

SPECS

- Two channels
- Effects loop
- One 12" Celestion 70/80 speaker (1x12); four custom 10" Eminence speakers (4x10)
- Footswitchable channel selection, effects loop, and boost/reverb.
- Accutronics spring reverb
- 1/4" headphone/direct output
- XLR direct output
- 60 watts
- 36 lbs (1x12), 46 lbs (4x10)



FIELD TEST TECH 21 TRADEMARK 60

TESTED BY JUDE GOLD

IT WAS ON TOUR IN CONNECTICUT IN 1997 THAT I first encountered the Tech 21 Trademark 60 combo (\$695 retail/\$519 street). Parked inconspicuously beneath a wall of guitars at some New Haven music emporium, the handsome little 1x12 open-back beckoned to me, because, already being familiar with Tech 21's SansAmp amp simulator, I knew company founder and analog tone-sculptor Andrew Barta had armed the amp with a sling full of his genius FET tones. What surprised me, though, was not that the Trademark delivers an array of raging guitar tones, but that it does so at such a wide range of volume levels. The clean sounds *stay* clean near top volume, and the lead channel delivers power-amp-type grind at a murmur. Adding to the amp's versatility is a three-button footswitch for selecting channels, turning the effects loop on/off, and activating a reverb/global volume boost (useful for leads and fills); a Bite button that throws the Clean channel into a dirty blues mode; and an XLR direct out that sounds excellent when connected directly to a P.A. or recording console. Another bonus is that after taking three years of abuse on the road and at local gigs, the two Trademark 60s that became part of my rig only suffered from one footswitching problem, a speaker cable coming loose, and a couple of dead jacks.

Tech 21 recently expanded the Trademark 60 family to include the 4x10 (\$995 retail/\$745 street) and 2x12 (\$850 retail/\$640 street with Celestion Century's; \$995 retail/\$745 street with Celestion 70/80s). This was welcome news, as I needed a versatile tone machine with which to rehearse and perform music for Northeastern University's recent production

of the rock/jazz/hip hop musical *Janie's Song*. The logistical wild card on this gig was that there was no "pit." The band was set up on stage, behind the action and facing the audience, so I needed an amp that could push a lot of air and deliver a wide spectrum of guitar colors without overpowering the actors' headset mics, or melting the faces of the attendees in the first few rows. The Trademark 60 4x10 turned out to be the perfect amp for the job. I left the active, shared EQ pretty much flat (which seemed to best suit both channels), set the volume no higher than 3 or 4, and was able to blend with (and, when necessary, soar above) the piano, horns, and rhythm section while always remaining respectfully below the voices of the singing actors.

However, as hard-hitting as the Trademark's sounds are, tube-tone connoisseurs will notice that this solid-state wunder-amp simply won't get as rude and paint-peeling nasty as a cranked Bassman or a throttled Plexi. In fact, to gain a little more snarl, the sound engineer for *Janie's Song* opted to mic the amp with a Shure SM57, rather than use the direct output (which he felt sounded less aggressive). This tactic worked well, and the amp delivered lively guitar tones throughout the performances. Overall, thanks to its simple and intuitive panel of chicken-head knobs, light weight, and direct tones that truly rival if not surpass those of the SansAmp, I dig the Trademark 60 so much that I actually prefer it to its doubly powerful, more complex cousin, the three-channel Trademark 120. From a jack-of-all-trades, one-stop-shopping perspective, the Trademark 60 behaves like the two-channel tube combo of your dreams.

Tech 21, (973) 777-6996; tech21nyc.com



In the field—the Tech 21 Trademark 60 4x10 onstage at Northeastern University's Blackman Theater in Boston.