

Xotic SP Compressor Review

By Gabriel Tanaka
Review of: Xotic Effects SP Compressor
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Rating: 5
On BestGuitarEffects

Summary:



There are many guitar compression pedals available on the market, several of which seek to emulate and surpass the famed Ross Compressor. Xotic decided to have a go at creating a compressor in the vein of that classic pedal while adding more versatility and sound-shaping options than most pedal makers have ever packed into such a small enclosure. Is this the best guitar compression pedal out there? Our Xotic SP Compressor review will help you decide if this is the compression pedal you're looking for.

Features:



Uses the same OTA (operational transconductance amplifier) technology use in the famed Ross Compressor.

Tones ranging from vintage, to subtle, to modern, and more.

Volume knob for up to +15db of boost.

Blend knob for finding the perfect balance between the dry and compressed signal.

2 Attack/Release internal dip switches.

High Cut Filter internal dip switch for controlling high frequency roll off capacitor (220pf).

Input Pad internal dip switch for preventing distortion and low cut filter control.

True bypass for eliminating any signal interference when switched off.

Powered by 9-volt battery or 9VDC power adapter. May also be run at 18-volts with the Xotic Voltage Doubler.

Visit Xotic for more info about the Xotic SP Compressor.

Sound & Performance:

I had a feeling this was going to be a really interesting pedal right when I pulled it out of the box. The Xotic SP Compressor has a real simple, yet sleek look, similar to the Xotic EP Booster and Xotic SL Drive pedals. It's also surprisingly heavy for such a tiny little pedal. You instantly get the feeling that Xotic built a real solid and durable pedal. This isn't some low-budget knock-off pedal.

Having a glance at the included manual reveals that this pedal contains 4 internal two-way dip switches in addition to the 2 surface knobs and three-way Lo/Mid/Hi toggle switch for a total of 7 parameter adjustment controls. That's a lot of options for such a small unit. You can really tell that Xotic spared no consideration for offering the most versatility they could squeeze into the SP Compressor.

I went ahead and unscrewed the bottom of the enclosure to allow instant access to shaping my tone while testing this pedal for my review. I recommend doing the same when you un-box your SP Compressor to spend some time finding your preferred settings. Although, it does sound pretty great in it's default settings. You may just want to leave it as is.



I started with a single-coil Strat sound with a clean amp and the SP Compressor in between. With the knobs on the pedal at noon and the Sustain/Compression toggle switch set to Lo, I activated the effect and was greeted to a nice boost in volume.

At this setting the compression is quite subtle, but there is a slight increase in sustain. Tweaking the Volume and Blend knobs in the range of 10 to 2 o'clock helps to find a good amount of blended compression level. The effect is smooth and pleasing to the ears, and this is a great starter setting for adding just a bit of clarity and boost to your clean phrasing.

Things get a bit more interesting by flipping the Sustain/Compression switch to the Mid position. With the internal dip switches at their default position this puts you in

what the SP Compressor manual labels as a Classic Vintage style compression. I find this setting to be a great all-around compression sound for most applications.

Again, just a slight tweak of the Blend knob really lets you dial in the compression just the way you like it. The Blend knob really is the most ingenious function on this pedal and really sets the Xotic SP Compressor apart in a crowded market. **This pedal really is something special and is surely to become a secret weapon of many guitarists.** Did I mention the pure, near-transparent tone? For an OTA style comp it's not as overly colored as some lesser compressor guitar pedals.

Flipping the internal Attack/Release dip switches to the On position for quicker attack and release times brings in the twang if country-style compression is what you're after. Flip the High Cut filter dip switch from its default position if you want to make your sound even brighter. Watch out though. This pedal really cuts though. **The SP Compressor never ceases to amaze me with how much control it offers for crafting your ideal compression sound.**

The SP Compressor works exceptionally well for really making your lead sounds cut through with singing sustain. Try it with a humbucker equipped guitar for some really fat sounds. Flipping the Compression/Sustain switch to Hi may raise the noise level a bit too much for most clean applications, but it may just be perfect for your gain-saturated guitar solos. **No matter what your compression needs may be, there is a setting to be found in this pedal that will get the job done.**

If you're a session player who travels light when it comes to effects, you may appreciate that this pedal is so tiny while still offering 9-volt battery power. Huge tonal options, minuscule size, and plug-and-play convenience. **The SP Compressor is hard to beat in every category.**

UPDATE: I had the opportunity to try the Xotic SP Compressor with the Xotic Voltage Doubler (as seen in the video above). This allows you to achieve even more headroom from the pedal. It's definitely worth trying as it provides a subtle sonic upgrade to what is already a great sounding compressor. The difference isn't night and day, but it's certainly noticeable and may offer a sound that you like even more. You can also use the Xotic Voltage Doubler with the Xotic EP Booster and SL Drive (and other 18-volt compatible pedals), making it a useful accessory to have indeed.

Let's have the final result.



Overall Rating: ★★★★★

Xotic really went all out with the SP Compressor. **This pedal offers more versatility than most compressors out there while remaining small enough to find a home on any crowded pedalboard.** Whether playing sparkly cleans or distorted leads, the SP Compressor will bring your tones to life with unrivaled clarity. **The SP Compressor has positioned itself in the top tier of the battle for best guitar compression pedal on the market.** This may just be the only compressor you ever need. I'll be spending a lot more time with this pedal myself. I suggest you get acquainted with it, also.

That concludes our Xotic SP Compressor review. Thanks for reading.