

LANEY CUB 8 & 10 £149 & £199
GUITAR AMPS

PHOTOGRAPHY BY JESSE WILD



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Laney joins the mini-amp fray with a pair of ultra-affordable, all-valve fun boxes *by David Durban*

The role of low-powered, small-speaker amps has long been an integral part of great recording tone. For example, Fender's diminutive Tweed Champ, originally designed as an inexpensive practice amp, ended up being used on many classic recordings by the likes of the Rolling Stones and ZZ Top. Now this style of amp is seriously back in fashion, albeit with some modern twists, thanks to the mini-explosion of American and British boutique builders who've been resurrecting classic Fender Tweed circuit designs and bringing them bang up to date.

The latest company to join the fray in getting a slice of the low-powered pie is famed British maker Laney with its brand new Cub range. The Cub 8 and 10 trace their roots to the beginning of the tube amp revolution; indeed, they come

equipped with 6V6 power valves, the valve of choice for Leo Fender's Tweed Champ and many other, all-valve, low-powered designs.

Cub 8

The Cub 8 is a small but nevertheless classic amp design in almost every respect. Here we have a no frills, crank-up-

and-go vintage-style tone machine that features a single-ended Class A circuit design loaded with a single ECC83 in the preamp – the 12AX7 equivalent commonly found in British amps – and a 6V6GT power valve, generating a real-world crankable five watts of all-valve tone.

The 6V6 is widely seen as the 'American' power valve equivalent to the 'British' EL84. However, despite the output being fairly similar, the core



The Rivals

Epiphone's vintage-looking **Valve Junior Combo** (£139) has become popular with home studio users and amp modders alike. **Blackstar's** **HT5 combo** (£249) sounds great and is massively versatile; however, they're selling faster than Blackstar can make them. **Vox's** **AC4TV** (£218) is a single-channel, four-watt, single EL84 combo, and although **Marshall's** brand new five-watt, EL84-loaded **Class 5** combo (£330) is pricier, it impressed us last issue.



character and harmonic response is completely different: the 6V6 is synonymous for offering bright, squashy and sweet tones, especially when at full tilt.

The Cub 8's control panel offers refreshing simplicity – one tone, one volume and you're away, while Hi and Lo inputs offer impedance adjustment for differing pickup outputs. Meanwhile, both the Cub 8 and 10 share a Fender-style on/off jewel light and off-white chicken head controls knobs.

The black cabinet is instantly attractive, with a stylised take on the old Fender-style TV front panel, matched with a coffee-coloured basket weave grill cloth, which harks back to the good old amp designs of the Art Deco era. It has to be said that Laney has done a great job

with its vintage/modern aesthetics of late – the recent Lionheart and this Cub ranges display the company's classic design flair with understated elegance. Meanwhile, lurking behind the vintage-style grill cloth is a Celestion Super 8, designed to match low-powered outputs for maximum tonal performance at lower volumes. And on the back, both amps are open-backed to help minimise boxiness in the tone.

Both the Cub 8 and 10 come in a diminutive package, capable of squeezing into a spare corner or resting on a chair for some DIY recording action. Portability is taken care of thanks to an easy-grip handle.

Sounds

Using the Martyn Booth Deluxe (reviewed on page 70),

The amp has a snappy response and is extremely touch sensitive – a lot of the clean/overdrive tone can be controlled from your volume control and pick attack

the Cub 8 proves a simple, straightforward amp and finding usable tones takes no more than seconds.

With the volume at just over halfway and the tone leaning at around four o'clock, you'll find a smooth, crisp and delicate clean tone bordering on break-up. The mids are mellow, the treble not too pronounced and the bass tight: a good FX platform.

More volume introduces more gain and sweet overdrive. Here we have fruity, old school classic rock tones with a smoother, less glassy treble than some British designs. The amp has a snappy response and is extremely touch sensitive – a lot of the clean/overdrive tone can be controlled from your volume control and pick attack. The eight-inch speaker's special design frequency response certainly helps a tight and controllable tone, with a classic edge of break-up.

Overall, the Cub 8 isn't as ferocious as we'd expected. It's a controllable, sweet sounding, classic rock box of fun, which will produce a vintage-cool recorded tone with ease.

Cub 10

The Cub 10, in terms of its aesthetics, is very much the

bigger, louder twin to the Cub 8. However, the Cub 10 comes with a more modern build ideal, utilising a class A/B design from later on down the valve family tree and with double the output delivering 10 watts of all-valve power.

Laney has also increased preamp options, with the introduction of an extra ECC83 and the inclusion of a preamp gain knob to the smart looking control panel. The doubling in power inevitably means a doubling in the power stage, with the Cub 10 featuring two 6V6GT power valves. Handling the extra power delivered by the Cub 10 is a 10-inch speaker, a Celestion Tube 10, which it says is designed to deliver "maximum response and classic tone".

Sounds

For the most part, the Cub 10 possesses that archetypal American Tweed sound – plenty of sparkle and sizzle in the top-end, with a chewy, natural mid-range. That being said, the bass response is initially unfocused and rather muddy at times – perhaps a ported back, rather than an open-backed cabinet, would help tighten things up. But the



It doesn't get a whole lot more straightforward than this...



Cub 10 is more tweakable than the Cub 8, and setting the added tone control to near maximum brilliance will help add focus in this department.

The clean tones are a little less neutral sounding when compared directly with the Cub 8 – it's a more alive and natural tone. With both the volume and gain on near full tilt, there are some delightful all-valve harmonics and the same touch sensitivity as found with the Cub 8. Also, the mid-range really gets thicker, fizzier and fruitier sounding the more you dig in. This creates a creamier blend of natural Zeppelin-esque valve overdrives, with a greasy, fuzzy tone straight from the Billy Gibbons school – blues and classic rock players will find a lot to love here.

Verdict

Laney's boisterous new brood both look great and come in at a very alluring price point. The Cub 8 offers precise cleans and juicy, classic rock overdrives when cranked. However, the Cub 10 is very much the dirty, snarling sibling – offering a slightly bigger sound, with greasy, classic rock and blues tones. They may not stand up to

the likes of Blackstar's very popular HT5 in terms of out-and-out versatility, but with their old school charms and tones, they certainly hold their own. **G**

The Bottom Line

Laney Cub 8

We liked: Size; price; vintage looks; classic rock tones
We dislike: Not the most versatile amp
Guitarist says: A great sized and sounding practice or recording amp that won't break the bank and will look great in the corner of your sitting room or studio

Laney Cub 10

We liked: Classic seventies blues/rock tone; price; looks; size
We dislike: Low-end is a tad woolly; not that versatile
Guitarist says: It looks like a practice amp from yesteryear, but it packs a mean punch with thick blues/rock tones and some sweet cleans

With a greasy, fuzzy tone straight from the Billy Gibbons school, blues and rock players will find a lot to love here



Laney Cub 8

PRICE: £149.95
ORIGIN: China
SPEAKER: Celestion Super 8
TYPE: All-valve, single-ended class A
POWER: Five watts RMS
VALVES: 1 x ECC83 and 1 x 6V6GT
CONTROLS: Volume and tone
ADDITIONAL FEATURES: Hi and Lo inputs, 8-16 ohm external speaker socket
WEIGHT (kg/lb): 6/13.2
DIMENSIONS: 301 (h) x 305 (l) x 205mm (d)
OPTIONS: No
RANGE OPTIONS: Other small valve amps from Laney include the Class A, five-watt EL84 Lionheart L5T-112 (£589.95), the class AB, 15-watt EL84 VC15-110 (£389.95) and the 15-watt, EL84 LC15-110 (£339.95)
Headstock
0121 508 6666
www.laney.co.uk

Test results

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

GUITARIST RATING ★★★★★



Laney Cub 10

PRICE: £199.95
ORIGIN: China
SPEAKER: Celestion Tube 10
TYPE: All-valve, class A/B
POWER: 10 watts RMS
VALVES: 2 x ECC83 and 2 x 6V6GT
CONTROLS: Volume and tone
ADDITIONAL FEATURES: Hi and Lo inputs, 8-16-ohm external speaker socket
WEIGHT (kg/lb): 8.25/18.2
DIMENSIONS: 355 (h) x 365 (l) x 220mm (d)
OPTIONS: No
RANGE OPTIONS: See Cub 8

Test results

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

GUITARIST RATING ★★★★★



The Cub 10 has separate gain and volume controls for driven sounds at low volume