

JET CITY JCA100H HEAD "dirt with plenty of tight bottom end and tough mids"



For a long while boutique amps have often been the unattainable dream for the majority of guitarists. Whilst not intentionally omitting the perhaps less affluent of owners, boutique makers have created amps with price tags that just have been out of reach or not justifiable for some. Numerous factors have forced the landscape to change over the last few years with several high-end makers now offering budget or sister lines to complement their higher price tagged big brothers. With streamlined features and components and refined production methods creating lower overheads the end result has been a lower price for the consumer - bonus! With all good things come haters however and many people instantly associate these cheaper amps with lower quality. Well let's see if we can silence the doubters.

Coming from the design shed of the famed Mike Soldano (yep, Mr Soldano the man behind the SLO100 and other seriously famed tone machines) we have Jet City Amplifiers - all tube, featuring simple controls, cool cosmetics, and sensible pricing...doesn't sound too bad to me so far.

Suffre Jet City

Launched in 2009 Jet City had an almost instant hit on their hands with the release of the JCA20H single channel 20 watt head. This seemed to please the newly invigorated small wattage amp lovers and appease those looking for something grand at slightly lesser volumes. Well the success this baby must've really put the writing on the wall for the new JC100H two channel 100 watt head.

A two channel head the JC100H's front panel consists of - normal and overdrive levels (as part of the preamp section), bass, middle and treble controls (making up your eq section), 'master' normal and overdrive channel level knobs and a presence dial to top it off. Soldano fans will notice the similarities in layout to the famous SLO100 head (not a bad thing) and indeed Jet City go on to mention 'The Overdrive channel is the circuit that made Soldano famous. It's been modelled and imitated, but this is the real-efing-high-gain-deal!' Sounds like a winner to me.

We built this City...

Adding to the aforementioned SLO esque control layout Jet City have gone the no frills look for this first line of amps with minimalist colouring and detailing. The American style logo is simple and effective with a mate even commenting that it

reminded him of a motor oil or racing brand. Solid blue and black tolex and classic black with white dot dials = a simple, rock attitude in my books.

Plugging in, the JC100H was pretty quiet on the clean channel, even when cranked with the eq section responding nicely to all sorts of pushing and pulling. Nice headroom makes sure you could push this sucker pretty hard and then drive it further with pedals if so inclined or just balance the masters and level controls. Now we come to what I spose everyone wants to know about...the drive channel. Whilst I've never played an SLO100, I've heard quite a few (both in the flesh and on recordings) and seen a few clones in my time. Well, the Jet City really seems to recreate that dirt with plenty of tight bottom end and tough mids. Broken, slightly driven tones bark nicely and react to both your guitar volume pot and the channel and master volume controls with the presence dial adding that extra sharp edge if you need.

Sold!

Alright, just to recap for those that didn't really take it in. Mike Soldano's amps have been a staple in the session/touring world for years. With their amps firmly placed in the hands of pros/studios/collectors alike yet still remaining out of reach for many, the Jet City brand looks likely to bring some of the Soldano prowess to the masses (and without the hefty price tag). As Jet City says 'We are on a mission to offer some great gear to guitarists at really fair prices.' Music to my ears. The multi tap transformer is a winner (allowing easy switching between 100v/120v/220v/240v for international voltages) and with these tones for this price Jet City have placed themselves in a good market for the almost anyone (and not just those that can't afford their bigger brother).

Mike Soldano couldn't have put it better when he says "Our keep-it-simple approach to tube amp design speaks for itself, these new Jet City amps offer my classic Soldano tones at a killer price - I'm proud to put my name right on the front".

By Nick Brown

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