





ASHDOWN AA-50-R

£699

Is this acoustic combo a nifty 50?

Acoustic amps are not always deemed necessary, even for players who only gig acoustically. But they offer huge gains for your sound over simply going through a DI into a venue's PA; to give more control and the option to be self-sufficient for smaller gigs, especially if you're a singer too.

The rise in dual-channel acoustic combos has been

pickups players might have with two different inputs. The high impedance input is designed for non active piezos and magnetic soundhole pickups, while the second is a lower impedance (30k ohms) suited to active pickup systems. One of our two test acoustics has a Takamine Tri-Ax magnetic pickup with switchable active and passive modes and it was impressive how dynamic the latter was with this amp –

slap reverb to trippier modulated flanger and rotary speaker, though in a bizarre oversight these are neither labelled or numbered on the amp itself. We also found many were only sensitive between 3 o'clock and 6 o'clock on the dial. Like Boss's Acoustic Singer Pro, you can use a different reverb effect on vocals and guitar at the same time. Unlike that amp and Laney's A1+ there's no mute button for killing the sound fast.

Form factor matters with acoustic amps arguably more than electric, and the AA-50R's more squat dimensions lend themselves to being elevated. We'd have liked an angled back for the option of using it as a wedge but that's easy enough to improvise. This is an investment and delivers in tone-shaping and build – but it's certainly got fierce competition right now.

Rob Laing

THE FIVE-BAND EQ ALLOWS FINE-TUNING OF YOUR SOUND

notable in recent years with Laney, Boss, Fender and Fishman all raising their value game with added features. At £699, this is priced above that competition but under AER's Compact 60combo models. It brings with it the solid reputation of Ashdown and a couple of key features that prove to be very useful.

Channel 1 will be your go-to for guitar, or other acoustic instruments if you wish, and it allows for the different kinds of

helped in no small part by the EQ-shaping options.

In addition to bass and treble controls over the low and high-end is a five-band EQ that allows fine-tuning of your sound – and since acoustic character can vary, even with piezos and the kind of playing being amplified, the level of control is welcome. For example, it's effective at ironing out harsher mids while still giving you some cut with a pick.

There are 16 types of effect here with everything from subtle

1 BLUETOOTH
The Bluetooth connectivity here isn't a mere gimmick – the ability to stream audio from your phone like on Fender's 100 and 200 models makes it easy to start jamming and learning parts, or running backing tracks. There's also a volume control at the back to set the level

2 FIVE-BAND EQ
For electro acoustics with onboard EQ with their preamps this allows deeper tone control; for passive and active piezos and magnetic soundhole pickups it's even more important to have this feature

3 REAR CONTROLS
Around the back you'll find the effects loop, phase switch, line feeds, two balanced DI's for pre or post five-band EQ and an input for footswitchable control of the reverb (sold separately, £18)

AT A GLANCE

TYPE: Two-channel acoustic combo amp

OUTPUT: 50W

SPEAKERS: 2 x 5"

CONTROLS: Gain, bass, treble, five-band master EQ, volume, reverb, effect programme select, phase (positive/negative), Bluetooth

SOCKETS: FET and active inputs, mic input, footswitch jack, line output and input, loop send/return, post/pre EQ DI

WEIGHT: 9kg

DIMENSIONS: 260 x 435 x 240 (mm) [HxWxD]

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SUMMARY	FEATURES	★	★	★	★	★
	SOUND QUALITY	★	★	★	★	★
	VALUE FOR MONEY	★	★	★	★	★
	BUILD QUALITY	★	★	★	★	★
	USABILITY	★	★	★	★	★
	OVERALL RATING	★	★	★	★	★