

its two switches serve to respectively bypass the unit and engage the overdrive stage. Two three-position mini-switches control EQ and “color” the rectifier stage; input options are Flat, Cut 1, and Cut 2, while rectifier choices are labeled Brown, Flat, and Violet. It’s important to note that the rectifier mode is only accessible when the compressor stage is activated. This is not a compressor and/or overdrive pedal, but a compressor pedal with a gain stage.

Using a Fender Stratocaster and a PRS with humbuckers through a tube-driven 2x12 combo, it’s easy to find favorable settings; the Compress-

sion knob at 9 o’clock, and the output at 1 o’clock (with filter switches set flat) produces clean, smooth sustain that’s simply *juicy*. Unlike your typical Ross/Dynacomp clone, an optical compressor is capable of cleaner, quieter, and very syrupy tones. They don’t, however, do very well when it comes to subtle compression, nor do they keep their low noise threshold at extreme gain/compression levels. Anyway... cranking the Sardine Can’s Compression knob brings out more juicy goodness ’til the last quarter of knob travel, at which point the Strat begins to sound to thin and background noise starts to rise.

The Sardine Can handled the PRS equally well, without unwanted clipping from the Comp section. Moving the filter switch to Cut 2 attenuates low-end response, and would work well for a woofy humbucker. Cut 1 is for the sonically adventurous; Celmo recommends it for emulating “cheesy” old (a.k.a. “low-fi.”) guitars.

Back to the Strat and with the pedal’s Rectifier switch engaged, it produced a very nice amp-like overdrive. Again, the Rectifier stage is only accessible when the Compressor circuit is engaged. And it doesn’t produce a clean boost or add compression – it simply adds some very controllable dirt to the

signal. With the PRS, it made higher levels of grit with no hint of sputtering. It’s a very nice tone, but if you want a high-gain signal, you’ll need a boost pedal in front of the Sardine Can. The color switch set to Flat produces a slightly darker/brown tone, while Violet is noticeably thin-sounding.

The Sardine Can Compressor is a great-sounding box, with one of the cleanest, most noise-free compressors you’ll hear from a pedal. Its compression has a great responsive feel that makes you want to play, and its rectifier stage adds an amp-like overdrive that perfectly complements its compression stage. – **Zac Childs**

Tiny Tube Monster

The Egnater Rebel 20

EVERY ONCE IN A WHILE, a piece of gear comes along that just kicks your booty. The Egnater Rebel 20 mini stack is one very good example.

Though it weighs just 16 pounds and ships in a handy shoulder bag, the Rebel 20 is no toy – add one or two of its portable 1x12 cabinets and you have a highly mobile and powerful amp. And that’s just getting started.

In a nutshell, the Rebel 20 is a 20-watt, all-tube head, but it also has two powerful features that you rarely see on an amp in this class. First, there’s a Variable Wattage Control, allowing for easy adjustments from one watt to a very loud 20 watts. How many of us have had amps that were great onstage, but were so powerful they blew the windows out at home... or vice-versa? This knob helps alleviate that issue quickly and efficiently. The other great feature is a Tube Mix control, which lets you blend the tone between pairs of Groove Tubes 6V6 and EL84 power tubes. This brings in all sorts of tonal colorations again not usually found in this price category. You’ll find that the tone gets a little fatter around the 12 o’clock to 1 o’clock mark, but as indicated in the manual, this is completely normal. Designer Bruce Egnater calls it “the sweet spot.” I also wondered about the static noise I heard when adjusting the Tube Mix knob, but Bruce has that covered in the manual, too. Apparently, it’s just a bit of DC voltage in the circuit and there’s nothing wrong with it. It’s the sound of a little electricity.

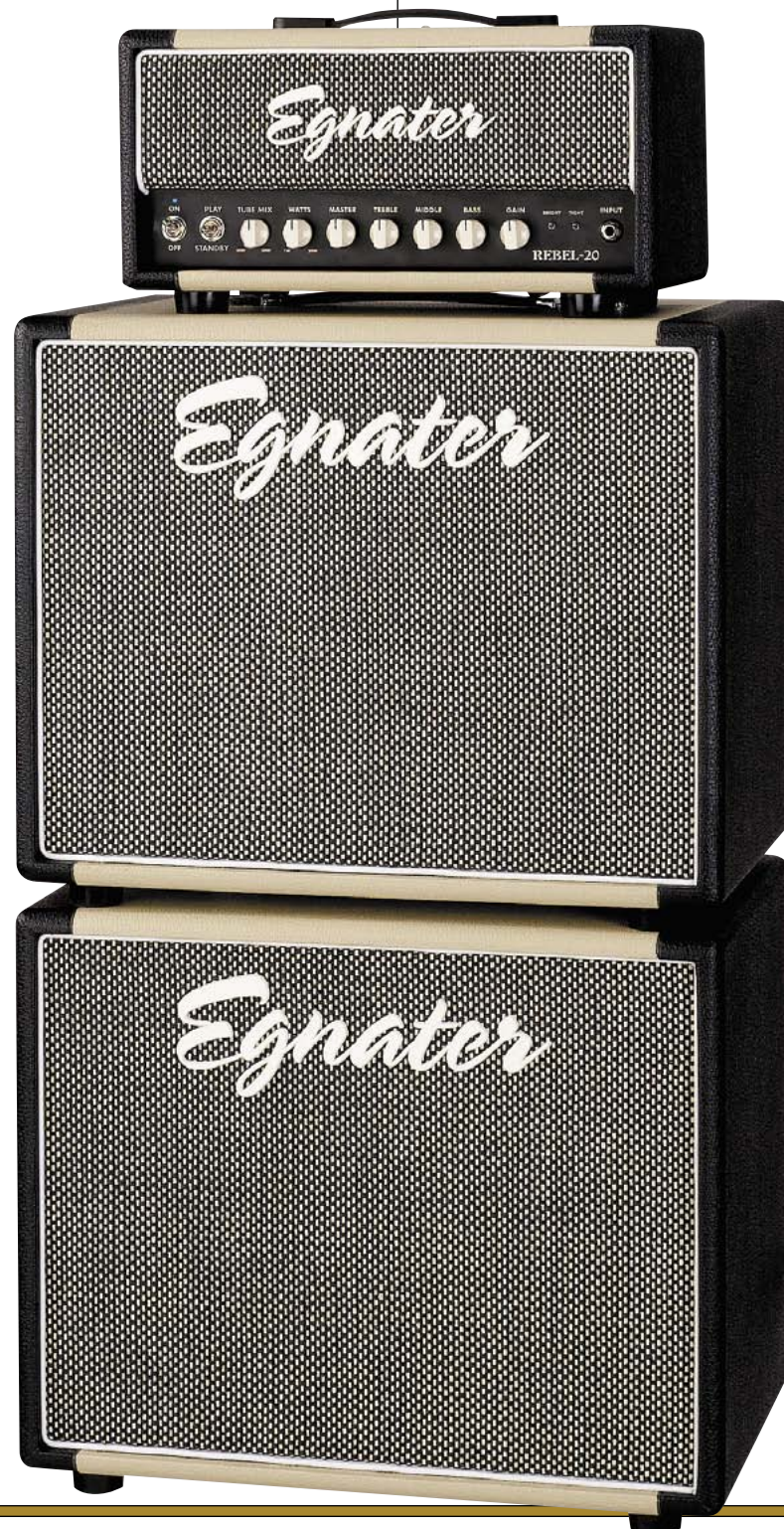
Other tone-shaping tools include a three-band EQ; Tight (-6db@180hz) and Bright Voicing (+8db@4khz Max) switches; and the Gain and Master Volume knobs you’ll use to tweak the three 12AX7 preamp tubes to perfection. On the back, you have speaker outputs of 4, 8, and 16 ohms, an effects loop, and fuse. There’s also a voltage-control switch that lets the amp run on 100, 115, and 230 volts. And all of this in a small, light head that measures a mere 14.25" (W) x 8.25" (D) x 7.5" (H).

What does this tiny tone tool sound like? In a word, ferocious! Using a Les Paul, PRS and a Strat, I conjured all sorts of great sounds from this amp. The key word here was “fat.” Lest you think that a small head can’t pump any real iron, dial that Gain knob all the way to the right and stand back. The big, molten, metal-ish tones of the Rebel 20 might just knock your socks off. And in between, there are plenty of overdrive levels sure to satisfy just about any guitarist’s sonic requirements. One particularly groovy thing is the natural tube compression that lends an exciting, vibey edge to one’s playing. There’s something very “alive” about the Rebel’s tone. Yes, it’s a rather bright-sounding amp – warm enough,

but getting it there sometimes requires rolling off the Treble.

All told, the Rebel 20 is an amp that generates exciting guitar tones and brings you back for more. There’s a connection between good tone and

good playing, and this amp is proof that good tone makes you want to come back again and again. Add to that an almost shockingly low street price and, no two ways about it, Egnater has hit a home run here. – **Pete Prown VG**



EGNATER REBEL 20

Price: \$599.99 (head), \$249.99 (cabinets)
 Contact: Egnater Custom Amplification,
 3402 Slauson Ave, Maywood, CA
 90270; phone (323) 277-4119; www.
 egnateramps.com.