

Røde NT-1 Signature £139

One of the world's most popular studio microphones gets back to basics. **Matt McCracken** finds out more

CONTACT WHO: Røde **WEB:** rode.com **KEY FEATURES** A large diaphragm cardioid condenser microphone with a 4dBA noise floor and excellent background noise rejection. Comes with a shock mount, pop filter, XLR cable, and microphone soft case





Billed as “the world’s most popular studio microphone”, the Røde NT-1 has been a mainstay of home recording musicians for over 30 years. This signature edition eschews the NT-1 5th Generation’s USB connectivity, returning to a more traditional studio style with a single XLR out. Speaking of style, it’s also available in a range of matte colourways including blue, green, pink, purple, and red, or if you prefer your mics more monochrome, it’s available in black too.

Like its predecessor, it features a JFET impedance converter, ultra-low noise floor of just 4dBA, and can withstand SPLs up to 142dB. This makes it ideal for capturing a variety of sources from the quietest whisper of a vocal to the blast of a snare drum or guitar cab. It has the same HP-6, 1-inch sputtered gold capsule that the previous generation features too, promising excellent noise rejection.

Our review model came in sleek matte black with a shock mount, pop filter, XLR cable, and soft sheath for the mic itself. The mic feels robust in your hand, if not heavy. The aluminium shell is super smooth and should be tough enough to be resistant to dings and scratches, and it gives us the overall feeling that it’s more than capable of putting up with

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use and abuse in a working studio. There are no low-cut or pad switches like you’d find on other condenser mics, but to be fair, these are nice extras rather than must-haves for us.

To start our testing, we placed the NT-1 about eight feet in front of a DW drum kit to see how it captured the wide frequency response. The results were really quite good, with it performing well as a drum room mic, capturing a very honest picture of the sound of our kit in a less-than-stellar rehearsal room. You could even purchase two and use them as a pair of budget overheads.

Next, we wheeled out our Orange 2x10 tube amp and placed the mic right up against the grill, dialling up the volume. Things got fizzy the more we cranked the volume at that distance, but bringing it back about or foot or so opened things up, delivering a nice ambience that never got wishy-washy. Recording both rhythm sounds and leads delivered more than usable tones, and we can see it pairing nicely with an SM57 for a more focused sound.

Our final test was on vocals and here we believe we found the NT-1’s *raison d’être*. Capturing a Billie Eilish-style breathy vocal we were blown away by the warmth and detail in the sound. It’s neutral, but never dull-sounding, despite being darker than the NT-1A which we’ve used many times previously.

Overall it’s this tonal neutrality of the mic that we’ve ended up loving, making it ultra-versatile as well as fantastic value for money. **FM**

FM VERDICT

8.5

Versatile enough to do a great job on drums, guitars, vocals, or anything else, this excellent value mic is well worth the asking price

THE PROS & CONS

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Super-flat response, sounding particularly impressive on vocals

Ultra-low noise floor captures quiet sources with minimal unwanted noise

High SPL rating, great for use as a drum overhead or on cranked guitar amps

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No low-cut or pad switches on the microphone body