



Digital Temptation

The Line 6 Spider IV 75

You'd think the argument between tube and solidstate/digital modeling amps would be simple: tube amps sound better and, ergo, you should buy one. But every year, new, high-tech amps add features to tempt prospective buyers. Enter the Line 6 Spider IV 75, a 1x12 combo that's as compelling a case for digital/solidstate amps as anything on the market.

"What," you may ask, "could compel anyone to think about buying a digital-modeling amp – one with a solidstate power section no less – over a tube amp?" Truth be told, three things quickly come to mind. First is versatility. Unlike a good tube amp that might offer a range of clean and dirty tones, plus perhaps reverb and tremolo, the Spider IV 75 has an array of sounds in the clean-to-overdrive rainbow, from sparkly "Class A" clean to "Insane" metal distortion. And many of them are good, workable tones.

Second is weight – another gig-worthy consideration. Tube amps can sound fabulous, but that is often due to a big, heavy transformer that adds both tone *and* pounds. If you're schlepping an amp up stairs to a gig or rehearsal space, that becomes a

LINE 6 SPIDER IV 75

Price: \$300 street

Info: line6.com

very real issue, especially if your back isn't all that strong or you're simply getting older. The Spider IV 75 clocks in at 36 pounds, which is manageable, especially if you add aftermarket wheels.

Third, price. The Spider IV 75 brings a lot of features and functionality to the party – four channels, 16 amp models, 20 digital effects, 300 presets, 64 user-programmable presets, and a tuner. There's also a tap-tempo effect, 14-second looper, and a 12" Celestion speaker.

Other goodies? You can connect the amp to the web and access lessons, tones, jam tracks, and more at Line 6's Spider Online site. And you can interface it with a Line 6 pedalboard, which is convenient when you're controlling an effect with a Line 6 EX-1 expression pedal or something from their FBV line of pedals. The looper is cool because you record a chord progression, then play a cool melody on top. Better yet, you can record the



second track, too, and add a *third* part in real-time. Also look for intelligent harmony and pitch-shifting effects, as well as up to eight simultaneous effects. For individual effects, look for overdrive, fuzz, tape and multi-head echo, various reverbs, chorus, wah, phaser, flanger, auto-swell, and compression. So basically, you can leave your stompbox collection at home. Everything is here in one box.

Of course, the Spider IV 75 will *not* replace a great tube amp and a raft of

killer analog pedals; there are still too many nuances of sonic fatness and warmth that elude digital circuitry. But the Spider IV 75 proves the convenience factor is becoming harder to argue. It's a great little amp that's portable, sounds cool, packs hundreds of tones and is updatable.

Line 6 has been pushing the guitar-amp envelope for more than 15 years and the Spider IV 75 will dazzle many players. Even if you're a tubehead, prepare to be impressed. **–Pete Prown VG**