

Testbericht Marleaux Consat Custom Fünfsaiter

Review from "[Guitarist](#)" - U.K. // Issue 6/2000

[Zur Marleaux Consat Custom Produktseite](#)

Gimmie a low five!

Marleaux Consat Stunning looks and build seem to add up to a fivestringer to die for. But does this handsome German come up with die Güter?

The german certainly know a thing or two when it comes to high class bass building. Their attention to detail is nothing short of meticulous and Marleaux instruments are highly considered, even within this climate of excellence. In fact, judging from this example, they seem to be in a class of their own. Tasteful combinations of choice woods are used throughout their extensive range of four-, five- and sixstring models and all are available as fretted or fretless instruments, with either neck-through or bolt-on configuration. They also have a variety of pickups available so selecting just one for evaluation was not an easy task.

But we finally settled on this rather tasty Consat Custom five-string. The choice of materials may be somewhat exotic but the design of the Custom Five is actually very typical of the Marleaux range as a whole. It features a distinctive and beautifully curved body with a gentle indentation at the tail and splayed horns that look something like in organic version of Rickenbacker's "Cresting Wave" design. Good choice. The body core is made of movingui-frise with a flamed maple top, finished in a striking orange satin. Between these two layers is a thin wenge binder that not only adds strength, but also gives a 'coach line' effect at the curved edge. This is one instrument that you just can't resist touching. The unadorned ebony fingerboard is equipped with a full two octave compliment of frets with a zero fret at the nut offering optimum string height. Small brass edge dots provide the only positional information.

As five-string basses go, this has one of the smallest headstocks around, and that's not only great for looks, it also helps in producing a well balanced instrument. To match the body facings, the headstock is reinforced with orange flame maple over wenge and it's equipped with slotted-post Gotoh tuners in cool black. Particularly well designed is the combination bridge and tailpiece assembly. Ultra low in profile and meticulously crafted it offers comfort as well as practicality and is eminently easy on the eye. The hardened saddles are adjustable for string height and width and the saddle assembly slides within a deep slot for accurate intonation. Everything locks into place with tiny grub screws that are barely visible. The string ends bed neatly below the surface and although these anchor slots look a little on the tight side, they will accommodate all of the top makes of string comfortably.

Marleaux offer a choice of pickups for their basses but this particular model is fitted with a pair of soapbar-styled Bartolinis with supporting circuitry. The electronics are not quite as they seem, for although the four rotary controls offered are indeed for volume, pickup blend and a couple for tone, the switch is not merely for the usual active or passive option. Yes, it does that too but a spring-loaded third position allows the treble control to be 'programmed'. By effectively resetting the

frequency range, a much greater tonal potential is available and individually tailored to your own preferences.

[Zum Seitenanfang / Top](#)

In use

There's something about this bass that just oozes with that 'play me' factor And when you do it certainly lives up to your expectations. It fits snugly into the body with all the curves and contours proving be way beyond the aesthetic. Balance is excellent, due largely to those handsome cutaways which also allow great access to the uppermost frets. The neck has a very natural feel about it and string tension is pretty even across all five strings. The string response is also well balanced and it's easy to get the low B to growl in a delightfully menacing manner - always a good sign. There's a definite 'modern' edge to the overall sound which is sympathetic to this contemporary styling, but it's more of a hint than a dominating factor. When it comes to depth of tone there's plenty of warmth available and it's all very robust in nature making the note definition good and the delivery punchy.

As with all active/passive circuits there are two definitive slants to the available sounds, but the programmable tone facility opens up a third dimension. It's a bit weird to get to grips with at first and it almost gets you wishing that they hadn't bothered, but like all innovations, once you net the hang of how to use it effectively, things start to make sense and subsequently prove to be an asset. Marleaux are obviously catering to the 'more options the better' customer and certainly in this particular instance all contributions seem to be valid. The Custom Five will undoubtedly catch the imagination of the flamboyant style of player, but tonally there's a lot here to suit the heavier bottom ender as well. That makes this model a very versatile performer indeed.

[Zum Seitenanfang / Top](#)

Verdict

Our first encounter with a Marleaux bass has been a most pleasant experience. Their expertise in combining up-to-date technology with playability is undeniable, and with a presentation as outstanding as this they should soon become well known and highly soughtafter over here. Apparently the Consat Straight Four and fivestring models are the company's top sellers, being less embellished and consequently keener on price, but this Custom Five is just so nice to play that I suspect many potential buyers will be persuaded to part with the extra dosh for this more luxurious version. Marleaux's bass range is becoming wider all the time, including a new super-J fivestring, so as far as UK players are concerned; this is going to open up a whole new world that we should all get ready to explore Sounds like fun for us all. We'll be keeping you up to date with new models as they make their way over here from Germany. A case of Voorsprung durch technik? You betcha!

Build Quality: 5 of 5 Points

Playability: 4 of 5 Points

Sound: 5 of 5 Points

Value for money: 4 1/2 of 5 Points

Verdict: 4 1/2 Points

We liked:

A beautiful tactile instrument which makes it really playable.

We didn't like:

The fact that you only get a gig bag for your money.

[Zum Seitenanfang / Top](#)

Technical Data

Origin: German

Body: Two-piece movingui-frise core, flamed maple top, with wenge binder

Neck: 3 piece figured maple, walnut stringers

Fingerboard: Ebony

Nut: Ebony

Hardware: Black

Scale length: 34" (864 mm)

Nut width: 1.77" (45 mm)

Width at the top fret: 3" (77,5 mm)

String spacing at bridge: 20 mm centres (average)

Overall length: 44.75" (1137 mm)

Frets: 24 plus zero fret

Pickups: 2 Bartolinihumbucking soap bars

Controls: Vol, Blend, Bass & Treble with programmable EQ

Finish: Orange satin

Weight: 7.7lb (3,5 kg)

Case: "Real Bag" gig bag, Hard case £ 75

Options: 3 EQ version add £ 45, Neck.trough, fretless various finishes.