



# Vintage Guitar<sup>®</sup> Gear Reviews

magazine

## Deluxe Treatment

### Telenator's CuNiFe Humbuckers

**I**n the early '70s, Fender sought to woo Gibson players by introducing a humbucking pickup in its Telecaster Deluxe, Tele Custom, and Starcaster. They teamed with pickup guru Seth Lover to devise the Wide Range Humbucker, which was truly cutting-edge with its offset/adjustable polepiece layout and CuNiFe magnets.

While only marginally successful at the time, those pickups – and the Telecasters in which they were mounted – remain popular with vintage-guitar enthusiasts. While the look, feel, and vibe of subsequent reissues have been a good thing, some believe their pickups fall short.

Enter Telenator Musical Electronics, a group of four craftsmen seeking to re-create the true tone of the Wide Range Humbucker. At the core of Telenator's reissue is the CuNiFe magnet (a blend of copper, nickel, and iron), which is made in

limited quantities. Along with the CuNiFe rod, the Telenator pickup has hand-machined Delrin bobbins wound with original-spec/enamel-coated wire to 10.6k on the ohmmeter, nickel/silver frames, and mild steel base plates.

Upgrading to Telenator pickups can be quite different from a normal swap; for instance, if you have a Fender reissue, the company asks that you send its original pickups to them so they can use the logo-embossed covers, thus retaining their original look.

Telenator sent a set of pickups it mounted in a recent-reissue Tele Deluxe, which we plugged into an all-tube 1x12 combo. Out of the gate, the pickups offered generous doses of complex harmonics – clear, punchy mids, round lows, and just enough snap in the highs to know you were still playing a Tele. The bridge

pickup, with its slightly hotter output, had a tightly focused sound with strong upper midrange, while the neck pickup was deep and throaty, giving the middle position a super-spanky tone.

While stock Tele Deluxe or Custom reissues sound a bit dark and lack midrange personality, the Telenators cover a much broader frequency range – very lively and musical. Whether through our amp's clean or overdrive channel, they offered obvious note separation, clarity,

and punch. Their complex tone and wide response require less overdrive gain to achieve good sustain, which allows for a clearer, more articulate overdrive sound (it's no wonder blues and classic-rock players gravitate to vintage Tele Deluxes; their tone is a great fit – thick, noiseless, and still true to their Tele roots).

Virtually everything about the Telenator pickups points to the company's attention to detail and its use of high-quality materials. The end result is outstanding. – **Phil Feser VG**



**TELENATOR CUNIFE HUMBUCKERS**  
Price: \$450 (each)  
Info: [telenator.com](http://telenator.com).