

Micro Tube DoubleDrive review by Dimitrios Hatzisavas from GearslutZ.com

Everyone in the audio business is searching for "magic boxes". Something that enhances the signal and makes it better, bigger, fatter, 3d, rounder, smoother, present, bigger than life...how many times have we used these words. Recently I discovered a box that does all that and I would like to share my experience with you... although it crossed my mind to keep it all to myself :)

It is a tube pedal / preamp for guitar by Siegmund Guitars called micro-tube double drive. Chris Siegmund, the genius behind this design, is very anal about the components that he uses for his designs and does not cut corners. In this box you will find much better and costly components than other designs in this price range. The micro tubes he uses deliver a sound I would expect from much larger tubes and they sound nothing like the typical 12ax7 used commonly in guitar pedals/preamps. The capacitors are old school paper in oil capacitors from the 40's and 50's and give a very organic sound to the device without that "plastic" or "metallic" flavor of modern pedals and amps.

SOUND

Well...this box has SOUL. There is a roundness, size and dimension when signal passes through it that make it highly addictive. It can make any lesser amp sound like a boutique amp and it will elevate your boutique amp to another level. Clean and slightly overdriven sounds are stunning. When I take the double drive out of the chain my amp sounds lifeless. The sound is smooth with a slight natural tube compression (or should I say tight and contained) with great harmonics that enrich the signal and make it sound huge but extremely articulate without being artificial or muddy. Guitar strings pop out strong and clear and all notes sound even from low to high register.

The distorted sounds are like a cranked vintage amp. Tube breakup goodness with a slight fuzz, but smooth and warm. When I want more modern high gain I insert the double drive after my high gain pedals as a boost (or with the amp's drive channel). It makes the sound much denser and beefier improving at the same time the articulation. I can finally have HUGE distorted guitars sitting well in a mix with minimum tweaking.

Another cool thing about this pedal is that you can control the voltage that feeds the tubes. You can run them hot for a tighter more compressed sound or cooler for a more relaxed "brown" sound.

I liked double drive so much that I had Chris add a few new features like transformer balanced in/out and some switches (brightness on/off, filters on/off, eq bypass etc) for a purer sound and more functionality in the studio (mic pre, bass DI etc). With these features it became my go to bass DI. It almost sounds like going through an amp (and I have a pretty good collection of preamps and DI's).

Chris Siegmund is a great guy to deal with and very honest. He is one of the very few remaining audio "romantics" that will not compromise quality for profit. If this pedal or anything else that he makes (check his site, very cool stuff) were released by a major manufacturer with the same components, it would cost at least twice as much. These are the kinds of people that are worthy of our support and this little review is my humble contribution for his great services to the audio community and his effort to keep his prices at a level that the person for whom the product is intended for can afford.

Some will say that I sound like I got paid to write this, well...I did. Chris paid me well with that WOW factor every time I turn this pedal on.