

Hermida Nu-Valve

Lots of pedals have “valve” in their name, but the Nu-Valve actually uses two Nuvistors—miniature vacuum tubes introduced by RCA in 1959 to compete with the early transistors. These thimble-sized triodes (which have metal covers and are about the same diameter as transistors from the '50s) require that the Nu-Valve be powered by an external 9-volt adapter only, and there are vents on both sides of the die-cast housing to allow heat to escape. The Nu-Valve is true bypass, and it has Volume, Gain, Tone, and Voice controls, and an LED status indicator.

Hermida says that this pedal is designed to be edgier sounding than the other solid-state pedals in the line—including the famous Zendrive—and depending on how you set the Tone and Voice controls, you certainly can get a lot of bite from it. That said, there are plenty of meaty distortion textures available here too. The Nu-Valve excels at tube-style overdrive with a British accent, and it has plenty of gain range to cover anything from blues to rock to classic metal. The dynamic response is excellent, and the Voice control doesn't radically alter the sound, but rather functions like an amp's presence control to allow you to fine-tune the top-end for exactly the distortion textures you want from humbucker or single-coil pickups. The Nu-Valve can also deliver a lot of output regardless of where the Gain knob is set, which makes it abundantly useful as a tube-powered booster for overdriving your amp's front end. What a sweet pedal, and well deserving of an Editors' Pick Award. —*Art Thompson*

KUDOS Excellent tube-sounding distortion.

CONCERNS None.

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