

WINNER

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Best Bass
Guitar Under
£1000

BASS COLLECTION
JIVE BASS



Well-known designs from a well-known brand: no surprises there – but extra attention paid to weight and neck profile lifts these above the crowd. Review by Gareth Morgan

Bass Collection

Jive Bass & Power Bass

The Bass Collection brand first appeared in the 1980s. Owned by Japanese company Nanyo Becki, Bass Collection basses came in two flavours: small-bodied contemporary models and more traditional Fender-style offerings. For close to 20 years the Bass Collection brand has been under the stewardship of the UK's House Music, who in 1985 established the Bass Centre. They reintroduced the line with the excellent Speakeasy bass we reviewed back in April 2006 (Vol 17/2), and there are plans afoot for lots more exciting kit. In the meantime, feast your eyes on the latest models, the Jive Bass and Power Bass, both of which emanate from a rather swanky factory in Korea.

JIVE BASS

We don't have to tell you where the inspiration for the Jive Bass comes from – not unless you've been living in a cave for 50 years. The 'Jive' name was actually used by late '80s Bass Collection J-style basses. These are essentially very similar, but with notable upgrades to the details.

The shape hasn't changed – it's still the familiar offset design of 1960 – but, crucially, the Jive is a less weighty instrument than it used to be because 4mm has been shaved off the body, making it 39mm deep as opposed to 43mm. Both forearm and ribcage chamfers are present and correct. The expertly-applied king crimson finish is close to Fender's candy apple



Three-ply guard and metallic red looks great – as does the pickup cover, but most will take it off



Authentically, the Jive's neck is slightly narrower at the nut than the Power's: 38mm as opposed to 41mm

The Jive gives a superb reproduction of the Jazz sound with glittering highs, punch and crunchiness in the low end

red, and this colour together with a matching headstock face helps create a nostalgic '60s look. Maple and rosewood have been employed for the neck and fingerboard, and the 'vintage '60s' profile is slimmer than the normal 'C'. It's really comfortable, super-fast in a contemporary manner and topped off by a headstock that doffs its cap to Music Man but with sharper lines and deeper recessing. The chrome hardware is ➤

FACTFILE

JIVE BASS

Description: Solidbody bass.
Made in Korea

Price: £295

Build: Basswood body, slim '60s profile maple neck with 20 medium nickel frets on a rosewood fingerboard, vintage-style tuners, vintage-style bridge and pickup cover. Chrome hardware

Electrics: Passive with two vintage-style single coils. Two volumes and one tone

Left hander: No

Finishes: King crimson (as review model), jet black, solar flare

Range Options: None

Scale length: 864mm/34"

Width of neck:

Nut 38mm

12th fret 57mm

Depth of neck:

First fret 20mm

12th fret 22mm

String spacing:

Nut 10mm

Bridge 19mm

Action as supplied:

12th fret treble 2mm

12th fret bass 3mm

Weight: 4.05kg/8.9lbs

Contact: House Music Ltd

020 7357 7703

sales@house.gb.net

FINAL SCORE

Build Quality 19/20

Playability 19/20

Sound 18/20

Value for money 19/20

Vibe 17/20

TOTAL 91%

Good for... Getting the authentic J Bass character for very little cash

Look elsewhere... For the active option – or the authentic item, but you'll pay loads more

Price: £295

FACTFILE

POWER BASS

Description: Solidbody bass. Made in Korea

Price: £295

Build: Basswood body, slim maple neck with 20 medium nickel frets on a rosewood fingerboard, vintage-style tuners and traditional bridge with cover. Chrome hardware

Electrics: Passive with one EMG-style humbucker. One volume and one tone control

Left hander: No

Finishes: Solar flare (as review model), jet black, king crimson

Range Options: None

Scale length: 864mm/34"

Width of neck:

Nut 41mm

12th fret 57mm

Depth of neck:

First fret 20mm

12th fret 22mm

String spacing:

Nut 11.5mm

Bridge 19.5mm

Action as supplied:

12th fret treble 2mm

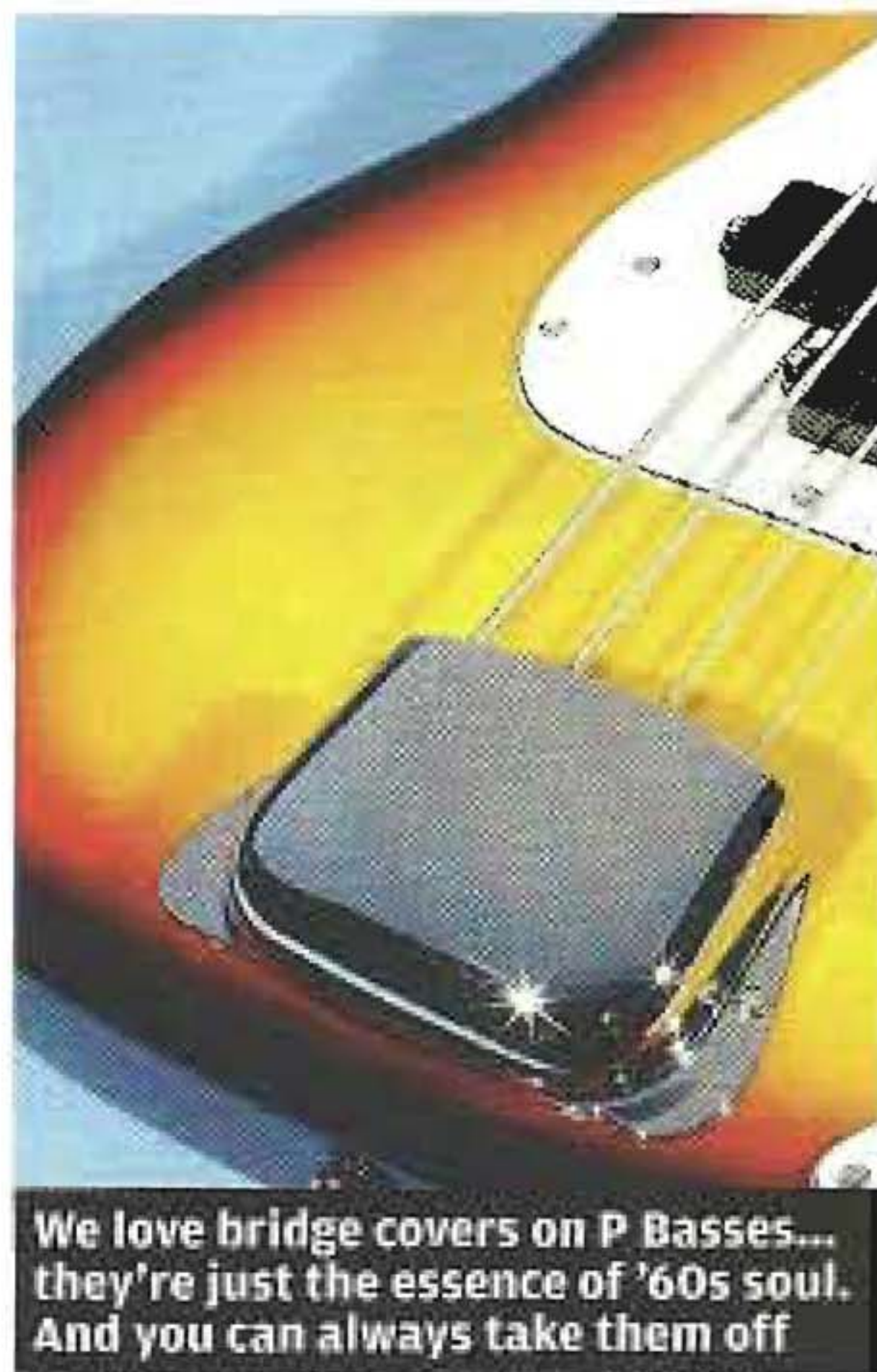
12th fret bass 3mm

Weight: 4.1kg/9lbs

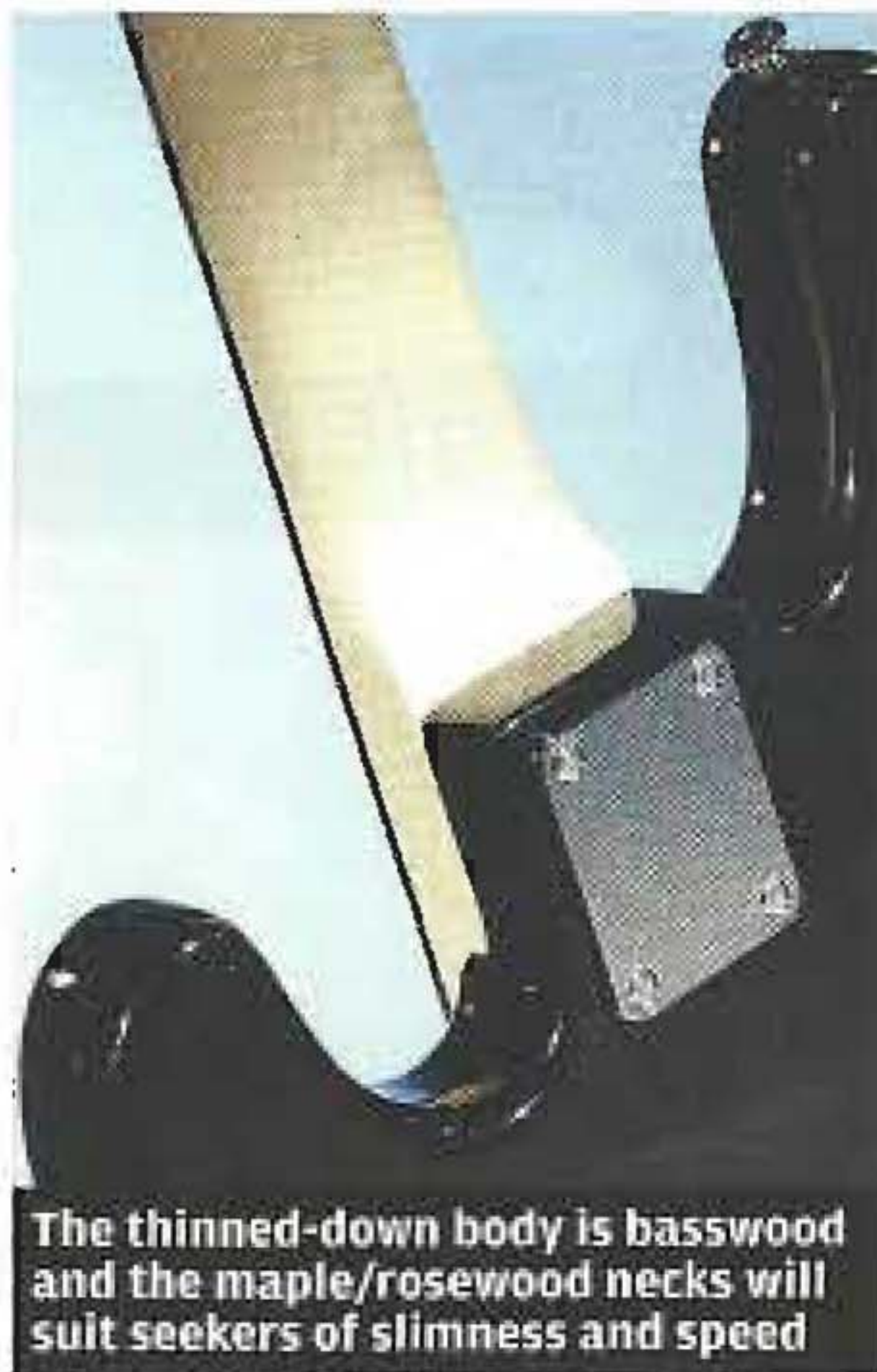
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We love bridge covers on P Bases... they're just the essence of '60s soul. And you can always take them off



The thinned-down body is basswood and the maple/rosewood necks will suit seekers of slimmness and speed

The Squier Classic Vibes are only slightly more, but the Bass Collections have faster necks and are lighter on the strap

also vintage style, with a bridge that's a chunkier version of Fender's original and other bygone details including a mint green pickguard, a chrome control plate and even a pickup cover. The electronics are passive, with two single coils hooked up to two volume controls and one treble roll-off control... which is after all, just as it should be.

SOUNDS

As pickup covers were fitted for pick players to rest their palms on, we took it off and got down to business. The Jive gives a superb reproduction of the qualities associated with a J Bass: plenty of glittering harmonics, plus width, punch and crunchiness in the bottom end. Highs are snappy but speak clearly and naturally without a hint of mid bias. The zingy edge can be sanitised by winding back the tone knob, and the twin-pickup mode gives real versatility.

With the neck pickup we head more into P Bass territory with earthy, growling lows. The midrange is rubbery and acoustic; the highs, while clean, are a little more restrained with less harmonic action... all of which adds up to a rocking old-school tone. We anticipated a brighter, burpy gurgle from the bridge pickup but weren't quite ready for its superbly even output level relative to other settings and the amount of bottom end. We're not talking earth-shaking, but it's a decent starting point. Make no mistake, the Jive may not sound stunningly individual but the overall quality of the sounds competes with instruments at twice the price.

POWER BASS

The Power Bass also has the reduced mass of its Jive sister, its basswood body being 4mm slimmer and lighter than you'd expect. The mint green pickguard and chrome bridge cover are eye-catching and vintage-correct, as is the solar flare finish. A pair of screws on the pickguard lie in wait for a pickup cover carried by some BC Power Bases, but not this one.

The Power Bass's neck has the same maple/rosewood construction, flat 'C' contour and is equally comfy and fast, making it in some ways strangely un-P-Bass-like. This time the headstock has been left unfinished. The 'passive EMG style' split-coil humbucker is linked to one volume and one tone.

SOUNDS

The Power Bass spits out an excellent version of the famous sound, with gritty, snarling lows. The midrange is full and clean, with a solid sound. There's plenty of spikiness at the top end with clean, natural-sounding definition. Backing off the tone knob gradually removes the sparkle, giving a smoother note edge; the bottom end takes over without spoiling the original sound, and the fatter tone from thinner strings makes higher register playing or more melodic basslines more effective and fun.

VERDICT

The Jive and Power basses offer authentic sounds and an excellent level of build quality. In terms of direct competition we must mention Squier, especially the superb Classic Vibe series, which cost only



a fraction more money - but while these Bass Collection versions are equally well equipped in the electronics department, they have faster necks and, on average, are noticeably lighter on the strap. If you're looking for either the J or P Bass look and are on a limited budget, these little gems from Bass Collection have to be on your shopping list. ☺

FINAL SCORE	
Build Quality	19/20
Playability	19/20
Sound	17/20
Value for money	18/20
Vibe	17/20
TOTAL	90%
Good for... Classy P Bass sounds and light weight on a budget	
Look elsewhere... For greater tonal variety... but then again, that's part of the design	

THE COMPETITION

SQUIER Classic Vibe Jazz Bass

An excellent Jazz with all the elements we know and love at a really competitive price

RRP: £309

PEAVEY Zodiac BXP Ellefson Signature

Another high-quality low cost passive bass with a shiny scratchplate: rather cool

RRP: £399

FENDER American Standard Jazz or Precision Bass

No pointless tinkering, just subtle tweaks to the old but hard-to-beat format

RRP: £975