

Rocked & Rated



Effects

The HD500 has over 100 effects and you can run eight simultaneously

Control

The onboard knobs make it easy to tweak tones in real-time

Flexibility

You can assign the expression pedal to volume, wah or pitch shift duties



Line 6 POD HD500

£409



The POD-fathers of modelling technology up the ante once again

Don't be fooled by the skinny manual that comes with the new Line 6 POD HD500. It's just a 'quick start' guide (the full version is online). Maybe Line 6 is doing its bit for the environment by not including a hard copy with the HD500. Perhaps the thing is so big it wouldn't fit in the box. Given the HD500's humongous spec list, that's entirely possible.

This unit heads up the new POD HD family. Nestled within its guts are 16 amp, 16 cabinet and eight microphone models. There are also "100+" effects (we counted 102), including Line 6's highly rated M-class effects featured in their M9 and M13 stompbox modellers. You can run eight effects simultaneously and save up to 128 of your own sounds. That should be enough for anyone. There's also a 48-second looper, with half speed and reverse modes, and a bevy of inputs and outputs designed to adapt to any possible application: home recording, pro studio and live.

The big news here is that Line 6 has improved on the quality

of its amp modelling. To be honest, the existing modelling technology pioneered by Line 6 is so good that we found it tough to imagine how it could be improved on. Apparently, Line 6 has assembled the best possible examples of classic and modern boutique amplifiers, serviced them to ensure that they are in tiptop condition, then modelled each amp using a process that captures "up to 10 times the amplifier DNA" than their previous modelling technology.

While a couple of the models are so obscure that we couldn't possibly judge how close they've got (the late 50s Supro S6616, for example), the classic Fender, Marshall, Hiwatt, Vox and Mesa/Boogie models sound stunningly spot on to our experienced old lugs. Full tonal versatility – leaving no guitarist feeling left out – is the name of Line 6's game here.

Conclusion: The HD500 is a serious piece of kit that can nail any tone you desire, from 50s rockabilly to the meanest of metal. £400 is very reasonable

for what's on offer. You could plump for the more affordable HD300 (£259) or HD400 (£339) versions, but we'd recommend saving for the HD500 with its ability to run twice as many effects at once, and double the looping memory of the other models. We can only wonder how Line 6 will improve on this amazing tool. They're probably already working on it. Until then, all that stands between you and complete tonal bliss is 400 odd clams. Just remember to download the full manual.

Ed Mitchell

At a glance

Line 6 POD HD500

TYPE: Amp/FX modeller
EFFECTS: 102
PATCHES: 640 total
CONTROLS: Volume, drive, EQ, presence; loop: on/off, record/dub, half speed, reverse
SOCKETS: Input, mic in, aux in, L/R out, XLR out, Variax in, USB, FX loop, S/PDIF out
POWER: PSU (supplied)
CONTACT: Line 6 01327 302700
WEB: www.line6.com

SUMMARY

For: Comprehensive spec, awesome modelling sounds

Against: You must eyeball the manual!



TG says... A one-stop tone shop



Line 6 has packed 10 times more "amp DNA" into the HD500. That's a lot of DNA!

"THE HD500 IS A SERIOUS PIECE OF KIT THAT CAN NAIL ANY TONE YOU DESIRE, FROM ROCKABILLY TO THE MEANEST OF METAL"