

ALL-TONE SPEAKERS

1250 AND 12100

REVIEW BY JAMIE WOLFERT

STREET PRICE 1250 - \$129

12100 - \$149



Innovation in the guitar speaker industry is a rare thing, and when something genuinely fresh and unique does come along, players tend to take notice. So in 2002 when Joe Naylor, innovator extraordinaire and head of Naylor Amps, Reverend Guitars, and several other notable and related companies, released his All-Tone speakers, which were intended to blend the best features of both British and American guitar speakers into one magical transducer, players did indeed take notice. The All-Tones, originally available through Reverend, immediately gained favor with guitarists that wanted the high end detail and responsiveness that is typically

associated with American speakers, like Jensens, combined with the warmth and balls of a classic British speaker, such as those made by Celestion.

By 2005, however, despite the success of the All-Tone 1250 and 1025 models, Reverend was out of the speaker business, choosing instead to focus its efforts on its bread-and-butter, the guitar line. This was probably a wise business decision, but it meant that these innovative speakers were now unavailable. In 2011, though, musician Mark Shumaker purchased the rights to All-Tone, and working closely with Mr. Naylor, proceeded to resurrect the brand and design a

handful of new speaker models. So after several years of design and testing, All-Tone is back in action for 2015, bringing back not only the original 1250 and 1025 speakers, but two new high-power models as well, the 1040 and 12100. These designs are being manufactured to All-Tone proprietary specifications by the very capable WGS company in Paducah, Kentucky. We received a 1250 and 12100 model speaker for review, and dutifully spent some time putting them through their paces.

The original All-Tone, the 1250, is a twelve-inch speaker with a 50-watt power rating, while the

12100 is a twelve-inch speaker rated for 100 watts power handling. According to All-Tone, the 12100 is based on the 1250 design, but with a more robust magnet and voice coil, increased bass and mids, greater headroom, and more volume. Both speakers performed very well in our tests, and we found the sonic differences between the two speakers to be quite distinct.

The 1250 seemed to be tailor-made for our Fender Deluxe. It exhibited much of the high frequency richness and bite of the Jensen reissue that our Deluxe came with, but with a more controlled response that tamed some of the harsher, aural ice-pick tendencies of that speaker when it's driven hard. Clean, it was chiming and responsive, with a complex and prominent mid-range character, and when pushed to the limit with increased gain and volume it thickened up beautifully, staying tight and controlled, with no flubbiness or wild hairs in evidence. It really delivered on the promise of an American/British guitar speaker mash-up in interesting and useful ways.

The 12100 certainly exhibited many of these same characteristics, with a similar touch sensitivity and high-end detail, but its enhanced bass response and headroom imbued it with its own distinctive personality. Perhaps because of the noticeable increase in bass, the 12100's frequency response seemed much flatter overall, and we felt it was generally more open and neutral sounding when compared directly with the 1250. The 12100 is definitely the hard rocker of the pair as well, and its extra headroom and low end wallop was a natural match for heavier tones, distortion pedals, and more aggressive riffing. It still had that glistening high end sheen, though, and was nearly as responsive as the 1250 on cleaner passages.

The new All-Tones should be a big hit with any player looking for a guitar speaker with a unique voice. The 1250 and 12100 are both very well made and excellent sounding speakers that performed flawlessly under a diverse range of playing conditions. To characterize them

in broad terms, I would say that the 1250 is more of a vintage-voiced speaker that will definitely appeal to classic Fender amp enthusiasts looking for enhanced control, warmth, and balls from their rig, while the 12100 is a more neutral, modern sounding design that will appeal to a wide range of players seeking big, detailed tones and a less overtly colored response.

WHAT WE LIKE

All-Tones are back, baby! An innovative concept and highly competent execution makes your dreams of the perfect British/American tone marriage real.

CONCERNS

Nothing, really. Can't wait to hear what else this company comes up with!