

# JHS MOONSHINE V2

REVIEW BY **ERIC TISCHLER**

STREET PRICE **\$199.00**



What the world needs now is love, sweet love, so I was a little skeptical when JHS's new version of its "Super Screamer," the Moonshine, arrived—don't we have enough of these? It turns out the world (or at least I) could also use a little less skepticism, because there's a lot to recommend this iteration of the pedal.

Like most Tube Screamer-inspired pedals, the Moonshine has a Tone control, Drive control, and Volume control. Like most Super Screamers, the Moonshine also has a switch (the "Proof" toggle) that changes the

clipping. Down offers more traditional Tube Screamer characteristics: the voicing is more compressed and darker. Up is more open, with a broader frequency response. What's unusual is that the Moonshine has a "Clean" knob that brings the clean signal in (and out). I'm usually a little skeptical about clean blends, but the Moonshine made me a believer; between these controls, this pedal is very versatile.

With Clean fully counter clockwise and Proof in the down position, the Moonshine sounds a lot like a traditional Tube

Screamer: compressed, heavy on the mids, with the top end and bass response attenuated. Despite the familiar character, the pedal definitely extends those mids well into the lower end of the spectrum—it's meaty, but still articulate. The Tone control also seems to have extended range; past 3:00 and it's bright, open, and present—the depth of tone is atypical for a Tube Screamer.

Both the Tone and Drive controls roll off bass as you advance them clockwise (adding treble and distortion, respectively),

which is typical, but that's (one of the places) where the Clean control is useful. By rolling knob up, the guitar's body comes back in, as does additional presence. By tweaking the Tone and Clean controls, there are a lot more EQ options than would be found on a typical three-knob Screamer, Tube or Super.

Flipping the toggle to the Up position opens up the sound but, again, the Clean control can help fill in the blanks, rounding out the lows or bringing in a little additional presence without have to crank the treble (and cut the bass) via the Tone control. Obviously, this is how a Clean blend works in any pedal, but I don't think I've played one that works so seamlessly with the distortion; in my experience, Clean blends tends to sound like they're introducing a parallel signal that seems . . . inauthentic, for lack of a better word—when used judiciously (not to say sparingly), that's not the case here. On the flip side, if you max out the

Clean (defeating the other three controls), you get a gorgeous sweetening effect. Yes, the Moonshine could be an "always on" pedal.

Of course, you're probably reading this review because you want an overdrive, so how does the Moonshine do in the crunch department? As noted, with Proof in the down position it's very Tube Screamer-y, but there's something livelier about it, more 3-D, crunchier, but still rounded—the sustain is more . . . exciting. With Proof in the "up" position, the distortion is more typically "amp-like"—dare I say Marshall-y? Lots of people think you need to run a Tube Screamer into a cooking amp; I'm not one of those people, but I got great results cranking the output (which didn't boost the volume as much as you might think—a useful quality in this case), bringing up the Drive to add drive and compression, then using Clean and Tone to fine tune the ensuing distortion. With this

approach, I was able to maintain more of my base tone by introducing fewer of the Screamer's gain characteristics.

JHS makes a point of saying that the Moonshine isn't a transparent overdrive, but with the range of controls the pedal offers, it comes pretty darn close.

## WHAT WE LIKE

The Moonshine offers a lot of control over a very distinct, classic voicing.

## CONCERNS

None.