cultural gap back then from Gainesville, Florida and Los Angeles, California... We came out there, and we were like fish out of water. It was a big city and very intimidating, but we learned the ropes the best we could and stuck it out.

TQR: What kind of setup you were playing on that first Heartbreakers album? There are some great tones on it...

Shelter Records had a studio upstairs from their office, and we had a 1964 Stratocaster, an early 50’s Fender Broadcaster, a little tweed Fender Deluxe amp, and another amp that belonged to the studio called a Fender Super Six (basically a Twin Reverb with SIX 12” speakers), which was cleaner sounding than the Deluxe.

TQR: Since early on, you and Tom used Vox Super

Beatles live... There are a lot of tube amp snobs out there who think you can’t get a good sound out of solid state amps, but you guys obviously do...what is it that you liked about them?



We did like them because The Beatles used them and they looked great. After we cut the first record and decided to play out live, we thought that those amps looked great. We went to a store out in the Valley that had a bunch of Super Beatles, and we didn’t care if they were solid state or tube, we just wanted that look, and we got them, we really liked the sound of them and started using them on tour, and that became our live sound for several years.

TQR: Speaking of the Vox amps, you and Tom also used AC30’s throughout the band’s 30 year career, which nowadays doesn’t seem like such a big deal because it seems like everyone is playing them again, but in the mid-80’s, you were pretty much the sole users of them. What drew you to that amp, and do you have any problems with maintenance? They tend to run extremely hot.

We love them because we love the Beatles and we assumed that they were using AC30s. During the middle years of the band, that was pretty much all we used. In terms of maintenance, nothing major, occasionally a tube will give out. I’m not technical, but our guitar techs keep an eye on things, and sometimes they’ll say, “Sounds like your tube is getting weak” and I’ll say, “OK, change it!” and that’s as involved as I get (laughs). My AC30 is a brown one, and it’s been especially roadworthy.



TQR: One of my earliest encounters with Mike Campbell was seeing you endorse the E-bow...and then I got “Runnin Down a Dream” and heard you play one for the live intro to “Fooled Again”...Did you play that on any other track, and do you still play one?

The first time we played the Whiskey in 1977, the E-bow people came to the gig, they had just

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started their company, and they showed it to me and I thought it was really cool so I was one of the first people who ever used one. I did a little endorsement of them and they gave me a couple. The first time I ever recorded the E-bow was on a song on our second album called "Magnolia." I also used it for the intro to "Fooled Again" live, with an Echoplex. It's a cool little thing, and I haven't used it much over the years, but I do pull it out every now and then and find something cool to do with it.

TQR: How about pedals?



In the early days, there weren't many pedals that I'd use. I would use the pre-amp in the Echoplex for my edge if I needed distortion, as the Super Beatles were really clean. I think the secret to my distortion and sustain is the Echoplex driving

into the Super Beatle. I occasionally used a wah wah, but most of my sound is that old, noisy tube Echoplex into the Super Beatle.

TQR: Among vintage guitar freaks, you and Tom are sort of viewed as gods, and it seems that every piece of video footage shows you guys playing great old guitars, from Gretsches and Guilds to Fenders, Gibsons, Rickenbackers, and other custom guitars. Have you always had the jones for picking up old guitars?

In the early days, it was just a necessity to pick up old guitars back then, and between us, for the first couple of albums we only had 4-5 guitars between us, but as you start making a little money, what else are you going to do but buy some new guitars? And we've always done that. It used to be really fun on tour in the '70s, '80s and part of the '90s to go to pawn shops on your day off and find really great deals on old guitars. That's all changed now with ebay and everything. We love guitars, they are pieces of art and it's just something that we collect over the years and there is just something about the old guitars that sound better, a sweetness that a new guitar doesn't have. There is a spirit and a soul with those old guitars...

TQR: What inspires you to buy a guitar, is it your influences, a look, or a sound you're looking for, curiosity?

It's all of the above. Of course when we started out, we would want to get guitars that we saw our heroes playing, and then you'd go into a shop and see something that looks interesting and pick it up. Mostly it was because, "Oh, that's what Scotty Moore played," or "George Harrison played one of those" or "Keith Richards has a Telecaster so I want to have a Telecaster." That's basically how it goes...

TQR: I remember you playing what I believe was a Ted-Newman Jones guitar in the early '80s... tell us about that one.



That guitar belongs to Tom. Ted Newman came around a couple of tours, it seemed that every time we'd play Texas he'd show up with some guitar that he'd built. And that particular guitar was one that he made for

Keith, it's a 6 string model, and we used it on a couple of recordings. Tom still has it but we don't play it too often.

TQR: The first time I saw you live in the '70s, you were playing a goldtop Les Paul with the P90 covers removed and the pink coils exposed... It sounded great.



I love that guitar, and it was my first Gibson. When we were in the studio for the first album and we just had the Fenders, I thought, "I've gotta have a Gibson," so I went into a store, and I actually got the Gibson and the Broadcaster the same day. I got the goldtop because I wanted something that I could play solos on – something with more sustain. As far as the Broadcaster, I didn't know what I was getting – I thought it was just a Telecaster. These are amazing guitars that we've used on just about every record. So really, my original '64 Strat, the goldtop and the Broadcaster are our recording gold. Anytime that we needed a sound we could go to those guitars. Even to this day, you just pull them out and get the job done.

The goldtop is a '68 I believe... the funny thing about it is that when I bought it, I thought that it had custom pickups, I

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didn't know until later that they were just P90's with the covers off. I put covers on it at one point, but I liked the guitar better without them so I took them off again.

TQR: You do a lot of two string, chordal soloing, a typical example of this is how you conclude the bit in "Breakdown"... was this a Chuck Berry influenced thing?

It is...A lot of times if I get stuck when I'm doing a solo and I don't know where to go, I just go to Chuck Berry (laughs), that's always the frame of reference. I also like having an open string in the key of the song that rings under the melody. It sounds full.

TQR: Another hallmark of your playing is your wide vibrato...



Mike Bloomfield, definitely. I loved Mike Bloomfield's playing on the first couple of Paul Butterfield records and then went back and heard him on the Dylan stuff, but it was his bending and vibrato on those Butterfield records. I really concentrated a lot on vibrato, probably more than most guitar players who were more concerned with playing licks and lines. I really concentrated

on control of the vibrato, the pitch, being able to do it slow or fast to fit into the rhythm of the song. Vibrato is really important if you are going to play a single line or a melody, because it's like the voice: there are places where a note should have vibrato, and places where it shouldn't, and I really concentrated on developing this. I also got some ideas on this from Jerry Garcia, I liked his fluidity and his vibrato, but it was mostly Mike Bloomfield. I loved his vibrato and tried to emulate that quite a bit.

TQR: When you play the 12 string Ric live, are you using a compressor with it?



I never used compressors live with the 12 because I like it to be open sounding. I like to just get the tube compression from the amps. The few times I tried using a compressor live, I always felt like I didn't have the control over the dynamics... I wanted certain things to be louder and the compressor sort of shuts it down and live, I like to be able to push it a bit so I don't use them. In the studio, compression is great, and we do use it on the 12 strings, and it can be very forgiving (laughs).

TQR: When you're writing, do you have a conscious idea of the type of sound that the song requires, as far as a guitar and amp combination, or does that come later?

It goes both ways, sometimes you just walk in and maybe just plug into an amp that you haven't plugged in for awhile, and hit something and think "that's a cool sound" and that might determine where you're going to go that day. Other days, you'll come in and you're just feeling like you wanna play a 12 string and you wanna create something that sounds like some Byrds song, so you pick up the 12 string and start messing around with it. Sometimes you're trying to do one thing, a concept or a riff, a chord sequence... you start with that, and then in the process, it might morph into some completely other idea.

TQR: Can I name some of the songs you've played on, and you tell me what guitar and amp combination you used?



TQR: "American Girl"

Tom played the '64 Strat into the Super Six, and I played the Broadcaster into the tweed Deluxe

TQR: Isn't there a 12 string part on that too?

No! We didn't have a 12 string at the time, but I simulated one by playing octaves – the open D string and then the octave above it. A lot of people think that is a 12 string, but it was just us trying to sound like a 12 string.

TQR: "I Need to Know"

That was the same setup, Tom on the Strat and me on the Broadcaster, into the same amps.

TQR: "Don't Bring Me Down" (recorded live)

Tom was playing my Strat and I was probably playing the

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Broadcaster through a Rat distortion, both through the Super Beatles.

TQR: “Shadow of a Doubt (Complex Kid)”

Tom played a Tele in open tuning, and I played the goldtop on top of it, with different voicings higher up the neck.

TQR: “Refugee”

Refugee was a bitch. We recorded that song a million times trying to get a tone. I tried every amp, and this went on for months and months and we just couldn’t get the sound. I had a demo that was pretty good, and we tried to recreate it, but just couldn’t do it. Out of pure frustration, we came into the studio, and someone had a Marshall, so I just plugged in a Tele and that was the sound.

TQR: That’s amazing because the record sounds so spontaneous...

Lucky really (laughs)

TQR: “The Waiting”

Tom played a 12 string Rickenbacker, and I played a white ‘70s Les Paul Custom with humbuckers in it...

TQR: Your part on “Runnin’ Down a Dream” has a gnarly tone to it...

“Runnin’ Down a Dream” was done at my house, and I had a setup at the time where I was using a little Ampeg Rocket in the garage, and wide with that in the studio I had a Groove



Tube preamp which was overdriven, so between the two we blended it together, and I used an SG Junior with the one P90 through it and we came up with that sound.

TQR: “Mary Jane’s Last Dance”

Tom played my Broadcaster on the rhythm part, and I played my goldtop Les Paul, so here we are again, back to those original guitars (laughs).

TQR: “You Don’t Know How it Feels”...there’s a Leslie on that, right?

That was a Fender Jazzmaster and that was a Fender Leslie on that.

Actually, Tom had a demo of that track that he had done at home that had the Jazzmaster through a Leslie, and when we went into the studio, we recreated that.

TQR: How about “The Last DJ”?

I played a Rickenbacker 12 string, maybe D/I’d (direct injected) with an amp, I’m not sure.

TQR: Speaking of D/I, have you recorded direct a lot over the years or is it mostly live in the studio with amps?

Over the years, occasionally we’ll go D/I, like on the first album “Rockin’ Around with You,” we plugged that Stratocaster right into the board and got that rhythm tone, but generally we wouldn’t go D/I unless it was a 12 string, to get that kind of Byrds thing with a limiter, which sounds good. Working with Jeff Lynne on “Full Moon Fever,” we started doing some of the songs with the Strat D/I’d through a Urei limiter, and that’s the basic rhythm sound.

TQR: Up until the Jeff Lynne years, didn’t The Heartbreakers pretty much record all of the tunes live in the studio with the band playing through amps, with a few overdubs later?

That’s true, but occasionally a D/I sound would be called for so we’d do that and also have an amp as well in the song.

TQR: Are there any milestones that you haven’t accomplished that you would like to?



That’s a hard question. We’ve accomplished a lot in terms of building an audience, and writing songs that hold up over the years, but I still think we could make THE GREAT ALBUM with a group of songs that’s really power-

ful, and live up to and surpass all the songs that we’ve already done, that would make me happy. I still think that we have an album in us that can top what we’ve done and that’s what keeps us going. But you know, when you’ve been around this long and you’ve had some hits, anything you do is measured against what you’ve done, and that can be an albatross in a way, because no matter how good what you’re doing now is, it’s going to be measured against “American

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Girl,” “Refugee,” “Need to Know,” “Mary Jane”... it’s a challenge, but that’s what I’d like to do.

TQR: The Traveling Wilburys seemed to be sort of a magical group. How involved were you with that group, and did you ever play with them?



I was not involved to a great extent, but I was around. There was one day, when they had just cut “Handle With Care,” and Tom called me down to the studio and they wanted to put a solo on it. So I went down there with a little Marshall amp and a Stratocaster, and Jeff (Lynne) and George (Harrison) were there. I knew them a little bit, but was pretty intimidated, coming down to play a solo

with George Harrison sitting there, but I tried to put my blinders on and just do the job, so I went down there and got a sound. They played the track, and Jeff was real supportive when I played a few things, he said, “That’s the right direction,” and I played something that was a little like something Clapton might play. So I played a few things and I wasn’t really thinking that it was helping the song, and George was sitting there and I said, “Why don’t you play a slide on this, because I think if you played it would be really better than what I’m doing,” and he said (nonchalantly) “Well, OK,” he picked up the guitar with the sound that I had, and he played that amazing, beautiful solo. I was really happy that the heat was off of me (laughs). So that was about (the extent of) my involvement, I just got that one sound for them, and was just so glad that he played it and not me...

TQR: Around the time of “Full Moon Fever”, I remember you playing the solo on the video of “I Won’t Back Down” on what I thought was the George Harrison “Magical Mystery Tour” Stratocaster, which he called “Rocky” Was that actually George’s guitar and do you own it?

It was... We flew over to England to do that video, and Ringo came down to play in the video, and George brought that guitar down and he said “Here, you wanna play this?” and I was like, “Sure!” (laughs). It was a thrill to hold it and play it, but I don’t own that guitar. George was just like that though, he was very generous.

TQR: Obviously your relationship with George Harrison must have been a highlight to your career... What can you tell us about your conversations with George, maybe things you learned?



He was just one of the sweetest guys, he was always really nice to me and supportive, and told me that he thought I was good, and that meant a lot. In terms of things I’ve learned, I don’t know about musically, but as a person he affected me deeply. He was so generous and open with

me. I didn’t hang out with him a lot, but the few times he would come over or we’d meet up, he would always bring gifts for the guys at the session. Like the time we did the video, he walked in and he had these little Beatles watches from the ‘60s and he gave each guy one. One day, he came over to my house, and on the way over he stopped at a store and bought these hats, and he gave me a hat. And I thought, that’s just such a cool thing and that we can all be more giving to other people, and I hope I took some of that up from him.

TQR: Do you think that having such a strong keyboardist in Benmont Tench has contributed to your playing style, maybe allowed you to add more color to the tracks?



Absolutely... Benmont is AMAZING and he’s the best I’ve ever heard. He and I have played together for so long, that we instinctively complement, and inter-

weave, and don’t get in each other’s way tonally and melodically. There’s something really special about the way we play and I don’t think that anyone else could cover Benmont’s shoes.

TQR: What do you think is the legacy of The Heartbreakers?

Well, what kind of hit home to me when I saw the film is a couple of things. We truly love each other and we truly love playing together still, and we have songs that hold up over the years that I think are head and shoulders above most other bands’ that stay together this long that people really identify with... Those songs really have a lot to do with our legacy, and the love that we have when we play them is pretty obvious, because we’re still together and we still have a passion for what we do together, and we still believe in each other and support each other.

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TQR: Tell us about the Duesenberg guitars that you're currently endorsing.



It's a funny story... When you're on tour, different guitar people will come backstage or at the soundcheck and say "Here, try this guitar out." We were on tour with the Black Crowes a few years back, and I walked backstage on Tom's side, and there was this Duesenberg guitar sitting there, and the roadie said it was something they had brought for Tom

and I said, "Oh, that's interesting," and then nothing happened. So near the end of the tour, my roadie brought it out and said "Here, did you see this?" and I said, "Oh, I thought that was Tom's and he said, "No, he never looked at it and wasn't interested." So I pulled it out and kinda liked it, and then Nathan from Duesenberg came to one of the gigs, saw me playing it, and came back and talked to me. I liked the guitar, and he said "Let's just do a limited edition if you want," and that's what we did. It's a well made guitar, it's very solid and there's a vibrato arm on it and it stays in tune real well and has a good tone. I'm such a purist, I prefer vintage guitars, but having said that, this one is a really nice guitar and I do use it. But I still like my old stuff (laughs)...**To**

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: East Coast guitarist/songwriter Tom Guerra is currently in the studio recording the fourth Mambo Sons cd, slated for late 2008 release. For more info, see www.MamboSons.com

Tom's Dirty Knobs

We'll assume that since you're reading this, you've seen more than a few bands in your day, ranging from big-time arena and festival acts to cozy venues where the band is backed into a dim corner, challenged to win over a rowdy or indifferent crowd. The club culture that supports live music today certainly has changed from the days when listening rooms were filled with ardent fans intent on actually hearing their favorite band throw down, and one of the greatest listening rooms to ever exist was right here in Atlanta – the Great Southeast Music Hall. The room was large enough to turn a



profit, but small enough to provide an intimate setting for nearly every touring band to have bussed through the South throughout the musically rich decade of the '70s.

One of the highlights of the January '08 NAMM show in Anaheim was a privately sponsored show held at an equally intimate venue, the Imperial Ballroom in downtown Fullerton, featuring Mike Campbell and the Dirty Knobs. The last time we saw Mr. Campbell was in Atlanta at a packed Heartbreakers show in a venue we love to hate, known as the Coca-Cola Lakewood Amphitheater – a sprawling 'outdoor' venue with a low concrete roof over the first 100 rows or so and the acoustics of a sewer pipe. Yes, we saw Campbell's fawn AC30, but we can't claim to have truly heard what was coming out of those speakers...

However, having seen Campbell and the Dirty Knobs in an actual ballroom that might hold 300 (maybe half that number were in attendance) left us stunned by the band's capable presence, and Mike Campbell's uncanny ability to wring classic, hall of fame rock guitar sounds from a black-face Princeton Reverb and tweed Princeton, a few pedals, and a lone Rickenbacker 6-string with toaster pickups. While we have long considered Campbell a consummate American guitarist of impeccable style and taste (much like Benmont Tench on keys), this gig left us muttering, "That was fucking amazing." And it was. Especially if you yourself play a little guitar.



Of course, talent can never be underestimated, and Campbell and his crew brought plenty to the gig. Every song had been put together with just enough care to keep it loose and fun, which is obviously why the Dirty Knobs show up in the first place. Still, Campbell's knack for rendering perfection

with a guitar is no less impressive, and doing it with a Rickenbacker nearly all night was a particularly enlightening piece of slight-of-hand. Given our own awkward fumbblings

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with Rickenbackers over the years, we felt all the more humbled. But that didn't stop us from grabbing a Rickenbacker for review, even if it wasn't the exact model we really wanted... Before we delve into the Ric, however, how about a few brief reminders on optimizing blackface Princetons from Dave Boze, the original author of "Under 18 Watts of Whoop Ass" that appeared in our premier issue, November 1999...

By Dave Boze

Princeton Tech Tips



The "matching deal" (blueprinting) with Princetons was always a Dan Torres idea. I read about it many years ago, tried it and fell in love. The "matching" is really only occurring in the power supply/phase

inverter sections. There is an inherent mismatch in the phase inverter from the factory that I balance, and the rest of the matching just tunes it all up. I do virtually nothing to anything else in the circuit except add screen grid resistors to add protection to the power tubes that doesn't exist in the Princetons, but does in the bigger Fender amps from that period.

Some silverface Princetons (circa 1971 and later) are slightly different from the blackface design and need to be changed around. It's nothing big, but there are a couple things I like to do to make them pure blackface circuits.



Dry Princetons (non-reverb) and Princeton Reverb models differ in one way, but it's a *huge* difference... The Reverb models have one extra stage of pre-amp gain (3 vs. 2 stages). This is essential in overall depth and tone as all the harmonics are set there. The non-reverb models just lack the guts and depth of a Reverb model because of this. (It's my opinion about the sound, but the fact remains, the Reverb models have 100 times more gain in the pre-amp). You can "match up" a dry one, but to me they just don't sound nearly as good. I have actually taken dry Princetons, removed the tremolo and added that extra stage of gain, and then they really

ROCK! 

The Rickenbacker 620

While we *really* wanted a model 660 with toaster pickups, Rickenbacker is perpetually back-ordered and not one was to be found new or used, so we settled for the 620 with Rickenbacker 'hi gain' ceramic pickups. The 'cresting wave'



body shape is the same classic design found on the only vintage Ric we

have ever owned – a '60s 450 12-string that sounded as good as you can imagine played through our candy panel JMI AC30. We bought that guitar for just \$1200 in Cartersville, GA with César Diaz words echoing in the car as we drove north from Atlanta on I75... "*The solidbody 12's sound the best...*" Whether you agree with that statement or not doesn't really matter – César owned two, and that was good enough for us.



Vintage Rics dating to the '60s remain moderately priced compared to more popular Fender, Gibson and Gretsch guitars – around \$2200 for a solidbody 450 6-string, for example. Some basses and rare, early 6-string models sell for considerably more, but it is a fact that for most bass and guitar players, Rickenbackers have

remained a somewhat unapproachable curiosity. Why? Rics are by nature endowed with exceptionally low action, a slender neck shape, and a unique, chimey, trebly sound that just doesn't seem to resonate with nearly as many players as Fender and Gibson guitars. On the other hand, current production Rickenbacker guitars continue to faithfully honor the original designs created by Roger Rossmesl, and the factory in Orange County, CA builds very well-made and beautifully finished guitars. Trouble is, most people just don't play 'em... But as the guitarist in *Working Class Heroes*, Don Butler *does*, and we asked him to give us a short summary of the history of Ric pickups:

"The 'toasters' were originally from the late '50s and measured approximately 5K. Around '63 they increased them to

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between 6.5K-7.5K. #42 gauge wire was used and they had six Alnico magnet rods (even the neck pickups on the basses had the six slug

guitar pickups). I've got a Ric pickup from the mid sixties that reads 8K, so the amount of windings varied... Sometime in the late '80s to early '90s they went from around 8K to between 11K-14K. This made the pickups sound very dark and mid-rangey and a lot of the clarity and chime were lost when used on a 12-string. Around 2002, John Hall designed a computer program for winding the toasters to 7.4K and a scatterwound wind. These pickups sound really good and are very comparable to the pickups from the early '60s. I know they've sold a lot of aftermarket Toasters because of this and before those were available a few of us were un-winding bob-bins on a weekly basis to get them down to vintage specs. Unfortunately, the gauge changed to #43 or #44 wire when they wound them that high, and the wire gauge difference alone makes a tonal change.

The 'hi-gain' pickups are basically wound to the higher specs of '90s Toasters (11-14K), but use a ceramic type magnet for more gain and high end. John Hall calls these a "Rubberized Magnet" as they are a variation on ceramic magnet pickups that are pretty exclusive to Rickenbacker." **TO**

"Black Guitars Sound the Best"



Yeah, another gem casually tossed by the late César Diaz, although this one was offered with a sly smile and a voice tinged with the artificial weight of utter bullshit. Still, the black 620 is a

looker. As Don observed, the 'hi gain' pickups lack the startling clarity and chime of the vintage 'toasters,' but they still produce an interesting and unique voice that seems to marry best with the compression of 6V6 and EL84 power tubes. The Rick-o-Sound' output jack also enables the signal from the neck and bridge pickups to be split via a stereo 'Y' cord to two separate amps or channels and effects. We were partic-

ularly impressed with the Ric played through our tweed Vibrolux and Tremolux, and of course, the mighty JMI AC30. While Mike Campbell often pulled out a small plexi slide during his set in Fullerton, that's a move that frankly would never have occurred to us, nor would ramming the Ric through a pedalboard armed with boost, modulation or distortion effects. Until now, we had always viewed Rickenbackers as best suited for rendering the sharp, churning rock & roll rhythms that emerged from the British Invasion, but at least in theory, Campbell's performance blew all kinda holes in that assumption.



Our 620 simply never inspired anything remotely similar to the edgy and brilliant melodic hooks that Campbell seemed to

effortlessly launch from his Ric and small battery of amps, but in hindsight, the blame rests with us – not the guitar. The narrow neck, low action and frets on the 620 just seemed to lock us into chords; string bends and free-wheeling solos working out of chord progressions higher on the neck seemed awkward and unsuitable for the way the 620 was put together. Mea culpa. Your results may vary.

On the positive side, the 620 is flawlessly crafted and finished. The Schaller tuners are precise, the pots exhibited a smooth taper, and the fret and nut dress were excellent. We would definitely order a set of 'toaster' pickups from Ric to replace the high-gains, which are available direct from Rickenbacker at \$100/each. We learned everything we thought we needed to know about the Ric 620 during our review sessions, but it was the guitar lesson delivered by Mike Campbell on his '59 Ric that proved once again why it's best to leave your assumptions at the door when evaluating gear. And the lesson is – you can do a lot more with a Rickenbacker than you might think, just as long as you *think* you can. As Jimi said, "It's all in your mind." **TO**

www.thedirtyknobs.com

www.rickenbacker.com

Mike Campbell Signature

Duesenberg

Guitar reviews often present very different challenges from writing about amps or effects, speakers and tubes. Holding and playing a guitar creates an immediate flurry of first impressions not unlike the experience of meeting someone

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for the first time. Having just returned from the NAMM show in Anaheim (the worst possible place to hear gear), the lingering impressions of first-meetings remain fresh... Some people you like straight-away if for no other reason than they are simply a pleasure to be around. Others you admire for their earnest enthusiasm for discussing whatever it is they do, even when you know they've been painfully standing in the same spot for two days, barely sleeping, eating crappy, over-priced food and perhaps imbibing too much. Of course, a few people fail to make much of an impression at all, and then there is the ultimate meet &

great faux pas – dude who pretends to carry on a conversation while constantly looking over your shoulder to be sure he isn't missing someone more important. We luv that.

Guitars create the same range of impressions, good and bad, and we'll bet your first impressions rarely change much over time. "I hated this guitar at first, but now it has become my all-time favorite..." Nah. Complicating things further, it is very, very difficult to create unique guitar designs in 2008 without slipping into territory that leaves potential buyers conflicted by quirky features that don't look, feel or sound quite right. And it's just as challenging to avoid skirting all too familiar territory in which a custom-built guitar appears to be a lazy knock-off, as if the builder ran out of fresh ideas, or worse, deliberately chose to copy something with just enough detours to avoid being sued. Walking the endless aisles of the NAMM show provides a perfect opportunity to experience just how ruthless we can be in making snap judgments about guitars. While we keep walking more often than not when passing an exhibit featuring unusual or offbeat instruments, others stop us in our tracks, sucking us into the exhibit for a closer, longer look. Duesenbergs do that.

Duesenberg guitars were created by German guitarist and designer Dieter Goelsdorf, and they quickly attracted the attention of many well known players, including Ron Wood, Buddy Miller, Keb Mo, Elvis Costello, Billy Gibbons, Keith Richards and others. The Duesenberg line includes a wide range of 6-string electrics, highly-regarded 12-string guitars, and basses. USA distributor and guitar nut Nathan Fawley hooked us up with a Campbell model celebrating the 30th anniversary of Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers, presented

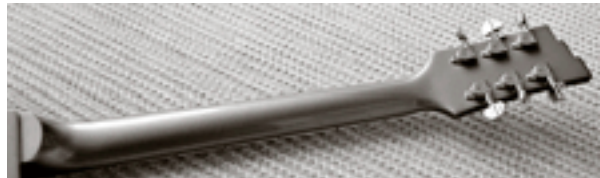
here for your consideration – the same model Mike Campbell played to open the Heartbreakers' Superbowl halftime performance.



Now, we could take the well-traveled path that dutifully describes the Duesenberg's thick DP90 and 'Grand Vintage Humbucker' pickups, the nifty medium jumbo fret work, a comfortable, semi-hollow single cut design with sustain block, a tremolo rig that we couldn't stop diddling (in tune), the sharp metallic Lake Placid blue paint job, precision tuners, etc... But more important than all of that is this... Why

might you enjoy playing the Doozy?

For starters, the Duesenberg feels good right out of the case. It's a friendly guitar that plays easy and requires no alteration to your playing style to accommodate things like smallish,



low frets, a neck shape that is too clubby or thin, nor is it top or bottom heavy. In fact, the Duesenberg feels *familiar*, which is better than merely good, playing like a Gibson with a Fender-ish longer scale length. The tremolo tailpiece tension is stiffer than a Bigsby, which we consider to be a good thing, and we experienced no problems with the guitar remaining in tune after our wobble sessions with the tremolo.

The pickups are also very unique, and unlike anything we



have heard since our review of the discontinued Rio Grande Metropolitan guitars. Both pickups reveal unusually strong output, and they seem to have been very deliberately voiced with plenty of midrange oomph. The bridge humbucker isn't dark – the B and E strings ring strong, but the treble frequencies aren't dominant, shrill or overbearing, and the underpinnings of both pickups are anchored in confident mids, which makes

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the Duesenberg appropriate and well-suited for just about every type of music you can imagine except perhaps a Jerry Reed tribute record, a Uriah Heep medley or C-tuned death metal. Blues... yes. Rock & roll... oh, yeah (yeah, yeah) Rockabilly... *hell* yeah. Jazz, even. The controls are also stupidly simple – a single volume and tone pot with a 3-way switch – no coil taps to make your humbucker sound like a neutered single coil, and so on.

At a list price of \$2960, we'll agree that the folks in Hannover are proud of their instruments, designed in Germany and made in Korea, but we found nothing 'cheap' about the Duesenberg – in fact, quite the opposite was true. Build, fit and finish quality are on a level with comparable imported Gretsch models, yet a look at the Duesenberg web site reveals guitars that copy nothing, past or present. Mike Campbell's collaboration with Duesenberg has resulted in a straight-ahead, no excuses, solid rock & roll guitar with style that plays and sounds great in its own very unique fashion. **To**

www.duesenbergusa.com, 714-580-1547

Clark Amplification

Were we surprised to discover Mike Campbell playing two rather modestly powered amps in a room larger than many clubs? Not really, and believe us, *The Dirty Knobs* were loud enough to get their point across. Jim Campilongo just recounted his UK tour with Martha Wainright playing a single blackface Princeton Reverb in the January issue of *TQR*, and the first article we published on the versatile Princeton was written by Dave Boze in our inaugural November 1999 issue. So as much as we still admire the big, rippin' vibe of a powerful 50 watt Marshall, an Ampeg V2, Super Reverbs and blonde Bassman heads, they just don't work on small stages in smaller venues, cranked – especially today, when high volume seems as welcome as second-hand smoke.



Well, among all of the moderately powered vintage amp designs ever created, it's hard to argue with the mass appeal of the tweed Deluxe. No reverb? You know

how to fix that with a Fender tube reverb box, a Holy Grail pedal, or the TC Electronic digital reverb we recently recommended. So how much would like to pay for yer tweed Deluxe? How about a hand-wired booteek version built by an

experienced pro with a solid reputation for \$875.00? Yes, it has come to this, and just in time for the "non-recession" that has us all thinking a lot harder about our gear acquisitions...



Michael Clark has been repairing, modifying and building custom amps for decades. We have known about his highly regarded tweed replicas for years, but it wasn't until we interviewed Clark that

we learned of his prior experience restoring and repairing vintage amps, and building his take on classic Marshall and Vox amps.

Sometimes we'll doggedly scroll through every page on eBay in various amp categories just to be reminded of the hundreds of amplifier models that have been built since the '40s. No matter how you may feel about eBay (it killed the used gear business for many music stores and pawn shops), it is a great resource for conducting research. During one of these sessions, we found a listing for a new Clark Beaufort 5E3 tweed Deluxe with a buy it now price of \$875.00 direct from Michael Clark. Reading the description, we understood that this was his stock, handwired Deluxe chassis shipped with a Mojotone lacquered tweed pine cabinet and Jensen P12Q speaker that Clark orders in quantities that provide a significant price break that can be passed on to his customers. Clark still uses NOS tube sockets in the 'budget' Beaufort, and ships with a NOS 5Y3 rectifier. He also includes a stout power cord that is easily the longest we have ever seen in a



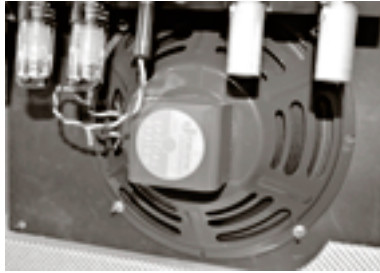
new amp. Basically, you're getting an over-built, custom handwired tweed Deluxe for the price of a mass-produced PCB amp. Imagine that. The Beaufort

sounds fantastic, it is extremely well built, and you can swap the stock 5Y3 rectifier for a 5AR for a little more girth, power and headroom. This, people, requires no equivocal hand-wringing what-so-ever. Enjoy the following introduction to Michael Clark, and bust a move before he regains his senses.

TQR: At \$875.00 the new tweed Deluxe we bought direct from you on eBay is a phenomenal deal.

Occasionally I'd offer an amp on eBay if a cabinet got dinged

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up or something and I've been involved with buying and selling on eBay for quite a while. We build the Beaufort Special specifically for sale on eBay and use the Jensen P12Q because

we think it sounds very good, and that speaker is a stockable item. When we build an amp with a different speaker it may take a month to get it, but we keep the Jensens on hand. We also use the Mojo replica 5E3 cab because it is a great value in quantity and I can pass the savings on to the customer. It is a solid fl" pine cab with /" finger joints and is nicely tweeded and lacquered.

TQR: So when someone orders a custom amp from you they can request virtually any speaker they want?

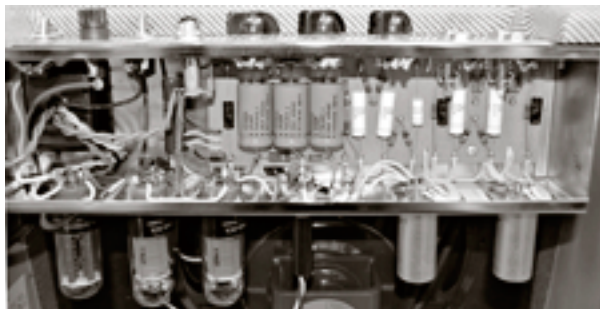
Absolutely. If you're dealing directly with me on a custom amp, I build it exactly how you want it. You can get the amp in a bigger cabinet or with add-on reverb, for example. I also will install a 0 to 9 or 0 to 15 Regulator on my amps.

TQR: Are the transformers in the Beaufort Special we bought the same as those in your custom-built amps?

They are the same custom wound transformers, but the concept is the same – the more amps I sell and parts I order, the lower the cost of the components. They are our transformers, made to our specs. They are not off the shelf components.

TQR: Is the circuit the same as well?

Yes, exactly the same. Probably where we vary a little bit is that we use a center tap 6.3V filament winding and Fender



just grounded one leg of the 6.3V to the chassis, (to use it as one side of the filament), and ran one wire to the other side of the filaments. We use the same wire routing, the same construction techniques with brass eyelets, all carbon comp Allen Bradley resistors, Carling switches, and the tube sockets are NOS made for the military in 1952.

TQR: So the bottom line is that aside from the Mojo cabinets that you can buy in quantity at a lower price and the Jensen P12Q RI speaker, the 5E3 Beaufort Special we bought on eBay is the same custom amp as the one you build and sell direct?

That's right.

TQR: Let's talk about how you first began working on guitar amps...

I went into the service in the early '70s and I had always been interested in electronics, so I was trained in electronics and radar repair for a year at Fort Monmouth, NJ. All the equipment in those days ran on vacuum tubes. There was a level of drastic overbuild for much of the military equipment being built then, and this influenced my build style greatly. After I got out of the military, I traveled and played guitar for years using all the tube amps I would come to repair and replicate.

TQR: And how did your experience with amp repairs evolve?



In the early '80s while I was playing the guitar,

getting someone to fix something for me was virtually impossible... everyone had moved on, so I got back into repair as a sideline business working on old Marshalls, Fenders and Ampegs. As parts and things became more available, I started building a few amps – replicas of the tweed Deluxe, tweed Champ, and low and high powered tweed Twins. Back then Mojotone was just about the only source for parts to build amps, and I've had a long relationship with them when they were on the West Coast and now in North Carolina.

TQR: When and how did you actually begin to make a living building amps?

Well, in those days I always talked with a lot of people like Gerald Weber and Ken Fischer, because there just weren't that many of us building amps at the time. The first big break for me was when Gerald Weber wrote a review of the same amp you bought – the tweed Deluxe. I was one of the first to get a web site up, too, and that helped, (although it hasn't changed much since then), and our business grew from word of mouth.

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TQR: And you eventually expanded into other vintage tweed models like the Pro. Is there one model that outsells all the rest?

Hands-down it's the Beaufort (replica of the 5E3 Deluxe), and maybe after that, the Tyger (replica of a tweed Bandmaster). We've also done quite a few restorations on vintage models of those amps, as well as countless 4x10 Bassmans, early JTM 45s and tons of other Fender tweed and blackface amps.

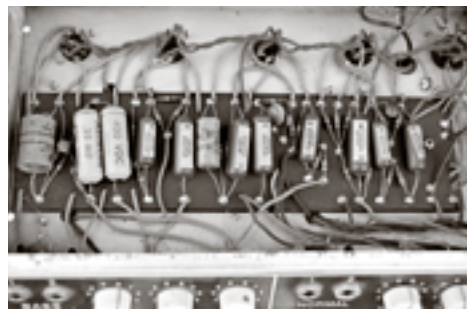
TQR: Are you still active with repairs and restorations?



I think you have to be. It's very important to our business to maintain an accurate perception of exactly how those amps really sound. Before anybody was really doing it, we

were building replicas of JTM 45's, having restored some early models, and we have on request built Vox AC15s. I also love building Fender blackface replica amps. You'll see on my web site that I enjoy fixing up and reselling Bandmaster and Twin reverb amps. They are really fantastic when they're done right.

TQR: Do you receive many silverface amps to be blackfaced?



Absolutely, and there was a time when I used to do more drastic modifications than I do today. I'll do historically

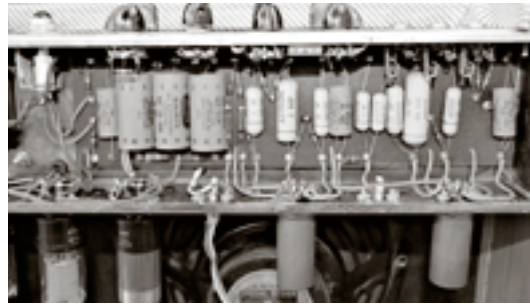
correct restorations as much as I can, and to the extent that I can acquire old parts, but if someone wants to go too far beyond a historically accurate restoration, I'm really not interested in modifying a vintage amp.

TQR: Are you saying that you actually go to the extent of locating authentic old components?

Yes. In fact, before restorations became so popular, I used to buy old Fender blue molded caps from Torres Engineering

that they had pulled from amps they had serviced. Most of the time they were still within spec. I actively seek old parts in my amps, like the 5E3 with the old tube sockets. I'll also search for old CTS pots, the right tube sockets, the right capacitors and carbon comp resistors that sound older, and that's where I think we're a little bit different.

When you think about the old amps and how they sound, part of that sound is the combination of the parts drifting and a lit-



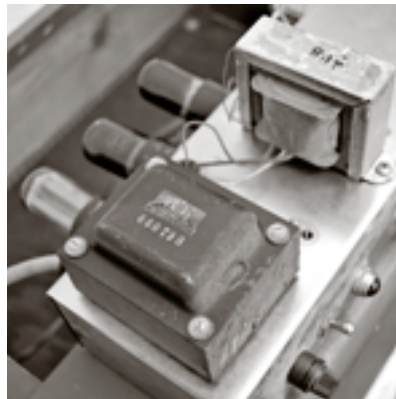
tle more leakage in the old caps than you'd see in

newer ones. Like a car back in those days, you could almost get a lemon right off the lot if the components happened to be on the wrong end of the tolerance curve. Doing restorations of old Deluxes, for example, I've heard some that sounded pretty good, some that were just OK, and others that were pretty great, but they all sound different due to the parts tolerances and drift. They were building those amps rather rapidly in the late '50s, and the machinery and insulating materials used to build transformers weren't as precise as they are today, so the tone we hear in old amps reflects a lot of those factors.

TQR: And the transformers were inconsistent as well...

Yes, and you can see some that vary on the voltages. Probably the most consistent output transformers were those found in the late '50s tweed Bassman.

TQR: So given the inconsistencies inherent in the old amps, when you set out to build replicas, you have to know exactly what your target is.



Yes we do, and you will see that concept in the Beauforts we build. Some of the resistors we use are slightly off tolerance from the original schematic and specifications. It helps to get an authentic "old" sound. Our power

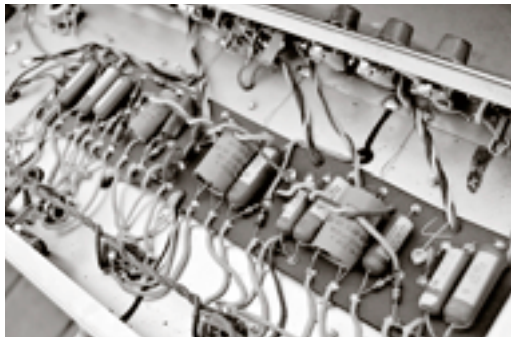
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transformers are also slightly different. If you were to measure a 5E3 power transformer from the late '50s, you might see 365V or 370V on the plates, and on mine you'll see something like 340V. It's a little bit softer in tone and less edgy. Louder and brighter is always a good way to get someone's attention, but it's not always the best way to go for tone. Another option with our power transformers is that you can use a 5V4 or 5AR4 in the Beaufort Special and put the plate voltages up to 360-365 volts. This matches well with the voltages you would see on an original 5E3 tweed Deluxe and gives a brighter, more "in your face" tone that will cut in a louder live band. We try to make our amps historically accurate and very consistent. We also use an authentic soldering method that Fender used in the old days.

TQR: And does that make a difference?

No, not a tonal difference, but I want it to look right. That's not to say that speaker cabling or input cables can't make a difference.

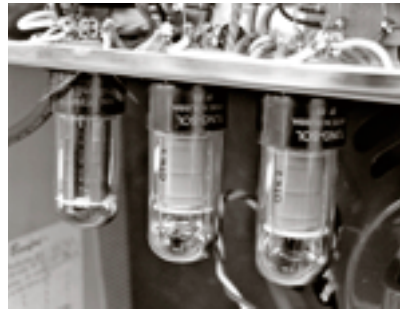
TQR: Amp builders are always touting the components they use. Why should non-technical guitar players care?



As far as resistors go, they probably don't make a ton of difference. You might be able to find someone that believes they can hear the difference, but Allen Bradleys are important in my opinion because they are simply the best carbon comp resistors ever made. They don't drift and they are, for the most part, low noise. Fender found that out the hard way when CBS bought the company, and they eventually switched back to 1 watt Allen Bradley carbon comp resistors. As far as capacitors go, I do think you can hear the difference. You have to trust the builder, and you either like the sound of the amp someone builds or you don't. Mallory 150s are a good cap, Sozos are even better in my opinion, and for my older-style amps I like to use the Jensen copper foil and oil caps. They tend to be not as good a cap electrically as the Spragues or Mallorys or Sozos, and they may even have a little bit of leakage, but that makes them *sound* like the old amps. The weird thing about all this is that the Jensen caps cost me 15 times as much as a cap that is actually better electrically. You get what you pay for in an odd way. Those are important

things for guitar players to know, and most of the people that I build amps for appreciate what's under the hood, so to speak.

TQR: We noticed that you are using reissue Tung Sol 6V6s, which seems to indicate that you are paying attention to what's happening with current production tubes. We like the Tung-Sols a lot.



We do, too. I try them all out within my ability to do so, and for the longest time we used NOS tubes in our Beauforts because current production tubes just wouldn't stand

up. It is a brutal circuit on a 6V6 tube, and the Tung Sols will hold up.

TQR: You also included an unusually long, gig-worthy power cord on our \$875 Deluxe.

We usually use a 15 or 20 foot cord, and sometimes we have gotten complaints that the cords are too long.

TQR: Well of course you would. Have you toyed with offering any other tweed models on eBay like the 5E3 Beaufort Special?

Well, we'll definitely continue to offer the Beaufort Special 5E3, but I'm not sure we could keep up with the demand for any other models, and we certainly couldn't sell them at such a low price. For now, when we have the time we'll build the 5E3s and sell them on eBay. For the money, it's a hell of a fine amp. Keep an eye out for a Beaufort Reverb Special (blackface Deluxe Reverb Replica) new model to show up as a "Special". **To**

www.clarkamplification.com, 803-791-7513

The Unmistakable Vibe of the 'UniVibe' Part 2

Following our February adventures with the Dunlop Stereo Univibe I-SC, Fulltone Deja'Vibe and the Red Witch Moon Phaser, we jumped into three additional Vibe effects that deserve your attention – the Sweetsound UltraVibe and MojoVibe, and the soon to be released FoxRox AquaVibe. Given the breadth and depth of the booming effects pedal biz, it has become challenging to grasp the number of boost, dis-

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tortion, delay, and modulation effects being built today, but it is abundantly clear that we unearthed an all-star group of 'vibe' effects, with thanks to Mike Piera (Analogman) for

greasing the wheels.



Bob Sweet's \$289.00 Mojo Vibe available through Analogman is a compact option to his original UltraVibe, and both effects really shine. The bigger UltraVibe creates exceptionally realistic and natural sounding rotation and swirl effects, plus wobbly pitch-bending vibrato, and the voice of the Ultra Vibe is indeed ultra-organic without imposing any unintended consequences on your tone. The sound of the Ultra Vibe is authentically analog by nature, deep and authoritative, rich and warm, yet the smaller MojoVibe sounds equally good. The

Mojo includes a Chorus/Vibrato toggle switch, and an internal DIP switch enabling a warmer, 'vintage' effect or a brighter, modern sound via a buffered FET input.



Both effects feature

pedal inputs for passive volume or expression pedals to control speed, and the large speed knob Sweet uses is also easily rotated with your foot. We would probably choose the MojoVibe simply because it frees up more valuable pedal board space. The Ultra Vibe (\$279.00) is built with a hard-wired AC cord while the Mojo runs on a 9 volt adapter.

Dave Fox' new (price yet to be determined) FoxRox AquaVibe boasts the widest range of speeds among all the Vibes we auditioned, from a barely detectable sloooow pulse to the fluttering beat of hummingbird wings. Chorus or pitch-shifting vibrato are selected with a top-mounted toggle switch, and inside the box are blue Level and Bright trimmers that adjust output volume and input impedance from 47K to 250K. Lower impedance settings roll off treble and produce a spookier, darker sound. Like the UltraVibe, MojoVibe and the Red Witch, the AquaVibe produces a fascinating range of



moody vibrato and orbital effects reminiscent of the recordings made with the original Uni-Vibe by Hendrix, Trower and Gilmour. All of these effects produce an exceptionally realistic, musically pleasing range of effects with excellent clarity from both clean and distorted signals.

Fundamental changes to our unaffected tone and dynamic attack were negligible, we detected no added noise, and all three effects feature true bypass.

We are also keenly aware that some of you perhaps have little interest in acquiring such sounds. Indeed, you may at this very moment be feeling anxious and slightly irritated reading about effects that don't appeal to you in the least... We understand, but as we compulsively fooled around with what are arguably the best of the best UniVibe effects, we discovered that all of them allowed us to set speed, volume and intensity at very subtle levels that endowed notes and chords with an almost imperceptible sensation of movement that is absolutely captivating, if difficult to easily identify. No intense, swirling rotation or wobbly pitch-warble, but an ever-so-light whisper of movement that adds dimensionality and depth without detracting from the fundamental voice of your guitar or the song. Surely someone has used this effect with such subtlety, but aside from recognizing what might be perceived as enhanced depth void of delay repeats or echo, how could we know? Whether a wily rock icon or producer has performed such subtle sonic acrobatics with a UniVibe or not, you might want to consider doing so, and by the way... the effect is no less appealing with an amplified *acoustic* guitar. The longer you think about this, the more it makes sense. Sound enhanced by ambient movement is often preferable to a flat, resounding thud.

As for our qualitative summary of the excellent 'Vibe' effects assembled here, once you get to this level of experience, design and build quality, the absurdity of the typical guitar magazine 'shootout' or rating system is completely revealed for what it is – a presumptuous means of conveniently ending a formulaic, paint-by-numbers review. Can you handle the



truth? The majority of players seeking a Uni-Vibe vibe might well choose the lowly \$129.00 Dunlop solely on affordability and the 'close enough for rock & roll' factor. We wouldn't,

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nor would we pick the Deja 'Vibe for reasons already explained, but we'll bet the Dunlop outsells all the other effects presented here by far, based solely on price. The Red Witch Moon Phaser is perhaps best considered as a unique

'tremo-phase' device of extraordinary depth and dramatic moodiness, while the AquaVibe, Mojo and UltraVibe provide the best in rich chorus and tremolo 'Uni-Vibe' effects that can also plant a subtle depth charge in your sound when used with moderation, as we have described. Which among these sexy effects would *you* consider 'the best'? We can't possibly know. We felt that the three true Uni-Vibes built by Sweetsound and FoxRox finished in a virtual dead heat. Hit their web sites and take your pick – you certainly won't be disappointed, because every one of these effects is exceptional. By now, this is a matter of record for Bob Sweet and Dave Fox. We'll leave the Red Witch Moon Phaser in a separate category, capable of producing its own unique if more extreme range of sonic dreamscapes and equally inspiring sounds. *May the vibe be with you, and as always, Quest forth...To*

www.foxroxelectronics.com,
www.sweetsound.com, 954-971-7334
www.analogman.com

The Quest for Über Boost...

Does 'Bigfoot' Exist?

You and I both know that among all the gizmos made for guitarists that in one way or the other promise a personal luvfest with the muse within, boost and distortion pedals numerically rule the universe. Why? Because the sound of a distorted



electric guitar has progressively permeated popular music on vinyl, tape and disc for decades – in fact, distortion in all its guises has transcended the root sound of the guitar itself, rendering countless varieties of distortion that vary in intensity, sustain, tone and attitude. So we now have hundreds of distortion devices to sift and choose from, including amplifiers that are capable of producing their own distortion naturally, pedals not required...

electric guitar has progressively permeated popular music on vinyl, tape and disc for decades – in fact, distortion in all its



And for every e-mail or call we receive asking when we are going to review something other than a distortion effect, we receive far more inquiries about still another builder's take on distortion, as if this guy in particular has finally cracked some secret code 40 years after the introduction of the Maestro Fuzztone. How many different ways can distortion be sliced and diced? What do we find pleasing or displeasing about different distortion effects? Are there really more than 300 distinctly different distortion effects new and old worth exploring, or are we allowing ourselves to be repeatedly sucked into the hype created by the people building this stuff? The truth is, the musical instrument business has always traded on emotional one-upmanship... Noone wants to be the last dumb shit to get the word on a cool piece of gear, and there is a certain pride in being among the first to discover and embrace innovation.



Remember the rack-mounted guitar rigs spawned in the '80s? Guitarists became live sound engineers when they weren't fussing with their hair, challenged with the task of linking banks of FX loops, limiters, compressors, power conditioners, graphic EQs, noise suppressors and modulation and distortion effects all in the Quest for Bitchin' Guitar Tone. Eventually, many players got tired of fucking with it, regained their senses and rediscovered the beauty of a guitar, an amp and a 15 foot cord (more or less).



We suspect that the enduring appeal of distortion effects has bloomed so substantially for three reasons: the increased availability of high quality components used by small, custom builders; the trend toward lower decibel levels at live performances that prevents bigger amplifiers from being cranked; and you can't really rock hard without distortion – even in the den. The result is an abundance of riches of such grand proportions that it has

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become nearly impossible to grasp or comprehend what is being built and how all of these effects past and present truly compare.

Well, in recognition of the obvious obsession with dis-

tortion devices, we are introducing you to still another stalwart entry in this edition of the *Quest* that produces a remarkably wide range of pleasing, busted up tones to feed your rock & roll fantasies...

The Rockett Boost



One look at the Rockett Boost inspires a flurry of reactions. Lots of toggles... no markings offering a hint as to what they might do... nice, shiny copper box... and then there is the

box the Rockett Boost arrives in – an expensive-looking, matte black paper container classy enough to hold jewelry or a Devon teacup, and it actually does hold a pair of flimsy white cotton gloves tucked inside. So you think, “Hmmm, somebody cares about the little things...” And when you inevitably open up the Rockett Boost, whether to replace the 9V battery or to simply ogle the internals, the meticulously twisted wire pairs and the obsessively neat and tidy layout will prompt you to again mutter, “Hmmm, someone cares



about the little things...” Clearly, they do. Could this be Über Boost – the Big Foot of boost pedals?

While the function of the symmetrical array of four toggle switches and two knobs are comprehended easily

enough, this is not a tool for the impatient or impulsive. The top toggle is a line buffer designed to compensate for signal loss caused by multiple pedals. We didn’t need it, but if you do, it’s there, and it works. The top left knob is a straight-up, global tone pot, and we *like* tone controls on boost pedals. The top right knob is a boost level control, and it isn’t subtle (a little goes a long way). The lower left toggle is ‘punch’/down, ‘bite’/up. The center toggle yields ‘cut’/down, ‘boost’/up, and the lower right toggle is a 3-way with ‘Fat,’ ‘Clean’ and ‘Treble’ settings. Now, what does this mean?



Essentially, 21 different tone and boost stage options accessed from the three lower toggle switches with global control over tone

and level. For example, the Fat/Clean/Treble toggle settings deliver just what the descriptions imply. Combine any of those settings with the mondo-intense ‘Boost’ or more reserved ‘Cut’ settings on the center toggle while choosing either ‘Punch’ (thick) or ‘Bite’ (sharper) from the left toggle, and season to taste with the global tone and level knobs. Things get really interesting when you also begin to experiment with different pickup selections on your guitar du jour as the Rockett interacts with it and your amp... The Rockett delivers an extremely wide range of selectable *voices* and *different gain stages* from one source that are easily understood and managed once you become familiar with the controls. And where some boost and distortion effects may produce an inherent EQ notch or ‘bump,’ roll off treble as gain is increased, or chop off bass frequencies, the Rockett gives you the ability to precisely manage variable EQ and boost intensity stages to obtain some very interesting and unique results well beyond the capabilities of most ‘boost’ pedals.

Understand, however, that the Rockett far surpasses our concept of a ‘clean boost’ that incrementally expands your unaffected sound, making it merely ‘bigger.’ Granted, the toggle settings are designed to create different levels of boost intensity as a starting point, but the ‘Level’ knob ramps things up very quickly in all of the toggled settings, and more time and experimentation are required to tap into the subtle boost settings we would describe as a ‘clean boost.’ We’re not saying the Rockett is a gonzo runaway train, but it can easily start a grease fire on your pedal board (and enjoy doing it). This is simply a *badass* tool for rockers, and we conjured some very scary and unforgettable blues tones from it as well. Rest

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assured that when you step on the Rockett, you will only be limited by your own limitations.

The Rockett Boost is also dead quiet and undetectable in the signal chain when turned off. It can run on a supplied 9 volt battery or separate 9 volt power supply (not included). For more of what the builder describes as a “Hi Fi” sound that increases the width of the tonal frequencies, an upgraded version can be ordered that includes an Auricap in a coupling cap position and a few other “secret tweaks.” According to the Rockett web site, the current lead time for orders is 4-6 weeks. Cost: \$349.00 [To](#)

www.rockettpedals.com, 720-936-8623

Acoustic Pickup

L.R. Baggs M1



There are more than a few options for acoustic pickups today, and most of them are sold with the promise of exceptionally realistic ‘acoustic’

tone (which to us, is the sound of strings amplified by a fine wooden box and top). If you happen to play a rare old acoustic guitar and wish to amplify it, popular under-saddle piezo rigs can lose their appeal quickly – do you really want a tech putting his hands all over your sweet baby to fit a piezo under the saddle? And of course, there is the infamous piezo ‘quack’ that allowed us to trade unbridled feedback for something less than a warm, rich and airy amplified acoustic



tone. Our first adventure with acoustic amplification occurred in 1979 and it was actually pretty successful... On the advice of legendary Atlanta

guitar builder and repairman Jay Riness (he would never have called himself a tech), we installed a nickel-sized Shadow transducer made in what was then West Germany, using a wad of supplied putty and positioning the Shadow flush



against the underside of the spruce top of our 1952 Gibson J45, adjacent to the treble side of the bridge. Admittedly crude by today’s standards,

perhaps, but the Shadow worked *very well* as a passive transducer with our Gibson at moderate listening room volume, and that amazing flexible German putty held it in place for thirty years until we finally pulled it out last week.

We bought an L.R. Baggs M1 passive soundhole pickup for \$139.00 including delivery online, and since our old J45 had already been equipped with a brass strapjack, installing the M1 took all of five minutes. The Baggs strapjack contacts are gold plated, the shaft is adjustable to fit different endblock lengths, and high-quality Mogami wire is used. According to the L.R. Baggs product info, the key to the M1s sound is TriAxial Dynamic Technology that allows the M1 to sense both string and top vibrations. The M1 is actually a dual-coil humbucking design in which the hum-canceling coil is suspended under the main coil by a tuned support that allows it to move in three dimensions. The primary coil moves with the guitar top, creating a body signal in the suspended secondary coil. The polepieces in the M1 are also completely adjustable using the tool supplied.

Well, the Baggs not only looks right in our J45 – it sounds fantastic, reproducing the warmth, sweetness and clarity of the Gibson without the artificially exaggerated, crispy presence of a piezo. Chords are balanced, rich and full with beautiful definition and airy sustain, and single notes are extraordinarily clear, woody and natural sounding. The M1 does indeed capture the acoustic qualities of the guitar, yet we experienced no problems with feedback or top vibration in very close proximity to an acoustic amp set at volume levels that would be required for a large room. No boominess,



chirpy treble tones or exaggerated string noise from the fretboard or fingerpick-

ing... In fact, our first round with the M1 in the Gibson consumed two hours, encouraged in no small part by a great guitar and old friend that has never sounded better. Stay tuned for future reviews of the best acoustic amps as well...[To](#)

www.lrbaggs.com

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Sound Better Play Better™

Don't miss your opportunity to save 10% on selected products offered by members of your ToneQuest Resource Directory!

Look for exclusive ToneQuest discount offers in gold and reference TQR when placing your order.

TQR Directory News! The Gibson Repair Shop, Nashville, new gear from Visual Sound, and Carr Amps! Welcome, Mercury Magnetics!

A Brown Soun The all-new Hemp E Cones, Bass 10's, and 10's for guitar are here! In addition to A Brown's original hemp cones, John Harrison has created a new "E" cone that is a bit brighter than the original hemp cone. Killer tone for Fender amps, or in combination with the original Hemp Tone Tubby speaker. The bass 10's have received rave reviews from none other than Tommy Shannon, and the 10's for guitar will knock you out in your Princeton, Vibrolux, or Super. A Brown Soun was founded in San Rafael, California in 1974 by John Harrison – a working musician who refused to settle for the few reconing choices that existed when he first needed speakers repaired in the Bay Area. Since then, John has been recognized by artists such as Carlos Santana, Neil Young, Pearl Jam, Van Halen, and many others as California's top speaker reconer. In addition to its famed reconing services, A Brown Soun also custom builds speakers and cabinets for virtually every application. The renowned Tone Tubby speaker developed by A Brown Soun has received rave reviews from top professionals around the world. Brown's recently released series of speakers for guitar and bass featuring hemp cones is setting a new benchmark for guitar and bass speaker performance, with dramatically improved clarity, note definition, frequency response, durability, and power handling. Whether you need new speakers, custom built cabinets, or vintage speakers rebuilt and sounding right, A Brown Soun is your professional resource. As the Tone Tubby logo says, "We're committed to tone!" and that means yours.

*A Brown Soun Inc. San Rafael, CA
www.abrownsoun.com 415-479-2124*

Acme Guitar Works offers a comprehensive selection of top-quality pickups and guitar electronic components. Their signature service is providing complete pre-wired electronic assemblies, with or without pickups, that allow you to easily upgrade the electronics in your guitars. Whatever your skill level may be with regard to wiring and electronics, these turn-key solutions offer a real benefit by allowing you to concentrate on the fun part of your craft (playing your guitar!) rather than spending your day off with a soldering iron in your hand.

Assemblies are available in a number of different configurations. Opt for Fender parts - such as pickguards and control plates/knobs - or order your assembly on a template and use your existing plastic.

Pickup options include Lollar, Fralin, Suhr, Van Zandt, Fender, and Duncan.

Assemblies for many guitars are available, including Strats, Teles, and Les Pauls, along with Fender

basses. If you don't see what you want on their website then give them a call.

Acme also stocks a complete selection of top-quality wiring kits. These kits include the finest components at reasonable prices, with no hype involved. Just the good stuff, no fluff.

*Acme Guitar Works
Bear, DE
www.acmeguitarworks.com
302-836-5301*

AllParts Top players and guitar builders rely on Allparts for the right guitar and bass parts they need, in stock and ready to ship. AllParts offers a complete range of finished and unfinished guitar bodies in a variety of premium tone woods, including alder and swamp ash, with optional highly figured maple tops. Finishes include all of the most popular vintage colors, including see-through blonde! Premium necks are also available with maple, rosewood, and ebony fingerboards in a variety of neck shape profiles, with or without binding. **Custom design your next guitar with AllParts, including tailpieces, tuning keys, bridges, nuts and saddles, pickups, pickguards (that really fit), knobs, hardware, and electronics for many popular models.** Bass players and lefties can also find the parts they need at AllParts! You can also rely on Allparts for hard to find parts, along with vacuum tubes and amplifier hardware.

*AllParts, Houston, TX
www.allparts.com 713-466-6414*

Analogman TQR readers are invited to save \$25 on the Sunface 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 Screemers 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*

Antique Electronic Supply Antique Electronic Supply carries the largest selection of parts for guitars, amplifiers, high-end audio, antique radios and amateur radios.

Looking for an obscure vacuum tube? Antique Electronic Supply has the world's largest inventory of NOS vacuum tubes, carrying hard to find tubes from such companies as RCA, GE, Sylvania, Tung Sol and others. They carry a great selection of currently produced tubes from JJ/Tesla, Winged-C (which are manufactured in the JSC Svetlana Factory in St. Petersburg, Russia), Valve Art and EI. In addition they stock Groove Tubes, Ruby Tubes and other current production tubes from both Russia and China.

Along with vacuum tubes AES has a wide range of parts for Ampeg, Vox, Fender and Marshall amplifiers, carrying such items as speakers from both Jensen and Celestion, tolex, handles, grill cloth, reverb tanks, resistors, capacitors, transformers, knobs, switches and other much needed parts. Antique Electronic Supply also carries Korg keyboard parts, as well as components for Leslie cabinets and a variety of books, software, test equipment, soldering supplies and chemicals.

Antique Electronic Supply has a great selection of parts for guitars and basses. They offer a full range of parts for both Fender and Gibson, stocking such items as bridges, pickguards, knobs, potentiometers, and tuning knobs. They have recently started carrying Badass Bridges, and they also sell Pro Co and Maxon effects pedals. Information and images are available for all of their items on www.tubesandmore.com.

For 22 years Antique Electronic supply has been in business and they know how to please their customers, offering same day shipping on orders placed before 2:00 p.m. MST. Catalogs are available upon request.

*Antique Electronic Supply, Tempe, AZ
www.tubesandmore.com, 480-820-5411*

Avatar Speakers was founded in 1991 by Dave Noss and is known for selling well-built, high value guitar and bass speaker cabs loaded with the best speakers in the world from Celestion and Eminence. We also offer the best prices on raw speakers from these fine companies.

Avatar recently introduced the new G2112H Premier cabs available in Red, Orange, Green, Brown, Black or Blonde tolex, loaded with your choice of speakers. Features include 13 ply baltic Birch cabs with superb dovetail corner joints and your choice of open, oval, or closed backs. Grill cloth colors include Wheat, Black, vintage Fender and Oxblood with white piping.

We also offer a Premier Vintage cab modeled after the '60s Bluesbreaker.

Avatar also markets their great sounding Hellatone line of 12" guitar speakers – aged Celestion G12H30's and Vintage 30's, both of which have

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received stellar reviews.

*Avatar Speakers, Dalton Gardens, ID
208-762-5251, www.avatarspeakers.com*

Callaham Vintage Guitars & Amps

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 540-955-0294*

Carr Amplifiers

Check out the ALL NEW Carr Mini-Mercury! The Mini-Merc is an extremely versatile combo with all tube Reverb, 3 position Boost switch, Treble cut switch, and a built in attenuator yielding 8, 2, fi, or 1/10 watt output. 100% hand wired and every amp is rigorously tested before leaving our shop.

The Mini-Mercury offers tones and big amp 'feel' ranging from lush 60s American reverb to modified 'brown' '70s British crunch at almost any volume. The cabinet measures a friendly 19.5" wide by 15" tall by 10" deep at the bottom sloping to 9" deep on the top. Our new Mini-Mercury has the same electronics as the standard 1-12" Mercury differing only in its smaller cabinet and its warm and smoky 10 inch Eminence "Lil Buddy" hemp cone speaker.

Plug into any Carr amp and you'll immediately understand why we said in our first very first ToneQuest review, "Finally, somebody got it right." Right, as in the perfect marriage of classic Fender balance, clarity, and head room, with innovative overdrive features that produce natural, sweet tube distortion, but never at the expense of the tone you've worked so hard to capture in your instruments. Lots of small-batch amp builders use premium components and labor-intensive, point-to-point construction, and Carr is no exception. The Solen filter caps used in Carr amps alone cost more than the sum of the parts in many boutique circuits!

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.

Some of the greatest speakers available today are part of the Celestion Classic Series. Over the years, we've applied our design expertise to build a range of speakers that will give you classic Celestion tone, no matter what style you play. The Alnico Series and the Heritage Series, both hand-built in Ipswich, England, are the result of meticulous attention to detail, created for those who are absolutely dedicated to the pursuit of true Vintage tone.

For high-volume OEMs, Celestion Originals represent outstanding value for money. We have the specialist experience coupled with the most advanced, high-volume manufacturing techniques to deliver Celestion tone, quality and brand appeal at extremely competitive prices.

*Celestion International Ltd www.celestion.com
For OEM Enquiries, contact Andy Farrow at
Celestion America, 732-683-2356
For retail and distribution enquiries, contact
Group One Ltd 516-249-1399 www.g1limited.com*

The Chicago Bluesbox by Butler Custom Sound is a series of amplifiers built with the blues player in mind, but is also compatible with virtually any style of music — from traditional to progressive blues rock. The Chicago Blues Box delivers clear, clean, harmonic complexity with headroom to spare, to thick, authentic, in-your-face crunch.

The flagship of the Chicago Blues Box series is the Roadhouse model, an all-tube, point-to-point, hand-wired, single-channel 50-watt tone machine hand-built in the USA right in Chicago. The straight-forward design makes this a favorite among players seeking authentic, full-sounding tone across the entire sound spectrum.

Over 60 hours of hand-built assembly goes into every Chicago Blues Box. Butler Custom Sound starts with a sheet of rubber impregnated fiber board, drills and tapes over 150 solder eyelets. The board is then assembled with electronic components and soldered from the bottom side for a reliable connection. The custom-wound, paper bobbin transformers, pots and switches are installed into the 16-gauge steel chassis which provides road-worthy strength. BCS then installs their proprietary Magic Wand ground bar system and the final wiring process begins. Before any tube is

installed, each undergoes a stringent hand-selection process. The boards are vibration-tested for intermittent connections, lock-tight is applied to hardware, and wires are twisted and bundled.

Before any amp leaves the Butler Custom Sound factory, each undergoes 60 hours of sound and quality testing. "We're players, not only engineers and technicians, so part of our job is to plug in to each amp and test for output noise levels, vibration and most importantly, tone," says BCS president, Dan Butler. The Chicago Blues Box has captured the elusive 3-dimensional, harmonic rich tone that is missing from so many of today's new amplifier designs. This amp is alive and ready to help inspire any player's art form.

*Chicago Bluesbox,
Butler Custom Sound
chicagobluesbox.com.630-832-1983*

Dave's Guitar Shop offers Fender, PRS, National, Taylor, Gretsch, Guild, Hamer, Vinetto, Ernie Ball, Rickenbacker, Martin, Santa Cruz, and many other fine new and used instruments, plus new and used amplifiers such as Fender, Marshall, Line 6, Carr, Matchless, Victoria, Bad Cat, Dr.Z, Savage Audio, Ampeg, plus hundreds of guitar effects, 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 they sell, because they're 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*

Doug's Tubes Doug Preston founded Doug's Tubes in 2002. It became an evolution originating from his passion for music, guitars, and tone. We are now serving thousands of satisfied guitar players and audiophiles internationally. It has been my intention from the beginning to seek out the most reliable and great sounding current production tubes, and to help influence manufacturers into reproducing many NOS tubes to keep our vintage amps going, such as the JJ 7591. We offer the most common choice NOS, currently manufactured, and hand selected used tubes at a fair price. If you need help in selecting tubes for your particular application, call Doug at Doug's Tubes, your one stop tube shop. Making music sound better, one amp at a time.

*Doug's Tubes, Levittown, NY 516-314-0357,
www.dougstubes.com*

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

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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.

TONE & STYLE - All Eastwood Guitars are fitted with high-quality modern components that offer an optimal playing experience that far exceeds their 1960's original counterparts. It is hard to find a guitar these days that oozes more vintage style than an Eastwood! All Eastwood Guitars are setup professionally before shipping to our customers.

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 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.com>
514-631-5787 ext. 22*

Fargen Amplification Inc was founded by Benjamin Fargen in 1997 to accommodate the needs of working guitarists that want pure vintage hand crafted tube tone, quality, modern features, reliability and value. Fargen Amplification started out from day one building custom one of a kind amps that filled a void in the market for those looking for a "tone match"...some of those early one-of-a-kind amps have become staples in the Fargen Amplification product line such as the "Blackbird" and "Bordeaux" amplifiers. We still offer full custom "one of a kind" builds from our Fargen Custom Shop. "Rather than just building nice vintage clones...I set out to improve upon what I thought were the best tube amp designs ever built and then put a signature spin on them. The signature elements that

have been added were drawn from years of gigging around town with my own vintage gear as well as vintage tube amp service work. I kept notes on all the mods, tweaks, adjustments and repairs that I made over the years while also noting the comments and overall wants of working guitarists. Because I also consider myself a "working guitarist" I find it very easy to relate to people on a "player to player" level rather than just a "technician to player" level. This goes a long way in getting people the tone they want and are looking for."

Check out our full hand wired tube amp product line @ www.fargenamps.com and find the tube amp sound you have been looking for!

*Fargen Amplification, Sacramento, CA
916-971-4992, www.fargenamps.com*

Fishman Widely recognized as the premier designer and manufacturer of acoustic amplification 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 resonophonic 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.

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Resource Directory

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*

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 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
1-800-388-4447*

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 information 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/*

Guitar Adoptions

Since 1999 Guitar Adoptions has provided musicians with an unmatched selection of premium electric and acoustic guitars, amplifiers and accessories online, combined with exceptional customer service personally provided by the company's founder, Dave Schmidt. The Guitar Adoptions online concept is simple: Select instruments that offer the best proven performance and value available today, present them online with superior photographic detail and sound clips, and directly consult with customers to assist them in making the right choice the first time.

Guitar Adoptions maintains an extensive inventory of acoustic and electric guitars that includes G&L, Giffin, Gretsch and Original Senn electrics, Guild, Morgan and Northwood acoustics, K&K Sound, Schertler and L.R. Baggs acoustic pickups, and Guitar Adoptions is the largest Larrivee and G&L dealer in the US. We also maintain an extensive inventory of guitars for lefties!

Our extensive selection of custom amplifiers includes Fargen, Louis Electric, Gretsch, Victoria, Clark, Sewell, Ultrasound, Schertler and L.R. Baggs. We also carry a wide selection of excellent stompboxes, including: Ellis Acoustic, MI Audio, MXR, Retro-Sonic Custom Effects, Seymour Duncan, Sweet Sound Electronics, Dunlop and T-Rex Engineering.

Guitar Adoptions also maintains an outstanding selection of pre-owned instruments by G&L, Gibson, Fender, Larrivee, Heritage and more, always described in detail and available for in-hand descriptions. Check our web site often for new arrivals! Whether you are an experienced pro, collector, a weekend warrior, or beginner who wants quality, we are dedicated to helping guitarists find the instrument of their dreams with hands-on, personal service and product knowledge that big online sites simply cannot offer, and always at competitive prices.

To view our inventory, please visit www.guitaradoptions.com and rest assured that all e-mail and phone inquiries will be promptly answered by Guitar Adoptions founder, Dave Schmidt.

*Guitar Adoptions
Wonder Lake, IL
815 653-6500
Toll Free 877-241-4580
www.guitaradoptions.com*

Hamer USA

In 1973 Jol Dantzig kick started what we know today as the boutique guitar industry by crafting a custom guitar for himself?then for a host of famous and influential players from Aerosmith to ZZ Top. Thirty-five years later, Dantzig and his crew of ten craftsmen continue the Hamer tradition of building modern guitars with a vintage soul. Over the years, Dantzig and Hamer have quietly brought innovative features, thoughtful solutions and impeccable quality to guitarists. Not only an inspiration for countless small builders who sprung up in their shadow, Hamer has also been a weathervane for the big manufacturers who are looking for marketing cues and trends.

Today, not content to be a "job-shop" Hamer is positioned as a "designer" brand with Jol Dantzig at the creative helm. It's a small outfit with the big-time chops that can help you envision a dream guitar and then execute it with authority.

Despite the boutique label, Hamer guitars remains dedicated to beauty, functionality and purpose whether they're building an ornate showpiece or a low-down tone machine. If you value substance over hype, Hamer can deliver the goods.

*www.hamerguitars.com,
www.guitarguru.typepad.com
860-379-7575*

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, complimented 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
info@juststrings.com*

KCA NOS TUBES Mike Kropotkin's KCA NOS Tubes offers a wide selection of hard-to-find and rare new old stock (NOS) American and European tubes for guitar amplifiers and tube hi-fi, including American 6L6 and 6V6, 12AX7, 12AT7 tubes, tube rectifiers, European 6V6, EL84 and EL34 power tubes, and other hard-to-find NOS tubes for guitar amplifiers and audio equipment. KCA has expanded it's offerings to new production tubes including SED (Svetlana), Electro Harmonix and Sovtek tubes. Due to the growing demand for NOS

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Resource Directory

tubes, KCA's stock is constantly changing, and inventory is regularly updated on the web, or you may call for more information. Ordering is simple through a secure online shopping cart. If you're not sure which tubes will sound best in your equipment, contact Mike for unbiased advice via e-mail. KCA's web site also provides reliable information on tube substitutions and general advice on tube selection, and Mike services and restores new and vintage point-to-point amplifiers.

*KCA NOS Tubes, Sterling, VA 703-430-3645
www.kcanostubes.com*

Klon Since its inception in 1994, Klon has been a one-product company, and given the overwhelming success of that product, the Centaur Professional Overdrive, it's not hard to see why. Designer Bill Finnegan, assisted by two circuit-design specialists, set out in 1990 to create an interactive and ultra-transparent overdrive, one that doesn't put its own stamp on your sound, but rather brings out in a very organic way more of what your rig was already giving you. Bill's premise was that there were many players who, like himself, had great guitars and amps, and who, as he likes to put it, "were not looking to reinvent the wheel," and the fact that he has sold some four thousand Centaur units (as of November 2002) attests to his intuition, as well as to the perfectionism that led him to spend over four years developing a single product. That perfectionism, of course, is also evident in the production unit: Bill builds every Centaur himself, by hand, using only the finest components and assembling them with meticulous care. Each unit undergoes a series of rigorous tests before shipment, and each is backed by a comprehensive ten-year warranty. Given the ongoing demand for the Centaur and Bill's disinclination to let anyone but himself build them, expect a wait of several months for delivery, but also expect your Centaur, when you receive it, to manifest a sonic superiority, a construction quality, a physical beauty, and a conceptual rightness beyond your expectations.

*Klon, Boston, MA 617 666-1551
www.klon-siberia.com info@klon-siberia.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 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.robertkeeley.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 65+ 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, and Volker Strifler, among others. The company launched its line of Two-Rock amps in the summer of 1999. Past models include the Amethyst Special Indoor Storm Model, Emerald 50, Sapphire 100, Emerald Pro and Topaz. Current models include the Custom and Custom Reverb, Onyx, Opal, and Ruby and LTD recording amplifier. Recently Two-Rock introduced their **Signature** series of amplifiers, by far the most popular of any Two-Rock series to date. Future models will include a single channel clean amp in various power levels. A number of customized versions of the aforementioned have also been built for players seeking the ultimate personalized tone machine.

*K&M Analog Designs, LLC.
www.Two-Rock.com
707-584-TONE(8663)
In Japan: www.Two-Rock-jp.com*

Koch Guitar Amplification was founded in 1988 by Dolf Koch in the Netherlands and are known worldwide as a manufacturer of high end boutique guitar amplifiers. They have many models for all

styles of music from the new 20W Class "A" Studiotone combo to the 120W Powertone II head.

All amps are channel switching with two or three extremely versatile channels. They are recognized for having both sparkling clean channels and wide ranging drive/gain channels. They were the first to utilize trim pots on their heavy duty circuit boards enabling anyone to adjust bias with only a screwdriver and voltmeter. Speaker damping switches which when toggled from high to low alter the tone to a more scooped sound. Rhythm volume switch on the footswitch (included) which when engaged drops the level to a pre-determined "Rhythm" level. It's the opposite of a boost and does not alter the lead tone as a result. It so useful guitar players tell us that they're surprised that no has done this before. All amps have Accutronics reverbs and Koch designed speakers that have a sweeter more extended high end. These speakers also handle more power and have a better bass response than almost any guitar speakers available. They are an integral component to the KOCH sound.

Other products include the Loadbox which attenuates a tube amplifiers output without destroying its tone, i.e. no huge loss of high frequencies. The Pedaltone is a semi-four channel, foot operated preamp which has four 12AX7 preamps tubes. One of these tubes acts as a .5W power tube! It has many patch points and output options for almost any application.

Some famous people that use Koch are: Paul Reed Smith, Al Di Meola, Randy Bachman, Buzz Feiten, and Jimmy Bruno to name a few. KOCH also manufactures the 300W EDEN VT300 all bass head and the 200W Sadowsky SA200 bass head on an OEM basis.

*Audionova Inc.
www.audionova.ca/
514-631-5787 ext. 22*

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 Beastly 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.

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Resource Directory

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 trannys 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 trannys 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 Warrantee and a Money-Back Tonal Guarantee. Made entirely in the U.S.A.

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

Midtown Music, Atlanta, GA is one of our very favorite sources for guitars, amplifiers, effects, and

accessories. Midtown opened in 1988 as a small vintage instrument store, and they now offer a lot of new items in addition to high end used gear. They have a large selection of new custom shop instruments by Gibson and Fender, and they also stock other fine instruments by Martin, Guild, PRS, Larrivee, and Gretsch. The back room is lined with hand wired tube amplifiers by Carr, 65, Dr. Z, Victoria, Fender, Savage, Two Rock, and HiWatt. The staff is experienced and helpful, and they're all players, too! Midtown Music is highly recommended and definitely ToneQuest approved! View a sample of their inventory online or call the store for prices and availability.

www.midtownmusic.com
404-325-0515

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 Olympi, 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

Mojo Musical Supply is the all-inclusive amplifier parts supply house. ToneQuest readers receive an exclusive 10% discount on all Mojo products! Just reference the "MojoQuest304" discount code when placing your order. Mojo specializes in pre-1980 amplifier parts, including a wide range of custom and vintage reproduction cabinets, a line of exact reproduction transformers, and hard-to-find electrical components. Mojo continues to supply a full range of speakers for the guitar market, including Jensen, Celestion, and of course, their own custom Mojotone speakers. The in-house cabinet shop at Mojo specializes in making authentic Fender and Marshall reproduction amplifier cabinets, custom cabinets from your own design, as well as 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. Within the last two years, Mojo has become one of the largest vacuum tube importers in the world, stocking over 20,000 tubes. Because they buy tubes in large volumes, their prices remain

very competitive. For completed electronics, Mojo is the east coast distributor for Belov amplification and also the home of Mojotone Custom electronics. Mojo manufactures and markets the Tone Machine amplifier, a powerful and eclectic tube guitar combo. They are also able to offer turnkey and partial component electronics and cabinets for OEM's and builders of all sizes. The future of Mojo lies in their ability to work directly with manufacturers, or bring the manufacturing in house. Our plans for the coming months and years are focused on making quality vintage parts available at even better prices, while assuring that all of their products are of the highest quality.

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

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

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Resource Directory

*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

RS Guitarworks is your one-stop source for expert finishing, refinishing and aging, complete guitar assembly and repair, custom electronic upgrade kits, pickups, hard-to-find hardware, and more!

Located in Winchester, Kentucky, RS Guitarworks began as a small repair and refinishing shop in 1994. As the word spread among guitarists, our business rapidly grew and today we receive expensive guitars from around the world for aging and refinishing. We offer many hard-to-find vintage replica parts and other specialty items related to vintage Fender and Gibson guitars, and we also custom build complete guitars, including our "Old Friend" Series, "Step-Side" and "Artist Replica" models.

RS Guitarworks Premium Wiring Kits offer a dramatic and immediate improvement over the factory electronics found in even the most expensive guitars. During a year of research and development we tested over 20 different tone capacitors and nearly every type of potentiometer made before developing our upgrade kits, which feature measured CTS pots within 10% of their specified value, and RS Guitarcaps in .022uf and .047uf values made expressly for us by Hovland. Our customers tell us that our 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 and sorted and labeled as a neck/volume, neck/tone, bridge/volume or bridge/tone control.

Wiring Upgrade Kits are available in 5 different styles for various Les Paul type guitars, as well as Telecaster, Stratocaster, and PRS guitars, and Explorer and Flying V types. Nearly any other configuration can also be built with a call to our shop. RS Guitarworks is also an authorized Fender, Jackson, Charvel, Guild and Gretsch Service Center.

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

*RS Guitarworks
859-737-5300, www.rsguitarworks.com*

Ruokangas Guitars Located in Hyvinkaa, Finland, Juha Ruokangas is a custom designer and builder of unique, handmade electric guitars. Many companies today use the terms "hand-made" and "custom-built" to describe expensive

guitars that are built in large numbers in a factory – Ruokangas' vision has always been to design and build instruments completely by hand in a low-production environment using the finest materials available in the world, and uncompromising craftsmanship.

Ruokangas guitars are available with a variety of unique custom options, including four standard neck profiles, three fret sizes and a wide range of finishes, binding, genuine pearl inlay and hardware combinations. All instruments are built using Thermo-Treated wood to impart a vintage look and sound even when new, and specific models feature genuine Arctic Birch figured tops combined with Spanish cedar – an exceptional wood with properties similar to Honduran mahogany. Models include:

The Mojo

Inspired by many requests received by our customers, the Mojo delivers all the twang you will ever need! Standard features include an Alder body, Rock Maple neck, Thermo-treated wood, high gloss finished body, satin finished neck, 25.5" scale length and 12" fretboard radius. The latest additions to the series - Grande and Supreme - have proven to be the most popular models with the unique semi-hollow Spanish Cedar body and Arctic Birch top.

The V.S.O.P.

All of us at Ruokangas are big fans of vintage guitars, and the V.S.O.P. offers fans of vintage Strats a bolt-on instrument that plays, feels and sounds like a classic. The V.S.O.P. can be designed with traditional single coils, humbuckers, or both utilizing spilt coils, and all models feature a Wilkinson tremolo tailpiece. The VSOP Supreme takes the Strat concept to the extreme with the Spanish Cedar body and Arctic Birch top, fretboard and pickguard.

The Duke

The Duke Series covers all the bases – from the stripped-down solidbody Sonic, to the original carved top design that started the Duke Series as the Standard, the striking appearance of the Deluxe with highly figured maple or Arctic Birch top, to the vibrant, woody, semi-acoustic style of the semi-acoustic Artisan.

The best way to experience and appreciate the entire range of Ruokangas models and options is to visit our web site and take the tour! You can custom design any guitar we build online with all available options, and of course, we will be happy to answer your questions and offer our advice via e-mail.

*Ruokangas Handmade Guitars
www.ruokangas.com
US contact: Eero Kilpi, New York,
1-914-316-2414*

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 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*

Toneman Veteran working guitarist Don Butler is an experienced tech who specializes in servicing and restoring JMI-era Vox tube/valve amps as well as many other vintage British amps including Marshall, Selmer, Hiwatt, Sound City and Orange amps. Don also services and restores vintage tweed, blonde, brown and blackface era Fender amplifiers. Don's modifications and upgrades to vintage reissue Vox, Marshall, and Fender amps have earned him a solid reputation among players throughout the country for achieving dramatically improved, authentic vintage tone from reissue amplifiers. Don uses hand-made Mercury Magnetics Axiom Tone Clone transformers, along with the correct, premium signal path components to bring reissues to vintage specs. He also modifies reissue Vox wahs to vintage specs, and he offers upgrades to Vox Valve Tone pedals and reissue Ibanez TS9's. For the past 6 years, Don has been building the famous Rangemaster Treble Booster, which is an exact replica of the original Dallas Rangemaster unit from the early 60's. In addition to the original treble model, Don builds a full range model and a switchable model combining the features of both Rangemaster units. Don was also the very first dealer for Pyramid strings, and you can count on him to maintain a full inventory of Pyramids at all times.

*Don Butler, Newhall, CA
www.tone-man.com
661-259-4544
10-6 PST, Tuesday-Saturday only*

-continued-

Resource Directory

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 world’s best guitars, played by the world’s best artists.

*TonePros Sound Labs International,
www.tonepros.com
www.guitarpartsdepot.com
818-735-7944*

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.

www.marquisdistribution.com, 209-845-9579

Victoria Amplifier From our first Victoria to the one we build for you, every Victoria amplifier is meticulously crafted for real musicians and built to be played for a lifetime. We utilize components and manufacturing techniques that are chosen for their proven ability to meet both the sonic and real world gigging demands that musicians depend on. From the real Allen Bradley resistors (new manufacture, not surplus) to the finger jointed pine cabinets, every aspect of a Victoria Amplifier is designed to provide years and years of faithful service and superior tone. With the addition of our new Victorilux and Sovereign amplifiers, Victoria now offers amplifiers with features like reverb, tremolo and high gain circuits that will surpass anything currently available and define the word “tone” for years to come. But manufacturing new amplifiers is not all we offer! Our restoration and

repair department is equipped to turn the most heinous, hacked up old amp into an inspiring gem. Our obsession with period correct components and our real world expertise are your assurance that an investment piece or an old road hawg will leave the shop with all of its tonal potential maximized. The job gets done right at Victoria Amplifier. You can be sure that we at Victoria Amplifier Co. will continue to provide the finest guitar amplifiers available anywhere, at any price. New from Victoria — the Victorilux and Victoriette — the ultimate club amps, plus, the Sovereign — our answer for players seeking true vintage British tone with master volume and reverb at a stage-friendly 35 watts!

*Victoria Amplifier, Naperville, IL
www.victoriaamp.com 630-820-6400*

Vintage Amp Restoration For nearly 20 years, Vintage Amp Restoration has specialized in the complete, period-correct restoration of vintage amplifier and speaker cabinets. Our specialty is Fender tweed amps, but we also stock period-correct materials and parts for many different makes and models of amplifiers and we have extensive experience applying them in the original style, including Marshall, Hiwatt, Vox and Ampeg.

We are also the Number One source for Ampeg replacement parts and restoration, including ‘60s and ‘70s vinyl covering and grill cloth, metal corners, handles, chrome, logos, engraved Lucite, Portaflux latches, shock mounts, dollies, replacement cabinets and parts, and recovering.

In addition to providing pro cabinet restoration, parts and supplies, we offer pro speaker re-coning, new and used speakers, and Vintage Amp Restoration is the source for custom-made authentic Victoria Luggage Co. covers for tweed, blonde and brown Fender amplifiers.

Vintage Amp Restoration founder Gregg Hopkins also co-authored the most detailed and information-rich book ever published on Ampeg amps - “Ampeg - The Story Behind the Sound.” Signed copies of the book are also available at vintageamp.com.

For a complete description of restoration services, parts, supplies and pricing, please visit our web site.

*Vintage Amp Restoration
www.vintage-amp.com
314-631-5030.*

Visual Sound Founded in 1995 by guitarist Bob Weil, Visual Sound is pleased to announce that its product line of high-quality effects pedals has increased, with the release of the V2 Series of effects pedals.

In addition to new, improved versions of the best-selling dual effects pedals – **Jekyll & Hyde**, **H2O**, and **Route 66** – the V2 Series also boasts of a brand-new dual effect pedal, **Double Trouble**, which accurately reproduces the sound of the TS-808 Tubescreamer, but with a Bass Boost switch and far more output volume than the original.

However, the new V2 Series doesn’t stop there. Bob, along with chief engineer R.G. Keen, have designed single-effect pedals from the favorite effects that have made Visual Sound a growing hit in the guitar-playing world: **Son of Hyde** is the same distortion channel found in the acclaimed **Jekyll & Hyde pedal**; **COMP 66** takes the compressor channel from the **Route 66** and lets it ride solo; **Liquid Chorus** is a wonderfully-voiced effect for electric, acoustic, or bass guitar, taken from the **H2O pedal**, but with the second output being a true stereo output – ideal for spacious sounds when used with two amps or a PA system; **Route 808** is designed to take the sound from the TS-808, but with a bass boost switch and greater volume output – along with Visual Sound’s proprietary tone-sweetening ingredients. Last – and far from least, the **Angry Fuzz** is an original effect that will blow away any other fuzz pedal out there; although it has an octave circuit which can be blended with the fuzz, it is not at all like an Octavia or other vintage pedal...playing angry has never been so much fun!

As if that weren’t enough, the 10th Anniversary edition of the **Visual Volume pedal** and the **Workhorse amps (60W212 Stallion)** continue to find their way onto pedalboards and rigs all around the world, as well.

For more information about Visual Sound, mp3 downloads and product information, please visit the Visual Sound web site or MySpace site, or contact Bob Weil personally.

*Visual Sound
www.visualsound.net
www.myspace.com/visualsoundusa
931-487-9001*

Willcutt Guitar Shoppe Located in Lexington, KY, Willcutt Guitar Shoppe is one of the world’s premier boutique guitar and amp dealers. Customers may select from guitar lines such as PRS, Hamer USA, Fender, Gibson, McInturff, Gretsch, McNaught, Nik Huber and Taylor. With a vast inventory of over 1500 guitars always on hand, Willcutt’s staff of experienced guitarists can reliably assist you with the purchase of your next dream guitar or amplifier.

Recognizing that a superb electric guitar requires an amp of equal quality, Willcutt offers a tremendous selection of handbuilt amplifiers, including Dr. Z, Victoria, Carr, Bad Cat, Bogner, Mesa, Fuchs, Rivera, and Koch.

Willcutt’s staff of veteran, working guitarists has the hands-on product knowledge necessary to assist players at every level in finding just the right guitar or amp the first time. The store’s website features high quality digital photos of nearly every item in stock, and 99% of all high end instruments are kept in their cases – not on display – insuring that every instrument remains in the best possible condition prior to sale. Pictures and detailed, in-hand descriptions are always available on request.

*Willcutt Guitar Shoppe, Lexington, KY
www.willcuttguitars.com
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