

# RAW AND READY

## The Allen Amplification Accomplice Jr.

First impressions of Allen Amplification's new Accomplice Jr. begin to form even before you open the box – it's so *light* you might think (as we did), "Did they ship just a head?" But our fears were assuaged when we cracked open the box to reveal a gig-ready 1x12" combo that weighed in at just 38 pounds.

Like Allen's larger Accomplice model, the Accomplice Jr. is a hand-made all-tube unit that pumps out 22 watts (with a pair of 6V6 power tubes) or 35 watts (with 6L6s), and also uses four 12AX7 preamp tubes along

Similar to its bigger sibling, the visuals of the Accomplice Jr. will appeal to anyone who lusts after a pre-CBS Fender amp, with black tolex, silver-



with a GZ34 rectifier. Like its progenitor, it operates in Class AB push/pull with controls for Volume, Treble, Middle, Bass, Reverb and Master volume. There's also a Bright switch and a knob labeled "Raw." Switches for Power and Standby are mounted on the backside of the chassis.

The Accomplice Jr. ships in three familiar configurations; 1x10" or 1x12" combo, or as a head. We recently took a swing at a 1x12" loaded with an Eminence Patriot Red White & Blue speaker.

sparkle grillecloth, and vintage cream knobs that combine to say "Leo." The blackface control panel and logo lettering complete a very Fullerton-esque package.

And as attractive as it is outside, for the tube-amp lover, the inside of the Accomplice Jr. is true nirvana. The chassis, housed in a finger-jointed pine cabinet, is 18-gauge stainless steel with spot-welded corners. The unbelievably tidy point-to-point soldering connects solid-core PVC wiring on a glass epoxy circuitboard with brass eyelets. Switchcraft jacks and Carling switches send electrical signal through carbon-film resistors to Mallory

M150 and CDM silver-mica capacitors. The transformers and the choke are made in the U.S.; the proprietary Allen TP25 power transformer features a center-tapped heater winding and internal hum shield, and is made with M-6 lamination steel Allen says helps keep it cool. The TO35MT power transformer features a paper bobbin, also made from M-6. The Reverb is a two-spring, medium-delay Accutronics unit that's entirely tube-driven. Allen uses TAD 6L6 power tubes because he says they do a better job of staying matched than do other brands.

The circuit is essentially borrowed from a Fender Deluxe Reverb, except it has only one channel and no vibrato. However, the Bright switch more than makes up for the lack of a second channel. There are also controls for Middle tone and Master volume, which make getting your tone at any volume much more accessible than on a Deluxe.

The first tones we heard through the Accomplice Jr. were created by a recent-issue Gibson Les Paul Special with Rio Grande Jazzbar and Bluesbar P-90-style pickups, a

TonePros ABR bridge, and aluminum tailpiece. They teamed up to produce a snarl that was just plain *malevolent*. With the bridge Bluesbar engaged, the EQ knobs set to straight-up 12 o'clock, and the volume at 10 o'clock, our LP Special parlayed a bright-but-smooth tone. Moving the volume up smoothed out the tone and noticeably reduced high-end response. With the volume knob at about 2 o'clock, distortion was full and creamy.

Turning up the Raw knob put a beautiful edge on the Accomplice Jr.'s distorted tones. This is not an understated control that makes you say, "Yeah, I *think* it did something." No, sir. While the Volume and Master controls help you dial in the basic level of overdrive, it's the Raw knob that lets you fine-tune the distortion, making it easy to find the right sound.

Engaging the Bright switch and rolling back the Volume, we got a nice jangle. Solos at this setting produced an almost country/Telecaster sound. Flicking to the neck pickup and disengaging the Bright switch put the Special on the border of big-box jazz. With the Bright engaged, the neck pickup offered a very beefy-sounding Strat-like tone that Eric Johnson or Stevie Ray would likely appreciate.

Plugging in our hardtail Strat with DiMarzio Virtual Vintage pickups, we switched off the Bright and, using the neck pickup only, got a full-bodied, throaty sound. The pickup sounded better with the Bright switch engaged, while the middle pickup was ambivalent. When the issue was clarity of tone, the middle pickup preferred to have the Bright engaged. For smoother distortion, though, it sounded better with the Bright turned off.

Given its power, light weight, high-quality components, construction, and stellar tones, the Accomplice Jr. is a no-brainer recommendation. In a world of amps with similar appointments that start at \$2,500, it's a steal. – **Bob Dragich** *VG*

**Price: \$1,399 (retail).**

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