



become nearly impossible to grasp or comprehend what is being built and how all of these effects past and present truly compare.

Well, in recognition of the obvious obsession with dis-

tortion devices, we are introducing you to still another stalwart entry in this edition of the *Quest* that produces a remarkably wide range of pleasing, busted up tones to feed your rock & roll fantasies...

## The Rockett Boost



One look at the Rockett Boost inspires a flurry of reactions. Lots of toggles... no markings offering a hint as to what they might do... nice, shiny copper box... and then there is the

box the Rockett Boost arrives in – an expensive-looking, matte black paper container classy enough to hold jewelry or a Devon teacup, and it actually does hold a pair of flimsy white cotton gloves tucked inside. So you think, “Hmmm, somebody cares about the little things...” And when you inevitably open up the Rockett Boost, whether to replace the 9V battery or to simply ogle the internals, the meticulously twisted wire pairs and the obsessively neat and tidy layout will prompt you to again mutter, “Hmmm, someone cares



about the little things...” Clearly, they do. Could this be Über Boost – the Big Foot of boost pedals?

While the function of the symmetrical array of four toggle switches and two knobs are comprehended easily

enough, this is not a tool for the impatient or impulsive. The top toggle is a line buffer designed to compensate for signal loss caused by multiple pedals. We didn’t need it, but if you do, it’s there, and it works. The top left knob is a straight-up, global tone pot, and we *like* tone controls on boost pedals. The top right knob is a boost level control, and it isn’t subtle (a little goes a long way). The lower left toggle is ‘punch’/down, ‘bite’/up. The center toggle yields ‘cut’/down, ‘boost’/up, and the lower right toggle is a 3-way with ‘Fat,’ ‘Clean’ and ‘Treble’ settings. Now, what does this mean?



Essentially, 21 different tone and boost stage options accessed from the three lower toggle switches with global control over tone

and level. For example, the Fat/Clean/Treble toggle settings deliver just what the descriptions imply. Combine any of those settings with the mondo-intense ‘Boost’ or more reserved ‘Cut’ settings on the center toggle while choosing either ‘Punch’ (thick) or ‘Bite’ (sharper) from the left toggle, and season to taste with the global tone and level knobs. Things get really interesting when you also begin to experiment with different pickup selections on your guitar du jour as the Rockett interacts with it and your amp... The Rockett delivers an extremely wide range of selectable *voices* and *different gain stages* from one source that are easily understood and managed once you become familiar with the controls. And where some boost and distortion effects may produce an inherent EQ notch or ‘bump,’ roll off treble as gain is increased, or chop off bass frequencies, the Rockett gives you the ability to precisely manage variable EQ and boost intensity stages to obtain some very interesting and unique results well beyond the capabilities of most ‘boost’ pedals.

Understand, however, that the Rockett far surpasses our concept of a ‘clean boost’ that incrementally expands your unaffected sound, making it merely ‘bigger.’ Granted, the toggle settings are designed to create different levels of boost intensity as a starting point, but the ‘Level’ knob ramps things up very quickly in all of the toggled settings, and more time and experimentation are required to tap into the subtle boost settings we would describe as a ‘clean boost.’ We’re not saying the Rockett is a gonzo runaway train, but it can easily start a grease fire on your pedal board (and enjoy doing it). This is simply a *badass* tool for rockers, and we conjured some very scary and unforgettable blues tones from it as well. Rest

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assured that when you step on the Rockett, you will only be limited by your own limitations.

The Rockett Boost is also dead quiet and undetectable in the signal chain when turned off. It can run on a supplied 9 volt battery or separate 9 volt power supply (not included). For more of what the builder describes as a “Hi Fi” sound that increases the width of the tonal frequencies, an upgraded version can be ordered that includes an Auricap in a coupling cap position and a few other “secret tweaks.” According to the Rockett web site, the current lead time for orders is 4-6 weeks. Cost: \$349.00 [To](#)

[www.rockettpedals.com](http://www.rockettpedals.com), 720-936-8623

## Acoustic Pickup

### L.R. Baggs M1



There are more than a few options for acoustic pickups today, and most of them are sold with the promise of exceptionally realistic ‘acoustic’

tone (which to us, is the sound of strings amplified by a fine wooden box and top). If you happen to play a rare old acoustic guitar and wish to amplify it, popular under-saddle piezo rigs can lose their appeal quickly – do you really want a tech putting his hands all over your sweet baby to fit a piezo under the saddle? And of course, there is the infamous piezo ‘quack’ that allowed us to trade unbridled feedback for something less than a warm, rich and airy amplified acoustic



tone. Our first adventure with acoustic amplification occurred in 1979 and it was actually pretty successful... On the advice of legendary Atlanta

guitar builder and repairman Jay Riness (he would never have called himself a tech), we installed a nickel-sized Shadow transducer made in what was then West Germany, using a wad of supplied putty and positioning the Shadow flush



against the underside of the spruce top of our 1952 Gibson J45, adjacent to the treble side of the bridge. Admittedly crude by today’s standards,

perhaps, but the Shadow worked *very well* as a passive transducer with our Gibson at moderate listening room volume, and that amazing flexible German putty held it in place for thirty years until we finally pulled it out last week.

We bought an L.R. Baggs M1 passive soundhole pickup for \$139.00 including delivery online, and since our old J45 had already been equipped with a brass strapjack, installing the M1 took all of five minutes. The Baggs strapjack contacts are gold plated, the shaft is adjustable to fit different endblock lengths, and high-quality Mogami wire is used. According to the L.R. Baggs product info, the key to the M1s sound is TriAxial Dynamic Technology that allows the M1 to sense both string and top vibrations. The M1 is actually a dual-coil humbucking design in which the hum-canceling coil is suspended under the main coil by a tuned support that allows it to move in three dimensions. The primary coil moves with the guitar top, creating a body signal in the suspended secondary coil. The polepieces in the M1 are also completely adjustable using the tool supplied.

Well, the Baggs not only looks right in our J45 – it sounds fantastic, reproducing the warmth, sweetness and clarity of the Gibson without the artificially exaggerated, crispy presence of a piezo. Chords are balanced, rich and full with beautiful definition and airy sustain, and single notes are extraordinarily clear, woody and natural sounding. The M1 does indeed capture the acoustic qualities of the guitar, yet we experienced no problems with feedback or top vibration in very close proximity to an acoustic amp set at volume levels that would be required for a large room. No boominess,



chirpy treble tones or exaggerated string noise from the fretboard or fingerpick-

ing... In fact, our first round with the M1 in the Gibson consumed two hours, encouraged in no small part by a great guitar and old friend that has never sounded better. Stay tuned for future reviews of the best acoustic amps as well...[To](#)

[www.lrbaggs.com](http://www.lrbaggs.com)