

# PRODUCT REVIEW

## *Sword of Satori Amp*

# Pritchard Amps

BY TRENT SALTER

This month's product review is submitted to Musicians Hotline by Pritchard Amps of Berkeley Springs, WV. This thing's gotta be cool if it comes from West Virginia! Eric Pritchard is the master designer of their new solid-state combos that are really starting to make some noise in the boutique amp community. This particular model is the "Sword of Satori" model, now that's an interesting name. This bad boy pumps out 60 watts through a custom 4 x 10 Eminence loaded cab, so it's time to raise the Sword of Satori and start slicin up the tone pie.

### Retro Look...

The Pritchard line of amplifiers sports a unique retro look that will be certain to satisfy vintage lovers anywhere. With its eye catching Hunter Green custom color tolex covering and cool wicker grill, this amp looks hip enough to not look outdated either. The cabinet is trimmed in gold rope bead, even gold screws are used on the front of the cabinet and topped off with the gold Pritchard Amps logo in the top left hand corner. Classic black corner covers on all eight corners, black rubber handle on top of



the cab is also where the top mounted control panel is located. Black plastic handles are also located on the sides of the cab for transport. The Sword of Satori is a Tunnel back cabinet utilizing (4) 10" Eminence Legend Speakers. The Pritchard's cool retro look would be as comfortable on your front porch as it would be as part of your backline.

### Features...

The Pritchard "Sword of Satori" for all intents and purposes is a two-channel amp. However, there are some very impressive features that significantly widen the options of tone that you pullout of this pup. Channel I is a variable boost channel and sports controls for input level, volume, voice, boost, bass, mid, treble, reverb and watts. Channel II is a fixed



boost channel and also utilizes a common input control, volume, voice, and bass, mid and treble. The front panel also incorporates a global boost section that also sports a cool noise gate indicator, crunch and parametric boost/cut control. Although there certainly seems to be an abundant selection of knobs to

turn and buttons to push, this amp really is pretty straightforward and user friendly.

A couple of very unique features on the front panel that are most certainly worthy of further explanation. First being the "voice" control. Each channel features a six-position rotary style knob for voice. Each position is labeled with a single letter to represent changes in the tonal circuitry. Your voice selections are A (Airy), S (Smooth), F (Flat), M (Moderately bright), V (Very bright), L (Lead), B (Bass boost) and P (bass guitar tone). A "watts" control for dialing in output wattage from 60 watts undistorted, to a max of 180 watts of peak distorted power. An "input" sensitivity control for creating a boosted input signal.

The rear panel is full of the bells and whistles as well, including a main power switch, speaker jacks, which are selectable (gig & practicing), effects loop (send & return), footswitch jack, equalized direct, amp direct and even microphone XLR input. They have thought of just about everything as far as features on this little green machine.

### Slicin Out The Tone...

As always, it's time to drop the linen and start the grinnin'! It's time to see how sharp this Sword really is. For testing purposes, I'm using a variety of axes. A flame top Les Paul Classic loaded with '57 Re-issue PU's, an 80's American Standard Strat (stock), an 80's Butterscotch Tele (stock) and a PRS Custom 22.

### Channel I...

My initial test is with a Telecaster. Utilizing Channel I, I opt for the following settings: Input gain 6, Boost 6, Bass 6, Mid 4, Treble 8, Reverb 2, Watts 3, Voice switch to "H" (high gain), Volume on 3. This tone chunks out the crunch. Sweet and warm with just the right amount of mid cut. Great crunch blues tone. Rhythm playing is tight and leads cut well with ample sustain. By increasing the boost, as well as the input gain control, I'm pleasantly surprised on how raspy this bad boy can get. This is the high gain setting and the overdrive is tight and punchy. Notes are distinguishable and the low end stays tight, even at high volume levels. Next we jump to the "S" setting of the voice switch. This is the solo mode that incorporates a slight mid notch to accent bass and treble. This to me is a very cool tone, with more low end than the previous voice. Next voice position "F". This is a flat setting. Very Fenderish - The Tele through this voice would pacify the vintage Fender tone connoisseur. "M" voice is a brighter voice, which is somewhat reminiscent of a Marshall tone. Sweet. "V" voice is very bright with plenty of upper mid cut. Vox fans will love this channel. "L" is the lead channel, which provides just enough of a boost to the upper mids to ensure leads will cut through a mix. I also tested this channel with a Les Paul, and a humbucker made a huge difference in the overdriven tones. A Les Paul was obviously a fatter enriched tone, but also made an impact on the crunch level. Another way cool feature of this amp is the "watts" knob. This is a patented control, which allows the amp to increase the output power but yet retain harmonics, sag and ripple modulation. A two-button footswitch controls the boost control and a treble noise gate. When the noise gate is engaged it's almost like a mid boost. I prefer the tone when the noise gate is not engaged, but would be a useful feature to help leads cut.

### Channel II...

Channel II is a fixed boost channel and would represent the clean channel. This channel has a separate global control panel, including separate EQ. This my friend is where the Pritchard really shines in my opinion. Utilizing a stock Strat with a similar EQ setting as Channel I, the voice switch in the first position "A" is so, so cool. Airy with plenty of clean headroom, in fact my Strat chimes out almost acoustic like tones, clean and spankin. Voice position "B" is a bass boost voice, which is very mellow; a sweet laid back Jazz tone. If I owned a jazz box this is the voice I would use. Voice "P" is a precision bass tone, but for guitars. Cool tone. These three voices are specially voiced for the clean channel. The remaining "voice" settings on Channel II are the same as Channel I. The clean channel of this amp is superb, with an incredible range of tonal options. Fender lovers will really appreciate the tones that are available with this amp. The Eminence Legend speakers in a 4x10 open back cabinet are warm and punchy. I also utilized a PRS Custom 22 with this channel and was equally satisfied with the tones I was able to achieve.

### Above and Beyond...

There are a few features that should be mentioned on this amp that go above and beyond the call of amplifier duty. First of all, a cool speaker PJ output jack. There are two speaker outputs on the rear of this amp, labeled "gig" and "PJ". The PJ jack is a compensated lower output jack for home practicing or recording. An XLR microphone input on the rear chassis for portable PA use or can be utilized for a harmonica. An FX loop with a unique return jack, which has a ring-tip-sleeve for use with either series or parallel effects set-ups. Two DI's, and EQ DI, which is a speaker emulator, and an Amp DI, which can drive an external amplifier.

### The Final Word...

The Pritchard "Sword of Satori" Amp will certainly challenge your old beliefs in solid-state technology. Eric Pritchard's patented XGPA technology is a product of massive research and just plain smart minds. This technology is a major break through in solid-state technology that produces fat creation, gain compression and harmonic generation. All the technological stuff aside, the Sword of Satori is an incredibly versatile amplifier, capable of multi voiced tones that you simply do not find on any other amplifier. From "airy" to "hairy" this amp spans out the tone with accuracy and articulation and weighing in at a manageable 42 lbs. If you love Fender 4x10 based amps, you've got to check out the Pritchard. At a list price of \$2,383.75, this amp is a solid value as well. The Pritchard "Sword of Satori" can slice you a piece of the tone pie!



*Information...Pritchard Amps*  
290 Pritchard Lane  
Berkeley Springs, WV 25411  
304-258-9113  
[www.pritchardamps.com](http://www.pritchardamps.com)