



AMP-LIKE OVERDRIVE ROUND-UP

When we speak about amp-like overdrives, we're generally not talking about a

Peavey 5150, but something a bit lower gain and more vintage in tone. Perhaps the most famous drive used to break up a tube amp is the humble Tube Screamer, with the gain rolled off and the level rolled up, used to smash the front end while cutting treble for leads. There's also the higher gain 'amp in a box' family of pedals used for heavier rock and, of course, the infamous 'transparent overdrives', of which the Paul Cochrane Tim and Klon Centaur are probably the most famous. So without further ado, here's a round-up of four fresh amp-smashing, transparent-feeling overdrives to really get your leads cooking.

Walrus Audio Warhorn

£199

MAKE SOME NOISE

Somewhere sonically in the family tree of the legendary Paul Cochrane Timmy, the Walrus Warhorn is a stunningly articulate transparent-to-mid-range drive. With the drive control fully backed off, and the level at just above unity, it easily pushes a tube amp into gentle saturation. Even at higher gain settings, the drive never gets too extreme and sounds great for more-or-less its whole rotation. There's a toggle for symmetrical and asymmetrical clipping, and we found that the sweet spot was a symmetric clip with the treble cut at about two o'clock, and the bass backed off to about nine o'clock.

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

Fender Santa Ana Overdrive

£160

DRIVE OUT WEST

While amp builders sometimes strike gold – consider the popularity of the Marshall Bluesbreaker, Shredmaster, and Fender Blender fuzz – foolishly, we didn't expect much of the Santa Ana. More fool us: Santa Ana is a blinding overdrive pedal, with a full range of amp-like tone controls, including an expressive presence control. From blues licks to modern metal, when stuck in front of a decent tube amp the Santa Ana had no trouble delivering. We'd appreciate it if the second footswitch, which boosts the signal or drive level by a pre-set amount, had an adjustable level, but otherwise it's hard to fault.

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



TOTAL
Guitar
BEST BUY
AWARD



Make your amp sing and your leads sear with these ace overdrives...

Seymour Duncan Forza

£220

HIGH-OCTANE DRIVE

Starting life as a special edition before getting a wider release, the Forza is a gorgeous-looking pedal, and the sound isn't far off! Boasting dedicated bass, middle and treble mini-pots as well as a level and drive control, the clipping is in the ballpark of a Hermida Zendrive, and the tone is dark to match. If you're expecting lots of clarity in the highs, you might leave disappointed; this is a raunchy dirt pedal, and the boost offered from the powerful EQ only adds extra crunch. It's possible to cut away some of the dirt and clean up for more articulation, but the pedal sounds its best closer to wide open.

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

EarthQuaker Devices Westwood

£147

NOT OUT OF THE WOODS YET

The core overdrive sound of the EQD Westwood is throaty and solid, adding a harmonically-rich saturation to a clean amp and with the level boosted, pushing a tube amp nicely into saturation of its own. With the now nearly standard level, gain, treble and bass, there's a familiar simplicity to the front panel. The bass and treble controls can take some fiddling to not result in octave-artifact 'squish' or thinner, bass-depleted tones. Tone stack aside, the build is the usual EQD boutique quality, and the clipping and volume on tap mean that through a decent amp, it's hard to go wrong.

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

AT A GLANCE

BYPASS
Walrus Audio, Seymour Duncan, EarthQuaker: True Bypass
Fender: True or buffered bypass

POWER
Walrus Audio, EarthQuaker: 9V DC centre-negative power supply
Fender, Seymour Duncan: 9V DC centre-negative power supply or battery

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