



VOICE SWITCH

THE voice selector switch accesses six different amp voicings in manual mode, or six patches – complete with gain, tone and effects settings – in patch mode

CARRY HANDLE

UNLIKE the other ID:Core amps, the head has a pair of external speaker jacks on the back, which deliver the funky stereophonic sound

USB CONNECTION

THE USB socket lets you hook up your ID:Core to the Insider deep editing software, which also includes a phrase trainer and an audio player

AT A GLANCE

TYPE: Digital amp head w/ built-in effects & stereo solid-state output stage
OUTPUT: 2x 20W
CONTROLS: Voice selector, gain, volume, EQ, effects type, effects level. Manual/hold/store button, mod/dly/rev select buttons, tap tempo button.
SOCKETS: Input, emulated headphones/recording out, mp3/line in, USB, 2x speaker out
WEIGHT: 2.5kg
DIMENSIONS: [HxWxD] 170 x 325 x 185mm
CONTACT: Blackstar Amplification 01604 817817
www.blackstaramps.com

BLACKSTAR ID:CORE 40H STEREO £129

Core blimey! Blackstar's affordable modelling range gets a head

WITH its accessible ID:Core range, Blackstar has done more than most manufacturers to put serious tone and digital effects into the hands of many beginners, along with an entire web community of enthusiastic users who want to share sounds, patches and more. The web portal and Insider editing software designed for the ID plays a big part, but the amps themselves are the key: a trio of very portable combos with stereo speakers. Now, there's a new addition in the shape of the ID:Core Stereo 40 head.

Essentially, the 40H is a Stereo 40 combo without the speakers, aimed at players looking for a more substantial live sound. The head's controls are identical to the combo, with a single guitar input feeding a digital preamp. There's a six-position voice switch that provides two clean, two crunch and two lead sounds, plus gain, volume and EQ, using Blackstar's

patented ISF (Infinite Shape Feature), which varies the EQ from Brit to USA and back. Effects comprise delay, modulation and reverb, with four choices for each type, which can also be tweaked from the Insider app. The ID:Core amp can either be run in 'what you see is what you get' manual mode,

Thanks to the ISF, it takes no time at all to dial in any guitar

or you can save and store up to six patches, which recall amp voice, gain and effects settings, but not master volume.

The Core's sounds are excellent, with very little background noise, even at higher gain settings. You have a choice of airy, hi-fi or fat vintage cleans, vintage low gain or modern high-gain crunch, and insane or totally mental lead

voices. Thanks to the clever ISF control, it takes no time at all to dial in any guitar – from lightweight single coils to extra muddy humbuckers, the Core can handle it and provide really usable tone in a snap. Then it's just a case of adding a little seasoning with your favourite effects and serve.

The Stereo 40 head's dual speaker outputs will connect to most speaker cabs without issue, though you should use identical speakers on both sides for the best performance. We like the extra width that comes from using the stereo effects; it makes everything seem louder and bigger without straining the dual-20-watt power amp. Using a pair of 1x12 cabs,

there's volume enough to use it for rehearsals, or even small gigs.

Small heads are all the rage at the moment – some are simple and straightforward, while others pile in as many features as possible at the expense of the one thing that we guitar players all seek at any level: great tone. Happily, the ID:Core 40 head seems to get the best of both worlds; it's easy to use, and you can get highly usable sounds happening in a few minutes. For the miserly sum of just under 130 quid, it's a lot of bang for your buck. If you've got the speakers, this could very well be your next head!

Nick Guppy

FEATURES				
SOUND QUALITY				
VALUE FOR MONEY				
BUILD QUALITY				
PLAYABILITY				
OVERALL RATING	★★★★★			