

# Fender Modern Player Jaguar Bass £442

This stripped-down version of the Jaguar bass offers a radical change, but would they have been better off calling it the Jazzuar? **by Roger Newell**

**T**he emergence of the long overdue Jaguar Bass was a welcome addition to the Fender bass range, but as good as the initial design is, like the guitar, it does have a relatively niche appeal and some idiosyncrasies that put many players off. It's no surprise then, to see the Jag Bass arrive in the more affordable Modern Player Series, where the remit is to intelligently tweak an established design and bring it in line with the needs of today's bassists. It's marketed at a price that will interest a lot more prospective buyers as well. The instantly recognisable offset body shape was first seen

on the Jazzmaster in 1958, then the Fender Bass VI in 1961 and the Jaguar guitar in 1962 but astonishingly, it didn't become a full-scale four-string until the launch of the Jaguar Bass in 2006! It's a great shape that still catches the eye and for this modification Fender has ditched all the extra switches and inset rotary controls associated with the Jaguar, presenting instead a much simplified design that's modelled more along the lines of the Jazz Bass – but here with the added tonal abilities of a P/J pickup pairing. The neck is pure Jazz too, both dimensionally and in

appearance, and adopts that seventies look with the classic black block inlays; ultra cool.

The upgraded and sturdy raised-tail bridge assembly has been given the vintage treatment with the added luxury of brass saddles for improved tone and sustain. The triple-ply parchment-faced scratchplate retains the outline of the combined Jaguar 'plates, but here the controls are mounted on a standard Jazz

Bass chrome-plated bell plate rather than the downward curved one synonymous with the regular Jaguar Bass. Undoubtedly a lot of thought has gone into this Fender-badged presentation. Yet curiously, it's currently only supplied with a black finish, which seems a shame.

## Sounds

Avoiding the complicated circuitry of the original Jaguar design has helped enormously in bringing this bass in on a budget but curiously, as a result, we think this simplification and user-friendly arrangement will appeal to a lot more players. It also has the benefit of the upgraded Modern Player designs for the two pickups. In fact, to be honest, this proves to be one of the best sounding P/J configurations in the current Fender catalogue.

Along with the fantastic tonal range here, there seems to be a

The offset body shape was first seen on the Jazzmaster in 1958, but didn't become a four-string until 2006





## The Rivals

Other basses that feature the same P/J pickup configuration for a similar outlay include the **Yamaha BB424** (£469). This bolt-on model has a vintage-styled bridge, custom-wound pickups, 21 frets and a rosewood fingerboard.

**Warwick's Rockbass Streamer LX 4** (£505) has all-black livery with active MEC two-band electronics and individual volume and tone controls for both pickups. For a wildcard, try the **BC Rich Heritage Classic Mockingbird Bass** (£579) with offset reversed body and neck-through-body design, active EQ and two split-coil pickups.

lot more punch, particularly when using the blended picked sounds. There's also an extra edginess to the general tone that isn't available on the original Jaguar Bass and it truly is a delight to hear. Match the volume levels for a seriously scooped sound that you'll feel in your teeth as well as your stomach and although it's by no



The combination of Precision and Jazz pickups offers versatility – and punch

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means a Rickenbacker, if you really dig in, this modified Jaguar will growl like the best of them, and live up to its name.

## Verdict

There are now seven different variations of the Jaguar Bass – three Fenders and four Squiers. The original Fender model has now been discontinued and

replaced by the Deluxe version, so six are available in the current catalogue. This offers a new, vital and streamlined approach. It's a way more affordable alternative to the Japanese-made Deluxe too, and with a tonality that's rather unique. Shame there's only one colour option, but this remains a very cool bass. **G**

## Fender Modern Player Jaguar Bass

**PRICE:** £442.80

**ORIGIN:** China

**TYPE:** Twin-cutaway, solidbody, four-string, passive

**BODY:** Koto

**NECK:** Maple, aged lacquered finish, 'C'-shape, bolt on

**SCALE LENGTH:** 864mm (34 inches)

**NUT/WIDTH:** Synthetic Bone/38mm

**FINGERBOARD:** Maple, black block inlays, 241mm (9.5-inch) radius

**FRETS:** 20, jumbo

**HARDWARE:** Heavy duty vintage-style bridge, individual brass saddles, open-gear tuners – nickel/chrome plating

**STRING SPACING, BRIDGE:** 20mm average (centres)

**ELECTRICS:** Fender Modern Player Precision Bass split-coil pickup and Modern Player Jazz Bass pickup, two volume controls and master tone

**WEIGHT (kg/lb):** 4.2/9.3

**OPTIONS:** None

**RANGE OPTIONS:** Modern Player Jazz Bass and Modern Player Telecaster Bass – both £526.80

**LEFT-HANDERS:** No

**FINISH:** Black only

**Fender GBI**

**01342 331700**

**[www.fender.com](http://www.fender.com)**



It's the Jaguar's 50th anniversary: this Modern Player fuses old and new elements

## The Bottom Line

**We like:** Elegant design; simplified circuitry and cleaner, edgier sounds

**We dislike:** Only one finish option is disappointing

**Guitarist says:** This Modern Player is an affordable, desirable Jaguar Bass with Fender on the headstock. As an entry-level instrument it stands out from the crowd. The third classic Fender bass design? Maybe...



## Test results

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

**GUITARIST RATING** ★★★★★