

Diamond Bottlenecks Tom Doughty Evolution Slide £34.95

Innovative British slide that combines glass and stainless steel by Dave Burrluck



The Tom Doughty Evolution slide combines glass and steel surfaces

DIAMOND Bottlenecks, inspired by British slide wiz Tom Doughty (www.tomdoughty.com), has produced the Evolution slide combining steel and glass in one slide – enabling you to use either material for subtle tone differences. Two-thirds of the slide is hardened stainless steel tube, the remaining third is hand-carved glass seamlessly bonded together to form a symmetrical glass 'n' steel tube. Notches are cut in the base so it doesn't rotate on your finger and

two lengths are offered: 58mm and 62mm, with a standard internal diameter of 20mm. And if you accidentally break the glass section Diamond Bottlenecks will replace it simply for the price of postage. Nice.

SOUNDS: The outer surface has a smooth seam, although internally it feels a little unfinished, "allowing the player to either leave as standard, or pad out to their preferred internal diameter measurement," says DB. On the finger it's a good medium weight. The tone differences are subtle and you can't help thinking when we make observations about slide tone we're not comparing like with like: thick heavy brass compared to thin lightweight glass. Here, with the identical thickness, the steel sounds a bit more direct, the glass a little more open, but it is subtle.

EVOLUTION SLIDE	TEST RESULTS
Build quality	★★★★★
Playability	★★★★★
Sound	★★★★★
Value for money	★★★★★

■ **WE LIKED** Unique concept
 ■ **WE DISLIKED** Steel/glass sounds not as different as expected; not cheap

Verdict

The unique pairing of steel and glass, in theory, gives the best of both worlds, although to this reviewer's ears the differences are subtle and, arguably, it's the size, weight, density and smoothness of the slide that promotes the major sound differences we perceive. That said, it's a good-sounding slide with great weight and feel.

Guitarist RATING ★★★★★

KEY INFO DB EVOLUTION SLIDE **PRICE:** £34.95 **TYPE:** GLASS/STAINLESS STEEL SLIDE **TEL:** DIAMOND BOTTLENECKS 01527 578236

Voodoo Lab Pedal Power 2 Plus £159

Powerful, pro-spec do-it-all power supply ideal for your pedalboard by Dave Burrluck



The Pedal Power's eight 9V power outlets will keep your FX motor running

VOODOO LAB'S LATEST PEDAL Power is the 2 Plus. It provides eight 9V outlets that will power "any type of

battery-operated effects". Importantly, to avoid ground-loop hum and noise, each output is completely isolated, short-circuit protected, highly filtered and regulated. It will also power up to two of the large 4-series Line 6 modelling pedals, not to mention other power hungry beasts like the BOSS Twin pedals. For vintage buffs there are two variable voltage (approximately 4V to 9V) outlets for that knackered-battery sound. It comes complete with a handful of the most-used DC power leads (including a battery clip if your pedal has no DC input), plus there's also a

mains power outlet to power any AC effects.

IN USE: Weighty, built like a brick and utilising a toroidal power transformer to keep things quiet, the Pedal Power 2 Plus is sizeable (at 152 x 86 x 44.5mm about the same size as a compact effect). The detailed user manual will explain all you need to know – including using the row of voltage selecting DIP switches on the underside which will extend the usefulness further. And even if you have an 18V pedal you can double up, in series, two of the outputs with a special lead. In fact, Voodoo Lab will provide you with virtually any DC power lead you need.

Verdict

Can we get excited by a power supply? Yes. It may seem expensive but it's easily the best, pro-spec unit currently available. The least you can do for your effects is power them properly.

PEDAL POWER 2 PLUS	TEST RESULTS
Build quality	★★★★★
Features	★★★★★
Compatibility	★★★★★
Value for money	★★★★★

■ **WE LIKED** The Swiss Army knife of power supplies
 ■ **WE DISLIKED** Expensive... but worth it

Guitarist RATING ★★★★★

KEY INFO VOODOO LAB PEDAL POWER 2 PLUS **PRICE:** APPROX £159 **TYPE:** MULTI-VOLTAGE PSU **TEL** SOUNDS GREAT 0161 436 4799

Galaxy Audio Hot Spot PA5X140 powered monitor £299

A little box capable of deafening even the drummer! by Paul Day

US COMPANY GALAXY AUDIO has been proclaiming 'small is best' for many years, proving the point with a line of mini monitors able to kick out a surprising amount of volume. Partnered by equally diminutive passive cabs, the Hot Spot PA5X140 becomes a powerful, portable mini PA system. But it's equally successful as a highly directional, individual monitor, capable of kicking out more than enough controllable, high quality volume for even the deafest performer. And the bijou proportions

(177mm x 279mm x 133mm) allow it to be sited in suitably close proximity, mic stand mounted using Galaxy's spigot-style adaptor.

A moulded plastic cab helps keep weight to a manageable 5.7kg, while standard jack and XLR-equipped inputs are governed by controls spanning two mic/line level controls plus three-band EQ. The on-board amp pumps 146W RMS into a special design, five-inch Neolite speaker, sited safely behind the bars of the metal front grille. Further protection is provided by a built-in compressor/limiter and SmartALIC all level input control circuitry.

SOUNDS: Sonic quality is excellent on voice, guitar and backing tracks, with plenty of power available, plus ample tonal tweaking via the simple but effective EQ array.



Verdict

Such quality doesn't come cheap, but the impressive, user-friendly performance helps to soften the financial blow. Anyway, there's nothing else around this small and this good.

The Hot Spot: it's powerful, portable, highly directional, and it sounds great

HOT SPOT	TEST RESULTS
Build quality	★★★★★
Features	★★★★★
Performance	★★★★★
Value for money	★★★★★
■ WE LIKED Size and sound	
■ WE DISLIKED Price	

Guitarist RATING



KEY INFO GALAXY AUDIO HOT SPOT PA5X140 **PRICE:** £299 **TYPE:** POWERED MONITOR **TEL:** SMARTSOUND DIRECT 0800 7317541

Dean Markley Alchemy coated acoustic strings £11.95-12.95

When you want tone that lasts and lasts, indulge in a spot of Alchemy... by Benji Bartlett

AVAILABLE IN A CHOICE OF gauges, from .011-.052 up to .013-.056, the new Dean Markley coated Alchemy sets are offered in both phosphor bronze and bronze configurations. The main difference with Alchemy lies in the type of material used to coat the strings. Dean Markley uses the MC394K Bright-Coat compound produced by leading US corrosion inhibitors, Cortec. These guys are experts in preventing oxygen, salt, acids, grease, etc, from doing harm to a wide range of metal objects from military helicopters to computer motherboards, so a set of guitar strings ought to be a walk in the park.

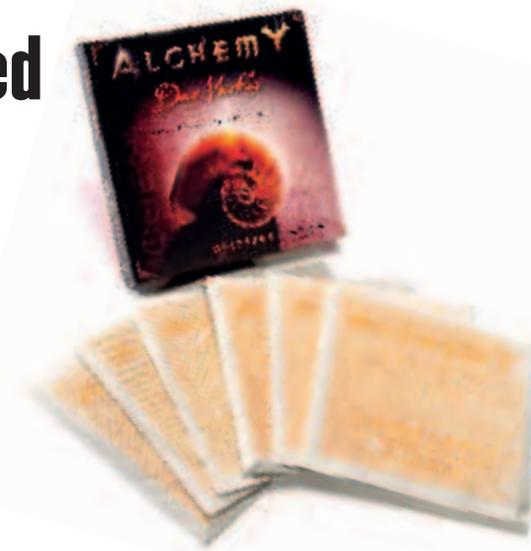
IN USE: In terms of fitting and stretching in, the Alchemy strings differ little from a regular set. The strings have an authoritative tone that is well balanced and clearly spoken. With a GoldPhos set fitted to our Seagull S6 the first impression is of a full-sounding,

nicely balanced swell with sweet trebles and a pleasant mid-range. The punch and power in the bass register is tight and, whether you play genteel fingerstyle or hammer the hell out of them with your thumbpick, the Alchemy set consistently delivers great tone and sustain.

Verdict

Using their proprietary compounds Cortec has successfully managed to keep Dean Markley's guitar strings singing longer and sounding sweeter

ALCHEMY STRINGS	TEST RESULTS
Build quality	★★★★★
Feel	★★★★★
Sound	★★★★★
Value for money	★★★★★
■ WE LIKED Install like regular strings; excellent performance; superior tone	
■ WE DISLIKED Gold/mustard colouration is an acquired taste	



without any of the associated tactile problems that plague lesser brands. If you want a rounded yet bright tone that will remain consistent, then Dean Markley's Alchemy set could very well be the strings for you. We've had 'em on our guitar for nearly three months and they're still going strong... To hear these strings being put through their paces check out Alchemy endorsee Amrit Sond at www.amritsond.com.

Dean Markley's Alchemy strings sport clear tone, plus a corrosion-inhibiting coating

Guitarist RATING



KEY INFO ALCHEMY STRINGS **PRICE:** £11.95-12.95 **TYPE:** MC394K BRIGHT-COAT TREATED ACOUSTIC STRINGS **TEL:** 08700 787464