



BUDGET BLASTER

Bugera 6260 head & 412H-BK 4x12 cabinet

BY TERRY BUDDINGH

IT'S THE BIGGEST BUZZ in the amp world: Behringer, known for its wide range of amazingly affordable and primarily solid-state music gear, has entered the heavyweight tube-amp arena with a loud *kerrang* and a new brand: Bugera. Made in Behringer's sprawling factory complex in Zhongshan, China, the Bugera line boldly debuts with nine new models: four high-powered heads, four open-back combos (featuring essentially the same circuitry as the heads but with inverted chassis) and a slant-front 4x12 speaker cabinet.

To check out this new line, I've selected the most stripped-down (and thusly the most affordable) Bugera head—the 6260—and coupled it with the 412H-BK cabinet to form the most basic building block of rock: the classic half stack.

FEATURES

THE 6260 SHARES many key components with its Bugera cousins, something that reduces production costs. In addition to having similar chassis metalwork and cabinetry dimensions, the models share the same power and output transformer designs. An amp's transformers are typically its most expensive components, and the output transformer is an especially important contributor to overall tone quality. According to Behringer's eponymous head-honcho, Uli Behringer, the company developed and refined the intricate design details and sound of the Bugera's output transformer for more than a year. With that kind of boutique-like obsession for detail, it's clear the Bugera team is truly serious

The 6260 benefits from the specially voiced speakers in the 412H-BK cabinet.

Like all of the Bugera amp designs, the 6260 sports four output tubes (and all of the tubes reside in high-quality ceramic sockets). And for you tone tweakers, all of the Bugeras are fitted with a switch that adapts the amp for either 6L6 or EL34 operation, and a conveniently located top-mounted bias adjustment pot with RCA test-jack makes it easy to check and fine tune your amp's bias on the fly.

Speaking of tubes, Bugera boasts an impressive in-house tube testing facility. I visited the Behringer/Bugera factory last November, and the large tube testing room was abuzz with people busily testing tubes using special burn-in and matching rigs. They also use actual Bugera combos for critical testing of microphonics. The 12AX7s are carefully graded by their resistance to microphonics, and they're selected for their final use accordingly. Uli Behringer said only five percent of the 12AX7s are selected for the most critical "A" grade applications. More good news: Bugera also plans to offer a full line of replacement tubes, so keep your eyes peeled for some sweet deals on great tubes.

Stripped to the bone like a fuel dragster, the 6260 has a minimal control complement that belies the amp's broad range of tones.



BUGERA 6260 HEAD & 412H-BK 4X12 CABINET

LIST PRICES: 6260 head, \$739.99; 412H-BK cabinet, \$369.99

MANUFACTURER: Bugera, a division of Behringer Intl. GmbH; bugera-amps.com

POWER OUTPUT: 120 watts

CHANNELS: Two

FEATURES: Sturdy steel chassis; ceramic tube sockets; large custom-wound transformers; selectable four-, eight- and 16-ohm output impedance; digital reverb; rugged footswitch (included), effect loop (footswitchable)

CONTROLS: Separate gain and master controls for Clean and Lead channels; shared bass, mid, treble presence and reverb controls

FOOTSWITCH: Four buttons (Clean channel, Lead channel, reverb and effect loop)

TUBE COMPLEMENT: Five Bugera-tested Chinese-made Shuguang 12AX7 pre-amp tubes; four Bugera-tested and -matched Chinese-made TAD tall-bottle black-plate 6L6Gs.

412H-BK 4x12 SPEAKER CABINET

CONSTRUCTION: MDF with metal corners; classic 4x12 design with center sound post;

mono or split-stereo operation; larger recessed handles; two edge-mounted casters

SPEAKERS: Four four-ohm, 50-watt, 12G50J4 Bugera 12-inch speakers

POWER HANDLING: 200 watts (total)

IMPEDANCE: 16 ohms mono, eight ohms per side stereo



PERFORMANCE

THE 6260 FORMS an especially synergistic bond with the uncommonly deep-, rich- and smooth-sounding Bugera 412H-BK 4x12 speaker cabinet. It's clear that the Bugera crew did a lot of study and experimentation to design speakers that so perfectly complement the sound of the head; you really have to hear them together to get the complete Bugera experience. The amazing thing is the Bugera speakers are made in-house. It's easy to understand why the speakers match the head so perfectly when you see first-hand how Bugera's unique manufacturing capabilities allow the company to fine-tune speaker performance so readily. Very few amp manufacturers can stake a claim to that kind of capability.

The 6260/412H-BK half stack is a serious rock machine. And while the Clean channel is indeed capable of crisp and punchy clean tones (especially with vintage-style single-coil pickups), this rig was clearly born to rock. Engaging the Clean channel's Crunch mode punches up the gain with a more aggressive upper-midrange emphasis that barks with Rottweiler-like authority, and amazingly, it's equally effective with single-coils or humbuckers.

The Lead channel increases the gain with more perfectly voiced upper-midrange emphasis and a leaner, trimmer and more percussive low end that handles low-tuned and seven-string guitars surprisingly well. Despite these characteristics, the Lead channel sounds fat thanks to the cab's exceptional low-end depth. It's truly amazing how seamlessly both amp channels work together and how many great sounds are available from so few controls.

THE BOTTOM LINE

NO QUESTION ABOUT IT—the Bugera 6260/412H-BK is an impressive gig-worthy half stack that's easily capable of hanging tough against more costly rivals. It's destined to become a hit with budget-minded rockers and I suspect we'll be seeing them on some big-time stages real soon too. The *real* bottom line: Bugera is for real. I've seen it all and I'm a believer. 🌟

| PRO | CON |
|--|---------------------------|
| SURPRISINGLY GOOD SOUND AT AN AFFORDABLE PRICE; BROAD RANGE OF TONES FROM MINIMAL CONTROLS | NO STRAIGHT CAB AVAILABLE |