

Tribology friction technology applied
to the ancient art of steel guitar

RRP:
\$56-95

Tribo-Tone

Tone bar

Lap steel, acoustic slide and National or Weissenborn players mostly use stainless steel or chrome-plated steel bars, but there used to be an alternative: the bakelite bar, which gave vintage recordings that sweet sound but which wore out fast and had the

expensive habit of shattering when dropped. Tribo-Tone in the USA takes the concept into the 21st century by using a super-tough, non-chipping hi-tech plastic with a heavy but non-toxic core. The bars come in three diameters - a slim 5/8", 3/4", the pedal steel standard of 7/8" - and in weights from 3.3oz to a hefty 8oz. Our heavy 7/8" bar is a cool moody black, but the range of colour options resembles a jumbo crayon set.

Your first time with a Tribo-Tone is a spooky experience. It glides over the strings with ghostly smoothness, and when the shine has worn down to a dull satin - as it's supposed to - then it slides even better. Squeaks, clicks and accidental chinks are no more, and there's no 'string zip' as you slide upwards - wonderful for recording. Ultra-high end is perhaps slightly diminished, but the plain strings are fat and luscious and the wound lows are pure and clean, even high up the neck.



FINAL SCORE

Sounds	19/20
Useability	20/20
Effectiveness	20/20
Value For Money	16/20
Vibe	18/20
TOTAL	93%

Good for... pure, toneful sounds for lap stylists
Look elsewhere... for the shimmering top end
- and added noise - of a steel bar

VERDICT

The Tribo-Tone is a real find. It sounds superb. Unlike a metal bar, it sticks to the hand like poo to a blanket when the gig gets hot and sweaty and doesn't suck the heat from your fingers in the winter. Not cheap - but this is a must-try for all acoustic and electric lap-style slide players.

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