Minihumbucks on Strat, What Would You Do?

by **visserman** » 21 Dec 2013, 14:36

I would like to change on a cheap Strat copy the pick-ups, and really like the idea of minihumbuck (because of its size) as neck pickup, will also change the other two to better sounding singles.

I have never done this before, but the pick-ups have too little detail and are kind of weak. Feel of guitar is good, I like it, since it is very different from the other two Strats I use.

It will be interesting to see what some of you think: Would full humbucks be fine as well? Humbucks on a Strat? You do not see it too often eh? So what about it?
As for the other, two remaining singles, any suggestions towards brands ect.

Any soundimprovement is fine as far as I can see. Not really after particular sounds, as long as I have some hotter pick-ups compared to the other singles, a bit like what I have on the Gold one, the bridge pick-up is hotter, and great boost for solos and other things which need to jump out of the mix.
Cheers.

visserman

Re: Minihumbucks on Strat, What Would You Do?

by **zombiwoof** » 21 Dec 2013, 16:49

I would try it, either a mini-hum or a Firebird pickup (they are different construction). A guy on the Weber forum has a Strat with three minis on it, he tried various types and said the Allparts mini is pretty good if you want to save some money, he also tried the Duncans and something else, I forget which he settled on in the end. Don't know how it will sound with the stock Strat 250k pots though, you might have to figure out a compromise with the regular singles, as it might be really spikey in the highs with the 250k pots. There are ways around this, though, you should research mixing HB's and Strat pickups on a guitar, there have been many posts on the various forums about the topic.

Al

zombiwoof

Re: Minihumbucks on Strat, What Would You Do?

by **Laurie** » 21 Dec 2013, 21:19

Some nice stuff here:
http://www.seymourduncan.com/products/e ... atocaster/

Laurie

Re: Minihumbucks on Strat, What Would You Do?

by **Jeremy** » 22 Dec 2013, 03:36

Mick Brierly Firebird T-Set

http://www.brierleyguitarpickups.com.au/special.htm

you can buy the humbucker separately

Jeremy

Re: Minihumbucks on Strat, What Would You Do?

by **visserman** » 22 Dec 2013, 15:40

Thanks people, keep ideas coming.
I am not there yet as to what kind of pick-ups I will put in. At the moment the guitar is at tech for fretdress. It really is a very cheap guitar, but I like the idea of hot-rodding it. Will also give a better idea of how much impact the woods have on the guitar. The guitar is pretty light-weight, the resonance is not bad, but the Fenders are much better.
I like light-weight guitars. Must be due to first electric which was the Les Paul, then I got the JS, then the Guya came along, which is also pretty light and small.

When it is all done I will get some videos done to demo the guitar with various amps. Maybe nice to get a video of the whole process, but I think that may be a bit too much really.
Cheers.

visserman

Re: Minihumbucks on Strat, What Would You Do?

by **Franzoni** » 04 Jan 2014, 16:37

I was thinking about doing a 'Tele-Gib' myself funny enough with my jap Squier Tele as i can't get to grips anymore with the weight of LP type guitars and i have the single coil thing sorted with the Strats...

A guy over on TDPRI has a Tele with two mini humbuckers with a specialised bridge plate to accomodate the bridge mini humbucker that looks really cool.....

Franzoni

Re: Minihumbucks on Strat, What Would You Do?

by **DarrinPA** » 05 Jan 2014, 05:29

Visserman - have you removed the pickguard? Some strats already have their bodies routed for a bridge humbucker. It would be worth checking ahead of time to see.

Jeremy - I really like that Strat/Tele mix. What brand/model is that?

DarrinPA

Re: Minihumbucks on Strat, What Would You Do?

by **visserman** » 16 Jan 2014, 17:41

I have not done anything yet Darrin. Guitar is at guitar tech. but he is in no rush.

I am aware that the pick guard may need routing. A friend who pointed this out to me does have a Tele neck which he no longer uses. Another option to change this guitar into something different?

The make? A Falcon. Cheap unknown copy who belongs to my bass playing friend but he is happy for me to get this guitar into something else.

I think the Strat/ Les Paul idea is good as it is something which is very useful and practical. If things would have been different in the 90s I would have ended up with a JEM and an Strat Plus, but I am happy things turned out to be different, also good to make your own instead of buying something of this nature.

It may take some time before anything is done as there is so much going on, still have quite a lot of repairs on the guitar and amp front and this conversion-idea is an extra which can wait. Will let you guys know once we are there. Should be good!!

visserman

Re: Minihumbucks on Strat, What Would You Do?

by **visserman** » 11 Apr 2014, 13:19

Okay first pick-up is installed now: Not a humbucker, it is a higher output one at the bridge. Guitartech had this one, he wanted to use it for himself but at the end got another set. I have forgotten the brand, he still had the box, but any this is interesting:

The guitar in case is very light in tone, it does not have much body. With the new pick-up it sounds much better. Probably best bridge pick-up compared to how my other two Strats sounds like. The Gold one is the one which does have the fullest sound, and is still a winner.

The other two pick-ups will be changed as well. Still like the idea of a humbucker, probably at the neck.
From the Seymour Duncan site I do like the SL-59-1 (or something of this kind) It probably is not too hot, but just hotter (and darker) than a standard single coil for the neck.

The Bierley site looks great, I do like those mini humbucks Firebird Style, again, probably not too hot, just what I like.

For the middle pick-up I would like a replacement as well: The two remaining pick-ups do not have much detail. The classic stat sounds are there, and it seems that the in-between sounds are the best on this guitar.

It is easy to spend a lot of money on high quality pick-ups, something I do not want to do. I can easily see that a budget guitar with great pick-ups still does not make a killer guitar, as the guitar is a combination of all its parts.

Is is fine to mix different single coils from different brands: The bridge pick-up is fine, happy with how it sounds like. Should I get another one to get for the middle position, or can I just get what I can find (and see how it sounds like)

Have many of you changed a whole set of pick-ups all using different brands, or did most of you get a full set of just one particular brand?

visserman

Re: Minihumbucks on Strat, What Would You Do?

by **Dirk** » 11 Apr 2014, 19:23

Most people would put a humbucker in the bridge on a strat for fat rhythm sounds, and keep the middle and neck single for sparkling cleans.
It's not very common to put a HB in the neck position of the strat, please elaborate on your thoughts behind that?

The Duncan mini HB's for strat and tele look like great direct replacements, without also changing your pickguard.

I wouldn't be afraid to mix PU's of different brands, I have a bass with a Dimarzio and a Duncan, sounds great.

Dirk

Re: Minihumbucks on Strat, What Would You Do?

by **visserman** » 13 Apr 2014, 15:29

Why Humbucker in neckposition? Because I like it. The clean sound from bridge pick-up is great. Would like similar idea of Les Paul neck pick-up in sound and feel.

My thinking is: Strat feel with ability of Les Paul sounds, hence blocking off trem and getting a fuller sounding pick-up in neck position.

The bridge pick-up is a Rio Grande Vintage Non Staggered.

Do not want to create a better sounding Strat, more like a different guitar with a Strat feel of neck and body and some pick-up positions.

Once the pick-up was installed it was wired (by accident) out of phase. Great, but just for a short time. I have the out-of-phase sound on the Guya, but do not use it much. Out-of-Phase sounds can easily created with the use of pedals. It is now back to standard wiring.

Thinking about the sound: The woods on this guitar are not great, could also change the body. The neck has had a fret dress, I like the feel: Flat fretboard, like most cheap Strats-a like guitars. Very different from the real thing, or good Squires.

My feeling so far is: Better pick-ups will improve sound, but guitar will still be very light (not much body) to its sound. A better body would change this, but I think for now changing pick-ups may be enough.

visserman

Re: Minihumbucks on Strat, What Would You Do?

by **Laurie** » 13 Apr 2014, 15:50

Interesting... I have a HM strat that I'm considering keeping but the bridge humbucker isn't "good". I never thought of a single coil size humbucker in the neck position. Might be the answer.

Laurie

Re: Minihumbucks on Strat, What Would You Do?

by **DarrinPA** » 15 Apr 2014, 00:20

Sort of a response to Dirk: I have telecaster that has a neck humbucker and a bridge single coil pickup. It is rare to find guitars being sold this way, but it makes sense to me. As a neck humbucker user, I never liked flipping to the bridge humbucker because of the additional "power" and "cut". A single coil in the bridge is nice for being a rhythym pickup. The lose of gain and bottom end is nice for softer parts of songs.

Laurie - if you go with a single coil sized humbucker the Seymour Duncan JB is nice. I didn't care for the SD Hot

Rails. But that's just my opinion.

Visserman - Have you ever heard a Duckbucker? They are very different sounding than most pickups. I'd like to use one but I don't have any guitars that needs new pickups.

DarrinPA

Re: Minihumbucks on Strat, What Would You Do?

by **Laurie** » 15 Apr 2014, 03:16

> *DarrinPA wrote:*
> *Laurie - if you go with a single coil sized humbucker the Seymour Duncan JB is nice. I didn't care for the SD Hot Rails. But that's just my opinion.*

Thanks!

Laurie

Re: Minihumbucks on Strat, What Would You Do?

by **Dirk** » 15 Apr 2014, 17:46

> *DarrinPA wrote:*
> *Sort of a response to Dirk: I have telecaster that has a neck humbucker and a bridge single coil pickup. It is rare to find guitars being sold this way, but it makes sense to me. As a neck humbucker user, I never liked flipping to the bridge humbucker because of the additional "power" and "cut". A single coil in the bridge is nice for being a rhythym pickup. The lose of gain and bottom end is nice for softer parts of songs.*

I understand, I guess it all depends on what type of music you play.
I'm used to the heavy bridge humbucker, clean neck pickup that most rock guys seem to gravitate towards, but I can imagine that would totally not work for other types of music.
Lately I'm quite fond of the clean sounds I can get with a neck HB/bridge single mix. My LP has coiltapping, so I can do that. I kinda grew tired of just the neck PU for cleans, it's too bassy for me, and I usually play bass!!

Dirk

Re: Minihumbucks on Strat, What Would You Do?

by **Laurie** » 16 Apr 2014, 03:43

I'm thinking about one of these in the neck of my strat....

http://www.seymourduncan.com/products/e ... _59_for_s/

Laurie

Re: Minihumbucks on Strat, What Would You Do?

by **visserman** » 30 Apr 2014, 12:47

Okay all done now: JB in neck, Kent Armstong in middle and bridge is the Rio Grande.

I was expecting the JB to be hot, it is not that hot. I like it, maybe the other two are fairly hot who knows eh?.

Good to have done this I observe a few things: Having one guitar with a humbuck and single coils make you aware that Single Coils are not less powerful, they are bright, very bright. Humbucks are a lot duller, not that much stronger in output.

The woods of the guitar do a lot: Comparing the JB to my other guitars with humbucks (both P.A.F's from different companies) my ears hear all the pick-ups being similar, the JB may be a bit brighter. It is really good, I am happy it is not super-hot and does not over power the other two.

With a humbuck at the neck, the in-between-sound is also a bit darker than what you normally would get when using a single coil in the neck.

Out of all three, the Rio Grande is the best to my ears. Not sure what the Kent Armstrong is, there was a model number at the back, did not write it down. I checked and they do pick-ups based on 50s and 60s Strat design. I guess mine is a 60s one since it sounds a bit hotter. (I compare to my Gold-Strat, which is based on a 50s design in sound and feel).

The guitar is fairly light in sound, it is almost like you only hear pick-ups and strings. This may sound not very good, but still the guitar does have good sound and feel. I blocked off the trem with a piece of wood, this also creates a bit of a different feel.

With the choice of pick-ups I have been really easy, just went for what I could find. And once they were in I could hear the change straight away.
Going through more humbucks would give you more options, but I think the improvement is sound is what I was after.

The Duckbucker? I looked at it and thought it was interesting, but since I could not find one.....On my list were quite a few and any of them did fit the bill so.....

About this dirty sound from bridge and clean for neck: It depends on your amp really and what you want.
There are some people for who distortion is the norm and when it get to solo time they choose bridge pick-up. I personally think that is a very dated view on how to play the guitar.

What I wanted from a humbuck in the bridge is to give me almost a overdriven sound at flick of the switch, but of course, this does not work when you play through a single channel amp: You will need an active pre-amp in the guitar to get that idea, a pedal will do the same.

My initial request for mini-humbucks was size: I did not think about single coil seized humbuckers, although they

must have been around since the late 80s.
Laurie's straight link to Seymour Duncan made me think, and the P.A.F single coil would have been first choice, but my feeling is the JB is better. If they call the JB "having hot output" I think the P.A.F may lack a bit.

The overall sound of the JB is tight, and fairly close to a standard P.A.F With the guitar being so light it probably makes the pick-up sound a bit brighter than the P.A.F's in my other guitars.

Going for a different body may be an interesting idea to try out, but I will leave this for now, as the guitar does sit in nicely in between the sounds of the other Strats.

The idea of chancing pick-ups seem to make sense when you build something up, or when your guitar is definitely lacking something in sound. If your guitar does sound good I cannot see any reason for doing this, even though there are so many different pick-ups around.

Having changed both single coils I do have to say that the noticable changes are in output and details in sound. Some people may not even hear it straight away. Pick-ups are not cheap and you pay a lot for just some extra details. Using a better amp with some pedals may be a much better option as it will be more noticeable. I think it is true that a not so good sound guitar can still shine through a reasonably good amp. Better quality pick-ups may still not sound that much better through a not so killer amp.

As with all of this, it makes sense to consider all the variables you play through.
Of course, and I am one of them in this one, if you are just swapping for the heck of it, it can be a lot of fun and an eyeopener in to what is responsible for your sound.

visserman

Re: Minihumbucks on Strat, What Would You Do?

by **visserman** » 06 May 2014, 12:42

Okay a lot more playing has been done of different amps: To get the benefit of the humbuck JB it helps if the amp you are using does have a gain: Marshall sounds great with the pick-up.

Both other pick-ups are great as well. Guitar is still very light and the pick-ups enhance it sound. Adding more bass on the amp does help to give more body to the sound.

Natthu does have a good tread about Partcasters, I would like to start something about building and looking into woods and how this affects your sound.

visserman