

BASS PLAYER – NOVEMBER 2006

Dingwall Designer Guitars of Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, produces instruments that universally feature Ralph Novak's Novax Fanned-Fret fingerboards. The Super J marks Dingwall's first effort to produce a classic-style instrument. I have to admit I didn't think I was going to like this much: Fender copies aren't my thing, and I was skeptical of the Fanned-Fret design. But once I picked it up and plugged it in, my doubts vanished. Don't be thrown off by the fingerboard; you hardly notice them when you're playing. Dingwall succeeded at creating a bass capable of classic sound and feel, and they did it with modern ideas that extend its versatility.

The Super J's playability was phenomenal. The thin neck was fast, and the fanned frets required only minimal left-hand adjustments. The fanned-fret concept worked well on this J-style bass, imparting the classic barky tone with uncanny evenness and a powerful, natural sounding low end. After playing the Super J for just one day, I felt so good about it that I took it to a high-pressure gig, where the composer and arranger of *A Chorus Line* was literally looking over my shoulder. With its vintage-based sound and enhanced response, the bass filled in perfectly for my usual axe—especially since the chart, which was written in the 70's, actually calls for "Fender Bass."