

Can Peavey's PV14 hold its own amongst tough competition?



Peavey PV14

In a crowded market of low budget, feature-packed small mixers, will the Peavey PV14 stand out? **Steve Evans** finds out...

DETAILS

PRICE £209

CONTACT

Web: www.peavey.com

TECH SPEC

Mic Inputs: 10 (with 48V phantom power)

Line Inputs: 10 mono, 2 stereo

Inserts: 10

EQ: 3-band shelving, 80Hz lo-cut per channel

Auxiliaries: 1 pre-fade send, 1 post-fade send

Effects: 14 types

Input Connections: XLR, 1/4" TRS, RCA Phono

Output Connections: XLR, 1/4" TRS, RCA Phono

Insert Connections: 1/4" TRS

Equivalent Input Noise (EIN): -129 dBu

Crosstalk/Attenuation: >90 dB

Signal/Overload Indicators: Red LED lights 3dB below clipping

Dimensions: 410 x 375 x 89mm

Weight: 5.49kg

ONCE UPON A time, at the heart of every studio, big or small, was the inescapable double act of a multitrack recorder and a mixing desk. Now, of course, work of the highest standard can be achieved in a digital environment, especially now that software-heads have dealt with latency and plug-in delay compensation issues.

Even if you have managed to shift that old beast of a board that took up half your room, or you've never had one, there are still times when you need a mixer, especially when you want to use outboard processors, distribute mixes around the studio or take your music out live.

A small mixer doesn't have to mean a poor quality mixer; budget mic amps and effects are of a high standard these days, and among the Behringers, Samsons and Mackies of this world competition is fierce. So where does the PV series fit in?

Coloured knobs

The PV14 looks a little different from its competition in that its surface hangs over the edge of its body rather like a pastry pie lid that hasn't been trimmed yet; consequently it doesn't look quite complete, as if it should be racked up (which it can be with the available, optional racking kit for under £30). It sports vivid blue, red and orange knobs, which, like everything else on this desk, feel smooth, robust and reliable. All knobs, faders, inputs and outputs are surface mounted for

easy access, and its layout seems straightforward and intuitive.

The test

I took the PV14 as my main front of house board to a three hundred person wedding reception, where it supplied a mix of the live band to a pair of big powered Mackie monitors.

It has 10 balanced mono channels on jacks and two stereo, which have an unbalanced RCA phono option that I used for the bands CD player and the DJ's mixer. Each of the mono channels has an insert point on a single TRS jack so I could insert compression on a couple of drum mics, the bass and the lead vocal; there are no inserts on the stereo inputs or the main mix output (though Peavey have included a 'Contour EQ' button, which inserts a top and bottom end boost over the main mix).

EQ-wise there's three bands and an 80Hz lo-cut on each channel. I like these EQs because the mid range seems to be working at about 800 – 900Hz. Even though they're not semi parametric I can dig right into the guts of the sound with the slightly dropped mid range.

There's phantom power on each mic channel for my condensers and DI boxes, but no phase reverse, which would have come in handy on my spot drum mics – I used some phase reverse XLR leads instead.

I had no problem with the sound of the mic or line inputs, and got the whole mix sounding pretty chunky. Also, these channels don't sound

bad when you overload them a bit.

As there are no groups or direct outs this desk is destined for live, monitoring or mixing use. I didn't have a problem with crosstalk but it's less of an issue than it would be with a recording board anyway.

There's a pre-fade and post-fade auxiliary on each channel called 'MON SEND' and 'EFX SEND' respectively. The post fader send is hard wired to the internal FX section, but also has its own 1/4" jack output connector.

There are 14 different effects

available using varying combinations of reverb and delay. The plate reverbs are smooth and bright, great for the drums and by far the best of the bunch. On some songs I used the Vocal Enhancer for the main vocal, which seems to be a mix of reverb and short delay – not bad. The shortest delay available is the Doubler setting, and the best sounding is Tape Delay, but you can't alter the amount of feedback. The room reverbs sound really bad, but you simply can't have everything at this price.

All in all

I had no complaints about the PV14 for its money. Out there in combat it never faltered. It's a little more solidly built than some of its competition, it sounds great and is effortless to use.

There are separate control room outs for more complex monitoring situations, and would be perfectly at ease being the resident board in a simple set-up. Mine is providing our drummer with his own DIY monitoring mix in my studio, and I can't think of anything better for the job. There are boards with more channels for the money, but you have to ask yourself about some of the components being used, and how well the cheaper boards would stand up to a battering. **FM**

VERDICT PEAVEY PV14

BUILD QUALITY



VALUE FOR MONEY



EASE OF USE



VERSATILITY



QUALITY OF RESULTS



A solidly built, nice sounding, simple mixer, with built-in effects to boot.