

Tradition Meets Luxury

Xotic's XJ-1T Five-String Bass

XOTIC STANDARD LIFE AS a high-end custom bass manufacturer, and from the beginning the company's instruments had a reputation for superb playability and tone. following the success of their XB models, Xotic recently leapt into melding the time-honored design of early basses with the XJ-1t five-string bass. the XJ-1 has an alder body with a bolt-on 22-fret maple neck with rosewood fingerboard. the neck uses stainless-steel frets and a Micarta nut, and its matching headstock carries Hipshot's ultra light tuners. the neck is also slightly wider than a number of modern five-strings, which means its string spacing is more like that of a four-string. Devoted four-stringers will love this, while slap players won't have to adjust their right-hand technique. the most striking visual aspect of the XJ-1t are its wood-covered lindy fralin JB-5 pickups, which give the bass a custom touch and make up a good part of its very heart. Players familiar with Xotic's basses and effects pedals know the company does its homework when it comes to tone. this is apparent when you hear the bass' onboard preamp. the tone-shaping possibilities of the standard bass/mid/treble knobs are virtually limitless when paired with the fralins. Xotic expands on this further with a classic volume/volume/tone knob configuration on the chrome knobs. if the six-knob configuration isn't enough for some tone whores, there are a couple of sleeper options. first, pulling up on the neck Volume control takes the bass into passive mode. With this, the onboard three-band preamp is bypassed, and the bass runs in straight "J bass" mode – tres cool, especially for studio bassists who want to avoid stray noise from active preamps. Another hidden joy is pulling up on the bridge Volume control, which yields what Xotic calls "humbucking" mode by combining both pickups into one massive pickup. finally, you can flip the bass over and adjust preamp frequencies via the trim pots, which can be accessed without even removing the backplate. How righteous is that? With all its features, how does the bass sound? Killer. With controls set flat and both pickups wide open, the XJ-1t has a great balance between modern and vintage. the warmth and heft of a classic, with the glisten and spank of a high-end modern piece. from the first few notes, what's most apparent is how even this bass sounds; notes all over the finger-board are even and present. the wide-spaced fingerboard had no dead spots, and notes were resonant and pronounced. the relatively flat fingerboard profile also made way for being able to set the



XOTIC XJ-1T FIVE-STRING BASS

Price: \$2,900
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bass with extremely low action. With super low action and a great feel the XJ-1t's crown jewel is still its sound. its overall tone can compete with any high-end bass on the market regardless of design. this is exceptional news since the XJ-1t is cheaper than a number of other high-end basses. everything from Marcus-like slap to Jaco-inspired growl to Joe osborn-like soul oozes from it. if you love the feel and look of a traditional instrument, but long for the sparkle of high-end electronics, this import gem has all the guts and glory a working bassist needs. throw in the fact it plays like a dream, and it's an easy call. – **Sean O'Bryan Smith**