

MORE SOUNDS THAN YOU THINK

Acid has a lot more varied presets than you might have been expecting, including many modern dance leads

ACID DIRT

To our ears, Acid delivers more distorted sounds than the original, by way of these dials

WOBBLE

The Slide and Accent controls are there to help give Acid that distinctive 303 movement

MODERN DIGITAL

MiniFreak is a highlight of a new wave of hardware digital synths in software, and has very varied presets



MIDI CONTROL

As with the hardware, there are lots of assignable controllers; in fact you can use the hardware to control the plugin version

TWO OSCILLATORS

Choose from a range of 20+ engines which vary massively



EXTRAS

While CP-70 V concentrates on the electric piano sounds from the original Yamaha, there are extra controls to take it beyond that

Arturia V Collection X €499

Arturia's mighty V Collection reaches generation X, but now its focus is not just on classic keyboards but new ones too. **Andy Jones** Xplains

> One of the 'safe bets' in production software is surely Arturia's V Collection. It's always offered a lot of quality keyboard emulations for its price, and it's regularly updated; great value when you consider its scale. However, it's also a victim of its own success, with so many classic emulations included that there's little more worth emulating. So how can future updates be as good? With the last (v9), Arturia got around the problem by introducing its Augmented range of instruments on top of a few vintage additions. Augmented Strings and Voices were

the first two entries, and we suspected that this would be a future path for V Collection to take. V Collection X proves we were on the money.

Add an X to Collection

There are three new Augmented titles in V Collection X: Brass, Grand Piano and Woodwind, but that's not to say that version X doesn't have vintage additions too. These come in the form of CP-70 V, Arturia's emulation of the Yamaha CP-70 electric piano and Acid, very much a TB-303 bass squeler, and more as we shall see.

Completing the addition of six instruments in total is the software version of Arturia's excellent hardware synth MiniFreak. MiniFreak V is an exacting replica of that digital synth and its inclusion points to another possible future for V Collection. (We're wondering if we'll get Pigments in a future update.)

Starting with Acid, we have an instrument that can very much deliver the classic acid sounds you know and love, but rather like the Augmented range (which we focus on in the box right), there's more to it than that. There are

You now get
close to 40
instruments in total
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loads of really filthy distorted sounds that go even further than the original's pretty darn dirty capabilities. There are also more up-to-date dance leads and even a pad, so it delivers a lot more than just Acid.

Much more restrained is CP-70 V which concentrates on great electric piano sounds with only a couple that stray too far.

Our 'highlight of V Collection X' award probably goes to MiniFreak V though. This instrument has been around to buy separately for a while and you get it with the hardware synth, for which it makes a great partner - and arguably even opens up the machine for even greater tweakage. Sound-wise you get a hell of a lot, with more than 20 engines supplying everything from classic analogue synthesis to dirty or shimmering digital. It can be as off-the-wall as you like (it's the older sibling of MicroFreak, after all) but absolutely beautiful too, a real gem of a synth to own in either hard or soft forms.

As if these and the Augmented additions aren't enough, Arturia has also rebuilt Mini V and Wurli V, with Mini in particular, looking (and sounding) better than ever.

Is V Collection still a winner?

Arturia has done well to keep the V Collection flag flying with version X. You now get close to 40 instruments in total which is quite incredible, and way more than any other bundle delivers. And we've not even mentioned the sound banks that come with the collection - there are now 17 thanks to three more additions in version X.

The Augmented range is solid and surprisingly varied in tone. This gives a fresher edge to the collection, acting as the modern sheen to most of the collection's dusty analogue warmth. Acid does a very good job of recreating that well known sound and a lot more. But it's



The main central dial in Augmented Grand Piano morphs between sounds, while others introduce effects like delay and reverb. Motion adds vibrato effects while Color brings some nice saturation

The reality of the Augmented instruments

The Augmented Series of instruments in V Collection does pretty much what you'd expect, given the name - each focuses on an instrument type and augments it. The new Grand Piano instrument, for example, has some beautiful grand piano sounds but is, like all the range, really all about morphing them with other sounds (with the main dial), introducing movement with a kind of vibrato effect, or adding other effects like delays and reverbs. It's easy, hands-on synthesis

really. We weren't looking forward to the Brass one, not being huge fans of the sound, but of course, it's a lot more than brass and there are some strangely compelling presets in there. It's very easy to take them beyond what you start with and call them your own. Woodwind completes the set and is equally expandable - woodwind if you want it, but way more too. These are great additions to the bundle and well worth exploring once you've done your keyboard museum tour.

the varied digital tones that MiniFreak brings that are (perhaps oddly) V Collection's most exciting update. We all love the original hardware and its tones are very welcome here.

So it's a good update, and whichever way you look at V Collection, you're still only paying around £15 per instrument which is a steal for some of the best emulations out there. **cm**

Web arturia.com

Alternatively

Korg Collection 4
\$399

Korg's Collection has 13 absolute classics in it and makes a great partner to V Collection

Roland Cloud
from \$2.99/mo

The Cloud continues to thicken with vintage Roland greats - many of which aren't in V Collection

Verdict

For V Collection still rocks
Love the MiniFreak V addition
Acid squeals well if that's your thing
The Augmented additions are very solid

Against If you want the 'vintage' of V Collection you might be disappointed with just two additions

V Collection is still an excellent bundle of instruments and with X, Arturia has maintained its record of great updates

9/10



Mini V gets updated to v4 in V Collection X, along with a new UI that gives it much more 3D appeal