

Pritchard Amplifier - "The Sword of Satori"

REVIEWED BY MIKE KENNEDY

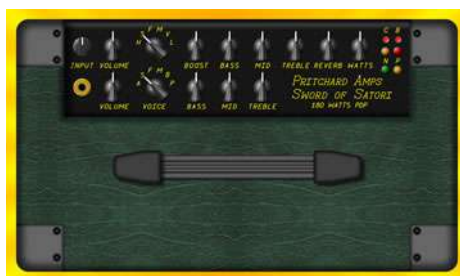
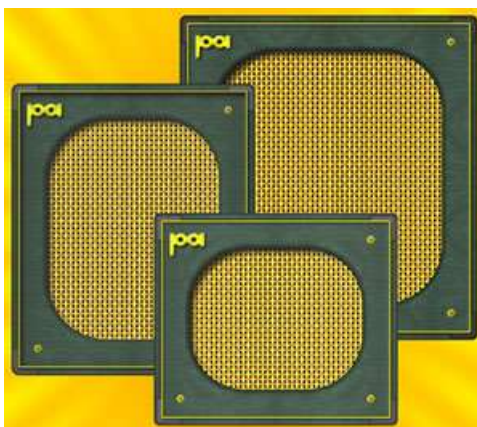
When I first read the name of this amp, I thought... Ahmmm... *Sword of Satori*. I wonder what that means. Well, Satori roughly translates into individual enlightenment, or sudden awareness. Not being a Zen Buddhist, I have decided to ignore the name, not that there is anything wrong with Zen Buddhism, it is just that I barely have enough time to practice the guitar.

The Pritchard *Sword of Satori* amplifier is a very versatile amp. When beginning this review, I decided to try various guitars, including a Victor Baker Archtop, 78 Ibanez 175, Fender Strat, Lowden acoustic electric and Epiphone nylon string classical. Having played through a variety of amplifiers for over 20 years, I have found that it is quite rare to come across an amplifier that can cover all gigs from jazz, rock, R&B to solo classical. Pritchard has designed the *Sword of Satori* in such a way that, with each guitar I plugged in, I was able to find the right setting without taking all day to do it. This amplifier's greatest asset is its versatility.

The 1-12 combo has a very simple design and is lightweight. With respect to having enough volume on a given gig, cutting through the rest of the group will not be a problem in most situations and the amplifier retains the same tone at any volume. My only suggestion would be to the exterior of the amp. The green cabinet and the cane speaker grill is less than desirable in my point of view. I prefer a black exterior with black grill. [Other coverings and grill options can be special ordered.]

I found it easy to achieve both traditional and contemporary jazz tones from the *Sword of Satori*. For jazz guitarists, the Pritchard retains all the warmth and clarity that we have come to expect from jazz guitar amplifiers. I used my Victor Baker Archtop and Ibanez 175 to test the jazz sound of the *Sword of Satori* and found that both guitars sounded true to themselves. The Archtop retained its acoustic qualities and the 175 had the warm tone for which it is known. The reverb is similar to that of a Fender Twin and the newer Polytones. The F setting and the B setting have a very warm and rounded sound with just enough midrange to give the tone a bit of punch. The B setting reminds me of the sound Wes Montgomery was getting on some of his records. The F setting is also warm and

This review states that "it is quite rare to find an amplifier that can cover all gigs" and then proceeds through the rest of the review to give examples with jazz sounds in voices F and B, acoustic sounds with A voice and electric guitar lead tone with the L voice.



Shown: Pritchard Amplifiers
TOP: *Sword of Satori* is available with different speakers and cabinets
BOTTOM: View of panel on top of amp

a bit brighter than the B setting comparable to Kenny Burrell's sound. Overall, the amp has a nice jazz sound.

I liked the options for both Acoustic guitars used to test the amplifier (Lowden acoustic / electric and Epiphone nylon string classical). The nylon string guitar sounded clean and I was able to set the 3 band equalizer to minimize an overabundance of midrange that these guitars have a tendency to have when amplified. The A voice setting is perfect for both the nylon and steel string guitars - simulating the sound of a miked guitar.

As with all of the other guitars I played through this amplifier, the Stratocaster I used also sounded great. The *Sword of Satori* has the tone of a tube amp which I prefer over solid state circuitry. The F setting really hit the spot for my taste, especially with the Strat. The 3 band equalizer and voice selector, make it very easy to find various sounds with which I was happy. With most solid state amps, the lead channel often loses quality of tone; however, with the *Sword of Satori*, the rich tone was not lost when switching to the Boost channel. The L setting is perfect for those screaming solos and is comparable to the *Lead* sound of a *Mesa Boogie* [Mesa Engineering] amp.

My overall opinion of the Pritchard *Sword of Satori* amplifier is a positive one. I

am most impressed with the flexibility of this amplifier. The need for an amplifier that is reliable and can be used in various musical situations is certainly a deciding factor for any musician choosing an amp who wants their professional experiences to run smoothly. I would recommend the Pritchard *Sword of Satori* to any working guitarist who has a wide range of stylistic needs.

Specifications and Features

Front Panel Controls: channel, input jack, input levels, volume, voice select, boost, 3 band tone control, reverb, watts control, boost and crunch switches, treble/mid noise gate indicator, power on indicator, channel 2, volume voice select, 3 band tone controls.

Rear Panel Features: mains power switch, mains inlets, speaker jacks (gig and practice), effects send/return, equalizer direct, amp direct and mic in.

Output wattage: 60 watts undistorted; 90 watts estimated clean peak transient; 90 watts dirty and 180 watts estimated peak distorted power.

Spring Reverb: electromagnetically shielded, treble/mid noisegate.

Amplifier Chassis: shock mounted 1/8 inch welded aluminum.

Cabinetry: 12 millimeter box jointed multiply Baltic birch.

Finish: two-tone green/black Tolex, cane grill, black interior.

Speaker: single 12 Tunnel Back speaker.

The Pritchard Amplifier
Pritchard Amps
290 Pritchard Lane
Berkeley Springs, WV 25411
www.pritchardamps.com
1-8-SSSO-COOOL

"The Ultimate Guitar
Amplifier" -
Bob Miles,
*Jazz Improv and
Miles on Music*