



EFFECTRODE FIRE BOTTLE

Alun Lower checks out a pedal that provides a way to push your single-coil tone just that little bit further

Effectrode's boutique vacuum tube effects have been making waves for some time now, and we're very excited to be checking out its Fire Bottle pickup booster. If you're unfamiliar with pickup boosters, they are the oldest type of overdrive pedal and essentially are just preamps designed to boost the signals to either kick the amp into overdrive or to enhance the basic tone of the guitar.

Construction & Features

Effectrode claims that the Fire Bottle is the smallest all-tube booster in the world. While we can't verify the claim for sure, the Fire Bottle certainly is very compact and lightweight for a boutique valve-driven pedal. That's not to say it's at all flimsy, though – the Fire Bottle could probably function as a nuclear fallout shelter for the inhabitants of Lilliput if it had to. Effectrode has designed this thing to last and claims the pedal can stand up to severe shock vibration up to 20,000g, high temperature and high altitude. So if you ever end up stranded on

We're instantly taken aback by just how much power is housed in this pedal

Everest and think to yourself, "Damn, I wish I had just a bit of a thicker sound to my Strat," you'll know exactly what to put in the last pocket on your rucksack. One thing you'll also want to make note of is that because the pedal is valve powered, the voltage runs high and so you are required to run the pedal through a 12-volt power supply rather than batteries.

The pedal comes with three basic functions. First up is the tone control, which is based on the classic Fender Harvard amp, which famously featured just a volume and single tone control. Probably the most well-known use of this amp was on the guitar sound from the Booker T. & the M.G.'s hit 'Green Onions'. Next up is the boost control, which adds up to

30dB of gain to your signal. Lastly, the Fire Bottle also comes with a 'Vari-Z' toggle, which is designed as a resonance control for single-coil pickups and can shift the resonant peak 2 to 4kHz down. The idea is that this will then make a Strat's bridge single-coil sound more like a neck pickup, even edging towards humbucker territory, and we're eager to plug in and see how it performs.

Sounds

Plugging in for the first time with a single-coil-equipped guitar, we're instantly taken aback by just how much power is housed in this tiny enclosure. The pedal is certainly capable of driving the amp into overdrive with the boost function, but this tends to make the sound a bit abrasive, especially with the single-coils. What we soon fall in love with is using the pedal as a tone shaper (with a more considered amount of boost), and when used in this manner we are able to conjure just about any single-coil sound we could wish for. The Vari-Z switch is fantastic for adding some extra depth to the basic sound, while the tone control

The Effects Tech

For the latest guitar reviews check out www.guitarbuyer magazine.com

Technical Specification

Price: £189

Built in: USA

Type: Analogue, tube-driven magnetic pickup booster

Features: Tone and boost controls, Vari-Z resonance switch, true bypass

Connections: Input, output

Power: 12V adaptor only (included)

Dimensions: 95(w) x 35(h) x 120(d) mm

Contact Details

Effectrode Audiophile Pedals

Tel: 01782 372 210

www.effectrode.com

helps shape the tone to your exact preference, either adding brightness and bite or taming it.

Conclusion

Overall, we're really impressed by the Fire Bottle. The sound quality really is everything you expect from a top-class boutique pedal and the Vari-Z is definitely the killer feature here. If there's a certain X-factor that you've been looking for with your single-coil tone (and we know there's a few of you out there that have exactly that problem), then the Fire Bottle might just be what you need – make it your mission to go and try one! The only drawback we can really think of is that the pedal can't be battery operated and that its very specific nature will limit the amount of people that will use it to its fullest. If that person is you, though, this pedal comes highly recommended. **GB**

What We Think

What did our test results reveal?

Pros: A powerful tone shaper for any single-coil guitar

Cons: Can't be battery operated

Ideal For: Single-coil players after beefier tones

GB Rating

Rating out of five stars

Effectrode Fire Bottle ★★★★★