

# BLACKSTAR LT PEDALS

## ROUND-UP

£49-£99

Rugged compact enclosures and valve-like response without valves – the Brit amp gurus revolutionise dirt pedals all over again

Words: Michael Brown

**BACK** in 2007, a fresh-faced British amp company unveiled a series of valve-loaded overdrive pedals that rocked the stompbox world. That plucky company was Blackstar, and those pedals came from the HT series. The line sold like hot-rod dirt cakes, but ever dedicated, Blackstar set out to deliver a new range of pedals that did away with the HT series' bulky enclosures and finicky power requirements: enter the LT Pedals.

While they don't have valves, the LT Pedals boast a similar dynamic response to the HT series, thanks to a patent-applied-for clipping circuit, plus Blackstar's exclusive Infinite Shape Feature (ISF), which allows you to get both British and American tones at the turn of a dial. Elsewhere, the pedals feature compact yet sturdy metal enclosures, high-integrity buffered bypass and operation via nine-volt battery or power supply. All that, and the LTs are available at dirt-cheap prices, too – but do they still have 'star quality'?



### BLACKSTAR LT DRIVE £49

Dirt that handles like a dream

**THE** LT Drive is the lowest-gain stompbox of the quartet on test, with a range of tones that covers a touch of hair to pushed drive. It feels dynamic, whatever the level of dirt, and always remains faithful to the sound of your guitar. As with its HT series counterpart, the Drive doesn't include the Infinite Shape Feature, but the tone control is incredibly well judged and usable across its entire sweep. With a valve-like response and huge amount of volume on tap, the Drive is insanely good value for money, especially if you don't need the extra gain provided by its siblings.

### BLACKSTAR LT DIST £69

Distortion that's not to be Dist

**THIS** pedal has the honour of being the lowest priced product to feature Blackstar's patented ISF control, which the company reckons will let you find "the sound in your head". Certainly, there are bountiful tones to be uncovered here, from mid-heavy British crunch to smooth American distortion, with plenty of sweet spots in between. All this control can make the Dist a little tricky to dial in: we found that each tweak of the ISF control required another adjustment of the tone control, which means your ideal tone can take a little time to find. It's worth it for the huge distortion sounds on offer, though.



**BLACKSTAR**  
**LT DUAL £99**

Double positive

Total  
Guitar  
**BEST BUY**

**MEET** the big daddy: a dual-channel overdrive that takes you from light break-up to all kinds of raunchy dirt. Channel 1 offers transparent drive that progresses to a smooth, compressed distortion, while Channel 2 picks up where 1 leaves off, from hot bluesy solos to high-gain dirt for monster riffs and solos. Having shared tone and ISF controls across both channels initially rang alarm bells for us, but the highly focused tone control ensures this isn't a problem. And while the switching can be a little confusing at first (you have to hit the active channel's switch in order to bypass the pedal), you soon get used to it. All the LT Pedals are impressive, but the Dual's range of tones makes it worth the extra cash.

**BLACKSTAR**  
**LT METAL £79**

None more black

**YOU** already know what the LT Metal is going to deliver: all-out aggressive gain, and loads of it. What you might not expect is just how good it sounds – every tone is well defined, with a huge bottom end, making it ideal for seven- and eight-string players. Those ISF and tone controls prove indispensable, aping big metal amps from both sides of the Atlantic, and sculpting the high-end without ever sounding fizzy. If it's skyscraper-demolishing metal tones you're after, the LT Metal has to be top of your list.

**AT A GLANCE****TYPE:** Overdrive/  
distortion pedals**CONTROLS:** DRIVE: gain,  
tone, level; DIST & METAL:  
gain, level, ISF, tone; DUAL:  
Ch 1 gain, Ch 2 gain, tone,  
Ch 1 level, Ch 2 level, ISF**SOCKETS:** Input,  
output, power**BYPASS:** Buffered**POWER:** 9V battery or 9V  
power supply (not included)**CONTACT:** Blackstar  
Amplification 01604 652844  
www.blackstaramps.com**BLACKSTAR LT DRIVE**

SUMMARY	FEATURES				
	SOUND QUALITY				
	VALUE FOR MONEY				
	BUILD QUALITY				
	USABILITY				
	OVERALL RATING	★	★	★	★

**BLACKSTAR LT DIST**

SUMMARY	FEATURES				
	SOUND QUALITY				
	VALUE FOR MONEY				
	BUILD QUALITY				
	USABILITY				
	OVERALL RATING	★	★	★	★

**BLACKSTAR LT DUAL**

SUMMARY	FEATURES				
	SOUND QUALITY				
	VALUE FOR MONEY				
	BUILD QUALITY				
	USABILITY				
	OVERALL RATING	★	★	★	★

**BLACKSTAR LT METAL**

SUMMARY	FEATURES				
	SOUND QUALITY				
	VALUE FOR MONEY				
	BUILD QUALITY				
	USABILITY				
	OVERALL RATING	★	★	★	★

Total  
Guitar  
**BEST BUY**