

Danelectro Billionaire Series Pedals

Danelectro was among the very first companies to offer ultra-affordable stompboxes; now, the US brand is now offering four new additions to their range in the form of the Billionaire Series. So, have Danelectro put their money where their mouth is **Tom Quayle** investigates.

Danelectro pedals have never really screamed high end, boutique tone or good looks. Quirky and retro-cool? Certainly, but at the budget end of the market they would rarely find their way onto a high-end pedal board. Their new Billionaire series might reset this course, offering great tones and quality Diecast construction in a surprisingly affordable package that looks and sounds the business.

The range consists of four pedals and a matching power supply. For this review, Danelectro sent us the four pedals to play with, namely the Billion Dollar Boost, Pride of Texas, Big Spender Spinning Speaker and Filthy Rich Tremolo. Upon opening the package, you are immediately struck by the size and build quality of these pedals. Their footprint is tiny and the Die-Cast metal housings are beautifully designed and finished

Billion Dollar Boost



in classic car hues, with great feeling controls and non-latching footswitches. All of the pedals feature top mounted jack sockets for even further space saving on your board and accompanying 9v DC inputs from a standard power supply or Danelectro's Battery Billionaire alternative. A bright Billionaire 'B' logo lights up when the pedals are engaged with all four utilising True Bypass switching with no pops, clicks or additional noise in operation. Considering the price of these pedals, the quality on offer is fantastic and a big step up from Danelectro's previous offerings in this department.

Starting with the Billion Dollar Boost you get a simple to operate, transparent if you want it, boost pedal that can also add treble and bass to your signal to tame or bolster different pickup and amp combinations. There is more than enough gain on tap to push clean amps into breakup tones and, at settings below half way, the Volume control adds weight and depth to clean tones that make this an always on, set and forget kind of pedal. Danelectro have also included a useful Low Cut switch for pulling out those frequencies that could get muddy with Humbuckers or larger amps. It's very effective and adds further use scenarios to this great sounding pedal. This is a fantastic sounding boost pedal that sounds far more boutique than its price point would lead you to believe. »

STAR RATING



PROS

- » Great build quality, design and finish
- » Excellent tones at a fantastic price
- » Easy to dial in great tones
- » Bright LED and True Bypass switching
- » Top mounted jacks
- » Small, space-saving footprint

CONS

- » None at these prices!

Check **THE SPEC**

Danelectro Billionaire Series Pedals

True Bypass // Metal Housing // Requires 9V Power Supply

For more information, please visit: <http://billionairetone.com/>

Next up we get The Pride of Texas, a low gain drive/boost pedal designed to emulate the sound of Texas' finest Blues picker. If you're looking for Tube Screamer-esque levels of drive you might be a little disappointed as The Pride of Texas is a lighter drive, even at cranked gain levels, but the tone on offer here is superb

The Pride of Texas



at all settings. Controls are simple, with Volume, Gain, Treble and Bass – a nice bonus from the traditional single tone control that offers greater tonal shaping. Adding the pedal to a clean tone fattens things up greatly, providing enhanced pick dynamics and just enough grit to crunch up chordal playing and make single notes sing. Pushing the gain control all the way up provides a light rock/blues tone with tons of clarity for chords and can be used to push dirty amps into saturated territory with ease. It sits best on top of an already breaking up amp however, where it puts you straight into SRV territory, especially with single coils, where the bass control works well for adding low end girth on anaemic pickups. As with the Billionaire Boost, the price point here is remarkable given the quality on offer. »

“The remaining pair of pedals are of the **modulation variety**...”

Big Spender Spining Speaker

The remaining pair of pedals are of the modulation variety, starting with the Big Spender Spinning Speaker. Also sporting a very simple layout, the BSSS features Volume, Treble and Speed dials, along with a ramp control for moving between the fast and slow settings inherent to a Leslie speaker. This is an effect that sound cheap very easily but, considering the cost; the BSSS manages to deliver a high-quality emulation of a Leslie in action that wouldn't be embarrassing on a pedal costing twice as much. The modulation has an analogue-esque warmth and a three-dimensional quality that really adds weight and movement to your signal in a pleasing manner without sounding cheesy or fake. Whether using the slow or fast settings the effect is highly pleasing and musical, never masking your chordal playing or killing your original tone.



Filthy Rich Tremelo



Finally, we have the Filthy Rich Tremelo pedal, featuring Speed and Depth controls plus a Hard/Soft switch to alter the shape of the waveform in use. The range of speed can take you from a slow, hypnotic tremolo, to a hard, fast-pulsing rhythmic effect and anything in-between. In the soft mode, the effect is very analogue-like in nature with a warmth and subtlety that sounds much more

expensive than the price point should allow. In the Hard mode, you get a more aggressive effect, but the warmth remains, and your original tone is kept intact.

The Billionaire series represents a big triumph for Danelectro. The price to tone ratio here is amazing for the consumer and is matched with great build quality and a design language that is much easier on the eyes than Danelectro's previous efforts in this department. These excellent pedals come highly recommended for those on a budget and even those with deeper pockets. Nice work Danelectro!

END ◀

