

GENERATION X

EMG JVX Jazz Bass pickups



The JVX captures the look, feel and tone of classic vintage J pickups.

* BY ED FRIEDLAND

SIMPLY PUT, EMG pickups are one of the cornerstones of modern bass tone. In 1976, the company began establishing a sonic signature that parted ways with the crusty tone of vintage pickups. EMG pickups gave the bass hi-fi response, increased output and dead-quiet operation—qualities that cemented EMG's position as a perfect choice for studio work.

Unfortunately, vintage purists found EMG's catalog a little wanting, so the company set out to remedy that with its JV "Jazz Vintage" set, which looked and sounded more like traditional pickups. Now come the new JVX pickups, which take the JV a step further with increased headroom, greater sensitivity and a hairier tone. These new pickups may be the ultimate bridge between modern clarity and vintage grit.

FEATURES

PASSIVE PICKUPS ATTAIN their gain level from the number of wire wraps around the bobbin: the more wraps, the louder the output, but at a cost to high frequency response. Active

SPECS

LIST PRICE: \$229.99
MANUFACTURER:
EMG, emginc.com



THE JVX PICKUPS ARE THE ULTIMATE BRIDGE BETWEEN MODERN CLARITY AND VINTAGE GRIT.

EMGs use significantly fewer wraps, which creates an open, uncolored tone with lower volume. The signal is then bumped up by an internal preamp built into the pickup itself—the result of which sounds quite different from an active-gain/EQ circuit with passive pickups.

The JVX's stacked coils eliminate single-coil hum when using the pickups individually as well as the honky upper-midrange presence that some passive stacks accentuate. Non-vintage series EMGs use ceramic bar magnets, which produce an even attack, exert less magnetic pull on the string and contribute greatly to EMG's pure tone, but the classic Fender-style arrangement of two Alnico V pole pieces—one on each side of the string—gives the JVX a more percussive attack. It also gives the pickup the right look for traditional-minded players.

The main difference between the JV and JVX system is the new X preamp—it's not quite as hot as the older model, but has increased headroom, which produces a more organic and open tone, according to EMG. The JVX pickups are designed with EMG's easy-to-install, solderless modular system. All connections

clip together, making it simple to add on other refinements like their Expander circuit, active EQs or different EMG pickup models.

PERFORMANCE

INSTALLING THE EMGS is extremely simple. The directions are clearly written, and the connectors fit together flawlessly. The included pots have a shallow profile to make room for the guts and nine-volt battery in the cramped control cavity. On my first attempt, I could just barely get the control plate back on, but by removing the lock washers between the pot shaft and underside of the plate, I was able to comfortably fit everything inside the cavity. EMG plans to offer the entrails of the JVX system pre-mounted on a standard Jazz bass control panel by the time this review goes to press.

Once installed, my Jazz experienced a tonal paradigm shift. The dark, soft lows were replaced with a tighter, more focused bottom. The mids became punchy and immediate, and the highs lay in wait to sparkle at the slightest hint of a string pop. They gave my bass a toothy growl that responded well to right-hand dynamics. Anyone with the mistaken impression that EMGs are "sterile" will eat their words after a run with the JVXs. Being able to use single-pickup operation without the hum is sweet, and the total elimination of ground noise is a huge bonus.

As battery life fades, a distorted attack will warn you it's time to change. While that's not exactly ideal for a gigging player, the JVX offers approximately 1,000 hours of battery life, so this shouldn't be a big issue, though changing the battery will require you to remove the tightly packed electronics.

THE BOTTOM LINE

THE EMG JVX SYSTEM is a great hybrid for those who want extended range performance without losing the grime and funk of passive pickups. **SC**

+PRO	-CON
GREAT FULL-RANGE TONE WITH VINTAGE GROWL • QUIET OPERATION	NONE