



## The Inaugural GoG Gear Awards!

Posted on February 4, 2019 by Michael Molenda

I have attended more NAMM shows than I will ever admit (though, hey, iced teas and movie tickets are reasonable bribes if you must know). They are crowded. They are loud. At times, they are absolutely silly. But they're also excellent excuses to hang with industry friends and peruse a bounty of new products that you may even want to make your own.

NAMM 2019 had a special significance for me, because it was the first time I attended as my own boss, representing **Guardians of Guitar**. Furthermore, the show provided me the opportunity to Play It Forward to the manufacturing community—are you getting hip to that GoG mantra of “Play It Forward, Play It Forward” yet?—and devise an award to showcase products that prompted my fellow Guardians and I to go “wow.”

The **Gigantically Outstanding Gear Award** (funny how that also stands for “GoG”) is our way of saluting gear makers who developed products by either [1] actually listening to players' needs, [2] innovating something awesome, [3] putting a crazy new twist on an age-old idea, [4] knocking the quality quotient out of the park, or [5] just did something so tremendously cool and fun that it made us smile. We also tried to limit our picks to gear that was attainable for the average working musician, and that will be readily available. For example, the Sundragon amp that we called out in our pre-NAMM article is absolutely a marvel of amp design. But it's a limited edition, and it was pretty much sold out by the close of the show.

The following “Top 20” GoG Awards were culled from reports by Guardians Barry Cleveland, Jude Gold, Ali Handal, Jimmy Leslie, Gretchen Menn, and I. Obviously, these products haven't been reviewed yet as many weren't shipping at the time of the NAMM Show. But we're not getting into nuts and bolts and analysis and investigations here. These are first impressions from a show that debuts cool new gear toys, and we simply let ourselves geek out at the creative possibilities promised by our 20 award winners.

That said, we now congratulate the GoG Awards inaugural class of 2019...

## Tech 21 Fly Rigs



Since introducing the fabulous Fly Rig concept in 2014, Tech 21 has continued to tinker with near-perfection and introduce new variations. The company released a trio of Fly Rigs at NAMM, and we were all hard-pressed to pick just one award winner. Happily, we make the rules here, so we simply went ahead and named all three as Gigantically Outstanding. The Fly Rig 5 got a version 2.0 update with new features such as a switchable pre/post boost and an independent reverb. Richie Kotzen became the first artist with a signature Fly Rig, and his using the device out on the road promoted a few refinements for his RK5 v2, such as an on/off button for the SansAmp section. That brings us to the latest signature artist for the Fly Rig series, Rammstein's Paul Landers. I picked this for my pre-NAMM report, and it didn't disappoint. The clean and dirty sounds are vibey and fearsome, and the Boost and Punch modes get it done when you want a solo or riff to burst out of the band mix onstage. All three of the new Fly Rigs can fit into a briefcase (of course), and the tones are organic, impactful, and totally rockin'. Pick one that fits your particular style and never feel like you have to compromise your sound when you can't drag your full rig to a show or recording session. [Click Here for More Info](#)