

JHS PEDALS DOUBLE BARREL V4

REVIEW BY **DAVID A. EVANS**

STREET PRICE **\$315.00**



Pedal iterations abound over at JHS these days. The current Double Barrel is actually the fourth version of the pedal. It's arguably the best version yet, in no small part because it showcases two of the company's best-sounding overdrive builds, the raw Morning Glory V4 and the smooth Moonshine V2.

A bit of history might clarify the relationship of the Double Barrel V4 to its predecessors. The pedal features two circuits. Its previous iterations, however, didn't feature the same versions which now grace the current Double

Barrel. The Double Barrel V3 actually contained JHS's 808 overdrive, which was also featured in JHS's two-in-one Sweet Tea (itself up to version three).

The Morning Glory, like the Moonshine, is an overdrive pedal, although the former provides a much rougher, rawer sort of overdrive than does the latter. The Morning Glory has gone through four iterations, and arguably the fourth version is the best because the alterations were substantive rather than cosmetic. This version has twice the headroom of previous models.

Moreover, it features a high/low gain toggle switch, as well as Red Remote capability. The Red Remote takes over control of the Morning Glory's gain toggle, and allows the user to switch between gain modes with the tap of the foot. Fortunately, the Double Barrel V4 features just the jack which the Red Remote needs to control the gain levels.

The Moonshine is JHS's take on a famous green overdrive pedal, with a couple of modifications. The Moonshine V2, unlike the 808, features a blend knob for balancing the clean and dirty signals in any desired

ratio. The latest Moonshine also features a two-way Proof toggle for either lower or higher gain.

But enough with the history lesson. How does the latest version sound?

The Morning Glory delivers a highly articulate, transparent, and, if pushed, rather raw sort of overdrive. At first, I believed that the circuit was straight-forward distortion rather than overdrive given the effect's transparency and clarity. In low-to-moderate Drive settings, the Double Barrel pumped out warm tone with some edge. Turning the Tone knob past noon produced more sparkle and chime and brought out a more "articulate" sound that would highlight pick attack and pick dynamics. Higher Drive settings increased sustain and provided a harmonically rich, full, and satisfying distortion that does not mask or bury the tonal quality of, say, a major chord.

The Morning Glory's gain toggle produced a noticeable difference of tone. When the switch was in its up position, the Double Barrel's output

volume was increased by perhaps five decibels or so. My ear might have deceived me, but I believed that this louder tone also sounded fuller than the tone I heard when the switch was flipped down. When the toggle was in the down position, the Double Barrel pumped out an equal amount of distorted tone, but at a lower volume, it seemed.

On the right-hand side of the Double Barrel are the controls for the Moonshine V2. To my ears, the Moonshine had a very different sound than did the Morning Glory—and that's a good thing. This second distortion increased my sustain with its super-smooth character. It was so smooth, in fact, that I felt I ought to ask it for dating advice.

At first, I believed that the Moonshine circuit was a straight-up distortion-type, but with a decidedly different character. It's more refined than the other circuit, offers greater sustain, and generally came across as much thicker than did the Morning Glory's distortion. What more can

be said of this classic sound? It's the tone that launched a thousand guitarists on their path to recreating Stevie Ray Vaughan's tone as heard on "Texas Flood." It's also a great sound for guitarists who need a thicker, heavier tone for rhythm work, or for guitarists who want to produce a wall of sound with a single amplifier.

Perhaps the greatest asset the Double Barrel provides is its "both-on" feature. That is, both overdrive circuits can be activated at once, and their order can be changed with the flip of a toggle. If the raw sound of the Morning Glory needs to be smoothed out, might I suggest adding in a bit of the Moonshine's overdrive? Yet this is merely a starting point.

WHAT WE LIKE

Two excellent overdrives with different characters, packed into one housing; they'll deliver almost any tone a person could need.

CONCERNS

I sometimes felt as if the Moonshine could be a bit more responsive to input level changes.