



LOUIS ELECTRIC Buster & KR12 combos

Keith Richards, Hubert Sumlin, Duke Robillard, Danny Gatton and Robben Ford are just some of the players who have played Lou Rosano's amplifiers – and now they're over here. Review by **Richard Purvis**

New Jersey has given us Whitney Houston, Bon Jovi, My Chemical Romance and the Jonas Brothers. On balance, perhaps, New Jersey ought to stop giving us stuff. But let's make room for Lou Rosano of Louis Electric, who designs and builds all his acclaimed amps himself in Bergenfield, NJ – and now they've arrived in the UK.

These two combos are classy-looking bits of work, with tidy trim and a swish retro-styled logo. The open-backed pine cabs are unfinished on the inside, displaying Rosano's flawless carpentry, and going deeper we find minimally-wired eyelet boards with orange paint splodged over all the caps and resistors to hide their values from cloners. They're both fixed-bias Class AB combos, and each has a Celestion G12, but in voicing terms there's a distinct US/UK split: the 25W Buster is a 6L6-driven product of the tweed Fender school, while the 40W KR12 has EL34s and reflects Rosano's love of old Marshalls. Oh, and the 'KR' stands for Keith Richards, as this is his signature model. That's some real pedigree.

Buster

Well spotted – it's not tweed. The fudgy vinyl is more reminiscent of Fender's early-'60s brownface era, but the three-



With a Les Paul, the Buster delivers all the soaring, splatting magnificence of Neil Young at his ragged best

knob, four-input panel is straight off a late-'50s 5E3 Deluxe. There are two key differences, though: the output valves are 6L6s rather than 6V6s, allowing this amp to belt out roughly double the 5E3's stated 12W; and the speaker is a G12H, usually associated with classic Marshall tones, rather than a Jensen.

The panel has a brushed finish, and the jewel light is luscious purple. You get Normal and Bright channels with two inputs and a Volume control each, and one shared Tone knob. A patch lead can be used to bridge both channels together for maximum gain and more tone-sculpting possibilities.

Sounds

We're not expecting shimmery clean sounds from this little amp, and we don't get them. Even with Volume around 2, where the output tubes

FINAL SCORE

LOUIS ELECTRICS BUSTER	
Build Quality	20/20
Playability	16/20
Sound	20/20
Value for money	17/20
Looks	18/20
TOTAL	91%

FACTFILE

Louis Electric Buster

DESCRIPTION Two-channel 25W 1x12" combo with 2 x ECC83, 2 x 6L6 and 1 x GZ34 valves, Celestion G12H Anniversary speaker. Made in USA
PRICE £1,550

CONTROLS Normal Volume, Bright Volume, Tone; Standby and On/Off switches

DIMENSIONS 51cm wide, 44cm high, 25cm deep
WEIGHT 18kg/39.6lbs

CONTACT ToneDoctor UK
01775 713528
www.tonedoctor.co.uk
www.louisamps.com

Like this? Try this...

Fender

'57 Deluxe

Handwired reissue of the tweed 5E3 model, surely the most influential small amplifier in history

RRP £2,050

REVIEWED June 2008

Volt Amp Co

Humble 18

British take on the Deluxe-based Dumble Overdrive Special, the original boutique wonder-amp

RRP £1,499

REVIEWED June 2011