

## Electric Sheep Discrete Overdrive

For a while, an overdrive pedal comes along that's similar, yet unlike any I have tested before. The Electric Sheep is that kind of pedal. Featuring discrete circuitry—no op-amps were used in the design—it yields a tube overdrive that's so reminiscent of a good tube amp that I was hard-pressed to detect any significant difference. Imagine a stunningly versatile overdrive with dynamic musicality in all settings, and just a whiff of compression when cranked hard. How the Electric Sheep managed to sound so open and dynamic, yet was still capable of evening out picking inconsistencies, is beyond comprehension. And it accomplished all this cool stuff while maintaining whisper-quiet operation—even with the Gain dimed. I was blown away by the taper of the controls, which is so smooth there are no abrupt jumps in volume, tone, or gain when manipulated—just a perfectly linear increase or decrease. A 70/80 control changes the gain structure from a smooth, glassy overdrive to an edgier, grittier distortion, and an HB/SC switch optimizes the pedal for use with humbuckers or single-coils. It's expensive, but if any pedal in this roundup deserves an Editors' Pick Award, it's the Electric Sheep. [jacquespedals.com](http://jacquespedals.com) —SAM HAUN



## JAM Big Chill

\$295

You know, I never thought I'd need a tremolo pedal with two different speed settings available until I started testing the Big Chill. Suddenly, I was shifting time between verses, choruses, and bridges with quarter-note-style and eighth- or sixteenth-note-like pulses. It just goes to show how a pedal can drive inspiration and creativity. Then, I thought, "Bummer—I wish there were two Depth controls, as well, so I could do two different slicer-type effects." Then, I discovered the Chop effect, which does exactly that effect for each of the two selections. Add the option for a clean boost (with Depth at zero), jacks for optional expression-pedal control of Depth and Speed 2, internal trims for Speed 2 level and Chop level, and a tight, articulate sound, and you have one monster of a flexible tremolo. My only beef is it's a bit difficult to hit the Chop switch while wearing Dr. Martens. [jampeds.com](http://jampeds.com) —MICHAEL MOLEND



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# Pedalaman!



**JAM Red Muck**  
\$219

I love that, rather than cloning a basic Big Muff, the designers at JAM were inspired to conceptually combine the circuits of the 1971 “triangle” Muff and the “Red Army” Muff, and then add their own dollops of a fat low end and a midrange bump. The “star chef” approach to enhancing the meal—in this case, the Red Muck—definitely produced an articulate distortion tone with some nice cocked-wah-style midrange emphasis. It’s also a slightly more sophisticated sound than the Cold-War-era myth of brutish Russians, as sustain is smooth and sensual, and you retain excellent note clarity even at full gain. *Khorosho!* [jampedals.com](http://jampedals.com)

—MICHAEL MOLENDRA



**JHS Pedals Alpine Reverb**  
\$249

The Alpine doesn’t explicitly state which type of digital reverb it’s going for, but I hear it as a spring/delay. When the strings are struck with a sharp attack, discrete repeats are audible—less so when the top is rolled off with the Highs knob. Whatever the reverb flavor is, the Alpine’s sound is delicious—warm and rich, even with the highs maxed. You can switch between two different reverb settings with the Shift knob, making it easy to change from just a little air around the notes to an ambient wash. More “shift fun” was had using the Alpine’s FX Loop (via a TRS splitter cable) to insert a Red Panda Particle, which let me add octaves, delays, and other more extreme effects that I could bring in and out, as well. Caution is needed to prevent self-oscillation—with or without the added effect—but that didn’t tarnish the fact that the Alpine brings something new to the reverb pedal party. [jhs pedals.com](http://jhs pedals.com) —MICHAEL ROSS



**JHS Pedals Twin Twelve Channel Drive**  
\$199

Thanks to its popularity with pickers like Beck, Jack White, and others, a 1963 Silvertone 1484 amp head now sees eBay bidding begin at \$400. Fortunately, JHS has captured the striking character of this rediscovered classic in the Twin Twelve. Even with the Drive down, it transformed the neutral cleans of a boutique Little Walter to the grind of a catalog-ordered beginner’s amp—in the best way. Cranking the Bass knob creates the tuba-like lows of a Howlin’ Wolf single, and rolling the Bass back and turning up the Treble increases articulation for more complex riffing. And, unlike the Silvertone, I could turn down the pedal’s Volume knob and maintain my chosen grit at any level. If you want the vintage tone and dynamics of a 1484, but don’t want the expense, upkeep, and weight of an additional amp, the Twin Twelve is a must have. [jhs pedals.com](http://jhs pedals.com) —MICHAEL ROSS



**Koch Superlead**  
\$349

This tank of a pedal packs a ton of features, tones, and routing options that could make it the hub of your gigging and recording world. With a single 12AX7 tube, the Superlead gives you a pristine Clean channel, an Overdrive channel that goes from mild to super distorted, and a Gain Boost that pours on even more grind and level. The 1/4" out has a level switch so you can run it into a power amp, an effects return, or an amp’s front end. The XLR out has beautiful speaker emulation, so you can record direct or send it to the P.A. and rehearse or perform with no amp at all. It comes with pre and post effects loops, and you can even power your stompboxes from it. Wow! [koch-amps.com](http://koch-amps.com) —MATT BLACKETT