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Gear Reviews

One-Ton Overdrive

Way Huge Green Rhino Overdrive MK II

The original Way Huge Green Rhino was Jeorge Tripps' take on the classic Tube Screamer circuit. Tripps saw the 808's lack of low-end as a liability, and built a bit more thump into his mid-'90s version. With Tripps' move to Dunlop, Way Huge recently reintroduced the Way Huge line; some are true reissues, while most have features not included in the original – Tripps is not George Lucas, and fortunately, there are no Jar Jar's in the bunch!

The Green Rhino MK II carries the trademark anodized aluminum housing and large black knobs, but has many new-and-novel features, like a secondary set of controls; a 100Hz knob controls a whopping 12db low-frequency boost/cut and a Curve knob controls upper-mid and some highs (the manual refers to it as "corner frequencies"). Its updated relay system allows true-bypass switching that can lock in bypass mode if its battery fails. Also, AC-input protection prevents damage if an incorrect power supply is plugged in. Finally, the unit has an easy-to-use battery door that doesn't require a screwdriver. The back of the pedal has a single input and output jack along with a DC input jack that can accept a standard 9-volt DC center pin negative power supply.

To put the pachyderm through its paces, we used a Gibson ES-335 and a Fender Tele, both running through a Dr. Z Carmen Ghia (which runs on two EL84 tubes) with a single 12" speaker and a '71 Fender Bassman head with a Celestion Seventy/80 running a 4x12" cab. With Volume, Tone, and Drive set low, and the 100Hz and Curve knobs at noon, the 335 through the Dr.Z started with a very pleasing low-level drive. Goosing up the 100Hz knob smoothed out low-end response until it was dimed, when it came on a little stronger than most would need with humbuckers. With the Tele, though, the upper reaches of the 100Hz control's range worked well for beefing up the bridge pickup.

Pedal modders have, for years, been adding low-end response to 808 circuits, but here, those tones are extremely usable and controllable. The 100Hz knob also cuts low-end when turned to the left of its center detent.

Setting 100Hz back to neutral, we turned our attention to the Curve knob, which adjusts the clipping stage of the circuit. So, at lower settings, it has less effect and is more pronounced at higher gain settings. Curve helps frame the Rhino's tone, giving it either a bit more brightness along with a more-open midrange at its minimum setting, or a slightly darker sound with more midrange focus at higher settings. Again, the big upside versus a traditional 808 is the control over this.

The Volume control has plenty of level on tap for any of the drive settings, and can, of course, be used to boost signal. The Tone is a high-cut, yet has a sweeter range than most 808s. Drive goes from slightly dirty to fairly raunchy, but never tries to be a distortion or fuzz unit. The unit doesn't do a true clean sound, so obviously, it won't work as a clean boost.

To many, the thought of another 808-type circuit hitting the market isn't all that exciting. But then, Jeorge Tripps is known for creating wonderful toys, and even without its 100Hz and Curve knobs, this pedal is superlative. Factor in those controls, and this pedal is an incredibly versatile overdrive. **– *Zac Childs*** VG

WAY HUGE GREEN RHINO MK II
Price: $129.99
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