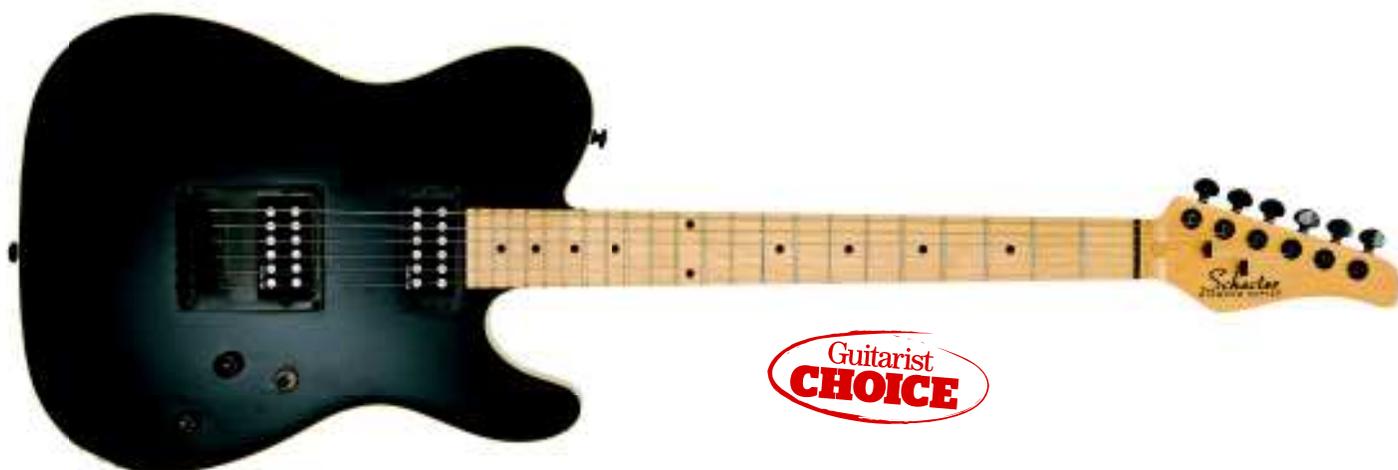


SCHECTER PT & PT FASTBACK \$599 EACH  
ELECTRICS



PHOTOGRAPHY BY SIMON LEES



# Schecter PT & PT Fastback **£599 each**

Two different guitars built on the same basic chassis – one traditional, the other pimped out *by Ed Mitchell*

**E**xperimentation was the name of the game in the seventies, and we're not just talking hairstyles and naughty substances. The era saw an explosion in tonal tweaking and guitar modification. While Eddie Van Halen was busy terrorising innocent Fender Stratocasters, and one unfortunate Gibson ES-335, Schecter Guitar Research was producing high-quality guitar parts. It would eventually make enough parts to assemble entire guitars.

In 1979, one of these assembled guitars found its way into the hands of Pete Townshend of The Who. Pete was in the process of retiring his 'numbered' Gibson Les Paul Deluxe guitars when his tech Alan Rogan found a Schecter in Manny's Music in New York. Pete fell in love with the guitar and subsequently had UK luthier Roger Giffin, and later Schecter, build him more examples featuring his favoured set-up of a Fender Tele-style body loaded with a pair of high-output humbuckers. Pete played his Schecter guitars onstage with The Who from 1979 to 1988.

While originally offered to the public as the Saturn model,

the production version of the Townshend-esque Schecter is now known as the PT. Oh, and it now has a brother in the shape of the more traditionally styled PT Fastback.

## PT

The subtle hint of its model name aside, the new Schecter PT is not a Pete Townshend signature model. The pimped PT is inspired by Pete's guitars, but the specifications do differ. For example, Pete's guitars had mahogany and poplar bodies; the new PT is made of alder.

The PT is essentially a Frankenstein's monster. But before you light your torches and head for the castle, know that the gene-splicing has paid off big time. Schecter has taken the original fifties design and injected some nitro in the form of a pair of Super Rock II

humbuckers studded with stonking great polepieces. The other standout feature is a neck that feels pleasantly chunky and comfortably slim all at once – a tough balancing act for sure. The addition of a 356mm (14-inch) fingerboard radius and 22 well-dressed jumbo frets makes playing the PT a dream.

Bending strings above the 12th fret is effortless and choke-free.

Although the PT has been stripped down to its basics (one volume, one tone, etc) at 5.1kg it's a chunky old beast that feels reassuringly solid when it's hanging from your shoulders.

## PT Fastback

The PT Fastback obviously 'pays tribute' to the seventies

The great thing about the Super Rock II humbuckers is that the pursuit of power hasn't produced any tonal harshness. They sound fantastic clean



Loud and proud: Schecter Super Rock II humbuckers

## The Rivals

### PT

For Telecasters with attitude check out the new **Fender Blacktop Telecaster** (£539.99), which features twin Hot Vintage Alnico humbuckers. Maggots and metalheads may prefer the **Fender Jim Root Telecaster** (£839.99). The Slipknot guitarist's main squeeze features two active EMG humbuckers (an 81 at the bridge and a 60 in the neck position). It's evil.



twin-humbucker Fender Telecaster Deluxe. Aside from the cosmetic detailing, and pickups, the PT Fastback mirrors the PT model's spec list. The feel is pretty much identical too.

Schecter has selected a pair of (Seymour) Duncan Designed humbuckers for the Fastback's engine bay. The fact that the FG-101 bridge 'bucker looks a bit like a Gretsch Filter'Tron has us, not unreasonably, excited to hear some old school twang in that position. We'll soon see about that.

The front HB-102 humbucker is based on Seymour's über-popular SH-4 JB model. Now, the JB is traditionally located at the bridge position, which makes its role as the Fastback's neck pickup an intriguing prospect. Interestingly, Pete Dee of English punk band The Adicts has a signature version of the PT, which features the same Duncan Designed humbuckers as the PT Fastback, only with the pickup positions reversed. On the face of it, it would seem to make

perfect sense to have the JB-style pickup at the bridge, but let's reserve judgement until we've tried the Fastback through an amp. By the way, unlike the PT, the Fastback has a full complement of two volume and two tone controls.

### Sounds

Before we get down to the serious business of rocking out, we should clear something up. According to their respective spec lists both PT models come fitted with coil-taps, activated by pulling on the tone knobs. In fact, both guitars are equipped with coil-splitters, not taps. Like the whole 'vibrato/tremolo' can of worms, this is a classic misnomer perpetuated over the years by many guitar manufacturers and players alike. It's not a big deal but it does merit an explanation.

Most often used on single-coil units, a coil-tap bypasses a portion of a pickup's windings to reduce output. A coil-splitter completely shuts down one of the coils in a humbucker to produce a true single-coil

If the PT is a brute - albeit a tonally versatile one - then the PT Fastback is closer in spirit to the guitar that inspired it

sound. So, there's a big difference between the terms. A judicious tap with a screwdriver, and a quick call to the helpful folk at Schecter's UK distributor, confirms that what we're dealing with here are coil-splitters. Glad we got that sorted out.

Running the PT and PT Fastback through the clean channel of our amplifier makes the differences between the two models even more apparent. The PT's Super Rock II pickups produce more output than the Duncan Designed jobs on the Fastback. That goes for every position on the toggle switch and the coil-split modes. The great thing about the Super Rock II humbuckers is that the pursuit of power hasn't produced any tonal harshness.

These pickups sound fantastic clean, unleashing an infectious mix of punch and sparkle. By way of contrast, the neck pickup sounds fat and juicy - they fit the bill for jazzy chords and clean blues licks perfectly. It's easy to see why Super Rock IIs are sought-after retrofit units. You can add us to membership list of the fan club.

As expected, the PT gets on great with overdrive. Depending on the gain level, you can get an incredible range of tones from razor-sharp punk to all flavours of rock and metal. While we realise this isn't a Townshend signature model, we couldn't stop ourselves from belting out some Pete-style power chords. Even dialling in a small amount of overdrive produces a level of power and sustain that's truly impressive. Socks were indeed blown off.

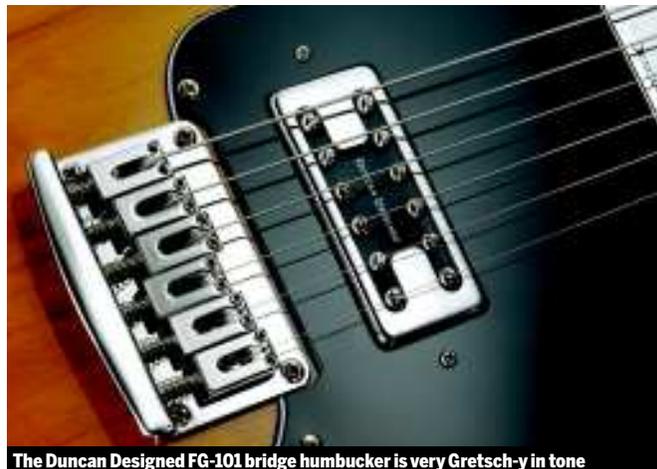
The PT is a much more versatile guitar than we ever expected. Most players will find a tone on this guitar that will keep them coming back for more and more. We found it tough to put down.

If the PT is a brute - albeit a tonally versatile one - then the PT Fastback is closer in spirit to the guitar that inspired it. The bridge humbucker pumps out a tone that's more reminiscent of an old Gretsch solidbody than a real Telecaster, but activating the coil-split gets you closer to the real deal. The JB-inspired

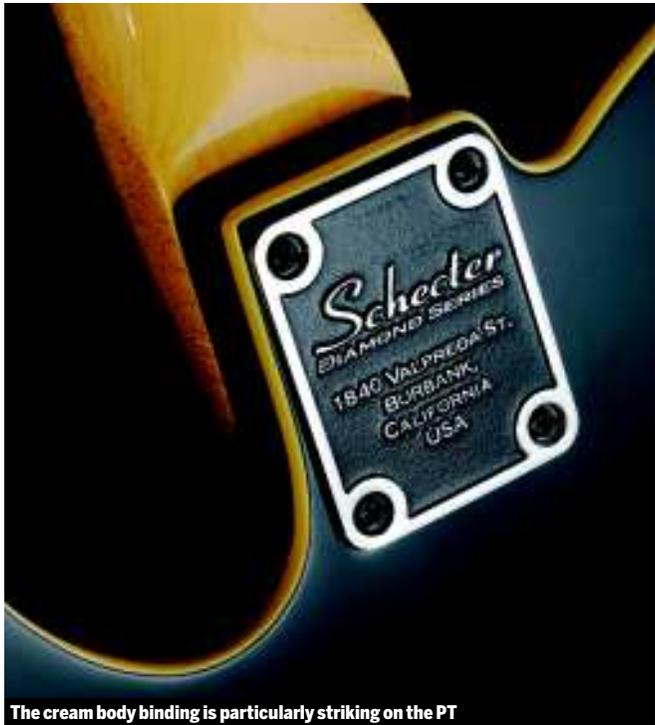
### The Rivals

#### PT Fastback

The most obvious rival to the Fastback is its original inspiration, the '72 Fender Telecaster Deluxe. The Classic Series '72 model comes complete with twin humbuckers and a period-correct big headstock. It's available in black or walnut (£789.99) and a three-colour sunburst finish for a tad more lolly (£819.99).



The Duncan Designed FG-101 bridge humbucker is very Gretsch-y in tone



The cream body binding is particularly striking on the PT

neck pickup works well in its slightly unorthodox position. While, like many neck humbuckers, it all goes a bit muddy when you add some overdrive, this JB substitute is the absolute business for upper fret noodling. All in all, we reckon that the PT Fastback is a good solid package, even if it's perhaps not quite as infectious an experience as its hard rocking brother.

### Verdict

Obviously the PT models assembled here are variations on the same basic chassis. The appeal of each PT model to potential purchasers basically comes down to the pickups; the shared neck profile and jumbo frets makes the top notch playability of both guitars pretty much identical.

While we enjoyed our time with the PT Fastback, it doesn't offer much that you can't get from other guitars at a similar price point. Obviously this guitar is competing with the Fender Classic Series '72 Telecaster Deluxe. Okay, that guitar is a little more expensive, but there's not that much in it. The PT Fastback could find it hard to beat.

The PT, on the other hand, is a bit special. It's a cool concept, fully realised. Taking a vintage-style body and hot-rodding it with some modern firepower is

old news these days. But in the seventies and eighties, when Pete Townshend was busy commissioning his Schecter guitars, the concept was new and exciting. We think it's still a thrilling package today. In fact, if you're looking for a versatile twin-humbucker guitar, inspired by the preferences of one of the greatest rock guitarists and tone freaks of all time, there's really no substitute. **G**

### The Bottom Line

#### Schecter PT

**We like:** Aggressive styling; outstanding pickups

**We dislike:** Not one for the purists we suspect

**Guitarist says:** The PT is a modern classic with great playability and tone, and pickups that can kick your teeth in

#### Schecter PT Fastback

**We like:** Great playability; good range of tones

**We dislike:** Bit ordinary compared to the PT

**Guitarist says:** A good quality guitar, but it could be eclipsed by the original – well worth trying though



### Schecter PT

**PRICE:** £599  
**ORIGIN:** Korea  
**BODY:** Alder  
**NECK:** Maple, bolt-on  
**SCALE LENGTH:** 648mm (25.5-inches)  
**NUT/WIDTH:** Graph Tech Tusq/43mm  
**FINGERBOARD:** Maple with dot inlays, 355mm (14-inch) radius  
**FRETS:** 22, jumbo  
**HARDWARE:** Black Grover tuners and PT-H bridge  
**STRING SPACING, BRIDGE:** 53mm  
**ELECTRICS:** Twin Schecter Super Rock II humbuckers, one volume and one tone control with coil-split, three-way pickup selector switch  
**WEIGHT (kg/lbs):** 5.1/11.2  
**RANGE OPTIONS:** None  
**LEFT-HANDERS:** Yes, £698  
**FINISHES:** Gloss black  
**Westside Distribution**  
**0141 248 4812**  
**www.schecterguitars.com**

### Test results

**Build quality** ★★★★★  
**Playability** ★★★★★  
**Sound** ★★★★★  
**Value for money** ★★★★★

**GUITARIST RATING** ★★★★★



### Schecter PT Fastback

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**SCALE LENGTH:** 648mm (25.5-inches)  
**NUT/WIDTH:** Graph Tech Tusq/43mm  
**FINGERBOARD:** Maple with block inlays, 355mm (14-inch) radius  
**FRETS:** 22, jumbo  
**HARDWARE:** Chrome Grover machineheads and Diamond six-saddle bridge  
**STRING SPACING, BRIDGE:** 53mm  
**ELECTRICS:** Two Duncan Design humbuckers, two volume and two tone controls with coil-split, three-way pickup selector switch  
**WEIGHT (kg/lbs):** 5.1/11.2  
**OPTIONS:** None  
**LEFT-HANDERS:** No  
**RANGE OPTIONS:** Pete Dee Signature (£699)  
**FINISHES:** Three-tone sunburst (as reviewed), gloss black

### Test results

**Build quality** ★★★★★  
**Playability** ★★★★★  
**Sound** ★★★★★  
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**GUITARIST RATING** ★★★★★