

PAWN
STARSLAZY J
CRUISER

Who better to design a high-quality amp booster than a man who makes high-quality amps? Daniel Steinhardt takes a pleasure cruise with Lazy J

Many of you will no doubt already be aware of the Lazy J Amplifier company, which is currently making some truly remarkable amps right here in the UK. Jesse Hoff, the man behind these amps, is also a big fan of pedals, specifically booster pedals. Over the years he has been working on and refining a unique OD/booster designed to integrate seamlessly into the front of an amplifier working at a variety of levels.

When I heard about it I had to get one for myself to try it out, and let me tell you, this thing rocks! The 'Cruiser' has a number of independent gain stages that work together to give you a huge variety of tones – everything from pristine clean boost, to edgy rhythm, to balls to the wall rockin' out.

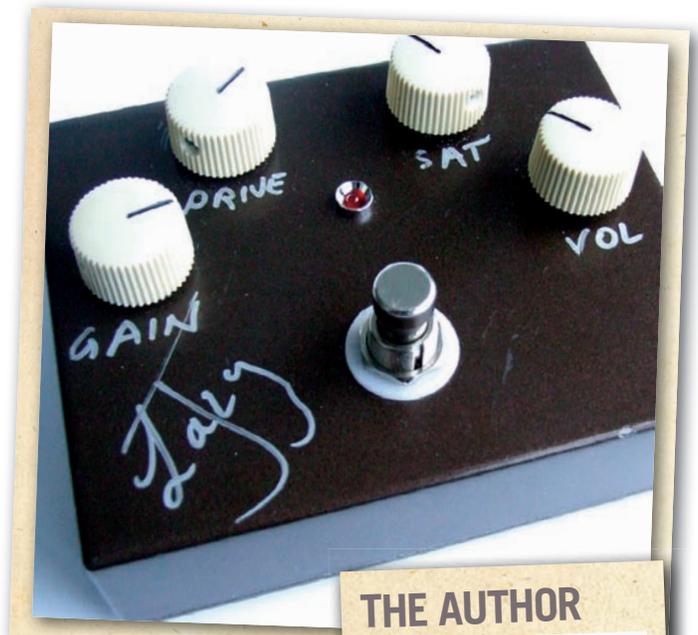
Driving Gear

The knobs are for (from left to right) input gain, OD gain, OD compression and master volume. With the OD gain turned off, it actually disengages the OD component from the circuit, so using the input gain and master volume you can set up a beautiful boost, from something completely transparent to something that will add a bit of 'hair' to the clean tone. The input gain knob is also a really great way to match different guitars, so you can always count on

consistent results.

Turn the OD gain up and it engages this part of the circuit, which interacts with the input gain and compression controls. There are three very usable preset levels of compression, which helps you match the pedal to the style of amp you're using. These different compression levels are the key to getting the pedal working with your amp at specific volume settings. For example, if your amp is operating at high levels and is already compressed, being able to turn the pedal's compression off is fantastic and gives the tone the cut it needs to be heard through all that valve 'squash'. On the flipside, if you're using an amp with loads of headroom, just turn up the compression and those wonderful 'amp working hard' tones are at your fingertips, so you can specifically voice the pedal for your rig.

The combination of the switchable compression settings and the fact that the pedal has been voiced so well means that Jesse has been able to do away with the standard tone control. This gives the Cruiser its wide open tone and does amazing things for its dynamic range. However, you do need to be happy with the core tone of your amp, as this is what the pedal is working with, but if what you're plugging into is great, this will simply make it greater.



THE AUTHOR



Dan Steinhardt has a 200Gb hard drive instead of a brain, where he stores endless effects and electronics knowledge. He's the main man at TheGigRig Ltd (www.thegigrig.com) and we're honoured to have him contributing to the magazine.

How Much Should I Pay?

Jesse makes these in small numbers, each one meticulously tested to ensure perfect and consistent operation, and they are available direct from www.lazyjprojects.com for £199. Not every amp manufacturer that sets out to make a great pedal achieves great results, and only a handful have ever come up with anything like this quality. The pedal itself is completely unique, sounds incredible and deserves nothing less than full marks. **GB**