



# STRYMON RIVERSIDE £299

Strymon applies its hi-tech expertise to the humble drive pedal

Words Trevor Curwen Photography Joseph Branston

**S**trymon pedals are known for accurate renderings of essential effects using powerful DSP, but the Riverside Multistage Drive is not totally digital. Instead, it combines both analogue and digital for the advantages that each confers: analogue for the natural instrument interaction and dynamics; digital to provide powerful and nuanced control over the sound.

It's built around four cascading gain stages – a JFET front end, followed by three digital stages utilising complex circuitry that's designed to simultaneously tweak multiple parameters for optimum valve amp-like sound, whatever the drive level.

## Sounds

The Riverside has high- and low-gain modes, selected via a mini toggle switch, that run from clean through all stations of overdrive in between, to the gutsy saturated distortion you'd get from a high-gain amp. A second switch offers a mid-boost that comes just after the first analogue stage, its underlying fatness pushing the subsequent stages harder for meatier harmonically-complex tones. Sympathetic bass, middle and treble tonal control gets the sound just as you'd like it. The midrange knob has great influence, whether offering a robust, thickening boost or aiding clarity with scooped mids. This EQ delivers the flexibility to easily complement a range of disparate-sounding amps, amply aided by a presence switch on the back that offers three different options for the top-end.

While the range of sounds is pretty comprehensive, the pedal's practicality is enhanced by Strymon's Favorite footswitch, which can store a snapshot of the front panel settings as a recallable preset, so you can call up a completely different sound to the one set by the current knob positions. There's also the option to plug a standard footswitch into the rear panel for up to 6dB of switched boost, and an expression pedal to adjust any single knob or a combination.

## Verdict

The Riverside offers new levels of flexibility for a dirt pedal. It's a workhorse that can pair with the widest range of amps, while offering a whole spectrum of overdrive and distortion sounds. Not only does it sound excellent, it's dynamically reactive and gives you two fully independent dirt channels, plus a clean boost and sound-morphing should you wish to add the necessary accoutrements. For those guitarists who firmly believe analogue is the only way to go for distortion/overdrive stompboxes, the sounds and features here could trigger an attitude readjustment. **A**

**PROS** Wide spectrum of quality sounds; Favorite switch with instant access to two sounds; potent EQ; sound morphing capability; switchable noise gate

**CONS** It needs 250mA of current (more than most dirt pedals)



## Tech Spec

**ORIGIN:** USA  
**TYPE:** Overdrive/ Distortion pedal  
**FEATURES:** True or buffered bypass, variable-threshold noise reduction feature  
**CONTROLS:** Drive, Level, Bass, Middle, Treble, low/high gain switch, norm/mid push switch, presence switch, bypass & Favorite switch  
**CONNECTIONS:** Standard input/output, Boost switch input, Expression pedal input  
**POWER:** 9V DC adaptor  
**DIMENSIONS:** 102 (w) x 114 (d) x 44mm (h)

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9/10