

Godin **in the press**


A4 & A5 SA Basses

As Featured
in the
April 2007
issue of
Bass Player Magazine

SOUNDROOM

GODIN Godin A4 & A5 SA: Update

BY SASCHA JACOBSEN & JONATHAN HERRERA



NAMM'S COOLEST NEW GEAR • DAVE LARUE MASTER CLASS • STANLEY CLARKE DVD

BASS PLAYER MUSIC!
PHILLY SOUL CLASSIC
HAROLD MELVIN
& THE BLUE NOTES
'BAD LUCK'
COMPLETE BASS LINE
- plus -
LEARN TO PLAY
BRAZILIAN GIRLS
'ALL ABOUT US'

**RIGHTEOUS!
MIKE
WATT**
PUNK'S PHILOSOPHER-KING
IGNITES IGGY & THE STOOGES

NASHVILLE'S BASS KING
THE MAN WHO CUT 50,000 TRACKS!
SHADOWS FALL
ALAIN CARON
SWITCHFOOT

8 REVIEWS!
IBANEZ ATK 4-STRING • FURMAN POWERED PEDALBOARD
GODIN SYNTH-READY BASSES • PEAVEY COMBO AMPS

www.bassplayer.com

5\$5.99 U.S. \$7.99 CAN. D.L.S. 21010182001



Godin A4 SA
List \$1,196
Street \$1,000

Godin A5 SA
List \$1,446
Street \$1,200

Pros One-of-a-kind synth capability, flexible acoustic-style tone

Cons Limited bridge adjustability

Contact
(514) 457-7977
www.godinguitars.com



TEST GEAR

Soundroom SWR SM-400 head, Eden D410-XLT cabinet, Roland GR-20 Guitar Synthesizer

Gigs & rehearsals SWR Workingman's 1x12 combo, Polytone Teeny Brute combo

GODIN Godin A4 & A5 SA: Update

BY SASCHA JACOBSEN & JONATHAN HERRERA

GODIN'S A-SERIES BASSES WERE REVOLUTIONARY when first released. They were the first basses to combine acoustic tone and looks with excellent feedback suppression, and our reviews in April '99 and September '04 commend Godin appropriately. Innovative engineering was behind the revolution, and the latest updates to the line continue this tradition. Godin's Synth Access (SA) A-series basses include individual piezo saddle transducers, synth-oriented controls, and a 13-pin output jack. Combined with a properly

configured Roland GR synth module, the A4 and A5 SA basses give players access to the extraordinary sonic palette of synthesis and sample playback. If a tune needs glockenspiel, mandolin, flute, or, heck, even drums, the SA basses can oblige.

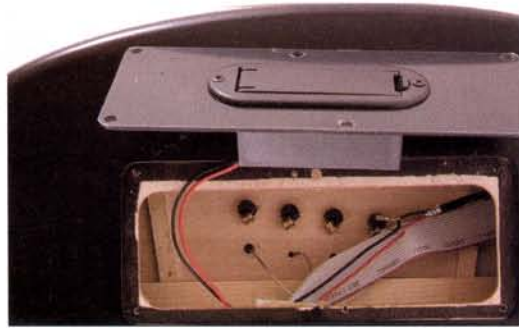
The SA basses' two-chambered body has some natural resonance, but these are not purely acoustic instruments. Unless I played solo, I needed an amp. As noted in previous tests, Godin's design is completely feedback resistant. Each test instrument's construction



Godin SA basses are designed for use with Roland's GR-20 synthesizer (\$595). The GR-20 offers a full palette of Roland's top-notch sounds and an easy-to-navigate interface. Its PATCH LINK function aids connection to MIDI-capable multi-effects, like the Boss GT-6B.



The push buttons cycle through the GR-20's patch list.



Re-stringing the Godin requires removing the back plate.

was excellent, and bandmates roundly appreciated the pleasantly unassuming look. While I appreciate the challenge of bringing solidbody versatility to a primarily acoustic-style instrument, I wish Godin came up with a better setup solution: Without the option to make string-height or intonation adjustments, the SA basses don't give much flexibility to a would-be tweaker. Thankfully the basses arrived well set up, and a trussrod adjustment brought the A5's string height into my comfort zone. As previously reported, the A4 and A5 produce a powerful, punchy tone that favors the midrange. The fretless A5 has effortless *mwah*, while the fretted A4's punch and growl (dialed-in via a flexible 3-band EQ) fits well into everything from funk to acoustic settings. The primary disadvantage of a piezo system is the high degree of left-hand finger noise, which I tamed by lowering the treble.

In order for a synth like the Roland's GR-series to work, it must receive a separate signal from each string. This allows the synth's processor to make quick sense of the ever-changing input. Tracking bass frequencies is particularly difficult because it takes most synths about three wave periods to correctly determine a sound's pitch. Thus, bass frequencies' long wavelength can result in a delay known as latency, audible to the human ear when it exceeds 5 milliseconds. Roland solves this problem with a special algorithm available as part of the downloadable Version 2 operating system update. Without the download, the GR doesn't track at all; with it, it's near perfect. Playing other instruments on bass is both amazingly fun and useful, particularly for home-studio recording and show gigs where you need sound effects and the occasional exotic color. And whether the synths get much use

TECH SPECS

Weight A4, 8 lbs 9 oz;

A5, 8 lbs, 14 oz

Scale length 34"

Body Two-chamber maple w/spruce top

Neck Maple

Fingerboard Rosewood (fretted) or ebony (fretless)

Neck width at nut A4, 1½"; A5, 1⅓"

Tone Controls Treble, ±15dB @ 10kHz; mid, ±9dB @ 300Hz or 1kHz; bass ±9dB @ 30Hz

Pickup RMC/Godin saddle piezo transducers

Preamp Godin 9-volt w/3-band EQ

Made in Canada; assembled in U.S.A.

Gig bag Included

Warranty Lifetime limited



The Godin SA basses' 13-pin jack sends both a conventional and a synth-capable signal to a Roland GR synth.

or not, the SA basses' excellent basic tone is never disappointing.

The SA basses include two buttons to cycle through patches on GR-series synths and a slider for controlling the mix between synth and conventional output. Standard MIDI devices are not directly

controllable from the SA basses, but GR synths have a MIDI output. If the endless universe of MIDI synthesis appeals to you, the Godin SA basses are among the only bass guitars that give you an invite to the party. Plus, they sound uniquely groovy and look perfect for acoustic gigs.

BP