

Rupert Neve
Designs 542
Tape Emulator
£675

2

Warm Audio
TB12 Tone
Beast
£459

1

3

Chandler
Limited Little
Devil Equalizer
£1,199

500 Series Modules

The 500 series format goes from strength to strength. We round up two Warm Audio mic preamps, a high-end Neve-style EQ, a Neve tape emulator, the first digital reverb for the format and a six slot housing to not quite fit it all in



4 Meris Mercury7 Reverb
£469

5 Fredenstein Bento 6
£319

6 Warm Audio WA12 Mic Pre
£349

1 The **TB12** builds on the **WA12** in a double-wide module with two discrete op amps and output transformers, HPF, line input, transformer bypass, capacitor style switching, detented output attenuator and input metering. The output attenuator allows you to drive the op amps into overt harmonic distortion. Switching between steel and nickel core transformers does most of the 'colouring', with the former squeezing into the mids. Along with the subtler changes from the op amp and capacitor (clean/vintage) switching, you can really tailor your source before recording.

warmaudio.com

VERDICT 8.7

2 The Portico range's most revered model, the **5042 Tape Emulator**, gets the 500 treatment as the **542**, offering a subtle yet powerful saturation and colouration effect to the tonally curious. The Input Trim and Drive knobs, along with the 15/30ips and Blend controls, give a full range of harmonic distortion and response shaping, and for afters the Texture section adds some extra excitation in the form of Silk Blue/Red.

rupertneve.com

VERDICT 8.8

3 Switching out of bypass mode on this impressive 4-band EQ instantly adds clarity to the source, due in part to the sharp 20Hz HPF and I/O transformers. A pair of low cut buttons bring the bass-end into line, while the main EQ section employs Baxandall treble/bass shelving filters: 12kHz above, 60Hz/110Hz below. The two stepped inductor based mid peak bands are straight from the Neve playbook with hi/low Q

switching. Serious quality tone control at a serious price.

chandlerlimited.com

VERDICT 8.9

4 A 500 series digital reverb, the **Mercury7** effortlessly inspires creativity while providing high-quality reverb for tracking/mixing. The five knobs/three switches allow plenty of tweaking. Each knob has dual functionality so modulation rate/depth, swell attack, reflection density and pre-delay can be adjusted, alongside the main reverb characteristics. A mono will add space to a vocal/excite a synth, while a stereo pair will trounce all your reverb plug-ins. Gorgeous

meris.us

VERDICT 9.5

5 The **Bento 6** combines solid quality with an attractive price tag. There's over 250mA per slot available, so power consumption is not a limiting factor when populating this six slot housing. The rear panel features switches for chaining slots together and linking compressor modules, a ground lift, as well as auxiliary XLR I/O for units that can utilise this.

fredenstein.com

VERDICT 8.4

6 Warm Audio's single slot **WA12** mic pre uses a discrete op amp design based on the Melcor 1731 (early API), bookending its Cinemag transformers. Feature-wise there are the essential controls (+48V, pad, polarity), a Hi-Z input and a detented gain knob. A solid quality, low noise/high gain preamp for a good price.

warmaudio.com

VERDICT 8.2

FM VERDICT



THE BEST VALUE Fredenstein Bento 6: Great value with plenty of power, routing flexibility and roadworthy ruggedness.



THE BEST QUALITY Meris Mercury7: Great quality reverb with more hands-on control than most rackmount effects units.