



Overwater

Aspiration Deluxe

So just how will these more affordable instruments measure up to Overwater's UK-built basses?

The Aspiration Deluxe basses we have here, a 4- and a 5-string, represent the mid-range models in the new series. Retailing at £649 and £699 respectively, for bass players who would revel at the chance of owning a custom UK-made Overwater bass but don't have the two or three thousand pounds to spare, they offer a very real chance of experiencing the same kind of feel of, say, an Overwater Progress III, Perception or Evolution bass. There's also a case for not having to wait several months for your bespoke bass to be built. But how will these Far Eastern models compare to the real deal?

Body and Neck

Both models are in keeping with the styling of Overwater's Progress basses, with an extended upper horn gently curving over the bass strings, a smaller horn on the treble side, and smooth ribcage and forearm contours. The body is white ash with a flame maple top, a wood combination

that Chris has specifically chosen for its sonic qualities: 'Obviously it's got to work with what we could afford because we're working to a budget, but nevertheless I was pretty insistent about the materials we used. White ash, which is the same kind of ash you have growing around here, not swamp ash, just sounds good. If you use lightweight wood the basses tend to sound a bit flat without the punch or the clarity, and I find on smaller bodies swamp ash doesn't always give a great bottom end. It's great on a Jazz Bass, but on a smaller instrument you have certain tonal problems.' The bolt-on neck is three-piece maple with an Indian rosewood fingerboard and a 34-inch scale for the 4-string, and a 35-inch scale for the 5-, a constant spec point throughout the Aspiration range. Six recessed bolts secure the join with a section of top wood inlaid between the end of the fingerboard and the neck pickup to mask the neck tenon. Both necks have a thin and straight profile, coupled with a low set-up and

well-balanced string tension, particularly on the 5-string, that allows you to be more dynamic in your approach to navigating the fingerboard.

Hardware

Throughout the project Chris has maintained his stance of wanting to design each bass from the bottom up rather than merely picking parts out of a catalogue and bolting them all together. 'We specifically designed the bridge and at the moment

they're machined brass, and they will be until the production numbers get up, but we are looking at casting the bridges and essentially that's what it will be, die-cast. It's a top-loading bridge just like we use in our UK Overwater basses, which gives you a better string break angle and a bit more mass.'

The machine heads are generic Gotoh tuners, and the pickups, like the bridge, are in essence exactly the same specification as those used on the company's UK Overwater basses. 'Traditionally we've always cast the pickup covers,' Chris continues, 'but this project has given us the opportunity to invest in tooling and mould tools for the pickup covers, and because it's the same design as the pickups we use in the UK, now we can mould the covers for all our basses. So in that instance there is a bit of crossover



The headstock is fitted with a set of Gotoh tuners



TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION

OVERWATER ASPIRATION DELUXE PRICE: £649 - 4-STRING £699 - 5-STRING

Made in: Korea
Body: White ash
Neck: 3-piece maple
Fingerboard: Indian rosewood
Pickups: 2 x Overwater
Electronics: Active 3-band EQ
Controls: Volume, pickup pan, 3-band EQ
Neck join: Bolt-on (6-bolt attachment)
Scale length: 4-string: 863 mm (34 inches), 5-string: 889 mm (35 inches)
Frets: 24

CONTACT DETAILS

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WHAT WE THINK

Plus: A pair of very playable basses with tones to match
Minus: None at this price
Overall: All the hallmarks of a UK-built Overwater at a fraction of the cost

BGM RATING OUT OF FIVE

BGM RATING ★★★★★

between the Aspiration Series and our UK-made basses.' There are several different electronics specifications going into the different Aspiration models. The Deluxe basses we have here come fitted with Overwater's full-spec three-band EQ, which again is pretty much exactly the same as what goes into Overwater basses being made in the UK.

Sounds

Plugging in these basses we were immediately impressed with their punchy tone, which retains plenty of clarity and response throughout. The three-band EQ is particularly responsive and we found leaving the controls set flat often produced the best results, though initially you may want to back off the treble a little to compensate for the fresh strings. The overall

The overall playability is hard to fault, and venturing up the fretboard reveals a real clarity in each note that makes high-register chords really sing. The feel and sounds on offer all point towards the company's existing UK models.

playability is hard to fault, and venturing up the fretboard reveals a real clarity in each note that makes high-register chords really sing. The longer scale length of the 5-string requires a bit more reach from your fretting hand, but we were really impressed with the balance of the low B string. While we would certainly verge on the 'less is more' approach when dealing with the EQ, depending on your backline and the nature of the gig you can easily just plug in and play with either of these basses. Yet there's a complexity to the tone that suggests it will continue to open up and improve as it's played, which can only be a good thing.

Conclusion

The Aspiration Series succeeds in combining an original and refined design with tremendous playability and some dynamic bass tones to match, all at a budget-friendly price. While they don't quite measure up to a bespoke handmade Overwater bass, the feel and sounds on offer all point towards the company's existing UK models. Still, if you don't have the funds to place an order with the UK custom shop, or you already own a high-end bass but maybe want a 5-string or a fretless, or a spare to take on the road, there is a huge amount of choice within the Aspiration range, and you won't be disappointed.