

EGNATER TWEAKER

Price: \$399.99

Contact: egnater.com

the HI1 and HI2 settings offer smooth, articulate overdrive, each with a slightly different flavor.

The Egnater Tweaker has two 6V6 power tubes producing 15 watts and a pair of 12AX7 preamp tubes, all in a small (14" x 8" x 7.5"), lightweight amp head with black Tolex, cane grillcloth, and gold piping. Controls on the front panel include a Master Volume with a Vintage/Modern voicing switch, three-band tone (Treble, Middle, Bass) with its own voicing switch (USA/AC/Brit) a Gain control with a Hot or Clean settings, and switches for Bright/Normal and Tight/Deep. The rear panel has an effects loop and a pair of speaker-output jacks with impedance selector.

The many voicing switches on the Tweaker allow for plenty of control over variables as one moves from one style of guitar to another, and their changes are subtle, but very useful, whether you're looking to add midrange overtones for a British/Vox sound, scoop the mids a bit for classic California tone, or tighten the low-end for a chunky, high-gain sound. Though the Tweaker doesn't offer footswitchable channel changing or a boost circuit, its Master volume control is very transparent and unless you're going from sparkling clean to screaming overdrive, you can clean up the front end of the amp easily with the guitar's Volume control.

The Ibanez TSA Tube Screamer has a well-executed cream Tolex cover with white piping, black grillecloth, and a dark-green chassis. A 15-watt amp, it uses a pair of 6V6s and has a



IBANEZ TSA TUBE SCREAMER

Price: \$399.99

Contact: ibanez.com

built-in Ibanez Tube Screamer circuit. Along with the typical Tube Screamer controls—Drive, Tone, and Level—the amp also has Bass, Treble, and Volume controls as well as a 6-db Boost switch. The back panel has a Pentode (5-watt output)/Triode (15-watt) power switch and jacks to accommodate a stereo footswitch and an effects loop.

Ibanez designed the amp so signal first runs through the Tube Screamer circuit, then through the boost circuit, followed by the effects loop and finally

into the front of the amp, so effects such as reverb and delay are post-overdrive. It also allows the Tube Screamer to be used as a straight overdrive or as a boost to drive the front end of the amp. Both the Tube Screamer and the Boost are footswitchable, essentially giving this single-channel amp the ability to have a clean sound, overdrive sound, and a solo boost (clean or dirty).

All three of these little amps offer great tones and solid build quality. Each one has its own set of cool, player-friendly features. And though they may be small in physical stature, they loom large in terms of performance and vibe. — **Phil Feser**

GEARIN' UP



TAKE A STAND GUITAR STANDS

Take a Stand guitar stands are made with hardwoods and wood trim accents, machined metal, and leather. Contact points are surgical rubber covered with leather, and supports are secured to the neck of the stand using internal stainless-steel pins. Two models accommodate guitars including unique shaped guitars like Gibson Flying Vs and Explorers. For more, go to takeastandinc.com.



SHEPTONE P90H

Sheptone's P90H pickup uses rough-cast, degaussed Alnico V magnets and scatter-wound #42 plain-enamel wire. They are available with black covers, black/gold/nickel/chrome open-faced covers, and gold or nickel poles. To learn more, go to sheptone.com.



SNARK TUNER

The Snark tuner has a full-color LCD readout that rotates 360 degrees, so the tuner can be clamped to the front or back of an instrument's headstock. Its features include a tap-tempo metronome, pitch calibration, and ability to transpose. It is available in guitar/bass and all-instrument/chromatic models. Learn more at snarktuners.com.



VOX AGA150/ICE 9 OVERDRIVE

The Vox AGA150 is a 150-watt/two-channel amp with a 12AU7 preamp tube. Each channel is equipped with a standard guitar input, as well as a microphone input with selectable phantom power. Its controls include Bass, Middle and Treble, while a Color knob allows the overall tone to be shifted during performance. A full complement of effects is available on each channel. It has built-in Chorus and Reverb, and Anti-Feedback control.

The Vox Ice 9 Overdrive has two overdrive modes, tone-shaping, and a "More" switch. Learn more at voxamps.com.

Like an Old Pair of Jeans

The Gizmoaudio Sawmill Distortion/Overdrive

Many of today's quests to build a better distortion/overdrive pedal inadvertently end up with more of the same ol' same ol'—a tired reproduction of a classic or a sly representation of something cool. The challenge lies in making a pedal that stands out, and a company called Gizmoaudio has done it.

Company founder Charlie Luke is a lifelong musician and Georgia Institute of Technology grad whose quest wasn't centered on a distorted sound, but the *clean* tone a pedal created. Focusing on the clarity of notes, he wanted a box that would let him play chords that didn't sound muddy. The circuit he developed evolved to become the Sawmill.

GIZMOAUDIO SAWMILL

Price \$ 220

Contact: gizmoaudio.com



Looking like a vintage box, the Sawmill is actually MOSFET with new ideas. The cream-finished enclosure has controls for

Drive, Bias, Treble, Bass, and Volume. Its on/off is true-bypass and the unit's secret weapon is a cool footswitch that allows switching to a user-preset overdrive. With it, the Sawmill acts much like a two-channel amp.

Possibly the coolest thing, though, is the way it responds to a lighter or heavier playing touch. When a player uses a light touch, the pedal becomes noticeably cleaner, revealing its focus on clean tone. Then, as a player digs

in, things get grittier. And again, the "secret weapon" footswitchable Bias control makes the Sawmill feel more like a vintage tube amp and lets you blend between overdriven and distorted tones. You can use it to go from a slightly overdriven tone to all-out distortion that'll rock your socks off.

The Sawmill is what Luke hoped to create – clean tones are super-clean and the cleaner distortion

make this pedal a joy to play. Hearing the articulation, regardless of distortion or overdriven tone settings, is a wonderful thing. Every note is clean and focused. You can plug this pedal straight into a clean-amp plug-in or cab simulator and rock without worry of losing tone. Few pedals can boast this capability. It

"feels" like an old tube amp, but retains this wonderful definition.

There are few if any issues in the Sawmill's design, and the tone is all there. It reacts well with any type of guitar. It is *not* a peel-your-head-off metal box, so shred guys could be left wanting. But overall, it flat-out sounds killer. – **Sean O'Bryan Smith**

The Eco-Acoustic

Martin's OMC Cherry

More and more guitar manufacturers are offering instruments constructed of environmentally-sound materials like "sustainable" woods, meaning from a managed tree farm using quick-growing varieties that can be replenished with relative ease.

One example is the Martin OMC Cherry, a cutaway acoustic/electric made mostly of cherry, Sitka spruce, and maple.

A darn handsome guitar, the OMC Cherry has natural finish complemented by a soundhole rosette of inlaid cherry leaves, while the back has attractive cherry "wings" with a maple "wedge" in the middle. The top is spruce, while the sides and neck are cherry. Inside are cherry blocks and spruce braces, with mortis/tenon construction for the neck. Other touches include a katalox wood bridge and fingerboard, cherry fret dots (nice!), and a maple veneer on the headstock that is also handsome. A cherry leaf under the Martin logo concludes the OMC's tasteful design. Specs-wise, the guitar has a 25.4" neck, while the fingerboard sports 20 frets.

For hardware, the guitar has a Corian nut (yup, the same stuff used to make kitchen counters), a Tusq saddle compensated for the 16" radius, and open-geared tuners from Gotoh – a nice vintage touch.

Unplugged, the OMC Cherry is a good-sounding guitar, but with the cutaway one can't expect lots of low-end response. Then again, it's also not too bright – it has a warm acoustic tone. The guitar plays well, too, though the neck is on the beefier side. The neck meets the body at the 14th fret, but you can safely clear about 17 frets for pickin' and grinnin'. Also, the guitar is very light – apparently cherry doesn't pack the same heft as a mahogany-backed dreadnought.

Plugged in, the OMC's Fishman Ellipse Aura offers a number of features, such as an Anti-Feedback switch and Phase to "improve bass response at low volume and suppress feedback at higher volumes." There's also a Voicing switch that gives you optional EQ colors for the picking – one of them boosts bass (which is good for solo performers) while the other cuts bass (for when you play with a band and don't want

to compete with the other low-end instruments). Most guitarists will get thrills from the Sound Image control, which offers digital mic simulations and distance settings. There are four settings to choose from and you'll quickly find one that suits your tastes or helps compensate for any EQ deficiencies in a room.

All told, the OMC Cherry is an

MARTIN OMC CHERRY

Price: \$3,499

Contact: martinguitars.com.

elegant, nice-sounding guitar, especially when amplified. If you're purely an acoustic player and need more volume, you might want to look at other Martins with greater natural projection. The guitar is also on the pricier side, but again, you get what you pay for – here, a beautifully constructed/appointed American-made acoustic with a premium pre-amp. And, of course, you get the satisfaction of knowing your guitar isn't made from endangered or unsustainable woods, which is an increasingly valid consideration with any product these days. Kudos to Martin for creating an instrument for its environmentally conscious customers. It also serves to remind us that us pickers can do our part to help keep the planet healthy, green, and simply teeming with guitars. – **Pete Prown**

Land That Gig!

Guitar Player Wanted: Vocals a Plus DVD

Here's an interesting DVD – a how-to-sing tutorial specifically geared for guitarists. Host Karan Andrea is a singer/guitarist who taps into the truism that it's easier for players to land a gig if they can sing, even if it's just a little backup. The video kicks off with a funny gag showing a guitarist shredding his way during an

audition, but then being clueless when asked to sing; he even tries strumming the mic!

After that, Andrea gets down to business and begins by demonstrating breathing exercises and showing us the anatomy of vocals, focusing on important organs including the larynx, pharynx, and vocal chords.

