



Logo
Vox tone is legendary for its distinctive chiming character

Pentode/triode switch
Switching to half power gives you more manageable volume levels

Speaker
The 12-inch Celestion Greenback speaker was Hendrix's favourite



VOX NIGHT TRAIN

£434
(head)

£187
(cab)

Britain's other legendary amp maker gets in on the small amp action

Here's the problem with guitar amps: they sound best when they're played too loud. Which is even more of a problem if you prefer valves: many guitarists notable for playing valve stacks in the 70s are now notable for wearing hearing aids. Manufacturers and guitarists alike have finally caught on that less powerful valve amps could be the solution. Vox's Night Train is the latest one you can use in a venue smaller than Knebworth.

With just one channel and no effects loop, the NT15H head sets out to do things the old-fashioned way, but there are some updates to the traditional format. A master volume control gives you distortion at lower levels, a pentode/triode switch lets you choose between full and half power, and you get Vox's Bright/Thick switch (Bright mode offers classic Vox jangle through to a heavy crunch; Thick mode dishes out more distortion).

'Modern' rock guitar sounds rely on preamp distortion, but classic valve tone occurs when

the power valves start to break up. Turning the volume control past half way on the Night Train doesn't make it much louder, but it makes the EL84s start to sing. Crank up the gain as well, and the extra push blasts the power section into even more overdrive. It's this sound (with pre and power sections going ballistic) that makes everyone crazy about vintage British amps.

The Night Train does the Brit amp sound extremely well, and with only 15 watts through the 1x12 V112NT cab, it also does it at manageable volumes. In a studio environment, the engineer would love you, and at a bigger gig, the sound guy would love being able to mic your amp while your onstage volume doesn't overpower the PA.

Thankfully, the Night Train is far from generic. Vox amps have always had a distinctive tone – which this model plays up in a big way. You might think the Night Train is only about vintage sounds, but there is plenty of gain available – perhaps too mid-rangy and loose-sounding for scooped, down-tuned

modern metal, but more violent than you might expect.

Conclusion: The only people who won't love this amp are bedroom-only guitarists (it's too loud) and those who don't mic their amp at gigs (it's too quiet). Also, to get the most from the one-channel setup you have to use your guitar's controls rather than relying on a footswitch. The payback for that is the killer, pure tone the Night Train blasts out, and that's got to be an amp's number one job.

Jonny Scaramanga

At a glance

Vox Night Train

TYPE: Valve head and cab
OUTPUT: 15/7.5 watts
SPEAKER: 1x Vox Celestion 12" Greenback
VALVES: 2x 12AX7, 2x EL84
CONTROLS: Gain, Thick/Bright switch, Treble, Middle, Bass, Volume, Pentode/Triode switch
SOCKETS: In, Speaker outs
WEIGHT: 7.7kg (head), 11kg (cab)
CONTACT: Vox
01908 857130
WEB: www.voxamps.com

SUMMARY

For: Killer real-world tone

Against: No footswitchable sounds

★★★★★

TG says... Who needs 100 watts?



Climb aboard the Night Train for true Vox tones!

"THIS AMP DOES THE BRIT AMP SOUND EXTREMELY WELL, AND WITH ONLY 15 WATTS, IT DOES IT AT MANAGEABLE VOLUMES"