



Hot Box

CARVIN X1 ALL-TUBE GUITAR PREAMP PEDAL

By Chris Gill

A GUITAR PREAMP can add new life to an amp by expanding its tonal range, dynamics and performance. Even better is a versatile preamp like the Carvin X1 all-tube guitar preamp pedal that also sounds great on its own and can be used to drive a power amp for live performances or plugged directly into a recording system in the studio. While the Carvin X1 is packaged in a pedal format, it's packed with features comparable to standalone multi-channel amps and professional preamp systems. When it comes to bang-for-the-buck and performance, the Carvin X1 is one of the most attractive preamps we've encountered recently.

FEATURES The X1 is designed to offer the tones and versatility of Carvin's esteemed X-100B amplifier in a compact format, and as a result it's packed with more features than many combo amps. The X1 is driven by two

12AX7 tubes that provide four gain stages to deliver everything from pristine clean tones to extreme high-gain distortion. Individual Rhythm and Lead channels provide instant access to two separate tones.

All of the controls are mounted in a recessed chamber on the top panel and consist of individual volume controls for the Rhythm and Lead channels, a Rhythm channel bright switch, a drive control for the Lead channel, bass, mid, treble and presence EQ controls shared by both channels, master volume, a bypass/loop switch (for selecting standard bypass or engaging the pedal's effects loop with the bypass footswitch) and a 2x12/4x12 switch for the cabinet simulation feature. A graphic EQ provides +/-12dB gain for 75Hz, 150Hz, 500Hz, 1.5kHz and 3kHz, and a pair of switches allow users to set the graphic EQ so it's automatically engaged for either, both or none of the channels. Four footswitches

engage bypass/loop, graphic EQ, Drive channel gain boost and channel switching functions. Rear panel jacks consist of 1/4-inch input and output, mono send and return and a 1-watt output that can drive an external 4 or 8 ohm speaker cabinet.

PERFORMANCE Much more than a Carvin X-100B in a box, the X1 delivers a multitude of stunning clean, overdrive and high-gain distortion tones suitable for any style of music from smooth jazz to extreme metal. The cab simulation delivers dynamic and harmonically rich direct recording tones, and the unit greatly expands any amp's tonal versatility whether it is plugged directly to an amp's input or effects loop. Thanks to its two-channel design and footswitchable graphic EQ section, the X1 can instantly expand the tonal versatility and sound quality of even the humblest guitar rig.

CHEAT SHEET



STREET PRICE:
\$449
MANUFACTURER:
Carvin Corp.,
carvinaudio.com

- The Rhythm channel with its bright switch and Lead channel with switchable gain boost and drive control provide instant access to two distinct guitar tones

- The five-band graphic EQ can be assigned to either, both or no channels and switched on and off with its own dedicated footswitch

- **THE BOTTOM LINE**
The Carvin X1 is one of the most versatile preamp pedals available on the market today, providing the tonal versatility of a multi-channel amp in a compact package that's ideal for any live rig or studio setup