



Vintage Guitar[®] Gear Reviews

magazine

Beyond Deluxe

The Louis Electric Buster

Lou Rosano has been building amps in the Fender vein for more than 17 years. His first build wound up in the hands of the late Danny Gatton, and other greats who have played through his Louis Electric amps include Keith Richards, John Fogerty, Jorma Kaukonen, and Hubert Sumlin.

Wanting to offer a basic, gig-friendly amp, Rosano recently designed the Buster. Based on hot-rodded 5E3 circuits used by Neil Young and Joe Walsh, but with a more-robust speaker, 6L6 tubes, and a heavier/upgraded transformer, the Buster was designed to be tweed-Deluxe-like while also being a more-versatile, stage-ready amp.

A 1x12" combo with two 6L6 tubes biased in class AB1 fashion, the Buster also uses a custom-wound transformer and a Celestion G12H30 speaker. It has two channels with four inputs, all bridgeable (like tweed and early Marshall designs). The preamp section is powered by two 12AX7s, while a single 5AR4 handles rectification duties.

LOUIS ELECTRIC BUSTER
Price: \$1,595
Info: louisamps.com.

Jacks and are by Switchcraft or Carling. The Buster is covered in brown Tolex and has classic oxblood grille-cloth. Finally, the amp is very load-in friendly at 25 pounds and measuring a compact 16" x 20" x 8.5".

For our test, we used a '59 reissue Gibson Les Paul and stock '67 Fender Telecaster. With the Tele plugged into the bright channel, we were met with clear, balanced tones. The G12H hefted its share of the load by softening the bite. Both channels

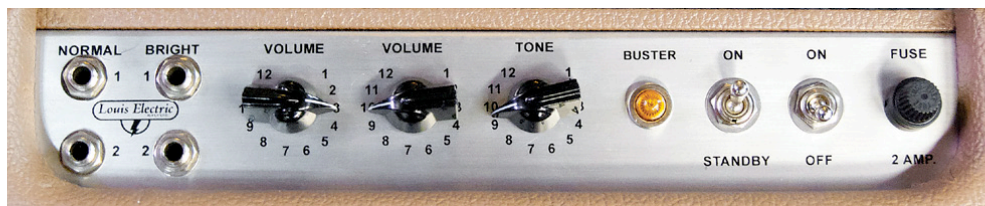
approachable by adjusting playing touch and/or the Volume knob on the guitar. The Tone control had a friendly range of treble roll-off that worked well. The low-end response produced by the heavier transformer and 6L6 tubes, along with the midrange of the Celestion

tailor treble cut that fit the room or situation.

The Les Paul, as one might assume, became dirty quite quickly. The upper range of the Tone circuit definitely helped the guitar achieve usable high-end response, with rich overdrive and no sputtering when hit hard – no stock tweed Deluxe could do this. The upgrades showed their charms by keeping distortion tight while helping open-E chords keep from farting out.

Driven hard, the Buster delivered smooth highs, a nice midrange focus, and enough lows to make power chords sound muscular. Bridging the channels allowed us to gain the amp to an even greater degree, or blend the two channels.

The Buster takes a classic circuit and addresses the complaints tweed lovers have had with the stock 5E3. With its great low-end response, midrange, and power, it's a strong club amp. – **Zac Childs VG**



Top-mounted controls are for Volume 1, Volume 2, and a single Tone knob.

The interior of the amp has a phenolic board and hand-wired construction with cloth-insulated wires.

offered beefy clean tones as their Volume controls were turned up to 5, while rolling up to 6 produced a great tonal platform with the Tele. Clean and overdrive were equally

speaker, made for a happy marriage with the simple tone stack. No matter the setting, the Tele sounded round, clear, and full. The Volume knob let us add overdrive, while the Tone let us