

Balanced Beauty

The Teye Guitars Electric Gypsy

NETHERLANDS-BORN Teye has been a professional guitarist for more than two decades, and like a lot of gigging guitarists spent his share of time searching for a guitar that could cover a variety of tones.

Drawing on his experience, and time spent building and modifying guitars with his father, Teye decided to build an electric that would satisfy his needs, something with the response of his flamenco guitar, the looks and feel of the Zemaitis in his collection, and a variety of usable tones.

With one look at the Teye Guitars Electric Gypsy model (available in color/trim options called La India or La Mora) it's immediately apparent that Wijnterp has a sincere appreciation for the work of guitar builder Tony Zemaitis. In fact, one's first impulse upon seeing the Electric Gypsy likely is, "It's a Zemaitis copy," what with its engraved-aluminum top and narrow-waist single-cut body. A closer look reveals a much more Southwest/Texas vibe, with inlaid turquoise mosaic and longer (25.5") scale length. The Electric Gypsy has a single-cutaway mahogany body with a three-piece set mahogany neck, compound-radius bound ebony fretboard with mother-of-pearl dot inlays, "diamonds and stripes" body inlays, and 24 large frets. Nearly all hardware is hand-made, from the aluminum-capped brass tailpiece and engraved aluminum adjustable bridge, to the engraved pickup rings, truss-rod cover, and switch tip. The only off-the-shelf parts are Grover Imperial tuning machines, Schaller straplock buttons, and the control knobs.

The finish on the La India is a very thin lacquer similar to a French-polish finish you might see on an old violin. Being hand-applied, this type of finish does tend to show imperfections and is more prone to wear than the typical modern high-gloss finish. But those who use it believe it gives the guitar

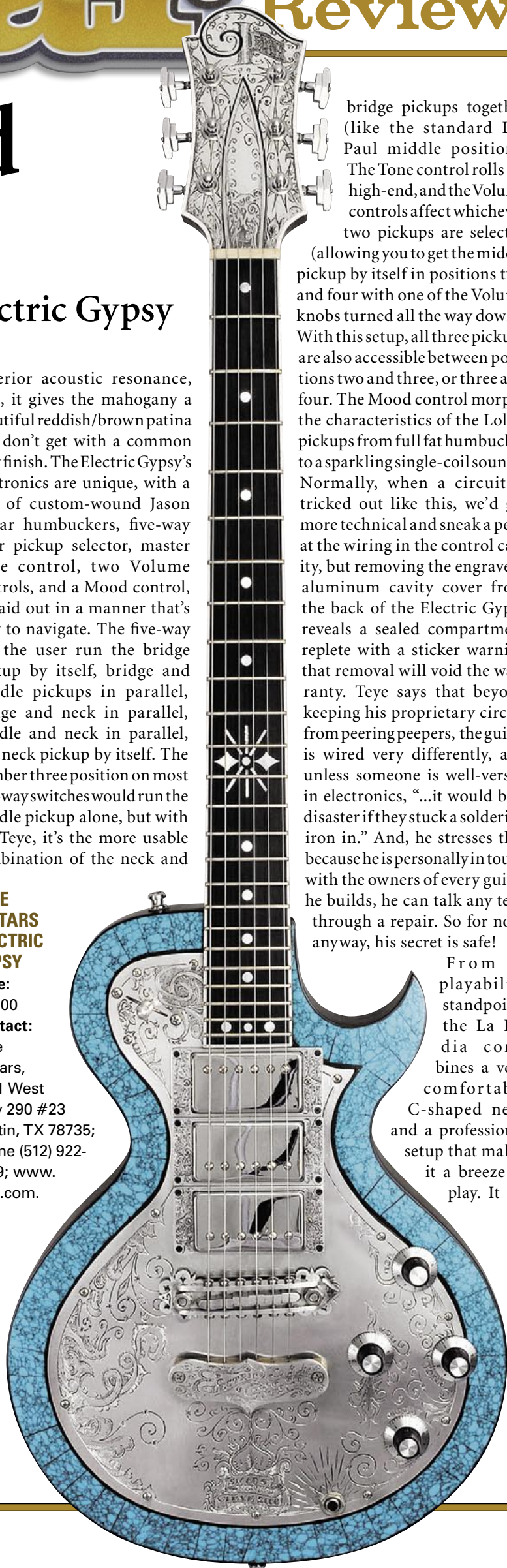
superior acoustic resonance, plus, it gives the mahogany a beautiful reddish/brown patina you don't get with a common poly finish. The Electric Gypsy's electronics are unique, with a trio of custom-wound Jason Lollar humbuckers, five-way lever pickup selector, master Tone control, two Volume controls, and a Mood control, all laid out in a manner that's easy to navigate. The five-way lets the user run the bridge pickup by itself, bridge and middle pickups in parallel, bridge and neck in parallel, middle and neck in parallel, and neck pickup by itself. The number three position on most five-way switches would run the middle pickup alone, but with the Teye, it's the more usable combination of the neck and

TEYE GUITARS ELECTRIC GYPSY

Price: \$8,500
Contact: Teye Guitars, 5801 West Hwy 290 #23 Austin, TX 78735; phone (512) 922-0789; www.teye.com.

bridge pickups together (like the standard Les Paul middle position). The Tone control rolls off high-end, and the Volume controls affect whichever two pickups are selected (allowing you to get the middle pickup by itself in positions two and four with one of the Volume knobs turned all the way down). With this setup, all three pickups are also accessible between positions two and three, or three and four. The Mood control morphs the characteristics of the Lollar pickups from full fat humbucker to a sparkling single-coil sounds. Normally, when a circuit is tricked out like this, we'd get more technical and sneak a peek at the wiring in the control cavity, but removing the engraved-aluminum cavity cover from the back of the Electric Gypsy reveals a sealed compartment replete with a sticker warning that removal will void the warranty. Teye says that beyond keeping his proprietary circuit from peering peepers, the guitar is wired very differently, and unless someone is well-versed in electronics, "...it would be a disaster if they stuck a soldering iron in." And, he stresses that because he is personally in touch with the owners of every guitar he builds, he can talk any tech through a repair. So for now, anyway, his secret is safe!

From a playability standpoint, the La India combines a very comfortable C-shaped neck and a professional setup that makes it a breeze to play. It of-



GEARIN' UP



AXL BADWATER BASS

AXL's Badwater AP-820 bass uses split and single-coil pickups designed by EMG, a solid alder body with distressed finish, antiqued hardware, and a classic-style pickguard. Check them out axlguitars.com.

BACKLINE ZENTONE 7

BackLine Engineering's ZenTone7 is a class-A tube amp with control settings that can be saved as presets while maintaining an all-tube signal path. It accepts an array of tubes and allows on-the-fly switching between three preamp gain structures and four output tube configurations. Read more at backline-eng.com.



DEAN RAZORBACK

Dean Guitars Razorback 255 and Razorback V 255 have a 25 1/2" scale length, wider fret spacing, and EMG 81/85 humbuckers. Learn more at deanguitars.com.

MAD PROFESSOR EFFECTS

The Mad Professor Deep Blue Delay is a digital/analog delay with an analog direct signal path and can be used either in front of an amplifier or in an effects loop. The Little Green Wonder is a stackable overdrive with adjustable low/mid EQ balance. The Little Red Distortion pedal is an adjustable '80s style compressed gain. Visit mpamp.com.



EXTech HUMIDITY ALERT METER

Extech Instruments' Humidity Alert Meter measures and displays temperature, relative humidity and dew point, and has audible and visible humidity alarms activated when humidity exceeds or falls

fers very good access up to the 24th fret because of the contoured neck heel and deep cutaway. The guitar's weight (about nine pounds) is well-distributed, a fact that when combined with its smaller, thinner body, give it a balanced, unencumbered feel.

Through the clean channel of a Koch Twintone II 1x12" (12AX7/EL34) combo, the La India's tone was very well-balanced – fat and clear in all five pickup-selector positions. A huge plus is the fact that the middle position engages the two outside pickups instead of just the middle, which allows the player to use a standard middle-position humbucker sound. As you back down the Mood control from 10 to 0, the tone slowly

morphs into a hot single-coil sound, rolling off midrange response and adding sparkle to the top-end. Again when you toggle through the five pickup combinations you get some pretty convincing Fender-like sounds; the two out-of-phase tones being very reminiscent of a Stratocaster, while the middle position makes a convincing Tele-like tone. The 25.5" scale bolsters the twanginess of the single-coil sounds and adds note separation and definition to the humbucker sound.

Through the overdrive channel of the Koch, the Electric

Gypsy produced a thick, creamy, sustain-loaded overdrive tone. Backing down the Mood control a bit adds a taste of Fender twang, giving the overdrive tones a touch more clarity and sizzle. Nearly every pickup-and-Mood-control combination produces a good-quality, usable sound, with nary a mini-toggle or push/pull pot to be found!

The Teye Electric Gypsy is a beautiful hand-crafted instrument with innovative, player-friendly electronics that produce a variety of usable tones. – *Phil Feser*

J's Rockin' Axe

Fender's J Mascis Artist Jazzmaster

INTRODUCED IN THE LATE 1950s as Fender's "jazz guitar," the Jazzmaster was also supposed to compete in the market with Gibson's semi-hollow ES line. But despite its very specific moniker, the guitar never caught on with the jazz crowd.

Lucky for Leo, the Jazzmaster was hijacked by many of the top surf and instrumental bands of the late 1950s and '60s (i.e. the Ventures) and in the 1970s and '80s by punk/alternative rock bands and artists (i.e. Elvis Costello).

Along the way, it also occasionally gained favor with harder-edged rock players. One prime example is J. Mascis, lead guitarist for Dinosaur Jr., the indie rock guitar icon credited with keeping guitar leads in rock music.

At last month's NAMM show, Fender debuted the J. Mascis Jazzmaster, an interesting derivative based on Mascis' personal guitar. Not only does it boast a cool metallic purple finish with matching headstock, but it offers a handful of new features like jumbo fret wire, a flatter (9.5" radius) fretboard, satin poly-finished neck, and Fender's Adjusto-Matic bridge. Otherwise, the guitar is classic Jazzmaster with its

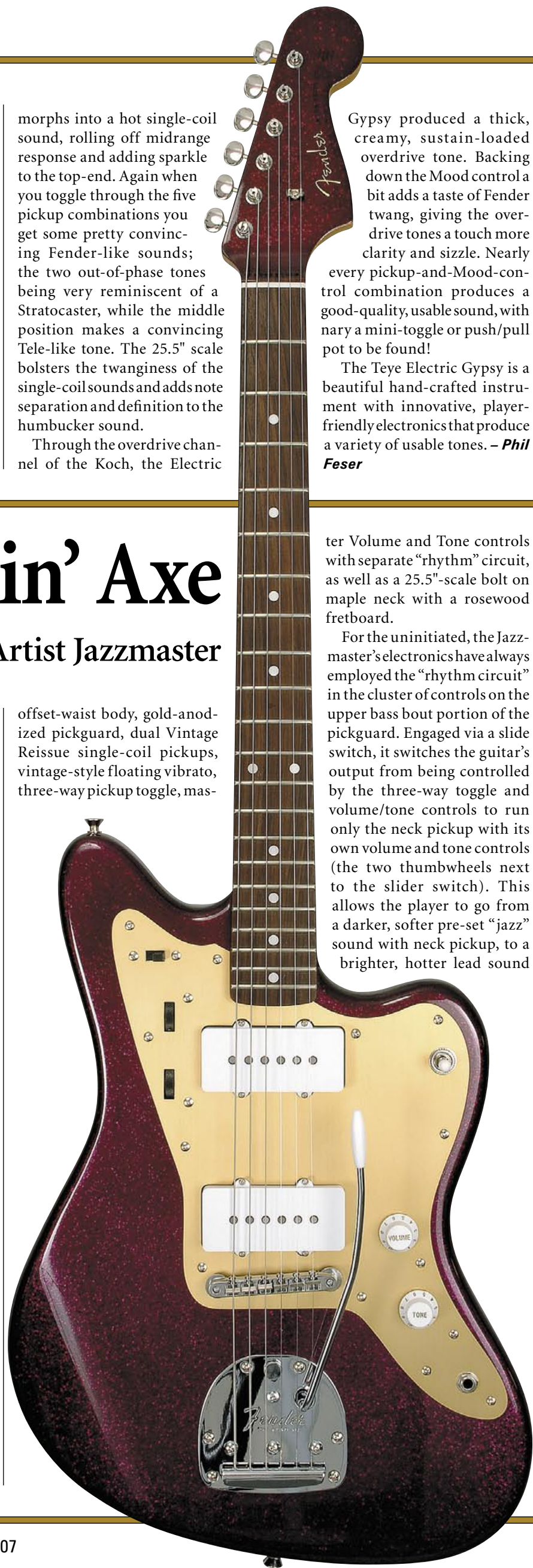
offset-waist body, gold-anodized pickguard, dual Vintage Reissue single-coil pickups, vintage-style floating vibrato, three-way pickup toggle, mas-

ter Volume and Tone controls with separate "rhythm" circuit, as well as a 25.5"-scale bolt on maple neck with a rosewood fretboard.

For the uninitiated, the Jazzmaster's electronics have always employed the "rhythm circuit" in the cluster of controls on the upper bass bout portion of the pickguard. Engaged via a slide switch, it switches the guitar's output from being controlled by the three-way toggle and volume/tone controls to run only the neck pickup with its own volume and tone controls (the two thumbwheels next to the slider switch). This allows the player to go from a darker, softer pre-set "jazz" sound with neck pickup, to a brighter, hotter lead sound

FENDER J MASCIS JAZZMASTER

Price: \$1,199.99 (retail)
Contact: Fender Musical Instrument Corp., 18860 E. Chaparral Road, Suite 100
Scottsdale AZ 85250-2610;
www.fender.com.



GEARIN' UP

below user-adjustable set points. Read more at extech.com.



FENDER JOE STRUMMER TELECASTER

Fender's Joe Strummer Telecaster is modeled after the '66 Tele played by Strummer throughout most of his career. It has a distressed finish, "Revolution Rock" engraved neck plate, and includes a limited-edition art customization kit created by artist Shepard Fairey. Visit fender.com.

MORLEY ABC

Morley's ABC is a true-bypass switching device that allows control of one input/guitar and three outputs/amplifiers, or three inputs/guitars and one output/amplifier. It has a rolled steel housing and can be powered with a battery or AC adapter. Read about it at morleypedals.com.



LAVA CABLE FT-1

Lava Cable's FT-1 Flow Tester pedal tests mono and stereo instrument cables and fits on pedal boards, in gig bags, and guitar cases. To learn more, go to lavacable.com.

PARIS SWING JORGENSON MANDOLIN

The Paris Swing Co. John Jorgenson Signature Mandolin has a solid Sitka spruce top, solid flamed back and sides, radiused ebony fretboard, miniature D-hole soundhole with Maccaferri-style rosette, clear pickguard with a Jorgenson label, and the Paris Swing "Tour Eiffel" headstock label in M.O.P., abalone, and gold leaf. Read more at parisswing.com.



XOTIC RC

Xotic Guitars and Effects AC Plus is a two-channel boost/preamp pedal that can cascade gain channels in various sequences. Channel B has a three-band EQ, Volume, Gain, and soft or hard compression. Channel A has controls for Volume, Gain, and Tone. It can be powered by 9-volt battery or power adapter. Go to xoticeffects.com.