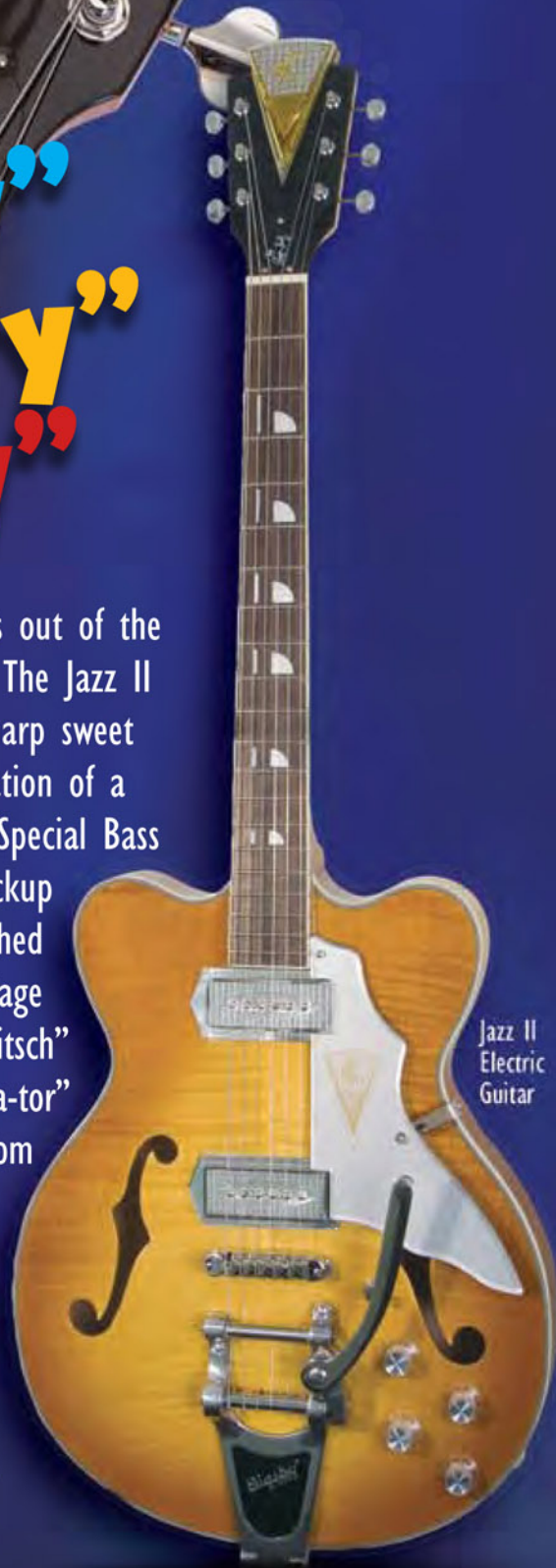
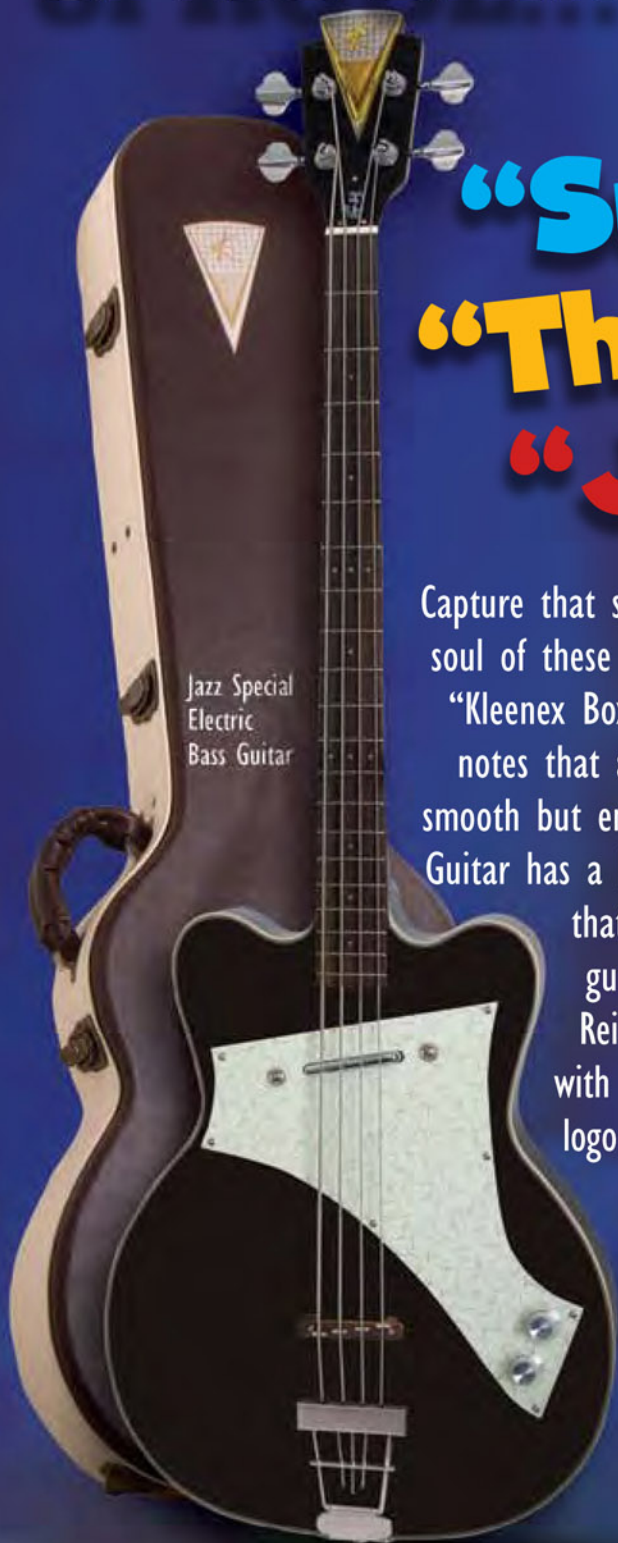


# Kay

## the essence of KOOL...

**“Sultry”**  
**“Throaty”**  
**“Jazzy”**

Capture that smoky tone that seeps out of the soul of these Kay Vintage Reissues. The Jazz II “Kleenex Box” pickups produce sharp sweet notes that are the right combination of a smooth but enticing bite. The Jazz Special Bass Guitar has a hand-wound Blade pickup that gives that distinguished gutsy punch. All Kay Vintage Reissues scream “Klassy Kitsch” with a distinctive “Kel-von-a-tor” logo that separates Kay from it’s imitators. The Kay Jazz Vintage Reissues whisper “Kool Sexy Jazz seducing it’s way into Today’s Hot Rock”.





# Kay KOOL KLASSIC KOLLECTION

## K775V JAZZ II ELECTRIC GUITAR

On the cutting edge of electric guitar design and among the most famous, revered and collected of the Kay electric guitars. The Jazz II is an extremely versatile instrument for stage and studio, with the ability to deliver a range of sounds from warm jazz to shredding heavy metal.

Among the most notable of artists in the early '60s, was 17-year old Eric Clapton who used the Kay Jazz II with his first band "The Roosters". Striking beauty, tone and playability make this guitar an overall winner in any style of music and provides a vintage-chic that will continue to wow the crowd.

**Colors:** Ice Tea Sunburst, Blonde and Black

**Body:** Double cutaway, thinline hollow body, multi-ply flame maple arched top and back, maple sides

**Purfling:** Multi-ply black and white celluloid binding

**Neck:** Set one-piece straight-grained Canadian Maple with single-ply binding, 20 medium nickel-silver frets and 6 sharkfin pearloid inlays.

**Fingerboard:** 26" scale bound rosewood fingerboard with 12" radius

**Tuning Machines:** Grover, 3 on a side Rotomatics

**Bridge & Tailpiece:** Genuine Bigsby Vibrato with fixed roller bridge

**Electronics:** Two "Kleenex Box", Gold K powerful single coil with adjustable pole pieces, 4 skirted individual tone and volume control knobs, 3-way toggle selector, side mounted output jack

**Pickguards:** Silver backed Lucite with Kay Logo

**Top Nut:** 1-11/16" Bone

**Headstock:** Original gold "K" chevron displaying 3-D raised Kel-von-a-tor style emblem. Truss rod cover has Roger Fritz Signature

**Finish Coat:** High-gloss polyester protective polymer

**Case:** Case: Vintage archtop wood hardshell case included

Two Series: USA custom made by Roger Fritz "Recording Series" and the Working Musician's "Street Series"

## K5970V JAZZ SPECIAL ELECTRIC BASS GUITAR

Featured on the cover of Paul McCartney's 45rpm single "Jet" and again in the video "Ebony and Ivory" and was the bass used by the band, The Surfaris, in the '60s to record the hit song, "Wipeout."

Known for its subsonic low end and slim neck as well as its woody tone, the hollow body construction and exclusive bracing system make this bass ideal for live and studio use. The luncheonette countertop pick guard combined with the Kel-von-a-tor headstock gives the Jazz Special Bass its avant-garde appeal.

**Colors:** Blonde and Black

**Body:** Double cutaway, tone chambered, hollow body acoustic type, with unique Kay feedback-resistant bracing, parabolic arched maple back, maple sides and 3-ply curly maple top

**Purfling:** Multi-ply black and white celluloid binding

**Neck:** Set one-piece Canadian Maple straight-grained neck, 20 jumbo nickel-silver frets and small abalone dot fret position marker inlays.

**Fingerboard:** 31" scale rosewood fingerboard with 12" radius

**Tuning Machines:** Wilkinson extra light, 2 per side, medium cloverleaf button

**Bridge & Tailpiece:** Stud mounted rosewood bridge with adjustment thumbwheels, chrome trapeze tailpiece

**Electronics:** One chrome single coil Thin Twin blade pickup, individual volume and tone controls, skirted knobs and side mounted output jack

**Pickguard:** Luncheonette counter off-white with gold fiber strands

**Top Nut:** 1-1/2" Bone

**Headstock:** Original gold "K" chevron displaying the 3-D raised Kel-von-a-tor style emblem. Truss rod cover has Roger Fritz Signature

**Finish Coat:** High-gloss polyester protective polymer

**Case:** Vintage archtop wood hardshell case included

Two Series: USA custom made by Roger Fritz "Recording Series" and the Working Musician's "Street Series"

For more information: [info@KayVintageReissue.com](mailto:info@KayVintageReissue.com), [www.KayVintageReissue.com](http://www.KayVintageReissue.com),  
The Kay Guitar Company • PO Box 8798 • Newport Beach, CA 92658 USA Fax: 949-752-0056



## GEAR

## Bench Test

Guitar Player Magazine  
Holiday Issue 2008

## Kay Thin Twin

TESTED BY MICHAEL ROSS

WITH THE COST OF COLLECTABLE FENDERS AND Gibsons entering the stratosphere, lovers of old guitars have been setting their sights on the next tier of vintage American instruments

with predictable results. Silvertones, Harmonys, and Kays that could be had for as little as \$300 a mere half-dozen years ago are now entering the four-figure range. These funky finds have also seen a stirring of interest among those more into playing than accumulating. You may have spied Marc Ribot ripping it up with Robert Plant and Allison Krauss or T-Bone Burnett on a small-bodied Harmony Stratotone, while Burnett himself holds down the rhythm on a vintage Kay Thin Twin. One of the coolest-looking guitars ever made, the Thin Twin's flame maple top, tiger-striped pickguard, checkerboard binding, and thin metal-covered pickups create a striking appearance that's unlike any other hollowbody electric. While the original—which is sometimes referred to as the Jimmy Reed or Howlin' Wolf model—is still affordable at under two grand, it's not an easily found specimen.

The increased interest in this area of axe archeology has led the Kay company to reissue some of its '50s and '60's models, starting with the Thin Twin and the Kay Electronic Pro Bass. The company enlisted the help of Roger Fritz of Fritz Brothers Guitars in Northern California, who had already been making a version of the Pro Bass under his own name. Parts and molds for the original Thin Twins were no longer available, so elements such as

SPECS | Kay Guitar Company, Web Site: [www.kayvintagereissue.com](http://www.kayvintagereissue.com)

MODEL	Thin Twin
PRICE	Revised 1/2016 Street Series- List: \$1025 - \$1125 Pro User: \$875 - \$950 Recording Series- List \$2995
NUT WIDTH	1 11/16"
NECK	Set one-piece straight-grained Canadian maple with single-ply binding
FRETBOARD	26"-scale rosewood with 12" radius
FRETS	20 medium nickel-silver
BODY	Laminated arched maple back, maple sides, 3-ply curly maple top with checkerboard binding
PICKUPS	Two chrome Thin Twin single-coils
CONTROLS	Dual Volume and Tone, 3-way pickup selector
BRIDGE	Tune-o-matic style
TUNERS	Vintage-style, three-on-a-side
FACTORY STRINGS	D'Addario, .010-.046
WEIGHT	7.9 lbs
KUDOS	Cool for days. Classic blues tones emanating from powerful pickups. Plays beautifully.
CONCERNS	Limited utility.



# Kay

## Thin Twin Vintage Reissue

K161VB- Blonde  
K161VCS- Sunburst  
K161VBK- Black

Case Included



### GEAR Kay

the pickguard, knobs, tailpiece, and base-ball-bat-style toggle-switch covers had to be manufactured from scratch using the originals as templates. The resulting instrument maintains all the essentials that made the vintage version so unique without attempting to be an exact reproduction. Still in place is the multi-ply checkerboard binding, the flame-maple flat top, and tiger-striped tortoise pickguard. (The model is also available in cherry-red sunburst or black with a cream pickguard.) At first glance, the Thin Twin pickup appears to be an anorexic version of a Danelectro lipstick, however, as with the Kay original, it is an iceberg. More than three quarters of its bulk lies below the skinny metal blade showing on the surface. The bottom part is mounted into a tone-chambered body, and it's braced to resist feedback.

The few changes evident on the reissue would have to count as improvements. The original wood bridge has been replaced with a metal bridge fitted with adjustable saddles

and height-adjustment thumbwheels. The vintage model's painted headstock, while quite decorative in its own right, has given way to a super-cool gold chevron displaying the 3-D raised "Kelvinator" style emblem—a design originally found only on upscale Kay models such as the Barney Kessel.

The workmanship on this Chinese-made version (an American handmade model is available at a considerably higher price) is superb, save for slightly sticky nut slots. The smoothly finished neck sports a comfortable shape reminiscent of a Les Paul's, and the frets are well finished, facilitating anything from blues bending to slipping and sliding into swing riffs.

Plugging in the Thin Twin is pure pleasure, albeit of a selective sort. The tones are all pre-1965, with no concession to typical hard rock and metal tones—no matter how much gain you add. But if you are looking for the fat, dark sound of Jimmy Reed/Howlin' Wolf guitarist Pat Hare, or any recent

record produced by T-Bone Burnett, look no further. The Thin Twin's neck pickup harnesses all those sub-surface windings to dominate the preamp section of your amplifier, and their particular character encourages breakup by accentuating the amp's bottom end. Through an Orange Tiny Terror, with the gain set relatively low, I got the kind of vintage dirt that a tune like "Mystery Train" calls for, but without descending into ambiguous murk. Adding the bridge pickup provided further clarity without losing that shadowy mojo. The bridge pickup by itself served up plenty of cut without approaching anything resembling twangy or bright.



# Bass Player Magazine

## September 2008

### KAY PRO BASS

BY BRIAN FOX

**YOU HEAR IT A LOT FROM PROFESSIONAL** and amateur doublers: "I've got an old Kay," they fondly say, speaking of the venerable plywood uprights the Chicago company began producing in 1937. Scan eBay and you might see other Kay gems that have survived from the '50s and '60s—even rare specimens like the 1952 K162, the first electric bass on the market after the Fender Precision Bass. The shabby-chic aesthetic of vintage Kay bass guitars' low-tech construction and thumpy tone has attracted a community of enthusiasts eager to tap the mojo in those vibe-y time capsules. Kay recently teamed with luthier Roger Fritz (one of said enthusiasts) to carefully recreate one of the coolest instruments from Kay's heyday, the K162 Pro Bass. Fritz Brothers Guitars ([fritzbrothersguitars.com](http://fritzbrothersguitars.com)) builds a custom replica of the K162 for around \$3,600, but Fritz helped design Kay's KV162 Pro Bass (\$999 list) for manufacture in China. Starting in September, Kay will sell the Pro Bass through Fritz Brothers, Musician's Friend, and select dealers.

There's nothing demure about the KV162's looks—its acrylic headstock badge and tiger-stripe mounting panels drew a lot of attention onstage. Its vibe was great on a roots-rock gig, but it was a little ostentatious for some other settings. With a profile like that of an acoustic guitar, the hollow body had rather a lot of mass, which helped keep the neck from diving when I played it standing

up. The set neck had a round, bat-like feel, but its narrow width—with string spacing to match—kept it from feeling clunky.

Unlike vintage Kays, the Pro Bass possesses both a trussrod and an adjustable saddle. On arrival, the Kay's action felt a little low, but a quick saddle adjustment raised the strings to my liking. Noting my low notes sounded a little anemic, I tilted the pickup to move it closer to the *E* string. Problem solved! The pickup's placement seemed well suited for pumping out old-school thump, reproducing the Pro Bass's meaty bottom with none of the honk of bridge-position pickups. The Kay sported solid construction, but its squeaky, creaky tuners sounded like fingernails on a chalkboard and made tuning a challenge.

The heavy-duty switch perched beside the Kay's cool volume and tone "cupcake" knobs

#### TECH SPECS

**Scale length** 31 $\frac{1}{4}$ "  
**Weight** 7.5 lbs  
**Top** Three-ply maple laminate  
**Body** Maple  
**Neck** Maple  
**Fingerboard** Rosewood  
**Nut** Bone  
**String spacing** 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ " at the nut,  
 2 $\frac{1}{16}$ " at 20th fret  
**Tone controls** Volume, tone, tone switch  
**Hardware** Wilkinson tuners  
**Hardshell case** Included  
**Finishes** Honey sunburst, blonde, black  
**Made in** China  
**Warranty** Limited lifetime





With no center block, the Pro Bass is hollow except for two narrow support blocks that run lengthwise on either side of the single-coil blade pickup.



is nifty—flipping it bypasses the tone-control pot and sends the pickup through the onboard capacitor, cutting highs and giving the Pro Bass a deep, dark voice akin to an upright bass. On one stage, the single-coil pickup was excessively noisy, but flipping the switch made a quick fix, removing all highs without making the bass sound muddy or muffled.

The Kay's short scale gave the stock flatwound strings a delightfully elastic finger feel; the bass felt best suited for gentle pick work and a light fingerstyle touch, and it sounded killer when palm-muted and thumb plucked. The Pro Bass was a hoot to play onstage—more than with solidbody basses, I could really sense the woof of air moving around me. Knowing that hollowbody basses are prone to feedback, I was especially mindful of my stage volume. Controlling dynamics with my right hand, I had a blast exploring that feedback threshold—there's a certain exhilaration playing a bass on the verge of sonic revolt.

While this newbie may not have the karmic accrual that comes from living the long, hard life of a vintage Kay, its modern construction makes it a durable, trustworthy piece, and it has a tone that sounds as old as the hills. The unique retro style and thumpy tone of the Kay Pro Bass makes \$999 seem like a reasonable asking price. It's a lot of dough to drop on a niche bass, but when it looks and sounds this cool, price doesn't really matter, right? **BP**

Vintage Reissue

## Pro Electric Bass Guitar

K162VB- Blonde  
K162VHS- Sunburst  
K162VBK- Black

Case Included



### KAY KV162 PRO BASS

List \$999 Street Price \$799

Pros Thumpy upright-like tone, serious stage mojo

Cons None

Bottom Line A quality reissue of a cool historic bass.

### CONTACT

[www.kayvintagereissue.com](http://www.kayvintagereissue.com)