

Egnater Renegade



Designed by Bruce Egnater, the Renegade is armed with independent controls and comes with a four-button footswitch for selecting channels and activating the reverb, effects loop, and secondary master volume on either or both channels. The power stage has two EL34s and two 6L6s, which can be used separately or blended together via the Tube Mix control on both channels. The idea is to give the player the ability to use the glassier sounding 6L6s or the more muscular EL34s, or any combination of the two. The Renegade's flexible control arrangement also provides the ability to configure each channel for 65-watt or 18-watt operation, set the low-end response for "tight" or "deep," and the high-frequency response for "bright" or "normal." In addition to all this is a Master section, which has reverb and secondary master-volume controls for each channel, as well as global Density and Presence controls.

On the Renegade's rear panel we find dual speaker outs, a balanced line out, a series effects loop, and meter test-points and adjustment screws for setting the bias on the two pairs of output tubes. The manual details how to adjust the bias for optimum performance, and also provides recommended bias settings for other types of power tubes that can be used in the Renegade, such as the 6550, 6V6, KT66, and KT77.

The Chinese-made Renegade is an easy amp to get comfy with thanks to its distinctly voiced channels, which serve up a broad assortment of American- and British-style sounds. Channel 1 is the more Fender sounding, and with the Tube Mix knob in the full 6L6 position it can deliver everything from pristine clean to mildly overdriven tones. This channel easily covers the bases from jazz to blues to country, but the timbral difference between the full 6L6 and full EL34 positions is surprisingly subtle—even at higher volumes—and even more so when blending different ratios of the tubes. (Bruce Egnater responds, "The differences can be more noticeable at higher volumes where the distortion characteristics of the tubes become most apparent.



The 5881s may also make for a bit tighter *feel*, while the EL34s may tend to have a more focused midrange. Of course, users can install any variety of tubes to create some interesting effects. For example, blending a pair of high voltage 6V6s with a pair of 6550s creates an interesting and unique combination of tones.)

The digital reverb sounds good on this channel, and the "spillover" function keeps the sound consistent when you switch between channels. However, if you're a hardcore 'verb freak you'll probably wish for a smoother decay than it provides.

Switching to channel 2 uncorks the

Renegade's distortion side, and this channel can elicit everything from grinding, JTM-45-inflected blues tones to full-bore shred mayhem. The gain range was very accommodating to single-coil and humbucker guitars, and the Tight/Deep switch and Density control make it easy to dial in the low-end response to suit your needs. Again, I found the Tube Mix control to be more subtle than salvational, though the 18-watt setting proved very handy for situations where you want to run the amp hard, but volume is an issue. The Renegade has a lot going for it, and in terms of bang-for-the-buck, it's a tough act to follow.

