

MODDING & UTILITY

Go the extra mile with these tone-enhancing solutions

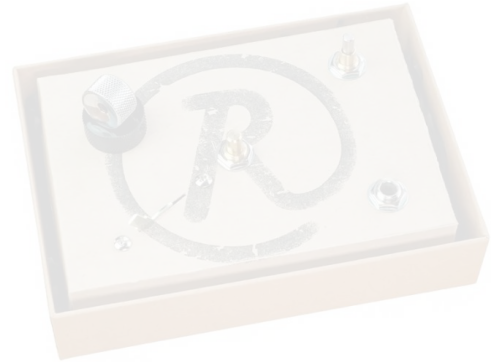
Words: Dave Burrluck & Trevor Curwen



Black Ice Boost

Think of onboard boosts and EQ, and you'd assume you need a battery to power them, right? Well, not if you're using old-school transformer technology. Like the Focus switch on Yamaha's Revstar II, the Black Ice Boost does just that, and the unobtrusive black box is small enough to fit in a pretty tight control cavity. It offers two levels of boost (which are switchable) or you can just run the one whose sound you like the best. Does it work? It sure does, with two levels of very usable thickening. It impressed the boffs at Cream T enough for them to fit the Boost into the latest Astra 'Decades' model (on review in this issue, see page 8). A no-battery zone!

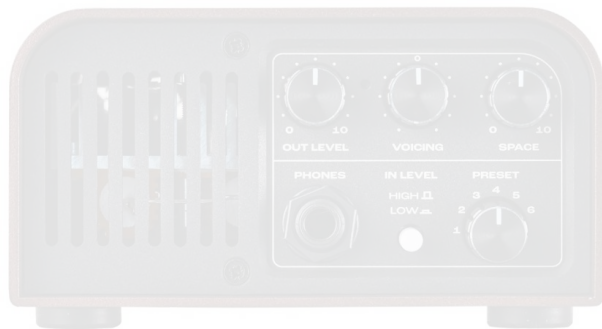
Price: £89 Website: www.blackiceoverdrive.com



Radioshop Pickups Telecaster Wiring Mod

A couple of years ago we put together one of Trev Wilkinson's T-style kits, which has been the host to many mods, hardware changes and experiments. It ended up with the original 1950 to '52-era circuit (from CharlesGuitars.co.uk), which allows you to blend the Tele's two pickups together, a really roasty Keef sound but with no tone control to tame that bright-edged Tele tone. Then we got a call from Radioshop Pickups in Wales who had just released its hand-wired Telecaster Wiring Mod, which, via a dual concentric tone pot, gives the classic Tele selections, with volume and tone control, *plus* that pickup blend. On behalf of blend-lovers out there, thank you! Prayers have been answered.

Price: £140 Website: www.radioshoppickups.com



Two Notes Captor X SE

One thing that many of the YouTube channels focusing on guitar have in common is the Universal Audio Ox Amp Top Box sitting in the background, which may lead some to think that it's the only load box with speaker emulation in existence. Not so: Two Notes has been in that business for over 15 years now and it celebrated with the Captor X SE, a special edition of its reactive load box that takes input from amps up to 100 watts and connects to your mixer or audio interface via balanced XLR outputs. Its dynamic IR (DynIR) cabinets and effects, all easily edited in the included app, add digital flexibility and professional-studio sound quality to any valve amp.

Price: £499 Website: www.two-notes.com

MY YEAR IN GEAR

ANSWERING THE CULL *by David Mead*



"I think that the most significant event in terms of gear this year has not involved buying but selling – although I am poised to make a rather important purchase in the near future. But more of that in a minute... There comes a time in every guitarist's life when we have to admit to ourselves that there are instruments tucked away in a cupboard that 'might get used at some point', which haven't, in fact, left the confines of their cases for a very long time. This was me around springtime '24.

"And so it was that I decided to review my personal collection and take nine guitars, an amp and several effects pedals to the auction rooms and wave them a – slightly emotional – farewell. But there is a twist to this sorry tale as I have a significant birthday coming up soon and the funds gathered from the auction will be spent on something six-stringed and extra-special. Although, I must admit that option anxiety has taken over my life. Good problem to have, but..."



PHOTO BY PHIL BARKER