

Garden wasn't quite the Fillmore all over again, it was an event we have been hoping would happen for years, and we were thrilled to have witnessed it. Now, not that we were asked, but here our recommendations for the perfect Bluesbreaker/Cream guitar rig:

the Ultimate Bluesbreaker/Cream Rig



You really shouldn't meddle with the classic tracks that profoundly inspired so many guitarists around the world on anything but a Gibson. Well... you can, but a Fender will sound like a Fender... Your "woman tone" will be replaced by a

less lusty "woman moan" not unlike the difference between sex on a perfect Saturday night versus a more subdued and tender reprise on Sunday morning.

No, a fat Les Paul is the ticket, or an ES335. There's your road-ready Bluesbreaker/Cream guitar *rack of slam*. Our favorite flavor for a Les Paul would be any Historic '58 or '59 reissue that speaks to you. After several years of experimentation with lighter Pauls in the 8 pound range, we've concluded that a great 9 pounder often wields more audible authority and woody attitude than the lighter ones, just so you know. By now, we install TonePros hardware on *everything*. Also, seek out instruments built with the correct neck-to-body geometry (neck angle) that allows you to get some moderate string height without cranking the bridge so far off the top that it creates a tighter, harder string tension, which can really kill tone and feel. If you want a light-weight humbucking guitar, get an SG or a 335 (not all 335's are light). We can't find anything not to like about the regular production Gibson SG Standards, and while in New York we



played a stellar Historic '61 reissue SG with lyre vibrola that was hard to leave on the wall at 30th Street Guitars. It was an exceptional instrument and we're still thinking about it. You already know about our hot tip on 335's – the first-year 1982-83 dotneck Gibson reissues. Ya'll were all lined up for the last sunburst on eBay and we ain't sellin' ours.

Regarding effects, you'll need a wah wah pedal, of course. We've thoroughly covered the excellent wahs built by Geoffrey Teese (April 2002), and one of the best finds among vintage, Italian-made Vox-style wahs remains the *Dallas-Arbiter Wah Face*. Ours is magic and cost \$110.00. As far as we know, Geoffrey Teese still restores them with the right parts (864-902-8237, www.realmccoycustom.com).



Now, amps are going to be fun... Of course, the automatic default move would be a big vintage Bluesbreaker 2x12 for the Mayall stuff and an early 100W Plexi with pinstripe 4x12

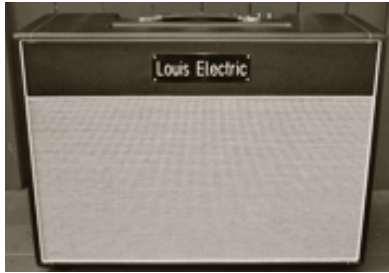
slant and straight-front cabs, but that setup would cost about \$20,000 if you could find them, and frankly, going vintage is no longer necessary. Besides, where are you gonna play a 100W dual 4x12 stack? If you're determined to go vintage, a 1969-1973 Marshall 50W small box head would do the trick paired with a 1x12 or 2x12 cabinet. We really like the K&M 1x12 cabinet loaded with an Eminence Wizard, Celestion G12H30 or the stock K&M speaker made by Eminence. A 2x12 begs for an Eminence Governor with a Private Jack or a pair of Celestion G12H Heritage speakers. You'll also need a boost pedal for the *full* Cream sound, and an Analogman Beano Boost for your humbucking guitars would be an excellent choice (our review follows). If 50W is still too much for your needs, stay tuned for the unveiling of the very portable 23W 1x12 ToneQuest Clarksdale next month. Among new amps, certainly the new handwired Marshall 100W head is worthy, if hard to find, but it's gonna be loud as hell unless it's attenuated. How about a new, handwired, full-size Bluesbreaker 2x12 housing a dead-knockoff of an early JTM45 loaded with KT66's? **To**

the Big Bluesbreaker

Lou Rosano's "Bluesbreaker" 45 watt 2x12 lays down the most authentic Bluesbreaker tones we have ever heard in a current production amplifier. It's housed in a big-ass 23.5" x 32" x 10.5" Baltic birch cabinet identical to the original and it is a bit of a load to haul, but the sonic rewards are worth it.

For his custom rendition of the Bluesbreaker, Rosano built a handwired "dead knockoff" of the original Marshall JTM45 Plexi, right down to the custom, handwound transformers built to original Radiospares specs, carbon comp and metal film resistors, the original Pererated circuit boards, original spec military 2 watt pots, and many of the original capaci-

-continued-



tors found in the Marshall Bluesbreaker that are still being made today overseas. Our review amp was also shipped with Russian HP KT66 output tubes that

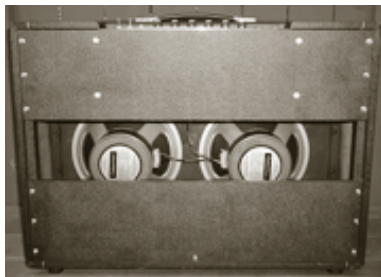
produced a warm, sweet, thick compression that responded beautifully to changes in pick attack. This amp is an instrument in its own right that excels with humbucker, P90 and Telecaster-style pickups, but what really distinguishes the Bluesbreaker from so many other less powerful boutique British-style amps is its power, coupled with the big 2x12 cabinet. Even when set at lower volumes, the Bluesbreaker produces a much more lush, rich, 3-dimensional and versatile range of sounds than a typical dual EL84 2x12 combo.



The GZ34 rectifier encourages stellar dynamic interplay between amp and guitar, and Lou has added a tone cap on the first input channel that emulates the

Rangemaster treble boost for an unparalleled, authentic Bluesbreaker feel and tone with humbucking pickups. Seriously – if this is your sound – prepare to be awestruck.

Our review amp was equipped with the new Celestion Heritage G12H 16 ohm speakers, which sound fantastic and will only improve with time (stay tuned for our review of the new Celestion G12H and G12M Heritage speakers plus an interview with Celestion engineers). Lou's custom, handbuilt LEL 014 Greenbacks are optional and have received raves from Balls Amplifier founder Danny Gork.



Features on the Bluesbreaker include four inputs for both channels (bright and normal), two volume controls, Treble, Bass, Middle and Presence. In addition to the full-size

Bluesbreaker 2x12 combo reviewed here, you may also order a head version of the JTM45 with or without speaker cabinet, or a slightly downsized version of the 2x12 combo similar in size to the Marshall 50W 2x12 combos built in the '70s. **TO**

www.louisamps.com, 201-384-6166

Back in the days when there were just a handful of amplifiers

ANALOG.MAN Beano Boost

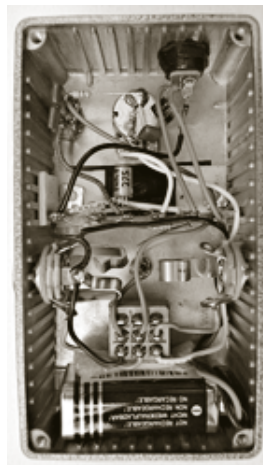
suitable for rock music available in England, the simplest alternative to permanently modifying the tone and dynamic character of a Marshall or Vox amp was to use external



effects deviceS that we universally describe today as "pedals." British designers were particularly adept at developing pedal designs that became classics, like the Dallas Arbiter Fuzz Face, Vox ToneBender, and the Dallas Rangemaster Treble Boost.

The Analog.man Beano Boost was developed in 2002 to offer guitarists a dead-nuts alternative to the rare and costly Rangemaster, and as usual, Mike Piera succeeded in not only recreating the original tones of this famous and worthy effect, but also expanding its capabilities with a Low and Mid boost. Here's Mike's short description of the development of the Beano Boost:

"The Beano Boost is based on the 1960s British Dallas Rangemaster, which was developed to give a treble boost to darker British amps. This pedal is a type of booster, not really a distortion pedal or a clean boost – it does modify your sound quite a bit by exciting certain frequencies and pushing your amp to create rich tube distortion. The pedal colors your tone with a crunchy overdrive, boosting specific frequencies and warming the tone with NOS germanium transistors.



We were able to come up with a truly exceptional version of this pedal due to the hundreds of NOS transistors we have bought for our Fuzz Face mods. We have used selected British NKT275 germanium transistors, which we also use in our Sunface fuzz, and they enable us to build a smooth treble booster with no shrill high end. We also acquired some Mullard black OC-44 transistors to try since most builders are using these in their Rangemaster clones. We

didn't think they would sound as good as the NKT's, but with

-continued-