



# Tech 21 Power Engine 60 powered speaker cabinet £299

## TECH 21 POWER ENGINE 60

**PRICE:** £299

**ORIGIN:** USA

**TYPE:** Power amplifier with cabinet

**SPEAKER:** Celestion G12P-80 12/100 watts @ 8 Ohms

**POWER OUTPUT:** 60W RMS

**CABINET:** 13mm birch ply

**CONTROLS:** Level, high EQ, mid EQ, low EQ, ground lift switch, power on/off switch

**CONNECTIONS:** 6.4mm input jack, XLR input jack, XLR output jack

**DIMENSIONS:** 51 (h) x 44 (w) x 28 (d) mm

**WEIGHT (kg/lb):** 15/33

**OPTIONS:** Black vinyl cover, flight case (hammered aluminium finish, lock and casters)

**RANGE OPTIONS:** PW60T includes a horn and is intended to match the Bronzewood 60 acoustic combo

**Rocky Road Distribution Ltd 01494 535333**  
[www.tech21nyc.com](http://www.tech21nyc.com)

A plug in and play power amp and speaker combo for amp modelling devices... could this be your POD's perfect powered performance partner? by Trevor Curwen

There's a big trend for self-contained amp/speaker systems for linking up with mp3 players to put a real bit of volume and shift some air in the room. This latest product from Tech 21 of NYC could be said to be of a similar ilk – just substitute amp modeller for mp3 player and you'll get the picture.

The Power Engine 60 (PW60) is a combined power amp and open-backed speaker cabinet for stage use into which you can plug a Line 6 POD or similar and get the same level of volume that you would from a conventional guitar amp, but without the problems that can arise in using an amp modeller in front of a conventional amp where that amp's own tonal and overdrive/distortion characteristics combined with those of the modeller can compromise the final sound.

The 60-watt solid-state amp in the Power Engine is designed to be clean and tonally transparent. Sounds from an amp modeller that you may have painstakingly edited for specific songs and/or recordings, therefore, ought to be reproduced without any additional colouration due to the amp – the whole

point being that you have already got the sound you want in your amp modeller and you just want to make it louder rather than change the tone.

The PW60 is designed multi-functionally to also be used as an extension cab for use with Tech 21's own amps as well as used with any make of amp modeller. It is also allied to the Trademark 60 amp to which it can be connected from that amp's direct output. There are jack and XLR inputs to accommodate equipment with both types of output. It is possible to plug a guitar directly in the input for a clean sound, but it loads down passive guitar inputs so to get decent results it should be an active guitar or a passive one plugged in via a buffered effects pedal. An XLR output is hard-wired to the input so that the input signal can be sent directly to a PA as an alternative to mic'ing the amp at a gig. An essential ground lift switch is

provided to negate any earthing problems that may arise.

Although Tech 21 has intended the amplifier to be neutral sounding it is aware that a little EQ may be necessary depending on the aural characteristics of the particular venue that the PW60 is being used in, so you

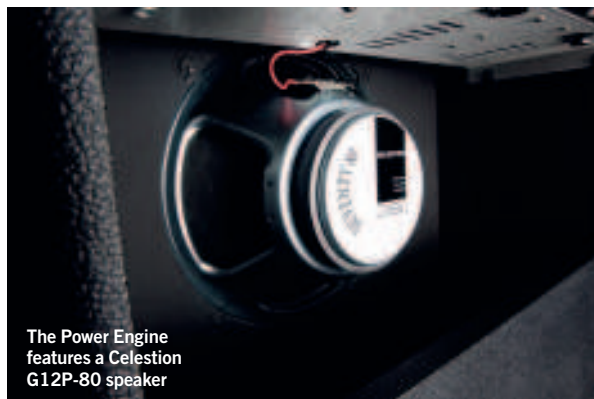
do get three small rear panel knobs that provide up to 12dB of active high, mid and low EQ sitting next to an equally small volume knob.

**SOUNDS:** The first thing we noted about the PW60 is that the inputs and outputs are to be found underneath the amp's chassis. This may

be the logical place for them, thus saving space and keeping leads tidy, but having the red on/off light here is a bit daft as (if the amp is on the floor) you have to get on your hands and knees to see it. Anyway, once up and running we put the PW60 through its paces with several different generations of amp

**Depending on the quality of the sound you put into it, the PW60 can reward you with a full-on dynamic live sound that will hold its own on any stage**





The Power Engine features a Celestion G12P-80 speaker

POWER ENGINE 60	TEST RESULTS
Build quality	★★★★★
Features	★★★★★
Sound	★★★★★
Value for money	★★★★★

■ **WE LIKED** Powerful sound; ample volume; easily transportable

■ **WE DISLIKED** Power lamp hard to see; no notched centre position on EQ knobs

## The rivals

Atomic Reactor 112	£449
Tech 21 Trademark 60	£499
Line 6 Flextone 3	£487

The only direct combo designed to do the same job as the PW60 that we could find is the Atomic Reactor 112 which we reviewed back in *Guitarist* 262. This is an 18-watt valve amp with a 12-inch speaker that features a docking bay into which you can slot a POD or similar. As an alternative to a combo, a rack-mounted power amp could be combined with speaker cabs, although price and the portability factor are probably less attractive. Marshall, for instance, do stereo valve power amps at 20, 50 and 100 watts. A small PA could possibly do the job although you wouldn't be getting the authentic 12-inch Celestion speaker sound and would have to rely on your amp sim's speaker emulation. Alternatively, if you want a combo with a varied range of different amp sounds built in, there's the Trademark 60 or the Flextone 3.



Rear panel knobs provide control for up to 12dB of active EQ

simulation: a 1980s Scholz Rockman Sustainor, Tech 21's own original Sansamp, Line 6 PODxt and the output from a computer running Guitar Rig 2 and Amplitube Live software.

In all cases the PW60 took the basic sound and pushed it forcefully out through the Celestion speaker without any obvious tonal shifts but added a new degree of realism to the equation that could only come from a real speaker moving real air. What was immediately apparent is that this thing can go from a whisper to very loud while keeping the sound consistent, making it suitable for all sorts of gigs.

Solid-state is the name of the game here so you are not going to get the sound of cooking output valves when the wick's turned up, which is the whole point – your amp simulation should be doing that for you – but, depending on the quality of the sound you put into it, the PW60 can reward you with a full-on dynamic live sound that will hold its own on any stage.

## Verdict

The Power Engine 60 is a great idea – Tech 21 has seen a gap in the market and filled it. There are modelling combos with combined sound

generation, amp and speaker but the PW60 gives you the amp and speaker and lets you choose your own sound generation. The makers of Guitar Rig and Amplitube would love us all to go onstage with laptops – wishful thinking maybe, but the PW60 makes it feasible. Computers aside, for a streamlined live rig, the PW60 is the perfect companion to the new breed of floor-based units like the BOSS GT-8, Line 6 PODxt Live and the range of similar units from Korg, DigiTech and Zoom. **G**

## Tech 21 Power Engine 60

Guitarist RATING

★★★★★