

Quicktest



G2D Custom Overdrive £179

Guitarist
CHOICE

A hotter version of a superlative stompbox from New Zealand

CONTACT: Sounds Great PHONE: 0161 436 4799 WEB: www.g2d.co.nz

We love the G2D Cream Tone, so expectations are high for this more gained pedal, designed to offer an amp-like response and tone for rock and blues.

A quality, triple-pole, double-throw switch brings true-bypass operation, and general build quality is high. That said, it's 80mm tall so a spirited stomp can topple it forwards, but at least the tiny rubber feet don't need to be removed to Velcro it to your pedalboard.

Sounds

With everything at 12 o'clock, there's a big level kick into a clean amp. Compared with our TS-808 Tube Screamer, there's less compression in the drive and a wider extension of bass and treble frequencies; it's more open and bigger sounding all over. Maxing the drive gives a heavier blues/classic rock-type tone that, thanks to the tone pot, is great with both single-coils and humbuckers. Note articulation always remains,

however, which might make it too revealing for some players, compared with Fulltone's OCD, for example. Stepping on the boost (solo) kicks the gain up, which adds volume and sizzle; everything you want to jump through the band. With a decent humbucker this gets you to heavy classic rock, but stops short of metal.

Verdict

Draw a triangle with a TS-808 at one corner, a Fulltone Full-Drive II at the second and a Providence SOV-2 at the third. Put a cross in the middle, and you'll find this. Bullseye! [MT]

The Bottom Line

We like: Superb blues rock sound, versatility, big tone

We dislike: Another awesome overdrive to confuse the buying decision!

GUITARIST RATING ★★★★★

Mad Professor Stone Grey Distortion £149

A pedal that's the new definition of great-sounding distortion...

CONTACT: Hardrockin' Distribution PHONE: 07870 564001 WEB: www.mpamp.com

The Stone Grey Distortion is the latest addition to Mad Professor's new PCB-board range of true bypass stompboxes. It's all pretty straightforward stuff. The pedal's metal case is studded with three controls (labelled volume, tone and distort) that do exactly what you would expect them to. The big old chrome footswitch below the knobs turns the pedal on and off. Textbook.

Sounds

The real proof in this pudding is when you plug it in. Mad Professor claims that its new baby offers better string definition than any of its competition: "Play a chord and hear each note distinctly, instead of it turning to 'mush' like many other high gain pedals," the Mad one boasts. Big words, but the Stone Grey Distortion has a top end sizzle that promotes note definition, even with the distortion whacked all the way up. That said, we're not talking about some unhinged metal pedal here. The maximum distortion on offer is more of the classic and hard rock, and old school punk, variety. That aforementioned sizzle really pays off when you downtune for the likes of dropped D riffs. There's still plenty of attack.



Verdict

The Stone Grey Distortion is a tight-sounding stompbox that works great with both single-coils and humbuckers, and responds well to playing dynamics. If you want a nice helping of gain that won't swamp your guitar's voice, but will help you cut through a mix, the Stone Grey should be on your must try list. [EM]

The Bottom Line

We like: The great note definition; the way it responds so sensitively to playing dynamics

We dislike: That every good pedal seems to be over £100

GUITARIST RATING ★★★★★

Morley Twin Mix £99

Easy connection and switching of two guitars and two amps

CONTACT: Westside Distribution **PHONE:** 0141 248 4812 **WEB:** www.morleypedals.com

Designed to facilitate instant switching of two inputs going to two output sources, the Twin Mix is powered from a 9V battery or adaptor and features separate footswitches to mute each input, as well as independent level controls for the two signal paths. When using only one output, the Twin Mix can send both inputs to that output so you can switch between them or combine them. With two outputs in use, each input is routed to its associated output.

In Use

We see two main scenarios for the Twin Mix. The first is that you can have two guitars permanently connected to a single amp and swap between them without unplugging. The level knobs could be used to match up the levels of two guitars, but also offers extra gain to drive amps harder if needed for a clean boost or a touch of overdrive. You could also have two rigs permanently connected – two guitars with their own amps – perhaps an

electric rig and an acoustic into an acoustic amp, or through a DI to the PA. When a quick change is called for, grabbing a guitar then making it active/muting it with a switch is much less of a faff than fiddling with volume controls and risking feedback.

Verdict

It's rugged, it has clearly visible indicators and it does what it's supposed to do. The Twin Mix is a practical utility item that will help you organise your stage set-up. **[TC]**



The Bottom Line

We like: Simple operation; boost facility; rugged construction

We dislike: Four-screw battery access

GUITARIST RATING ★★★★★

You could have two rigs permanently connected – two guitars with their own amps

Tascam Portastudio Four-track for iPad £1.99

Old meets new – a quick and dirty four-track recorder

CONTACT: Tascam **UK PHONE:** 01923 438888 **WEB:** www.tascam.co.uk

For those of us old enough to have used them, there was a refreshing simplicity about cassette-based Portastudios

compared to today's digital systems. You simply stuck in a cassette tape, plugged in and started recording – great for

knocking song ideas together or recording some chords to practice soloing over. Tascam has brought that simplicity back with a recreation of a Portastudio for the iPad, with four recordable tracks each with high and low EQ and panning.

In Use

You can record voice or acoustic guitar through the iPad's inbuilt mic and electric via a compatible input device (although you'll need one with direct input monitoring to hear what you are playing against what's already recorded). To get started you just select one of 20 virtual cassettes to store the recording and then choose which track you want to record

to, set an input level and hit the record and play buttons. You then simply rewind (in real time with backwards tape noise just like a cassette!), choose another track for overdubs and record up to three of them before mixing down your song while manipulating touchscreen faders and knobs to create a CD-quality wav file for use in iTunes.

Verdict

Well, it's cute but it's certainly not a toy – it's a very useful tool for instantly recording your song ideas, working out complementary guitar parts or making multitrack demos. If you've got an iPad and two quid to spare, then you've no excuse not to try it. **[TC]**

The Bottom Line

We like: Easy to use; inexpensive; fun

We dislike: No return to zero function; no reverb; not compatible with all input devices

GUITARIST RATING ★★★★★





Santos Martinez SM650CEA £529

This Brit-designed, Chinese-made nylon electro is making waves...

CONTACT: JHS PHONE: 0113 286 5381 WEB: www.jhs.co.uk

Santos Martinez is the invented name of a low-to-medium price range of nylon-string classical acoustic and electro guitars. So far, so ordinary. But when Brit classical guitarist Raymond Burley bigged up the amplified sound of this top-of-the-line SM650CEA, we took notice.

It's a 648mm scale cutaway electro with 52.5mm nut width that uses solid woods throughout — a clean spruce top and rosewood back and sides, tidily bound with subtly posh white coach-

lining, a slipper foot Spanish-style mahogany neck, rosewood 'board and proper wood rosette, not a transfer. The bridge saddle isn't compensated, but is slightly angled and intonation and overall playability is excellent despite a rather more 'old Gibson', than old Ramirez-style neck profile. Electrics come from Fishman: a Sonicore undersaddle piezo and Aero Blend preamp (with onboard microphone) that includes tuner, mic/piezo blend, notch and phase controls.

There's a realism to the plugged-in sound that you wouldn't generally expect to hear at this price point

Sounds

Raymond Burley wasn't wrong about the performance of these guitars. Not only is this a good sounding, if a little bass heavy, nylon acoustic, amplified its acoustic tone is well-represented. With a three-band EQ to balance the sound to your amp system, and by blending in a little of the microphone, there's a realism that you wouldn't generally expect to hear at this price point. The onboard tuner is accurate — only the small, unmarked preamp rotary control knobs are hard to see in dimly lit stage environments.

Verdict

A surprise. A really tidily made, good-sounding nylon electro that holds its own in bigger brand company. Nice. [DB]

The Bottom Line

We like: Clean build; preamp; good plugged-in tone

We dislike: Lack of indicators on preamp knobs; tonally a little bass rich

GUITARIST RATING ★★★★★

Samson Meteor £99

A new USB studio microphone with a rather old vibe...

CONTACT: Korg UK PHONE: 01908-304601 WEB: www.samsontech.com

If you want to record acoustic sounds onto your computer you can plug a conventional mic into an audio interface, or you can go with the streamlined option of using a USB mic. And they don't get more streamlined (at least in a visual sense) than the chromium-plated Samson Meteor, which looks like it just fell off the hood of a Cadillac...

In Use

With three inbuilt legs that let it sit regally on your desktop (it

also has a standard thread for stand mounting), the Meteor is a cardioid condenser with one of the largest diaphragms (25mm) of any USB mic. It also features 16-bit, 44.1/48kHz resolution for its analogue to digital conversion plus a mini jack headphone socket with volume knob and microphone mute switch.

Being class-compliant, there's no need for drivers, so you can just plug the Meteor into a convenient USB port and start

recording. What's more, it doesn't require a powered hub, so you can use it with an iPad in conjunction with Apple's Camera Connector Kit.

We used the Meteor to record vocals and acoustic guitar with very decent sounding results and found it convenient to leave it permanently sitting on the desktop, ready for use at the drop of a hat — great for capturing those moments when inspiration strikes without having to faff about.

Verdict

Whether used for Skype, podcasting or recording voice and guitar, the Meteor will deliver a nice clear sound. [TC]

The Bottom Line

We like: Inbuilt stand; no drivers; doesn't need a powered-hub; decent sound quality

We dislike: No lo-cut filter

GUITARIST RATING ★★★★★



There's no need for drivers — you can just plug the Meteor in to a convenient USB port and start recording