

# Fret-King Black Label Eclat DBC: a Bucket-load of Fun

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**I**t may look like a Les Paul Junior that's been attacked by beavers, but there's more to Fret-King's latest stripped-down tone machine than just copying the big boys. Designed in collaboration with British guitarist Dave 'Bucket' Colwell, who has the likes of Bad Company and Humble Pie on his CV, it takes a classic formula – mahogany body, set neck with Gibson scale-length, P90-type pickup and wraparound bridge – and gives it a bit of a spin.

<b>SOUND QUALITY</b>	. . . . .
<b>LOOKS</b>	. . . . .
<b>BUILD QUALITY</b>	. . . . .
<b>PLAYABILITY</b>	. . . . .
<b>VALUE FOR MONEY</b>	. . . . .
<b>OVERALL RATING</b>	. . . . .

The first two things you're likely to notice are the little cutaway above the neck, offering just enough room for a shredder's thumb, and the huge chamfer gouged out of the front, which invites your forearm to sit there like a dog in an armchair. But there's one feature that's much more important in terms of tone, and that's the positioning of the Wilkinson pickup. It's further away from the bridge than you might be used to, and the effect is quite dramatic.

The Eclat DBC may have a shade less upper-mid aggression than an LP Junior but what you get instead is an almost Stratocaster-like element of 'cluck', which can only be down to the pickup and its placement. This makes it a seriously nice blues guitar with just a touch of overdrive. The volume and tone controls offer a lot more versatility than you might expect from a one-pickup guitar – in particular, backing off just a couple of notches on the volume cools things down beautifully for clean chord work – and it's so well made that you'll soon forget you're playing an instrument that was born in the Far East rather than Tennessee.