

# Quicktest

**Welcome to** Guitarist's regular round-up of the best of the rest of the gear that's passed through our hands this issue

## Softube Metal Amp Room \$179

Guitarist  
**CHOICE**

Step inside the room for some metal mayhem

**CONTACT** Softube **PHONE:** +46 13 21 16 23 **WEB:** www.softube.com

**Softube's Vintage** Amp Room plug-in put a virtual Fender combo, Vox AC30 and Marshall stack with various mic'ing options into your computer, providing classy sounds with a user interface just about as uncluttered and easy to use as you could get. Now the company has done a similar thing with Metal Amp Room, which ought to be even simpler to use as you only get a single amp.

That amp is a hybrid modelled on a Marshall JCM800 and an Engl Powerball and there are two different 4 x 12 cabinets to choose from: one for a raw metal sound, the other voiced for classic rock. Each cabinet can be mic'd with a condenser and a dynamic mic with various positional options and a preamp that sets the balance between the two.

### Sounds/In Use

Inserted into a recording track, MAR offers a fine range of metal and classic rock sounds. There are plenty of adjustments from the amp's comprehensive tonal controls as well as those offered by moving the virtual mics around. MAR excels at a full-on aggressive metal sound with a smooth high-end that responds particularly well to a palm-muted playing style – a built-in adjustable noise gate keeping things silent when needed. If it's sustain you want, there's plenty of it and the

amp can also be switched to a lower gain mode for more traditional rock sounds.

### Verdict

A great sounding hassle-free option if you want to record just metal or rock guitar on your computer. **[TC]**

### The Bottom Line

**We like:** Dead easy to use; excellent metal and classic rock sounds

**We Dislike:** No standalone version

**GUITARIST RATING** ★★★★★



## QwikTune GP1 'Guitar Professor' £13.99

It's back to school with Qwik Tune, meet the prof...

**CONTACT:** JHS **PHONE:** 01132 865381 **WEB:** www.jhs.co.uk

**The QwikTune** GP1, aka the Guitar Professor, offers not only LCD display with LED visuals, but an electronic pitch pipe, microphone and a rather clever Chord Finder giving you over 250 chords grouped in major (5, 6, 6 add9, 7, maj7, 9, add9, add11, add13), minor (m6, m7, m9, m6 add 9, m7, 5), diminished, augmented and suspended (sus2, sus4, 7sus4) categories.

### In use

Selecting options is easy, just switch between keys and chords and then all you have to do is copy the fingering points. The only thing to point out here is that the chords are only available in one position, but you can always fill in the missing notes for yourself. At this price you can't expect strobe-like accuracy, but the tuner works well enough and for acoustic instruments the mic

seems pretty good. The pitch pipe has a typically annoying tone, but works well enough. Obviously this is not meant to be a stage tuner – it's not really accurate enough nor does it have the ability to be part of a pedalboard – but it's an ideal companion for a learning guitarist.

### Verdict

Dangerously close to a gimmick, the Guitar Professor is actually a useful tool for its chord finder alone. The tuner itself is average but more than workable, and the pitch pipe horrible, but it remains a very cheap, and small, learning resource. **[DD]**

### The Bottom Line

**We like:** The price; ease of use; chord finder

**We dislike:** The pitch pipe tone!

**GUITARIST RATING** ★★★★★

## Vintage V880N £149

A highly affordable parlour from Vintage. But is it any good?

CONTACT: JHS PHONE: 01132 865381 WEB: www.jhs.co.uk

Although Vintage's range of Chinese-made acoustics escalates to over £500, the entry point is much more affordable: £139. You might expect this new addition, from its classy vintage-y appearance, solid cedar top, laminated mahogany back and sides and posh-looking gold-plated tuners to cost somewhere in between. In fact, it's right at the lower-end and has to be one of the best value-for-money parlours anywhere. Internally it's very ship-shape and externally the fine details are impressive: toned, tight-grained top, a proper wooden inlaid rosette, compensated saddle, tidy wooden binding to the body, a sonokeling fingerboard and a neck that's nicely shaped. The frets let it

down a little with some sharp ends and scratchy top surfaces, but it wouldn't take much to tidy that up.

### Sounds

Small-size parlours have their own sound and the V880N gives a good impersonation: quite tight low-end, full bluesy mids and a crisp high-end. It's not the loudest parlour we've heard but doesn't feel overly tight either. The 44mm nut width is adequate although the string spacing could be widened – it feels a little cramped in lower positions – but the bridge spacing, at 55mm, is again pretty much on the money: a sort of all-round picker and strummer. A better set-up would definitely improve the situation as the string height is

a little low and parlours need to be hit hard.

### Verdict

Like many brands at the entry level, Vintage has upped the ante recently to stay visible in a crowded market. This V880N is a real surprise with plenty of vintage vibe and a more than acceptable parlour-esque voice. [DB]

### The Bottom Line

**We like:** Vintage vibe; detailed build; acceptable sounds; price

**We dislike:** Frets need more work and set-up could be improved

GUITARIST RATING ★★★★★



## Gerlitz Guitar Honey, Smudge Off & No 1 Guitar Wax package £13

Does your guitar need a bit of spit 'n' polish? Gerlitz has the answer

CONTACT: Posh Guitars E-MAIL: poshguitars@btinternet.com WEB: www.poshguitars.com



Despite the current relic'ing craze, many of us still like our guitars to look new and shiny. If that's you we suggest you check out these Gerlitz products, now available through Posh Guitars. Guitar Honey isn't the usual ambiguous lemon oil preparation, but a blend of fingerboard conditioning oils in a 2 fl oz pump spray. Twice the size, Smudge Off is a spray-on instant shine restorer and No 1 wax contains "number one grade pure Brazilian Carnauba (the hardest wax there is)," says Gerlitz and is specifically for modern gloss and satin finishes. All three come for £13, or sell separately at £4.50, £4.50 & £5 respectively.

### In use

Guitar Honey, like any fingerboard prep, should be applied with strings off and after removing any

obvious gunk. A quick spray and polish does the job and doesn't leave the 'board overly oily. It also does not harm nitro-cellulose lacquer, should you get some on the body or neck. Smudge Off is

just as simple: spray on, polish off – instant shine! The No 1 wax should be applied lightly, left to haze then polished up (for a limited period if you buy all three products you get a very good Gerlitz micro-fibre

cloth for free). Our guitar has never looked, er, well, posher!

### Verdict

We're spoilt for choice for preps and polishes, but this Gerlitz range is seriously good and well priced. You might also want to know that Posh Guitars is set up to channel its profits to Christian musicians who are actively working in recognised Church fellowships, as well as financing Christian work in Africa, building orphanages to care for the sufferers of AIDS. [DB]

### The Bottom Line

**We like:** Quality; ease of use; price; free cloth

**We dislike:** Nothing

GUITARIST RATING ★★★★★

