

WIN! OVER £1000 WORTH OF BASS GEAR

INTERVIEWS: MIKE BRADFORD, PATRICK BRUDERS, BRAD RUSSELL, BGM VISITS WARWICK HQ!

BASS

THE UK'S NUMBER ONE BASS GUITAR MAGAZINE

Guitar Magazine

SHOW TIME!

SPECIAL EXTENDED LONDON BASS GUITAR SHOW ISSUE:

THE GEAR, THE ARTISTS,

THE AWESOMENESS

NATE WATTS, LEE ROCKER, JAH WOBBLE, DAVID ELLEFSON, MALCOLM JOSEPH
WOJTEK PILICHOWSKI, ANDY IRVINE, GUY PRATT, JONAS HELLBORG,
GROG, IGOR SAAVEDRA, PETER HOOK, ANDREW LEVY AND MORE TO BE CONFIRMED...

MARCH 2 & 3 2013, LONDON OLYMPIA

JEFF BERLIN

THE MASTER DEBUTS HIS NEW COLUMN

www.bassguitarmagazine.com

UK £4.35 Issue 88 Show Issue 2013



9 771476 521054 >

Contact Details

Bass Gear
www.bassgear.co.uk
01189 706925

LAURUS QUASAR T900-XRS

Ian Glasper road-tests a true blue Italian godfather of a bass.
Will he end up getting whacked?

Tired of blending in with the backdrop? Fed up of being regarded as a mere extension of the rhythm section? Well, fume no more, my friends, because salvation is at hand, in the (peculiar) shape of the Laurus Quasar T900-XRS. It's not cheap – in fact, its hefty price tag is positively elitist – but its appearance will ensure you never want for the attention of a curious eye ever again. Sporting an extravagant body that you may well come to love as much as your own, it also boasts a headstock that you probably won't. Still, if they're talking about you, they're not talking about anyone else, right? And besides, there's more to the Laurus Quasar than meets the eye...

Build Quality

Hand-crafted in Vicenza, there's more than a whiff of the Renaissance about this desirable instrument, the aesthetics of two different periods circling each other warily. Yes, it looks an oddball, but there's no denying the quality of its construction. What is immediately apparent when wielding this crazy axe is that it's beautifully weighted despite its unusual shape, and that it has been crafted for maximum player comfort. The striking two-tone body itself is deliciously tasteful in natural woods.

The through-body neck boasts a fingerboard made from phenolic resin, which, in case you were wondering, is a heat-hardened plastic made from phenol and formaldehyde. Other benefits cited for this miracle product include less humidity absorption, increased life of string grooves and complete elimination of dead notes. All you really need to know is that it's really compact and hard, it wears well, and most importantly it's easy under the fingers. That's 'easy' as in 'easy like Sunday morning': it's almost therapeutic letting your fingers wander up and down here, but more on that later. Build-wise, though? No complaints.

The neck also incorporates a dual-action truss-rod to allow for micro-adjustment if it needs tweaking, but the review model was set to damn near perfection so was left well alone. The brass head-end nut is also equipped with individual string adjustment that obviously gives tremendous scope for a bespoke set-up if you need to tinker with the action. Beneath the lovely quilted maple top, there are two tone chambers hidden in the body, which reduce the guitar's weight and also possibly its sustain. Laurus claim that they improve the mid and treble ranges and 'enhance sensitivity', which is all well and good, but without an identical non-chambered guitar to compare against, it's a moot point. Tone chambers or not, the guitar feels, and sounds, great.





LAURUS
Quasar
T 900 XRS



Another unusual feature is that you load your strings body-end, where the tuners are also located, and feed them into the headstock. The tuning was pleasingly accurate and stable: the strings are fed over five futuristic stand-alone mini-bridges, one for each string, each with an adjustable brass saddle. It looks simple, sexy and solid. Even the way the strings vanish vein-like into the head-stock is visually compelling and speaks of a dynamic instrument, which makes the complete non-design of the stock shape even more of a mystery.

Sounds and Playability

It may look spiky, but appearances here are deceptive, and when you're wearing it those subtly chamfered edges are lovely and soft. The hand-moulded asymmetrical neck nestles in the palm very comfortably too; it's razor-thin and actually less of a handful than most four-string basses, and that plastic fingerboard is very pliable and most conducive to indulgent noodling sessions.

The instrument is blessed with beautiful acoustics, offering up sweet snappy tones when slapped, a distinctly percussive bite to high-range chord patterns and soloist scales, and a lustrous bottom end when played with fingers. The slapping action is nothing short of glorious, actually, and the neck is nicely accessible whatever range you're operating at, its narrow profile and deep body cutout making every millimetre of every fret readily available. Superb harmonics can be wrung from seemingly anywhere, and every note resonates with a pleasing clarity.

There's plenty of range in the interaction of the controls too, with the three-way Noll pre-amp driven top end (kick it in by pulling the volume control) more than gnarly enough for a metal player, while the mellower mids and smooth lows are perfectly suited to jazz and funk. The pick player questing for that throaty growl will also be pleasantly surprised at how aggressive this guitar can sound, with the low B producing a positively filthy tone when driven hard. Shame the headstock looks so lame and laid back compared to the body, because otherwise this



Technical Specification

PRICE | £3,999
COLOUR | Flamed maple
BODY | Kaya mahogany
NECK | Maple and purpleheart
NECK JOIN | Neck through-body
FINGERBOARD | Phenolic resin
SCALE LENGTH | 34"
FRETS | 24
BRIDGE | Independent brass saddles
PICKUPS | Nordstrand Humbucker
CONTROLS | Bass, mid, treble, active/passive volume and pick-up balance
VARNISHING | Handicraft 'waxed' polyurethane

What We Think

PLUS | Eccentric to the point of debauchery, if you like that kind of thing, but a quality build through and through
MINUS | Although very striking visually, that's not necessarily all in a good way – the headstock is, to be quite frank, vile
OVERALL | An acquired taste, but wonderful to play

BGM Rating

BUILD QUALITY ★★★★★★☆☆
SOUND QUALITY ★★★★★★☆☆
VALUE ★★★★★★☆☆

might have been a hit with more affluent metallers.

The two choices of strap nut location at the bridge end of the instrument are a nice touch: it means you can sling the Laurus higher and more traditionally, or much lower and heroically off-kilter. One looks cooler, but one's easier on the wrist to play from – unless you're Rob Trujillo, of course – and ultimately it's nice to have the choice.

Conclusion

That body grows on you, but the clunky headstock ruins the aesthetic for this player at least, with a decidedly outdated feel to it, while the Laurus logo on the headstock looks like a chocolate coin you'd find in a Christmas stocking. Some bloke's scribbled on the back too... oh wait, that's a signature! But seriously, for a guitar so beautifully constructed and fun to play, it's a shame to see it apparently at odds with itself, a minor design quirk having such a major impact on the overall vibe. Lots of great features, then, and a big personality sound-wise, but can you live with the headstock? The only advantage for most will be the compact length of the guitar, which means that even in its luxuriantly padded gig bag it'll easily fit in even the smallest car boot. At this price, you just won't want to leave it out there overnight. ■