



✓ VG APPROVED GEAR

LITTLE MONSTERS

Tech 21's Fly Rig Brit and Cali

In this age of shrinking guitar rigs, Tech 21's Fly Rig pedals show just how guitar-related technology is getting smaller but more powerful. Fly Rigs measure a mere 11.5 x 2.5" and fit easily into a gig bag, yet are packed with useful effects for shows, recording, or practice.

The Brit and Cali represent the latest evolution in this hip series. Each is extremely straightforward and voiced to replicate their respective tubular sounds – warm, classic rock (the Brit... think Zep and GnR) and high-voltage, boutique crunch (the Cali... Metallica and Mastodon). Each contains a few critical effects and features: digital delay and reverb, and Tech 21's renowned analog SansAmp circuitry.

The Brit and Cali have their overdrive/distortion section on the right, near the input jack. These are guitar effects and not emulations, and have typical stompbox controls: Level, Tone, Drive, and Boost (21 clean db). The middle of each pedal – the SansAmp circuit – is like the

familiar control panel on your guitar amp, with Level, Drive, Reverb, and three-band EQ. The Drive control is much like the overdrive sound of a master-volume tube amp, and wholly different from the crunchy Drive in the effect section on the right. Set up the SansAmp as a rockin' rhythm channel, then kick in the Brit or Cali effect as heavier overdrive for power chords and leads. That makes these pedals work like a three-channel tube amp.

On the far left, the delay section (DLA) has controls for Level, Repeats, Drift, and Time, plus a Tap tempo footswitch to sync the echoes to the beat in real-time. Drift is a hip modulation tweak that makes the repeats deliver weird, wonky pitch-shifts. Turn it down for traditional echo, or turn it clockwise for more unusual sounds. At full blast, it even works as something of a light

chorus effect. The delay sections on both the Brit and Cali are superb – fat and clean with glorious high-fidelity.

One of the coolest things about these units is that they can accommodate any type of input and output impedance and adjust automatically, so you don't have to worry about the technical back-end. The Fly Rigs even create a strong "buffered" signal to fix problems caused by long cable runs. Just plug in your guitar and send the output to a regular guitar amp, acoustic amp, mixer, PA system, or direct-recording interface. The box will do the rest.

On the job, both more than deliver the goods. Each sound great plugged into the front of a standard guitar amp, but you'll be surprised when plugging into a full-range PA or acoustic amps and engaging the SansAmp circuit. Tech 21's famed tube-amplifier emulations take over to make it sound like you have a high-end head and cabinet. Each pedal also has an excellent user's manual filled with sample tone setups.

It's hard to believe that boxes this small can deliver so much firepower, but the Fly Rigs do so with style and ease. Sure, it's fun to have big pedalboards loaded with stompboxes, but sometimes you want to travel light. And the Brit and Cali are pint-sized dynamos of tone and power. – *Pete Prown VG*



Price: \$249 (list)
Info: www.tech21nyc.com

