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Bird of Many Colors

CARR SKYLARK By Chris Gill

THE COMBO AMP has gone in and out of style over the years, reaching an initial peak in the mid Sixties before CBS purchased Fender and getting another bump during the Seventies when Mesa/Boogie hit the scene. Today, numerous combo amp models are available to choose from, but few companies offer variety comparable to Carr, which makes 10 different combo models. The Skylark is the latest addition to the company's lineup, and it packs a ton of versatile features into its compact chassis.

FEATURES The Carr Skylark is a 12-watt combo with a pair of 6V6 tubes for the power amp section and two 12AX7s and two 12AT7s for the preamp and reverb sections. Equipped with a single 12-inch speaker—in this case a 50-watt Celestion A-Type—the Skylark resembles a Fender Deluxe, but it out-deluxes the Deluxe

in several important ways. First, it has a built-in attenuator that provides variable reduced output between 1.2 and 1/100 watts. It also has a midrange control, which already improves upon the classic Fender design but goes one better by providing a wider range than Carr's previous midrange controls. This is also Carr's first amp with a presence control.

The front panel provides volume, treble, mid, bass, reverb and presence controls. Mini-toggle switches select low- or high-gain settings and turn the attenuator on or off. The amp also has a built-in all-tube reverb circuit with a 17-inch tank and audio taper control that eases in the reverb gradually. The Celestion A-Type speaker is American voiced to provide the scooped-mid tone of classic mid-Sixties U.S. speakers.

PERFORMANCE Most 12-watt 1x12 combos

are based upon the venerable tweed Deluxe, but the Carr Skylark goes well beyond that with expanded clean headroom and tighter crunch that's more reminiscent of a brownface Deluxe or mini Plexi-style amp. The amp is also impressively loud, which makes the attenuator a nice addition for those who want to play the amp at more civilized volume levels.

The EQ section and presence control make it easy to dial in a rainbow of tones, from bright, sparkly British Invasion jangle to fat, in-your-face classic rock crunch. In between are ballsy blues overdrive and reverb-drenched surf tones. If you need even more gain, the Skylark is a great platform for overdrive and distortion pedals, which can let players coax credible metal tones from the amp. Whereas most combos are one-trick ponies, the Skylark delivers a stable full of awesome tones.

CHEAT SHEET



LIST PRICE \$2,390
MANUFACTURER
 Carr Amplifiers,
carramps.com

- A built-in attenuator drops the output power between 1.2 to 1/100 watts to preserve the aggressive power tube dynamics for practice or recording applications.

- The all-tube reverb section features a full-size 17-inch reverb tank and an audio taper control that provides a range from subtle reverb to full-on surf drip.

- **THE BOTTOM LINE**
 The Carr Skylark may be based upon the classic 12-watt 1x12 combo platform, but it is an impressively versatile single-channel combo that delivers a rainbow of tones.