



Harley Benton TableAmp V2 Bluetooth

An affordable, Bluetooth-equipped desktop amp designed with electro-acoustic instruments and vocalists in mind – but with scope for amp modelers too

By Richard Blenkinsop

▶ PART OF HARLEY Benton's desktop amplifier range, this acoustic model boasts 30W of power, a 5" speaker, 1" tweeter, Bluetooth connectivity and onboard reverb. It's been designed for electro-acoustic guitars, ukuleles and vocal microphones but it can also be used as a monitor for unpowered amp modeler units like the Helix, Quad Cortex or Kemper.

There are quite a lot of compact, desktop-style amps out there, so what sets this apart? Firstly, it's got a combined XLR/jack input allowing you to easily plug in either an instrument or microphone. Also, to get Bluetooth at this price point is pretty good, and you're getting quite a bit more power than you do with many other desktop amps anywhere near this price point.

Build quality

The build quality is fine here; nothing exceptional, but let's remember we're dealing with a fairly budget amp. The faux-leather handle and metal parts either side of it are a nice touch. It's fairly neutral in terms of aesthetic too, so it won't look out of place in a living space.

The only potential weakness in terms of the physical build is where the power supply plugs in. There's no recess for it – it just plugs flat into the back of the unit. One big knock to that could do some serious damage, but that's only if we're being picky.

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What's nice and not particularly common at this price point is that it comes shipped with its own power supply. If you're in the UK or US though it's worth bearing in mind that it's a European plug, so you'll need an adapter (EU to UK or US, not like the ones you take on holiday).

I did notice a few grounding issues when using it with an electro-acoustic guitar – there was a slight hum that was more noticeable as the volume was increased. This could be to do with the plug adapter I was using, so not necessarily a problem with the amp itself, but again, worth considering for those in the UK.

Usability

The TableAmp V2 Bluetooth is super easy to use, and it's lightweight. With only five knobs on the control panel, it's hard to get lost – you've got guitar/mic volume, then bass and treble controls, the reverb level, then a master volume.

It soon becomes apparent that the volume increments don't seem to be linear – same with the reverb. If you very slowly increase the volume, it doesn't get gradually louder; it's like you get to a certain point then it increases. There are quite a few of these increments

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though so it's easy enough to get to the volume you want, but it just took me by surprise a little.

The Bluetooth is really easy to pair with any device, and there's a handy switch on the back that lets you switch from microphone or instrument input so you get the right sensitivity levels.

Sounds

With an electro-acoustic guitar, it sounds good; you're not getting superb clarity or a broad, rich frequency range - you get the sound of your guitar's pickup amplified. When set flat, the amp is fairly dark sounding, but you can of course dial in more treble and reduce the bass using the controls, if you don't have them on your instrument's preamp. As mentioned, I did get some ground interference, but I'm putting this down to external factors.

With desktop amps, you might wonder what the point is with an acoustic guitar – an instrument that is already fairly loud on its own. With 30W, you can pump out a fair bit of volume. With both the instrument and master volumes pushed, it does start to distort as you might expect, but before it gets to that point, it's considerably louder than just the guitar on its own. If you're playing in small, quiet bars or cafes, you'll manage fine with this amp.

I tried the amp with a trusty SM58 too and was pleasantly surprised. It's loud and clear, so whether you need it to speak or sing through it, you'll be heard. Again, there's enough volume on tap to justify getting a mic out and plugged in. The reverb also works nicely with vocals - better so than it does with guitar for me personally.

Connecting via Bluetooth to listen to music, the TableAmp performs well. There's plenty of bass there, without it getting muddy, and the top end remains clear too. This paired with the slick look of the amp reaffirms it as a great multi-functional piece of gear that can sit comfortably in any chic living space.

Lastly, I tried the amp out as a de facto FRFR speaker. Setting the EQ flat, I plugged an electric guitar into a Kemper Profiler and then went out of that into the Harley Benton TableAmp V2 Bluetooth amp. Depending on the profiles and IRs you've got set up, you might want to dial your sound in on the EQ, but it actually works really well for this purpose.

GUITAR WORLD VERDICT



The Harley Benton TableAmp V2 Bluetooth is a compact but fairly loud desktop amp. If you need to give your electro-acoustic guitar or ukulele a boost in volume, then it's fantastic. The combined XLR/jack input means it's just as quick to plug in a microphone so it works for singers too. The sound quality is pretty good, but in terms of value for money, this thing really punches above its weight!

PROS

- + Multi-functional - for acoustic guitar, vocals, music playback, FRFR.
- + Very affordable.
- + Bluetooth enhances the versatility.
- + Looks good.

CONS

- Not super clear on acoustic.
- Battery power would be really useful.

SPECS

TYPE: Solid-state acoustic combo

ORIGIN: China

OUTPUT: 30W RMS

SPEAKER: 5" speaker & 1" tweeter

CHANNELS: 1

CONTROLS: Guitar/mic volume, bass, treble, effect level, master volume, EQ switch

CONNECTIVITY: Mic/jack input, aux input, headphone output, Bluetooth

WEIGHT: 3.1kg/6.8lbs

DIMENSIONS: 320 mm x 200 mm x 160 mm

Verdict

If I found myself in possession of the Harley Benton TableAmp V2 Bluetooth for the long run, I'd likely use it most for music playback and as a monitor for the Kemper. It's a great size for it to sit neatly next to a modeler, but it's still big enough to get proper tones out of at bedroom levels.

I do think that for many players, this won't be quite loud enough to gig with seriously, and might not be a necessity at home. However, if you don't need a great deal of volume and you're looking to keep costs down, then this could be a fantastic option both for instrumentalists and vocalists. If there was an option to run it on batteries, I'd bet that it would be really popular with buskers – perhaps there's scope for a future model there.