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BIG SURPRISE, SMALL PACKAGE

Amptweaker's TightDrive Jr

You may remember James Brown as the mastermind at Peavey Electronics and Kustom Amplification. In addition to being the brains behind Peavey's 5150, Classic Series, and JSX, Brown is an award-winning pedal designer. Today, he practices his artistry at Amptweaker.

One of Brown's Amptweaker designs is the TightDrive Jr, a multipurpose overdrive that takes up minimal real estate on the pedalboard. It uses a multistage single-ended design similar to a tube preamp, and powering it with 9 or 18 volts produces dramatic differences in tone, similar to switching from a 50- to a 100-watt amp, and allows you to dial in more open and dynamic sounds at 18 volts.

The TightDrive Jr's controls are easy to suss. There are knobs for Volume, Tone,

and Gain, and two slide switches; one selects Plexi or Smooth EQ tones, while the other yields Fat (aggressive chunk) or Tight (thicker, singing distortion). The pedal is true-bypass, has a Noise Gate, and fits in the palm of your hand—perfect for traveling guitarists who need to rescue themselves from the horrors of backline amplifiers.

Volunteering a Telecaster through a Deluxe Reverb offered all manner of clean boost, beef, and malleable aggro was had. The TightDrive Jr has a smooth, warm personality. And because it's an overdrive, not a high-gain distortion, there's nothing harsh about it. The Plexi setting has the most grind, while the EQ switch's Middle and Smooth positions gradually take the edge off. The Tight switch spreads copious crunch in the Fat position, while Middle

and Tight shape and finesse gain settings for warm shred or articulate single-note blues rock. Chords ring like crazy but the Noise Gate will chop off as much of that as you want. Nice touch.

The TightDrive Jr is a great low-maintenance overdrive in a small package. It's a sweet deal. — *Oscar Jordan VG*



Price: \$160 (list)
Info: amptweaker.com

