

FIRST PLAY



ORANGE ROCKER 15
£599

WHAT IS IT? All-valve, EL84-powered 1x10 combo with valve-buffered effects loop and flexible power switching



ORANGE ROCKER 32
£829

WHAT IS IT? All-valve, EL84-powered 2x10 stereo combo with valve-buffered effects loop and half-power option





Modern Rockers

Orange's new Chinese-made combos are among its most versatile yet, especially if you're a pedal user, with features for the home, studio and stage

Words Nick Guppy Photography Neil Godwin

Unveiled at this year's winter NAMM show in California, Orange's two new Rocker combos feature the EL84 power valve, which has become almost as synonymous with the iconic Orange sound as the EL34s that powered its mighty 1970s OR120 watt heads.

Designed in the UK by legendary Orange guru, Adrian Emsley, and made in China, both combos are built to typical Orange standards with chunky ply cabinets, tough basketweave grilles and heavy-duty steel chassis. Inside, the electronics are PCB-based, with one large board holding most of the components, including the front panel controls and valve sockets. The components and wiring all appear first class: Orange was one of the first companies to manufacture offshore and its quality control is unsurpassed.

Both combos also feature Orange's new 'Voice Of The World Gold Label' 10-inch custom design loudspeaker, which has a chunky magnet and looks capable of handling a lot of power. The Rocker 32 has two of them and peering round the back reveals two separate speaker leads plugged into the chassis – a clue to the Rocker 32's secret weapon, which is stereo with not one but two output



The Rocker 15's flexible power options make it suited to home studios... it's easy to get a great cranked-up tone at almost conversation level

stages. Also on the rear panel is a mono out/ stereo in valve-buffered effects loop – and it's this that opens the door to some tantalising effects possibilities.

Both amps feature a half-power option incorporated into the front panel standby switch; the Rocker 15 also has a rear panel 'headroom/bedroom' attenuator that allows power outputs of one watt or 0.5 watts.

The enamel control panels follow Orange's classic 1970s 'graphics only' format, using pictograms to describe the control functions. The Dirty channel includes gain, bass, mid, treble and master volume controls, while the clean Natural channel has a single volume control. Overall, both amps look, feel and smell like classic Orange designs – built to handle any amount of abuse and come up smiling. They're quite compact, too, although as you might expect they aren't exactly lightweights. In addition to having an extra loudspeaker, the Rocker 32 also has two output transformers and we think it should really have a pair of grab handles on the sides.



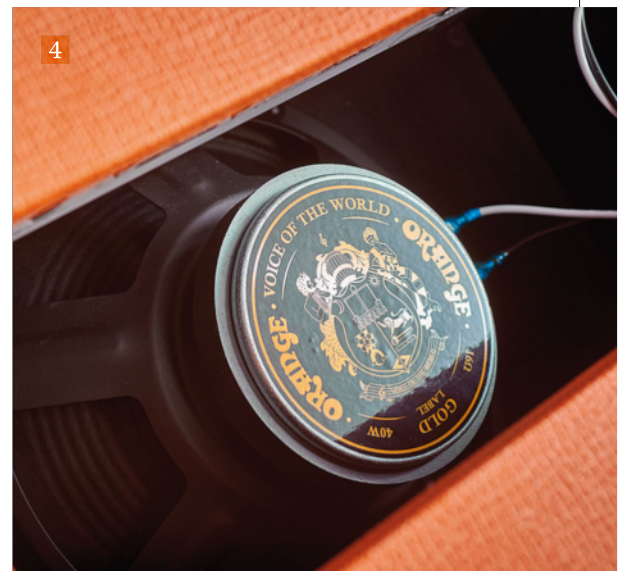


1. The Rocker's Natural channel features a single volume control, yet its tone remains highly versatile
2. The Rocker combos add even more versatility to Orange's stable of amps
3. The Dirty channel has a three-band EQ, with a wide-ranging gain control, delivering everything from blues and classic rock to modern metal
4. Both Rocker combos feature Orange's new 10-inch 'Voice Of The World Gold Label' loudspeaker

Feel & Sounds

In use, both amps power up smoothly, with practically zero mains hum, making them ideal for both recording and low-level home use. The Rocker 15's flexible power options make it especially suited to home studios with its one-watt and 0.5-watt output levels making it easy to get a great cranked-up tone at almost conversation level.

The Natural channel on both the Rocker 15 and 32 may only have a single volume control, but it's perfectly dialled in to flatter practically any guitar and it sounds wonderful, with a glassy treble giving way to an addictive chime at higher volume levels. It's a sound that is very reminiscent of the EL84-powered AD30R combo that Orange relaunched with in the later 1990s and has since become a sought-after modern classic.



The Dirty channel's gain control has a very wide range, allowing fine control of moderately driven sounds, with plenty of Dark Terror-approved filth at the top of its travel, making it ideal for everything from classic Brit rock and blues to modern metal. This channel's sound is, again, typical Orange with a powerful midrange and balanced treble. It sounds great with any guitar but needs a meaty humbucker to really pull out the best tones.

Now, the Rocker 32's stereo capability will make it almost irresistible to effects users. Plugging in a decent stereo chorus and setting the outputs to dry/wet sends a clean unaffected sound through one side and a fully wet modulated sound to the other. This wet/dry combination generates the chorus effect in the air between the loudspeaker and the ears, creating a real three-dimensional soundscape

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5. The front panel echoes Orange's classic 1970s designs, with graphics-only markings

6. Both combos come with a standby switch that allows full and half-power operation. The Rocker 15 also has a rear panel attenuator switch for two more output levels

7. Classic Orange styling and build quality means the Rockers are built to last and last – and they're available in black vinyl, too



The Rocker 32's secret weapon is stereo with not one but two output stages... and the mono out/stereo in valve-buffered effects loop opens the door to some tantalising effects possibilities



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that swirls and breathes like a classic Leslie rotary loudspeaker. Delays are big fun, too. One of the coolest things you can do with a stereo setup beyond ping-pong clichés is add a very short delay between both channels, in the 10- to 25-millisecond range, which sounds enormous, especially when mixed with a good dose of reverb.

Verdict

The Rocker 15 and 32 are both deceptively versatile combos, among the best Orange has ever released. Whether you go for the mono or stereo version, you've got a compact and *relatively* portable amp that's just as comfortable at home as on stage, with plenty of punch for small-to-medium gigs. Aimed at all serious players, there's plenty to satisfy here, from the delicately nuanced Natural channel, to the earthy grit and punch of the Dirty channel. They're available in black vinyl, too, and the prices are temptingly competitive. What's not to like? 📺



ORANGE ROCKER 15

PRICE: £599
ORIGIN: China
TYPE: All-valve preamp and power amp, 1x10 combo
OUTPUT: 15W RMS, switchable to 0.5, 1 and 7W
VALVES: 3x 12AX7, 1x 12AT7, 2x EL84
DIMENSIONS: 410 (h) x 470 (w) x 260mm (d)
WEIGHT (kg/lb): 13.5/30
CABINET: Ply
LOUDSPEAKER: 1x10" Orange 'Voice Of The World Gold Label' custom design
CHANNELS: 2
CONTROLS: Natural channel: volume. Dirty channel: gain, bass, middle, treble, volume. Channel selector, Half/STBY/Full Power selector, power switch
FOOTSWITCH: Single latching footswitch changes channels
ADDITIONAL FEATURES: Valve-buffered effects loop. Built-in attenuator and half power switch allows 0.5, 1, 7 or 15W power output
OPTIONS: Also available in black
RANGE OPTIONS: See Rocker 32

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www.orangeamps.com



9/10

PROS Very portable; four output levels to suit any environment

CONS The attenuator switch would have been better placed on the top control panel



ORANGE ROCKER 32

PRICE: £829
ORIGIN: China
TYPE: All valve preamp and power amp, stereo 2 x 10 combo
OUTPUT: 2x 15W RMS, switchable to 2x 7.5W
VALVES: 4x 12AX7, 2x 12AT7, 4x EL84
DIMENSIONS: 460 (h) x 580 (w) x 290mm (d)
WEIGHT (kg/lb): 23.5/45
CABINET: Ply
LOUDSPEAKER: 2x10" Orange 'Voice of the World Gold Label' custom design
CHANNELS: 2
CONTROLS: Natural channel: volume. Dirty channel: gain, bass, middle, treble, volume. Channel selector, Half/STBY/Full Power selector, power switch
FOOTSWITCH: Single latching footswitch changes channels
ADDITIONAL FEATURES: Valve-buffered effects loop with mono or stereo return. Half power switch
OPTIONS: Also available in black
RANGE OPTIONS: See Rocker 15

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9/10

PROS A compact and loud combo with true stereo capability

CONS It's quite hefty at over 20kg and really needs a pair of side grab handles to aid portability