



70S BRITISH DRIVES

The holy grail for many overdrive builders has long been the 'British sound in a box' – a classic, dirty-rock tone that can span the gamut from muscular rhythm parts to (with a twist of the gain knob) singing, saturated leads. Nowadays, you're spoilt for choice in terms of which 'amp in a box' to get. Most approaches choose to replicate a classic tube amp preamp, but there's still the question of whether you can model a tube amp in discrete solid-state circuitry, or if a purpose-designed overdrive circuit combined with your amp would work better. So, with that in mind, how close have these builders gotten to the real deal? Let's get stuck in and find out!

EMMA REEZAFRATZITZ £145

WHY YOU DIRTY ER, FRAT?

The first version of this pedal was based on the Tube Sound Fuzz, and this revised unit builds on those strengths. Also, though it's not based on a ProCo RAT, the name hints at it for a reason – with the gain rolled up it does a pretty good impression of RAT crunch. The bias switches between class B and class A amplifier operation, though you'll probably end up staying in class A territory based on the sounds on offer, even if it is a bit noisier. With the gain and treble rolled back, there are also smooth low-gain lead and rhythm sounds on tap, though a bit of experimentation is required to find them.

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

STONE DEAF TRASHY BLONDE £160

DEAFEN YOUR NEIGHBOURS

The Trashy Blonde's artwork and name combo might not be to everyone's tastes. That aside, how does it sound? Good, as it happens; the star of the show is the boost, which proves great for adding hair to a tube amp, and the versatile EQ-bump offered by the gain side adds versatility. Through the wrong amp, it can be a little thin unless at room-shaking volume or with the bass dimed, but there are enough usable tones in here to keep most classic rockers happy, especially with the handy paracentric EQ, which can be swept for wah/phaser-like sounds using an expression pedal.

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Turn any amp into a rock monster with these amp-in-a-box marvels...

WAMPLER CATAPULP

£189

ORANGE YOU GLAD THIS PEDAL EXISTS?

Known for their ‘amp-in-a-box’ circuits, it should come as no surprise that Wampler’s Orange-style unit is a powerful contender. Boasting an active three-band EQ, the ability to set it up to either drive your amp into saturation, or act as the main clipping source for your signal while retaining a balanced core tone is a compelling selling point. With everything from light hair to saturated roar on offer, the tones check out as well. Complaints? It feels like the sweet spot for the bass control is elusive and finding the correct trade-off between the volume and gain controls is tricky.

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	USABILITY	☆☆☆☆
	OVERALL RATING	☆☆☆☆

ORANGE GETAWAY DRIVER

£119

LESS IS MORE

Though this pedal is hardly compact in an age of micro pedals, the sounds on offer make up for any inconvenience posed by its size. From light drive to beefy, classic rock saturation and, with the treble turned up, even some modern rock chug, this pedal does it all. The controls are simple – just volume, gain and a treble-controlling tone stack, but both the amount of volume on tap and the warmth of the clipping leave plenty of scope for combinations that will work with any amp to get that rich, classic drive. Whether you favour a touch of breakup or a harmonically dense wall of sound, this can get you there.

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	OVERALL RATING	☆☆☆☆

AT A GLANCE

BYPASS: Stone Deaf, Wampler, Orange: true bypass; Emma: buffered

POWER: 9V battery or power supply

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