



TOUR DE FORCE

Egnater Tourmaster 4100 head and 4x12 cabinet



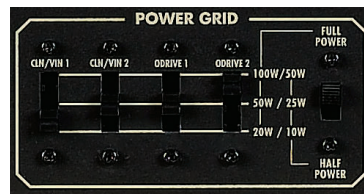
BY ERIC KIRKLAND

BRUCE EGNATER IS A patriarch of modern amplifier design and performance, with more than 30 years of amp building to his credit. His famous Eighties-era achievement of balanced and intense high-gain tone undoubtedly inspires countless modern amplifier engineers and remains a primary reference for contemporary boutique distortion. Chief among Egnater's talents is the design of complicated multichannel affairs, aptly evidenced by his massive contribution to Rocktron's TOL series amps and Randall's revered Modular Tube System (MTS) amplifiers.

Egnater's new Tourmaster head blends his gifts into a 75-pound behemoth packed with features, sounds and gain levels. Its four preamp channels, contour circuit and voicing options create enough tonal variety to satisfy most players, but Egnater's Power Grid wattage control feature increases the amp's versatility exponentially, allowing players to assign one of five power levels—10, 20, 25, 50 or 100 watts—to any of the four channels. It takes a lot of tubes to run an amp like this, and Groove Tubes supplies them all: four 5881s and eight 12AX7s.

FEATURES

THE TOURMASTER'S FEATURES aren't only numerous, they're also useful. For a start, the amp has high- and low-gain inputs and four preamp channels: Clean/Vintage 1 and 2 and Overdrive 1 and 2. Each channel has an identical set of controls for volume, contour, treble, middle, bass and gain, with an additional switch that sets the channel's overall voice to either classic or modern. The contour circuit is a switchable voicing tool that shifts the midrange curve from focused



Located on the head's back panel, the Power Grid offers five distinct power options for each channel.

and forward to scooped and wide. There are also master controls for global output volume, reverb, presence and density. Remote activation of all four channels, the effect loop and reverb come via the supplied six-button footswitch.

Egnater took full advantage of the back panel's real estate as well, offering a channel-assignable and switchable tube-driven series/parallel effect loop with send and return level controls, a speaker-simulated recording output with a level control, a tube-biasing test point and dual-speaker outputs with four-, eight- and 16-ohm settings.

A custom-designed transformer lets the Tourmaster offer assignable power options as well, which are selected through the back panel's Power Grid. Using slider switches, the operator can set each channel's output power as 100, 50 or 20 watts, while a half-power switch reduces those settings to 50, 25 and 10 watts. For this review, I ran the amp through one of Egnater's rugged Tourmaster 4x12s, which feature Celestion 30 speakers and removable, locking track-style casters. The cab's jacks automatically sense impedance, making connection to any amp a no-brainer.

PERFORMANCE

CREATING STIMULATING TONES couldn't be easier, thanks to Egnater's signature compression, which doesn't limit dynamics so much as it enhances the tonal strength and helps to focus the

EGNATER TOURMASTER 4100 HALF STACK

LIST PRICES: Tourmaster 4100 head, \$1,399.99; Tourmaster Series 412, \$699.99

MANUFACTURER: Egnater Custom Amplification, egnatersamps.com

POWER OUTPUT: Switchable between 10, 20, 25, 50 and 100 watts

CHANNELS: Four, with eight modes

CONTROLS: Power and standby switches; (per channel) classic/modern voicing switch; channel select button; contour activation button; gain, master, contour, treble, middle and bass knobs; global output volume; global reverb level, presence and density controls; effect loop send and return level controls, series/parallel switch, and channel assignment slider switch; recording output level control; bias adjustment; impedance selector; Power Grid switch and half-power slider

COVERING: Black-and-tan textured vinyl, heavy-weight black-and-tan basket weave grille cloth

TUBE COMPLEMENT: Groove Tubes 5881 (four) and 12AX7 (eight)

TOURMASTER 412A/B CABINET: Birch, with metal handles and corners, rubber feet and detachable casters; automatic impedance sensing (4/16 ohms mono, 8 ohms stereo per side)

SPEAKERS: Four Celestion Vintage 30

DIMENSIONS: 30 x 14 x 30
WEIGHT: 98 pounds

amp at high stage volumes. The classic voicing is more open and airy, while the modern setting tightens the response and increases punch. Clean/Vintage 1 has no trouble creating tones from the beautifully dark and spongy Blackface era and does a pretty convincing late-Sixties Deluxe impersonation at low power settings. There's a little more brightness and gain in Clean/Vintage 2, making it ideal for blues soloing and adding hair to clean rhythm tones.

Where most British-style overdrive channels are sharp and jagged, Egnater's distortion is rounder, more granulated and equally detailed throughout the frequency spectrum. The Overdrive 1 channel exemplifies these characteristics well, generating enough distortion to cover most of the classic rock bases and can even venture into metal realms. Overdrive 2 unleashes all of the Tourmaster's gain through an aural sandstorm of musical particles, and it still manages to track and define each note with maximum punch. The reverb is subtle, but it won't overwhelm overdriven tones.

THE BOTTOM LINE

BRUCE EGNATER'S ALL-TUBE Tourmaster 4100 is a welcome addition to the growing population of do-it all superamps. Players will appreciate the Power Grid's five power options for each of the four channels and the unique way that this amp's easily controlled response rewards. Best of all, the Tourmaster's tonal variety supports any style of music at about half the price of similarly appointed amplifiers. ✨

PRO	CON
POWER GRID PROVIDES FIVE POWER OPTIONS IN EACH CHANNEL; HUGE RANGE OF OLD-SCHOOL AND MODERN TONES; NUMEROUS FEATURES; RELATIVELY LOW PRICE	REVERB COULD BE MORE LUSH; WEIGHS A TON

