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Subject: K150-2 vrs K200B-2

Posted by [slk854](#) on Thu, 22 Jan 2015 23:09:02 GMT

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Not a trick question. I have just recently acquired a K150 in black with the 15" speaker and 16" horn. My very first Kustom amp ever, and the first I have ever played through. I am just blown away by the sound...I normally play through a Fender Twin Reverb, but it is not my go to amp anymore.

Ok to the question in hand. Were the K150-K250 amps an upgrade to the K200B. Now I know that the K200B is one of the coolest looking amps ever, but I am talking sound.....One day I do plan on getting a K200 because they do seem to be more collectable than the 150-250. I could be very wrong on that premise. Just thought I would ask the experts/collectors here. I have to say though I am very pleased with the K150 I have. Don't know how you could improve on it's sound...

Steve

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Subject: Re: K150-2 vrs K200B-2

Posted by [Iowa Boy](#) on Fri, 23 Jan 2015 04:01:39 GMT

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Depends on what you play.....if you play bass, the K-250 is the only way to go. As posted on this site several times in the resent past, it has the bass boost circuit that the k-200 don't have. I own both and several of the k-200 series, they are all noisy.....popping, hissing occasional crackling. The k-250 is stone cold silent....and the bass boost is very noticeable.

As to the k200's being more collectible, I'll argue that one with you. Just look on Craigslist or Ebay.....they are for sale everywhere. Now K-150 or K-250, they are by far fewer in numbers out there.

Stevem or Pleat I think posted on an earlier thread that the components of the 150 and 250 series were improvements over the older K-200 series and were less prone to idling noise. They can give you the specific's as far as that goes.

I'm not saying the K-200's are bad, seeing like I said I have several of them. But once you play a K-250, you'll never go back to a K-200 again at least if you play bass. At least I never will.

If you play guitar, the K-250 AMP, if your lucky enough to find one that is loaded with all the features, was also equipped with fuzz and wah wah. Never have seen that on a K-200 only reverb, tremolo, and harmonic clipper.

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Subject: Re: K150-2 vrs K200B-2

Posted by [stevem](#) on Fri, 23 Jan 2015 11:36:53 GMT

Good sound is in the ear of the beholder, no?

I have many of each type of these amps with many different speaker combinations as many others here do and after playing / messin around with running different heads thru all the different speaker set ups I have these things at least stand out to me, and may be others here also!

1) the metal face K150 and 250 heads can sound just like the 200B heads and the 200A heads, that being the non Frank heads , and this assumes the same speakers!

2) having the tone control on the reverb and the better tremolo and vibrato section in the metal face amps is a big improvement, as is the selectone and mid range control.

3) the higher gain and sensivity of the late 71 and up metal face amps is a big step forward for playing feel no less if you have a axe with low output single coil pickups.  
On the down side if you have a active guitar you need to set its bigger output level to not clip the new hotter preamp!

4) the Frank era heads have a mellow tone and a type of crunch clipping drive to them when pushed that can not be had in any other latter Kustom head due the way it is built electronically.

Other details would be the K150 plexi face combo amps and the fact that they came fitted with a choke in the power supply section like the latter metal face 150 has ( but not the K250) and this addition makes them a good bit more punchy sounding, much more so than the increase in power output wattage over the K100 amp would lead you to believe!

The face is that although the metal face heads are of a latter era, Kustom made far less of them than the K200A and B heads, so that should really be factored into the collectibility thought process!

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Subject: Re: K150-2 vrs K200B-2

Posted by [Kustom\\_Bart](#) on Sat, 24 Jan 2015 04:23:28 GMT

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I have both type's they all sound good, can make them work for anything, just not a fan of the metal face amps and would pass up ten of them for one nice plect face, that is just me though. Can gig about anywhere with a guitar, processor, and a K50.

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Subject: Re: K150-2 vrs K200B-2

Posted by [pleat](#) on Tue, 27 Jan 2015 02:56:43 GMT

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Adding to the discussion of what is more collectable. The original Bud Ross era of the plexi face amps will always be more collectable to the die-hard Kustom collector. True there are more plexi face Kustoms than the slant metal face series amps.

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One of the big factors there are less metal face amps is the music scene was changing in the early 70's. The love of T&R was dropping in popularity, there were other brands moving up in popularity, Acoustic, Peavey to name a couple. I remember a time in the 15 years I was in retail music, early 70's you couldn't give away a T&R of either style. I saw people cutting off the T&R and painting the cabinets black.

Peavey offered the same features and power for half the cost of a Kustom or twice the size and power in the same price point of a kustom.

As far as quality, Kustom still had all high grade components, but had moved to more IC's and plug and play circuit boards with the molex connectors, causing a lot of failures. This was a Baldwin era decision as well as skimping on insulation in cabinets and going from marine grade plywood construction to particle board. I've never owned a slant metal face amp from the small Challenger to the big K250 amps that I have confidence in gigging out with. The last Kustom covention in 2012 we had in Chanute, we started with a K300 PA head and issues and had to change it out to a older K400 PA head. Just adding my 49 years of using and selling Kustoms. pleat

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Subject: Re: K150-2 vrs K200B-2  
Posted by [slk854](#) on Tue, 27 Jan 2015 14:04:25 GMT  
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So what would be the issues with gigging with a 150/250 guitar amp???What seams to break down???

Steve

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Subject: Re: K150-2 vrs K200B-2  
Posted by [stevem](#) on Tue, 27 Jan 2015 15:51:39 GMT  
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Nothing in my book!

Up until 8 years I gigged near every weekend since 1971 when I got my K250 to replace my K200 to play Bass through and all I have had to do in all that passing time was clean the pots and while I was in there touched up the Molex connectors !

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Subject: Re: K150-2 vrs K200B-2  
Posted by [pleat](#) on Tue, 27 Jan 2015 15:52:45 GMT  
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Molex connectors, power switches, are the main issues that make me nervous, plus the fact we had 10 times more problems with the slant face amps for just those issues at the store. I've had a couple of K150 heads, one guitar and one PA that the power resistors that are bolted to the

bottom of the chassis get so hot it burned the wires off the tabs of the resistors.  
The Kustom Challenger amp has the best name for an amp. It's a challenge to keep them working.  
Just my opinion. I'll stick to the older Bud Ross era Kustoms.  
pleat

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Subject: Re: K150-2 vrs K200B-2  
Posted by [slk854](#) on Tue, 27 Jan 2015 16:26:03 GMT  
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I must be missing something here. I am very new to Kustoms so don't beat me up too bad. Isn't the K150-250 a Bud Ross era? I mean he was still the owner when they were made? right?

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Subject: Re: K150-2 vrs K200B-2  
Posted by [pleat](#) on Tue, 27 Jan 2015 18:24:11 GMT  
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Bud left in late 72 to pursue Kustom Radar but things were changing before that. The older plexi era amps were when Bud had major control over the company. I'm not saying the later amps were junk, I just prefer the older circuits where they were individual transistors over the IC amps of the slant face amps.  
pleat

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Subject: Re: K150-2 vrs K200B-2  
Posted by [Iowa Boy](#) on Tue, 27 Jan 2015 18:34:36 GMT  
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Pleat does have a point about the plastic power switches. I've said all along that was a design flaw from the beginning. Same cheap design used in ceiling fan switches for the most part and they have to be replaced every so many years because they can't handle the stress.....plastic verses metal....doesn't take a rocket scientist to figure out which is the better material. At least Stevem has found us a solution to that problem now. Please tell me the new switches aren't made of plastic as well.

Hoping that Pleat experienced isolated incidences of failures with the second generation of Kustom amps. Like I said earlier, when I compare my K-300 to the K-400 and K-200 to my K-250, there is no idling noise with the K-300 or the K-250 and the bass tones are much mellower in both amps than the others.

When Pleat said people were cutting off the T&R, I almost cried. That is the most coolest feature about this equipment. I still get irate when I see how people have abused this equipment, but they take care of the junk cars they drive as well. Every cabinet I buy has a new heavy duty vinyl cover made for it and these covers are twice as thick as the material of the T&R. My girlfriend absolutely hates making them for me since they are so heavy and hard to sew. Abusing Kustom equipment is like abusing an animal.....just criminal!

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Subject: Re: K150-2 vrs K200B-2  
Posted by [slk854](#) on Tue, 27 Jan 2015 18:44:36 GMT  
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stevem wrote on Tue, 27 January 2015 10:51 Nothing in my book!  
Up until 8 years I gigged near every weekend since 1971 when I got my K250 to replace my K200 to play Bass through and all I have had to do in all that passing time was clean the pots and while I was in there touched up the Molex connectors !

Ok new to all of this. What is meant by touching up the Molex connectors? Is this something I should go on and do for right now for good measure? Like a little preventative maintenance? Explain how please...

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Subject: Re: K150-2 vrs K200B-2  
Posted by [pleat](#) on Wed, 28 Jan 2015 01:54:36 GMT  
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I think I've seen a lot more failures in all era Kustoms and other brands than most people will see in a lifetime. I worked after school in our local music store from 67 to 1970 when I went full time until 1979.

The molex connectors were a good idea in the beginning, Kustom thought that dealers without good repairmen, a dealer could just unplug a circuit board, pop in a new one and send the defective board back to the factory for repair. Most issues weren't solved that easy, and the second part of the plug and play circuit boards made assembly easier and faster at the factory. I've a couple of Kustom amps given to me as dead on arrival only to clean the molex connectors and have the amp fire back up.

I think the reason so may Kustoms still look good are because the original covers took most of the abuse for years rather than the T&R.

I have either original covers or new after market covers for all my amps and cabs.

pleat

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Subject: Re: K150-2 vrs K200B-2  
Posted by [slk854](#) on Wed, 28 Jan 2015 20:42:28 GMT  
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So what is the procedure for cleaning the connectors. I assume you need contact cleaner, but do you use anything else?

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Subject: Re: K150-2 vrs K200B-2  
Posted by [chicagobill](#) on Wed, 28 Jan 2015 21:33:30 GMT  
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Yes, contact cleaner is a must and I suggest that you use Caig DeoxIt.

There are two halves to each connector a male and a female. And while you can use a tiny jeweler's screwdriver to pry the connectors tight, they really shouldn't need that, unless they have already been damaged.

I start by pulling the plug off of the board, then spray a tiny amount of DeoxIt into each of the female side connectors. Then I will push the plug back on and pull it off again a few times to burnish the mating surfaces clean. Whenever you do this, try to push and pull the plugs straight out from the board, as twisting or angling the plug may cause the pins to change shape. If they are distorted enough, they will no longer make good contact.

If the connectors look really bad like the amp was under water at some point, I may get out a set of dental brushes to clean out the female connectors. These are those tiny cone shaped brushes meant to clean between your teeth. Or I'll use a round toothpick and spin it around inside the contact area. These contacts have been plated, so don't get too abrasive or you will damage the plating surface. Once the plating is gone, the metal underneath will start to rust and then it will be time to replace the contact or remove the plug completely.

In 99% of the cases, just a simple spray with DeoxIt and a few plug and unplug cycles will cure the problems.

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Subject: Re: K150-2 vrs K200B-2  
Posted by [Iowa Boy](#) on Thu, 29 Jan 2015 02:33:13 GMT  
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Deoxit is available at Parts Express

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Subject: Re: K150-2 vrs K200B-2  
Posted by [chicagobill](#) on Thu, 29 Jan 2015 05:52:46 GMT  
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It used to be available at Radio Shack as well, but I haven't been there in a while.

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Subject: Re: K150-2 vrs K200B-2  
Posted by [stevem](#) on Thu, 29 Jan 2015 11:21:41 GMT  
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I unfortunately have not seen it at radio shack in quite a while, but I do think they can still order it up, but the price would be very high!  
I would order it up from mouser, newark, or digikey, big well stocked music store like where I work stock it in hanging plastic packs, but once again, not cheap!

Subject: Re: K150-2 vrs K200B-2  
Posted by [braud357](#) on Thu, 29 Jan 2015 23:14:06 GMT  
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I bought some Deoxit from my local Radio Shack several months ago. I just recently "saved" a Peavey TNT130 combo bass amp with it. A fellow in my band had it stored in his garage, and said that it had a short. I brought it home, and sure enough - it did sound like it had a short. Several of the pots were VERY scratchy. I sprayed all of them with Deoxit, and EUREKA !! It now works perfectly and sounds great. This stuff is AMAZING !!

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Subject: Re: K150-2 vrs K200B-2  
Posted by [chicagobill](#) on Fri, 30 Jan 2015 06:19:31 GMT  
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Yes, DeoxIt is the best electronic cleaner that I have ever found. In our shop we used to use another brand, but I used DeoxIt. So many times the guitar techs would use the other stuff and still have scratchy pots. One shot of DeoxIt and the noise would be gone.

Now DeoxIt is all we use. And you don't need to spray a lot of it into a pot to get it clean. Just a very small amount will usually clean the worst sounding pot.

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