

# Quicktest

**Welcome to** Guitarist's regular round-up of the best of the rest of the gear that's passed through our hands this issue



## Roland BA-330 £509

A feature-packed, mains- or battery-powered portable PA

**CONTACT:** Roland UK **PHONE:** 01792 702701 **WEB:** www.roland.co.uk

**Yet another** self-contained, pint-size PA, Roland's latest little 'un packs plenty into minimal measurements. The BA-330 delivers 15 watts stereo via four 6.5-inch speakers and two tweeters. It runs on mains or battery power and comes in a nicely presented, super-compact cab weighing an easily heftable 13.8kg. The onboard mixer offers two mono and two stereo channels, each with appropriate XLR and/or jack inputs. Relevant controls comprise volume and tone, with master level partnering treble and bass pots. A switchable effects section offers reverb or delay, while other facilities include anti-feedback filtering and connections covering an auxiliary input, line out and stereo link.

### Sounds

Voice and guitar stay crisp and clear up to levels that you

wouldn't expect given the rated wattage, but this PA best suits intimate venues. EQ controls make usefully discernible differences and the limited effects are well chosen, although their volume is non-adjustable. The anti-feedback facility is similarly simplistic, but certainly helps tame some high frequency whistles.

### Verdict

While not the cheapest example of its type, the BA-330 is an easily transported, well-spec'd PA system with a clean-cut sound – a combination that should please many solo and duo performers. **[PD]**

### The Bottom Line

**We like:** Good sound  
**We dislike:** Preset effects level; price

**GUITARIST RATING** ★★★★★

## AER Amp Two £1,599

Portable bass amp aimed at the pros

**CONTACT:** Westside **PHONE:** 0141 248 4812 **WEB:** www.westsidedistribution.com

**AER** is well known for its high quality Amp One and now comes the Amp Two.

With more power, an upgraded speaker system (with 12-inch neodymium driver in a bass reflex enclosure coupled to a four-inch mid-high range radiating speaker), adjustable compression and extra headroom for solid clean sounds with punch, it's much improved. The sturdy birch ply enclosure is finished in black-spatter acrylic and although small and light in weight, it's huge on tonal quality. Numerous jack sockets provide all the linking possibilities you require including aux in for CD or mp3 input for practice purposes.

### Sounds

Ultra-quiet in operation, while there's plenty of volume to hand (240W RMS), it's the full, rich bottom-end that immediately catches the ear. The fully adjustable compressor is both fast and effective but the EQ section is exceptional. Essentially it's three-band with the middle assisted by a frequency control, but with bass boost plus wide/narrow alternatives on that frequency manipulation this offers an extremely

comprehensive range. There's also a colour button that alters the mid-range contour so you really get an oven-ready feast of tasty tones.

### Verdict

All you could possibly want from a pro-standard, highly compact and portable bass amp is here. It'll make any bass sound great but at this price anyone who fancies it will already have a good instrument. Take it anywhere and rumble! **[RN]**

### The Bottom Line

**We like:** Tonal palette; versatile; portable  
**We dislike:** Pricey

**GUITARIST RATING** ★★★★★

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CHOICE**



# Roqsolid Powercover £32



Effective equipment protection at an affordable price

CONTACT: Roqsolid PHONE: 07748 155864 WEB: www.roqsolid.co.uk

Not many amps, cabs or combos come with covers and those that are included usually tend to be token gestures regarding the protection they provide. Full-on flight cases can often be an over-the-top alternative in terms of physical and financial weight, so Roqsolid's padded Powercovers seem to offer a sensible substitute for many amplification applications. This UK company specialises in these slipover safeguards, supplied to order and either custom-made or chosen from a list that currently includes over 800 existing examples, ranging from the well known to the pretty obscure.

Construction is common to all, with an external layer of heavy-duty, black nylon material laminated to a padded felt interior. All seams are

securely stitched, the majority being reinforced by substantial binding of seatbelt-style webbing. The latter comes in black or five contrasting colours, which can aid identification. Prices start at around £23, while a worthwhile extra cost option is a full-sized hardboard insert on the front, as this supplies substantially greater speaker security.

## Verdict

Made for a 1 x 12 Peavey combo, the review cover looks classy, fits perfectly and offers more than adequate protection against normal wear and tear, making it a useful, cost-effective accessory. [PD]



## The Bottom Line

**We like:** Appearance and accurate fit

**We dislike:** Nothing

GUITARIST RATING ★★★★★

# GuitarGuard from £24.99

Put a sock on it...

CONTACT: Wild Child Distribution PHONE: 01273 702224 WEB: www.guitarguard.net

Here's a product certain to split opinions both functionally and aesthetically. GuitarGuard is a stretchy partial cover for your pride and joy, designed to protect it from scratches and dings. It's available in Fender Strat (Stratjacket) and Tele (Teleskin) shapes, and for the Gibson Les Paul (Gibskin) and a Martin dreadnought-shaped acoustic (£29.99, Dreadnought).

The material is a bit like Neoprene, albeit a dry foam equivalent that, according to GuitarGuard, is safe to use with nitro-cellulose lacquers (Neoprene can cause clouding and damage to nitro-cellulose).

The guards are easy to fit and indeed provide good protection for the guitar body against buttons, buckles and the like. As such they're likely to appeal to OCD types who live in fear

that their guitar might pick up any playing wear when they, er, play it. Just as coating a guitar in a thick plastic finish can deaden its resonance and feel somewhat, so the GuitarGuard dulls things down a touch, as you'd expect, the effect of which is more noticeable on acoustic guitars. It's not a big deal, but for the life of us we can't work out why you'd want anything impeding your tone (or looks) even one per cent if you've shelled out a ton of money on a beautiful guitar.

## Verdict

The truth might be that A1 condition is more important than A1 feel and sound to a lot of people, especially when there's money involved. One for the Relic-haters perhaps! [MT]



## The Bottom Line

**We like:** Safe to use with all kinds of finish

**We dislike:** We'll take tone and feel over looks, any day

GUITARIST RATING ★★★★★



## Planet Waves Lubrikit £13.25

A shot in the arm for tuning stability

CONTACT: D'Addario UK Ltd PHONE: 0191 300 3000 WEB: www.daddario.com

This new kit that includes a syringe half-filled with a specially-formulated lubricant to eradicate friction at both the nut and on the bridge saddles to drastically improve tuning

stability. The syringe's tip has a soft rubber applicator for precise use and also included are a pair of swabs to get in the nut's nooks and crannies.

### In use

We applied the Lubrikit to our Yamaha Pacifica 112 with a set of ancient strings on it. We popped each string out of its relevant nut slot and applied the smallest drop of lubricant with the pink swab to each. When the strings drop back in, it's unavoidable that small amounts of liquid squidge out, but the guitar stayed noticeably in tune after the treatment, standing up to all kinds of whammy abuse.

We were a tad more reticent of applying the liquid to the saddles, as it is a little sticky on the skin but, as it's best to remove all friction points, it's suggested that you do so to get best results.

Planet Waves wouldn't tell us the exact chemical make-up of the lubricant, but they assured us that it's totally inert, thus safe to use on nitro-cellulose finishes and maple necks.

### Verdict

A cool idea – Big Bends did it first, of course, with its Nut Sauce – that can solve many tuning issues, and could also lead to an interesting chat with a Romanian customs official should they find a few of these dubious-looking syringes tucked in your gigbag... [SB]

### The Bottom Line

**We like:** Simple idea; easy to use; works

**We dislike:** Lubricant is sticky on the skin

GUITARIST RATING ★★★★★

## Morley Dragon 2 wah £179.99

Looks like the Dragon has re-entered...

CONTACT: Westside PHONE: 0141 248 4812 WEB: www.morleypedals.com

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The Dragon 2 comes from the mighty brain of George Lynch and, among the myriad features is one that we can't believe we haven't seen before: a footswitchable 'half-cocked' tone. This is the pedal's Wah Lock function and you can alter the frequency using the notch control that is sited just above the lock button.

There are two wah modes – standard and wow! – and the latter is designed for use with high-gain tones that operate in tandem with a loudness pot that regulates the overall wah output. Set it to zero, the output is at the same volume as the dry tone, while winding it up adds gain to the effected signal.

Built to Morley's usual hardy standards, we do wonder

whether there's a place for a red dragon on a modern pedal. Still, if it sounds good...

### Sounds

And sound good it certainly does. Looks aside, we reckon that wah players will fall head over heels in love with the Wah Lock function. It gives instant cocked Satch, Schenker and Hendrix tones without having to have your foot hovering over the treadle (in fact Wah Lock mode bypasses the treadle entirely), and the sweep of the notch pot will surely give a tone to suit everyone.

Loudness can be a little overpowering if you're not careful, but the wow! mode is indeed perfect for high-gain tones, as its more bassy voicing

is perfectly counteracted by a cooking amp's preamp zing.

### Verdict

Worth buying for the Wah Lock mode alone, this is a great wah for all harder rock and metal styles that's well worth the asking price. [SB]

### The Bottom Line

**We like:** The Wah Lock function; overall performance

**We dislike:** Just the rather garish livery

GUITARIST RATING ★★★★★