

# MODTONE

## DIRTY DUO

REVIEW BY  
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STREET PRICE  
**\$119.99**



### THE TONE OF THE BLUESOME TWOSOME

How many overdrives does it take to satisfy a tone seeker? According to supply and demand, there is no number high enough. There are so many overdrives available now, that those with enough time and cash could spend the rest of their lives stacking, tweaking and sculpting different gain structures. While this pursuit is fun and addictive, Modtone asks a more productive and immediate question—how many overdrives does it take to cover the needs of a working, creative guitarist?

The answer comes in the form of a robust, sparkly blue twin overdrive pedal. Sound familiar? Those that have been in the boutique game long enough will remember the classic Fulltone Full-Drive and its variant offspring. I am here to tell you that the Dirty Duo isn't just a mere boosted Screamer type of job—it can do much more. Instead of thinking about the Dirty Duo as an overdrive and boost in one box, one can think off it as two completely different types of overdrive designed to compliment each other. Or, even an overdrive into a high-headroom pedal-

hungry amp when the Dirty Duo is run into a clean, flat platform. Overdrive 1 goes from boost to drive to torrential saturation with the extra gain switch in the up position. This tone sings with a juicy, yet cutting voice that never sounds choked or nasally—despite its well-endowed midrange content. Overdrive 2 employs a super low-noise op-amp for an amp-like dynamic that is far more open and uncompressed. Clever.

### CASCADING SHADES OF GAIN

To me, it seems the Dirty Duo is best used in front of a clean amp. Starting with

Overdrive 2, with the Level at unity and Drive about midnight, it feels right to control things from the volume knob and fingers. Almost like a juiced-up JTM 45, Overdrive 2 responds to fingerpicked arpeggios and gives off a little grime-chime with harder digs. Turning up the volume of the guitar to full whack and digging in with a pick gives off a Pete Townshend type of kerrang best suited for Classic Rock. This is when Overdrive 1 is engaged with my favorite 666 setting—or just past midnight on all the knobs.

What is immediately apparent and different about this dual drive is the lack of extraneous noise at idle with both Overdrives engaged. Digging in with both blue eyes ablaze gave off gobs of harmonically rich, sustaining gain emissions that sang while spinning webs of harmonic feedback between chord strokes. This is what this beast was designed to do—stack overdrives with complimentary EQ voicings and gain structures. Overdrive 1 melts into

Overdrive 2 like a sugar cube on a wet tongue. To satisfy my curiosity, I see what Overdrive 1 has to offer by itself pumped into a real amp that is already crunching on its own. Just as I expected, this ain't grandpappy's Screamer. It can sing or string depending on where the Tone control is set and roar like a legato lion with the extra gain stage engaged. Killer.

## WHAT WE LIKE

Many of us already have two complementary overdrives, but were they custom designed to work perfectly in unison without extra cables and noise? This is a great, affordable grab-and-go solution for session guys as well. Imagine what one could do with the Dirty Duo and a Strymon Big Sky with its built-in cab sim? In some situations, no amp is needed for killer tone with a box like this. This is an absolute bargain that doesn't skimp on tone and features. How do they keep the cost so low with this kind of build quality and tone? Eastern manufacturing. A great anthem by the band Flipper

comes to mind—"That's the Way of the World." People of all ethnicities take pride in their work. The proof is in the pudding.

## CONCERNS

None.