

**EFFECTS LOOP**

THE Micro Dark's simple but high-quality buffered effects loop interfaces with a wide range of stompbox and rack effects. It's noise-free and very transparent

HEADPHONE OUT

THE headphone output has Orange's CabSim speaker emulation circuit and doubles as a recording out, providing usable tone direct to your mixing desk

SHAPE

ORANGE'S clever shape tone control has a flat response in its centre position, boosting mids in one direction and cutting them in the other. It's immensely powerful

AT A GLANCE

TYPE: Valve/solid-state hybrid design
OUTPUT: 20W
VALVES: 1x 12AX7 preamp
CONTROLS: Gain, shape, volume
SOCKETS: Input, headphone out, speaker out, effects loop send/return
WEIGHT: 0.75kg
DIMENSIONS: [HxWxD]
 135x 165x 95mm
CONTACT: Orange Amplification
 0208 905 2828
www.orangeamps.com

ORANGE MICRO DARK £129

Honey, I shrunk the amp – again! Has Orange produced a new game-changer?

EVERY so often, a product comes along that makes everyone sit up and take notice – Orange's Tiny Terror did just that in 2006, becoming phenomenally successful, with over 30,000 sold, and spawning a range of equally popular spin-off designs and countless imitators all over the world. As a result, when Orange releases a new amp, everyone – especially the competition – pays more interest than usual.

Enter the latest product to join the Orange catalogue: the Micro Dark. Based on the same award-winning format as the Dark Terror, but using the form factor of 2012's bijou Micro Terror, the Micro Dark is about the same size as a pint of milk, yet features the same tough all-steel construction as its big brother. Inside, all the electronics are on one neat PCB, including one 12AX7 preamp valve. Out of necessity, the power supply is now external, with a laptop-style brick delivering the

15 volts needed to warm up the Micro Dark's valve and drive its 20-watt output stage. The Micro Dark's controls are deceptively simple: gain, master volume and Orange's clever shape tone control, which is roughly flat in the middle position, boosting mids in one direction and cutting mids while boosting treble and bass in the other direction. There's also

gain classic rock and blues sounds we associate with vintage Orange amps from the 1970s, but twist the gain knob further and the thick, aggressive distortion of the Dark Terror takes over, with a singing sustain and tons of harmonic content for those edge-of-the-pick squeals.

The Shape control makes it easy to shift the Micro Dark from

of Orange's bigger all-valve heads. The best part of all, though, has to be the cost – for around the same price as a decent overdrive pedal, you're getting a real 20-watt amp with a valve front-end, which can easily be carried in a gigbag and packs enough power to handle a band situation.

While there are plenty of other small amps around, we don't know of any that match the Micro Dark for size, power and sheer tone, making us think we could be looking at yet another Orange game-changer. With Christmas just around the corner, our advice is to get your order in now – the Micro Dark will be one of the hottest products of the year.

Nick Guppy

We could be looking at yet another Orange game-changer

a headphone socket, which features Orange's CabSim speaker emulation, and a buffered series effects loop.

Powered up, the Dark Terror is practically noise-free at lower gain levels. Played clean, there's more than just a touch of the AD30R's sparkling treble, with just a hint of edge. The gain control has plenty of range to cover those medium-

vintage to modern, with a very wide range compressed into its travel. Plugged into a 4x12, the Micro Dark is also one of the loudest 20-watt hybrid amps we've ever heard, with more than enough output for small gigs and rehearsals, as well as recording. It has a wide dynamic range that gives it a very valve-like quality – sounding just like a small version

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