



September 2016



TECH 21 VT BASS 500

Street \$500

Power output 300W @ 8Ω, 500W @ 4Ω

Weight 6.5 lbs

Bottom Line When you need “that” sound, the VT Bass 500 gets you there without the schlep.

Tech 21 built its brand on a product that simulated an amplifier, the SansAmp, but its analog modeling circuit became so popular that Tech 21 decided to mate

it with a power amp for a line of bass heads. There are several versions of Tech 21’s VT circuit in pedal, rack, and amplifier form, all designed with the intent to emulate the legendary Ampeg sound. Tech 21 offers two full-rack amps in the VT line—the VT Bass 1000 and 1969 models—but the 500 is a powerful mini amp with a decidedly classic-vintage personality.

The VT circuit has been reviewed in several iterations, but a new feature on the 500 is the button that shifts the mid frequency from 500Hz to 1kHz. Like the VT Rack and VT DI models, the VT 500 has a BLEND control to mix the emulated and clean signals. Rolling BLEND completely down gives you access to only the 3-band EQ. The fun starts as you roll BLEND clockwise, bringing with it the full participation of the VT circuit. The DRIVE control opens up the gain structure, but be warned: It is designed to break up in higher settings. The CHARACTER control sweeps through SVT and B-15 territory, and more, eventually landing in face-melt-land by the end of the rotation. The BITE control is a presence boost that accentuates note attack in high distortion settings, and although there is no MUTE switch, the effect loop, headphone jack, and DI are front panel-mounted for easy access.