

Modern Beauty for Classic Players

The Tremcaster SSH

OHIO-BASED TREMCASTER is the brainchild of luthier John Mosconi, a guitar repairman and luthier whose focus is the tone and feel of guitars from the 1950s and '60s.

Tremcaster's SSH gets its name from its pickup configuration – two single-coils and a humbucker. The pickups are all from Lindy Fralin; Vintage Hot single-coils in the neck and middle positions and an Unbucker in the bridge, all wired through a Switchcraft jack and five-position switch and CTS pots.

Tremcaster instru-

ments have their own take on the double-cutaway design. With straighter lines and slightly sharper edges, the SSH sports an alder body, and our tester came with optional maple neck with maple fingerboard finished in vintage amber that nicely accented the Classic Two Tone Burst finish.

The SSH is a great player's guitar even before one addresses the host of subtleties that set it apart. The 25½" scale neck sports a comfortable 12" radius and a Graphtech nut. The Fralins are accented with attractive chrome surrounds and the locking Sperzel tuners are a working-player's

favorite. Throw in a Wilkinson VS-100 bridge and all things point to this being a serious instrument.

But does it deliver the goods? The answer is a resounding "yes!" Mosconi shows his reputation as a craftsman is well-deserved. Every curve and nuance of the workmanship show that this is a high end instrument. Mosconi's attention to detail is evident throughout. The simplistic beauty is evenly matched when plugged into an amp as well.

Tested first at demo sessions, the SSH was plugged into a number of amps, but spent most of its time plugged into an EL84 loaded 1x12" combo. The first thing that was noticeable about the SSH was how clean the sounds were. Quite frankly, the single coils can get a tone so clean you can eat off of them and they have that classic single coil bite. The neck position in particular is extremely versatile and could prove

a bit of split personality, which gives it the drive of a vintage humbucker, but because Fralin winds the screw coil stronger, when you tap the pickups, the single-coil stays strong. This helps the SSH retain a classic three single-coil voice when tapped. Blues players, in particular, will love being able to toggle between their inner Gibbons and inner Hendrix.

While clean tones on the SSH are immaculate, overdriven tones are good, but more refined – more "particular," if you will – with a slight natural compression that gives off a strong "California vibe." The tones have a nice midrange bite due to the combination of the Fralins and the alder body. Blues and classic-rock players will love the tones while modern players in heavier genres may not find them as usable. Overdriven tones would probably best fit modern country, though again, the Fralin Unbucker helps the guitar's overall tone soar.

One aspect worth particular mention is the playability of this instrument. It's one of the most comfortable instruments around, and our tester arrived with an expert setup.

The SSH is a finely crafted instrument that will make itself at home in most musical settings. Players looking for a nice high-end instrument capable of wondrous clarity with subtle complexity should check it

useful for everything from jazz and blues to country. Chicken pickers will love the addition of a treble pot as one of the knobs for that glistening top end cut.

Luckily, the Unbucker gives the SSH

out. In an era of over-the-top designs and crazy body woods/electronics combinations, it's refreshing to see a basic workhorse sporting such inner and outer beauty. – **Sean O'Bryan Smith**



TREMCASTER SSH

Price: \$2,295
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