



FENDER BRONCO 40 BASS COMBO £250  
BASS AMPS

PHOTOGRAPHY BY JOSEPH BRANSTON

# Fender Bronco 40 bass combo £250

At last! A bass practice combo that fully embraces current technology... and it sounds good too **by Roger Newell**

In the modern climate of inexpensive, feature-packed digital modelling amps for guitar players, it's good to see bass players getting a look in too. The Fender Bronco 40 is a compact bass combo that not only possesses great sounds as it stands but also has a plethora of onboard effects and amp models. It also has the ability to link to your computer using the Fender Fuse software to give access to unlimited preset storage and online patch swapping. Presented in smart black livery with a metal mesh grille, metal corner protectors and a single strap handle, this is well built and easily transportable. It has a 10-inch bass speaker making the whole

thing compact and lightweight so absolutely ideal for home practice or more intimate rehearsal sessions and gigs.

Equipped with a clearly defined control panel that makes navigation both straightforward and logical it doesn't take long to get to grips with how everything works. The 24 amp models run in three banks of eight and are colour coded by yellow, green and red LEDs, so recalling or trying a new setting is easily achieved. Every setting you change can be stored and recaptured, and you can reverse your decision before committing it to memory. Rotary controls are supplied for compression ratio and for the choice of effects,

and with so many sound options at your fingertips, rehearsals are going to become a lot more fun. The headphone option means you can

experiment to your heart's content without annoying everyone in a 50-metre radius.

## Sounds

In spite of only having the one 10-inch driver, the Bronco has generous, deep bass response. As a straightforward combo it has lots to offer tonally, but with the added advantage of effects and eight amp models, you're spoiled for choice. Models include Fender's own 59 Bassman, Redhead (SWR) and Rockin' Peg (Ampeg SVT). The effects include delay and an envelope filter plus a good-sounding



Amp model presets will be a novel and welcome addition for most bass players



## The Rivals

**Roland's CB20XL Cube** bass combo (£219) carries a single eight-inch driver and, although less powerful than the Fender, still proves a very worthy practice unit that is also studio-friendly. There's also the **Roland Micro Cube Bass RX** (£206) that lives 'down' to its name. Tiny but perfectly formed, it has six onboard amp models, built-in effects and a drum machine and will work on batteries. The **Line 6 LowDown LD15** (£116.33) is another good example of bass modelling technology and featured effects. Again an eight-inch speaker is employed but, like the Fender, this is not lacking in bass response.

chorus; but the quality of each effect is dependent on which model you've selected. When you find a combination that works for you, the sounds storage ability is a real blessing.

Switching between models and effects is easy and, stepping from one amp to another, the resulting changes vary from subtle to startling, so there is plenty to experiment with – all part of the learning curve. One of the most rewarding forms of solo practice is playing along to favourite tracks, and to this end Fender has included an auxiliary input so that your mobile music player can be fed into the mix.

## Verdict

Nicely presented and compact, this is an extremely versatile unit despite its size. The level of output means it's ideal for

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A responsive 10-inch custom speaker nestles behind the Bronco's sci-fi livery



practice and even small gigs, but the Bronco has far more use as a studio combo where you can take full benefit of all the onboard facilities. And with direct computer access without the need for additional interface or microphones, this is 21st century technology working to our advantage, with a control interface that doesn't overtax the brain.

This amp will appeal to multi-instrumentalists looking for a fine sounding, easy-to-use bass amp solution, as much as it will to more seasoned bassists looking for a portable, versatile amp for when the big rig is too much. Good work once again, Fender. **G**

## The Bottom Line

**We like:** Easy to use; good bass response; typically Fender tones

**We dislike:** Not much to fault here: it does what it sets out to achieve and a bit more besides

**Guitarist says:** If you want something more than a regular combo, then this should be auditioned

## Fender Bronco 40 bass combo

**PRICE:** £250.80

**ORIGIN:** China

**TYPE:** Modelling amp with effects

**OUTPUT:** 40 watts RMS @ 8 ohms

**DIMENSIONS:** 457 (w) x 286 (d) x 387mm (h)

**WEIGHT (kg/lb):** 13.7/30

**CHANNELS:** Single

**CONTROLS:** Gain, bass, middle, treble, master volume, preset, compressor and effects

**ADDITIONAL FEATURES:** 24 onboard presets, effects, compressor, tuner, connections for headphone/line out, auxiliary input, XLR output and USB, Fender Fuse Software

**SPEAKER:** 10-inch custom speaker

**RANGE OPTIONS:** Footswitch 099-4049-000 (£26.40) saves two quick-access presets

**Fender GB**

**01342 331700**

**www.fender.com**

## Test results

<b>Build quality</b>	★★★★★
<b>Features</b>	★★★★★
<b>Sound</b>	★★★★★
<b>Value for money</b>	★★★★★

**GUITARIST RATING** ★★★★★