A new Eric Johnson Strat or 1977 Strat - which one?

by **The_Doc** » 03 Oct 2012, 17:16

Played both of these recently and I have an opportunity to buy either, at a reasonable price. I'm no expert on strats and just wondered what people thought of these guitars? Which one would you go for and why? I have a vague recollection that 1977 was a 'bad' year for strats.

For info...the '77 is a glossed natural wood body, maple neck and the big headstock - condition is mint with hardcase and all the bits.

The_Doc

Re: A new Eric Johnson Strat or 1977 Strat - which one?

by **zentropa** » 03 Oct 2012, 17:23

I would go '77. 77-80 were pretty weak strat years, but it's not getting any younger. Is the finish a refin or is it original?

You can always get newer sig stuff if you are willing to pay for it. Vintage gear is hard to find for a good deal anymore. Once it hits 40 years it will likely break $2k-2.5k in value even for a bad year.

Basically, the 77 will continuously increase in value while the EJ will take 20+ years.

However... It is about sound and playability too.

zentropa

Re: A new Eric Johnson Strat or 1977 Strat - which one?

by **The_Doc** » 03 Oct 2012, 19:09

Thanks zentropa - the finish is 100% original - it even has it's original tags and sales invoice.

The_Doc

Re: A new Eric Johnson Strat or 1977 Strat - which one?

by **zentropa** » 03 Oct 2012, 23:54

Yeah, i'd definitely look at it this way: over the next 10 years you will probably see 15+ EJ strats. Mint '77 strats will likely be somewhere between 0 and 1.

zentropa

Re: A new Eric Johnson Strat or 1977 Strat - which one?

by **Laurie** » 04 Oct 2012, 00:36

If it plays well, go the '77.

Laurie

Re: A new Eric Johnson Strat or 1977 Strat - which one?

by **DasBeef** » 04 Oct 2012, 00:51

Maple, big headstock. You really needed to ask?

DasBeef

Re: A new Eric Johnson Strat or 1977 Strat - which one?

by **visserman** » 10 Oct 2012, 14:54

1977 of course, why???
Because the Eric Johnson is made now, and will still be made for a while.
The 70s Strats do have a vibe, like em or not. The new ones are good, you may even prefer them: Different neckshape, fretboard ect.
The Eric Johnson is based on a 50s Strat, so again, will feel and play different from a recent one, however it is not a vintage one.

Okay in a nutshell: The 70s one will hold its value, because it being vintage. Collectors may sniff at them in disbelieve, but when you do your research, their prices have been rising. Probably because they are more affordable then any 60s or 50s Strat.
Are they bad? No, but you need to play the guitar. If you prefer the sound and Feel of the Johnson Strat, go for that, but from an investment point it would be the 70s one. You may even come across a early 60s one, and then you could trade the 70s one against that one.

If you do not mind me asking, how much will the 70s one be? You do not need to be specific, just something like in the range of.....
Cheers!!

visserman

Re: A new Eric Johnson Strat or 1977 Strat - which one?

by **FastEddie** » 10 Oct 2012, 16:06

As for resale value go with the 1977 it's price will go up

FastEddie

Re: A new Eric Johnson Strat or 1977 Strat - which one?

by **The_Doc** » 10 Oct 2012, 18:08

No probs visserman and thanks for the advice everyone. The price of the ' 77 is around the £1,500 to £1,700 range. After doing some more research, I concluded that wasn't as good a price as I had first thought - £1,200 to £1,300 would have been more like it. I haven't made a decision yet and it's probably gone now, so I will miss out. That would be my fault entirely for dithering about but that's ok as I'm after a few other things at the moment that will more than make up for it

The_Doc

Re: A new Eric Johnson Strat or 1977 Strat - which one?

by **visserman** » 12 Oct 2012, 11:55

I think it is good to wait and check. Of course, the £ 1.200/£1.300 is better than the other ones you mentioned, but I think it does become the norm that they will go in the range of the £2.000 mark, especially when it is from dealers.

Go back about 5 years and there were still just above the £1.000 price

I think they are the vintage that players can afford, which cannot be said about those 50s and 60s Strats.
And are those so much better than? Not really, they just have the hype, and this will not change as time moves on.

It may be true that with the 70s ones the fluctiuations gets bigger. Read about the stories of quality control and saledemands. They had to ship them, even if the details were not always right and that is why some look and sound different from the others. Those variations have always been there with Fender, but the margins may have become bigger in the 70s.
It all adds to the mojo, but then it also depends what you are looking for eh?
Once Fender became FMI the consistency came back, and is still there today, however they are far from prefect and most Fender may age in strange ways: Cracks start to appear on finishes, discolouring ect. More mojo or just cheap materials??
Any 70s Japanese copies and how they age? Not a single mark!! How did they do it eh?? I know another discussion but another one why Fender and Gibson (YES they are as bad or maybe even worse at this!!) should not always be looked upon as the absolute top of quality and vibe

visserman

Re: A new Eric Johnson Strat or 1977 Strat - which one?

by **Franzoni** » 13 Oct 2012, 10:19

My two cents is the same as most others....

70's Fenders i have come across (i had a 70's strat) is up and down....the Basses and the Teles seems to have escaped the worst of the bad QC at the time and least design changes ..had a 76 tele escape my clutches once back when they were still affordable an still regret it....

On another note i notice the post american standard si have are gaining in value considerably....up to last year these could be got for €700-850 mark from private sales and small dealers....i actually got one for €700(including a fender tweed case) for the lead singer in a band some of you might remember i was playing with on the big festival stages last year.....the price from the same dealer for the same model i got it off have risen back to pre-recession prices...€1200-1400..... ...QC in these guitars is pretty high and the TBX tone control is extremely handy for getting a tele type tone from the bridge....

Franzoni

Re: A new Eric Johnson Strat or 1977 Strat - which one?

by **The_Doc** » 18 Oct 2012, 14:22

Thanks again for your advice everyone and, finally, I made a decision

The ' 77 was still there and the price came down but (even with brand new strings on), I just couldn't get on with it. Sounded much louder and snappier than modern strats but I didn't feel as comfortable playing it. I'm not sure even a pro set up would have sold it to me. So, after several cups of coffee and very heavy rain keeping me in the store (*as if I needed and excuse*), I decided on the new EJ strat and this is what came home with me...

The neck is right up my street and I'm really into the sound of these pups. Pretty low output but incredibly smooth with overdrive. Good, clear, generic strat sound when clean - just what I wanted. NGD in the end - eventually!

The_Doc

Re: A new Eric Johnson Strat or 1977 Strat - which one?

by **natthu** » 18 Oct 2012, 14:42

Love the dots & Binding neck... and that colour is killer

natthu

Re: A new Eric Johnson Strat or 1977 Strat - which one?

by **skugga** » 18 Oct 2012, 23:36

Looks great!

Is it Lucerne Aqua Firemist?

The top pic looks almost Ocean Turquoise or some version of Lake Placid Blue.

skugga

Re: A new Eric Johnson Strat or 1977 Strat - which one?

by **DasBeef** » 19 Oct 2012, 04:38

Belter! I <3 neck binding.....

DasBeef

Re: A new Eric Johnson Strat or 1977 Strat - which one?

by **The_Doc** » 19 Oct 2012, 09:40

Thanks all and it is Lucerne Aqua Firemist skugga Even Mrs The_Doc likes it because it matches our bedroom colour scheme

Other interesting things about it...

- no string trees..staggered machine heads
- no back plate on the trem
- 5 springs on the trem - stiff as hell but I hardly use a trem so ok
- came with a white curly cable (gearmanndude)
- also came with what, I can only assume, is an EJ styled strap...nice
- 10 gauge strings...I usually string with 9's on strats but this feels fine
- the Fender transfers on the headstock are set on top of the finish...I'll need to be careful not to damage those
- no tone control on middle pup but there is a tone control on the bridge - more useful for me as I tend to use the bridge a fair bit on strats
- the EJ logo is tucked away on the silver neck plate
- apparently the term cavity isn't painted - I can't confirm that but I don't really care about it either !

Overall. a good comfortable strat with a pro tone and one that will be going out on the road with me next year. It might also appear in a charity promo video we are planning to shoot early next year - I think that guitar should look on film even though I won't (I don't have a 'good side')

The_Doc

Re: A new Eric Johnson Strat or 1977 Strat - which one?

by **natthu** » 19 Oct 2012, 10:18

> *The_Doc wrote:*
> *... no string trees..staggered machine heads*

I like that
Fender seem to do that every now and then.
I never put string trees on the guitars I build.

natthu

Re: A new Eric Johnson Strat or 1977 Strat - which one?

by **visserman** » 22 Oct 2012, 15:28

Mmmm, old style 50s Strat with modern features---Staggered Machine Heads-- and Eric Johnson mods---tonecontrol on bridge pick-up, binding on the neck--Heh this is not a Gibson!!?!

The sound compared to typical 70s Strats?: Probably smoother as you said, the 70s Strats probably sound more honky, midrangy compared to this one, also the difference in the sound between switching from one pick up to the other may be be less compared to the Eric Johnson Strat. Neck will be biggest noticeble difference.

So you did the right thing in the end: See what you like most of all out of these two and just get what you like.

visserman

Re: A new Eric Johnson Strat or 1977 Strat - which one?

by **The_Doc** » 22 Oct 2012, 19:19

Spot on !! This strat probably works best for me as I definitely have 'Gibson tuned' ears and hands !

The ' 77 was very honky as you say visserman - a pretty crude tone really - loud and brash - would probably sound at its best through a Marshall stack that's on fire (and not through the 22w combos I tend to use these days !)

The_Doc

Re: A new Eric Johnson Strat or 1977 Strat - which one?

by **visserman** » 26 Oct 2012, 11:14

It depends on your approach, I just use small amps and the Strat sounds great through it.
It is all about getting the ampsettings right for your guitar.
Talking about the honkyness: the Bridge pick-up of some of those 70s Strats is just right, modern Strats will be a lot hotter, and that is where some people will say: "Give me another pick-up for that funky Bridge one please"

visserman

Re: A new Eric Johnson Strat or 1977 Strat - which one?

by **gurran1928** » 30 Dec 2012, 12:58

Always go for the old one!

gurran1928

Re: A new Eric Johnson Strat or 1977 Strat - which one?

by **The_Doc** » 30 Dec 2012, 16:24

A quick update on this ....

The ' 77 sold for around GB £ 1,200 and went to a good home but I'm glad I got the Eric Johnson Strat as I'm really enjoying it. It's the perfect companion for my Fender Super Sonic which is now back from Fender after the factory mod I had done to stop a channel switching 'popping' problem

The_Doc

Re: A new Eric Johnson Strat or 1977 Strat - which one?

by **Laurie** » 30 Dec 2012, 17:12

Nice!

Laurie