

BAREFACED

ONE 10 and TWO 10 Cabs

Chris Hanby turns the other cheek while checking out Barefaced's new 10" speaker cabinets

Barefaced
<http://barefacedbass.com>

With the advent of class D digital amps and neodymium speakers, the modern bass amp is considerably less imposing than the fridges of yesteryear. That said, while cabs have become smaller, they still haven't become portable enough to be comfortably carried on the Tube. The few manufacturers that have produced titchy cabs always include a catch, such as low power ratings, odd impedance, boxy tone and so on. In a seemingly endless quest to find a conveniently sized portable cab, I've played through a lot of 10" cabs and combos. The experience of playing through them has usually been quite underwhelming, often because of the puny low end that single smaller cabs produce.

I first heard of Brighton-based Barefaced when reading amp-related articles written by their MD Alex Claber both in *BGM* and on bass forums, from which I have learned a lot over the years. Barefaced has made a good name for itself over the last few years, and having not yet had the pleasure of trying them for myself, I was very pleased when I was asked to review them. Alex contacted me to discuss what amps I'd be using along with various other requirements. We exchanged many emails, all packed with info, set-up options and advice specific to my situation. This, Alex was quick to inform me, was all part of the service and would be the same should anyone contact Barefaced looking to buy some new amplification.

It's worth pointing out that the concept behind the Barefaced 10 range is to offer a vintage sounding speaker that gives the same tone as your classic 8x10, but much more portable. The cabs are also designed to enable a modular set-up to cope with a variety of different gig situations. As a result, what you get is not a hi-fi response: don't expect to hear super-zingy top end. These are made to produce thick, creamy lows and warm mids and are perfectly engineered to get the best out of vintage tube and all valve heads.

If you do hook it up to your swanky new class D amp, you'll get pure retro bass tone. That's not to say there is no treble, it's just mellower than cabs with tweeters. The secret to the Barefaced 10 range is the unique 10CR250 driver. Designed by Barefaced and custom-made by Eminence in the US, it has high output and can push more air than standard 10" speakers. Coupled with the ONE10's hybrid resonator enclosure, the result is clean, controlled bass response, capable of easily handling a low B string or an upright bass. This design also keeps production cost down and allows for a more affordable end product.

I started my testing with a single ONE 10 paired with my trusty Markbass F1 at an intimate restaurant gig. My bandmates gave me quizzical looks as I passed them the cab to see how implausibly light it was – around seven kilos. The whole rig stood just over a foot tall and looked almost comical. The smiles didn't stop there though: upon switching it on we were greeted with a fat wodge of thick, creamy bass. I could feel my grin widen still further as we started the gig and the stage was pumping. It is impossible to overstate how much

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low end this cab produces; it really is akin to much larger designs. You could be forgiven for thinking that you were playing through a 4x10 cab. The ONE 10 kicks out pure old-school tone and easily coped with my gig. I had the amp set fairly low and had ample headroom.

My next few gigs were in larger venues, where I would usually take a bigger rig. I decided to throw caution to the wind and take two ONE 10 cabs. This proved to be a wonderful idea as it allowed me to fit my entire rig (bass, pedalboard, suitcase of leads, head and the two Barefaced cabs) in the boot of my car with room to spare. The load-in was also dead easy as the cabs are so light they practically walked themselves onto the stage. The cabs performed very well here too, effortlessly providing abundant volume and that inexplicably rich bass response. I found myself cutting lows rather than boosting, and enjoyed the gigs thoroughly. I didn't miss my regular, larger set-up at all.

For my next outing at another larger venue, I opted for the single TWO 10 Cab, which despite being twice the size of the ONE 10, is still light and manageable. As expected it handled the gig with ease, offering the same creamy low end as the two ONE 10s combined. In fact, when A/B'ing the pair of ONE 10s against the single TWO 10, I could hear almost no difference. I'd imagine a pair of TWO 10s would provide most rock bands with enough power and punch to cover any gig.

My final test was to run all three cabs at once from my beloved 1970s Ampeg V4B. It's a 100W

all-valve head that can run down to the necessary 2 ohms load. After stacking the various 10s up and plugging in, I could hear that this is where these cabs really shine, with a vintage tone, quick, transient attack and smooth, velvety lows. Close your eyes and it could almost be a full 8x10 next to you.

The bass amp and cab market is vast these days, and caters for just about every possible whim or fancy of the modern bassist. Whether you crave studio monitor detail, vintage belt, have minimal budget or require chiropractor-friendly scale, you'll find someone making something to suit your needs. Where I think Barefaced has a market for its 10" cab range is with gigging bassists looking for high end vintage tones without the backache and storage problems of an 8x10. Upright players will also love the ONE10 for its tonal depth and convenient size.

Those looking for a modular rig, able to handle everything for small rehearsal and acoustic gigs, through to large stage shows, can combine several cabs to cope with any situation. The sheer size, tone and portability of the ONE 10 and TWO 10 will have most of us reaching for our wallets. Add to that the exceptional build quality, innovative design and fabulous customer service and these cabs seem like an obvious choice. As a community, British bassists have been importing amplification from across the pond for as long as I can remember: perhaps it's time that we looked closer to home next time we choose to upgrade (or downsize) our rig.

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION

Barefaced ONE 10

Price | £299

Made in | UK

Power | 100-250W RMS

Speaker | 1x10"

Weight | 7.5kg (steel grill), 7kg (cloth grill)

Barefaced TWO 10

Price | £499

Made in | UK

Power | 100-500W RMS

Speaker | 2x10"

Weight | 14kg (steel grill), 13kg (cloth grill)

WHAT WE THINK

Plus | Size, cost, weight, price and vintage tone

Minus | None

Overall | Plug in and enjoy the Barefaced tone!

BGM RATING

