KORG
PANDORA MINI £95

Pocket size, with a cupboard full of models

TAKE a look at the Pandora Mini's spec sheet and it's hard not to be impressed by how much Korg has squeezed in for 60 quid. 200 presets, 200 user presets, 26 amp models and 23 cabs. There's a USB slot, plus an aux in which can be pitchshifted, as well as a tuner and a Rhythm mode for drum and metronome patterns.

Sound-wise, you get 109 effects split into five categories. There's Dynamic/Pickup modelling, which comprises compressors, EQs and volume-based effects as well as pickup modellers which flip the sound of singlecoils to humbuckers and vice versa. The Modulation and Filter block offers everything from chorus to pitchshifting and talk-style filters.

Then you have Delay, Reverb and Noise Reduction. At times, the quality of the sounds reflects the price tag; at others, it surpasses it.

The Pandora can also connect to your computer via USB for editing patches on-screen. This is easier than using the onboard buttons, which, combined with the small display, can be a bit fiddly. We'd liked to have seen the USB port double as an audio interface, but they had to leave something off.

Korg's Pandora Mini is a great portable practice tool. It may face competition from iPhone apps, but there's still something about using dedicated hardware that feels right. The sheer amount of sounds and features make it a strong contender for your money.
Stuart Williams

AT A GLANCE
TYPE: Compact multi-effects unit
EFFECTS: 158 amp, cab and effect models
PATCHES: 200 user, 200 preset
CONTROLS: A, B, C, D buttons, scroll wheel, tap/tuner switch, utility switch, edit switch
SOCKETS: Input, output, headphones, aux input, USB
POWER: 1x AA battery, USB bus power
CONTACT: Korg 01908 304601 korg.co.uk

SUMMARY				
FEATURES	■	■	■	■
SOUND QUALITY	■	■	■	
VALUE FOR MONEY	■	■	■	
BUILD QUALITY	■	■	■	
USABILITY	■			
OVERALL RATING	★★★★			

APOGEE JAM £75

Playing guitar on your iPad just went high-end

WE'RE a fickle bunch. Not that long ago, we marvelled at the prospect of playing guitar through our iPhones, but the novelty has since faded. If anyone can revive the spark, surely it's Apogee. Renowned for its analogue-to-digital converters, the company is the only manufacturer that Apple has deemed worthy to make hardware to complement its software. Hardware like the Jam.

At £75, you're probably thinking "but my iRig only cost me £25". Yes, it did, but the Jam works differently. For starters, it will work with your computer, so you don't need to buy an interface for each. It also makes use of Apogee's A/D legacy by converting your guitar signal before it hits the iPhone or iPad. It presents your device with a digital signal through the dock

connector, thus bypassing Apple's noisy onboard converters.

The Jam serves only as an input, so whatever device you're using, you plug your headphones into the regular socket. It works a treat with Apple software such as GarageBand on the iPad and Logic Express on the Mac. We also tried it successfully with Peavey/Agile Partners' AmpKit, with lower background noise than similar interfaces we've used. However, it won't work with IK Multimedia's AmpliTube for iPhone.

Apogee has been clever with the Jam – it delivers a high-quality signal to Apple's mobile devices at a time when their popularity is growing. The plastic construction doesn't inspire as much confidence as Apogee's past products, but its functionality makes up for it.
Stuart Williams

AT A GLANCE
TYPE: Guitar interface
CONTROLS: Gain, with LED signal display
SOCKETS: Input, digital output to USB/dock connection
SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS: Mac: OS X 10.6.4 or later, 1GB RAM iOS: iPad, iPhone 4, ios 4.3 or later
CONTACT: Sonic Distribution 0845 500 2 500 apogeedigital.com

SUMMARY				
FEATURES	■	■		
SOUND QUALITY	■	■	■	
VALUE FOR MONEY	■	■	■	
BUILD QUALITY	■	■		
USABILITY	■	■	■	
OVERALL RATING	★★★★			