

WAMPLER ROUND-UP

£189-£199

These boutique stompboxes from the USA ain't cheap, but killer tones and a huge array of features give you plenty of Wamp for your wonga

Words: Trevor Curwen Photography: Joby Sessions

HAND-BUILT

in the USA, you'll find Wampler pedals on professional pedalboards the world over – Guthrie Govan and modern fusion master Tom Quayle are two of the Brits who use 'em, while over the pond, the brand has made waves in Nashville with the likes of Keith Urban, Brad Paisley and Brent Mason. Designer Brian Wampler initially focused on the amp-in-a-box genre, and has pedals that recreate classic and boutique amps from both sides of the pond, but the full range has expanded to over 20 pedals with various overdrives, distortions and fuzzes, plus a compressor, buffer, chorus/vibrato, two delays and a reverb. One thing that strikes us about these solidly put-together and classy-looking pedals is their versatility – a lot of thought has gone into these stompers, giving you a load of extra switches and knobs that allow a wider range of tonal options than much of their competition. So, let's check out Wamp's going on...



WAMPLER PLEXI-DRIVE £189

Plex-able overdrive

FOR those who don't know already, Plexi is shorthand for a mid-to-late 60s Marshall sound that was derived from the Plexiglass panels found on some models of the era. And it's this classic sound that Wampler's Plexi-Drive is designed to deliver. Basically, this is an overdrive pedal with a British flavour and two modes of operation. Flicking on the Bass Boost switch adds a nice touch of 4x12 thump to proceedings, but both modes let you pile on that familiar Marshall-y crunch. After an overdrive that can give your amp some classic British rock tone? Then look no further...

WAMPLER EGO COMPRESSOR £199

Blue crush

LIKE many guitar compressors, the Ego is based on the classic MXR Dyna Comp/Ross Compressor. As a practical tool for keeping levels dynamically consistent, adding sustain or giving clean notes an extra snap for country or funk picking, the Ego Compressor can do it all with ease – and with the blend and tone knobs, you can balance your compressed and dry sound and add a touch of sparkle. A compressor might not be the first pedal that comes to mind when you're looking to expand your 'board, but if you've gotta have one, there are few that give you as much versatility as the Ego.



AT A GLANCE

TYPE: Overdrive, compressor, distortion and fuzz pedals

CONTROLS: Plexi-Drive: Gain, volume, tone, bass boost switch

Ego Compressor: Blend, attack, volume, tone, sustain

Sovereign Distortion: Gain, volume, mid behaviour, tone, bright/even switch, boost/standard switch

Velvet Fuzz: Fuzz, volume, brightness, big/tight switch

SOCKETS: Input, output, power

BYPASS: True bypass

POWER: 9V battery, PSU (not included)

CONTACT: First Line Distribution 07894 747041
www.wamplerpedals.com



WAMPLER PLEXI-DRIVE	
FEATURES	
SOUND QUALITY	
VALUE FOR MONEY	
BUILD QUALITY	
USABILITY	
OVERALL RATING	★★★★★

WAMPLER EGO COMPRESSOR	
FEATURES	
SOUND QUALITY	
VALUE FOR MONEY	
BUILD QUALITY	
USABILITY	
OVERALL RATING	★★★★★

WAMPLER SOVEREIGN DISTORTION	
FEATURES	
SOUND QUALITY	
VALUE FOR MONEY	
BUILD QUALITY	
USABILITY	
OVERALL RATING	★★★★★

WAMPLER VELVET FUZZ	
FEATURES	
SOUND QUALITY	
VALUE FOR MONEY	
BUILD QUALITY	
USABILITY	
OVERALL RATING	★★★★★

WAMPLER SOVEREIGN £199

The king of dirt

LIKE fuzz pedals, distortion pedals each have their own signature voice, usually with tweakable gain and volume and a single tone knob, maybe two. However, in typical Wampler style, the Sovereign takes that so much further. First off, you have a boost switch that can add a load more gain to the standard sound, and then you have not only a switch to make the whole lot brighter, but a tone knob to dial in the top-end, and mid behaviour knob that can really focus the midrange right where you want it. The result is a distortion that's rich in harmonics and with exactly the top-end presence you need to cut through the mix. Excellent.

WAMPLER VELVET FUZZ £199

Fuzzy feel-good factor

WHILE different fuzz boxes can sound quite radically different from each other depending on the components used, most of them usually only have one sound on tap. Enter then, the Velvet Fuzz, which breaks the mould by sporting selectable Big and Tight options. Big gives you traditional fat 60s fuzz that wouldn't be out of place on a Hendrix recording, while Tight trades in some of the fuzzy girth for a sharply honed, muscular distortion, but both are responsive and clean up nicely with your volume knob. Not sandpaper, nor Velcro, this is velvet-smooth fuzz and versatile with it.

