

Peavey Classic 30 Combo

Released in the early '90s the Peavey Classic 30 has been one of the industry's safest buys ever since. Recently, the venerable combo has received an update. So does it still punch above its weight? **Tom Quayle** finds out.

There was a time, before the lunchbox amp craze, when everybody wanted a compact and versatile 1x12 combo with a great tone. Perfect for use on smaller stages or at home, the Peavey Classic 30 was, and still is, a very popular performer with a wealth of features that make up a surprisingly versatile amplifier. Recently, Peavey decided to update the design with a couple of tweaks, the most notable of which is the introduction of a standby switch, which replaces the single power switch on the original. (Our review model didn't have this update but was tonally identical).

Made in the USA, the Classic 30 is an amalgamation of classic clean tones ('Fenderesque' if you like) and more modern higher gain drive sounds. The pre-amp section is fed by three 12AX7 tubes, offering a wealth of gain and dynamic cleans and the power section sports four smaller EL84 tubes providing the 30 Watts RMS of output.

This is a very aesthetically pleasing amplifier with classic good looks thanks to its tweed covering, cloth grill and lashings of chrome plating on the chassis and with the addition

of a true spring reverb firmly placing it in the vintage styled category.

For a small 30 Watt combo, the Classic 30 features an extensive control layout with clean (normal) volume, pre and post-gain, three-band EQ and reverb level controls with vintage chicken head style knobs. A channel and boost switch accompany these, allowing switching without the optional footswitch, which must be bought separately - something I always find slightly annoying, particularly as our review model had the reverb switched off and without the footswitch we couldn't switch it back on again!

The power and standby switches (on the updated model) are set next to an effects loop and a vintage looking pilot light indicating power. On the back of the chassis you'll find ins and outs for an extension speaker and the footswitch plus the 12" Blue Marvel speaker. The tubes are surrounded by a metal grill giving the whole design a solid look and feel and adding reassurance that no damage will occur during transport.



As with all US built Peavey amplifiers, the Classic 30 is extremely well made and feels reassuringly solid, despite its vintage appearance. All of the controls and switches are rigid and responsive without ever feeling cheap or plasticky. There are also no rattles or vibration noises that can often be heard with more budget minded amplifiers - the Peavey Classic 30 seems to be rock solid through and through - a real road warrior of a combo.

Starting with a Tele style guitar the clean channel reveals a superb and very responsive American clean tone that is perfect for

anything from chimey chordal playing to chicken picked runs and beyond. The 12" Blue Marvel speaker is fast and dynamic, with a good bass response and never gets boomy or muddy, thanks to the open back design. With humbuckers the tone can become thick and jazzy making it easy to see why this amplifier is popular with top 40 and show bands, needing a range of tones.

Cranking the volume gives a pleasing, perhaps just slightly harsh, crunch tone but you'll need to stick in some ear plugs to get there - this is a very loud amp for such



STAR RATING

CHECK THE SPEC 

[...>]

a small package. Switching over to the drive channel with single coils gives a range of classic Rock and Blues tones that have lots of bite and can be dialed in very accurately thanks to the three-band EQ. There is a surprising amount of useable gain on tap, but those seeking super-smooth, modern lead tones or scooped metal sounds might be disappointed as the tones here are more voiced for Blues and classic Rock - and it does those really well.

The inclusion of the FX loop makes the amp even more attractive, with delays and modulation effects sounding great with all tones.

The Classic 30 is a very versatile, well made and great sounding small combo amp that is very easy to recommend. For small stages and home use it's a great all round performer and thanks to the great build quality, should last you for many years. Even after all these years, and especially with the revised features, it remains one of the best buys in its class.

