Looking for a new guitar... need your advice

by **Laurie** » 30 Mar 2014, 02:35

Slimming down to only one guitar. I have three at the moment - an Eric Johnson strat, a HM strat from 1990, and a Les Paul Traditional.

The Eric Johnson doesn't get played. Neck is too thick. It's already on loan to someone who will probably buy it. The Les Paul doesn't get played. I've never bonded with it. The HM strat is "ok" but to make it "right" I'd need to change pickups and I really don't want to start messing around with it - the humbucker in the HM strat is mud, and the single coils are pedestrian.

Time for one new do-what-I-want guitar.

Here's the list:
- I'd like strat scale length.
- Must have maple fretboard
- Must have thin strat-like neck profile - my old 2001 American Standard was just about perfect and I like the HM strat.
- Must have strat tones
- I'd like humbucker too

It sounds like I'm looking for a PRS but I've always found them to be lifeless.

Assume I'll look at anything priced within reason - with my trades/sales I'll be able to afford up to about $3,500.

What are your thoughts?

I've been poking around at one of these:
http://www.music-man.com/instruments/gu ... rucci.html
But they don't have the scale length or maple neck. I had an Axis for a while but it didn't work for me.

I've thought of getting a "good" early 2000's American Standard strat and having one of these put in the bridge when I buy it:
http://www.seymourduncan.com/products/e ... ils_for_s/
or
http://www.seymourduncan.com/products/e ... _59_for_s/

Laurie

Re: Looking for a new guitar... need your advice

by **natthu** » 30 Mar 2014, 03:39

It sounds like you need to build a Partscaster Strat from the ground up. No compromises.

eBay seller The Stratosphere is a good place to start for genuine Fender parts.
If you need something non-standard, check out Warmoth.

natthu

Re: Looking for a new guitar... need your advice

by **DarrinPA** » 30 Mar 2014, 06:10

My friend that owns a recording studio has the JP Ernie Ball signature guitar [the good high priced model] and it's nice, but nothing super amazing. The price isn't quite inline with the true value of it. I do prefer the feel of it over a normal American Strat. Soundwise it's pretty straight forward/ slightly aggressive, which I think is good. I prefer the JP over the PRS, which I just don't see or hear what all the hype is about.

As for the strat idea; you don't have to settle for a single coil sized humbucker, you can probably find a fat strat around the same price. Or if you want to add the humbucker yourself, odds are that the body cavity is already routed to fit a humbucker. My American made Highway One has three single coils but is routed to fit a humbucker, the same goes for my MIM Strat. Oh, unless you don't want the humbucker in the bridge position....

If you are limiting yourself to one guitar - make sure that it's everything that you want. Most of your "must have's" seem to lean towards the 2001 strat. At that price you can easily upgrade everything you want to make it *your* guitar. You can even find a used Custom Shop Fender in your range

DarrinPA

Re: Looking for a new guitar... need your advice

by **Laurie** » 30 Mar 2014, 06:33

Yeah, I was toying with the idea of a HSS standard strat with a P-rails in the bridge and Texas specials in middle and neck.

Laurie

Re: Looking for a new guitar... need your advice

by **ChristoMephisto** » 30 Mar 2014, 13:23

Was gonna suggest the same thing, a Partscaster.
I've changed the neck on my tele three times, and the pups more than a few time
This way your guitar is made for you

ChristoMephisto

Re: Looking for a new guitar... need your advice

by **Laurie** » 30 Mar 2014, 13:51

Hey Christo! Good to see you back.

Nathu and Darrin, thanks for the advice.

I'm starting to think I can't get away from a build-your-own solution. Wanted to avoid that, but a 2001 strat with a HSS pick guard with a P-rails in the bridge and Texas specials in middle and neck sounds like the perfect guitar for me...

Laurie

Re: Looking for a new guitar... need your advice

by **natthu** » 30 Mar 2014, 14:51

> *Laurie wrote:*
> *...I'm starting to think I can't get away from a build-your-own solution. Wanted to avoid that...*

Embrace it!

IMHO the worst and most difficult part of assembling a partscaster is the wiring (if needed)... which I know you're a gun at, so no worries there.
The rest is really just a bit of waiting for parts and screwing things in. Very easy and usually pretty quick.

The thing you most need to be careful with is making sure you are coupling the correct type of hardware to the model of body or neck you're using.
Fender parts are reasonable interchangeable but there are several different types of bridges, tuners etc (usually vintage vs modern) found on each of Fender's guitar models.
Once you know your parts it's all very easy, but if you haven't made a partscaster before you might find yourself accidentally buying a part which just doesn't fit.
Perhaps I should start a Partscaster tips thread.

From what you've written, it sounds like you might get away with just buying a loaded body and a loaded neck and slapping them together... and maybe swapping out a pickup or three.

Resale value isn't great on a partscaster. Usually you'd be better off parting it out than selling the guitar whole.

However, if you plan on making the *perfect* guitar for you with a view to keeping it for a long time... resale isn't really an issue.

natthu

Re: Looking for a new guitar... need your advice

by **Dirk** » 30 Mar 2014, 14:58

> *natthu wrote:*
> *Perhaps I should start a Partscaster tips thread.*

Please do, I'm still in the planning of doing a parts-tele some day.

Dirk

Re: Looking for a new guitar... need your advice

by **Pieces Of The Night** » 31 Mar 2014, 17:15

Take a look at Carvin's stuff:

www.carvin.com

Pieces Of The Night

Re: Looking for a new guitar... need your advice

by **sclitheroe** » 01 Apr 2014, 00:12

Why not find a good luthier, give them the specs, and see what they can do for $3500?

I loved reading this book about getting your dream guitar built:
http://www.amazon.com/Guitar-American-Life-Tim-Brookes-ebook/dp/B005FFPW1M/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1396305986&sr=8-1&keywords=guitar+an+american+life

Not sure if $3500 puts you into the custom luthery range, but surely you're in the conversation at that price point. (or maybe not, I have no idea to be honest)

sclitheroe

Re: Looking for a new guitar... need your advice

by **charmonder** » 01 Apr 2014, 00:46

Jazzmaster! and rewire the top part for coil taps, pickup options etc

charmonder

Re: Looking for a new guitar... need your advice

by **BearBoy** » 02 Apr 2014, 10:23

If you're after a Strat then you could configure one yourself with Fender's new "Design Your Own Fender" service:

http://www.fender.com/american-design/

Work out about $1500ish with fairly standard options.

BearBoy

Re: Looking for a new guitar... need your advice

by **natthu** » 02 Apr 2014, 10:43

> *BearBoy wrote:*
> *....Fender's new "Design Your Own Fender" service:*

Can only be ordered and shipped within the US... so Laurie would have to drive south some to pick his up

natthu

Re: Looking for a new guitar... need your advice

by **Pepe** » 02 Apr 2014, 10:54

Nice! But I cannot design MY Fender with it. It doesn't offer the options I want, i.e. a Hardtail bridge.

Pepe

Re: Looking for a new guitar... need your advice

by **BearBoy** » 02 Apr 2014, 11:07

Yeah, options are a bit limited at the moment but it has only just started. Be interesting to see if they widen the options (I would like to see Jags, Jazzmasters and Mustangs on there) and the countries they deliver to.

BearBoy

Re: Looking for a new guitar... need your advice

by **natthu** » 02 Apr 2014, 13:37

> *BearBoy wrote:*
> *...I would like to see Jags, Jazzmasters and Mustangs on there...*

I wouldn't... because if that were the case, I would feel compelled to buy more guitars... and that would destroy my current excellent GAS resistance.

natthu

Re: Looking for a new guitar... need your advice

by **Laurie** » 02 Apr 2014, 13:46

Arrrrrggghhh... I think I like this one. Didn't realise they did a "deluxe" version.

http://www.music-man.com/instruments/gu ... i-bfr.html

I like the Koa.

Laurie

Re: Looking for a new guitar... need your advice

by **charmonder** » 02 Apr 2014, 16:16

> *BearBoy wrote:*
> *...I would like to see Jags, Jazzmasters and Mustangs on there...*

> *natthu wrote:*
> *I wouldn't... because if that were the case, I would feel compelled to buy more guitars... and that would destroy my current excellent GAS resistance.*

sorry for this!
http://www.offsetguitars.com/dressing_room/index.htm

charmonder

Re: Looking for a new guitar... need your advice

by **BearBoy** » 02 Apr 2014, 17:42

Played with that many times. Luckily there's no "Buy It Now" button

BearBoy

Re: Looking for a new guitar... need your advice

by **natthu** » 02 Apr 2014, 20:58

> *charmonder wrote:*
> *sorry for this!*

I am all too aware of the OSG dressing room, but I've used it to cross more ideas off the 'maybe' list than anything else... sometimes ideas don't look as good as you'd expect (fortunately)

...and like BearBoy says:

> *BearBoy wrote:*
> *...Luckily there's no "Buy It Now" button*

natthu

Re: Looking for a new guitar... need your advice

by **Laurie** » 03 Apr 2014, 04:27

Just tried one of these
http://www.music-man.com/instruments/gu ... i-bfr.html

at the local music store. The neck isn't for me.

It's looking like coming back to modding my HM strat:
http://www.fenderstrat.net/wp-content/u ... 623280.jpg

Laurie

Re: Looking for a new guitar... need your advice

by **DarrinPA** » 03 Apr 2014, 05:52

Was it the shape, scale, width? I don't mind the shape of it [the non-deluxe model], maybe because I'm used to Ibanez necks which are also for shredders, but what bothers me is when a neck is painted and/or stained. I love their bass guitars, they are as close to being unfinished as possible, I don't see why they paint the guitar necks on many of their guitar models.

Anyways, have you completely ruled out finding another 01 strat?

DarrinPA

Re: Looking for a new guitar... need your advice

by **Laurie** » 03 Apr 2014, 13:13

It was the profile. To be honest I didn't like the stats either when I went back to them. They felt like base-ball bats. It's no wonder I couldn't bond with the Eric Johnson. The HMs have a very specific neck profile - the radius is huge (almost flat fingerboard) and the neck is very thin. Seems to fit my huge hands the best.

Laurie

Re: Looking for a new guitar... need your advice

by **skugga** » 04 Apr 2014, 02:41

The HM is still my favourite guitar to play from a comfort standpoint.

The combination of 25" scale and 17" radius is a fairly unique one from what I can find.

A few of the Ibanez prestige guitars have similar radii although most of the Wizard necks are even thinner than the HM neck. All of those are 25.5" scale though.
PRS seem to be the only ones really doing a 25" scale but they don't go past 11" radius at that length.

My American Deluxe is more versatile and probably has better overall tone and feels great to play but doesn't have the fluidity of the HM.

If I can find another late run digital logo HM at a good price I'll probably grab it and replace the pups and change the wiring (and most likely respray it).

skugga

Re: Looking for a new guitar... need your advice

by **Pieces Of The Night** » 04 Apr 2014, 19:40

I wish the build your own Fender had the option of having binding on a telecaster neck.

Pieces Of The Night

Re: Looking for a new guitar... need your advice

by **visserman** » 16 Apr 2014, 14:55

Laurie,

The Music Man looks like high end, The HM Strat looks a bit crude.

Think you may have to build from what you mentioned, maybe something like the Music Man idea.

Played a 1971 Strat a few days ago: Put together. In feel very close to my '76. In sound, like my Gold one. Good to know this.

When I started checking for vintage parts myself it was not encouraging. Build from scratch if you are that specific and you will get what you like.

visserman

Re: Looking for a new guitar... need your advice

by **Laurie** » 16 Apr 2014, 17:33

I landed on a 2004 deluxe strat. Very happy. Has the same neck profile as my old 2001 standard and has a great overall feel. I'll keep the hm strat and swap the single coils out for single coil size hum buckers.

Laurie

Re: Looking for a new guitar... need your advice

by **natthu** » 16 Apr 2014, 22:03

Sweet.

Some pics with you rocking out?

natthu

Re: Looking for a new guitar... need your advice

by **visserman** » 17 Apr 2014, 15:10

Laurie, good to hear.

A few more thoughts: Crude? The colour black of your HM compared to the Music Man. Think you know what I mean eh? Scott does have a beautiful Tele, you may be able to do something like that with the HM. Pieces of the Night did do something with the finish of a guitar, made it look a bit like the Music Man or a PRS.

About the pick-ups: You have all the choice with the HM having singles and a Humbuck, just swap and change and see what you like.

I like the word "pedestrian" you used to describe the quality of the singles of the HM.

It seems that were are going for pick-ups at the same time: On my list I have 14 single size Humbucks and 8 single coils, all Seymours. Any of them will do, but I think it will be a job to get any of them soon. Already spotted another one, not on the list, but I think I should not try.
Also temped about two Humbucks and the one which is now at the bridge, get it installed in middle position. Also should not do, since I have guitars with a similar kind of make-up.

About not bonding with a guitar: Is this maybe from not playing that much or.....?
Personally I appreciate all the variations: Try to have about three or four on the stand and play these throughout the day, then swap within few days for new set. Getting used to different feel may take time if you do not play much. Over last few days played the Ibanez JS a lot: huge frets, which give fretboard a scalloped feel. Great for playing fast and using hammer-ons and pull-offs. Different feel from the more traditional approach a la Fender. The floating bridge also gives it a different feel. I tend to keep my Strats also with floating bridge, although they feel different compared to the Floyd on the JS.

visserman

Re: Looking for a new guitar... need your advice

by **Laurie** » 21 Apr 2014, 00:04

I have my HM strat back in my hands. Feels very good. Bought a DiMarzio Chopper for the neck position but haven't had a chance to fit it.

The new Deluxe strat is at the luthier for a setup. Expect it to come back feeling good too.

My EJ strat is already gone (neck was just too fat), and the Traditional Les Paul just feels like a baseball bat to my hands and will be sold real-soon-now.

I'm comfortable that I've made the right choice - the Deluxe strat for strat-y things. And the shorter scale length HM strat with a couple of humbuckers for the humbucker-y things. And both feel right.

Laurie

Re: Looking for a new guitar... need your advice

by **Dirk** » 21 Apr 2014, 12:52

I love it when a plan comes together!

Dirk