

# Quicktest

**Welcome to** Guitarist's regular round-up of the best of the rest of the gear that has passed through our hands this issue

## Elixir instrument cables from £36.99

Long-life string makers come up with a 'true tone' cable. The Emperor's new clothes...?

**CONTACT:** Westside Dist. **PHONE:** 0141 248 4812 **WEB:** www.elixirstrings.com

**Guitarist CHOICE**



When Elixir launched its long-life coated strings many of us thought, oh no, not another. But now many, including some of the world's biggest and best guitar makers such as Taylor and Tom Anderson, fit them as standard. Will the same occur with Elixir's new cables?

Available in various lengths (10, 15, 20 and 30 feet) and with either straight/straight, straight/right-angle or right-angle/right-angle plugs, you're immediately impressed by the apparent quality: a chunky grey plastic shrouded lead with rugged hard plastic, gold-plated jack sockets. Elixir reminds us how a cable is like a capacitor and can subtly, or profoundly, filter your tone on its way to the amplifier. Aside from that it is suggested you just plug in. Er, okay then...

### In Use

We've been using this cable since early this year. Why? Because it sounds good. Initial A/B'ing with various cables of a similar length

didn't unveil any massive differences but you will hear – certainly straight into your amp – a combination of subtleties that keep you using it. A sweeter high end, more clarity and openness, rich bass. Subtle, yes, but the more we used it the more we liked it.

### Verdict

High-end cables don't always produce what they promise but we'd recommend these. Not because they sound dramatically different but, aside from the reassuring quality feel, they simply sound very good – another few per cent towards achieving your maximum tone. [DB]

### The bottom line

**We like:** Rugged quality, no problems with the sound either  
**We dislike:** Don't expect a sonic conversion – it's subtle

**GUITARIST RATING** ★★★★★

## db audioware Flying Haggis £49

**Guitarist CHOICE**

Tasty software amp and effects from north of the border

**CONTACT:** db audioware **PHONE:** NA **WEB:** www.db-audioware.com

The Flying Haggis by db audioware takes a different approach from other software amp and effects simulations on the market. Rather than analysing and simulating existing hardware, the makers say they have just used their ears. The result is a specially-designed single amp model but one that comes with six cabinet choices with mic'ing options plus reverb and an array of six stompboxes – gate, auto wah, phaser, tremolo, echo and chorus – to add a little bit of spice.

### In Use

Usable as standalone or as a plug-in, Flying Haggis has a user interface that is simplicity itself with all the knobs on show where you can quickly grab and adjust them. The only hidden menu is the list of categorised presets – a simple flip of a switch back from the main panel. Those presets give a nice range of familiar amp and FX sounds that are great from the off, but are also starting points for tweaking. As well as bass, middle and treble, the amp has knobs for drive, distortion and compression, and those combined with the various speaker



emulations give a huge range of playable tones. There are some fine clean sounds to be had, helped along nicely with the cool reverb and some compression to add spanky note definition, while juxtapositions of the drive and distortion knobs work through subtle shades of overdrive to sustaining liquid lead tones.

### Verdict

An affordable alternative to some of the big players with a suitably wide variety of tones available for either your recording or practice needs. [TC]

### The bottom line

**We like:** Quality software guitar sounds without breaking the bank  
**We dislike:** No fuzz stompbox

**GUITARIST RATING** ★★★★★

## Gretsch Electromatic G5222 **£159.99**

Five watts, a six-inch speaker and more cool than a polar bear's fridge...

**CONTACT:** Fender GBI **PHONE:** 01342 331771 **WEB:** www.gretsch.com

**There's no** bigger name, that mixes such an illustrious history with sheer cool, than Gretsch: its guitars are perfect for giving you that certain something. The same can't necessarily be said about amps – rightly or wrongly, many people just see them merely as boxes designed for making noise.

This new 'compact amp' from Gretsch is about as simple as it gets, yet still drips with vibe. Rated at just five watts, it channels one 12AX7 and one 6V6 valve through a six-inch speaker: there are two inputs, and one volume pot.

The cab, coated in a lovely light tweed, is an open-back affair and, as befits amps of this ilk, the control panel faces backwards.

### Sounds

With no EQ and such a small

speaker, your guitar volume is your friend as we found it best to whack the amp up full to obtain a modicum of power valve drive that overcomes the speaker's unavoidable tonal shortcomings. Control the gain with your guitar and the tone, while hardly anything to write home about, is pleasantly warm and clean.

Allowing more gain through tends to mush the tone up too much, causing clarity to be lost in a barrage of booming low end.

### Verdict

There's no doubt it exudes vintage charm, but a shekel shy of £160 is a lot of money for this amp. By all means give it a whirl, bearing in mind that the six-inch speaker and tiny cab make for a fairly stylised and boxy – albeit fun – tone. [SB]



### The bottom line

**We like:** Simple, cool look  
**We dislike:** High RRP considering the competition

**GUITARIST RATING** ★★★★★

## Moonphaser Analogue Phase Shifter **£215**

Phasers set to stun? This one certainly is!

**CONTACT:** Moonphaser Ltd **PHONE:** 01223 841035 **WEB:** www.moonphaser.co.uk

**The Moonphaser** draws its inspiration and tonal qualities from the magical phaser designs of the seventies. Designs like the Mutron Phaser and arguably one of the most sought after, the Maestro MPI.

The Moonphaser is dripping with authentic seventies character, although it's housed in a smaller more pedalboard friendly enclosure. The very best NOS (new old stock) components have been paired with modern top-quality

capacitors and low-noise metal film resistors. This means that the problems of old, like inconsistent quality and tone, are over. We get two simple controls: speed, that controls the modulation rate between one phase cycle every eight seconds right up to six cycles every second, and depth. The effect is switched in and out by a true-bypass 3PDT footswitch and housed in a lovely Hammond enclosure with retro moon-phase graphics, blue LEDs and brushed aluminium knobs.

character and sparkle. Stick a great smooth-sounding overdrive pedal in the mix and you will experience incredibly sweet gain phasing. Careful though, the Moonphaser won't hide any top-end gain shrills.

### Verdict

If you're looking for that vintage, funk/rock phase-sound there is simply nothing else on the market that matches up. The Moonphaser is expensive but next to collectable vintage phasers it justifies its hefty price tag... just. [DD]



### Sounds

Sweet and chewy is the order of the day. With the speed and depth at two o'clock it's perfect for those big clean-funk groove's of the 1970s. The Moonphaser's amazing high-end clarity supplies lashings of lush, liquid phase. Even with the depth control maxed out your guitar tone will retain all of its

### The bottom line

**We like:** Vintage vibe; simple operation and 'that' tone  
**We dislike:** Boutique price tag; not for harsh/ultra heavy guitar tones

**GUITARIST RATING** ★★★★★