

Ashdown Klystron C210H-500 Combo

Ashdown's flagship bass amplifier hails from the Classic range – still built in the UK and updated as part of a **continuous development programme.**



Ashdown Klystron C210H-500

Price: £1199
Made In: UK
Power Output (RMS): 575-watts
Speaker Config: 2x10 + Horn
Weight: 37kg

Contact Details

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What we think

Plus: Looks great, lots of useful features, included footswitch.
Minus: In today's weight obsessed market this ranks as a heavyweight
Overall: A great combo with plenty to get your teeth into, but not the most portable option available.

BGM RATING OUT OF FIVE

BUILD QUALITY ★★★★★
SOUND QUALITY ★★★★★
VALUE FOR MONEY ★★★★★

BGM Ratings

Exceptional ★★★★★
Excellent ★★★★☆
Good ★★★☆☆
Average ★★☆☆☆
Poor ★☆☆☆☆

The Ashdown Klystron C210H-500 is a 575-watt combo that forms part of the company's Classic range – amps, speakers and combos built to 'do everything better – more volume, more dynamics, an extended frequency range, and greater versatility'. Built in the UK, this combo boasts vintage looks combined with modern components: the vinyl covering and old-fashioned top mounted carrying handles certainly add to the vintage look, as does the Ashdown logo and silver metal top vent. The usual Ashdown control set is top mounted in this instance, and consists of a single *Input* (which is switchable for passive/active instruments), a *Compressor*, a *Valve Drive* control, a simple 3-band EQ with additional sliders for 15dB cut and boost at 180Hz, 340Hz, 1.3kHz and 2.6kHz, and a *Sub-Harmonic* control. Also top mounted are *DI*, *Tuner* and *Line Out* jacks. A *Speaker* connection and effects loop is available on the rear of the amp. The combo uses a blend of solid state and dual triode tube preamp stages – as such it's a pretty heavy combo (especially for a 2 x 10), weighing in at a hefty 37 kg. Large metal inset handles are side mounted to make carrying it easier, although the width of the combo makes it a two-person carry. Overall the build quality appeared to be excellent.

My first impression as I plugged in was one of warmth. Set flat, the combo

had an undeniable fullness of tone that proved to be an excellent starting point. Subtle EQ tweaks yielded a great fingerstyle tone, that while punchy enough to sound great in a live situation retained enough warmth to fill out the lower end. Slap tones were also easy enough to come by – just a matter of gently tweaking the EQ, and adding in a dose of compression. The valve drive control added in extra 'grit' where needed, and the sub-harmonic control – Ashdown's 'secret weapon' drops the signal down an octave to great effect although it didn't track much below the open A string, which is what we'd expect. Points were scored for the inclusion in the price of the Ashdown ABM Series footswitch, which allows the user to switch in the valve drive control, the EQ, the compressor and the sub octave control without having to turn to the amp. This is a great addition when using the combo live as a gig proved: I dialled in a great fingerstyle tone that would be appropriate for 90%

of the gig, then used the footswitch to kick in the compressor and valve drive for a meaty slap tone. Having access to the sub octave control was very useful in a live environment.

At £1199 the Ashdown is at the upper end of the popular 2 x 10 combo market. Although it makes use of lighter, custom developed Neodymium speakers, the C210H-500 is still a very bulky customer in comparison to other similar models on the market, including of course offerings from Ashdown's own range where light weight is the over-riding design criteria. The feature set makes this a good investment since it offers all you need and then a bit more, and it certainly has more than enough power to cope with most gigging situations. Combine all this with great looks and vintage appeal and you end up with something rather special. Competition is hot in this area but for Brit flag flying Ashdown can stand tall.

Stuart Clayton



An evolution of the ABM range, the Klystron now includes compression