



Design
The JCA100H is designed by Mike Soldano, giving this upstart some A-grade pedigree

Valves
Jet City loves valves so much that there's even one in the effects loop

Gain
Don't expect it to do metal, but for indie and classic rock you can't go wrong

JET CITY JCA100H

£759
(head)

£479
(cab)

High-end valve performance on a budget from Mike Soldano's new venture

During the LA-based guitar boom of the late 80s/early 90s, Mike Soldano's namesake amps were everywhere. The SLO-100 is arguably his most iconic design, a high-octane monster that allows tonehounds with enough cash to fill their nostrils with the stench of free-range valve distortion. The Soldano sound wasn't available on a budget... until now.

Late last year, Soldano co-founded Jet City Amplification with an aim to build affordable valve amps, and Jet City has just touched down in the UK with its flagship offering, the JCA100H. This model features the same circuit design and identically labelled controls as the SLO-100, giving you two channels (Normal and Overdrive), a shared three-band EQ section and a master Presence control. The preamp uses four 12AX7 valves, with four 6L6s in the power stage delivering 100 watts of power. There's also an extra 12AX7 that buffers the effects loop.

The Normal (clean) channel is bright, but with a slight scoop to

the mid range thanks to the 6L6 valves, and the preamp stays clean until you push it to around halfway. Try some neck position singlecoils for that classic woody blues sound, and add some gain and presence for some Gaslight Anthem style chiming open strings. Boosting the preamp further takes you into chunky classic rock rhythm territory.

The Overdrive channel picks it up from here, and there's a noticeable kick that results in an overall 'larger' sound. We're talking fat-ass, harmonically rich powerchords and just enough gain to make hammer-on and pull-offs lead lines easy without becoming fizzy.

There are a couple of niggles, though. Channel switching is handled exclusively by the included footswitch, with no control on the panel. This might seem like a moot point, but if you lose or forget the footswitch you'll be stuck in whichever channel you left the amp on until you get another footswitch. The other point is that there's no onboard reverb. OK, so it's not a huge problem but similarly priced

competing products on the market have kept it in.

Conclusion: Soldano's input here carries a hefty chunk of credibility and quality. And let's be honest, only a numpty leaves gear behind at gigs, and the lack of reverb won't be a problem for many. Jet City's mantra is "100% tube tone; 0% Bull****", and, interestingly, we found ourselves concentrating less on tweaking the tone controls and more on just playing the damn thing – which is always a good sign.

Stuart Williams

At a glance

JetCityJCA100H

TYPE: Valve head
OUTPUT: 100 watts
VALVES: 5x 12AX7, 4x 6L6
CONTROLS: 2x Gain, bass, middle, treble, 2x Master volume, presence
SOCKETS: Input, speaker outputs, footswitch
WEIGHT: 23.8kg
DIMENSIONS: [HxWxD]
267 x 635 x 240mm
CONTACT: Source
Distribution 0208 962 5080
WEB: www.jetcityamplification.com

SUMMARY

For: Awesome rock tones on a budget

Against: Less features than some competition

★★★★★

TG says... Jet-powered tone



Until now, amps bearing the Soldano name at this price didn't exist

"THE JCA100H FEATURES THE SAME CIRCUIT DESIGN AND LABELLED CONTROLS AS THE ICONIC SOLDANO SLO-100"