

**Hands-On Review:
Gallien–Krueger MB Series Combos
New lightweight combos offer big sound at an affordable price**

By Terry Buddingh, International Music-Gear Journalist

Gallien-Krueger's new MB combos combine GK's classic preamp tone-shaping circuitry with a lightweight Class-D power amp and other weight-reducing materials and technologies. You get GK's legendary 4-band active tone control section—frequently hailed as the most musical and user-friendly bass-tone control section ever developed. You also get the time-proven tone-shaping characteristics provided by GK's carefully voiced Contour preset feature. If you've played a GK amp in the past (And who hasn't?), you'll feel right at home with the new MB combos.

Other features include Passive and Active inputs to accommodate any bass, a Limiter with on/off switch to preserve the amp's clarity at high volume (or when switched off, to preserve all of the dynamic nuances at low to medium volume levels). The MB combos also have a high-frequency Horn-tweeter with on/off switch for sweet sizzle and aggressive bite (with the Horn on), or thick and rich old-school fatness (with the Horn off). And each MB combo has a built-in XLR DI output for recording or running through a PA.

There's also an 1/8-inch Auxiliary Input jack so you can practice along with a CD or MP3 player, etc., and a headphone jack for silent practicing. The new MB combos also feature durable-yet-lightweight plywood construction, and a feather-light aluminum grill. And each amp is equipped with a top-mounted strap handle that's positioned perfectly for good balance and effortless transportation.

Model Differences

Each MB combo features a different speaker size, and that's the key to decoding their model numbers and differences; the MB210 has two 10-inch Paragon speakers, the MB212 has two 12-inch Paragon speakers, and the MB115 has one 15-inch Paragon speaker. The MB210 and MB212 speakers feature lightweight neodymium magnets, while the MB115's high-sensitivity 15 has a ceramic magnet. Paragon speakers are made in GK's exclusive factory near Shanghai China (as are the MB combos).

Which One Is For You?

The MB115 is surprisingly loud for a single-15 combo. Its high-sensitivity Paragon speaker sounds exceptionally smooth, direct and evenly balanced. From top to bottom, every note sounds plump and juicy, yet clearly focused. Oozing with old-school goodness, the MB115 can recreate the magic of Motown's golden era with a flat-wound strung Fender Precision Bass, swing some cool jazz with an upright, as well as kick up some rowdy country and get real nasty with some down-home blues.

The MB210's low-frequency response is surprisingly deep and strong; it's great for punchy finger-style playing or funky slapping. Its thick low-end depth enhances the girth, body and dynamic bump of a Fender Jazz Bass's soloed bridge pickup. Turn both pickups on, and it transforms into a wicked slap machine. The MB210 can't approach the maximum volume levels of the MB212, but you can increase its maximum volume level by adding an extension speaker (the MB210 is the only member of the new MB series that's equipped with an extension speaker jack).

The MB212 has a more modern voice, and it excels with contemporary 5-string basses. Teamed with a Music Man StingRay, the sound is tight, clear and assertive, and the two 12s combine to create a complex and layered texture that enhances the bass's aggressive edge and bite. Paired with a Warwick Corvette, the amp's nimble dynamic response and complex texture enhances pick-style attack nuances and midrange growl. Loud and proud, the MB212 rocks.

GK's new MB series combos offer gig-worthy power and tone in a surprisingly lightweight and exceptionally high-value package. There's one to suit just about every playing style and situation. Click or call now to order with the assurance of Musician's Friend's Dual Guarantees that ensure your total satisfaction and the lowest price.

Features & Specs

MB Series Combos

- Individual Passive and Active Input jacks
- Preamp Gain control
- Contour on/off button
- Active 4-band tone controls
- Active Boost control
- Master Volume control
- Limiter on/off button
- High-frequency Horn on/off button
- 1/8" Aux-In jack
- 1/4" Phones jack
- Balanced XLR DI output jack
- State-of-the-art Class-D power amp
- Weight-reducing switch-mode power supply
- Plywood cabinet

MB115

- One 15-inch Paragon high-sensitivity ceramic speaker
- 200 watts into the internal speaker

23" x 19" x 14"
35 pounds

MB 210

Two 10-inch Paragon neodymium speakers
One Speakon speaker output jack
350 watts into the internal speakers; 500 watts w/ext.
23" x 19" x 14"
33 pounds

MB212

Two 12-inch Paragon neodymium speakers
500 watts @ 4 ohms
26" x 19" x 14"
39 pounds