



✓ VG APPROVED GEAR

PRODUCTION-LINE CUSTOM

The John Page Custom AJ

After 20-plus years with Fender, where he co-founded and helped guide the renowned Custom Shop, John Page struck out on his own to start John Page Custom. One of the guru's freshest offerings is the production version of the Classic AJ.

Based on Page's first post-Fender creation and named after his son Adam John, the AJ is crafted in Japan and employs Page's "uniquely familiar" elements including a medium C-shape/25.5"-scale bolt-on maple neck with a 12" radius maple or rosewood fretboard, offset dot inlays, 13" lower bout, single-cutaway alder body, Gotoh vintage-style staggered tuners, "box" bridge with three compensated solid brass saddles, black Bakelite pickguard, and chromed nickel hardware.

Electronics include a John Page Bloodline JP-3T single-coil in the bridge position and a Bloodline JP-3P P-90 at the neck. Both are mated to a three-way toggle and single Volume and Tone controls with chrome dome knobs. Like other Page models, the AJ's bridge pickup is slanted in the opposite direction than a typical Tele pickup to smooth out the high stings and add clarity to the lower strings.

The AJ, like other John Page guitars, comes with his industry-first "Lifetime Performance Guarantee" which covers just about any part failure under normal use for life to the original owner.

The AJ's slightly smaller 13" lower bout (the standard Tele body is 14") and the smooth generous top arm and back belly contours make it light, well-balanced, and super comfortable sitting or standing and give it a very "custom" vibe and appearance – this is not just another Tele clone.

And that all comes without sacrificing tone or sustain. Adding to the guitar's resonant body tone is Page's strong and super-tight neck joint utilizing recessed threaded machine screws mated to threaded body inserts instead of the typical woodscrews-

neck plate combo. The combination of meticulous fret finish, a flatter 12"-radius fretboard, and a contoured neck heel give the AJ a nice, low action with no choking-out or fret buzz, not to mention great access to the upper frets.

Plugged into a Keeley compressor and Ibanez TS808 running into a Fender Blues Junior, the AJ's reverse-angled bridge pickup produced a ton of tight, focused twang with a super-snappy low E string and smooth, deeper high E and B – crisp, but notably less brittle and harsh than a typical Tele setup.

The neck pickup had a thick, beefy sound with throaty quality that blended well with the bridge in both

output and tone. The pickup combination was thick, with plenty of jangle; not as scooped as the classic combination on guitars of this style, but with more mids, increased overall output, and great balance.

With the TS808 turned up, the bridge pickup's reverse slant again added to bigger tone by increasing the high-string sustain and depth while increasing the low-string clarity and chunkiness for an overall more-balanced Tele crunch. The neck pickup also liked to get dirty, offering a fat and thick gainy overdrive sound that maintained note-to-note clarity and didn't get overly muddy or washed out.

John Page's "uniquely familiar" features and pickup combination and arrangement, together with a slim/heavily contoured body, rock-solid neck joint, and top-notch craftsmanship, give the AJ a custom feel – at a production-line price. –*Phil Feser VG*



Price: \$1,639 (list)
Info: www.johnpageclassic.com

