



Tech 21

VT Bass 1969 & B410-VT

BY BRIAN FOX

TO MANY OF US, THE ULTIMATE IN OLD-school soul and rock & roll bass tone was codified back in the 1960s and hasn't changed a whole lot since; hand a dude like me a P-Bass and the choice of an Ampeg B-15 combo or SVT stack, and watch him settle into hours of blissed-out riff-and-groove noodling. For twenty-some years, Tech

21 NYC has been building amps and pedals—the popular SansAmp Bass Driver DI among them—that seek to satisfy those of us infatuated with the fat, tubby, tube-y tones of yesteryear. The company's new VT Bass 1969 essentially takes the guts of one of its popular stompboxes, the VT Bass, and pairs it with a power amp that pushes 345



watts through a 4Ω load. For testing, Tech 21 sent the head along with a matching B410-VT cabinet.

VT BRUISER

For the VT Bass 1969, Tech 21 elected to stack two identical channels, switchable via a button on the head or the included footswitch. The two channels can also be blended together, but more on that in a minute. The head's BASS, MID, and TREBLE active EQ controls offer 12dB of boost/cut at well-spec'd frequencies; it's a straightforward system that makes it easy to scoop or boost according to taste. The heart of the head, however, lies in how its GAIN, CHARACTER, and LEVEL controls interact. The LEVEL and GAIN controls are self-explanatory, with LEVEL setting the overall volume and GAIN dialing in a degree of grit. The CHARACTER knob works like a highly-specialized EQ that also controls the DRIVE and changed the gain structure. At lower settings, it shifts the scoop of the midrange (from 500 to 800Hz, depending on the position). At higher settings, it boosts the higher end of the midrange (from 1 to 2 kHz, again depending on the position). The interplay of the CHARACTER and GAIN controls makes for a dizzying array of tones, from dark and thumping (GAIN at noon, CHARACTER down low) to midrange-rich and throbbing (both knobs at noon) to piercing and punishing (both cranked). Pushing to extremes, the VT Bass 1969 is powerful enough for all but the biggest stages.

The VT Bass 1969's two switchable—and blendable—channels make a number of things possible: set one channel clean, one dirty; with matching EQ and GAIN/CHARACTER settings, make channel 2 a bit hotter and switch for a volume boost; blend the clean and dirty channels for a signal that preserves the low end and still offers sufficient fizz. In all, it's a pretty slick system that I'm surprised we don't see more of.



SPECIFICATIONS

TECH 21

VT Bass 1969

Street \$1,050

Bottom line Tech 21's VT Bass 1969 makes it easy to dial in anything from vintage thump to modern crunch, and the ability to switch between—or blend—channels makes an otherwise great amp downright badass.

V410-VT

Street \$765

Bottom line Classic looks, rugged build, and faultless performance make the V410-VT a worthy partner to the VT Bass 1969.

Contact tech21nyc.com

TECH SPECS

VT Bass 1969

Power rating 345 watts @ 4Ω

Controls Channel selector switch, GAIN button (+10db) For each channel: DRIVE, CHARACTER, BASS (312dB @ 125Hz), MID (312dB @ 500Hz), TREBLE (312dB @ 3.2kHz), LEVEL;

Rear panel jacks Two Speakon, two ¼" speaker (wired parallel, 4ff minimum load); XLR direct out (with ground/lift and -10dB pad); ¼" FOOTSWITCH, POWER AMP INPUT, PRE-AMP INPUT, and TUNER OUTPUT jacks.

Footswitch Channel select, MIX (blends both channels), MUTE

Rackmount hardware Included

Dimensions 17" x 3.5" x 16" (two rack-space)

Weight 21 lbs

Made in U.S.A.

B410-VT

Cabinet design Dual rear ports

Power handling 500 watts

Impedance 8Ω

Drivers Four custom-designed 10"

Jacks One Speakon, one ¼"

Dimensions 24" x 24" x 16"

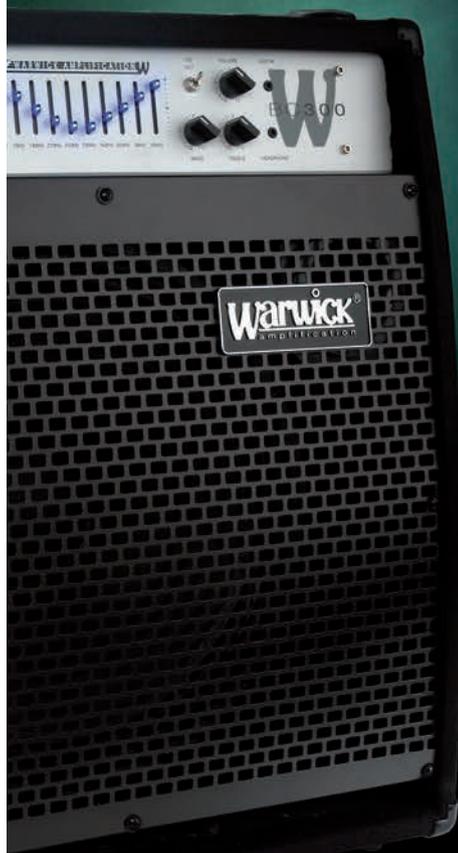
Weight 70 lbs

Made in U.S.A.

Warwick BC 300

PURE POWER!

- No Hiss
- No Hum
- Big Headroom
- Tighter Bass
- 300 Watts rated @ 0.03% THD



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Designed as a complement to the VT Bass 1969 head, the B-410 VT is a worthy partner. Owing to its two rear ports and tweeter-less design, the cab is about as compact a conventional 4x10 as you can find, and at 70 pounds, it isn't unbearably awkward to tote around town. The cabinet's hard vinyl cover seems pretty scratch-, dent- and rip-resistant. My only gripe is that the VT Bass 1969 had a tendency to slide around on the cab's slick top.

Those familiar with Tech 21's various SansAmp and Character Series pedals will find lots to love in the VT Bass 1969 rig, and those unfamiliar are likely to eat up what the company has cooked up. If you're looking for a versatile, powerful, straightforward rig with righteous vintage and modern sounds and the ability to switch and blend the two, get hip to Tech 21's trip. It just might blow your mind, man! **BP**



BONGO
MODERN DESIGN
MASSIVE TONE

ERNE BALL
MUSIC MAN
AMERICAN MADE SINCE 1984