

Switch position 5 (up) is the neck pickup; position 4 is neck + bridge out-of-phase; position 3 is neck + bridge normal; position 2 is bridge + middle; and position 1 is bridge pickup. Nudging the switch in between positions 2 and 3 activates all three pickups, but there doesn't appear to be a way to get the middle pickup by itself. Hardly a concern, however, because all of this gives the guitar a boatload of sonic range (including a Peter Green-type sound from position 4), and between the two Volumes, master Tone, and Mojo control, there are virtually endless ways to shape the sounds. The Mojo pot really is the secret weapon here, as it can make a fat humbucker sound progressively more like a single-coil, and without weakening the sound like splitting the coils tends to do. This passive circuit brings a whole new range of textures to any of the other settings as well, providing all kinds of ways to make the La Azteca sound much more expansive than a standard humbucker axe. You can, for instance, cop a nice impersonation of a Stratocaster's neck pickup—and also get those chiming tonalities from positions 2 and 4—or sweep the bridge 'bucker from big and meaty to skinnier and more Tele-like without losing any of the ballsiness that a good T pickup brings to overdriven tones. There's a lot to explore here, and I found myself spending inordinate amounts of time trying out different Mojo settings on all the pickup combinations and really digging the sounds of this illuminating guitar.

SUPER T SERIES PISTOLERO

Our "Hippy" version of the Pistolero trades the standard six-gun motifs on its screen-etched metal plates for a more "flower child" presentation, and the overall effect is every bit an eye-catching testament to Teye's artistry. The body and neck are mahogany on this model, and while there's no Shipwreck coloration to evoke things washed up on a beach, the au naturel graining of the select woods is very sweet looking. An engraved headstock plate continues the "peace and love" theme and the tuners are stock Grover Imperials. Even the metal pickup bezels feature peace sign etchings.

The Pistolero's neck carve is similar to La Azteca's, and it wears the same hand-rubbed oil finish. With a bound ebony fretboard carrying 24 finely finished frets, it adds up to a beautiful playing guitar that sounds solidly in tune and has an easy feel with medium-low action that facilitates aggressive string bending.

The pickup selections for the Pistolero are as follows: Switch position 5 (up) is the neck pickup; position 4 is neck + bridge out-of-phase; position 3 is neck + bridge normal; position 2 is bridge pickup + tapped neck pickup; and position 1 is bridge only. The control configuration of dual Volumes and a master Tone provide a lot of options for rhythm and lead playing, and the Mood control brings a wealth of additional sonic gymnastics to the party. It may be a simplified version of the Mojo control found on the La Azteca (and you can hear some differences between them), but nevertheless, the Pistolero antes up a vast range of standard humbucker tones along with very enticing "new" sounds as you roll single-coil textures into the

phalanx of pickup combinations. The Pistolero easily doubles as a Les Paul-sounding guitar for blues and rock, but its Mood knob adds sonic options that allow for tones ranging from SRV-style neck pickup excursions to ones reminiscent of Jimmy Page's guitar scapes—and all without having to fish around for mini-toggle switches. Bottom line: The Pistolero has all the exotic appeal of Tony Zemaitis' dazzling 6-string creations of the '60s/'70s, and yet it is entirely its own thing in terms of what it can do in live performance and studio situations. Priced less than half what the La Azteca runs, this super-cool guitar certainly delivers a ton of bang for the buck and earns an Editors' Pick Award. ■

TEYE ON TEYE'S 10TH ANNIVERSARY

AS BOTH AN EXTREMELY TALENTED guitarist and a forward-thinking builder, Teye has brought a lot to the boutique guitar scene over the last ten years. His beautiful designs and innovative electronics make the guitars that he and his team build very interesting options for players who love classic humbucker and single-coil axes, but also want instruments with greater flexibility than what is available from guitars that were invented in the 1950s. We recently had a chance to speak with Teye and pepper him with a few questions ...

What do you feel have been your most important achievements in guitar design over the last ten years?

I would say the following: An aesthetic that breaks new ground in the world of the electric guitar. Also a full-spectrum broadband bridge and tailpiece design, and electronics that work with the guitar's construction to allow for maximum versatility via the use of the onboard passive circuit.

Your Mood and Mojo controls are very effective. How do they operate and what is the difference between them?

The concept behind Mood and Mojo is to be able to 'switch guitars' in the middle of a solo, right there on stage. Without wanting to divulge any secrets, they both operate via a clever reassigning of available coils and weird filtering to deepen

the effect. The Mood circuit was my first attempt, and it proved really useful. Mojo is a logical next step. It's a much more complex circuit that is sweeter and much deeper sounding than the Mood. In a nutshell, they both achieve a convincing blend between traditional humbucker and single-coil tones, without the skinny sounds of coil-taps and the like. And all the Mood/Mojo circuitry is 100 percent analog and 100 percent passive—no batteries or pre-amps or digital modeling!

Will amplifiers and/or pedals ever become part of your product line?

Yes. Together with an old friend of mine, I am working on an amplifier that will have four of my inventions to solve the main problems that I have with guitar amps today. I've also got a great idea for an overdrive pedal as soon as I have time to build it.

Do you have any plans to make your own pickups?

None whatsoever. Jason Lollar makes 'em exactly how I want them, and, personally, although I've made a few, the winding of pickups has never excited me.

Are you still playing a lot, and is that important to the R&D of new models?

Yes, and yes. There's nothing like a live concert situation to truly judge the new ideas. I try to play as broad a spectrum of music as I can, too—from full blast rock gigs in the park to duos with a singer at weddings. —AT

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The image displays a variety of guitar and bass amplifiers. In the background, there are several large Marshall stacks. In the foreground, a Fender amp is visible. A red electric guitar is leaning against one of the Marshall stacks. In the lower foreground, a Universal Audio Apollo Twin desktop recording interface is prominently displayed. The interface has a large volume knob and several buttons. The background is dark and textured, suggesting a stage or studio setting.

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