

the Duesenberg appropriate and well-suited for just about every type of music you can imagine except perhaps a Jerry Reed tribute record, a Uriah Heep medley or C-tuned death metal. Blues... yes. Rock & roll... oh, yeah (yeah, yeah) Rockabilly... *hell* yeah. Jazz, even. The controls are also stupidly simple – a single volume and tone pot with a 3-way switch – no coil taps to make your humbucker sound like a neutered single coil, and so on.

At a list price of \$2960, we'll agree that the folks in Hannover are proud of their instruments, designed in Germany and made in Korea, but we found nothing 'cheap' about the Duesenberg – in fact, quite the opposite was true. Build, fit and finish quality are on a level with comparable imported Gretsch models, yet a look at the Duesenberg web site reveals guitars that copy nothing, past or present. Mike Campbell's collaboration with Duesenberg has resulted in a straight-ahead, no excuses, solid rock & roll guitar with style that plays and sounds great in its own very unique fashion. **To**

www.duesenbergusa.com, 714-580-1547

Clark Amplification

Were we surprised to discover Mike Campbell playing two rather modestly powered amps in a room larger than many clubs? Not really, and believe us, *The Dirty Knobs* were loud enough to get their point across. Jim Campilongo just recounted his UK tour with Martha Wainright playing a single blackface Princeton Reverb in the January issue of *TQR*, and the first article we published on the versatile Princeton was written by Dave Boze in our inaugural November 1999 issue. So as much as we still admire the big, rippin' vibe of a powerful 50 watt Marshall, an Ampeg V2, Super Reverbs and blonde Bassman heads, they just don't work on small stages in smaller venues, cranked – especially today, when high volume seems as welcome as second-hand smoke.



Well, among all of the moderately powered vintage amp designs ever created, it's hard to argue with the mass appeal of the tweed Deluxe. No reverb? You know

how to fix that with a Fender tube reverb box, a Holy Grail pedal, or the TC Electronic digital reverb we recently recommended. So how much would like to pay for yer tweed Deluxe? How about a hand-wired booteek version built by an

experienced pro with a solid reputation for \$875.00? Yes, it has come to this, and just in time for the "non-recession" that has us all thinking a lot harder about our gear acquisitions...



Michael Clark has been repairing, modifying and building custom amps for decades. We have known about his highly regarded tweed replicas for years, but it wasn't until we interviewed Clark that

we learned of his prior experience restoring and repairing vintage amps, and building his take on classic Marshall and Vox amps.

Sometimes we'll doggedly scroll through every page on eBay in various amp categories just to be reminded of the hundreds of amplifier models that have been built since the '40s. No matter how you may feel about eBay (it killed the used gear business for many music stores and pawn shops), it is a great resource for conducting research. During one of these sessions, we found a listing for a new Clark Beaufort 5E3 tweed Deluxe with a buy it now price of \$875.00 direct from Michael Clark. Reading the description, we understood that this was his stock, handwired Deluxe chassis shipped with a Mojotone lacquered tweed pine cabinet and Jensen P12Q speaker that Clark orders in quantities that provide a significant price break that can be passed on to his customers. Clark still uses NOS tube sockets in the 'budget' Beaufort, and ships with a NOS 5Y3 rectifier. He also includes a stout power cord that is easily the longest we have ever seen in a



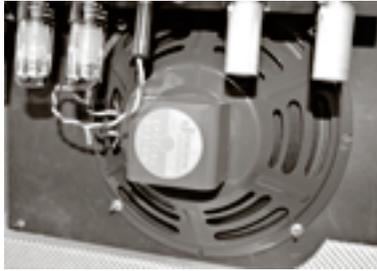
new amp. Basically, you're getting an over-built, custom handwired tweed Deluxe for the price of a mass-produced PCB amp. Imagine that. The Beaufort

sounds fantastic, it is extremely well built, and you can swap the stock 5Y3 rectifier for a 5AR for a little more girth, power and headroom. This, people, requires no equivocal hand-wringing what-so-ever. Enjoy the following introduction to Michael Clark, and bust a move before he regains his senses.

TQR: At \$875.00 the new tweed Deluxe we bought direct from you on eBay is a phenomenal deal.

Occasionally I'd offer an amp on eBay if a cabinet got dinged

-continued-



up or something and I've been involved with buying and selling on eBay for quite a while. We build the Beaufort Special specifically for sale on eBay and use the Jensen P12Q because

we think it sounds very good, and that speaker is a stockable item. When we build an amp with a different speaker it may take a month to get it, but we keep the Jensens on hand. We also use the Mojo replica 5E3 cab because it is a great value in quantity and I can pass the savings on to the customer. It is a solid fl" pine cab with /" finger joints and is nicely tweeded and lacquered.

TQR: So when someone orders a custom amp from you they can request virtually any speaker they want?

Absolutely. If you're dealing directly with me on a custom amp, I build it exactly how you want it. You can get the amp in a bigger cabinet or with add-on reverb, for example. I also will install a 0 to 9 or 0 to 15 Regulator on my amps.

TQR: Are the transformers in the Beaufort Special we bought the same as those in your custom-built amps?

They are the same custom wound transformers, but the concept is the same – the more amps I sell and parts I order, the lower the cost of the components. They are our transformers, made to our specs. They are not off the shelf components.

TQR: Is the circuit the same as well?

Yes, exactly the same. Probably where we vary a little bit is that we use a center tap 6.3V filament winding and Fender



just grounded one leg of the 6.3V to the chassis, (to use it as one side of the filament), and ran one wire to the other side of the filaments. We use the same wire routing, the same construction techniques with brass eyelets, all carbon comp Allen Bradley resistors, Carling switches, and the tube sockets are NOS made for the military in 1952.

TQR: So the bottom line is that aside from the Mojo cabinets that you can buy in quantity at a lower price and the Jensen P12Q RI speaker, the 5E3 Beaufort Special we bought on eBay is the same custom amp as the one you build and sell direct?

That's right.

TQR: Let's talk about how you first began working on guitar amps...

I went into the service in the early '70s and I had always been interested in electronics, so I was trained in electronics and radar repair for a year at Fort Monmouth, NJ. All the equipment in those days ran on vacuum tubes. There was a level of drastic overbuild for much of the military equipment being built then, and this influenced my build style greatly. After I got out of the military, I traveled and played guitar for years using all the tube amps I would come to repair and replicate.

TQR: And how did your experience with amp repairs evolve?



In the early '80s while I was playing the guitar,

getting someone to fix something for me was virtually impossible... everyone had moved on, so I got back into repair as a sideline business working on old Marshalls, Fenders and Ampegs. As parts and things became more available, I started building a few amps – replicas of the tweed Deluxe, tweed Champ, and low and high powered tweed Twins. Back then Mojotone was just about the only source for parts to build amps, and I've had a long relationship with them when they were on the West Coast and now in North Carolina.

TQR: When and how did you actually begin to make a living building amps?

Well, in those days I always talked with a lot of people like Gerald Weber and Ken Fischer, because there just weren't that many of us building amps at the time. The first big break for me was when Gerald Weber wrote a review of the same amp you bought – the tweed Deluxe. I was one of the first to get a web site up, too, and that helped, (although it hasn't changed much since then), and our business grew from word of mouth.

-continued-

TQR: And you eventually expanded into other vintage tweed models like the Pro. Is there one model that outsells all the rest?

Hands-down it's the Beaufort (replica of the 5E3 Deluxe), and maybe after that, the Tyger (replica of a tweed Bandmaster). We've also done quite a few restorations on vintage models of those amps, as well as countless 4x10 Bassmans, early JTM 45s and tons of other Fender tweed and blackface amps.

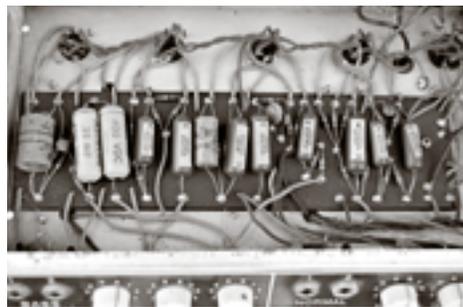
TQR: Are you still active with repairs and restorations?



I think you have to be. It's very important to our business to maintain an accurate perception of exactly how those amps really sound. Before anybody was really doing it, we

were building replicas of JTM 45's, having restored some early models, and we have on request built Vox AC15s. I also love building Fender blackface replica amps. You'll see on my web site that I enjoy fixing up and reselling Bandmaster and Twin reverb amps. They are really fantastic when they're done right.

TQR: Do you receive many silverface amps to be blackfaced?



Absolutely, and there was a time when I used to do more drastic modifications than I do today. I'll do historically

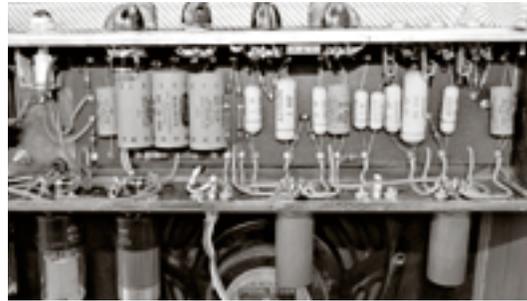
correct restorations as much as I can, and to the extent that I can acquire old parts, but if someone wants to go too far beyond a historically accurate restoration, I'm really not interested in modifying a vintage amp.

TQR: Are you saying that you actually go to the extent of locating authentic old components?

Yes. In fact, before restorations became so popular, I used to buy old Fender blue molded caps from Torres Engineering

that they had pulled from amps they had serviced. Most of the time they were still within spec. I actively seek old parts in my amps, like the 5E3 with the old tube sockets. I'll also search for old CTS pots, the right tube sockets, the right capacitors and carbon comp resistors that sound older, and that's where I think we're a little bit different.

When you think about the old amps and how they sound, part of that sound is the combination of the parts drifting and a lit-



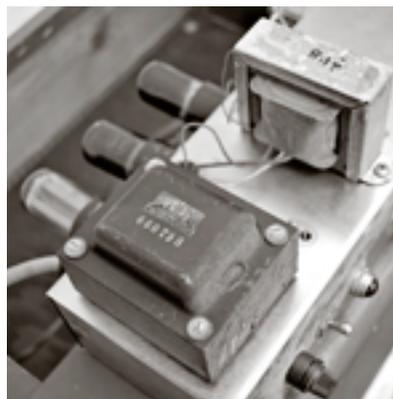
tle more leakage in the old caps than you'd see in

newer ones. Like a car back in those days, you could almost get a lemon right off the lot if the components happened to be on the wrong end of the tolerance curve. Doing restorations of old Deluxes, for example, I've heard some that sounded pretty good, some that were just OK, and others that were pretty great, but they all sound different due to the parts tolerances and drift. They were building those amps rather rapidly in the late '50s, and the machinery and insulating materials used to build transformers weren't as precise as they are today, so the tone we hear in old amps reflects a lot of those factors.

TQR: And the transformers were inconsistent as well...

Yes, and you can see some that vary on the voltages. Probably the most consistent output transformers were those found in the late '50s tweed Bassman.

TQR: So given the inconsistencies inherent in the old amps, when you set out to build replicas, you have to know exactly what your target is.



Yes we do, and you will see that concept in the Beauforts we build. Some of the resistors we use are slightly off tolerance from the original schematic and specifications. It helps to get an authentic "old" sound. Our power

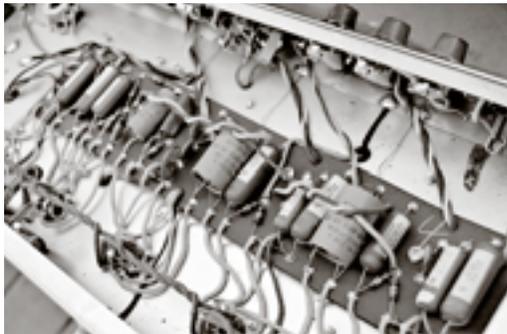
-continued-

transformers are also slightly different. If you were to measure a 5E3 power transformer from the late '50s, you might see 365V or 370V on the plates, and on mine you'll see something like 340V. It's a little bit softer in tone and less edgy. Louder and brighter is always a good way to get someone's attention, but it's not always the best way to go for tone. Another option with our power transformers is that you can use a 5V4 or 5AR4 in the Beaufort Special and put the plate voltages up to 360-365 volts. This matches well with the voltages you would see on a original 5E3 tweed Deluxe and gives a brighter, more "in your face" tone that will cut in a louder live band. We try to make our amps historically accurate and very consistent. We also use an authentic soldering method that Fender used in the old days.

TQR: And does that make a difference?

No, not a tonal difference, but I want it to look right. That's not to say that speaker cabling or input cables can't make a difference.

TQR: Amp builders are always touting the components they use. Why should non-technical guitar players care?



As far as resistors go, they probably don't make a ton of difference. You might be able to find someone that believes they can hear the difference, but Allen Bradleys are important in my opinion because they are simply the best carbon comp resistors ever made. They don't drift and they are, for the most part, low noise. Fender found that out the hard way when CBS bought the company, and they eventually switched back to 1 watt Allen Bradley carbon comp resistors. As far as capacitors go, I do think you can hear the difference. You have to trust the builder, and you either like the sound of the amp someone builds or you don't. Mallory 150s are a good cap, Sozos are even better in my opinion, and for my older-style amps I like to use the Jensen copper foil and oil caps. They tend to be not as good a cap electrically as the Spragues or Mallorys or Sozos, and they may even have a little bit of leakage, but that makes them *sound* like the old amps. The weird thing about all this is that the Jensen caps cost me 15 times as much as a cap that is actually better electrically. You get what you pay for in an odd way. Those are important

things for guitar players to know, and most of the people that I build amps for appreciate what's under the hood, so to speak.

TQR: We noticed that you are using reissue Tung Sol 6V6s, which seems to indicate that you are paying attention to what's happening with current production tubes. We like the Tung-Sols a lot.



We do, too. I try them all out within my ability to do so, and for the longest time we used NOS tubes in our Beauforts because current production tubes just wouldn't stand

up. It is a brutal circuit on a 6V6 tube, and the Tung Sols will hold up.

TQR: You also included an unusually long, gig-worthy power cord on our \$875 Deluxe.

We usually use a 15 or 20 foot cord, and sometimes we have gotten complaints that the cords are too long.

TQR: Well of course you would. Have you toyed with offering any other tweed models on eBay like the 5E3 Beaufort Special?

Well, we'll definitely continue to offer the Beaufort Special 5E3, but I'm not sure we could keep up with the demand for any other models, and we certainly couldn't sell them at such a low price. For now, when we have the time we'll build the 5E3s and sell them on eBay. For the money, it's a hell of a fine amp. Keep an eye out for a Beaufort Reverb Special (blackface Deluxe Reverb Replica) new model to show up as a "Special". [To](http://www.clarkamplification.com)

www.clarkamplification.com, 803-791-7513

The Unmistakable Vibe of the 'UniVibe' Part 2

Following our February adventures with the Dunlop Stereo Univibe I-SC, Fulltone Deja'Vibe and the Red Witch Moon Phaser, we jumped into three additional Vibe effects that deserve your attention – the Sweetsound UltraVibe and MojoVibe, and the soon to be released FoxRox AquaVibe. Given the breadth and depth of the booming effects pedal biz, it has become challenging to grasp the number of boost, dis-

-continued-