

JAM pedals

£165-£255

Boutique and Greek!

BY **Trevor Curwen**

PHOTOGRAPHY **Joseph Branston**

JAM pedals are handmade in Greece using only high-quality materials, including rare NOS chips, specially selected matched NOS transistors, tropical fish capacitors and carbon comp resistors. For the most part, they are based on classic pedals from the past and designed to deliver vintage tones, particularly the sounds of classic 60s and 70s rock. Users include Billy Gibbons, Brad Whitford, Dweezil Zappa, Bernie Marsden, Bill Frisell and Nels Cline. Custom artwork is available at extra cost, as are point-to-point wired versions.



JAM RetroVibe

PRICE: £255

ORIGIN: Greece

TYPE: Vibe pedal

FEATURES: True-bypass

CONTROLS: Depth, speed, 2x internal trimmer (level, intensity)

CONNECTIONS: Standard input, standard output

POWER: 9V battery or 9V DC supply (65mA)

DIMENSIONS: 94 (w) x 119 (d) x 53mm (h)

440 Distribution

01132 589599

www.jampedals.com

We've seen quite a few Uni-Vibe-style pedals lately, including Korg's up-to-the-minute take on the original with totally redesigned circuitry. By contrast, JAM's take on the 'Vibe goes back to the original sound creation method of using four photocells surrounding a pulsating light source. You don't get the switchable vibrato and chorus modes or treadle-operated adjustment, but, between them, the depth and speed knobs provide plenty of variation. The pedal doesn't lack volume when kicked in and there's an internal trimmer (factory-set to max) to reduce the output. Another internal trim pot adjusts the maximum intensity. We'd like to resist the temptation to name-check Hendrix and Trower in a vibe review, but the RetroVibe will sound so familiar if you're a fan of either – not just the modulation but a gloopy reduction in the top end, too.

Verdict

It's not too big, sounds authentic and has purple chicken head knobs!

GUITARIST RATING

★★★★★

Guitarist says: Authentic sound delivered via the simplest interface



JAM TubeDreamer 58

PRICE: £165

ORIGIN: Greece

TYPE: Overdrive pedal

FEATURES: True-bypass

CONTROLS: Level, tone, gain

CONNECTIONS: Standard input, standard output

POWER: 9V battery or 9V DC supply (6mA)

DIMENSIONS: 60 (w) x 111 (d) x 32mm (h)

JAM has four different versions of the Tuedreamer in its range. All are based on the Tube Screamer but vary in their circuitry to produce a different tonal response. This TD58's variation is that it uses the JRC4558D chip, as in the original TS808, but has three diodes for asymmetrical clipping instead of symmetrical. The TD58's control knobs have largely the same range as a vintage TS808 and the sound naturally has a little extra added in the midrange area to help its prominence in a mix. What you are getting is a natural amp-like overdrive that responds really well to picking dynamics and is endowed with plenty of clarity so that every note in a chord rings true. It's a great asset in front of any valve amp, adding a natural leg-up whether you want a lead sound to complement your clean or to get a driven amp to sing.

Verdict

Everybody's doing one these days, but as Tube Screamer-style pedals go, this is one of the best we have played through.

GUITARIST RATING

★★★★★

Guitarist says: Organic overdrive with real clarity





<http://bit.ly/guitarist391>



JAM Fuzz Phrase

PRICE: £219

ORIGIN: Greece

TYPE: Fuzz pedal

FEATURES: True-bypass

CONTROLS: Level, gain, internal BIAS trimmer

CONNECTIONS: Standard input, standard output

POWER: 9V battery or 9V DC supply (5mA)

DIMENSIONS: 60 (w) x 111 (d) x 32mm (h)

Designing a vintage-sounding fuzz pedal has a lot to do with choosing the right transistors and matching them. For this Fuzz Face-style pedal, JAM has chosen the rare CV7003, military-spec version of the OC44 germanium transistor, which it says is consistent and heat-resistant (germanium transistors can be susceptible to temperature changes) — more so than the more commonly used AC128 and NKT275. We liked the sound best with the level knob on max while dialling in the dirt with the gain knob through a nice overdrive at mid settings to the last bit of travel, which brings out the top end and a richer fuzz. It's about finding the sweet spot, though, and edging the gain back worked for us, although running it flat-out and controlling things with your guitar volume may be the way to go, as it cleans up really well.

Verdict

Expressive fuzz. Worthy of that afro/purple background artwork.

GUITARIST RATING



Guitarist says: Sweet-sounding fuzz, but it doesn't come cheap.



JAM Rooster

PRICE: £185

ORIGIN: Greece

TYPE: Treble boost pedal

FEATURES: True-bypass

CONTROLS: Level, treble/mid/bass switch

CONNECTIONS: Standard input, standard output

POWER: 9V battery or 9V DC supply (5mA)

DIMENSIONS: 60 (w) x 111 (d) x 32mm (h)

The Rooster is a treble booster inspired by the Dallas Rangemaster, used by Rory Gallagher, Brian May, Tony Iommi and, perhaps most famously, by Eric Clapton on the Bluesbreakers' 'Beano' album. JAM has strived to get the vintage sound right by again calling on the services of the CV7003 transistor — the original Rangemasters also made use of the OC44. As well as a knob to dial in the amount of boost, starting with unity gain at about 12 o'clock, you get a three-position switch that focuses the frequency range of the boost. The bass setting is more of a full-range fat-sounding boost, while treble loses some bottom for a brighter presence, and mid is between the two. Whatever setting of the switch, the Rooster will excite the top-end frequencies of an overdriven amp, bring out the harmonics and send sustained notes into singing feedback.

Verdict

This Rooster will certainly wake up your amp in a vintage-inspired fashion.

GUITARIST RATING



Guitarist says: 1960s-style vintage treble booster with tonal options





JAM Rattler

PRICE: £169

ORIGIN: Greece

TYPE: Distortion pedal

FEATURES: True-bypass

CONTROLS: Level, tone, gain

CONNECTIONS: Standard input, standard output

POWER: 9V battery or 9V DC supply (6mA)

DIMENSIONS: 60 (w) x 111 (d) x 32mm (h)



Anyone wondering where the inspiration for the Rattler came from should check out the first three letters of its name. Yep, it's based on a vintage Pro Co RAT pedal. Featuring the rare NOS LM308N chip and an asymmetrical clipping circuit, the Rattler offers a range of sounds from a clean boost, through various driven amp scenarios to an all-out distortion with a fuzzy edge. This is all delivered via a tone knob with a huge strident top-end presence fully clockwise that reduces as you wind it back to a mellower, although never dull, vibe. It's no bad thing that the Rattler can pretty much nail the sound of a vintage RAT (we checked it against our 1980s model), but we reckon that its wide range of harmonically-rich distortion tones, combined with dynamic responsiveness, make it a great asset for anyone's pedalboard.

Verdict

It might be a RAT-inspired pedal, but the Rattler proves itself to be a distortion for most occasions.

GUITARIST RATING

★★★★★

Guitarist says: Who said you should never step on a rattler?

JAM Big Chill

PRICE: £229

ORIGIN: Greece

TYPE: Tremolo pedal

FEATURES: True-bypass

CONTROLS: Level, depth, speed 1, speed 2, square/sine/triangle switch, 2x internal trimmer (CHOP effect level, speed 2 level), CHOP footswitch

CONNECTIONS: Standard input, standard output, 2x expression pedal input

POWER: 9V battery or 9V DC supply (15mA)

DIMENSIONS: 120 (w) x 94 (d) x 30mm (h)



The Big Chill offers vintage-style sounds with a range of practical features. You can choose from three tremolo waveforms — sine, triangle and square — and have the option of two speeds, selectable by a second footswitch. Each speed is set with its own knob, while there's an internal control to set the second speed quieter or louder than the first. There's also a knob for tremolo depth and one for the output volume that offers a useful boost (set the trem depth to zero for boost only); you can also use external expression pedals to control tremolo depth and the second tremolo speed. A third footswitch brings in the CHOP effect, a more brutal square wave on/off tremolo that chops the audio into segments. The classy range of sounds, including vintage Fender, should suit most players' tremolo needs, but it's the switching and control that set this apart from other pedals.

Verdict

While the vintage tone hits the spot, versatility is the key word here.

GUITARIST RATING

★★★★★

Guitarist says: A practical feature set makes this a great trem for live work