

DIGITECH RP1000 £499
EFFECTS



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Guitarist
CHOICE



DigiTech RP1000 £499

The new flagship model of DigiTech's hugely successful RP range has tons of flexibility for the gigging guitarist
by Adrian Clark

DigiTech started to blur the boundaries between its 'consumer' RP range and the more professionally appointed GNX range a few months back with the launch of the RP500. With the sort of AudioDNA processing power we'd previously only seen on the GNX units, and a tougher construction than earlier RP units, we thought the RP500 could feasibly be used both live and in the studio by a pro player. The company has now taken things a step further with the RP1000 – an impressive-looking multi-FX unit that appears to be tough enough for pretty much most jobs.

The RP500 marked a slight diversion from previous RP designs in the way it defaulted to 'pedalboard mode', whereby the footswitches turn individual effects on and off within a patch. Only a slight diversion, as preset mode (where the footswitches select patches) is only a button push away, but it still sets the RP500 apart from the majority of floor FX units, many of which don't even have a 'pedalboard mode'.

The RP1000 does even better. Sporting a whopping 14 footswitches, it offers enhanced versions of both modes. Here,

preset mode gives instant access to 10 presets at a time, while in pedalboard mode you can still access five patches in addition to being able to turn five individual effect modules (compressor, distortion, chorus/FX, delay, reverb) on and off independently. A pair of bank up/down switches scroll through the 200 patches in groups of 10 or five, depending

on the mode selected. Then there's a Tap Tempo footswitch (for setting delays and other time-based effects) and one final footswitch for engaging an external effects loop.

What impresses us immediately about the RP1000 is the relative lack of fiddly editing buttons. Patches are edited via the tried-and-tested DigiTech matrix display, once again in its new streamlined design, with parameter knobs doubling as selector buttons to cut down on clutter. Building a patch on the newest RP models is a breeze, because you can always start from the tone and effects libraries. These selections of ready-made signal chains can be combined at will and there are 40 of each to choose from.

The unit's RP lineage (think 'bedroom practice hub') is still evident from the USB jack, which enables you to use the X-Edit software for patch editing or archiving. Even more exciting, you can use the (included) Cubase LE4 software to record the RP1000 direct to hard-disk. Similarly, there's also a phrase looper, which allows you to record 20 seconds in mono. It's fairly rudimentary compared to a dedicated looping delay unit, but it's fine for practising solos over chord progressions.

Sounds

We were impressed by the

There's a range of Fender, Marshall and Mesa/Boogie-inspired models, and a few more surprising additions



The RP1000 has impressively non-fiddly editing buttons



range of classic amp and effect models on the RP500, and the RP1000 has even more to offer. There's a wide range of Fender, Marshall and Mesa/Boogie-inspired models, along with a few more (pleasantly) surprising additions such as the Gibson GA-40, the Peavey 5150 and the Orange OR120. As tasty as the effects are, we recommend stripping a few of the presets down to just their amp and speaker models, because they're well worth hearing in isolation.

One of the criticisms levelled at all-in-one modelling/FX units is that you have to make use of everything in order to get your money's worth. Whether that's true or not, the RP1000 has an impressive array of effects and can be used purely as an effects processor with your favourite amp set-up. The claims of it being an 'affordable Bradshaw switcher' are a bit fanciful, but then you do have instant access to 100 different pedalboards...

The RP1000 doesn't have a noticeably wider range of effects than the RP500, but the selection is not exactly the same. Once again, there's pretty much everything you're likely to need for standard use, and the Lexicon reverbs add an extra touch of class. Some of the clean sounds positively glisten, but you're not limited to perfect digital delays and reverbs; the spring reverb (based on the

Fender Twin) is rich and meaty, especially at crazy surf guitar settings, and the Maestro Echoplex model is perfect for those slowly degrading tape delay sounds.

The twin LFOs and expression pedal can be assigned to just about any effect parameter, making for a wide range of real-time and automated effects. There are a handful of extra distortion models on the RP1000, where the list includes plenty of old classics along with some more cultish additions such as the Demeter Fuzzulator and Fulltone OCD overdrive.

As with RP1000's smaller sibling, our only complaint regarding usability is that the expression pedal is too small, giving a restricted feel to the sweep range. This is a common issue with multi-fx units, where the expression pedal has to fit the overall design of the unit, but there is enough room at the front and back to extend the RP1000's pedal by 4-5cm.

Verdict

Given the similarities to the RP500, it's impossible not to compare the two units, whereas they actually have enough differences to appeal to different types of player. Lacking the CD/mp3 input of its smaller sibling, the RP1000 is clearly intended less as a bedroom practice tool, and the amp loop and effects loop point

to a more professional environment. At its heart, though, the RP1000 is really a generously upgraded RP500, which is no bad thing. We were already impressed by the effects and amp models on the smaller unit, so it's nice to have access to even more here, and of course the huge increase in real-time control is most definitely welcome.

Price-wise, the RP1000 represents quite a step up from the RP500, and it costs more than the rival BOSS GT-10. Maybe this just serves to demonstrate what good value the RP500 is! The street price for the RP1000 should be a bit cheaper, putting it into more direct competition with the similarly featured GT-10. It's certainly a worthy rival. **G**

The Bottom Line

We liked: Impressive numbers of sounds-per-pound; the expanded Pedalboard mode is a winner!

We dislike: The expression pedal is still too small

Guitarist says: Any modern multi-FX involves a steep learning curve to extract the best sounds. The RP1000 is no different but, along with its impressive spec, the Pedalboard mode tips the balance heavily in its favour



DigiTech RP1000

PRICE: £499

ORIGIN: USA

TYPE: Modelling multi-effects unit

FEATURES: Wide range of effects and amp models, tuner, assignable expression pedal, USB connection (for patch editing or direct digital recording)

EFFECTS: Ten modules with various options: wah, compressor, chorus/FX, distortion, amplifier, noise gate/auto swell, EQ, delay, reverb, volume pedal

PATCHES: 100 presets, 100 user slots

MIDI: No

CONNECTIONS: Input, left/right line outputs, left/right XLR mixer outputs, external amp send/return, effect loop send/return, headphone output, looper control input, USB jack

POWER: DC adaptor (supplied)

OPTIONS: None
Sound Technology 01462 480000
www.digitech.com

Test results

Build quality	★★★★★
Features	★★★★★
Sound	★★★★★
Value for money	★★★★★

GUITARIST RATING ★★★★★

The rivals

In terms of price, the **Line 6 POD X3 Live** (£410) comes closest, and it rivals the RP1000 for ruggedness. Line 6 amp models have a definite sound of their own, so if you like that sound, you can't get much better than the X3 range. At a lower price are the other two big-hitters, the **Zoom G9.2tt** (£349) and the **BOSS GT-10** (£369). The Zoom has the added feature of twin valve amplification stages, but lacks the rugged gig-readiness of the other units. The GT-10 is probably the most impressive on paper, but its harder, brighter sound is the opposite of the Line 6 low-end grunt.



An extra loop, balanced XLR outs, headphones, switching: everything you'd need