



## IS THAT A PREAMP IN YOUR POCKET?

### The Tech 21 PSA 2.0

A staple in recording studios for 25 years, the original Tech 21 PSA was a rackmount overdrive/preamp for direct recording or use onstage in place of a traditional amp head. The company has updated the unit as the PSA 2.0, and fitted it into a surprisingly diminutive chassis. Guitarists and bassists (even singers and other instrumentalists) can also deploy it on pedalboards like a regular stompbox, recalling their three favorite presets in Performance mode.

Unlike digital modelers, the PSA 2.0 works more like a traditional amp, using analog circuits coupled with digital functions to save up to 128 sounds. The tones are reactive, allowing players to tease out more-organic tones than digital amp/cab sims. Part of Tech 21's solution is a full suite of tonal controls, including a two-band EQ and mini-knobs labeled Drive (power amp distortion), Crunch (upper-frequency dirt), Punch (midrange-frequency breakup), and Buzz (low-end overdrive). The little speaker icon kicks in the analog cab-simulation portion of the SansAmp circuit, which can be left on all the time.

Plugged into a home-recording studio, the

PSA proved easy to use. The 2.0 gives a lot of flexibility with all those tone-shaping controls, from brighter modern guitar to warmer old-school character. There are 49 factory presets to get you going, offering textures from clean to breakup to full-on crunch (there's also a MIDI jack for further switching options). The Crunch knob proved critical for getting high saturation without too much treble, corralling the distortion into a warmer zone. Keep in mind that using full-range studio monitors will create different tones than if you plug it into the Power Amp In jack of a combo (which will yield more-traditional tones).

The PSA 2.0 is another worthy addition to the SansAmp family, combining original PSA tones with modern flexibility and size. If you want a powerful overdrive/preamp you can stick in your pocket, the PSA 2.0 has tone to spare. — **Pete Prown**

Price: \$399  
[www.tech21nyc.com](http://www.tech21nyc.com)