



**SWITCHED ON**

**ROUND** the back, heavy-duty mains, standby and quarter-power switches work with a satisfying clunk that feels like they'll last forever. The low-power option is great for recording

**BIG BOTTOM**

**THE** rear panel's resonance control varies the LBX's low-end response, crucial to matching the speaker cabinet. This is one of the secrets to getting Eddie's 'brown' sound

Total  
Guitar  
**BEST BUY**

**AT A GLANCE**

**TYPE:** All-valve preamp and power amp head  
**OUTPUT:** 15W, switchable to 4W  
**VALVES:** 5x 12AX7, 2x EL84  
**CONTROLS:** Gain, low, mid, high, volume, presence, resonance  
**SOCKETS:** Input, footswitch, effects loop send/return, output  
**WEIGHT:** 7kg  
**DIMENSIONS:** [HxWxD] 180 x 325 x 160mm  
**CONTACT:** Fender GBI 01342 331700 www.evhgear.com

**LESS IS MORE**

**AMAZINGLY**, this deceptively simple control layout is all you need to dial in the 5150 LBX's huge arsenal of rock guitar tone

## EVH 5150 III LBX £450

Sound like Eddie without breaking the bank – or your back

**MOST** amp makers offer a metal-cased lunchbox amp these days, but EVH has been slow to join the party – until now. With one of guitar-dom's most enviable user lists – including, of course, Mr Van Halen himself – any new addition to the EVH range is significant, but it's particularly true at this price.

While the 5150 LBX is small, there's no compromise in the construction or circuitry. It's built to a very high standard, with a robust printed circuit board holding most of the components, and a tough steel chassis supporting two oversized transformers. Cosmetically, it looks the business, with a powder-coated EVH 'stripe' logo fixed to the front of the perforated steel cover, and a smart white control panel with ivory chicken-head knobs. The 5150's preamp section is all-valve, with no less than five

12AX7s generating a huge onslaught of rock and metal overdrive tones. The designers have opted to do away with the clean channel and keep the blue (crunch) and red (lead) channels everyone uses, so the smart front panel is clear and easy to

lunchbox amp, with a series effects loop, jack for the single button footswitch, resonance control to tweak the 5150's low-end response, and a single speaker outlet with an impedance switch. Overall, it's good-looking, well-built and ready to rock.

## It comprehensively blows other lunchbox heads away

understand, with controls for gain, low, mid and high EQ, volume and presence. There's a single input jack, a small push-button switch to change channels, and a large mains indicator light. The rear panel has mains and standby switches together with a quarter-power option that knocks the output down to around four watts. It's surprisingly fully featured for a

We try out the 5150 LBX with its matching 2x12 extension cab and a variety of different guitars – Strats, Les Pauls and a Floyd-equipped Strat with PAF-style humbucker. Even though the LBX lacks a proper clean channel and shares its controls, there's more than enough range on the blue 'crunch' mode to cover most needs, going up to the kind of sustain that

most amp builders would give you for a lead sound. Activate the red 'Full Burn' mode, and the overdrive and distortion is borderline insanity, with so much gain that even the weediest single-coil pickups turn into high-gain solo monsters.

Use the presence and rear-mounted resonance controls to dial in the LBX's power amp, and you can easily nail the almost over the top 'brown' sound that's an integral part of Eddie's style and technique, making pinched harmonics, extended trem dive-bombs and legato tapping almost too easy. But the LBX isn't a one-trick pony – back off the gain, add a little midrange and you can get 80s Brit-rock as well as cleaner, 70s classic rock tones, too, and a pretty good 'nearly clean' sound by rolling off the guitar's volume in blue mode. Plugged into its matching 2x12 cabinet, there's



### 51-nifty

**Hungry for more power? The 5150 range has something for you...**

The range-topping 5150 III 100-watt head (£1,719) has no less than eight 12AX7 preamp valves and four 6L6 power valves, together with dual speaker outlets and a line out. Three channels for clean, crunch and lead, each with independent gain, volume and tone controls, mean you can precisely tailor each channel's sounds. There's a 50-watt version at a much more affordable £959, which shares controls for channels one and two, making it more compact, as well as adding a headphones socket. The 5150 III 100S (also £1,719) is a hand-modified and customised version that's identical to the ones Eddie tours with, featuring increased gain on crunch and lead channels, and separate resonance controls for each channel on the rear panel. As well as a choice of 1x12, 2x12 and 4x12 speaker cabinets, you can also buy a 5150 III 1x12 combo for £999, or a 2x12 version for £1,269.

more than enough power for small-to-medium gigs, while the quarter-power option is handy for recording, when you want a fully cranked sound at lower volume.

Compared with other lunchbox heads, the 5150 LBX does the same thing its full-sized versions do to most other amps in this genre – it comprehensively blows them away. It's a flame-thrower of tone that gives you the authentic EVH sound and response in a small, portable package that's more affordable than ever and way



The LBX has more features than most lunchbox heads

The EVH's quarter-power switch is ideal for recording work



better than a pile of transistorised wannabe boxes. That's the most important thing about the 5150 LBX: it's the real deal – all-valve from input jack to speaker jack. That can make it less controllable than a solid-state facsimile, but learn how to drive it with picking dynamics and your guitar's volume and tone controls, and you'll be rewarded with one of the best rock guitar tones to ever come out of a box this small. However, to really appreciate the LBX's carefully crafted bottom-end, you'll need a

decently-sized speaker cabinet that isn't going to be so portable, but it's so worth it. If you want to sound like Eddie but don't have a huge budget, this is the amp you've been waiting for.

**Nick Guppy**

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

### ALSO TRY...

#### ORANGE DUAL TERROR

£599

Orange's popular Dual Terror is 30 watts, switchable to 15 and seven watts, and has a second channel called 'Fat' with its own EQ



#### VICTORY RD1 ROB CHAPMAN SIGNATURE HEAD

£599

The RD1 gets a lot of tone from a deceptively simple front panel. Its 28 watts, with a very useful two-watt low-power mode



#### PEAVEY 6505 MH MINI-HEAD

£495

This mini-head packs a dual-mode clean/crunch rhythm channel and speaker-emulated direct out, which is great for recording. It's a lot of amp for the money

