

# Native Instruments X1 MK3 £259

Charlotte Sterland gets to grips with this portable controller for DJs who want looping and effects at their fingertips

**CONTACT WHO:** Native Instruments **WEB:** [native-instruments.com](http://native-instruments.com) **KEY FEATURES** A good device for those wanting a compact DJ mixing controller with a host of effects and looping options on board. The OLED screens and colour coded lights are a bonus, with integrability with Traktor Pro software really useful





The X1 MK3 is the latest version of Native Instruments' compact Traktor controller, adding several new features over the MK1 and 2 versions. Importantly, for club use: it's small and colourful (the indicator lights that is, not the black box), robust and relatively straightforward to get to grips with.

The MK3 has a slightly updated layout compared to earlier models, including a pair of high quality OLED displays instead of one. Moving between mixer and effects modes is done using the central button at the top of the device. A shift press of this also takes us between MIDI mode and controller mode. In mixer mode, the top three dials control three bands of EQ, while the fourth down controls the volume of that mixer channel.

The X1 can control effects across two decks simultaneously. When in effects mode, the four dials on each side of the controller can be used to control a variety of effect parameters, either set to control a single effect with access to multiple parameters, or for broader control over a full effect group, with the top dial used as a global dry/wet.

The next set of dials half way down the device control loop length and 'beat jumps'. The lower keys control the samplers as well as cueing and syncing. A Pattern Player is also available in Traktor Pro Plus

software (requiring an additional subscription) and can be customised to play sequenced patterns and rhythms from the controller.

The X1 MK3 adds stylish lighting that can be used to indicate the status of a deck in the Traktor 3 software. Green lights indicate when a loop is active and a red light indicates a track is 30 seconds from finishing, although these lights can also be deactivated or customised in the software. The additional screens are handy for displaying information such as volume and loop lengths.

Other devices can be connected to the controller via the three USB inputs on the rear. This is useful for chaining other controllers to the MK3, but doing so requires the use of the included power supply.

The difference between the rectangular and dome-shaped buttons is great for more tactile mixing, in dark rooms, and the cue and play buttons feel different; a variation on previous models.

One disappointment is that there's no touch-sensitive strip in the MK3, which is a drawback for those

who prefer to be able to 'slide' deck functions, rather than just have keys. This was available on previous versions, and it was especially handy for functions like pitch adjustment.

The MK3 also comes with a soft protector case and weighs only 0.75kg, so could not be easier to pop in a backpack.

This is Native Instruments' first new Traktor controller in some time, and we hope its arrival spells a renewed focus on the DJ software and its associated hardware tools. **FM**

## FM VERDICT

# 8.0

**A great portable effects and mixing controller for DJs building modular setups and those who want something they can use in any club**

## THE PROS & CONS



High quality OLED display screens

### Portable and light

Multiple USB inputs for use in tandem with other hardware

### Mountable and security lockable



Audio interface

Some features from previous models have gone

No LED/colour coded volume monitoring