

Testbericht Marleaux Consat Custom Fünfsaiter

Review from "[Bass Player](#)" - Issue 11/1999 U.S.

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Constructions

Marleaux basses are the creation of a two-person lutherie team located in Germany. Highquality, handmade instruments are the goal, and the Consat Custom 5 Bolt-On shows beautiful attention to detail and a fine selection of tone woods. Marleaux loaded our tester Consat with five woods, including German flame maple for the body, African wenge for accent layers between the movingui-frise bookmatched top and headstock plate, bird's-eye maple for the neck, and walnut for the neck stringers. Marleaux tops off these tantalizing timbers with a two-part polyurethane finish that feels warm and smooth to the touch. The two-octave neck has a deep-inset joint for added stability and better tone. Marleaux makes sure the neck stays put with a six-bolt neck joint that's gap free and super tight. Overall, the Consat's feel reflects the makers' high level of skill.

Electronics

You shouldn't expect stock electronics on an over-threegrand instrument. The Consat isn't loaded with the typical double single-coil passive arrangement. Instead it features Marleaux's custom programmable EQ, which allows you pick from a menu of EQ frequencies and store them in the active preamp. Marleaux also offers a nonassignable EQ system with an active/passive switch.) Here's how it works: Mission control is the 3-way switch, which toggles between program mode, store mode, and selected frequency mode. With the switch in the middle position, frequencies can be selected by turning the EQ controls to desired EQ points. The bass control selects 100Hz, 160Hz, or 250Hz; the midrange 400Hz, 700Hz, or 1.2kHz; and the treble 2.5kHz, 4kHz, or 6.5kHz. (Leaving the knobs in the center detent position selects 160Hz, 700Hz, or 4kHz.) Once you've dialed in the frequencies, you place the 3-way switch in the "Up" or third position and hold it two seconds to store the frequency centers. Move the switch to the "Down" or first position and the EQ points can then be cut or boosted by 14dB. It takes awhile to become comfortable with the system, but once you do, you'll find a load o' tones.

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Playability

Our Consat's setup was phenomenal: low and fast with nary a fret buzz. In fact, we couldn't find a single high fret anywhere on the ebony fingerboard. Even the B string was clear and tight. Think you can't play fast on a 5? Try a Marleaux. The Consat feels great on your lap or with a strap. The well-sculpted tummy cut lets the bass melt into your mid section. (Sounds messy, but it's not.) And the minimal neck heel lets you "Stanley" for days in the upper register.

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Sound

The Marleaux shows that with the right selection of woods, hardware, and strings, it's possible to make an excellent sounding 34"-scale 5-string. The B string is one of the tightest ones we've encountered with no "babying" required. Unlike on many 5's, the Consat's B is part of the instrument, not an add-on with a slightly different tone and feel. Low-end addicts will spend most of their time in the first position where their need for super bass will be satisfied. We found dozens of different sounds lurking in the preamp. The majority were great, some not so great. That's the downside to having that much flexibility, though – there will always be a few weird combinations. The Consat has a strong voice loaded with punch that resonates down to low B. It can do the reggae rumble or the Jaco staccato with ease. Or it can offer good, solid bass tone with a big foundation.

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Value

A "value" to one is a second mortgage to some. However, a large portion of the Marleaux Consat Custom's price tag pays for loving craftsmanship combined with electronics that will serve you onstage or in the studio. (Or your corner office with a view.) If production basses don't float your boat, hunt down a Marleaux and see what handmade is all about.

Technical Data

Made in: Germany

Warranty: One year limited

Weight: 9 lbs, 7 oz

Color: Natural

Options: 2-band-EQ

35" or 36"-scale; high-gloss finish

neck-through-body version;

fretless (no charge)