

## ROUNDUP



## MAGNATONE SINGLE V HEAD AND 2X12 CABINET

THE CLASSIC TWEED

**IN THE LATE '50S AND EARLY '60S** Magnatone's throbbing, pitch-shifting vibrato did its thing for seminal artists like Bo Diddley and Buddy Holly, but otherwise, these amps were known for sounding bold, rich, and warm. Great for jazz players, but not ideal for the overdriven sounds that rock and rollers were chasing in the late '60s. Fast-forward several decades, and Ted Kornblum (whose family founded St. Louis Music Supply in 1922, and used to be a Magnatone distributor) is now on his own and has set his sights on resurrecting the famous Magnatone brand and to make them better than ever. A revitalized Magnatone line hit the ground in 2013 (*GP* reviewed the Stereo Twilighter in September of 2014), and the popular Single V combo has now be reconceived in this head and cab set.

Circuit-wise, the Single V doesn't cling to any particular vintage Magnatone model. Instead, Larry Cragg (who is also Neil Young's long-time guitar tech) came up with the concept for this model, which he explains thusly: "Way back at the beginning, I was asked, 'if I were king what amp would I make?' I said, 'A tweed Pro with two 12-inch speakers, reverb, and a pitch shift vibrato.' Obeid Khan [formerly of Crate, Ampeg, and Reason] tried to make this combination a reality, and after a couple of years and many examples, he got it right, and it even sounded better than my favorite 2x12 tweed Pro amps."

So the Single V on deck here represents a great mid-'50s tweed Pro—known for its juicy, versatile, broad-spectrum rock and blues sound—to which Khan grafted the famous two-stage Varistor vibrato of the original Magnatone 280 of the late '50s (also switchable to standard tremolo), with improved reliability for modern

use, plus a tube-driven spring reverb. In addition to the included footswitch for activating the reverb and vibrato, there's an optional rocker pedal available for remote speed control. A pair of 6L6s delivers 30 watts of fixed-bias Class AB power, governed by an interface that's classic in its simplicity: Normal and Bright channels with independent volume knob-sharing a set of tweed-style EQ controls. The set retains the swank brown-and-gold cotton-textile covering and Esty-era styling (complete with gold-plated chevrons), and the generously proportioned open-back speaker cab carries two custom U.S.-made ceramic Magnatone-branded speakers by WGS. Removing the head's back panel exposes a steel chassis with a circuit comprising Mallory signal caps, carbon-film resistors, and SEC and Tube Amp Doctor filter caps that are hand-wired on a thick glass-epoxy board. The pots, tube sockets, and switches are chassis mounted, and on a second smaller board reside the speaker, switching, and remote pedal jacks.

I tested the Single V rig with a Gibson Les Paul and a K-Line Strat-style guitar, using a variety of overdrive pedals in the front end. Played straight up, effects off, and fairly clean, the amp definitely evoked the meaty texture and dynamics of a mid-sized '50s tweed amp, with a bold voice for a 30-watter. The Les Paul induced some chewy breakup just shy of noon on either dial, but the Strat-style guitar needed the volume up around one o'clock before it started to grind. The breakup was classic, old-school rock and roll, with good midrange grunt and a musical balance between lows and highs. It was loud by the time I hit the good stuff, though, and a lot of players would need an attenuator to control volume in many

### MODEL

#### SINGLE V HEAD AND 2X12 CABINET

CONTACT	Magnatoneusa.com, info@magnatoneusa.com
PRICE	Head \$3,199 street, 2x12 cabinet \$899 street; covers by Victoria Luggage Co. included

### SPECIFICATIONS

CHANNELS	Two
CONTROLS	Normal Volume, Bright Volume, Treble, Bass, Presence, Reverb, Intensity, Speed, FM/AM switch (for true vibrato or conventional tremolo)
POWER	30 watts
TUBES	Five 12AX7s, one 12AU7, one 12DW7, two 6L6 output tubes, GZ34 rectifier
EXTRAS	Speaker out with 4/8Ω switch, line out, jacks for Remote Pedal (vibrato speed) and footswitch
SPEAKER	Tested with Single V 2x12 loaded with custom-made WGS ceramic-magnet speakers
WEIGHT	Head 46 lbs, cab 48 lbs
BUILT	USA
KUDOS	Excellent build quality in a revamped vintage classic. Solid tweed-leaning core tones and outstanding pitch-shifting vibrato.
CONCERNS	An attenuator or other volume-reduction solution may be needed in some playing situations.

situations. It also made an excellent pedal platform with either an Analog Prince of Tone or a Z.Vex Box of Rock engaged to take leads over the top.

The Single V really put its wares on display after I stepped on the vibrato switch and dove into that lush, thick, and phasey effect. It was bags of fun to play and authentic to my memory of the vintage Magnatone sound. The tremolo sounded great, too, and the reverb was superbly deep and watery. All in all, the Single V Head and Cab is a great-sounding choice if your gig calls for textured, euphonic, old-school effects.

—DAVE HUNTER