

Vox amPlug Cabinet £21

Leave your headphones behind with this useful amPlug add-on

Speaker
You can some experimental recorded sounds by putting a mic in front of the cab frecoreding



amPlug
The amPlug modules come separately and retail at £46 each

Cabinet
The new cab means you no longer have to wear headphones when you're playing your amPlug

At a glance

Vox amPlug Cabinet

TYPE: Speaker cabinet
OUTPUT: 0.7 watts
SPEAKER: 1x3" Vox
SOCKETS: Input, amPlug in, power
WEIGHT: 300g
DIMENSIONS: [HxWxD] 105 x 95 x 55mm
CONTACT: Vox 01908 857130
WEB: www.voxamps.com

Vox is one of the biggest names in the amp world, and while it could have rested on its laurels with its most famous valve-based design, Vox has never shied away from helping out the little guy, too – and they don't come any smaller than the amPlug Cabinet.

This battery powered box houses a three-inch, 0.7-watt speaker, and is the perfect solution to stop you being tethered around the ears to your guitar. And we just couldn't help



cooing at the cuteness of this perfectly scaled-down cab!

Of course, it's designed for use with any of Vox's amPlugs, which connect to the top of the cabinet while you plug the guitar into the cab's guitar input.

The cab is then connected by a hard wired mini-jack cable to the amPlug's headphone output, turning this into the smallest Vox stack you've ever used. We tried out Vox's AC30, Classic Rock and Metal models through the cab to good effect. You're not gonna get trouser-flapping levels of bass – and as with many small speakers, it can get a bit fatiguing if you play it loud for a while – but overall we're impressed.

Conclusion: The amPlug cab is a novel idea that will have its

uses in practice, but we could see it being handy for guerrilla-style recording, too. However, the cab and one amPlug costs over £60 as a pair, so you're not far off being able to afford Vox's battery powered DA5. That said, if you already own an amPlug module, it's a great addition.

Stuart Williams

SUMMARY

For: Convenient practice on the go
Against: Expensive with an amPlug

★★★★☆

TG says: Travel-size tone

Manson MBK3 pickup set £229 (set) £129 (individually)

The gloves come off for the latest collaboration between two UK industry titans

Wiring
The four-conductor wiring gives you extra options like coil splitting



Build quality
The chrome covers and Allen key pole pieces match the aggressive, modern sound

High output
They're passive, but these units still pump out at a high level, leaving your dynamics intact

At a glance

Mansons MBK3

TYPE: Passive humbuckers
MAGNET: Alnico V (neck), ceramic (bridge)
WIRING: Four conductor
FINISH: Chrome covered
CONTACT: Mansons Guitar Shop 01392 496379
WEB: www.mansons.co.uk



Best known to Muse fans as the guy who makes those guitars, Hugh Manson is a respected luthier and tech, and the owner of Mansons Guitar Shop. Here, he's teamed up with fellow UK brand Bare Knuckle Pickups.

This collaborative effort is set to provide a more aggressive tone than the MBK1 and 2 sets. It's not just a spin-off of Bare Knuckle's current product line-up, either; both pickups are newly designed. The four-conductor



cable means you can wire the pickups as straight humbuckers or with a coil split.

Plug in and prepare to be blown away by the low end power of the neck humbucker.

Under a lot of gain, its tone becomes a bit saggy, but some experimentation with the height produces a tight, powerful sound without losing clarity. The bridge pickup offers more clout from the mid range, with the triple ceramic magnet design avoiding the squashed sound that can often occur with high-output ceramic pickups.

Conclusion: The MBK3 set offers a great alternative for those wanting a high output

without having to use active pickups – the dynamics of the Manson-made units remain intact with plenty of punch on clean and distorted tones. Add flexible wiring options and badass-looking chrome covers to the list of pros, and it's all over.

Stuart Williams

SUMMARY

For: Strong tones, dynamic response
Against: Neck pickup can be muddy

★★★★★

TG says: It's a knockout!