



MOOER RED TRUCK £220

Looking for a compact pedalboard with just the essential effects? Take one of these for a test drive and you might want to keep on truckin'

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What You Need To Know

- 1 Why Red Truck?**
Er, look at it from above, see the 'cab window', see the 'six wheels'?
- 2 Who is Mooer?**
A Chinese company known for their micro pedals, many of which are based on classic vintage pedals.
- 3 There are a lot of knobs...**
Yep, but don't be put off: each section has its own set of knobs. Just think of it as a bunch of separate pedals.

We are all familiar with the hi-tech digital multi-effects pedal, typified by the Line 6 Helix. But there is another sort of multi-effects pedal that is perhaps not so well known: the sort that's almost like a bunch of stompboxes glued together side-by-side, perhaps less versatile but having the advantage of taking up less floor-space, making it more portable than some of the fully-loaded behemoths. The roots of this design go back a long way, but the genre had something of a resurgence with Tech 21's Flyrig, designed to be just that: a rig that could fly in your guitar case while you were sitting in economy class. Mooer has looked at that

concept and released its own take. The resulting Red Truck is eminently portable (and even comes with a cute lightweight carrying case) but has more effects, extended connectivity and the ability to store and recall a small number of presets.

There are five footswitchable effects: analogue drive, distortion, and digital effects for modulation, delay and reverb. There's also a boost section at the start of the chain, selected via a toggle switch. The modulation effect offers a choice of tremolo, phaser or chorus/flanger while the delay has digital, echo and analog. A sixth footswitch offers tap tempo for the delay and modulation, together or independently,



1. Activate an effect and not only does the green footswitch ring light up – its knobs light up red

2. This shows whether you are in Live (L) or Preset (P) mode but it becomes a tuner display if you hold the Tap footswitch

and can also call up the onboard tuner. There are two modes available: Live, which you can use just like you would five individual pedals; and Preset, where the five footswitches can call up any combination of active effects that you have saved.

This is not an entirely closed system either as you can add your own pedals via an effects loop located in the signal chain between distortion and modulation: it's always active so you have to use the connected effect's own footswitches.

Sounds

While the Red Truck is perfectly at home in front of an amp (or two amps if you use

While compact it has more effects and extended connectivity

the stereo output), those send and return sockets also allow you to use the four cable method of connection, whereby you can have boost, drive and distortion in front of your amp while modulation, delay and reverb are neatly placed in its effects loop.

Further flexibility is added by a stereo headphone output with cabinet simulation which, besides offering silent practice, can

deliver a stereo signal to a mixer or audio interface for recording.

The Pure Boost offers up to 20dB of clean boost, switched in by a toggle switch. It's disappointing, however, that footswitching is not available because it's a classy sounding boost that can give a real kick to the front end of your amp or add extra power to the Red Truck's Drive and Distortion sections. With a degree of enhancement via Bass and Treble knobs, we'd be tempted just to leave it on all the time simply for that.

The 'Truck's Drive section is based on Moer's Rumble Drive, which is said to be a Dumble-influenced pedal. To our

THE RIVALS

**TECH21 FLYRIG5 £329**

With Tech21's long-established analogue Sansamp technology at its heart providing amp simulation (or overdrive), plus reverb, plexi distortion and a boost with independent footswitches. At the end of the signal chain is a delay, voiced to sound like a vintage tape echo, with a separate tap tempo footswitch.

www.tech21nyc.com

**VALETON DAPPER £145**

An effects strip featuring overdrive, distortion and delay (with a tap tempo footswitch) effects plus a tuner and an FX loop. There's also selectable cab simulation for recording or going straight into a PA. Besides the original model there's the downsized Dapper Mini (£85) and Dapper Dark (£152) with boost, distortion, chorus and delay.

www.valeton.net

**CARL MARTIN QUATTRO £439**

The Quattro pre-dates the FlyRig and puts four effects into one chassis, beginning with a compressor/limiter and running into a two-channel overdrive that has crunch and hi-gain options selectable via a second footswitch. You get vintage-style chorus and echo, and an effects loop sits between the overdrive and chorus.

www.carlmartin.com

**BOSS MS-3 £399**

The brand-new MS-3 is described as a "new-concept pedalboard solution". While decidedly more hi-tech than the others as it's compact it could be used as a standalone effects processor for travelling light. It can run six internal pedals (there are 112 effects types onboard) as well as integrating three external pedals.

www.roland.co.uk



The six effects are practical with the added bonus of a preset mode

ears it delivered amp-like overdrive in the Tubescreamer ballpark with a similar enhanced midrange. For more dirt, this time with a Brit amp flavour, the distortion section offers raunch up to full-on stack sounds with tonal sculpting via treble, mid and bass controls and a mid boost for added girth. So far so good.

The modulation section is quite versatile, with its three different effects and a level knob to adjust the amount added to the dry sound as well as the usual rate and depth knobs. The tremolo isn't the soft and rounded sine-wave throb of a Fender amp but has more of an aggressive on/off square wave vibe to it while the phaser delivers in a 1970s MXR orange box-style, and the chorus/flanger has some lush sounds including a very nice rotary.

Delay is basic but practical – the three variations offering different angles on how the repeats fade away – while reverb



3. Effects work in conjunction with the tap tempo footswitch to set delay time and modulation speed
4. Reverb is one of the better effects with plenty of variation
5. Add in your own favourite pedal(s) between the distortion and modulation sections or use the sockets as part of the 4-cable method
6. Though basic, delay offers analog, echo and digital options



has plenty of variation up to large ambient spaces with the added spice of both modulation and a shimmer effect.

Collectively, the six effects give you a pretty practical pedalboard to use conventionally, but you get a bonus with Preset mode when you want to bring a couple or more effects in at the same time – perhaps distortion with a touch of delay for solos, for example.

Verdict

This could be the perfect halfway house for someone who wants to eschew individual pedals (board-mounted or not) for the convenience of an all-in-one unit, but doesn't want to go the full digital route with a massive floor unit. The Red Truck

is also a convenient standby unit that can travel to gigs in your guitar case, ready to be plugged into the PA if your amp fails, or even be your sole piece of ancillary equipment if travelling light is an absolute necessity.

As always with this type of unit, the drawback is that you are stuck with one set of sounds from a single manufacturer which may involve some compromise. For example, you might love the sound of the drive but think the distortion is a bit meh. To be fair, though, Moer has actually endowed it with usable sounds that have broad appeal and you can always add a couple of your own pedals, although that may defeat the object if cutting down onstage clutter is your goal. **G**



MOOER RED TRUCK

ORIGIN: China

TYPE: Strip-style multi-FX

FEATURES: Tap tempo, tuner, included carrying case

PRESETS: 5

EFFECTS: Boost, Drive, Distortion, Modulation (tremolo, phaser, chorus/flanger), Delay (analog, echo, digital), Reverb

CONTROLS: Boost knobs x 3 (Boost, Bass, Treble), Boost on/off, Drive knobs x 3 (Volume, Gain, Tone), Distortion knobs x 5 (Treble, Mid, Bass, Level, Gain), Distortion Mid Boost on/off, Mod knobs x 3 (Level, Rate, Depth), Mod type selector, Mod tap division selector, Delay knobs x 3 (Level, Time, Feedback), Delay type selector, Delay tap division selector, Reverb knobs x 6 (Level, Decay, Tone, Shimmer, Mod Depth, Mod Rate), Footswitches x 6

CONNECTIONS: Standard guitar input, standard main outputs (L/Mono, R), standard stereo phones output, standard Send, standard Return

POWER: 9V adapter (300mA)

DIMENSIONS: 530 (w) x 303 (d) x 93mm (h)

Strings and Things

01273 440 442

www.moeraudio.co.uk

www.stringsandthings.co.uk

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PROS: Easily transportable compact size; essential effects in one package; headphone output with speaker simulation

CONS: Boost section doesn't have a footswitch