

# CHECK ONE, TWO

## Product:

**JET CITY JCA100HDM and JCA48S BOX**

## Reviewed by:

Peter Hodgson

## Information:

[www.imd.com.au](http://www.imd.com.au)

## RRP:

JCA100 HDM - \$ 1599.99

JCA48S - \$ 749.99



## Features:

### JCA100HDM-

- Channels: Crunch and Overdrive, foot-switchable with included footswitch
- Controls: Normal and Overdrive Gain, Bass, Middle, Treble, Normal and Overdrive Masters, Presence, Depth, 100w/50w.
- Effects Loop: Tube buffered
- Footswitch: Overdrive channel footswitch, included.
- Tubes: 5x 12AX7 Preamp / 4x 6L6 Power
- Output Power: 100 watts into 16 ohm or 2x 8 ohm speaker outputs

- Input Power: Multi-tapped power transformer at
- Weight: 43.6lbs net

### JCA48S-

- Inputs: 1x4ohm for mono in series or 1x16ohm in parallel operation, or 2x 8ohm for stereo operation
- Power handling: 400 watts RMS mono or 200 watts RMS per channel for stereo operation
- Multi-ply, void-free hardwood
- Cabinetry:
- Drivers: 4x12" Jet City Custom Eminence Drivers
- DIMS: 28" Hx28" W x14"D
- 69.5lbs net

Michael Soldano's amp designs are legendary, and the fruits of his labours can be heard in the tones of guys like Daniel Johns, Steve Vai, Eric Clapton, Warren Haynes and Joe Satriani. The guy understands high gain like almost nobody else on the planet, and he also understands that the way to ensure a powerful, energetic, clear, punchy tone is to use a minimum of components for the most direct path from guitar to speaker. The Jet City Amplification JCA100HDM is Jet City's flagship amp, and it's designed by Soldano himself, offering a cool opportunity for the average Joe to tap into classic Soldano tone without the frankly shocking prices that Soldano's own amp brand commands.

The JCA100HDM is a two-channel, 100 watt monster that bears Soldano's distinctive style both visually and tonally. Although the basic Jet City look is relatively consistent with other amps in the range, the layout of the control knobs just has something very 'Soldano' about it. But wait, there's a twist! Whereas Soldano's amps all literally have controls that "go to eleven," each of the JCA100HDM's pots tops out a nine. Could this have anything to do with the mysterious "333" badge, the meaning of which is a closely guarded Jet City secret? Hmm...

At the heart of the JCA100HDM you'll find a whopping five 12AX7 preamp valves, as well as four 6L6s in the power amp. There are two channels (Crunch and Overdrive) which are selectable via the included foot switch only: no amp-mounted channel select switch in sight. There are Gain controls for both the Normal and Overdrive channels, as well as the expected Bass, Middle, Treble and Presence controls, as well as Soldano's famous Depth control, which does for the low end what a Presence control does for the high. There are also two Master Volume controls (Normal and Overdrive), and a 100 watt/50 watt switch. Around the back you'll find one 16 ohm speaker output, two 8 ohm outputs and two 4 ohm outputs, as well as a tube buffered effects loop and the foot switch jack. There's no reverb, but that's what the effects loop is for!

**Wind the guitar's volume back and the tone cleans up exactly as you would hope. Blend the Crunch and Overdrive gains just so and you'll get a jangly ring that works great with chords and single coils.**

The chassis is made of 16 gauge cold-rolled steel in a multi-ply, void-free hardwood cabinet, and the head weighs a respectable but not unmanageable 19.8kg. Oh and get this: there's a wire-mounted blue LED nestled in between the 333 badge and the power tubes, simply because, in Jet City's own words, "it looks cool." I like the way these guys think.

Paired up with the Jet City JCA48S cabinet (with four 12" Jet City Custom Eminence drivers and switchable stereo/mono

operation), the JCA100HDM roars. The crunch tones are sufficiently bitey and chunky - and the amp is capable of some nice edgy cleans - but neither Jet City nor Soldano are under any illusions that this amp will be used for its clean tone. Kick in the overdrive and you'll be greeting with a thick, sustaining, solid power chord tone that can handle powerful amounts of bass, especially once you start using the Depth control to tune the cabinet's low-end response to that of the room you're playing in. Meanwhile the Presence control is carefully voiced to avoid that piercing 'oops, too much' range until the very last click and a half of its travel, while still providing useful high end cut. There's a strong midrange character that pokes through even when you turn the Mid knob down to zero, which I think is great - it saves you the embarrassment of over-scooping your midrange and getting lost between the kick drum and hi hat.

The JCA100HDM is capable of killer blues and hard rock tones, and even some metal sounds, and it's great for those Alice In Chains-like thick rhythm forays. But it's capable of a lot more than that. Wind the guitar's volume back and the tone cleans up exactly as you would hope. Blend the Crunch and Overdrive gains just so and you'll get a jangly ring that works great with chords and single coils. And the 50/100 watt switch does far more than just reduce the volume. In 50 watt mode it thins out the sound just a little (and lets you get the power amp distorting a little earlier), while in 100 watt mode the whole shebang just sounds bigger, bolder and more powerful.

The JCA100HDM is a very powerful amp that feels built for those who like to use a minimum of effects, controlling their dynamics from the guitar. Its lead voice is fat enough to do the job for Satch-like instrumental rockers, while the rhythm tones are big enough for single-guitar bands to occupy a lot of sonic real-estate. And through it all you have Michael Soldano's tonal influence - not to mention the extra helping of 'cool' courtesy of that pointless but welcome blue LED.