

ROUND UP

# Carl Martin

An update for this vintage trio scales down for convenience

Words Trevor Curwen Photography Adam Gasson

Since TC Electronic launched in 1976, Denmark has become home to several pedal companies. T-Rex, Emma and LunaStone come to mind, but Carl Martin is one of the longest established, having released their Hot Drive 'n Boost back in 1993. Since then, the company has expanded its range considerably, with more than 40 guitar pedals spread across their Pro and Vintage Series, plus a handful of pedals for bass players.

You can always rely on Carl Martin to update their pedals. The original Hot Drive 'n Boost comes in three guises – original, MKII and MK3. Which brings us neatly to these three Vintage Series pedals here, all of which are updates. Keeping abreast of the trend for smaller pedals to fit on a 'board, Carl Martin has started to give the Vintage Series a revamp. First to get this treatment are the Surf Trem and the DC Drive, which now fit into a new anodised chassis.

Meanwhile, the Red Repeat pedal has also had an upgrade with new features that include modulation and a second footswitch for tap tempo, resulting in the '2016 Edition'.



CARL MARTIN

## Surf Trem 2018 £75

VIDEO & AUDIO ► <http://bit.ly/guitaristextra>

Designed to deliver the sort of tremolo sounds you'd find on 50s and 60s amps, the Surf Trem has the simplest of control options, providing just Speed and Depth knobs. However, the new design offers plenty of improvement over its chunky but cool-looking predecessor. Its sleek, slimline shape presents a more workable footprint on the pedalboard with all connections at the top end, making it easy to site similar pedals right next to each other. It does, though, lose the second blinking LED, which showed you the tremolo speed at a glance.

The circuitry (taken from the TremO'vibe tremolo and vibrato pedal) offers a warm and rounded tremolo reminiscent of Fender-style bias tremolo with plenty of variation running from a deep slow throb to fast and fluttery. And you won't miss a volume knob, as there's no perceptible loss of level when the pedal is kicked in. **G**

**VERDICT** No bells and whistles – simply vintage amp-style tremolo elegantly presented

### Tech Spec

- ORIGIN:** China
- TYPE:** Boost pedal
- FEATURES:** True bypass
- CONTROLS:** Speed, Depth, bypass footswitch
- CONNECTIONS:** Standard input, standard output
- POWER:** 9V DC adaptor
- DIMENSIONS:** 60 (w) x 115 (d) x 50mm (h)

8/10



CARL MARTIN

## DC Drive 2018 £99

VIDEO & AUDIO ► <http://bit.ly/guitaristextra>

The original DC Drive (now discontinued) was a double footswitch pedal that packed a boost alongside its overdrive. This new single-footswitch version loses the boost but still offers the overdrive, delivered via Level, Tone and Drive knobs and a Regular/Fat toggle switch that effectively gives the pedal two distinct voices.

Regular is quite lean, rolling off some of your bottom end, but Fat puts that back in and adds in lower mids for more girth and a smidge more gain – it's fuller and smoother. There's quite a range of drive available here from clean boost through all shades in-between to a driven-amp saturation that brings out harmonics, but cleans up very well with the volume knob.

With a tone knob that focuses on top-end presence, there's a host of crisp drive sounds to be had with plenty of string definition. It makes a great dirt channel for a clean amp but can also push driven sounds further. **G**

**VERDICT** A workmanlike drive pedal with two voices, which would lend itself to many styles

### Tech Spec

**ORIGIN:** China

**TYPE:** Drive pedal

**FEATURES:** True bypass

**CONTROLS:** Level, Tone, Drive, Regular/Fat switch, bypass footswitch

**CONNECTIONS:**

Standard input, standard output

**POWER:** 9V adaptor (not supplied)

**DIMENSIONS:** 60 (w) x 115 (d) x 50mm (h)

**Guitarist CHOICE**

9/10



CARL MARTIN

## Red Repeat 2016 £99

VIDEO & AUDIO ► <http://bit.ly/guitaristextra>

Carl Martin's longstanding delay pedal gets some neat new features with this 2016 Edition. This includes an extra footswitch to deliver Tap Tempo and toggle-switched modulation with adjustable Depth and Speed courtesy of two mini knobs. As another toggle switch selects between the Time knob and Tap Tempo for the delay time, you can always have two favourite delay times instantly available.

While the pedal is digital, it is voiced to deliver the less-than-pristine repeats that you might expect from a vintage analogue device, either tape or BBD-based. This is something it does well, offering repeats with a crusty edge to them that can blend in naturally, helped with a practical Tone knob that rolls back their top end. The modulation feature, designed to emulate the 'wow and flutter' of a vintage tape echo, goes way beyond that into seasick vibrato and metallic resonance. Used sparingly, though, it can create an authentic wobble. **G**

**VERDICT** A good range of delay from doubling and slapback, to a play-along-with-yourself 600ms

### Tech Spec

**ORIGIN:** China

**TYPE:** Delay pedal

**FEATURES:** True bypass,

600ms max delay time

**CONTROLS:** Echo, Time,

Repeat, Tone, Mod Depth,

Mod Speed, Mod switch,

Manual Time switch,

bypass footswitch, tap

tempo footswitch

**CONNECTIONS:**

Standard input,

standard output

**POWER:** 9V adaptor (not supplied)

**DIMENSIONS:** 120 (w) x 95 (d) x 56mm (h)

8/10