



What We Want To Know

- 1** **This isn't exactly a new product, right?**
Not exactly. We reviewed the original HD500 back in issue 336. This is the recently updated version.
- 2** **So what's new here?**
There are improved footswitches with bright LED rings that are much easier to see on stage and an increase in DSP power means that you can have effects combinations that were not possible with the old HD500.
- 3** **Should I dump all my pedals and go for this?**
That depends what you want from your effects: it's swings and roundabouts, read on...

Line 6 POD HD500X £429

Line 6's flagship floor processor gets the X-factor

WORDS **Trevor Curwen**

The original POD HD500 was Line 6's flagship unit thanks to its impressive High Definition modelling technology. We were suitably blown away by the quality of the sounds back in 2010, but technology continues to advance, so it should come as no surprise that Line 6 has been busy enhancing and refining the POD HD to make it even better. And that, hopefully, is what we have here with the HD500X.

Like its older brother, the HD500X is a flexible tonal workhorse capable of creating a rainbow of sounds that can be

stored in the 512 user-writable preset locations. On board, you'll find a comprehensive set of amps, and over 100 effects covering just about every type, plus 16 speaker emulations with a variety of mic'ing options.

Presets are constructed from a signal chain that can feature an amp model plus eight effects blocks, each of which is capable of loading any onboard effects model or providing access to an external loop to incorporate additional units. Parallel signal routings, each featuring a separate amp, are also possible. Editing can be done swiftly

from the front panel (a set of knobs allows instant tweaking of amp sounds), but a PC-based editor/librarian is available to make things even easier.

Ruggedly constructed, the HD500X looks like it has been built for the road but it's also designed to do the business at home and in the studio – there's connectivity for many scenarios and the facility to record directly to computer via USB. Even if you eschew the modelled amps and speakers for just the effects on stage, they are all ready and waiting to grace your recordings. The inclusion



The Rivals

The **GT-100** (£470) is the flagship floor processor from **Boss**, featuring 400 patches and the ability to perform like a conventional pedalboard. **DigiTech's RP1000** (£359) offers 200 memories and a pedalboard mode to use five footswitches as stompboxes. A cheaper solution is **Zoom's G5** (£259), with 297 onboard patches featuring up to nine effects with instant individual switching for four, plus a switchable valve boost

of a 48-second looper further enhances onstage flexibility as well as being a practice aid.

Sounds

Two modes are available using the 12 footswitches and treadle. In one mode you can instantly

The sound modelling is excellent throughout, with authentic-sounding amps and quality effects

switch between presets and still have four footswitches available to turn individual effects on and off within the preset. The other mode sets the HD500X up to be more like a conventional pedalboard with instant access and switching to all eight effects while allowing access to presets with a couple of footswitch pushes, so you can have different instantly accessible 'pedalboards.' The modelling is excellent throughout, with authentic-sounding amps and quality effects.

Verdict

An array of separate pedals, mixed and matched from various brands, seems to be the

preferred approach of most players these days, but the HD500X comes at it from another angle. While it's true that the initial cost is greater than starting with one pedal and building up, and that you are stuck with Line 6 effects, the sheer amount of effects models available, the flexibility of their routing and switching, and the fact that you can program exact sounds and recall them instantly with consistency may outweigh any perceived disadvantages. The HD500X offers a very practical way to organise and access effects on stage and could take care of all your recording needs, too. **G**

Line 6 POD HD500X

PRICE: £429
ORIGIN: China
TYPE: Floor pedal amp and effects modeller
AMP MODELS: 30, including models of many classics (see website for full list)
EFFECTS MODELS: Over 100 including delays, pitch/modulations, distortions, dynamic effects, EQs, filters, wah/volume and reverbs (see website for full list). Up to eight can be used simultaneously, DSP permitting
PRESETS: 512 preset locations
OTHER FEATURES: Tuner, tap tempo, 48-second looper, USB audio interface, software editor/librarian
CONNECTIONS: Guitar input, aux input, stereo headphone output, unbalanced outputs L (mono) & R, effects send, effects return L (mono) & R – all standard jack. Mini-jack CD/mp3 input. XLR mic input and balanced outputs (L&R). MIDI In, MIDI Out/Thru, SPDIF digital output, USB 2.0, expression pedal (Pedal 2) socket, Variax socket, L6 link
POWER: 9V DC adaptor (supplied)
DIMENSIONS: 546 (w) x 270 (d) x 74mm (h)
WEIGHT (KG/LB): 4.5/10
RANGE OPTIONS: POD HD300 (£275), POD HD400 (£360), POD HD PRO (£629)
Line 6
01788 566566
www.line6.com



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

Guitarist says: A do-it-all effects solution for onstage use that's also a great recording and practice tool