



Tascam CD-GT2 portable CD guitar trainer £119

Guitarist CHOICE

The latest Tascam phrase trainer is the best yet... *by Trevor Curwen*

After the introduction of the mp3-based version of its phrase trainer for guitarists, Tascam has released the third generation of the CD model. Following in the footsteps of the CD-GT1 and the CD-GT1 MkII, the new CD-GT2 has exactly the same functionality but sports improved ergonomics in a more compact design, a larger set of sounds and clocks in at £30 less than previous versions.

If you have not come across Tascam CD phrase trainers until now, a quick summary is probably in order. Basically, you can plug in a guitar and, using the onboard amp simulations and effects, listen and play along to the music on whatever CD you choose. You can change the pitch of the CD music or slow the playback speed down without changing the pitch, loop sections of the music for repetition and employ a guitar cancelling function, which reduces the volume of the lead guitar on the CD. The balance of volume between your own guitar and the CD is adjustable, so you will always feel comfortable with what you are hearing.

In this latest incarnation of the model, the whole of the top surface lifts on a hinge to allow access to the CD chamber. This means that the whole top panel

can be used for the controls, rather than half, giving a more spacious layout that feels less cluttered and easier to use.

Inuse

There are 83 adjustable preset patches for guitar onboard plus another 12 for vocals if you fancy getting into a bit of karaoke. The guitar patches are an effects chain of three modules the first of which covers the degree of drive, with overdrive, distortion or compression selectable. The second module offers a choice of modulation and tonal effects while the third adds ambience with a choice of delay or reverb effects. Each module has a couple of editable parameters and there are 10 storage slots (banks) onboard the CD-GT2 where you can store your favourite edited sounds. While you don't get the variety and attention to detail of a dedicated amp modeller here, you do get a very large palette of sounds that work well in the context they are provided for – to dial in a sound that gets your guitar tone as close as possible to the part you are trying to learn.

Setting the balance between your guitar sound and that of the CD can be done swiftly and you have the choice of separating the two elements to opposite sides of

the stereo in your headphones or any playback system connected via the line output.

While the various pitch settings for the CD (+/-6 semi-tone, in semi-tone steps with +/-50 cents fine tune), are useful for fine tuning the sound to your guitar or learning a song in a different key to the original, it is being able to run the CD at anything up to half speed that is probably the most effective tool for learning how to play tricky passages. With a cloned sound and the section you want to learn looping over and over, you soon know if you have got things right by the way your playing meshes with the original. Setting a loop only takes a couple of button pushes but an alternative way of working is to use the 'Flash Back' button to roll back and play the previous few seconds of a song – this can be put under footswitch control (as can rewind, fast-forward, bank, effect on/off) for hands-free operation. Once you have things fairly sussed the cancelling function can do a reasonable job of removing Vai, Clapton or whoever from the background and letting you step forward as the main soloist with the rhythm section. Not bad!

Verdict

Apart from the cleaner, more straightforward design, there is not a lot about the CD-GT2 that is vastly different to its predecessors. But we'd be unhappy if there was, because the range has always provided a superior phrase training facility that does everything you need it to with a minimum of fuss. So don't worry, the CD-GT2 is carrying on the now grand tradition at a price that ought to tempt you to take the plunge if you haven't already. Believe us, this will improve your playing!

The Bottom Line

We like: Portability; easily operated phrase training facilities; wide range of onboard sounds; footswitchable functions

We dislike: No batteries or PSU supplied

Guitarist says: The best CD phrase trainer around gets more refined and more affordable.

The Rivals

The **Alesis Playmate Guitarist** (£180) is probably the closest to the Tascam range with similar CD facilities combined with 80 editable multi-effects. If you are more comfortable with mp3s look at the **Tascam MP-GT1** (£135), which uses music downloaded to your computer. If you have a computer you can use the **IK Multimedia StealthPlug** (£79), an audio interface built into a guitar lead.

Tascam CD-GT2

PRICE: £119

TYPE: CD-based phrase trainer with integrated guitar preamp and effects

ORIGIN: China

FEATURES: CD player with pitch/tempo change, and loop functions. Onboard chromatic tuner with calibration (435 to 445Hz), three-octaves tone oscillator, metronome (BPM: 40 to 220, Beat: 2 to 6)

CONNECTIONS: 6.4mm mono jack guitar/mic input, 3.2mm stereo (TRS) mini-jack headphone socket, 3.2mm stereo (TRS) mini-jack line output, footswitch socket

CONTROLS: Input gain, phones volume, four-way cursor, value increment/decrement.

CD transport controls: stop, pause/playback, fast-forward, rewind, flash back. Buttons: tempo, key, guitar cancel, effect, time display, loop in/out, misc, tuner, level

EFFECTS: 83 factory presets for guitar featuring overdrive, distortion, compression, flanger, phaser, chorus, exciter, tremolo, vibrato, auto wah, pitch shifter, delay, reverb. 12 factory presets for vocals

DISPLAY: 128 x 64 dot matrix LCD with graphical user interface

SUPPORTED DISCS: 8cm and 12cm CD, CD-R, CD-RW

POWER SUPPLY: DC 9V (optional AC adaptor), AA batteries x 4

DIMENSIONS: 194 (w) x 138 (d) x 38.7 (h) mm

WEIGHT: 550g (excluding batteries)

OPTIONS: PSU (PS-P520, £16)

RANGE OPTIONS: Bass (CD-BT2) and Vocal (CD-VT2) models available at £119

Tascam UK 01923 438888

www.tascam.co.uk

Test results

Build quality	★★★★☆
Features	★★★★★
Sound	★★★★☆
Value for money	★★★★★

GUITARIST RATING ★★★★★