



to insane amounts of gain the Studio Devil AMP also delivers where it's needed, packing considerable weight behind our guitar parts.

The cabinet models use convolution to achieve the sounds of a variety of different speaker cabinets, providing a huge range of impulse responses to choose from and the option to include any of your own.

Hell raiser

With our opinion of Studio Devil restored, we turned our attention to the effects section. On offer is a seven-band graphic EQ, single-band parametric mid EQ, wah-wah, compressor, gate, echo, reverb and four modulation effects. Working through each effect, we were again impressed by the quality of the effects when compared to similar analogue boxes in our collection. Gallo Engineering has provided a huge range of tone-shaping options, as well as the facility to move most of the effects to either pre- or post-preamp positions.

Unfortunately, it is this very flexibility that makes Studio Devil so hard to use: unlike other amp and effects emulators, it isn't immediately apparent how the routing is set up, and while you can move an effect from pre- to post-preamp, you do so by flicking a switch (no further visual cues are given to suggest where each effect is placed). Similarly, there is no option to create custom routings; split signal paths or any of the other complex routing options now considered standard in other software amp/effects emulators are not catered for.

Studio Devil AMP does a great job of emulating guitar amps and effects. The flexibility of the tonal options alone put it up among the best amp emulators we've used, but the GUI takes some getting used to, detracting somewhat from the overall experience. **MTM**

SUMMARY

WHY BUY

- Great-sounding amp sounds
- Full complement of effects
- Accurate dynamic tone response

WALK ON BY

- Small, hard-to-read GUI
- Less-than-intuitive routing system

VERDICT

Despite our initial misgivings over the GUI, Studio Devil AMP provides some of the best guitar tones we've experienced to date.



FOR PC & MAC

Gallo Engineering AMP MODELER PRO

Virtual amp software has become a studio standard, but Gallo is hoping to raise the bar. Mike Hillier puts AMP to the test.

KEY FEATURES

- 15 preamp models
- 3 power amp models
- Impulse response cabinet processor
- 7-band graphic EQ
- Sweepable parametric mid-band EQ
- Wah-wah
- Compressor
- 4 modulation effects

STUDIO DEVIL AMP MODELER PRO

Manufacturer **Gallo Engineering**

Price **\$149**

Web **www.studiodevil.com**

Minimum system requirements

PC/Mac VST or AU host

Virtual amplifier software has really begun to take off, with all the major DAWs now including some form of amp modelling as standard

(Apple even went so far as to make the new Amp Designer one of the key features of Logic 9). While this ensures that almost all end users have some form of amp emulation that they can turn to, it makes it harder for third-party manufacturers to stake a claim. Gallo Engineering is hoping that it can raise the bar with Studio Devil Amp Modeler Pro, offering users amp tones that they've not yet heard in the digital realm.

Devil's advocate

Currently available as a VST or AU plug-in (an RTAS version is in the works), Studio Devil AMP combines a comprehensive amp modelling section with convolution-based speaker modelling and effects comprising a variety of guitar-based treatments.

On bringing up an instance of Studio Devil AMP in Ableton Live, first impressions were disappointing. The GUI is cramped and hard to read, the knobs don't stand out from the panel image and it's hard to see at first glance

how anything is routed. However, as we played through a few of the presets our opinion of Studio Devil AMP rose. The amp models really seem to sing with the guitar, delivering a deep, natural sound with plenty of character. There's lots of variety, too, from clean, jangly Roland Jazz Chorus-type sounds through some nice, responsive bluesy overdrive tones and right up into higher-gain territory. The preamp model names aren't quite as easy to recognise as some of those in other plug-ins we've used, but the sounds make it very clear where the tone stack is coming from.

If you switch off all of the effects and simply play with the preamp and cabinet section you'll get a real feel for what Studio Devil is capable of. All of the sounds interact with your playing dynamically and subtle adjustments to the gain knob bring further subtle changes to the dynamic interaction of your guitar and the amp model, just as it would with a real analogue amplifier (something that is frequently overlooked in other amp emulations).

High gain is a notoriously difficult area to get right when emulating tones, with many emulators, both hardware and software, breaking up in a decidedly synthetic manner, offering none of the grit and grind of a real high-gain amp. Recently we've seen considerable development in this area, with a few developers really nailing the sound (Softube's Metal Amp Room being among our favourites). It was therefore pleasing to note that when set

MEASURING UP

By tackling both amp emulation and effects, Studio Devil AMP has set its stall among the big players, such as IK Multimedia's AmpliTube and Native Instruments' Guitar Rig. However, unlike both of these, Studio Devil AMP isn't as instantly accessible or as powerful when it comes to routing. If you don't need all the effects emulations then Softube's Vintage Amp Room and Metal Amp Room plug-ins are among the most accurate we've tried.