

PAF Plus?

Smit Boosted Classic and Bucker Lite pickups

BEING A GUITARIST FOR more than 30 years, Kevin Smith learned much in his quest for great tone. For years he has dissected pickups while devising his own “recipe,” and today he builds pickups for a living in a one-man shop that specializes in a line of production and custom-wound humbuckers.

The Smit Handwound Guitar Pickups Boosted Classic bridge pickup and Bucker Lite neck pickup are direct replacement units for standard-sized

humbuckers, and are sold with all necessary hardware. Both are neatly constructed and potted for feedback reduction, with a standard single lead, braided-shield wire and Alnico V magnets (different Alnico formulations are available and the Bucker Lite is available with ceramic). The Boosted Classic is modeled after the legendary Gibson “Patent Applied For” (PAF) pickup, with a slight increase in the number of windings, while the Bucker Lite offers a more single-coil-like output from two coils.

Installed in a late-'70s

Ibanez Artist plugged into a Fender Blues Deluxe reissue set for clean tones, the Boosted Classic produced classic PAF tone with clear, tight low-end response and sparkly highs, with notable articulation and note separation. Pushing the amp's gain to breakup, the pickup really sang, with sparkly high-end harmonics with nice penetration and, again, very clear lows. Articulation and separation stayed consistent as the pickup produced increasing sustain. Through a Peavey Valve King set to high gain and running through a 4x12" cabinet, the pickup lost none of its clarity or note separation, instead offering very nice upper-midrange harmonics while low-end response remained clear and tight. And even at high gain,

it created very little feedback.

Through the Fender set for clean, the Bucker Lite produced clear tones with *sweet* sparkly highs, very clear low-end, and great note separation – *and* it lived up to Smith's promises in that its output ran neck-and-neck with the Boosted Classic. As we pushed more and more gain from the Fender, the Bucker Lite proved very musical in its presentation of harmonics and squeaky-sweet highs with big, clear, low-end. The overall tone was nicely balanced, with shimmering sparkle and great note separation and articulation – primo blues tone with nice sustain. Through the Peavey set to high gain, the Bucker Lite retained its incredible clarity and note separation. Yes, it has many tonal characteristics of a single-coil, including upper-end harmonics and clean, clear lows guaranteed to make you smile. And even in close quarters, the Bucker Lite resists feedback under all but the most intense conditions.

– Bob Tekippe



SMIT BOOSTED CLASSIC/BUCKER LITE

Price: \$80
Contact: Smit's Parts and Handwound Guitar Pickups, phone (615) 390-7181; smitparts.com.