

## Tech 21 Trademark 60

BY JAMIE RIO

**A**s long as I have been playing guitar, I have played through tube amps. Not because I love tubes, though. As a matter of fact, I hate tubes, but I love the sound they make. I guess I have a true love/hate relationship. Consequently, I have spent years searching for a guitar amp that encompasses all of the wonderful, fat warmth and magic of a fully loaded tube combo—without the tubes. Well, I may have just found what I've been searching for.

Tech 21 builds a handsome, technically advanced combo amp, the Trademark 60, that uses tube-emulation technology rather than real tubes. It is small, super light (36 pounds) and delivers quite a few different amp sounds, ranging from a clean Fender to a Vox AC30. The Trademark 60 is laid out like a typical two-channel combo amp, but the sounds are created in a less than typical manner. Channel 1 offers clean to saturated tones, in a very Fender sort of way, through the Drive, Punch and Level controls. Level is the obvious overall volume control, while Punch and Drive are both overdrive controls. Drive is like the volume control on a non-master-volume tube amp. It adjusts the amp distortion and can cut or boost from 12 o'clock.

Punch is a mid-range overdrive, and can also cut or boost from 12 o'clock. By the way, all of the knobs on the Trademark 60 are mini "chicken heads." Not only are they very smooth and cool-looking, they're also a practical way of conserving space. Channel 1 of the amp also sports a Bite button that adds highs and really tightens up the low end.

Channel 2 of the combo is designed for distortion. This channel consists of a Drive control, Growl and Level controls, plus a Weep button. Drive is the distortion knob but, unlike Channel 1, it increases from minimum to maximum. Growl is a powerful mid-range control that also works from minimum to maximum. Level adjusts the volume for Channel 2. The Weep button adds a delicious, thick sustain and is especially nice for playing single notes.

The master section of the amp gives you boost, reverb and high and low EQ. Both EQs boost or cut 12 dB from the 12 o'clock position. Boost works with the footswitch and gives your solos a kick (up to 9 dB) without affecting the tonality. The Reverb

knob controls a full-length Accutronics three-spring reverb and I've gotta say, it's the best spring I've heard. The Link button lets you combine the boost with the reverb, so you can give your volume a jump

and add reverb at the same time via the footswitch. eling amp (remember, it's tube emulation), but it sure can recreate some famous amp sounds. With the clean channel, I got a very nice saturated Stevie Ray sound, and with Channel 2, I created everything from a Larry

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The Trademark 60 also features a super quiet effects loop, and a built-in direct box that lets you plug that legendary SansAmp technology into a PA or recording board. You won't need to mike this amp. It sounds great going right through the board. Finally, we have the 12", 8-ohm, 100-watt speaker. The

Carlton jazz tone to a perfect Brian May (Queen, "Bohemian Rhapsody"). The amp has a bigger sound and feel than you would expect from a small, open-backed combo. I played venues ranging from 100-seaters to halls big enough to hold 600 people, and never felt a lack of tone or volume.

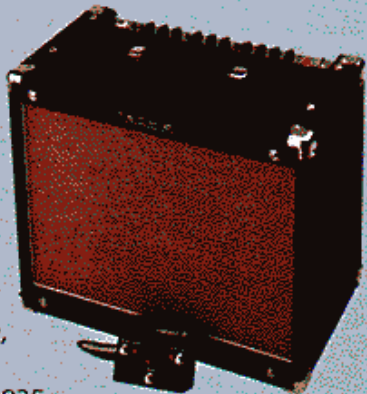
Oh yes, I can't forget the footswitch. It has three buttons: Boost/Reverb, Effect loop and

### SOUND CHECK

- Tech 21's exclusive "tube emulation technology"
- 60 watts
- Lightweight (36 pounds)
- Dual channels and onboard spring reverb
- \$695

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folks at Tech 21 would not tell me who makes this speaker for them. It's like the secret sauce on your favorite burger: tastes great, but you're never going to find out what's in it. Anyway, it certainly does the job of putting the sound to this amp's wonderful technology.

I played more than 50 hours of gigs with the Trademark 60 before I began to write this review. Tech 21 does not call this a mod-

Channel 1 and 2. It's small enough that I can hit all three buttons at one time. This lets me change from my Channel 1 tone to a boosted Channel 2 sound with effects, all at once. It may be hard for you to visualize, but it's lots of fun.

The Trademark 60 has now become my main amp, which is a huge change for me as I have always played through tubes. I won't miss those tubes a bit now.