

SOUNDRoom

Laurus T 900 XR

BY JONATHAN HERRERA

OF THE MANY NATIONAL STEREOTYPES, the Italian sense of style is as true as any. Made in Italy by gifted luthier Pierluigi Cazzola, the Laurus T 900 XR is a beautiful extension of this tradition, but its exotic look is the result of functional goals, not beauty for its own sake. With the T 900, Cazzola made ergonomics and resonant sensitivity his priorities.

Obviously, the inverted tuning arrangement is the Laurus' most conspicuous feature. Laurus favors this design to improve balance, and delivers it with excellent proprietary brass hardware. I quickly adapted to the arrangement, and found the precise barrel tuners equally capable and easy to use as the more conventional head-

LAURUS T 900 XR

Direct Approx. \$4,550 (depends on exchange rate)

Pros Near-perfect balance; elegant tone with excellent clarity and definition

Cons Unusual neck profile will turn some off

Contact

www.laurus.it
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TECH SPECS

Pickups Nordstrand Dual Coil humbuckers

Electronics Klaus Noll TCM 3 with 3-band EQ: (bass, ±15dB @ approx. 80Hz; mid, ±15dB @ approx. 500Hz; treble, ±15dB @ approx. 4kHz)

Width at nut 1 13/16"

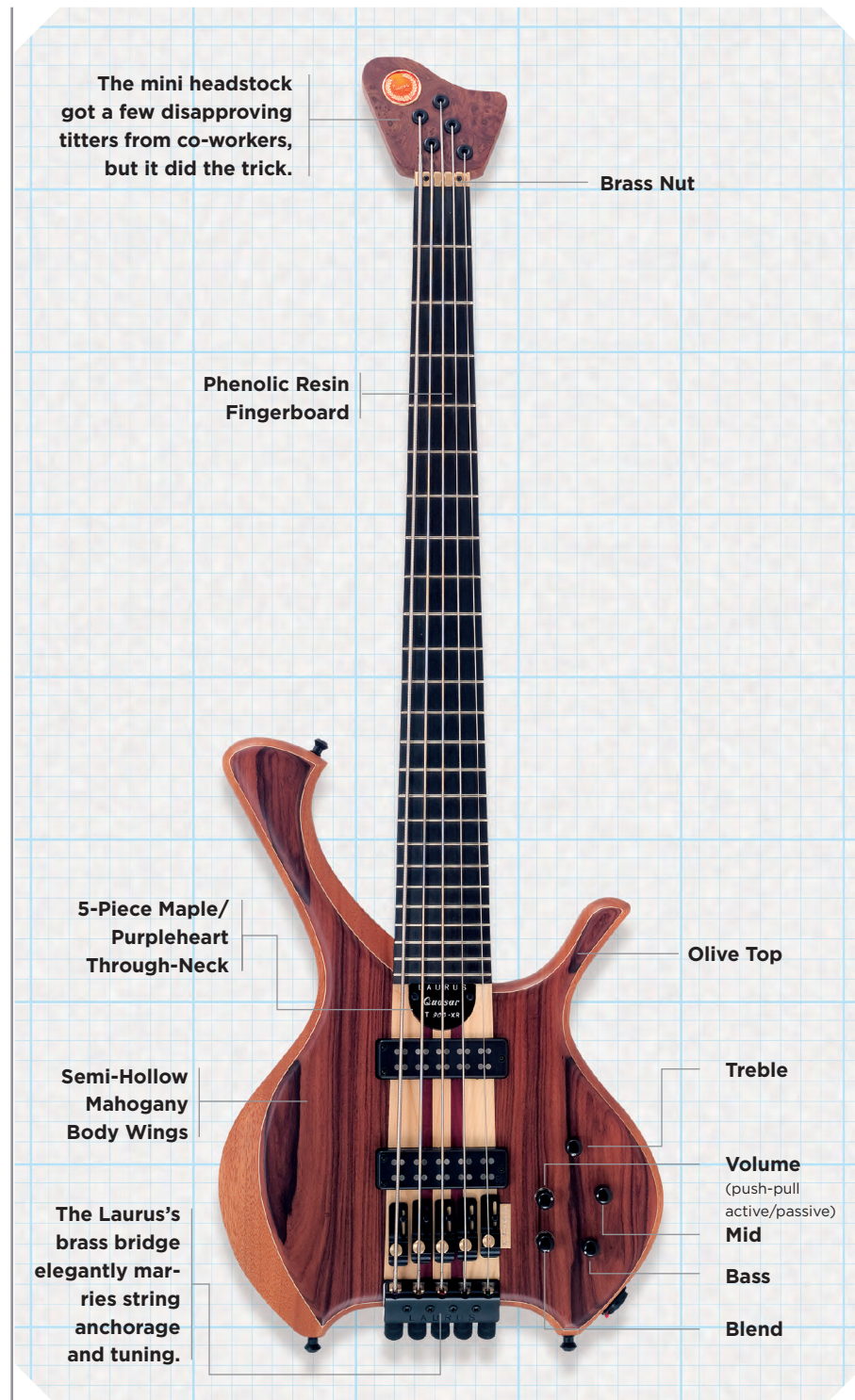
Width at final fret 3 1/4"

Case Custom gig-bag included

Weight 9.5 lbs

Made in Italy

Warranty 5 years limited



Alternate Opinion

Incredibly resonant, and the *B* string seemed to ring for days. I loved the pickups' voicing. — BRIAN FOX



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stock type. Importantly, the Laurus system doesn't require hard-to-find double-ball-end strings. The bass's superb weight distribution, coupled with the well-contoured lower horn, made it perfectly balanced on my lap. To further benefit weight and improve resonance, the Laurus's mahogany body wings are hollowed out. On a strap, the Laurus was also well balanced, and included two lower strap pins for placing the instrument at different angles depending on a player's approach. Laurus indeed achieved excellent ergonomics, although the T 900's neck profile is unusual, and will likely not please everybody. I dug its shallow depth, but the asymmetrical profile includes a relative sharp angle at the apex of the curve; almost like a skewed Fender V-profile. It was initially off-putting, although I did adjust. Some probably won't want to bother.

The Laurus's construction was excellent.

The lightly applied oil finish enhanced the woods' figure, and the engraved trussrod cover and laurel-wreath label are attractive touches. The hardware performed well and the fretwork and neck finishing was superb.

SOUND

The Laurus features Nordstrand Dual Coil pickups and a Noll preamp. I wasn't familiar with Noll prior to this review, but was pleased with the preamp's performance throughout testing. It was subtle and well voiced.

Even acoustically, playing the Laurus immediately revealed its extremely resonant neck and body. I could feel notes in my left hand and through my body, enhancing my impression of the instrument's musicality and sensitivity to dynamics. With the EQ flat and the pickups blended, the Laurus spoke with a tight and controlled voice than seemed well balanced across the spectrum. It was delicate and refined, with excellent

string-to-string balance and top-to-bottom coherence. The *B* string felt and sounded tight, with texture and output well matched to the other strings. The Laurus had a rich overtone spectrum and light low end, so fans of big-booty fundamental should look elsewhere. The soloed bridge pickup sound was burpy and rich in the mids, although again its elegance was anything but aggressive. The neck pickup was the woodiest of the settings, yielding the most vintage-like J-style tone. The bass sang in the mid and high registers, and its excellent fretwork and balance made soloistic playing a pleasure.

The Laurus T 900 XR was a beautiful and thoughtfully designed bass that would be particularly well suited to dexterous players who crave good physical and sonic balance. It's clearly the work of a capable luthier, and though its expensive, it should be on your shopping list if you're after a truly refined, stylish instrument. **BP**