



PHOTOGRAPHY BY JOE BRANSTON

## Fender '70s Precision Bass £1,102

Surely we don't need another P-Bass from Fender? Well, surprisingly it seems that we do **by Roger Newell**

**W**hen Leo Fender launched the Precision Bass onto an unsuspecting bass-playing populous in 1951 it was met with a degree of distaste and suspicion. However, it took little more than a quick go on one to win all but the die-hard traditionalists over. Something so much more compact than an upright bass, with the ability to be amplified, was just too good to ignore. It was almost perfectly designed from the start, but by 1957 with a few modifications to the body, headstock and pickup, the

Precision as we know it today was complete.

The story does not stop there, however, as over the years Fender has continued to offer the beloved P-Bass in a variety of styles and prices. So surely, then, there's already something to suit everyone? Well apparently not, for here comes the new Japanese-built '70s P-Bass, and it's actually a welcome addition to this already wide range.

In both the three-tone sunburst and Olympic white finishes this is a very attractive prospect indeed. The black

block inlays and binding on the maple neck, used originally on the Jazz Bass, are incredibly eye-catching. Add to that the three-ply black scratchplate and the welcome return of the thumb rest (positioned above the strings), and that 1970s vibe is captured brilliantly.

Other features of this model are the F-stamped neck plate, a vintage-style truss rod system, knurled chrome knobs and the appropriate 1970s-style Fender logo on the headstock. There's also a pleasing tint to the maple neck, which gives it a slightly aged look, while the

### The Rivals

Chances are if you want a P-Bass then you'll choose one from the huge Fender range, but there are other options available. One of the best is the **Lakland Skyline 44-64 Vintage P** (£999) with Hipshot Ultra-Lite tuners, hybrid split pickup, a Lakland dual access bridge and a matching body/headstock finish. The classy **Sadowsky RV4 Hybrid PJ** (around £2,200), as the name suggests, offers a P-styled bass with an extra single-coil pickup and extra controls. In Candy Apple red finish it's a tasty looking bass. A cheaper option is the **Bass Collection Detroit Bass** (£375) – a tribute to Motown bassman James Jamerson. With classic styling (including coverplates) and a matching headstock, this is a viable budget alternative.



shallow profile and wide 'board make this bass a real joy to play.

### Sounds

With all the usual passive electronics in place, this naturally sounds like a good Precision, which means that the reason for choosing this particular version is all about looks and feel. The sound, of course, remains fat and solid no matter what position you set the tone control. There's enough top available to make your speakers spit out the notes, but it's the warmth and depth of the bottom end that gives the foundation for consistently great sounds. Most players work with the tone control slightly off centre, using a treble bias for the funky or hard rock stuff and a bass bias for the traditional old-school sounds, but with well-defined notes.

### Verdict

This period of Fender basses has been all but forgotten – it was a time of old jigs producing poorly fitting parts. But some good designs also emanated

from this period that are worth remembering. Manufacturing problems are now a thing of the past and this model offers a striking combination of 1970s elements and is a welcome and justified addition to the vast current P-Bass catalogue.

Surprisingly, there are only three current P-Bass models that are manufactured in Japan – the other two being from the Steve Harris Signature model and the Sting. In short, if you like the look, the sound and playability won't disappoint. **G**

### The Bottom Line

**We like:** That neck – the block inlays, binding and the fabulous profile

**We dislike:** With so many P-Basses to choose from can you ever be sure you've got the right one?

**Guitarist says:** Undeniably attractive, the appeal of this over any of the other Precision models is its looks and excellent feel



The sound is pure classic P-Bass

### How much for Precision?

Entry point for the hallowed Fender P-Bass is the Mexican-made Standard series Precision (£694); a more vintage version is the Classic Series '50s Precision (£838) that's nicely aged in the Road Worn series for £1,246. Entry to the USA-made ranges comes with the Highway One P-Bass (£946) followed by the American Special at £1,090. The modern USA P-Bass is the American Standard (£1,450 with rosewood 'board), a more tweaked version appears in the American Deluxe range (£1,834), while the more vintage-specific American Vintage (£2,278) is as close you can get to the real vintage piece. Add in the numerous signature P-Basses, from £980, and if you're after Precision, you'd better start choosing!

**NB:** Prices given are for sunburst finishes; solid colour options are usually slightly cheaper.

The shallow profile and wide 'board make this bass a real joy to play



The black block inlays are a nice seventies touch

## Fender '70s Precision Bass

- PRICE:** £1,102.80 (inc gigbag)  
**ORIGIN:** Japan  
**TYPE:** Twin-cutaway, solidbody four-string, passive  
**BODY:** Alder  
**NECK:** Maple 'C' shape, bolt on  
**SCALE LENGTH:** 864mm (34 inches)  
**NUT/WIDTH:** Synthetic bone/41.3mm  
**FINGERBOARD:** Maple, black block inlays and black binding  
**FRETS:** 20, thin vintage-style  
**HARDWARE:** Chrome-plated vintage-style four-saddle bridge, vintage 1970s-style Fender-stamped open-gear tuners  
**STRING SPACING, BRIDGE:** 19.75mm, average (centres)  
**ELECTRICS:** Split single-coil Precision bass pickup,  
**WEIGHT (kg/lb):** 3.8/8.4  
**OPTIONS:** There are two other Japanese-made Precision basses: the Sting Signature (£1,126) and the Steve Harris Signature (£1,366)  
**LEFT-HANDERS:** No  
**FINISH:** Three-tone sunburst (as reviewed), Olympic white gloss polyurethane  
**Fender GBI**  
**01342 331700**  
**www.fender.com**



### Test results

<b>Build quality</b>	★★★★★
<b>Playability</b>	★★★★★
<b>Sound</b>	★★★★☆
<b>Value for money</b>	★★★★★

**GUITARIST RATING** ★★★★★