

NAYLOR'S ELECTRA-VERB 38

After witnessing the Electra-Verb 38's basket weave grill cloth, black "stove-top" knobs and leather-style Tolex, one might get the idea Naylor has gone the same



route as some of today's top boutique builders. Offering an aesthetically pleasing amp, running in Class A, with minimal options and a low gain structure. Well, the amp is quite pleasing to the eye, but that's about where the similarities end. First off, the Electra-Verb is a hand-wired 38-watt Class A/B amp, with a solid-state rectifier, that boasts the gain capabilities of a JCM800. In other words, this puppy rocks. Second, the amp offers a myriad of tone shaping options along with an Accutronics two-spring, long-tank reverb, tube-buffered effects loop, switchable impedances and gold-plated inputs.

The seven-ply birch cabinet holds the Electra-Verb's heavy duty nickel-steel chassis and two 10" Naylor 1040 speakers that are custom-made by Eminence (1x12 combo \$1,849). The amp's layout is similar to a Vox AC30, with the chassis mounted vertically and the controls located on the top rear of the amp. Next to the Lo and Hi inputs are gain, volume, treble, mid, bass and reverb knobs. There is also a bite switch located between the volume and treble, as well as stand-by, power and three-way ground switch. All switches are heavy-duty stainless steel.

Naylor has chosen a pair of Sovtek 5881s to power the Electra-Verb, along with five Sovtek 12AX7WB tubes: three in the preamp section, one for the reverb and one to buffer the effects loop. The power tubes are held tight with spring holders and mounted in ceramic sockets. All five 12AX7s have phenolic sockets and are held in place by spring-loaded, stainless steel

caps. It's obvious Naylor had the "tech" in mind when designing the Electra-Verb 38, because getting to the amp's guts is as easy as removing the six-screw back

panel. Once off, tone-geeks can witness one of the prettiest point-to-point wiring jobs on the planet.

The 1/8" phenolic eyelet board runs through the center of the chassis and all circuitry is soldered on top, making the components a snap to get at. All wire is color-coded, allowing even the "greenest" of techs to follow the amp's schematics.

The circuitry is composed of 1/2-watt carbon film resistors as well as electrolytics and capacitors made by Illinois Capacitor. The stainless steel pots are made by Mouser.

Another convenient feature is the ability to switch voltages. By disconnecting the power wire (located on the left of the circuit board) and resoldering it to the 100, 120, 220, 230 or 240 solder juncture, the amp has the ability to operate in Europe, Australia and the Far East. This modification may also require other slight changes and should only be performed by a qualified electronics technician.

When initially plugging my Les Paul Jr. into the Electra-Verb's Lo input, I was expecting a mellow, jazz meets blues feel, comparable to a blackface Twin with the bright switch off. However, I was pleasantly surprised at the tonal variations the amp was able to muster. With the gain switch a little below

9 o'clock, the volume knob pegged and the bass and treble set 3/4 up, I was able to capture a warm "Fenderesque" tone. Pushing the gain

switch up halfway, while backing off on the volume, revealed a smokin, gritty blues sound comparable to an overdriven Bassman. By turning down the bass, flipping the bite switch on and employing the likes of a Tele, the amp began to get a British feel, but without the sinister highs associated with an AC30. Switching to a Les Paul Standard and inching the gain up past noon, I grabbed a creamy, overdriven crunch similar to that of the Rev. W. E. Gibbons, pastor of the ZZ Top Reformation Church.

Although a significant amount of overdrive is achieved through the Lo input, the Hi input is where the Electra-Verb 38 becomes a full-on rock machine. Capturing similarities of an old Marshall Super Lead combined with the punch of a JCM800, the Electra-Verb is very responsive to picking attack, pull-offs and tapping. Even with the gain and volume pegged, open chords were still definable. The amp's reverb added lushness, without becoming "squishy" at higher settings, while the tube-buffered effects loop help warmed up the digital signal from my effects processor.

The only gripe I have with the amp is the placement of the effects loop, which is located on the underside of the chassis—next to the speaker outputs. It's especially difficult to see when setting up on a dark stage. Do your effects processor a big favor and make sure to plug into the effects return and not one of the speaker outs by mistake. Yikes!

Overall, the versatility and tonal characteristics of the Electra-Verb's Lo input are it's strongest selling points. Although, I was evenly impressed with the amp's raucous attack and even response through the Hi input. In short, in this day of minimalist, mega-buck amps, it's nice to see a boutique combo with a heavy focus on features. —GG

