



It's been another bumper year for bass players, with amp technology improving all the time and killer new basses on the racks. Mike Brooks brings you the very best of the best



BEST FRETTED BASS UNDER £500



Chowny CHB-1 | £460

This semi-hollow, Chinese-made, short-scale is a whole lot of bass for the money. Great value.
www.chownybass.com

Revelation RBJ 67 Deluxe | £199

A stunningly capable bass at a pocket-friendly price – what's not to like?
www.revelationguitars.co.uk

Danelectro Longhorn | £529 ▶

(was under £500 at time of review)
A faithful reproduction in all departments of a vintage classic: quirky, different, but playable.
www.jhs.co.uk

Cort C4 Plus OTAB | £399

Featuring a Markbass preamp, Bartolini pickups and organic woody visuals, check it out!
www.proel.co.uk



BASS CENTRE

Bruce Thomas Profile

Sometime Elvis Costello bassist Bruce Thomas comes up trumps with a signature bass from the Bass Centre. Joel McIver gives it a road-test



Bass Centre
www.basscentre.com

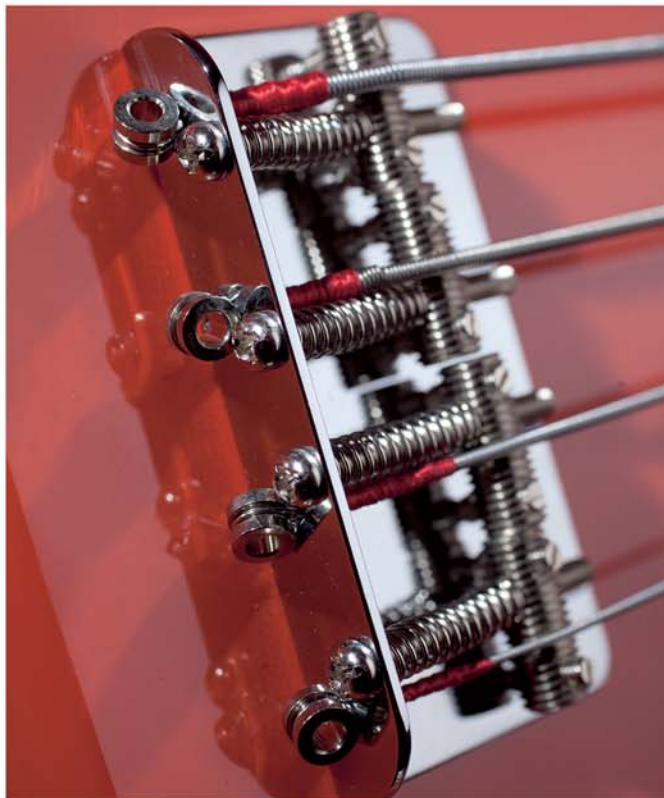
Elvis Costello wouldn't be quite the household name he is today without the assistance in the early part of his career of the Attractions, a seasoned band in which Bruce Thomas supplied iconic bass-lines known to anyone into post-punk music.

Thomas was known in the middle years of his career for playing a salmon-pink Fender Precision, but this splendid instrument – responsible for many of his best bass parts – was half-inched by some callous swine in the 1980s. In that instrument's continued absence, Thomas has got together with Barry Moorhouse of the Bass Centre to create a Precision-esque bass that mirrors the many modifications that Thomas made to the original – a process obviously made trickier by not having the original around for comparison. However, Thomas reckons Moorhouse has pulled it off perfectly, in a feat of collaborative design and engineering that pretty much beggars belief.



As Thomas himself puts it, "Anyone who's watched the development of the Profile bass over the past couple of years will know that it's not a stock bass I've simply added my name to, but a genuine, personally developed signature guitar. Our intention was not to produce a replica model or a phoney vintage guitar, but to create a new instrument true to the spirit of the original – a bass that's a joy to play. I'm happy to say that's now been achieved."

Thomas, now the author of several books including a recent autobiography titled *Rough Notes*, is interviewed in the next issue of *BGM*, when you'll also have a chance to win his signature bass courtesy of the Bass Centre – so let's give the Profile a spin, just to let you know what you're getting...



Not that you're likely to need to make that call: the Profile has been constructed with attention to detail at the top of the agenda, from the slotted-saddle bridge – specified by Thomas in preference to a more modern, sustain-heavy design, because he prefers this older design's easier adjustability – to the frets, which are dressed with all the smoothness you'd wish for. The intention to create a player-friendly Precision clone is obvious, from the familiar volume and tone controls via the genuine salmon-pink finish to the tuners – which may be generic, but that's to be expected at this relatively modest price point.

Sounds and Playability

This bass has earned its name thanks to the changes made to it from the original design – notably the slimmer neck. The slender, almost Jazz-like neck profile lends itself immediately to fast, melodic playing: pick the Profile up and you won't be putting it back in its box any time soon. It's just too much fun to play.

Jazz basses are often as playable as this, but in our experience Precisions rarely are, thanks to their traditional neck mass. Of course, you know that is not meant as a slur. Precisions are perhaps the ultimate example of a future-proof design, anywhere in the engineering world, and far be it from us to diminish that. It's just that a touch of reshaping to the neck makes a whole lot of difference – and that, readers, is what has happened here.

In any case, plug the Profile in and those familiar Precision tones are there. Tone-wise, neither Thomas nor Moorhouse intended to stray far from recognisable Fender-esque sounds, and in this they've been wholly successful. There's solidity and power here, with a high mids-heavy tone achievable with a tweak to the left of the tone control, but glassy highs are not what this bass is about, and nor should they be. It's a modern replica of a vintage instrument, with all that entails.

Conclusion

Bravo, chaps – the goal of replicating that long-lost Precision, now doubtless in a lock-up somewhere or on some unsuspecting bassist's wall, has been achieved. The Profile takes the tangible design, as well as the intangible but still detectable ethos of his modifications, and combines them into a wonderful bass that you will not want to stop playing. And all for £495? Make sure you investigate it. ■



Build Quality

At a London pint's value less than £500, the Profile has some serious competition, not least from Fender's own Mexican-built models. Splendid as those instruments undoubtedly are, the Profile is a signature instrument which comes with a certificate of authenticity, a copy of *Rough Notes* and the knowledge that the bloke who made the bass will pick up the phone.