

# Product Review

## US MASTERS TVA30 Guitar Amp

by John Strobel

Just in time for NAMM, an all tube 30 watt Class A amp made by US Masters...yes you are reading this correctly and it retails for only \$899. US Masters, a premier guitar manufacturer in Wisconsin has built their first guitar amp to compliment their fine collection of master crafted guitars.

When Bruce called to tell me that we'll be one of the first magazines to review the **TVA30**, I was more than excited,

with a relatively small dealer network? The TVA30 is a very special amp at very good price, which means they have an excellent opportunity to sell many amps. But how will folks know about it? Well maybe I can help.

On paper the TVA30 reads like the ultimate boutique amp with 30 watts of class A power via 4- EL84 tubes (no solid state devices in the signal path), point-to-point hand wired, two channels, foot switchable, reverb, custom 12" speaker and very cool

finish options including the vintage tweed which they provided for this review. This amp is no lightweight either, it's about 50 pounds.

The control layout is straightforward making it easy to dial in some great tones right from the start. In the

owner's manual

US Masters provides several of their favorite settings from overdrive to metal. The look and feel of this amp has such a boutique vibe; I had to remind myself it costs less than \$900. For full details visit [www.usmasters.com](http://www.usmasters.com); there are many detailed pictures **providing close-ups** of the wiring, transformers etc. The construction is tightly monitored and controlled in their China based factory. Please keep in mind, this amp is professional grade and can be used for touring and recording.

On Christmas Eve, I spent over 2 hours exploring every aspect of this amp I could and

was never disappointed. It didn't matter what type of guitar I used or what kind of sound I wanted, the TVA30 delivered. The clean channel was exceptional with every note ringing out as clearly as I have ever heard. I loved the overdrive too and was able to produce all the "classic" lead tones along with current metal. My neighbors were also very appreciative of the sound pressure levels this amp pumps out (I hope they'll forgive me). It can get very loud and still sound excellent; I was looking for "11".

Yes, the US Masters folks have done it; their first amp is a real winner and should be wildly popular. If you are looking for an excellent all tube combo for under \$900, you need to hear this amp today. You will not be disappointed.

### Specifications

**Power and Signal Path:** All tube 30 Watt Class A power amp with 4-EL84/6BQ5 and 3-12AX7 preamp tubes  
No solid-state devices are in the signal path nor are any used for creating overdrive or distortion.

**Wiring:** Built for highest dependability and lowest noise - **Point-to-point, hand wired** and printed circuit board, **shielded wiring** for internal signal paths, **no connectors are used internally** except to connect to the reverb tank (uses RCA connectors)

**Channels:** 2 channels - Clean and Drive (High Gain), footswitchable

**Inputs:** 2 - Low (attenuated) and High  
**Controls:** Clean Volume, Drive Gain, Drive Volume, Channel Switch, LED Channel Indicator, Boost (affects both channels), Treble, Middle, Bass, Reverb, Effects Level, Standby, Power

**Rear Panel:** Effects Send (Pre-amp Out), Effects Return (Power Amp In), Stereo Footswitch Jack (reverb and channel switch), 2 Speaker Outputs, Speaker Impedance Selector (4 or 8 ohm), Power Cord and Fuse Assembly

**Speaker:** Masters Design **RedBack G1280** custom-designed high efficiency 12" speaker

**Color Options:** Black, Cream, Red & Tweed

**Models:** TVA30C - 1 x 12" combo;  
TVA30H - head; 112S - 1 x 12" closed back speaker enclosure

**Footswitch:** FT-200 metal case footswitch included with **TVA30**; switches channels and reverb



but also just a little skeptical (more on this later).

For you long time readers, many of you are very aware that I have been and continue to be a big a fan of US Masters guitars for all the right reasons. They build excellent products and with the several emails I have received from readers over the years...you agree.

Getting to my skepticism, which focuses on the question, why build an amp when the market is already so crowded? Let's face it there are so many options available between the big brands and boutiques. How can US Masters cut through the clutter especially

