



## PLAYING CLEAN

### ZT Amplifiers' Custom Shop Jazz Club

**Z**T Amplifiers put itself on the map with portable-but-sonorous amps. Now it has expanded its line to include the Custom Shop Jazz Club, developed for guitarists seeking rich tones with plenty of headroom, and designed with cooperation from veteran guitarists Randy Vincent, Vic Juris, Charlie Apicella, and Dave Stryker.

The Jazz Club is a 220-watt Class D amp with a single 12" neodymium speaker. In keeping with the look and feel of ZT's lunchbox models, the Jazz Club is a gig-friendly 15" x 14" x 11" and weighs just 25 pounds. Finished in a durable and handsome dark blue, it's top-loaded with a sturdy carrying handle and Input, Gain, Bass, Mid, Treble, Volume, and Reverb controls. The rear panel has an effects loop, extension speaker output, 115/230 voltage selector, internal speaker mute, and an XLR DI output.

Tested with solid- and hollowbody guitars, the Jazz Club delivered radiant sounds with warmth at stage volume. Manipulating the Volume and Gain knobs introduced a variety of clean textures from airy to crisp; the key is dialing-in a balance between the level and the amount of aggression needed. Beginning with the Gain maxed and turning the Volume knob up from zero, the amp's edginess makes single-note lines punch hard. It yields plenty of

Price: \$1,299  
www.ztcustomshop.com



projection for small to medium venues, even when gain is reduced for softer resonances.

The EQ is simple yet effective, with plug-in-and-go reliability and sheen that will compel you to play rather than tweak. The spring-type reverb goes from zero to surf with substantive echo.

The Jazz Club is inspiring. Anemic cleans are a death to the pursuit of jazz, and this amp is anything but. It has a robust sound at higher volumes and will entice you to put away your dirt boxes, play clean, and swing those eighths even harder. — *Oscar Jordan*

## ROCKIN' TOP

### The Gold Tone AC-6+ Acoustic Composite Banjo Guitar

**G**old Tone specializes in acoustic instruments, hybridizing them like mad scientists – bass banjos, banjos with steel resonators, mando-banjo mutations. Now, add their AC-6+, a six-string banjo played in standard guitar tuning.

The AC-6+ has a maple neck, 21-fret fingerboard, Fender-like 25.5" scale, composite rim, and ABS binding. To appeal to modern musicians, it comes with an internal SMP+ pickup and a big chrome Volume knob mounted on the drum. Traditional folk and bluegrass players might balk, but this ain't the banjo for them.

On the job, the AC-6+ works as promised. Fingerpickers will have a natural affinity for the instrument, especially laying out Travis-style picking with boom-chicka-boom bass lines. Another trick is to tune the banjitar to open-G to conjure the more-harmonic overtones associated with conventional banjo. Flatpickers can get in on the fun, too, playing jazz, blues, and even rock. Plug into a DI box, preamp, or acoustic amp for stage work, and it sounds just dandy. Use your EQ to adjust treble to taste.

This instrument's allure is obvious – allowing guitarists to pluck banjo without a steep learning curve – and this entry-level instrument and will open doors for guitarists looking for a bit of "Rocky Top" cool, without the hassle. —

**Pete Prown VG**

Price: \$630  
www.goldtone  
musicgroup.com

