

NEW GEAR 2002

ergonomically bent Grip Pick to Line 6's astonishing Guitar Port—was positively overwhelming. A lot of manufacturers apparently decided to turn on their creative juices at a time when many thought the world was about to blow up, and if there was anything worth celebrating at NAMM, it was the fortitude and inventive spirit that prevails in this industry.

Exploring the football field-sized halls of the Anaheim Convention Center revealed not only a boat load of new guitars, amps, pedals, rack effects, and recording gear, but also such scintillating surprises as the Crate BV 300H (a prototype 300-watt, three-channel tube head that was loud enough to kill small critters), the Hiwatt Tape Echo (which has two very obvious things going for it), and the Godin Fort guitar case (a 2.5 lb enclosure that could protect your pre-war Martin D-45 from



a stomp attack by Hulk Hogan).

It would probably take an entire issue of *Guitar Player* to cover everything we saw at NAMM, but rather than compile a stupifyingly huge list of new products, we decided to spotlight the 40 items that really made an impression on us. Of course, we haven't had a chance to field test any of these things yet, but stay tuned, as we'll be reporting in-depth on many of the products featured here in upcoming Bench Tests. In the meantime, we hope you enjoy this exposé of highlights from NAMM 2002. —ART THOMPSON

◀ AUTOMAGIC SILVER MACHINE WAH

The German-made Silver Machine Wah (\$360) offers a ton of hip features in a bitchin', stainless-steel enclosure. The first cool attribute is the Automagic activator—a pressure sensor that turns the effect on when you put your foot on the trea-

ble, and turns it off when you remove your foot. For those who like to use wah pedals as static filters, there is also a "continuous on" mode. The Automagic provides three switchable frequency bands and four bandwidths, as well as both wah and wah/dry modes. This thing

looks, sounds, and



works great. Automagic, dist. by Godlyke, (973) 835-2100; godlyke.com.

◀ BAD CAT HOT CAT

Designed by Mark Sampson, the 30-watt Hot Cat (\$2,959) is a single-channel, class A amp that offers an expansive tonal range courtesy of a flexible preamp and a dual-EL34 output stage. The Hot Cat's Clean and Gain inputs allow for a broader array of rhythm and lead textures, and, by connect-

ing an A/B/Y box to these jacks, you can blend the signals to create either cleaner distortion tones or more distorted clean sounds. The Hot Cat has clean volume, gain, edge, level, bass, treble, brilliance, and master-volume controls, and can be optimized for a softer or harder dynamic response by selecting either a tube rectifier (5AR4, 5Y3, 5U4) or the built-in solid-state rectifier. The Hot Cat is entirely point-to-point wired using terminal strips instead of boards, and is available in 1x12 or 2x10 combo formats. A head version

goes for \$2,599. Bad Cat, (909) 808-8651; bad-catamps.com.

◀ B.C. RICH MICK THOMPSON SIGNATURE MODEL

You have to hand it to B.C. Rich. Trends in guitar design have come and gone, yet they've stuck to their guns with their one-of-a-kind style solidbodies. Designed in conjunction with Slipknot's six-string-sicko, Mick Thompson, the NJ Signature Series Warlock (\$799) has all you need to piss-off your folks and