

JHS PEDALS SWEET TEA V3

REVIEW BY **NICK RAMBO**
STREET PRICE **\$319.00**



"No, I'm not the man I used to be lately. See, you met me at an interesting time."

This line struck me about 20 minutes into trying out the newest iteration of the Sweet Tea from JHS Pedals.

Of course, this medium-to-high-gain stompbox delivers significantly more grind than you'll hear on the average John Mayer tune, but the lyrics were especially poignant given the fact that I'd recently planted a two-in-one combodrive on my own pedalboard.

So while this mashup of two highly respected JHS designs—the Moonshine

drive and Angry Charlie—felt new to me tonally speaking, it also felt strangely familiar from a utility standpoint. An interesting time, indeed.

SWEET TOOTH

The right side of the Sweet Tea is where you'll find the Moonshine. Now in its second version, this "massively tweaked" Tube Screamer variant offers a wide range of tones.

Using the standard Volume, Tone and Gain controls, you can make it sound a lot like a Tube Screamer—but there's more to it than that.

What makes the V2 significant is the addition

of a clean blend control. If you're someone who prefers more of your original signal in the mix, this handy extra knob gets you there. I found it best used sparingly with the gain dialed up in front of a clean amp, but inching your clean tone up to where it isn't so clean is where things get interesting.

The final control, a two-way "Proof" switch gives you more sizzle and saturation in the down position, and more volume and headroom when pushed up. I preferred the openness of the up position in most instances, but both

can be useful in the right application.

GET ANGRY

I'll be real with you—I found myself preferring the left side of the Sweet Tea most of the time. Saying so, however, isn't as much a sleight to the Moonshine side as it is a testament for how finely crafted the Angry Charlie half is.

A higher gain take on the classic JCM800 tonal palette, the Angry Charlie does everything right. You want screaming leads? No problem. Chunky EVH-style "Brown Sound" rhythm tones? Piece of cake. Lower-gain Marshall grind? You got it.

The sweep of the gain knob is extremely favorable and the addition of a three-band EQ in this updated version is fantastic for dialing in the Marshall tone you're looking for.

When running the Moonshine into this side of the pedal, I found myself with the gain control on the Angry Charlie set lower, around 10:00. This gave me a standard rhythm tone

and the ability to slam it harder for more intensely saturated lines. Of course, running the Moonshine second in line allows you to use it as a volume booster and tone shaper—and as a bonus, I found that the clean blend allowed me to dial in a tighter and more focused sound.

Lots of tones are available as you sip your way through the Sweet Tea—so drink deep.

WHAT WE LIKE

Being able to flip the order of the two circuits is an industry standard move at this point, but it works

especially well in this instance. Tube Screamer into JCM800 is classic for all the right reasons, but reversing it gives you a whole different vibe.

CONCERNS

The EQ sweep of these two took a bit of getting used to. As a rule, I tend to prefer brighter tones, but it was interesting that I had to go to such extreme positions on the knobs to get them. The good news though, is that they were within reach.

