



J ROCKETT AUDIO DESIGNS ARCHER IKON & THE DUDE

£169 & £169

A pedal and an amp, both the subject of myths and hype, find themselves ripe for resurrection by a Californian boutique stompbox company

Words Trevor Curwen **Photography** Joby Sessions

If we asked you to name two items of guitar gear that have a massive reputation among tone-fiends but are now out of production and so rare that used prices have escalated to the point where they are out of reach of even the most wealthy, chances are that the original gold Klon Centaur pedal and the Dumble Overdrive Special amp would be mentioned.

Original Klons go for silly money compared with most pedals, and if you could find a Dumble amp on the market... well, you could buy a decent terraced house in certain parts of our fair isle for the same money. Indeed, Alexander 'Howard' Dumble only made around 300 of these amps and is unlikely to make any more, while Klon designer, Bill Finnegan, has said he will never make any more Centaurs.

Not surprisingly, then, plenty of stompbox companies now build pedals that aim to get you close to those elusive tones, not least J Rockett Audio Designs (JRAD) whose new Tour Series pedals, the Archer Ikon and The Dude, respectively promise Klon and Dumble-alike tones. Both are nicely compact and reassuringly heavy pedals that take a nine-volt adaptor, but will also run off batteries, although the four screws for battery access are small so you'll have to be careful with them.

Sounds

When Bill Finnegan decided that he wasn't going to make any more Klon Centaurs, he enlisted the services of JRAD to undertake production of the follow-up KTR pedal. Ultimately, the deal fell through, but

ABOVE Want to add some myth and mojo to your pedalboard? These two J Rockett pedals are significantly cheaper (not to mention more available!) than the gear they're based on



JRAD consequently produced a Klon clone called the Archer. We've featured the silver version of the Archer before but now the company has released this gold version called the Archer Ikon (cough). It's not just that colour scheme that recalls the original Klon, though; this version apparently has the same 'magic' diodes. Although Klon Centaur circuit boards were covered in gloop to disguise the components used, word got out about what the circuit was – all except for a pair of diodes that were not incontrovertibly identified.

Consequently, the many Klon clones that are around use different value diodes. However, US retailer Pro Guitar Shop and JRAD now claim to have identified and acquired some of the 'magic' diodes and developed the Archer Ikon around them as a 100 per cent, part-for-part remake, fine-tuning the circuit along the way to be indistinguishable from an original gold Klon.

Rockett's take on the Ikon is that it has a tad more compression in the midrange, plus less high-end presence than the silver version, which would translate to being smoother with a little less bite. We didn't have a silver version on hand to compare it to, and are aware anyway that any differences would be subtle and translated by each player in their own terms. What we can say, though, is that it does exactly what you would expect a Klon-style pedal to do. With the gain down and the output up you get a lovely open-sounding boost for your amp – something to kick in or to leave on all the time, with a treble knob fine tuning it to taste. Turning up the Gain knob dials in nicely smooth and transparent low-level overdrive that should complement any amp.

With a Dumble Overdrive Special probably the world's most desirable amp, it's no surprise that

manufacturers are keen to distil some of that magic into a pedal, and there are already quite a few out there. JRAD's The Dude is the latest of these and was designed after close inspection of an original ODS. The pedal's Level knob ups the output, introducing clean boost from about 10 o'clock, and if you want some dirtier sounds, the Ratio knob starts to blend in some gain to the clean boost until the sound is fully overdriven with some great blends along the way. All this while retaining string clarity with tweaks available via a Treble knob and a Deep knob that operates around the lower mid frequencies and can put in a bit of a scoop or dial in a bit of 4x12 thump. Playing through The Dude, you are aware of its sensitivity to touch and the rich harmonic content of the sound, both attributes of a Dumble amp. If you're into lyrical lead playing with plenty of fat sustain, there's definitely something for you here. Regardless of any amp comparisons, though, it's a thoroughly versatile overdrive pedal.

Verdict

The Archer Ikon is an ideal adjunct to a good valve amp, and The Dude is an excellent sounding overdrive that can endow any amp with overdrives right across the range to higher gain while offering some of that elusive D-flavour and mojo. **[TC]**

PROS Solid build; quality sound; provision of some elusive tones and functionality that players want

CONS Tiny screws if you want to change a battery; black knobs against a black background is tricky on a dark stage

Tech Spec

ORIGIN: USA

TYPE: Drive pedals

FEATURES: Buffered bypass (Archer Ikon); True bypass (The Dude)

CONTROLS: Output, Gain, Treble, bypass footswitch (Archer Ikon); Level, Ratio, Treble, Deep, bypass footswitch (The Dude)

CONNECTIONS:

Standard input, standard output

POWER: 9V battery or 9V adaptor (not supplied)

DIMENSIONS: 59 (w) x 104 (d) x 45 mm (h)

Zoom UK Distribution
08432 080 999
rockettpedals.com

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