TAYDEN

Guitar Speakers



Wild and screamy or smooth and creamy, speakers are a big part of the guitarists signal chain. Tayden speakers could help you find those elusive vintage tones.

Words: Tim Slater

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Tru-Brit 25	£63.00
ACE 25 (including bell)	£185.00
Brit 60	£74.00
Retro 55	£72.00
Tru-Brit 30-H	£74.00
Smooth 25	£185.00

All prices are SRP inc. VAT

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Speakers are an often overlooked component in the guitar signal chain. Guitarists will bang on for hours about tubes and transformers when discussing the relative merits of a Fender combo vs. an old Marshall or HiWatt stack but the speaker plays a hugely important role in defining the character of an amplifier. Tayden speakers are a UK-based company that is on a mission to restore some genuine homespun credibility to a speaker industry that has become largely dependent on offshore manufacturing and so Tayden has developed a range of vintage-style guitar speakers that claim to emulate the specific tones of selected original classic guitar amp speakers.

The necessities of modern economics being what they are, even Tayden isn't completely immune to using Chinese-made pressed steel baskets and magnets but all of the other major components including the cones and motors are manufactured and assembled in the UK. Tayden's unique British Racing Green paint job adds a welcome touch of individuality that suggests something of an old-school 'cottage industry' feel that is entirely in step with their bespoke charms.

One of the advantages of being a smaller manufacturer is the flexibility to offer individual customers exactly what they want and besides re-coning speakers Tayden also offer general service and repair, regardless of brand or type of speaker. It's also worth noting that 12" drivers reviewed here are also available in 15" and 10" versions, with a wide variety of impedance values to suit virtually any type of combo or speaker cabinet configuration you could think of.

This review focuses on six separate examples of Tayden 12" guitar speakers that cover a wide range of applications, tones and even eras. Each speaker was tested using a box-fresh Peavey Classic 30 tube combo as the host amplifier and the speakers were tried with the amp's EQ at 12 o'clock and both channels' volume controls set to around 3 o'clock, with the master volume also set to 3. As with any test, the results are subjective but we've done our best to convey which style of music or application we think each speaker is designed for. Our test guitars were '99 USA Standard Telecaster and an 08 Musicman Silhouette fitted with DiMarzio humbuckers. **PM**

Tru Brit 25

SRP: £63 - Magnet: Ceramic - Power rating: 25 watts RMS

The Tayden Tru-Brit 25 is inspired by that stalwart of guitar speakers: The Celestion G12-M (commonly known as the 'Greenback'). Like the Greenback, the Tru Brit is a bit of a brute.

Built to withstand heavy distortion, the Tru-Brit sounds silky yet aggressive and being primarily designed to cope with high distortion applications, it would be ideal when used as a quartet inside a 412 speaker cabinet. In the context of a 112 combo, the Tru-Brit definitely sounds best when the amp is cranked or the overdrive channel is active; backed-off it has a polished and very controlled tone but is maybe sounds a little too dark if you prefer a slightly looser tone with a softer attack.

Verdict: Great for rock and metal players looking for an aggressive tone tempered with an authentic vintage-style warmth and detail.

*Tayden also make the 30 watt Tru Brit H which is designed to offer slightly more bandwidth with less mid-range and more punch. The Tru Brit H is claimed to deliver an articulate sound with less overdrive and more headroom.





ACE 25

SRP: £185 including bell. - Magnet: Alnico - Power rating: 25 watts RMS

Our review sample came fitted with an optional bell for an authentic vintage appearance but the bell is purely cosmetic and currently comes at no extra charge. Sound-wise the ACE 25 is voiced to reproduce the warm and responsive tone of the original Celestion G12 –aka the legendary so-called 'Blue' speakers fitted to the early Vox amps of the late 1950s and early 60s. Indeed, the ACE's motor is based on an early G12 and compared to the distinctly modern Tru- Brit, the ACE immediately sounds more forgiving. Bash out a big old open G chord on the Tele and the ACE kicks out a chest rattling growl that drips with smooth musical-sounding highs. Good old alnico! It might not be cheap but when it comes to sweetening things up, there's nothing that can match the glistening bell-like chime of an alnico speaker. The ACE delivers consistently on clean and overdriven sounds and demonstrates a remarkably accurate take on the solid meaty punch and responsive feel is the hallmark of the vintage 'Blue'.

Verdict: From Hank to Brian May, if it's the classic throaty G12 sound you're after, the ACE nails it.

Brit 60

SRP: £74 - Magnet: Ceramic - Power rating: 30 watts RMS

Designed to offer the warm dynamic range of the Celestion Vintage 30 but able to cope with far higher gain levels, the Brit 60 feels tighter and more focused than the ACE. The Musicman Shillouette's medium output humbucking pickups still sound quite 'Stratty', even at fairly high gain levels and this is clearly evident when playing through the Brit 60. The Brit 60 takes some getting used to after the softer ACE speaker but once your ears adjust to the difference the Brit 60's potential as a great rock speaker soon pushes to the fore. The original Vintage 30 is noted for its detail and ability to handle elephantine gain levels with ease and the Brit 60 shares these qualities: Fact juicy mids, a nice tight bass and a smooth top end all make the Brit 60 an ideal speaker for classic rock.

Verdict: Not subtle but the Brit 60 can cope with anything you care to throw at it.





Retro 55

SRP: £72 - Magnet: Ceramic - Power Rating: 55 watts RMS

This particular speaker is a design unique to Tayden but it is still based on an old F-Series Fane driver that is virtually identical to the Fane speakers favoured by Pink Floyd guitarist David Gilmour. The Retro 55 has a slightly wider bandwidth and more headroom than the other drivers in Tayden's guitar speaker lineup and it certainly has a very balanced sound characterized by sparkling articulate highs and a very smooth transient response across the whole frequency range. With more room to breathe, the resulting strident tone seems to give single coil pickups a bit of extra beef and presence.

The Retro 55 comes as something of a pleasant surprise; it still has the meat of a classic British guitar speaker but the extra headroom seems to level off the high end, resulting in a crisp lively sparkle which suggests an influence that is more HiWatt than Marshall.

Verdict: A classic British tone with more emphasis on definition and detail than sheer ear-blasting attack.

Smooth 25

SRP: £185.00 - Magnet: Alnico - Power Rating: 25 watts RMS

Tayden's own design, this alnico speaker uses a different design of motor and delivers noticeably less top end than the other speakers in this test. Tayden suggest that the Smooth is the ideal partner for something like an old Fender Tweed Deluxe and we can see their point; the Smooth certainly needs a bit of breaking in to open it out a bit but for that semi-overdriven clean/dirty dirty/clean thing that Fender amps seem to do so well, the Smooth could be the perfect choice. The Smooth 25 is also available with a vintage-style bell at no extra cost.

Verdict: If you are into the shimmering tone that Billy Gibbons got from his Tweed Deluxe on those early ZZ Top albums, the Smooth could be just up your street.

