



Pimp-my-drive: a boutique British overdrive

Comet Hyperdrive £130

A cool overdrive from a new English brand

CONTACT: Manson's Guitar Shop PHONE: 01392 496379 WEB: www.myspace.com/cometeffects

Not Comet the well-known chain of high street electrical stores, but Comet Effects, a new company featuring a number of custom-made stompboxes built by Shane Brooks from his base in Silvertown, Devon. Easily the best-named pedal of the year so far is the Fuzz Aldrin, which shares its place in the range with this darkly good-looking overdrive number.

It's quite a chunky unit and subtly swathed in a Pimp My Ride-style metallic blue and black paint job, offset by a supernova-bright blue operational LED. The trio of controls comprise level, tone and drive and there's an input

of an optional PSU if removing the base plate to access the battery becomes too much of a chore.

Sounds

As with the Ibanez Tube Screamer, we find it a pleasant surprise that, with the drive control set to minimum, the tone of our initially clean amp was slightly warmed up: much better than simply removing the signal entirely.

Even at its maximum setting the Hyperdrive is restrained and offers a fat overdrive not a million miles away from that of Billy Gibbons in its greasiness. In front of an already singing amp, the pedal comes into its own and is even more articulate than the TS9. It adds girth and heat to your tone and responds well to guitar-volume manipulation too.

Verdict

We're more than spoiled by the sheer amount of so-called 'boutique' pedals that seem to be coming out of the walls at the moment, and it's a revelation when we find one that has real potential to be included on numerous pedalboards in the months to come. Don't get left behind: test drive one now. [SB]

The bottom line

We like: It offers great tones and open-ended versatility

We dislike: Not as dirty as some may require

GUITARIST RATING ★★★★★

Standback amp stand £24.99

Stand and deliver... great tone to your fans

CONTACT: Damn Fine Distribution PHONE: 01869 346519 WEB: www.ampstandback.com



A gravity resisting device even for the heaviest amps

A simple way of increasing the projection of a smaller powered combo is to raise it up towards head height, most traditionally by way of a construction of beer crates. This time-honoured method works well, but it can be overpowering and you do lose whatever resonant qualities your stage

gives your tone. Another option is to lean your amp back around 45 degrees or so in order for it to face the back of your thighs; a tricky manoeuvre at best.

This ingenious piece of kit enables you to do just that safely, and the design allows the weight of the amp to counterbalance the effect gravity has on such items. It's possible to alter the angle the amp sits at and we tried it with solid-state and valve combos of both single speaker and 2 x 12 configurations. The heavier the amp is (we were sure our Boogie Lone Star 212 would cause it to fold like a wino in a stiff breeze) the sturdier the Standback seems, certainly for any regular combo.

In Use

Putting the stand together for the first time is a bit of head-scratcher, but once all the pieces fit into place you'll be wondering what the problem was. A rubber foam block is placed under the amp and held in place by both its weight and the two red straps.

Then it's a matter of simply leaning the amp back onto the top of the A-frame formed by the trio of black strips and the final black strap is pulled taught. A stroke of genius, we say.

Verdict

As the stand folds away to a dimension more than small enough to fit into all but the most modest of gig-bags, your amp-leaning problems, if indeed you have ever had any, are now solved! [SB]

The bottom line

We like: Easy to construct and works perfectly

We dislike: Can get in the way of rear-panel features

GUITARIST RATING ★★★★★

Carl Martin 2 Wah £119

To wah or nor to wah, that is the question... try one of six here

CONTACT: First Line **PHONE:** 01626 830336 **WEB:** www.carlmartin.com

The 2 Wah actually includes a total of six differently voiced wahs and, although you can only access two of them at any one time, the breadth of tone available and the potential for serious versatility is already a given.

There are two basic modes – high and low – which are further divided into a trio of choices for each. An attack control, also sited on what passes for a front panel on any wah, allows for an efficient fine-tuning of the effect.

The trick with the 2 Wah lies in the subtle manipulation of the treadle. As you'd expect, pushing forward turns the wah on and off, and we found that it didn't really require too much pressure to operate the switch.

Heeling down on the treadle

engages a second switch, one that toggles between the low and high modes; you simply need to choose which of the three relevant settings of each you want to use and away you go.

Sounds

The sounds are described as recreations of classic and vintage wahs, and Carl Martin's recommendation of using one for your rhythm duties and another for your solo work proves an effective approach.

There's no getting away from the sheer quality of the wahs that are on offer here, but we did find that an overly exuberant rocking of the treadle did tend to cause us to inadvertently change modes, which was a shame.

Verdict

This is an impressive wah – well-made and at a good price. We'd suggest trying it first, as flicking between modes can become a little too easy, but the sounds on offer are as good as we expect from Carl Martin. **[SB]**



More wah than you'll know what to do with

The bottom line

We like: The concept is a good one and the tones are uniformly excellent

We dislike: That mode switch is a little too sensitive.

GUITARIST RATING ★★★★★

Voodoo Lab Pedal Power AC £125

Convenient all-in-one power for those big pedals

CONTACT: Sounds Great **PHONE:** 0161 436 4799 **WEB:** www.voodoolab.com

Anyone with multiple pedals running at the standard 9V DC has plenty of options for powering them all from a mains supply – the Voodoo Lab Pedal Power 2 Plus being one extremely elegant solution – but what about AC powered pedals? After all, there are certainly plenty of those around these days.

Okay, you could just use individual wall warts, but if you have more than one AC powered pedal and limited board space Voodoo Lab may again have the solution. The Pedal Power AC provides power to four pedals via two 9V AC outputs and two that are switchable between either 9V or 12V. It comes with IEC power lead and a set of six connecting cables – four for pedals with

2.5mm connectors, two for 2.1 mm. Other custom cables are available from Voodoo Lab.

In Use

Up and running, the use of a toroidal transformer in the unit along with completely isolated outputs ensures noise free operation and, although by no means tiny, the Pedal Power AC's squat 1U profile means it should fit relatively unobtrusively onto your pedalboard, taking up a lot less space than individual adapters would and certainly looking tidier. It can even be used in conjunction (by male to female IEC) with its DC sibling.

Verdict

If you are running more than one

AC pedal this is a no-brainer. Combine it with a Pedal Power 2 Plus and you have a huge amount of potential in what effects you can add to your pedalboard. **[TC]**

The bottom line

We like: A convenient way to get those AC-dependent boxes working together

We dislike: Nothing really, but it is quite heavy

GUITARIST RATING ★★★★★



Power to the pedals. Well, the AC kind at least...