

What follows is a customer review submitted by Bob Cisternas

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Hey Chris!

I spent a few days trying to put this together...and I thought finding the words for the MB were hard, this is harder.

The MS is quite unlike anything else I've ever played though. I wish I could say something as clever as I plugged in, cranked everything to 10 & was blown away...but that's about as far from the truth as can be.

First, the dynamics. Its a lot louder than I expected it to be! The EQ is even better it seems than on the MB. Like on the MB, a little goes a long way, both increases & decreases. The ability to shape the overall tone is incredible, and I've gotten used to the trademark "overlap" that your tone controls have so it was a little more familiar to me than when I first got the MB or the DD. The reverb is full & lush, not a hint of the thin tinny hollowness that some amps have. The Tubby is everything I have come to expect from them...they are truly incredible speakers...able it seems to bark without any bite, but also delivering a warm, balanced sound, with mids that are present without muddying the sound.

Now, the "intangibles." It's really hard for me to try & put this into words...this amp is just so different. Where the MB just basically blew me away when I first played it, the MS is really something else, something very special. In a word it's been quite an intimidating experience...very deep, very religious almost. I can honestly say it's like hearing my guitar...or more accurately my playing, with a "haze" lifted. I don't know if it's the particular selection of tubes in conjunction with the low wattage & design...but the sound seems so "direct."

I can hear my fingers on the strings...the strings vibrating over the pickups...I can hear the wood of the guitar, the cable, the wood of the amp even. I thought I was imagining things, but I've played 4 different guitars, even a few different cables...and just as the MB allowed me to experience subtleties I have never heard before, the MS does it at an even more incredible level. All the components of sound while at once so distinct are all seamlessly blended.

For about the first half or so of the volume, till maybe about 6 or so, the sound just builds & builds, like the speaker is becoming saturated or the tubes. The sound is full & plush, but not as dark as I would have expected...there's a brightness to it, a transmission of highs that's just so well balanced. It's just so clean...not as bright or shrill as a small Fender, and while not as dark as a Marshall, its got a "roundness" to its sound. Then when the breakup starts the amp just blooms. The EL37 you state is the Holy Grail of output tubes...I don't know how much that contributes to what I'm experiencing, and probably won't unless I switch it out for one of the 5881's I have...but I really have no desire to. It's got such a "Texas" tone to it...but at the same time an almost acoustical spectrum that only grows as the amp breaks up.

When we first talked about this amp I know I probably mentioned to you that I'm not much a fan of "antique" the way some people are...and it made really little or no sense in my mind as I started to imagine it as described...but now it makes perfect sense. Like the classic aged LOOK I had in my mind, it's as though the sound travels through time before it comes out of the speaker...it's the sound of age not in the sense of years, but in the sense of mileage, of experience...it imparts to the guitar the aubile version of what you imparted to the look. Organic, classic, seasoned, yet without all the sag & weariness of something that hasn't aged well!

Like that special well used black iron skillet, it seasons the sound just through the fact that it allows all the flavor of the sound to come out just by virtue of its own being...of what it is. At lower heat, it's just a warming up of what you put in the pan...as I turn up the heat, it just brings out the sizzle, more flavor, color & texture...it all bursts out...as long as it's there to begin with! It allows the sound to be all it can be.

If there was any doubt as to whether or not some of the things I had to say about the MB were lame, there's surely no doubt here. I once said about the MB that its not an amp that will do well with mediocre guitars, or strings, or cables, or technique for that matter.

This is true to the Nth degree with the MS. If there's crap in the chain...she'll let you hear it. And if you doubt that the magic tone is anywhere but in your fingertips...well she'll show you that's the ONLY place it is, because anything you put in front of her to try & make up for that fact will become glaringly obvious.

This amp will truly tell you what you are made of, and will question you're your gear, your technique, and your commitment to technique. You'll know immediately when you got it wrong...but you'll really never know what "right" sounds like until you play through this amp.

Totally in awe.