



## Soldano 44

**BLUES CITY MUSIC OWNER LYNN BURKE** (A guitarist himself, who moonlights as a 727/777F captain for FedEx Express) came up with the concept for the 44, requesting it be the size of Soldano's Astroverb, but with 50 watts of power from two 6L6/5881 output tubes and a preamp based on the crunch circuit of a Soldano SLO-100. This team effort, which also included Mike Soldano's right-hand man Bill Sundt, has resulted in a very gig-worthy combo that measures a mere 17.5" x 17.5" x 10". This very custom model is only available from Blues City Music.

The 44's controls are Preamp, Reverb, Bass, Middle, Treble, Normal Volume, Lead Volume, and Presence. Having a master gain control (Preamp) and two master volumes that can only be switched via an on/off footswitch may not be an ideal "channel" switching scenario, but in practice it works okay. I found it best to set the rhythm level first, and then adjust the Preamp and Lead Volume controls for the right amount of distortion and volume when my guitar was turned all the way up. And once you have the levels set, the Lead master works great as a volume boost for solos.

Other than that, the 44 is about as straightforward as it gets. The voicing of the tone controls makes it easy to get great sounds from single-coil and humbucker guitars, and the Presence control is particularly useful for obtaining just the right amount of bite in the higher-gain realms. The 44 has gobs of gain

potential too. Setting the Preamp control at 2 o'clock or higher summons serious amounts of distortion, which is also very clear and articulate sounding. The overdrive tones have that searing character that made the SLO so loveable, and these textures sound cool at any volume, too, which makes it fun to use the 44 even in situations where you have to keep a tight lid on the levels. The 44 is very dynamically responsive, and even when using a high Preamp control setting you can go back to a tough-sounding clean tone by turning down your guitar. If you forget to bring along a footswitch, the only difference is that the Lead master can't be activated. In that configuration you simply set the Normal master where you need it and control the rhythm and lead tones entirely with your guitar volume and picking attack.

The 44 also has an excellent reverb, which is tube powered and features a long, 2-spring Ruby tank. The airiness of the 'verb is outstanding, and it imbues the tones with a great sense of dimension and vibe. Surf players might desire a little more crash 'n' splash, but if your reverb tastes favor a more "studio"-like response, you'll love what the 44 has in store.

Ideal as the 44 could be for many players in stock trim, Blues City Music offers many options and upgrades that can turn it into a truly one-of-a-kind amplifier. If you like the concept of big performance in a small package you can't go wrong with the Soldano 44. —Art Thompson

### SPECS

#### Blues City Music,

(901) 485-8250;  
bluescitymusic.com

<b>MODEL</b>	44
<b>PRICE</b>	\$2,170 direct
<b>CHANNELS</b>	One
<b>CONTROLS</b>	Preamp, Reverb, Bass, Middle, Treble, Normal Volume, Lead Volume, Presence
<b>TUBES</b>	Two Sovtek 5881 power tubes, five JJ12AX7s
<b>POWER</b>	50 watts
<b>SPEAKER</b>	12" Eminence Legend
<b>EXTRAS</b>	N/A
<b>WEIGHT</b>	49 lbs
<b>KUDOS</b>	Very cool clean and overdriven sounds. Super compact. Excellent reverb.
<b>CONCERNS</b>	None.