

# Blue Brit



## Blue Brit - Overdrive

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### Overview

When I set out to design this pedal, I wanted something that would be versatile, simple to use and sound great with any Guitar or Amp. It had to be suitable for different types of players too, that is both rhythm and lead players. But what I wanted most of all was for it to produce a beautiful rich soulful overdrive; something that could be clean when played lightly, but break up beautifully when you dug in. If I'm completely honest, I wanted it to sound like John Mayer's tone! The reason for this is it was what I personally would find most useful for my style of playing.



What I came up with is the Blue Brit!

The name Blue Brit hopefully isn't too cryptic, it comes from the fact that its sound was based around Marshall® (British) ideas; it's Blue and sounds great for playing the Blues.

Although I set out to get that British sound, being a unique design it has ended up being quite unique. I've been told that has some Fender® qualities being likened to a Fender® Blues Deluxe®, but also a bit tweedy. The overriding feedback however is that it is very amp like and hits the self imposed "John Mayer" brief.

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### Using the Blue Brit

#### Power

The Blue Brit is designed to be used with a centre negative 9V power supply or a 9V battery.

To install the battery unscrew the backing plate and clip the battery into the battery terminal.

**IMPORTANT:** When refitting the lid ensure that the small blue grounding wire is wedged between the lid and case. With this wire in place it will greatly improve the Blue Brits, immunity to mains hum and other noise interference.

To power on the Blue Brit, insert an input lead.

#### Input/Output

The Blue Brit follows the unwritten standard of input on the right output on the left.

**IMPORTANT:** Always use a conventional TS (as opposed to TRS) 1/4" inch audio jack. The Blue Brit is equipped with a power saving feature where it will only power on if an input cable is connected. This works only with a TS connector and the Blue Brit will not turn on with a stereo TRS connector.



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### The Sound!

The Blue Brit is an analogue overdrive pedal, that is, it produces a soft clip. However, it is more than that, if you continue to keep pushing up the gain, that soft clip will start to turn into a hard clip. Combine this with a guitar with really hot pick-ups, it is possible to get really nice distortion.

The following section goes into detail on how to make the most of your Blue Brit pedal.

**Gain** – The gain knob is used to amplify the input signal from your guitar as well as determine the amount of overdrive or distortion the pedal will produce. As a general rule if the knob is to the left of 12 o'clock you will achieve an overdrive tone; whereas if you increase the gain past this point you will notice a more distorted sound. This however is a generalisation and the perfect spot for the gain knob will depend entirely on the level of the input signal sent to the Blue Brit.



**Volume** - This knob is exactly what it says it is. Volume. That's not to say that it is unimportant! In fact it serves a very useful and important function. Some examples of where the volume knob can be used in not particularly obvious ways are as follows:

As you adjust the tone of the Blue Brit it can have an effect of the overall volume of the output. In general as the tone knob goes to the right, the volume should be turned up to compensate for the reduction in output.

Other situations where the Volume knob is useful is when you get that exact sound you are after, but just want to slightly increase/decrease the volume without changing the final tone of the pedal. This is in contrast to the Gain knob which will change the way the tone sounds.

It is important to note however that when using a tube/valve amplifier adjusting the output level of any pedal in your pedal chain can affect the "Drive" characteristics of the amplifier itself by causing the tubes/valves themselves to distort.

The Blue Brit is no exception, if you turn the volume right up, it may cause the tubes/valves in the amp's pre-amp to distort. Don't be put off by this, it usually sounds awesome, but it is something to be aware of. This is one of the main reasons tube/valve amplifiers sound better than solid state amplifiers.

So there you have it, Volume is almost one of the most important knobs on there!

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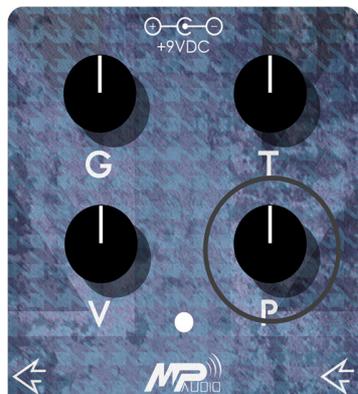
**Tone** – The tone knob is used to shape the sound that is produced by the Blue Brit. As the knob is turned to the left the high and some of the mid frequencies will be suppressed in the final sound.

To use less technical terms the sound will become warmer and darker as you turn the knob to the right; conversely as the knob is turned to the right the sound will become brighter and more sparkly.



When the knob is all the way to the right all frequencies originally generated by the guitar (plus any additional from the pedal) are present, if this is combined with high gain levels the sound can become harsh. This isn't a problem for some genres but if you wish to reduce this harshness and maintain that smooth sound, simply turn the knob slightly to the left.

When playing with the tone knob it is important to note that it can affect the final output volume of the pedal. If you find turning the knob to the left has reduced the overall volume, just turn up the volume by turning the volume knob to the right.



**Presence** – This is the most subtle control on the Blue Brit, but is very important for honing in on the exact sound you are after.

It is to be used in conjunction with the tone knob (in fact if the tone knob is all the way to the left it actually has no affect at all).

What it does is recover the high frequencies (or treble) that get reduced when the tone knob is turned to the right. Put another way, it puts the sparkle and brightness back into the sound when you increase the tone knob.

If you are finding the sound to be a bit to “Rolled out” or “Muddy” increase the Presence by turning the knob all the way to the right. If it is still too rolled out, try decreasing the tone knob a little bit.

*Blue Brit*



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### **Pick-Up Tips**

NOTE: Does not contain any “Pick-up” tips in regards to wooing the opposite sex.

The Blue Brit offers a wide range of different sounds it can make by adjusting the Gain knob, towards the top end of the gain you will get a light distortion sound, towards the lower end, an overdrive sound. This threshold between the two is entirely dependent on the input levels of your guitar.

If you have a very dynamic playing style, play around with the gain knob and find that balance of clean when you pick and break up crunch when you dig in to the strings. If you find the gain gets away from you a bit when you dig in, just slightly turn the gain back a tad.

Below are some recommended settings depending on the style of guitar being used, the guitar in the brackets is what was used to determine the following settings.

#### **Single Coil (Fender Stratocaster)**

Vintage style single coil pick-ups have a far less output level when compared to humbuckers. If you want to get a smooth sounding overdrive without too much crunch, it is recommended you have the gain set to around 12 o'clock.

#### **Humbuckers (Gibson Les Paul)**

Humbucker pick-ups have far higher output levels when compared to single coils. To obtain a similar sound to the above single coil setting, it is recommended to have the gain knob set somewhere between 9 and 10 o'clock.

These are just approximations and obviously are dependent on the type of guitar and the volume setting on the guitar itself.