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REPLICATING THE BLACK

FENDER DAVID GILMOUR SIGNATURE MODEL

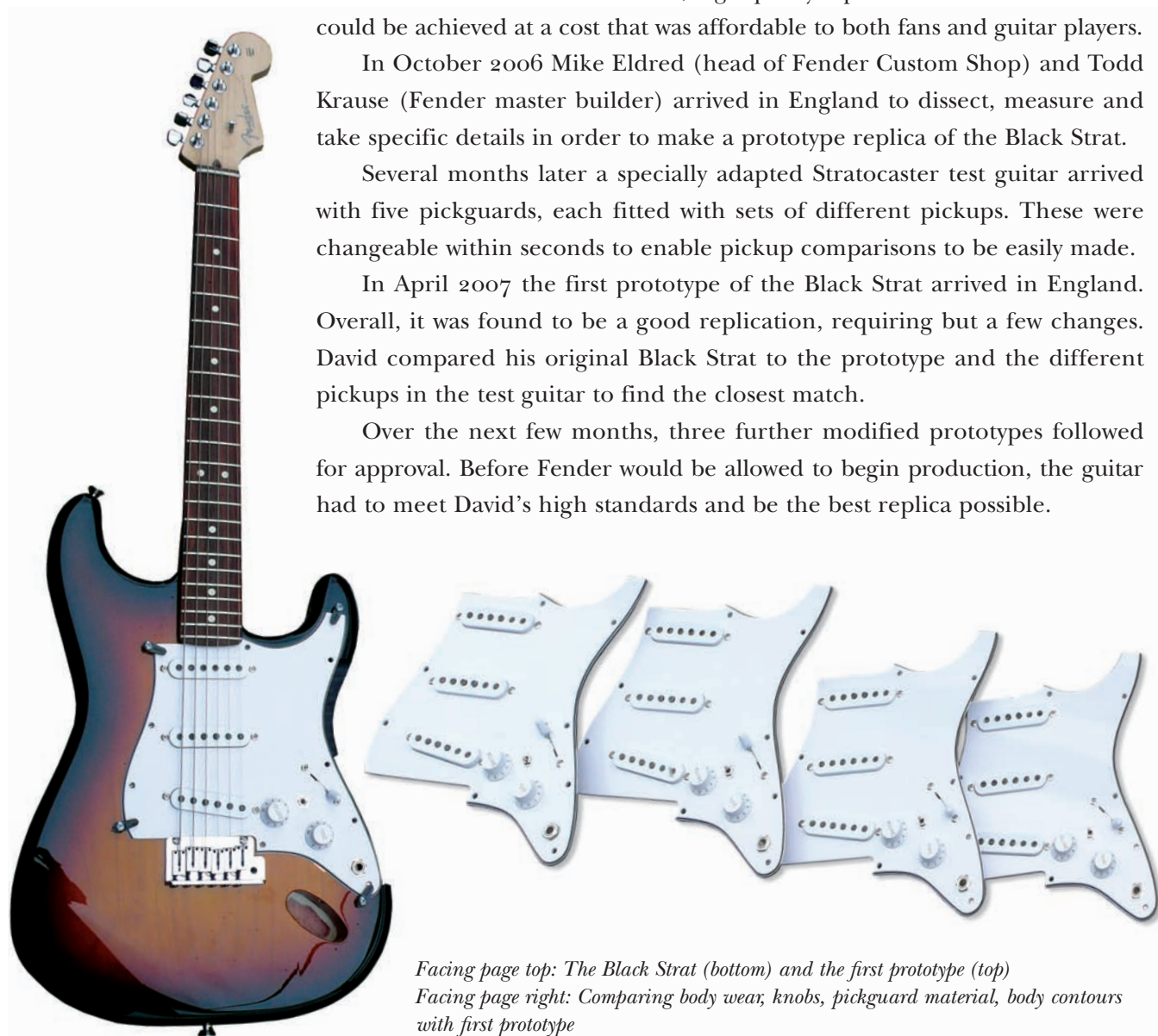
David had refused previous requests from Fender to copy his guitar, however, he was now assured that a definitive, high quality replica of his Black Stratocaster could be achieved at a cost that was affordable to both fans and guitar players.

In October 2006 Mike Eldred (head of Fender Custom Shop) and Todd Krause (Fender master builder) arrived in England to dissect, measure and take specific details in order to make a prototype replica of the Black Strat.

Several months later a specially adapted Stratocaster test guitar arrived with five pickguards, each fitted with sets of different pickups. These were changeable within seconds to enable pickup comparisons to be easily made.

In April 2007 the first prototype of the Black Strat arrived in England. Overall, it was found to be a good replication, requiring but a few changes. David compared his original Black Strat to the prototype and the different pickups in the test guitar to find the closest match.

Over the next few months, three further modified prototypes followed for approval. Before Fender would be allowed to begin production, the guitar had to meet David's high standards and be the best replica possible.



Facing page top: The Black Strat (bottom) and the first prototype (top)

Facing page right: Comparing body wear, knobs, pickguard material, body contours with first prototype



FINAL PROTOTYPES

In March 2008 the Black Strat was taken to the Fender Custom Shop in Corona, California to spend three days with Master Builder Todd Krause. During this time every intricate detail of the guitar was checked and re-checked before the final prototype models were to be made.

"People have been asking me about this guitar it seems like forever. It was utterly just amazing, this overwhelming sense of history and the past and just being surrounded by it."

Todd Krause, Fender Master Builder

Exact measurements were taken from the Black Strat. These included the profiles and contours of the neck and body, the pickguard material, the electronics and the appearance, look and feel of the aged, worn guitar. David wanted particular attention paid to replicating the sound of the pickups and their set-up along with the height and feel of the tremolo.

Two models have been produced. The first is a replica of the Black Strat as it is currently, showing signs of wear and tear (Fender refer to these as Relic). The second is a brand new replication of the Black Strat with the same parts and components (Fender refer to these as NOS), a 'new old stock' version of the guitar.

With the prototypes finally correct and acceptable, the project could now progress to the manufacturing phase. Two final prototypes of each model were made. One set are kept at the Fender Custom Shop as a reference from which all other David Gilmour Signature Stratocasters will be made. The other pair remains with David.

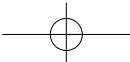
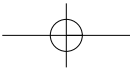
Top: Todd Krause inspecting the Black Strat

Centre: Prototype bodies

Right: Phil Taylor, the Black Strat, Todd Krause at the Fender Custom Shop

Facing page: Two of four final prototypes





ATOM HEART MOTHER, JUNE 2008 NOS PROTOTYPE

David was very pleased with his final prototypes and thought it time to 'road test' one at a live show. In June 2008, he was approached to appear as a special guest for a performance of *Atom Heart Mother*. Ron Geesin, who had arranged the original album score with Pink Floyd in 1970, had been asked to co-ordinate a concert for the Chelsea Arts Festival. The rehearsals at St Lukes Church, Chelsea were the first time David and Ron had worked together since the making the album and it presented the perfect opportunity to try one of the new replica Black Strats on stage. David selected the NOS final prototype for the performance, held in the Cadogan Hall, London. Much to the delight of the crowd, he joined Ron, the musicians, brass section and choir on stage for the piece played in its entirety as the second half of the evening performance. Both the event and the guitar proved a great success.

Below left: The Black Strat on Phil Taylor's desk with prototype necks for evaluation. In the background, prototype in case

Below right: The Black Strat replica prototype on the deck of Astoria, London

