

ROUND UP

LunaStone

The Danish innovators reveal three new boutique options

Words Trevor Curwen **Photography** Joby Sessions

Since its inception in 2012 Denmark-based LunaStone has attracted several of TC Electronics' top team to the company, while making a mark specialising in drive pedals based around their TrueOverDrive technology. This drive is created purely from cascading gain stages rather than clipping diodes, and it helps to create a sound and playing feel close to that of a valve amp with its natural compression.

TrueOverDrive was last seen in these pages implemented in the TOD 1 and TOD 2 – two compact pedals with soft-touch switching, large red LEDs and knobs placed in a diagonal configuration for easier onstage tweaking with your foot.

That platform has been built on with two new overdrive pedals, but where the TOD1 and TOD2 each offered a subtly different take on the overdrive experience, LunaStone seems to have made it more niche with the release of the Blue Drive and the Smooth Drive, seemingly aimed at players of specific genres. Also new is the Boost 18 that replaces The Pusher boost pedal in LunaStone's line-up.




LUNASTONE

Boost 18 £89

VIDEO & AUDIO ► <http://bit.ly/guitaristextra>

The Pusher had been LunaStone's sole clean boost pedal for some time and demand for a refresh became strong. After responding to requests from various users, the company upped the amount of boost from 15dB to 18dB, as hinted at in the name of this new replacement. Same as The Pusher, the Boost 18 is a 9V-adaptor-powered mini-sized booster with offset connections and a single chicken-head knob to dial in the amount of boost.

The JFET circuitry here is designed to add tonal enrichment as well as boost, so even with no boost added, we found a welcome lift in clarity. The extra 3dB of boost might not seem much but it provides more leeway for some applications. Full on it certainly drives our clean amp into edgy raunch, while lower boost settings give us naturally voiced 'extra channels' for driven amps and dirt pedals. 

VERDICT We always liked the Pusher and the extra 3dB here makes this a worthwhile successor

Tech Spec

ORIGIN: China
TYPE: Boost pedal
FEATURES: True bypass, up to 20dB of boost
CONTROLS: Boost, bypass footswitch
CONNECTIONS: Standard input, standard output
POWER: 9V DC adaptor, 2mA
DIMENSIONS: 37 (w) x 91 (d) x 33mm (h)

8/10



LUNASTONE

Blue Drive 1 £169

VIDEO & AUDIO ► <http://bit.ly/guitaristextra>

The Blue Drive 1 explores that area where boost turns to overdrive, starting off as a fine clean boost with the drive down, moving on to add grit to a medium-level drive, along with a wide-ranging Tone control, which can get strident in the top end if ice-pick tone is called for. Nicely responsive, this is a pedal that reacts whether you are gently caressing the strings or digging in with aggression. LunaStone states the inspiration for the pedal comes from the blues genre and the marketing of the name reflects that.

However, we believe that an overdrive is an overdrive and shouldn't be limited to a particular musical ghetto. This is a particularly good one and while it – justifiably – might be right up a blues player's street, it's really for anyone who wants to extend the range of their clean amp into something a little grittier with more top-end bite. **G**

VERDICT A responsive low-to-medium level overdrive with a cutting edge, whatever your musical preference

Tech Spec

ORIGIN: Denmark
TYPE: Overdrive pedal
FEATURES: True bypass,
CONTROLS: Volume, Tone, Drive, bypass footswitch
CONNECTIONS: Standard input, standard output
POWER: 9V battery or 9V DC adaptor, 75mA
DIMENSIONS: 73 (w) x 114 (d) x 51mm (h)



9/10



LUNASTONE

Smooth Drive 1 £169

VIDEO & AUDIO ► <http://bit.ly/guitaristextra>

LunaStone's vision for the Smooth Drive 1 encompasses the silkier side of the blues and a little jazz – name-checking BB King, Larry Carlton and 335s in their marketing. And certainly the tonal character is more subdued. Or, in other words, it's smoother than the Blues 1 – not so strident and a little fuller in the midrange, although it can still get a bit snarky at high Tone and Gain knob levels.

The pedal is designed as a response to players who wanted a gentler version of the TOD 1 and, as such, it has less gain and compression than that pedal, allowing more leeway in knob juxtaposition for just breaking up and low level drive tones. There is also a nice line in enhanced clean boost, all delivered with real responsiveness. Overall it's a great all-round pedal to place in front of a decent amp and compares very favourably to an Analogman KOT. **G**

VERDICT Versatility in a boost pedal – a clean or a tonally focused boost of your own choosing

Tech Spec

ORIGIN: Denmark
TYPE: Overdrive pedal
FEATURES: True bypass,
CONTROLS: Volume, Tone, Drive, bypass footswitch
CONNECTIONS: Standard input, standard output
POWER: 9V battery or 9V DC adaptor, 75mA
DIMENSIONS: 73 (w) x 114 (d) x 51mm (h)



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