

# Pritchard Sword of Satori 1-12 TB

Zen and the Art of Tone



**By Douglas Baldwin**

Zen Buddhist monks-in-training often meditate on koans—paradoxes that can only be answered when the student achieves *satori*, or enlightenment. For those given to meditating deeply on guitar tone, the burning question of the past 40 years has been “How does one achieve tube tone without a tube?” For these folks, Eric Pritchard’s line of amplifiers may be the closest thing yet to enlightenment. *Ummm...*

**ALPHABET CITY**

The Sword of Satori 1-12 TB provides a traditional set of gain and tone controls for shaping sound; each channel, however, also features voice knob—a six-position rotary switch that accesses a range of voices identified only by letter names (A for Airy Art, a clean acoustic setting; B for Bass Boost, good for clean jazz ballads; F for Famous Flat, like Leo Fender’s pride and joy; etc.). Most important, Mr. Pritchard’s abecedarian system really works—each sound leaps out as if masterfully preset with appropriate EQ and preamp gain, with nary a rise or drop in volume.

Letter lust extends to many of the other functions on the Sword of Satori. LEDs are identified as “C,” for channel (each of the two has its own voice knob); “B,” for boost (additional decibels for each channel); “N,” for the noise gate, which kicks in when the first channel’s boost is on; and “P,” for power.

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**ILLOGICAL BOX**

This small, light amp simply defies logic with its massive volume and expressiveness.

The watts knob is particularly cool, as it allows you to lower the overall volume level of your distorted sound without compromising tone—a fantastic feature for guys who gig in different-sized rooms. The cabinet’s unique “tunnel-back” de-

sign allows you to literally feel the focused bass and low midrange energy, no matter where you stand, and the elusive “edge of distortion” tones sound so natural that bandmates will ask which brand of 12AX7 preamp tubes you’re using. While a few friends grooved on a G minor shuffle, I unsheathed the Sword and cut the simple riff below, which chimed like Big Ben. Later, when I switched amp voices and whipped out some vicious slide lines, my tone hovered just shy of harmonic feedback. When we were done, I was packed up and gone in one trip to the car—the Sword of Satori’s 35 pounds weren’t much more than my guitar case weighs. This is not a cheap amp, but it nails so many great tones that it’s worth every penny. It’s also worthy of our “1 Award.”



Track 48

Moderately (♩ = 120) Gm7 C9

**CONTACT** Pritchard Amps, 8-SSSO-COOOL (877-762-6665), [pritchardamps.com](http://pritchardamps.com)

**GEAR BOX FEATURES** **POWER** 60 solid-state watts (180 watts peak distorted power) **SPEAKER** 12" custom Eminence **TOP PANEL** Input jack, input level, channel 1 and channel 2 volume, voice knob, boost knob; bass, mid, treble, reverb, and watts knobs **BACK PANEL** Power switch, PJ and Gig speaker jacks, jack for channel-switching and boost, effects send and return (return is TRS for both serial and parallel loops), speaker-emulated output, +4dB external amp DI (TRS for single-ended or balanced lines) **PRICE** \$2,075