NBD: Fender Bass VI

by **natthu** » 11 Jul 2013, 11:14

I finally managed to get my paws on a proper Bass VI (well, it's not vintage, it's an MIJ re-issue... there's no way I could afford a vintage one)

It sounds epic.
I've owned baritone guitars before, but this is different again. It's not like playing bass, but it's not really like playing guitar either.

I love Japanese sellers. They are the best.
I paid for it on Saturday, the seller posted it on Monday and it arrived Wednesday.
It was sold as used, but it's basically as new... the protective plastic is still on the pickup covers and pickguard!

natthu

Re: NBD: Fender Bass VI

by **Pepe** » 11 Jul 2013, 12:37

Great! What type of strings do you need for these? And what do the four switches do?

Pepe

Re: NBD: Fender Bass VI

by **DasBeef** » 11 Jul 2013, 14:23

I approve of this typre of behaviour and actively encourage more!
I was toying with the idea of getting a Squier one, but I'm not sure.

DasBeef

Re: NBD: Fender Bass VI

by **natthu** » 11 Jul 2013, 15:30

> *Pepe wrote:*
> *Great! What type of strings do you need for these? And what do the four switches do?*

Bass VI strings... They are somewhere between Bass strings and guitar strings.

Each pickup has an on/off switch and the fourth is a "strangle" similar to the one on a normal Fender Jaguar.
The strangle on a Jaguar makes the guitar sound thin (and in my opinion, horrible), but on a Bass VI it can be useful as it kills a lot of the "bassiness" (thus allowing you to use a guitar amp without destroying it).

> *DasBeef wrote:*
> *I was toying with the idea of getting a Squier one, but I'm not sure.*

The Squier ones look to be excellent value for money if nothing else (around 275 GBP)... plus they have B&B necks, which I know you like
I'd almost consider forking out the cash for a second Bass VI in the form of a Squier just for the B&B neck.

It looks like Fender are starting to fill out their range between 'cheap' and 'affordable' with a lot of options based on some of their traditionally less popular models now (i.e. Offsets).
The Squier Vintage Modified range is brilliant for any enthusiast with little money to spend, and the Pawn Shop stuff is great if you're looking for something a bit better and slightly oddball.
It's interesting to note that there aren't any options in the (MIM) Standard, American Special and American Standard ranges when it comes to Offsets though.
...and since the rest of the world has limited access to the Japanese range of Re-Issues, It seems to jump from the Blacktop (BT) range straight to American Vintage Re-Issue (AVRI), which is one hell of a price difference.
Maybe they'll address that if all these other Offsets sell well?

natthu

Re: NBD: Fender Bass VI

by **natthu** » 11 Jul 2013, 15:46

@Beef:

One thing I just noticed about the Squier Bass VI is that it has a standard looking JM/Jag bridge... without the extra width of the Bass VI bridge it might be difficult to intonate it correctly.
Also, like other VM range guitars, the Trem unit has no lock.

natthu

Re: NBD: Fender Bass VI

by **zombiwoof** » 11 Jul 2013, 15:51

When the Bass VI first came out, it was tuned just like a guitar (E to E), only an octave lower. Jack Bruce used one in the early days of Cream. However, many guys used them with lighter strings as a baritone, tuned either A to A or B to B (1st-6th string). It actually was designed to be a 6 string bass, not a baritone, but turned out to not be too popular as a 6-string bass. Later, it became the norm for 6-string basses to have an added low B and added high string, instead of just adding two more strings on top of the regular 4 string setup. Are they shipping the reissue set up as a baritone now?.

Al

zombiwoof

Re: NBD: Fender Bass VI

by **DasBeef** » 11 Jul 2013, 16:06

You know I want that B&B neck.
A little OT, but seriously considering one of these first....

But Fender, why you no binding!? Seriously, why ????

DasBeef

Re: NBD: Fender Bass VI

by **natthu** » 11 Jul 2013, 16:20

> *zombiwoof wrote:*
> *Are they shipping the reissue set up as a baritone now?*

No, this one is E-E and that's the way I will use it.
I only mentioned Baritone guitars because it's kinda in the same territory in the way many people use them... only, I think the Bass VI does it better.

I am a bass player and I don't play this thing like a bass. I can't. It's just not the same thing. It has a sound of its own and allows you to play in bass register but with a more guitar like technique.
A standard Bass VI string set is of lighter gauge than the equivalent tuned bass set. I'm sure you could put normal Bass strings on it, but I don't think that was really what it was intended for.

I believe Lennon used a Bass VI whenever bass duties fell on him (like in Helter Skelter, where McCartney played guitar).

It's brilliant for a guitarist, because it feels more like a guitar (and therefore familiar) than a bass to play.

Basically, if you're a bass player with no experience playing guitar, a Bass VI is going to be difficult for you to play... on the other hand, guitarists shouldn't have too much difficulty adapting to it.

natthu

Re: NBD: Fender Bass VI

by **natthu** » 11 Jul 2013, 16:25

> *DasBeef wrote:*
> *...seriously considering one of these first....*

What the crap is that!?... I don't think I've seen that variant before. Maple fretboard on an offset guitar?... Is that even legal?
If you really wanted B&B you could go for a Warmoth neck instead...

...but seriously, I agree, Binding on that would add 90% more classiness to it.[

natthu

Re: NBD: Fender Bass VI

by **Dirk** » 11 Jul 2013, 16:34

Great score Natthu! Awesome, some day I need one as well.

Dirk

Re: NBD: Fender Bass VI

by **DB Cooper** » 11 Jul 2013, 17:32

That guit-bass looks SUPER-COOL! Would love to get a chance to play one of those!

DB Cooper

Re: NBD: Fender Bass VI

by **BearBoy** » 12 Jul 2013, 12:27

That's fantastic Natthu

I've been GASing for one of these for ages but, based on the relatively limited use it would get, could never justify the cost of one of the MIJ imports and wasn't that keen on the changes they had made to the Pawn Shop ones. Now they've announced the Squiers I am back in the hunt

I noticed the narrower bridge on the Squiers but the Fender Pawn Shop ones and even Custom Shop ones have the narrow bridge. Looks like only the MIJ ones have the wider bridge. I think I'll pick up one of the Staytrem VI bridges (they make them in both wide and standard widths) if I have any issues with the stock one.

I'll probably have mine as A-A or B-B though rather than as a bass.

BearBoy

Re: NBD: Fender Bass VI

by **natthu** » 12 Jul 2013, 12:51

I think the original 60s Bass VI had the wider bridge. Japanese Re-Issues tend to be very faithful aesthetically (it's the insides they skimp on).

natthu

Re: NBD: Fender Bass VI

by **Arpeggiator** » 13 Jul 2013, 15:00

Very nice!

The Bass VI really is a fantastic instrument - very versatile and you will find a lot of uses for it in a band context.

I now have two: The Pawn Shop one and one of the 90's MIJ reissues.

I know it sounds ridiculous but I'm probably gonna get one of the Squiers too and slap some flatwounds on it. Also, the wider nut and different radius makes for a completely different playing feel.

My MIJ has a 38mm nut and of course the 7.25" radius, the PSVI has 42mm and 9.5", as do the Squiers.

Natthu, yours seems to be one of the current reissues - does it have the narrow neck too?

Arpeggiator

Re: NBD: Fender Bass VI

by **natthu** » 13 Jul 2013, 15:43

I'm pretty sure mine's the current model. It has a 40mm nut, which I guess is a good compromise.
The neck itself is big, but not crazy big. I prefer thin necks myself, and this does not feel uncomfortable.

I was thinking about the Squier aswell (depending on how cheap they'll be here, and also if I can actually get one).
I probably won't get one though..

natthu

Re: NBD: Fender Bass VI

by **Laurie** » 13 Jul 2013, 18:02

> *natthu wrote:*
> *finally managed to get my paws on a proper Bass VI (well, it's not vintage, it's an MIJ re-issue... there's no way I could afford a vintage one)*

Never heard of this type of guitar before. A very interesting concept... Looks good too!

Laurie

Re: NBD: Fender Bass VI

by **Pepe** » 13 Jul 2013, 18:36

Wow! There are still blank spots on your musical map, Laurie?

Pepe

Re: NBD: Fender Bass VI

by **DarrinPA** » 14 Jul 2013, 02:18

Besides Robert Smith of The Cure using it, it is rather obscure. Any other musician that I can think of that have used a VI, it's usually on just one song. I remember seeing these in guitar magazines back when they released them for a short while in the early 2000's, but I wouldn't have taken notice if Mark Hoppus hadn't made it popular in the song "I Miss You".

DarrinPA

Re: NBD: Fender Bass VI

by **natthu** » 14 Jul 2013, 02:38

There's a lot of less mainstream bands using the Bass VI, and of course, the Beatles and Cream used one on occasion.

Until the first batch of Japanese Re-issues you could only get a vintage or custom shop VI ($4000+). Now that Bass VIs are even more accessible because of the budget Pawn Shop and Squier VM series, it's likely we'll see them more often.

natthu

Re: NBD: Fender Bass VI

by **sclitheroe** » 19 Jul 2013, 01:28

So when we say they are guitar like and familiar to guitar players - I'm guessing you couldn't play barre chords on this right? What about bends? I've not touched a bass, so I have no idea how thick these strings are in relation to anything.

sclitheroe

Re: NBD: Fender Bass VI

by **natthu** » 19 Jul 2013, 03:37

Barre chords are no problem for me, results may vary though. I play a lot of power chords on normal bass, but there's no way I could achieve 'normal' guitar chords on one. I can play almost anything on a Bass VI that I can play on guitar.

natthu

Re: NBD: Fender Bass VI

by **natthu** » 19 Jul 2013, 03:38

Bends are not so easy on a Bass VI, but it does have a Jazzmaster style tremolo system which works well.

natthu

Re: NBD: Fender Bass VI

by **BearBoy** » 19 Jul 2013, 10:01

Do you know what gauge strings are on it Natthu?

BearBoy

Re: NBD: Fender Bass VI

by **natthu** » 19 Jul 2013, 10:29

I don't know the factory string gauge, the Fender Japan website probably has that info....

A new set of custom strings I'm going to try arrived today. I'll report back on those once I've given them a work out.

natthu

Re: NBD: Fender Bass VI

by **BearBoy** » 19 Jul 2013, 12:20

Ah, okay. Didn't read your first post carefully enough (just saw the bit about it being used so thought it might not have the original strings).

If they are the factory stock ones then they're .024, .034, .044, .056, .072, .084 (same as the Pawn Shop VI ones). Seen a lot of people saying the stock strings are too light on the PS VI. What gauge are the replacement ones you have bought?

BearBoy

Re: NBD: Fender Bass VI

by **natthu** » 19 Jul 2013, 14:06

> *BearBoy wrote:*
> *..thought it might not have the original strings...*

They might not be, but they probably are....

I have read a lot of complaints that the low E is too thin, and perhaps a little floppy.
Mine doesn't seem too bad, but yet again I sometimes detune my fretless 5 semitones... so that's all normal for me.

Sorry, I was out when I wrote the previous post, otherwise I would have included the new string gauge.
It's a set of La Bella 767-6F, which I've heard make the Bass VI 'sparkle'. In any case they are supposed to be perfectly balanced (we'll see).
Strings are: 26 / 35 / 44 / 55 / 75 / 95 all flatwound. I am a big fan of flats for both guitar and bass, so I thought I'd give them a go on the VI as well.

natthu

Re: NBD: Fender Bass VI

by **bigtone** » 05 Sep 2013, 06:57

Been wanting a bass VI forever. A PS version may just scratch the gassy itch!

bigtone

Re: NBD: Fender Bass VI

by **ChristoMephisto** » 28 Mar 2014, 20:17

I'd go with the squier version. Only cause it looks closer to the original from the late sixties.
Those blocks on the fretboard are killer.

I got an Oly one and put Labella steels on it, the darn low E broke up at the tuner and can barley get it wrapped around the tuner. Ended up replacing it with a Daddario medium scale .095 (along with the rest back to nickle) and sounds better to my ears than steel strings..

Also swaped out the trem system for a '62 RI trem system with the locking mechanism and and arm doesn't fall out now.
Along with some on-off-on slide swithes (not mustangs) I added five series and series/parallel to the standard seven and the strangle switch has two settings now. The usual .0033 and a second one parallel (.0066) for less bass cut and sounds awesome with the puos in series.

ChristoMephisto

Re: NBD: Fender Bass VI

by **BearBoy** » 28 Mar 2014, 20:43

How are you getting on with the stock bridge?

BearBoy

Re: NBD: Fender Bass VI

by **ChristoMephisto** » 28 Mar 2014, 21:18

Stock bridge is fine for intonation. Didn't even have to flip the bridge. I also shimmed the neck to help with the tension on the bridge.
It was way out when I put on the new trem system, sounds weird, but when I was setting the trem-loc tension screw, it corrected the intonation.
My only complaint is the string spacing of 55mm. The high e is too close to the edge of the fretboard, would like to change that to 52.5mm

ChristoMephisto