

Bigger Killer Bee

The Gabriel Voxer 33

VG READERS FIRST learned about amp builder Gabriel Bucataru in 2005, when he was featured in the “Builder Profile” column, and the subsequent review of his Voxer 18 (March '06). Gabriel's latest amp model is the new Voxer 33 available in a 1x12" or 2x12" combos as well as a separate head and cabinet.

The Voxer 33 uses a EF86 preamp tube in the Bright channel, a pair of 12AX7 preamp tubes in the Normal channel, an EZ81 rectifier, and a quad of EL84 power tubes. Components and construction are top-shelf, including custom Mercury Magnetics transformers, Sprague capacitors, ceramic tube sockets, a welded heavy gauge aluminum chassis, all point-to-point wiring, and a fingerjointed nine-ply Baltic birch plywood cabinet with extra bracing.

Fitted with a Celestion G12 Gold speaker (the 2x12" combo is fitted with a Celestion Greenback reissue and an AlNiCo Blue), like our first review Gabriel, the Voxer 33 was dressed in the company's signature black and yellow tolex with gold piping, cream woven-cane grill, custom yellow chickenhead knobs, a heavy duty yellow-nylon-mesh-encased detachable power cord, yellow jewel light, black-and-yellow control panel silk screening and yes, even black-and-yellow speaker leads (now *that's* commitment to a color scheme!). If the bumblebee look is a little too bold for you, Gabriel also offers a black-and-cream “Capuccino” and all-black “Blackburn” color schemes.

Everything, from the perfectly executed tolex to the fit of all components to the laser cutout “Gabriel” logos on the footswitch, and preamp-tube compartment, give the Voxer 33 a high-end/high-quality vibe. Controls include a Volume and Tone control for the Bright (EF86) channel, Gain, Tone, Cut and Volume controls, and Gabriel's exclusive six-position

Tone Contour switch for the Normal/crunch channel.

The Voxer 33 ships with a two-button footswitch that overrides the control panel's Gain control and allows toggling between two Gain controls mounted on the footswitch. Dual 1/4" input jacks (high and low gain) are provided for each channel, and a footswitch jack, as well as internal and external 1/4" speaker jacks with an impedance selector.

The Bright channel offers Gabriel's take on that classic Vox tone, with full, complex midrange and snappy, rich highs. With either an ESP 400 and G&L ASAT, the amp sounded very lively and natural. The single Tone control does not just offer the typical high roll-off. Rather, it's voiced with a variety of tone curves from round and dark at 0, to crisp and twangy at 10. It arguably sounds best between 4 and 6, depending where the Volume knob is set. Some nice natural breakup and overtones start to build once its Volume is pushed past 5 or 6, and it's very controllable with the volume controls on the guitar, or by adjusting one's pick attack; the amp has a very dynamic front-end.

The Normal channel also exhibited a lot of British-style midrange bark, but

with much more attitude. The addition of the Gain and Contour controls really let the player ramp up the gain and zero in on an exact tone. The six-position Contour control offers substantial tone options, from thin and tight with slightly less gain in the A and B settings, to thick and bassy with a boost in gain in the E and F settings. As with the Bright channel, the Normal's Tone control was also very useful for refining the tone; between the Cut (high

roll-off) and the single Tone control, the Voxer's sound is easy to tailor. Cranking up the Gain and Volume controls delivers the overdrive and saturation, while the Cut and Tone control help level off the highs and tighten the sound, keeping it complex and crunchy.

The Gabriel Voxer 33 produces a rock-solid high-octane “British” sound with lots of control, impeccable built quality, and a very cool “Killer Bee” aesthetic vibe. — *Phil Feser*



GABRIEL VOXER 33

Price: \$2,820 (1x12" combo), \$2,980 2x12" combo, \$2,350 (head)
Contact: Phone (847) 394-5091;
www.gabtone.com.

