

ORANGE HARD WIRED TINY TERROR & HAYDEN MOFO £649 & £429
GUITAR AMPS



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Orange Hard Wired Tiny Terror & Hayden Mofo

£649 & £429

So then, two British metal-boxed guitar amps vying for your attention - but which carrying bag are you going to want to have slung over your shoulder? *by Nick Guppy*

The Chinese-made Orange Tiny Terror has become almost legendary in its own lifetime, reportedly selling well over 30,000 units worldwide and spawning a few 'me-too' copies in the process. By popular request, Orange has recently introduced a new 'Made in the UK' Hard Wired version, offering its custom shop build quality in the now familiar small chassis.

The TT's popularity means this is a niche market in danger of becoming overcrowded and there's already some healthy competition for the Hard Wired TT in the shape of Hayden's new beast - the delightfully named Mofo. Designed by former Matamp man Dave Green, and with the first 100 hand-assembled by him with a signed certificate, the Mofo is much more than just another TT wannabe.

Build

Styling is not so easy on an all-steel amp - we've become accustomed to vinyl-covered

wooden sleeves and removing them has a tendency to make an amp look unfinished - so it comes as no surprise to find that there's a worldwide cottage industry producing retrofit orange vinyl-covered Tiny Terror sleeves! Nevertheless the TT still looks smart, even if the predominant colour is white rather than orange.

Inside the Hard Wired's clean, powder-coated chassis is a proper point-to-point circuit fabricated with heavy-duty wire, double-ganged potentiometers, high quality resistors and generously sized caps, as well as the same industrial-strength switchgear found on other Orange custom shop products. There are no eyelet boards or turret boards - everything is chassis-mounted and connected by wire alone - placing higher than normal demands on the builder's soldering and assembly skills. Component placement is critical in a valve audio circuit and a few millimetres can make all the difference between a

great-sounding amp and one that's so-so. This example looks extremely well put together and should it accidentally follow a TV out of a third floor hotel bedroom window, we'd wager it would survive.

The Hayden's steelwork looks sleek and modern, with a front grille fabricated from round steel bars adding a nice design touch. The case is neatly finished in a satin black coating with gold silk-screened lettering and matching anodised preamp valve covers. We've seen some independent reviews on the internet that might give the impression the Mofo is a point-to-point hand-wired product - it isn't. It may well be hand-assembled, but with a couple of exceptions the Mofo's electronics are all

The TT's tone control has enough scope, while not sacrificing the all-important mid-range, which is at the heart of the Orange signature sound >

The Rivals

Vox's Night Train head (£425) may look like an Italian boutique toaster but it provides some credible tone, benefiting from assistance from the legendary Tony Bruno. **THD's UniValve** (£725), the original steel box amp of the modern era, may cost more, but it's in an entirely different tonal galaxy. It deservedly won a Gold Award when we reviewed it back in 2001. **Marshall's Haze head** (£399) may not be covered in metal, but the tone is pure vintage Marshall rock, and in a portable package too. It's certainly going to give both Tiny Terrors a run for their money.

contained on one large through-plated printed circuit board, including all the valve bases and front panel controls. Incidentally, if you weren't sure about the meaning of the word Mofo, the non-abbreviated version is printed on the PCB - high voltages notwithstanding, perhaps a good reason for end users not to unscrew the bottom cover! Another is that Hayden has fitted a switch under the amp that drops the output to approximately two watts for home or recording use. It's a useful feature, but not easy to get to, or to see which mode the amp is in. The general standard of the board and its components is reasonably good, as is the soldering and wiring.

Overall, both amps look the part and should stand up to a fair amount of use and abuse.

Features

The Tiny Terror is very easy to understand as there are just three rotary controls - for volume, tone and gain - driven from a single input socket.

Hayden's Mofo is rather more complicated and indeed versatile with controls for gain, mid, bass and treble, presence

Hayden's Mofo has slick modern good looks with plenty of power for live use, a fairly useful low power setting... and the extra controls provide flexibility

and master volume. There's also a 'Mofo' control which is another preamp gain, plus a gain-boost function toggled on and off by the supplied footswitch – there's no other means of activating it. There are two input sockets, labelled US and UK, which have tonal characteristics in line with what you'd expect to hear from a typical Brit or American amp.

To the far right of the control panel, a single socket labelled 'FX' caters for the Mofo's series effects loop. This is a three-conductor jack socket, with a common ground and separate contacts for send and return signals. To use it, you'll need one of those adaptors that combines two mono jack plugs into one stereo plug, or a dedicated Y cable. It's fine in principle, but you're up the junction if you lose or forget the adaptor or cable: hardly the most practical inclusion.

As mentioned above, there's a slider switch on the chassis' underside labelled 'Stealth/Full Power', which reduces the output to roughly two watts and drops the volume for home use – again it's a useful feature, but the location isn't exactly practical. Same thing goes for the main power switch, which is a decent quality illuminated rocker, but mounted on the rear panel – not so useful if you

happen to be on the other side of the stage to your amp when it dies midway through a number. But these are all relatively minor criticisms, what's most important is how these two amps sound and respond.

Sounds

Another reason for the original Tiny Terror's popularity is that it packs an enormous amount of gain into that diminutive chassis and the Hard Wired version is no exception, making it easy for even a relatively weedy standard Strat to drive into serious distortion. Back this gain control off, though, and there's plenty of room for clean and mildly distorted sounds. Similarly, the TT's single tone control has enough scope for most people's needs, while not sacrificing the all-important mid-range, which is at the heart of the Orange signature sound.

The Hard Wired Tiny Terror delivers exactly the right vintage British vibe, perfect for classic rock and still very much in vogue today. Compared to the Chinese-made version, there seems to be more of everything: more highs, more bottom-end, more gain and more volume.

The Hayden Mofo has a lot more headroom and punch with double the output power,



Badge of honour: a point-to-point circuit lies inside

so its clean sounds are much more usable. However, two gain controls, a master volume and a switchable boost makes setting up an ideal balance between lead and rhythm sounds tricky. The Mofo can certainly kick out lots of filth, but not quite enough for a really good metal sound. The tone controls work

smoothly, without any particular British or American bias. Overall, this amp is best suited to classic rock players and it's quite easy to produce convincing Queen, Zep or Bad Company. The two-watt 'Stealth' setting isn't particularly stealthy as two watts is still plenty loud enough to annoy your neighbours, but it does enable the amp to be driven hard at more usable levels in a recording studio.

Verdict

Intended primarily for amateur and semi-pro home and recording use, but with enough power to handle the odd gig, we can't see any reason why there shouldn't be a huge waiting list for the point-to-point Tiny Terror. It sounds excellent: more focused and just a whole lot bigger than the Chinese-made equivalent, and with Orange custom shop build quality inside the chassis it's practically indestructible. The



Tiny Terror's only contentious aspect is that you have to like the styling, which rather tends to dictate that you buy a matching cabinet. We also think a vinyl-covered plywood sleeve could be a very popular option if Orange decided to offer it. In the meantime, as we mentioned, there are a number of third party alternatives.

Hayden's Mofo has slick modern good looks with plenty of power for live use and a fairly useful low power setting. Although it may not have the Orange's character and instantly recognisable tone, the Mofo's extra controls provide greater flexibility. There are some good tones to be had from this amp, if you're prepared to work a little to find them.

However, being different for its own sake is not necessarily a good thing: some features are irritatingly unpractical and should have been thought through prior to committing the design. If the Mofo featured separate send and return sockets on the rear panel alongside the re-located Hi/Lo power switch, a mains switch on the front panel, and a pull switch for the boost function on one of the front panel controls, these few small changes would have made a big improvement.

Leaving the 'hand-built limited edition' blarney to one side, the Mofo's build quality is decent enough, but doesn't ultimately compete with the

Orange, which to be fair to Hayden is substantially more expensive. Both are good value for money on the whole.

Either way, both amps provide a toneful, portable solution for home, rehearsal and gigging use. Plug in and take your pick!

The Bottom Line

Orange Hard Wired Tiny Terror

We like: Point-to-point build quality; great tone

We dislike: Not much, though we'd like an optional orange wooden sleeve

Guitarist says: Bags of Orange tone in an easy to carry package. Definitely a highly collectable amp for the future

Hayden Mofo

We like: Power; features; reasonable price

We dislike: The 'Stealth' switch placement; the single effects loop jack; no front panel boost function switch; rear-mounted mains switch.

Guitarist says: A generally decent amp, with more than reasonable power-to-price ratio, but marred by space-saving design features that could be irritating in use



Orange Hard Wired Tiny Terror head

PRICE: £649

ORIGIN: UK

TYPE: All-valve single-channel head with solid-state rectification

OUTPUT: 15 watts RMS

VALVES: 2 x ECC83/12AX7 preamp, 2 x EL84 power amp

DIMENSIONS: 190 (h) x 305 (w) x 133mm (d)

WEIGHT (kg/lb): 6/13

CABINET: 1.7mm mild steel, powder-coated

CHANNELS: One

CONTROLS: Gain, tone, volume

FOOTSWITCH: No

ADDITIONAL FEATURES: Triple loudspeaker outlets

OPTIONS: None

RANGE OPTIONS: The original Chinese-made Tiny Terror costs £313, the new twin-channel Dual Terror is £499

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Hayden Mofo head

PRICE: £429

ORIGIN: UK

TYPE: All-valve single-channel head with solid-state rectification

OUTPUT: 30 watts RMS

VALVES: 3 x ECC83/12AX7 preamp, 4 x EL84 power amp

DIMENSIONS: 190 (h) x 365 (w) x 240mm (d)

WEIGHT (kg/lb): 8/18

CABINET: 1.6mm mild steel, powder-coated

CHANNELS: One, with footswitchable boost function

CONTROLS: Gain, Mofo, mid, bass, treble, volume, presence

FOOTSWITCH: Included, toggles boost function

ADDITIONAL FEATURES: Triple loudspeaker outlets, low power 'stealth' switch

OPTIONS: None

RANGE OPTIONS: None

Hayden Amps

01245 441155

www.haydenamps.com

Test results

Build quality	★★★★★
Features	★★★★☆
Sound	★★★★★
Value for money	★★★★☆

GUITARIST RATING ★★★★★

Test results

Build quality	★★★★☆
Features	★★★★☆
Sound	★★★★★
Value for money	★★★★★

GUITARIST RATING ★★★★★



The Hayden's 'Mofo' control is another preamp gain control