

# Quicktest

Welcome to Guitarist's regular round-up of the best of the rest of the gear that's passed through our hands this issue

## Audio Ease Cabinet \$59 USD, or €49 EUR

Classy speaker simulation and a spring reverb for your recordings

CONTACT: Audio Ease PHONE: ++31 30 24 33 606 WEB: www.audioease.com



**In Use**  
Once Cabinet is inserted into your audio channel in your chosen DAW, the choice of five cabinets offers a decent cross-section of popular speaker types and configurations. Controls are available to blend between two

All of the major computer amp modelling programs offer a reasonable selection of speaker cabs with various mic'ing options, but what if you want more control and tweakability? And how about those that record directly to their computer using a line out from their own hardware amp and then want to make it sound more realistic, as if it came from a mic'd speaker cab?

Fortunately Audio Ease is a specialist company that has a convolution software plug-in called Speakerphone, using impulse responses to reproduce the sound of just about any type of speaker. That's much more than guitarists are likely to need, but the three features guitarists apparently like best in Speakerphone have been combined in a new spin-off called Cabinet: a collection of five guitar amp speaker cabs, a recording studio live room and a classic spring reverb.

virtual mics, to narrow or widen the soundstage (if running in stereo) and for tweaking the bass. You can also add a very cool-sounding spring reverb, dial in the sound of a room mic and even change the damping characteristics of the room. All this provides an extremely realistic sound with loads of variation on tap.

**Verdict**  
As the final stage for your computer-recorded guitar tone, Cabinet offers excellent results. [TC]

### The Bottom Line

**We Like:** Authentic sound; edit-ability; free 30-day demo

**We Dislike:** A few more cabs from Speakerphone wouldn't have gone amiss

GUITARIST RATING ★★★★★

## CruzTOOLS Groove Tech Guitar Tech Kit £39.99

The ultimate guitar tool kit?



CONTACT: Westside PHONE: 0141 248 4812 WEB: www.cruztools.com

For many players the closest we get to a 'tool kit' is one of those Swiss Army knife-like multi-tools. Well, USA tool company CruzTOOLS has one of those – the excellent GrooveTech Guitar/Bass Multi-Tool (£12.99) – but it also offers something a little more extensive with its Guitar Tech Kit.

It includes a well-written 'Easy Setup Guide' and we get a six-in-one screwdriver with two sizes of cross- and flat-head tips plus two hex sockets, a bright three-LED flashlight, 11 metric (gold) and imperial (black) Allen keys (those for truss rods have ball-ends), string cutters, thickness gauge, a capo (ideal for measuring neck relief) and a string winder. All seem very pro-quality (they carry a lifetime guarantee) and come in a clear-fronted zip-up pouch that'd easily fit in a gigbag pocket.

**In Use**  
While the GrooveTech Guitar/Bass Multi-Tool is one of the best we've encountered, the full Tech Kit is near perfect for all the basic DIY adjustments from string changing to truss rod/relief adjustments, pickup height and intonation. It's all in one place too! That flashlight is

essential for back-stage environments and only the clear plastic string winder lets the kit down – it should be a gaudy bright colour.

**Verdict**  
High quality tools don't come cheap but for an all-in-one solution for your own guitar tech needs we'd strongly recommend either the GrooveTech Guitar/Bass Multi-Tool or the more expansive Guitar Tech Kit. Is it too early to ask your spouse for a Christmas present? [DB]

### The Bottom Line

**We like:** Quality tools, all-in-one place; set-up guide  
**We dislike:** Easy to lose clear plastic string winder

GUITARIST RATING ★★★★★



## Kala 'Joe Brown' ukulele £275

Fun and inspiration abounds with this cute but grown-up uke

CONTACT: Sutherland Trading PHONE: 02920 887 333 WEB: www.sutherlandtrading.com

In schools around the country the ukulele is usurping the recorder as the beginner instrument for kids. Entertainer Joe Brown, whose name this soprano Kala uke bears, is also quick to point out that it's a 'proper' musical instrument, and one fast gaining in popularity.

Although tuned a 4th up from the guitar, and with the fourth string itself jumping an octave higher still, the chord shapes are the same (except that the two bottom strings are missing) so guitarists can adapt to ukes with ease. "What's great about that," stresses Joe, "is that when the kids' hands get a bit bigger they can gravitate naturally to the guitar."

Kala ukes come in a variety of woods – our soprano model is

koa, the flagship timber, but other sizes and timbers are available with prices yet to be fixed. Construction and finish are excellent, particularly as Joe especially stipulated geared tuners, low action, perfect intonation, side position markers and overall "a general feel of quality".

### Sounds

And all that contributes to a very playable instrument that really does sound sweet and musical. A uke can be a great self-accompanying tool (witness Joe's delightful reading of I'll See You In My Dreams, which closed the concert for his late friend George Harrison), or indeed as part of an acoustic rhythmic section.

### Verdict

Don't confuse a quality musical instrument such as this with those cheapo 'toy' ukes you find in every music shop up and down the land: this is a sophisticated instrument built from serious tonewoods that plays well and sounds good, and from which any guitarist can derive instant fun and satisfaction. [NM]

### The Bottom Line

**We like:** Traditional design; quality touches such as geared tuners and fine woods

**We dislike:** That some people won't treat it as a serious musical instrument

GUITARIST RATING ★★★★★



## Zilla Music Tall Vintage 2 x 12 cabinet £347

Guitarist  
**CHOICE**

English, custom-made extension cabs

CONTACT: Zilla Music PHONE: 0208 898 6503 WEB: www.zillacabs.com

Zilla Music is an independent English company specialising in extension speaker cabinets. There are a number of 'standard' 1 x 12 and 2 x 12 formats available; this is the Tall Vintage 2 x 12 measuring 740mm wide and 460mm tall - which is shorter than a Marshall 1936, making it space efficient in the boot of your car. There are plenty of standard vinyls and custom order Tolex options to choose from, likewise with grille cloth, piping and hardware. We've gone for black, of course, which costs £212 unloaded.

Construction is sturdy, using Baltic ply and 12mm finger joints, the only visual anomaly being chrome screws among all that black – we should have

asked for black! This cabinet has a straight baffle, but Zilla also offers a slanted version, likewise with closed- and open-back configurations.

Zilla offers Celestion Vintage 30s, Greenbacks and G12Hs, again with custom options available, including the English-made Tayden speakers. Here we have one Vintage 30 and one G12H (+£135 for the two) rear mounted to offer a versatile, all-round rock 'n' roll configuration.

### In Use

Those with lower power amps might prefer Greenbacks, but on the end of a Mesa Lonestar head and a Hughes & Kettner Puretone, this configuration shows a good, versatile balance



of power handling, sweetness, low-end weight and projection.

### Verdict

The price is very reasonable given the custom options, build quality and spec, making Zilla highly recommended to anyone in search of a custom cab. [MT]

### The Bottom Line

**We like:** Well made; good sound; custom options; value

**We dislike:** Chrome screws on black vinyl

GUITARIST RATING ★★★★★