Awareness After Guitar Upgrades and Mods

by **visserman** » 11 Oct 2016, 11:11

Some of you may have build guitars from scratch using various parts, Natthu comes to mind here. He will be aware of most of the things you will notice after you have upgraded certain parts of your guitar.

Anyone ever changed pots, pick-selector and wiring? Just that and nothing else and noticed a HUGE difference in clarity of your sound? Well I have done so, and not just for sake of upgrade, no, there were issues, but now these have gone plus the fact that the pick-ups sound clearer, fuller and just overall better.

It is that Hi-Fi thing when audio lovers tell you to use better speaker wire and connecting leads, and better plugs for the connection. It all makes sense, but still that is make so much of a difference in your sound.....well yes it is true!!

It also makes you think: On any quality guitar you could still do a lot of upgrading, but how far do you really want to take this.....?
Personally I will undertake anything when there is a need for it as it: Amp fails, guitar does have strange electronic, static sounds etc. I could carry on describing the kind of thing you can experience soundwise, but no need really as we will all know what I mean here.

Oh by the way, this upgrade of pots, and wires does not only apply to amps and guitars, your pedals as well eh? But again now far do you want to take this?

Let us talk about your experiences in chancing parts of your guitars and in particular wiring and pots (and sockets and insulation and other electrical things)

I guess we would all expect a difference in our sound after a pick-up change, but pots and wires and other things? But then again, it all makes sense.

Okay over to you and your experiences now!!

visserman

Re: Awareness After Guitar Upgrades and Mods

by **Dirk** » 11 Oct 2016, 18:00

I've done various mods to guitars and basses, but the most epic one was a complete shielding job to my Fender Duff McKagan sig. bass.
It's completely dead silent now.

I guess what always bothers me most is that on an expensive instrument, like a Fender or Gibson, you know; the big names,
there's still so much to improve in shielding, wiring, straplocking, tuning keys, pickups, bridges, etc.
It's crazy, you'd expect to pay for quality, not an instrument that needs upgrading from the factory.....

Dirk

Re: Awareness After Guitar Upgrades and Mods

by **Pieces Of The Night** » 11 Oct 2016, 19:27

Lets be honest half of what you pay for a guitar is just for the name. Of the other half, half of that is where it's made and the rest is for components. As for after market upgrades when i change pickups and such i usually just change everything switch,pots,etc to make it easier. I see no point in companies using plastic nuts anymore when graphite nuts are only 12-15 bucks. I'm sure a company like Fender could get a huge discount on things like that and that would make guitars much better with out being overly expensive.

Pieces Of The Night

Re: Awareness After Guitar Upgrades and Mods

by **Dirk** » 12 Oct 2016, 19:36

My thoughts exactly.

Dirk

Re: Awareness After Guitar Upgrades and Mods

by **natthu** » 13 Oct 2016, 06:44

> *visserman wrote:*
> *....ever changed pots, pick-selector and wiring? Just that and nothing else and noticed a HUGE difference in clarity of your sound?*

I can't say I've changed out much of the electronics on an existing guitar, but I can confirm that when assembling a new guitar from parts, there is a noticeable fidelity difference between cheap and quality components.

The main reason I prefer to use "better" components/parts when building a guitar is that they physically feel better (ie quality pots will operate smoother and have a reassuring feel of constant resistance when turning, cheap pots feel cheap). I'm less concerned with clarity because I tend to use a lot of effects to the point where the original guitar signal probably makes very little difference to the end sound.

> *Dirk wrote:*
> *...the most epic one was a complete shielding job to my Fender Duff McKagan sig. bass.*
> *It's completely dead silent now....*

Yep. I'd have to agree. Shielding makes an enormous difference on many guitars.

natthu

Re: Awareness After Guitar Upgrades and Mods

by **visserman** » 13 Oct 2016, 14:04

> *Dirk wrote:*
> *I've done various mods to guitars and basses, but the most epic one was a complete shielding job to my Fender Duff McKagan sig. bass.*
> *It's completely dead silent now.*
>
> *I guess what always bothers me most is that on an expensive instrument, like a Fender or Gibson, you know; the big names,*
> *there's still so much to improve in shielding, wiring, straplocking, tuning keys, pickups, bridges, etc.*
> *It's crazy, you'd expect to pay for quality, not an instrument that needs upgrading from the factory.....*

Yes the shielding one thing, good that you mention that. It was one of the issues. And yes with the quality brands you still may have to do a little bit of work, depending on model and what year. I tend to believe that the more modern versions of today have better quality control than the ones from the past, but then again, it may depend on factory and what goes on at the time

visserman

Re: Awareness After Guitar Upgrades and Mods

by **Pieces Of The Night** » 13 Oct 2016, 15:59

With the Duff bass it may not have been shielded because his original might not have been shielded. Shielding ,according to some,affects the tone so it might been left off because of that.

Pieces Of The Night

Re: Awareness After Guitar Upgrades and Mods

by **visserman** » 17 Oct 2016, 12:06

I think over the years we have become more critical about safety and quality. Some people may have shielded their guitars in the past, and certain brands may have started a trend back then, by shielding their instruments, to make them stand out from the other brands. Similar to what you mentioned about the nut.
All these quality details are about saving costs for the bigger companies.

visserman

Re: Awareness After Guitar Upgrades and Mods

by **Dirk** » 17 Oct 2016, 17:46

> *Pieces Of The Night wrote:*
> *With the Duff bass it may not have been shielded because his original might not have been shielded. Shielding ,according to some,affects the tone so it might been left off because of that.*

Either that, or it's because they're built in Mexico, and they skimp on important details like this.....
I also had to score a couple of the original plastic F-knobs on Ebay, IMO they belong on that instrument. It looks so much cooler that way.

Dirk

Re: Awareness After Guitar Upgrades and Mods

by **Franzoni** » 25 Oct 2016, 17:20

Yeah i done a good bit of this mostly on Fenders though.....there is nothing original left now on my Jap Squier strat apart from the neck and body..... ...all the electrics and tuners are off an American Strat and the Bridge is a wilkinson i got cheap secondhand off a lad who bought it for a project and never used it.... ...

The Jap Tele is running a close second as i have a set of Nocaster custom shop Tele pickups to go into in shortly and and i'm going to get it rewired and the bridge changed to something a bit better...

The biggest tonal surprise was when i changed the bridge in the Jap Strat to the Wilkinson with a solid steel block from the original one with the cast block.....big increase in 'zing' and twang for want of a better word....

Franzoni

Re: Awareness After Guitar Upgrades and Mods

by **visserman** » 27 Oct 2016, 16:29

Well I only have a String Tree left of the original guitar.
About the Wilkinson and the original bridge: Are both the six screw, trad. type of bridge or is the Wilkinson the type of the Modern American Standard with two screws? There is a difference between feel and sustain of both these type of bridges: The two screw type may feel smoother.

There is something about original Fender necks, no matter how badly they were finished originally, and also the sharp edges on the fretboard. They just have a fantastic feel. The new neck I have now feels very smooth, strings bend easily in any position, it is great but I also admire the original necks which can, at times, feel clunky compared to more modern versions.

visserman

Re: Awareness After Guitar Upgrades and Mods

by **Franzoni** » 28 Oct 2016, 18:46

I managed to get my hands on a loaded scratchplate off an 94 Usa strat...exact same pickups and wiring that are in my other two strats...i currently have vintage noiseless in the jap squier so i will be able to give you a better report when i have it wired up over the next few days compared to the USA models...VN pickups are a bit too mellow for my liking even with 500K pots installed.....The Jap has a maple neck compared the to the rosewood on the USA guitars and yep it's a six hole vintage style rather than the two pivot with the SS saddles....quite like the USA trems as i've been playing my main '89 strat from new so 27 years now..... i'd probably upgrade the Wilkinson as well if i got a spare USA two pivot one at the right price secondhand..... .....

Franzoni