

SWELL's G-TOD Pedal

by John Strobel

How does a new pedal cut through the clutter in a very competitive market that continues to get a steady, at times daily stream of new products? When you include all the digital modeling amps, effects processors and pedal boards there seems to be little need or hope for another analogue overdrive pedal. Well that was until the G-TOD by SWELL joined the pedal party.

The **Guitar-TubeOverDrive** ("G-TOD") is a vacuum tube design utilizing a 12AX7 that is typically found in only the finest boutique brands and at \$270, its one of SWELL's lowest price units so it certainly qualifies as a high end boutique pedal. SWELL Pedal Co has been around for a few years and this is my first encounter with any of their pedals.

It's a nice cream colored small box with four knobs, lightweight and comes

with ac adapter. The tone controls are very simple and intuitive. The tone knob is a high cut, since you have two drives the first drive is au-



to- automatically engaged once the pedal is turned on.

The drive button activates drive 2. The circuit is built around a 12AX7 vacuum tube that is known for adding perceived

"warmth" to sound. Added bonus - you can get totally different tones by using different brands of tubes, such as Electro Harmonix, Groove Tubes (12ax7M Mullard re-issue), and Tungsol tubes, etc. You can also switch out the stock JJ/Tesla 12AX7 for a 12AT7 tube, the AT7 tube is essentially the same thing, but it has 70% gain of a 12AX7. I was not able to test different tubes but the possibility of controlling your tone, available gain and compression at the tube level on this pedal is very cool.

To me good tone inspires good playing and it has always been that way for me.

The G-TOD definitely inspires good playing every time I plugged in. My jam buddies also loved my tone, which was a major plus. "Hey is that really you?" We played for several hours through both tube and solid-state amps all sounding fantastic. I tried it through several different guitars and the G-TOD is the real deal! It acts like a tube guitar amp in how it responds to dynamics. When I rolled back the volume on the

guitar it will clean up, which is something I have not experienced in others. It was clear, real, transparent and very quiet. This is the pedal I've been looking for. The G-TOD feels more like channel switching rather than a pedal in front of my amp.

Features

- 100% Analog Circuitry
- SWELL Tone Circuit
- High Voltage TUBE(12AX7) Overdrive Designed for Guitar
- Drive 1 & 2 Selectable via Footswitch
- CONTROLS: Drive 1 / Drive 2 / Tone / Level
- Tuned Amp Out
- Record Out with Speaker Simulation
- True-Bypass Footswitching
- Top-Mounted Jacks
- 12vac 1000ma Power Supply
- MADE IN USA - Nashville, TN
- 10 YEAR WARRANTY

If you want to learn more about SWELL and their products check out their website swellpedals.com they have great content as well as a blog/forum. For many of us with more gear than sense it has become clear to me that I really need the G-TOD and can replace or at least put aside my other OD pedals. For those of you who are in the market for a new overdrive, the SWELL G-TOD needs to be on your "must try" list. Once you play through it you will want one too!