

Morley Mark Tremonti Power Wah £129

A durable new wah with a penchant for rock by **Chris Vinnicombe**



Tremonti's treasure: for scorching lead sound, the Power Wah is 'it'

FORMER

Creed guitarist Mark Tremonti's new project Alter Bridge incorporates plenty of scorching lead playing. The perfect time, then, for the Mark Tremonti signature Power Wah. Construction verges on the bomb-proof, echoing the

aesthetic stylings of Tremonti's Rectifier backline. On this example glue has been allowed to bleed out from underneath the edge of the rubber, which looks slightly untidy. This minor quibble aside, we were impressed by practical details like the tool-free battery access.

SOUNDS: As the Power Wah features an Electro-Optical switchless design, the filter is not engaged until you rock the pedal forward. Unlike a Crybaby or Vox, you can't lift your foot away and leave the treadle in a half-cocked position, as a large spring returns the pedal to its resting position, disengaging the effect. This may take some getting used to, but we found it liberating. With the Wah Boost control set to zero, the basic tonality has a distinctly modern voicing. The sweep is narrower than a vintage-style wah, eliminating the scratchiest part of the high end. The on-board boost brings in a raucous 20dB extra gain, more than enough to

MORLEY TREMONTI WAH TEST RESULTS	
Build quality	★★★★★
Features	★★★★★
Sound	★★★★★
Value for money	★★★★★

■ **WE LIKED** Bold, modern performance; hassle-free operation

■ **WE DISLIKED** Voicing may not possess enough subtlety for some genres

get you noticed in a dense mix. Also, the location of the rotary boost control means that it is possible to manipulate it 'on the fly' with a careful foot.

Verdict

A player's choice of wah is subjective and directly linked to musical context. Funksters may need a bigger sweep and bluesmen more refinement, but for players looking to push their tone through heavy guitars, the Tremonti Power Wah is brutally efficient. **A**

Guitarist RATING

★★★★★

KEY INFO MORLEY MARK TREMONTI POWER WAH **PRICE:** £129 **TYPE:** SWITCHLESS WAH **TEL:** WESTSIDE DISTRIBUTION 0141 248 4812

Lute Hole/Rio Grande Soundhole pickup

Two beautifully crafted products in an easy-fit soundhole pickup by **Benji Bartlett**



Lute Hole and Rio Grande: a marriage made in guitar heaven

★★★★★
Guitarist CHOICE

YOU MAY REMEMBER THE LUTE Hole feedback suppressing soundhole plugs we featured in issue 259. These fine hardwood acoustic guitar accessories have now been mated with

a soundhole pickup to make just about the prettiest-looking soundhole pickup we've ever seen. The pickup is custom designed for Lute Hole by Texas tonemongers Rio Grande. The single-coil unit is topped with mahogany and mounted just beneath the maple Lute Hole soundhole cover. A genuine 3.5m George L's cable is hard-wired to the pickup and can be easily snipped to the desired length, thanks to a solderless jack plug. Alternatively the cable can be retracted and fed into the body of the guitar should you prefer your repairer to do a more permanent installation using an end-pin jack socket.

SOUNDS: Wow! This pickup is simplicity itself to fit. Just slacken off the strings of your acoustic guitar and push-fit the pickup into the soundhole. With a little gentle wiggling from the side to seat the pickup, you're ready for action. The sound from the Rio-Grande pickup is impressively well-balanced, warm and rich, and a fundamentally acoustic tone. We tried the pickup in both spruce and cedar

LUTE HOLE PICKUP TEST RESULTS	
Build quality	★★★★★
Playability	★★★★★
Sound	★★★★★
Value for money	★★★★★

■ **WE LIKED** Gorgeous looks; great tone; easy to install

■ **WE DISLIKED** Doesn't fit smaller body guitars. No adjustable polepieces

soundboard guitars and were impressed with both the detail and faithful reproduction of each guitar.

Verdict

There are cheaper soundhole pickups but, at £115, the Lute Hole Soundhole is not extortionately priced. Considering the speed and ease of fit, and its consistent sound quality, players toting several acoustic guitars, or open mic devotees after a good amplified tone, should check it out. It looks amazing, sounds even better, requires no batteries and is a doddle to install – the perfect cure for the piezo blues. **A**

Guitarist RATING

★★★★★

KEY INFO LUTE HOLE/RIO GRANDE SOUNDHOLE P/U **PRICE:** £115 **TYPE:** ACOUSTIC P/U **TEL:** MADISON AND FIFTH 01858 446782

Zoom RhythmTrak RT-223 £169

A bijou boogie box for the budget beat enthusiast by Benji Bartlett


ZOOM'S GUITAR MULTI-FX UNITS have long been the choice of players seeking maximum bang for buck in a competitive market, but what about Zoom's drum machines? The latest addition to Zoom's RhythmTrak series looks set to bring the price of quality auto-drumming even lower. The unit follows its Smart Media-equipped Zoom Rhythm Trak RT-323 predecessor and thankfully has inherited many of the best features of its more pricey sibling. In essence, you've got a choice of over 500 rhythm patterns, 127 drum kits and 12 banks of bass-line programs. The unit is intuitively laid out with event-

triggered, light-up, velocity sensitive pads and a large LCD display.

SOUNDS: After marvelling at the demo song's assorted pastiches of famous rock and pop songs, the overall impression of the sounds on offer is a good one. The real-time recording function makes programming beats a painless and rewarding experience, and this solidly built unit feels reassuringly heavy-duty. There's even room for a little sonic tailoring in the form of compression and EQ as well as a choice of great-sounding reverbs.

Verdict

In terms of usability for guitarists, this little groove box kicks some serious ass! It has a versatile metronome that lights the drum pads in time with the beat (ideal for nailing those odd time signatures) and is easy to program.

Other functions include Groove Play mode, which triggers patterns simultaneously, allowing you to jam out great backing tracks to shred over. With rear guitar input, the RT-223 is a fine practice tool and recording pal at a reasonable price. 

Guitarist RATING

★★★★★

Zoom's beat box: practice aid with fine features

RHYTHMTRAK RT-223	TEST RESULTS
Build quality	★★★★★
Usability	★★★★★
Sound	★★★★★
Value for money	★★★★★
■ WE LIKED Solid construction; good quality sounds; easy to use	
■ WE DISLIKED MIDI in only	

KEY INFO ZOOM RHYTHMTRAK RT-223 **PRICE:** £169.95 **TYPE:** PR

Francisco Bros B40 Classical Guitar £240

★★★★★
Guitarist GOLD


Ridiculously affordable solid-topped Spanish-classical by Benji Bartlett

CLASSICAL GUITARS DON'T usually get much of a look-in in Guitarist with all the great electrics and amp reviews that you lot demand. But when a brand like Francisco Bros turns up on our shores, well it's our downright duty to share it with you. The guitars are being brought in by sole importers Highly Strung, and at first strum they compare very favourably against similarly priced instruments. The B40 model we have here features a solid cedar soundboard, solid rosewood side and a laminated rosewood back. If you're revisiting your classical guitar beginnings, or are looking for a nylon string guitar for recording, the Francisco Bros guitars could be just the instrument you've been looking for.

SOUNDS: The B40 has a wonderful broad tone with bold bass and sweet, sustaining highs. We couldn't believe just how good this guitar sounded. In terms of playability, Francisco Bros has managed to produce an instrument that plays well straight from the box and chords comfortably right up the neck. The comfortable neck, gold-plated machines, traditional slipper heel construction, ebony fingerboard and simple decoration make the B40 an attractive proposition.

Verdict

For this sort of money you'd be hard pushed to find a better-sounding, more comfortable-playing classical guitar. The build quality is truly impressive and the tone will have you double-checking the price tag trying to figure out why the instrument is so cheap. Our advice is to get in there quick

before someone realises they've made a mistake! As a classy extra voice for your collection, just £240 for this beautiful guitar is a steal. We reckon we'll be seeing a lot more from this maker in the future. 

Add another bow to your six-string artillery with this Spanish-built beauty

FRANCISCO BROS B40	TEST RESULTS
Build quality	★★★★★
Usability	★★★★★
Sound	★★★★★
Value for money	★★★★★
■ WE LIKED Solid cedar soundboard; magnificent tone	
■ WE DISLIKED Nothing	

KEY INFO FRANCISCO BROS B40 CLASSICAL **PRICE:** £240 **TYPE:** SOLID-TOPPED CLASSICAL **TEL:** HIGHLY STRUNG 01235 762000

Guitarist RATING

★★★★★