

BluGuitar AMP1 Iridium Edition

What the BluGuitar AMP1 did for classic amp tones, the BluGuitar AMP1 Iridium Edition does for modern metal amp tones. This isn't a tweaked version of the acclaimed AMP1 – it's a new build, designed from scratch for merciless metal guitar tone. **Nick Jennison** tells us more.

BRAINCHILD

of amp designer, engineer and guitarist Thomas Blug, the BluGuitar AMP1 was a genuine paradigm shift in the world of guitar amplifiers. It offered players a highly tweakable 4 channel, 100w amp with a full valve preamp section in a pedal format. It was an overnight success with touring professionals and weekend warriors alike, thanks to its unrivalled portability, ease of use and killer tones.



That said, the original “silver” AMP1 had a distinctly “classic” voicing. It certainly wasn’t lacking gain, with tons of saturation on tap, but the tone was perhaps a little “old school” for more aggressive styles. Enter the new Mercury and Iridium editions of the AMP1 - tweaked versions of the original to suit players with different tastes. While the Mercury is tighter and more aggressive than the original “Silver” version, the Iridium is pure balls-to-the-wall metal in a a sexy, none-more-black package.

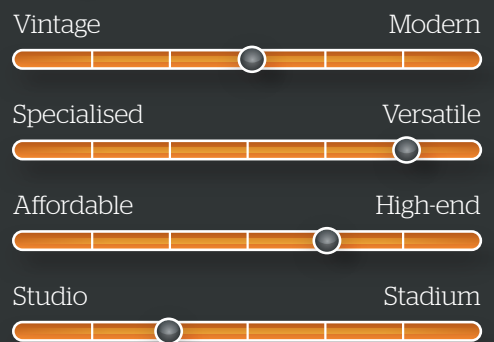
Offering a high-headroom clean channel and three distortion channels with independent tone and volume controls, an on-board boost to further tighten and saturate your tone, two flavours of gate and a lush digital reverb, the AMP1 Iridium is a veritable Swiss army knife of heavy tones. To be honest, it’s hard to imagine needing anything else for a metal gig, except maybe a wah, a tuner and delay - which you can plumb in via the FX loop.

Metal tones are deceptively hard to get right. There needs to be ample low end, but it has to be tight and articulate. The highs need to bite hard, but they can’t be abrasive. The mids need to be focussed, but not pinched and honky. I’m happy to report that the AMP1 Iridium strikes this delicate balance superbly well across all three of its overdrive channels. Each offers a different dynamic feel and compression: “vintage” is perfect for classic 80s metal, while “classic” is open and articulate and “modern” is tight and focussed. The trim pots on the side of the pedal make it very easy to tailor the sound of each mode to your tastes. I found that boosting the highs on one mode for rhythms and rolling off the highs and boosting the volume of another for leads worked very well indeed. You can switch between any of these modes using either MIDI or the optional Remote1 footswitch. »



BluGuitar AMP1 Iridium Edition

The Breakdown



For fans of

Vintage tones with a modern twist

100w in a tiny format.

Excellent boost, reverb and gate

For more information, please visit: bluguitar.com



The clean channel, by contrast, is extremely clean and headroomy, with a distinct mid-range scoop that will help even the most congested of humbuckers to sparkle. It's ideal for arpeggiated clean parts and eerie ambient parts, but you might want to look elsewhere if you need broken-up tweed tones.

The three onboard effects are excellent, and tuned perfectly to work with the sounds on the AMP1 Iridium. The boost is similar to the ubiquitous Tube Screamer, but with a slightly more aggressive upper midrange presence - it's ideal for taking solo tones

over the top, or for further tightening up the already tight tones this amp offers. The reverb is rich and immersive with warm highs and clear lows, and it works equally well to add space to clean and lead tones. It's activated by the onboard reverb footswitch, and this switch also sets the gate to "soft" - this is a super clever feature, allowing you to use the "metal" gate for tight staccato passages and switching straight to the sustain-preserving "soft" mode for reverb-laden leads.

Of course, all of this is no good if you can't be heard, and the AMP1 Iridium delivers



“It’s also a **supremely comfortable** guitar to play thanks to the 25” scale length, PRS ‘Wide Fat’ neck profile and beautiful fretwork...”

here in spades. The poweramp reconfigures to offer a full 100w through either 8 or 16ohm cabs, and it can get brutally loud if you need to. There’s also a recording out for running direct, which offers analogue speaker simulation that can be defeated if you’d prefer to use your own IRs. »





The BluGuitar AMP1 Iridium offers the kind of tone, attack and versatility you'd expect from a big heavy 4-channel amp head, but in a pedalboard format. If you're a touring musician, the portability is a godsend, but even if you're not, this little amp offers some of the most convincing metal tones I've heard in a long time for a fraction of the cost of most high-gain amps. Very highly recommended!

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