

AGUILAR AGRO BASS DISTORTION PEDAL

A long time heavy hitter in the bass amplification game, it's only relatively recently that Aguilar has expanded its product line to include pedals. With a compressor, octave, filter and preamp/di box they've now added the 'Agro' distortion pedal to their stable. With the likes of Avishai Cohen, Oskar Cartaya, Gary Willis, John Patitucci, Freddie Washington and Chris Chaney using their products it's easy to see why Aguilar has such a solid reputation and I'm keen to hear how Agro this distortion pedal really is.

WHAT'S ONBOARD?

Heavy duty steel housing, solid true bypass switch and smooth, nicely tapered pots and control knobs get a big thumbs up from me for a start. The thumbscrew and sliding tray for the battery draw underneath makes for super simple (ie - no tools needed) access to use if you're that way inclined; otherwise a 9v adaptor will do the trick. A suitably bright blue led won't leave you wondering whether the Agro's on and a stomp on the switch and you're in business.

ENGAGE!

I reckon bass players are gonna dig this little grey box. With the saturation set low and balancing the level you can get warm, boosted tones whilst increasing the saturation takes you through to high gain distortion. The Contour and Presence controls are interesting choices (as opposed to the more typical EQ controls) and really work well. Contour can scoop out mids for a janglier feel or boost them for a thick growl and Aguilar describe the Presence control as 'adding the right amount of 'attack' to ensure your bass remains defined even at more saturated settings'. I found this to be true and some twiddling could really increase clarity without being a brittle, bright control. The Agro is very responsive too and sounds great when adjusting your finger attack playing subtly or digging in. At certain settings you can really balance this feel and get a clean tone with the vol rolled off and gentle playing that then breaks when you dig in and roll up your volume control - beautiful!

NEED BASS?

One of the great things about the Agro is the fact that it's designed and tuned for use with bass. Now, that might sound damn obvious but you'd be suprised how many players use guitar gear and expect it to always interact well with their setup. Sure there are exceptions to the rule and you should always go with what sounds good to your ears but if you're playing bass, then gear designed for bass is a good starting point.



“Rockers and pick players will enjoy the jangly, raspy cut...”

DOWN AND DIRTY

More tonal goodness from the Aguilar gang here with a really usable bass distortion pedal. Rockers and pick players will enjoy the jangly, raspy cut whilst funk guys can set it warmer for less saturated, vintage vibes. Rugged and flexible the Agro is a great option if you're after some grainy bass sounds.

By Nick Brown

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