

**ROAD TESTED
SHERLOCK
FATHEAD
Reviewed by
Todd Burman**

(From Australian
Mixdown magazine
Dec 2002)



Have an amplifier dilemma? Can't find 'that' tone. Need a solution? His name is Dale Sherlock, and this man is proud to give the people his finest achievement, the Sherlock 'Fat Head'.

An amplifier unapologetic for its design and construction, for its new and fresh killer tones, and bringing sonic bliss for guitarists craving an amplifier worthy of their axe.

Who is Dale Sherlock?

Let's meet the man! Dale Sherlock has been a guitar amp technician for fourteen years, working under the banner of Sherlock Amplifiers for many years. Remember the Signal Station guitar pre and power amps from the early nineties - Dale Sherlock.

Where did he become a professional technician? Ansett Airlines, of course, for twelve years! The Fat Head is hand built in Melbourne, no expense spared, and has been in development for many years and its latest version is the finest yet.

What is the Fat Head?

Step inside and take the journey. Warning-once you step inside it may be near impossible to come back, and many guitarists have been lost and never seen again. They have been unable to stop playing the Fat Head. Despite the acute symptoms, the positive side effects are it has been known to vastly improve your love of the guitar amplifier.

The Specs

All tube MIDI controlled guitar amplifier. Four massive channels, midi assignable - clean, clean/edge, rhythm, and lead. Available in 100w and 50w versions - 7 high gain, selected, 12AX7 pre-amp and splitter tubes. 2 sets of EQ control, bass, mid and treble - gain and master volume controls for each channel - 2 position bright switches for clean channels - 2 position tone switches and gain boost for dirty channels - AB master volumes, midi assignable, for volume boost in any channel - AB presence and depth controls, midi assignable to any channel - Series, parallel effects loop, with send and return - internal FX mixing via effects level control, also FX bypass, MIDI assignable - 2 parallel speaker output sockets - Midi in, Midi through sockets - all switches are chrome metal except for impedance and channel socket

switches - supplied with 10 button midi controller housed in a rugged metal chassis with switches rather than bank switches - also featured is a world first technology that is so incredible that I will leave it to you to find out, and that alone is worth its weight in gold.

Sonic Bliss

The Fat Head is built lock stock and barrel in Melbourne. That's right, a world class amplifier built in our own back yard, one which will create a world-wide phenomena is one of our own, and proudly flies the Oz flag. The Fat head has already been shipped internationally, including the US of A, to outstanding acclaim. Australia, it is our turn to delve into the world of the Fat Head.

Every single part of the Fat Head is hand built by Dale, no expense spared, no cheap parts, no factory lines, no corners cut, it is built with pride. It is an amplifier worthy of praise and will very soon become a

household name. It will create a stir for rival amplifier manufacturers and a few headaches as well.

It is all tube and represents the best of both worlds by blending digital advancements and innovative expertise in tube technology.

It is four channels of pure tube tone, all individually voiced, featuring an individual pre-amp section for each channel, as well as master volume controls for each channel. It has the ability to use pure tube technology and the flexibility of digital technology. Let's take a look at each channel and what you can expect. Firstly the two clean channels, Clean and Clean/Edge, each have there own gain and volume controls, but share the EQ section, bass mid and treble. Also both feature 2 position bright switches. The clean channel has one of the most exceptional pristine clean sounds I have ever heard. It has the ability to provide

super warm tones to very bright punchy bite. This is also achieved from each channel having its own individual gain level, so you can utilize it to your own advantage, and not to be bound to using a tone that the amp is restricted to. The tone of the clean sound will be dictated by where you position the bright switch. In the up position the guitar high harmonics are boosted, ideally for rhythm playing for pure clean tones. When the bright switches down you are confronted by the crisp tone for more response and voiced for intricate clean playing. The bright switch centered is in the off position. Overall the clean channel provides a scary amount of punch and bottom end warmth that other amps simply cannot achieve without sacrificing tone. Second is the Edge channel, and no, not the guy from U2, mind you some of the tonality of this channel will succinctly remind you of some of his tones. This channel

essentially is a clean channel with low gain warmth. It has exactly the same features as the clean channel, but is voiced more towards a bluesy tone with staggering mid response. Simply put a blues player's wet dream. All those Hendrix style riffs will find a nice warm home in this channel. Enter the dirty channel, which the Fat Head is aptly named after. My God the distortion is in a league of its own - period. The tonal response through various guitars that I run through this channel are brilliant, all had a monster scream whilst keeping their individual tonality. Rhythm and lead channels feature individual gain and volume controls, a shared EQ section of bass, mid and treble, a three-position tone switch and a gain boost button. The three position switch functions as frequency boost prior to distortion. In the up position it boosts top end, in the down position it covers a mid/top boost. If you require no boost then

simply center the toggle switch. The rhythm channel is second to none. It has all the balls you will ever need in a distortion, and if that isn't enough engage the gain boost, and you will be adequately compensated with fat beefy tone. The Fat Head is voiced toward a modern high gain distortion but via the tone switch can be voiced to capture smooth vintage tones, it basically has it all. It is simply sonic bliss, capturing all harmonics and not skipping a beat with its V8 engine of tubes engulfing four to the floor distortion. 100 percent total rock and roll. It is a head to rival a Mesa Boogie and one that will sit nicely alongside a vintage Plexi. This amp is brutal and unforgiving when it comes to the lead channel, put your belts on and let's ride... The Fat Head lead channel is an absolute prize winner! It takes modern high gain distortion to the extreme. If you are brave and wish to

engage the gain boost on this channel you will need a Les Paul tuned down to create metal heaven previously uncharted territories. It is LETHAL, for those distortion freaks who never thought massive distortion was possible, it is now available. Other features include visually friendly channel and EQ indicator LEDs: green LED = Clean channel, yellow LED = Edge channel, blue LED = rhythm channel, red LED = Lead channel (with some exceptions dependant upon the individual user's presets) The Fat Head also features an FX loop allowing the user to add FX to the pre-amp section of the head and can be operated in either series or parallel. Other features of the head include dual presence and depth. Two presence knobs control Presence A and B. This will allow the increase or decrease of the amount of high frequency signal, adding brilliance when increased or warmth

when reduced. The depth buttons when engaged will give a bottom end boost and is very tasty.

Finally we come to the midi and what it will allow you to do. The Fat Head comes with a ten-button midi controller. With the amps built in midi mod it makes it possible to combine sections of the Fat Head's features, and allow you to program channels and assign them to the foot controller, very handy indeed. But it can also work with all midi foot controllers.

The Fat Head come with a slave output, which is a quarter socket and can be used as either a line level output for recording, or for feeding into another amplifier in a slaving configuration. And that, ladies and gents, are the facts of the Fat Head.

Harmonic Heaven

The BIG surprise is still to come. What would you expect to pay for a hand built four-channel head like this? \$4,500 or maybe \$5,500 for the really high end amps...

The Fat head costs \$3,500. Yes that's right \$3,500 and if you don't have a midi controller Dale will build you one, including a 9 volt output socket from the controller to supply the power to your pedals, and will only cost an extra \$300.

I have seen some amazing guitar amps through the years, and this one goes straight to the top and is simply an A grade head. It is tone central. As a guitarist you could not do yourself any bigger favor than purchasing the Fat Head. It is one of the most brilliant amplifiers I have ever

heard, and is one of the most well built heads too. Dale is happy to make any modifications that you would require as well. The Fat Head is all-Australian! hand built to perfection and has some of the most killer tones you will ever hear-period. Do yourself and your guitar a favor and check out the Fat Head, your guitar may never forgive you if you don't. For more information log on to www.sherlockamps.com. An absolute massive all Victorian two big thumbs up!

PRICE: \$3,500 with foot controller \$3,800

DISTRIBUTED BY:
Sherlock Amplifiers

PHONE NUMBER:
(03) 9846 5614

WEB ADDRESS:
www.sherlockamps.com