



DIAGO LITTLE SMASHER LS01 GUITAR AMP HEAD



Bijou but bold? Petite yet punchy? Tiny and toneful? The new Diago certainly is small, but is that its biggest feature?

Amps these days seem to be getting smaller and smaller, while the tones get bigger and bigger! A good position for us guitarists to be in, and the Diago Little Smasher looks to push this concept even further.

Build and Features

It's true to say that the Little Smasher has obvious advantages in its portability. You may be

wondering what the merits of a small amp are if you generally plan to use it through a typically large 2x12" or 4x12" cab, for example. Think for a moment, though, just how useful this portable unit really can be. It saves you time lugging heavy gear into your rehearsal van if the cabs are already at the practice venue. You can quickly plug it in to a bedroom 1x12" cab to test out spontaneous ideas. It's great to pop around a mate's house

to jam with through a spare speaker-in socket on a cab which can be easily mic'd up and recorded straight into a digital studio recorder device, for example. For these reasons it may ramp up your ability to be more creative because of its simplicity in use and pure transportability. It's not going to make you worry about putting your back out either.

Features include a strong and yet lightweight chassis and guts

weighing no more than 600 grams in total, with a two-band EQ functioning over 15dB down to -30dB per each respective bass or treble pot's very wide sweep. It will accommodate 4- or 16-ohm cabs and kicks out a tidy 5 watts of power. It also comes with its own dedicated power supply and non-slip rubberised feet. Also of note is a practical speaker mute switch which when you toggle brings your signal back in with an

idiosyncratic surge of signal. Brilliantly, the PS10 power supply circuit has been designed with both surge and short circuit protection.

Sounds

The quality of the tone belies its humble size and stature, and because the output wattage is only 5 watts you can run the LS01 pretty hot and use a lot of its solid-state headroom to great effect. As you alter the gain control it definitely changes the gain structure and therefore the volume and tone to some extent, so you need to tailor this to your specific instrument to get the best from your single-coils or humbucker tones. The greatest asset within the Diago's compact artillery is its tonal diversity. Don't expect gallons of harmonically saturated valve richness, but equally don't underestimate its quality of warmth. It's not at all thin or wispy, which you could be forgiven for anticipating may be the case, but rather it's linear and well detailed with a satisfactory sustain for wide vibrato and ringing power chords. If you are after a traditional mid-scooped tone you can still achieve this even though there is no dedicated mid pot. If you dial the EQ controls up to maximum tilt you get the most dynamic smiley-face-equivalent tone. You can also get another, slightly harder mid scoop from an easily memorable 12 o'clock setting on both of the treble and bass pots, but with less relative boost in the bass and treble. Missing a mid pot does require a little bit more experimentation with the controls, but it's simple to do and quick to find a few good usable themes to work with. A huge part of your tone



The amp is definitely pocket sized...



YOU CAN RUN THE LS01 PRETTY HOT AND USE A LOT OF ITS SOLID-STATE HEADROOM TO GREAT EFFECT

comes from the pickups you are using and, of course, the final stage – the output drivers or speakers – you are using. There is nothing to stop you from pre-EQing the amp with an inline EQ pedal (or any other effect) if you so desire, just to give that visual ease of control over the broad-ranging tonal palette.

Conclusion

Originally designed as a backup amp for your live-gigging situations, the reassurance something like this can offer you is truly worth serious consideration – particularly if your gig van is



...but the tones will surprise you!

already chock-full of bulky heads and cabinets. At just £129 this may be the very kind of affordable contingency option you should consider. It is tough and will fit in your jacket pocket. The power supply socket makes for a solid connection to its matching power supply lead, and overall, the unit is substantial enough not to be tipped off the edge of your cab once your speaker and instrument cables are plugged in. This is a quality product, one which we were surprised didn't cost more and wasn't wrapped under the banner of some intangible and vacuous boutique mystery. **GB**



Simple and tidy connections



DIAGO LITTLE SMASHER

Price: £129.99
Built in: China
Type: Solid state Class A/B power amp
Power: 5 watts RMS clean (before distortion)
Features: Single channel, all analogue signal path with 4 analogue modelled cascading gain stages
Dimensions: 43mm (H), 120mm (W), 86mm (D)
Weight: 600g

CONTACT DETAILS

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GB VERDICT

GOLD STARS

- ★ Surprisingly warm tones
- ★ Simple but flexible EQ
- ★ Great value for money

BLACK MARKS

- Don't expect valve-like richness

IDEAL FOR...

Any guitarist after a portable and dependable back-up amplifier

GB RATING

