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Hermida Audio Mosferatu Overdrive/Distortion



As its name implies, this elegant little sucker utilizes a metal oxide semiconductor field-effect transistor (MOSFET) in its distortion circuitry, which, combined with an ingenious tone stack, results in an impressively broad selection of killer tones. The key to the Mosferatu's (\$199 direct) sonic flexibility is the way in which the Tone and Voice controls interact to emphasize particular aspects of the midrange frequencies. Tone sweeps a sweet yet modest range, while Voice essentially alters the throatiness of the midrange—but changing the setting of one affects the response of the other, expanding the total combined possibilities exponentially. The Mosferatu's Gain control is similarly flexible—covering a range from pleasingly gritty to super saturated—and the Volume control provides plenty of level. The pedal is exceptionally quiet, though the Voice control adds noticeable hiss when cranked.

When I tested the Mosferatu using a PRS Brazilian Custom 24 through the clean channel of a Rivera Venus 6 at moderate volume, the pedal dished up very tube-amp-like tones, similar to those obtainable from the Rivera's distortion channel. Using the bridge pickup and lower-gain settings, I got crisp, glassy-edged crunch rhythm sounds with lots of bite. Switching to the neck pickup and cranking the Gain control yielded fat yet silky sustain, particularly with the guitar's Tone control rolled back a bit. Single-note articulation was excellent, as was responsiveness to playing dynamics. I got similar results from a Trayser STD with single-coils, though the overall sound was slightly airier and the lows not quite as full and focused. —Barry Cleveland

KUDOS Exceptionally versatile tone-shaping circuitry. Quiet. Dynamically responsive.
CONCERNS None.
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Hermida Audio Zendrive 2 Tube Overdrive/ Distortion



The original solid-state Zendrive was inspired by Robben Ford's overdrive preferences, and the guitarist has been using one exclusively for a while now. The Zendrive 2 (\$270 direct) is quite similar to the original, but its circuitry sports a Groove Tubes GT12AX7M tube—along with a MOSFET—for those who value valves. The tube may be replaced with any 9-pin preamp tube should you wish to explore the numerous alternatives (12AY7, 12AT7, etc.). The Zendrive 2's controls are identical to those found on the Mosferatu (see above) and respond in essentially the same way, though there is a tad less gain on tap. In fact, depending on which guitar and amp you use, the two pedals even sound nearly identical on most settings, particularly when playing humbucker-equipped guitars. The main difference is that the Zendrive 2 is slightly more responsive to playing dynamics due to its less-compressed overdrive—but we're talking subtleties here. The good news, of course, is that both pedals sound fantastic, are equally versatile, and boast outstanding dynamic response and single-note articulation. Given a choice, I'd probably opt for the Mosferatu simply because it is smaller and less expensive, though they are both exemplary devices. —Barry Cleveland

KUDOS	Exceptionally versatile tone-shaping circuitry. Quiet. Dynamically responsive.
CONCERNS	Pricey.
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