

Quicktest

Welcome to Guitarist's regular round-up of the best of the rest of the gear that's passed through our hands this issue

PNP Music RRT-1 Deluxe distortion £79

A drive pedal for the most classic of rockers

CONTACT: PNP Music **PHONE:** 07973 550185 **WEB:** www.pnpmusic.co.uk



PNP Music is a new company based in Bolton, founded by guitarist Peter Tate and his engineering colleague Phillip Hewitt, and this pedal is the more advanced of just two that, at present, represent the outfit's current catalogue.

The pedal is a hot distortion that, in this incarnation, also offers the choice of germanium or silicon diodes. These are selected via a front-mounted micro switch. The other two controls on board are for output and distortion.

The polka-dot livery, not to mention the distinctive 'RR' logo, illustrates the inspiration behind the basic tone on offer – a certain Randy Rhoads – and Pete tells us that PNP has aimed at replicating the tone Randy used during the famous After

Hours TV special, which you can enjoy on YouTube.

Sounds

We found that the best tones are to be had when using an amp at the point of break-up, using the pedal to add increasing levels of treble gain. The germanium setting is slightly flatter and hotter than its silicon counterpart to our ears and, aside from a hefty jump in output when flicking the switch (a niggle PNP has already addressed and solved), this is a solid distortion unit.

Although it's aimed at those looking for Randy's tones, it does a lot more and, with single-coils, it's also bluesy enough to give Eric Johnson-style sustain, especially with a Strat's neck pickup.

Verdict

At £79, this hand-built pedal is decent value and there's no doubt that Randy fans and more will find a use for it in their rigs. We have. [SB]

The Bottom Line

We like: The choice of tones is impressive

We dislike: The idea that it's a one-tone pony. It's not

GUITARIST RATING ★★★★★

Planet Waves Woodstock strap collection £23 to £38.50

Blissed-out straps from a simpler time, man

CONTACT: Summerfield **PHONE:** 0191 414 9000 **WEB:** www.planetwaves.com

The Woodstock festival took place in August 1969 and has since been elevated to a mythic status. The line up read like a Who's Who of rock legends and the attendance, not to mention the queues, was in the hundreds of thousands.

To celebrate the event's 40th anniversary, Planet Waves has issued a collection of straps with designs influenced by the mind-set of the time. The series is officially licensed and comprises four woven (all £23) and two leather (both £38.50) straps offering unique designs, including tie dye, the iconic blocky hippy-style fonts, the original tickets and more.

As with all Planet Waves straps, they're topped and tailed by substantial black leather fobs, though these ones sport a Woodstock logo. The hole and slit for the strap pin is neither too big nor too small.

In Use

Generally speaking, the wider the strap the more comfortable it is to play with. So with a Les Paul, we find the more expansive leather Peace Flag strap dissipates the guitar's weight nicely. Of course, the woven examples are

more malleable and also perfectly usable – the fractal tie-dye design is especially eye-catching. At no point did our guitars clatter inexplicably to the floor either, so it's win-win.

Verdict

The rather eclectic nature of the designs certainly won't be for everyone, but Planet Waves is one of a handful of names that manufacture excellent pro-standard straps, so if Woodstock isn't and, indeed wasn't, for you, there'll certainly be something you'll like in its catalogue. [SB]

The Bottom Line

We like: Cool designs and reasonable prices

We dislike: The looks may polarise opinion in 2009

GUITARIST RATING ★★★★★



Zoom H4n £329

**Guitarist
CHOICE**

Handy recorder gets handier still

CONTACT: Zoom UK **PHONE:** 01462 791100 **WEB:** www.zoom.co.jp/english/products/

We reviewed Zoom's H4 handy recorder a while ago and now the company has brought out its successor, the H4n. Major upgrades to the new model include built-in X/Y stereo condenser mics that enable variable recording patterns at either 90 or 120 degrees, a new digitally controlled preamp for improved audio quality, a larger LCD screen, revamped interface and an onboard reference speaker. In addition there's the facility to use both the internal mics and any plugged-in external mics simultaneously for four-channel recording.

In Use/Sounds

The H4n can record at 24bit/96kHz to a removable SD

card and you can then transfer the results directly to computer, via USB.

It's an easy-to-use, high quality portable stereo recording experience, ideal for gig and rehearsal recording. It also has attributes that'll appeal to guitarists and songwriters. There's a four-track multitrack capability, with a metronome and a Hi-Z input for plugging a guitar straight in. A range of insert effects, including amp simulation, offer a wide variety of polished guitar sounds. There's also a tuner and variable speed playback, with a centre-cancel function ideal for phrase training. What's more, the H4n can be set up as a USB audio interface for direct connection to computer.



Verdict

We liked the H4 and we like the H4n even more. If it was just a stereo recorder it would still be value for money, but the extra features make it an extremely useful multi-function tool to have at hand. [TC]

The Bottom Line

We like: Mics; multitracking
We dislike: Only includes 1GB SD card

GUITARIST RATING ★★★★★

Samson G Track £137

The lovechild of a mic and a USB audio interface

CONTACT: Korg UK **PHONE:** 01908 857100 **WEB:** www.samsontech.com

To record audio on a computer you'll need an audio interface, and if you want to record vocals and acoustic guitar you'll need a microphone too. Samson's G Track neatly offers both. It's a large-diaphragm cardioid condenser mic that connects to a computer via USB but also has line inputs and a stereo headphone/speaker output built into its casing.

Outputting two channels via USB, the G Track will either let you record mono mic and mono line input at the same time, or a stereo line input signal. A set of three knobs control the output and input levels and a 'Direct Monitor' switch offers three choices of how you listen to what you're recording in relation to the computer's audio output. A desk stand and Sonar LE music production software for Windows are also included

in the package, so you can get recording right away.

In Use/Sounds

The G Track comes complete with a comprehensive set of leads that enable you to connect anything with a 6.4mm jack or RCA phono output to its mini-jack sockets. This means that you can plug a guitar straight in and record it and vocals at the same time, with the mic offering a crisp, detailed sound and the direct monitoring facility ensuring no latency delay as you record. Simple to set up and use, this may be the most practical all-in-one introduction to computer recording you'll find.

Verdict

If you've yet to record on computer, G Track offers a great starting point. [TC]

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The Bottom Line

We like: Single device for multiple tasks; all leads included; decent sound quality for the price; stand
We Dislike: At this price, absolutely nothing

GUITARIST RATING ★★★★★