

STACK MAGIC

Egnater Rebel 20 head and Rebel 112X cabinet

BY CHRIS GILL

“DOWNSIZING” is usually a dirty word, especially in these rough economic times. But in the amp world, the current trend toward small, low-powered amp heads and mini stacks has been a very good thing indeed. Several companies, including Blackheart, Krank and Orange, recently introduced all-tube mini amp heads that deliver big sounds, yet sell for a mere fraction of the price of their full-size counterparts.

The Egnater Rebel 20 falls neatly into this new category of “brawny bantams,” with its diminutive-sized head and compact matching 1x12 speaker cabinets. Several unique and useful features, including a Tube Mix control and a Watts control with continuously variable output from 1 to 20 watts, make the Rebel 20 stand out in an increasingly crowded genre. And the Rebel 20 looks extremely cool and upscale to boot, thanks to its vintage-inspired two-tone Tolex covering, matching salt-and-

pepper twine basket-weave grille cloth and cursive Egnater logo. The burning question is whether an amp that weighs a mere 16 pounds can sound as good as the big boys. Is the Rebel 20 a David amongst Goliaths or just a cute, little brute that’s suffered from shrinkage?

FEATURES

LIKE THE NAME SUGGESTS, the Rebel 20 head is a 20-watt amplifier, but it features a unique power tube section consisting of two 6V6 and two EL84 power tubes that users can blend in any percentage combination using the Tube Mix control. The Watts control, another distinctive feature, allows you to vary the output from one to 20 watts. The preamp section consists of three 12AX7 tubes (all tubes are by Groove Tubes) that provide more than ample gain for the Rebel’s single-channel circuit.

Other front panel controls include the usual master volume and gain knobs, and the treble, middle and bass EQ, which is voiced similar to a Marshall with singing upper mids. A bright switch provides an 8dB boost at 4kHz, and the Tight switch cuts the bass by 6dB at 180Hz to keep low frequencies from sounding overly flabby and loose. A standby feature is included to help extend tube life. The rear panel is stripped

down to a few essentials, including a mono effect loop (fixed at unity gain), individual four-, eight- and 16-ohm speaker outputs, and a 100/117/230-volt AC select switch, which is helpful for guitarists who want to take the Rebel overseas on tour.

Although the Rebel 112X speaker cabinet is an option, you should seriously consider pairing one or two of them with the Rebel head, as the cabs are voiced specifically to let the Rebel sound its best. The cabinet features a custom-voiced Egnater Celestion Elite 80 12-inch speaker, and the closed-back, birch construction and front port

The matching 112X cabinet is closed and front-ported to pump out big, tight bass.



EGNATER REBEL 20 AND REBEL 112X

STREET PRICES: Rebel 20 head, \$599.00; Rebel 112X cab, \$249.00

MANUFACTURER:

Egnater Custom Amplification, egnaterramps.com

OUTPUT: 20 watts

TUBES: Two 6V6, two EL84 (power amp), three 12AX7 (preamp)

SPEAKER: Egnater Celestion Elite 80 12-inch

CHANNELS: One

FRONT PANEL: Power on/off, play/standby switch, Tube Mix control (6V6 to EL84), Watts control (1 to 20 watts), master, treble, middle, bass, gain, bright switch, Tight switch, single 1/4-inch input jack

REAR PANEL: 1/4-inch return, 1/4-inch send, four-, eight- and 16-ohm speaker outputs

OTHER: Nylon shoulder carrying bag



are all tuned to deliver exceptionally full bass response without sacrificing those creamy mids and sparkling highs.

PERFORMANCE

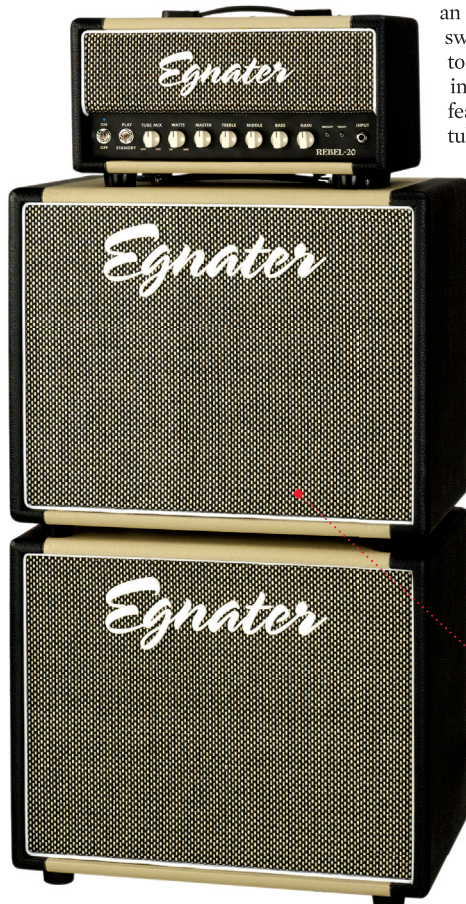
THE ONLY THINGS small about the Rebel 20 are its size and price. Thanks to the 112X cabinet’s closed back and the amp’s surprisingly loud output, it sounds and even feels identical to many 50- and 100-watt 4x12 stack amps when you close your eyes (or more importantly, place a mic in front of it in the studio) only it’s not quite as loud. With two cabinets it’s more than loud enough to gig with, especially if you mic the amp through a PA.

The ability to blend the wide-range sparkling treble, slightly loose mids and bass of 6V6 tubes (think Fender Deluxe) with the more-focused tight bass, punchy mids and chiming highs of the EL84 tubes is a revelation. When you crank up the master and set the gain around nine o’clock, the Rebel pumps out satisfying power amp overdrive crunch that kills when used with humbuckers. Experimenting with the Tube Mix, Watts, master and gain controls, I discovered a wide variety of personalities in the Rebel 20. You’ll probably find yourself running through ZZ Top, AC/DC, Aerosmith, Zep, SRV, Clapton and Maiden licks and being blown away by how close the tones match. The Rebel is an absolute godsend for studio recording, as it can summon stellar tones with minimal tweaking. There isn’t a single setting on this amp that sounds bad.

THE BOTTOM LINE

WHETHER YOU CHOOSE a half stack for your studio or a full stack for gigging, the Egnater Rebel 20 is a must-have for anyone who loves the big, full sound of a stack amp but is tired of breaking his or her back. Its incredibly sweet tones, versatile range and totally cool looks offer exceptional bang for the buck that we all desperately need in these desperate times. ★

PRO	CON
LIGHTWEIGHT (INCLUDES SHOULDER BAG); VERSATILE TUBE MIX AND WATTS CONTROLS; HUGE SOUND; INEXPENSIVE	ONLY SINGLE CHANNEL



Output is continuously variable from one to 20 watts with the Watts control.