

## FIRST PLAY



**GRETSCH G2215-P90  
STREAMLINER JUNIOR  
JET CLUB  
£370**

**WHAT IS IT?** A recent addition to the Streamliner range: a solid, slab-bodied bolt-on Jet that packs quite a punch

# Tear It Up

A bolt-on addition to the solidbody range? Like us, you might be surprised after hitching a ride with this low-priced Junior Jet Club...

**Words** Dave Burrluck **Photography** Phil Barker

**A**s the entry point into the vast Gretsch guitar range, the Junior Jet Club is simplistic by design. Available in dual humbucker or, as here, in a slightly more expensive P-90/humbucker format, it also comes in a trio of colours with cream body binding and pickguard to match the covered neck single coil. It certainly recalls the style of the classic single-cut Jet models, Gretsch's response to the Les Paul.

While the original Jet was a sealed semi-solid design, this G2215 is a solid slab-bodied affair. The body and neck are both nato, and although you'd expect the neck to be glued in, it's a bolt-on – quite a rarity in Gretsch's catalogue. Granted, that does scream budget, and, while that's the point of the exercise, it also gives these Junior Jet Clubs a rather unique place in the range, not least in sound.

Despite the difference in constructional style, it retains obvious Gretsch DNA. The Jet outline is slightly longer and a little more squared than the Les Paul, yet somehow less rudimentary-looking than a Telecaster. Combine that with the classy, classic raked-back three-a-side headstock and the thumbnail fingerboard markers, and there's no doubt you're playing a Gretsch.









1. These clear, amber-coloured plastic barrel knobs are a throwback to the 50s, before the metal 'G-with-arrow' logo knobs became more commonly used
2. It may be unfaced, or black-painted, but this narrow headstock with its classic Gretsch logo – and no mention of its Streamliner status – is a real throwback to the original Jet of 1953
3. Gibson style is evident in this wrapover bridge and its raised pre-set intonation ridge. Meanwhile, the BT-2S humbucker is the second-generation Broad'Tron, designed for the Streamliner range, revamped in 2019 to have a little more clarity. Its measured DCR is 9.3kohms
4. More Gibson style here with the soapbar P-90, an increasing fixture on Gretsch's start-up models. It's a pretty big voice with a measured DCR of 8.93kohms



## UNDER THE HOOD

What's going on inside this rockabilly rebel?

**W**ith those three control cavities, it's unusual, but then so is the circuit. First, there's a treble-bleed circuit on the 500k volume control that places a 150kohms resistor and a .01 microfarads cap in parallel. While the resistor value is pretty standard, the cap isn't: typically a .001 or .002 microfarads cap would be used. The bigger cap here is 'bleeding' a lot more than just high treble, meaning that as you reduce the volume you're almost hearing a bass cut. If that isn't odd enough, the volume and tone are wired vintage style, which means there's plenty of

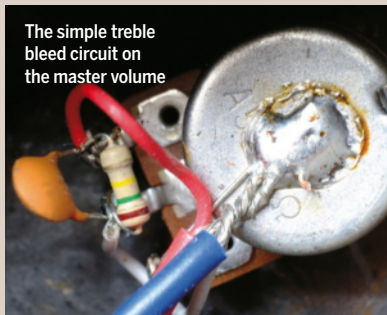
interaction between the two controls. If it sounds a little bonkers in theory, it's actually rather good in practice.

Originally, the neck P-90 seemed to overpower the bridge pickup and we couldn't lower it, which suggested it was direct-mounted to the body. However, removing the pickup a large piece of rubbery foam (which should act as the cushion) is clearly too hard and thick. Simply removing that and replacing it with thinner, more elastic type of foam means you can pull the pickup down as you would normally with this type of mounting.

The stripped-down spec also removes a couple of the things that make Gretsch instruments sound and look like they do. The simple wrapover bridge means there's a large expanse of top going begging for a Bigsby, and what on earth is going on with the controls? Well, the shoulder-placed pickup selector toggle does its usual thing. The control on the treble horn (typically a master volume) is simply the volume, which means that the single control located by the bridge (typically a volume) is actually a tone control. That's three separate circular cavities to cut with three recessed plastic covers, each held in place with three screws. Surely a single cavity with the three controls in would've been an easier and more cost effective proposition?

The neatly top-bound 45mm-thick slab body seems to be a four-piece spread, but the pieces are seamlessly joined and there's actually a slightly coarse mahogany-like grain showing through the brown/tan-coloured translucent high-gloss poly finish. The neck has a headstock splice under the 1st and 2nd frets, while the fingerboard material is laurel, almost generic rosewood-looking in colour with a flecked grain. The well-tended frets sit over the binding, and those thumbnail inlays (a grained pearloid) sit inside the binding. Simple it may be, but it's a tidy build.

The simple treble bleed circuit on the master volume



The foam cushion on the P-90 is too thick. We simply replaced it







The bridge unit might not shout 'Gretsch', but it's a perfectly good rootsy rock voice that laps up crunch

### Feel & Sounds

With a good weight and well-balanced feel both strapped on and seated, comfortable is an accurate description, particularly with its Gibson-like 629mm (24.75-inch) scale length. There are no surprises with the mainstream-feeling neck, which is 21.2mm deep at the 1st fret and 24.6mm by the 12th. It's spec'd as a 'Thin U', but that seems a bit of a misnomer because, aside from a very slight flat to the back in the lower positions, the tapered shoulders give a more regular, classic C feel. Either way, it's a perfectly good profile that feels far from 'budget'; the medium gauge fretwire has good height and there's a very lightly rounded edge to the neatly bound fingerboard.

Now, if you think you're going to replicate classic Gretsch fare when you plug in, this Junior Jet Club should probably come with a warning: this is a no-Gretsch zone. As initially supplied, the P-90 is big and thick, with a big blues voice and a muscular slide





Although this is a pretty standard bolt-on, it's a rarity for Gretsch. The neck pocket in the body is angled to rake the neck back and create the correct height for that Gibson-style wrapover bridge



## GRETSCH G2215-P90 STREAMLINER JUNIOR JET CLUB

**PRICE:** £370

**ORIGIN:** Indonesia

**TYPE:** Single-cutaway slab-body solidbody electric

**BODY:** Nato

**NECK:** Nato, 'Thin U' profile, bolt-on

**SCALE LENGTH:** 629mm (24.75")

**NUT/WIDTH:** Synthetic/43.3mm

**FINGERBOARD:** Bound laurel, pearloid 'Neo-Classic Thumbnail' inlays, 305mm (12") radius

**FRETS:** 22, medium jumbo

**HARDWARE:** Anchored Compensated Wrap-Around Bridge/tailpiece, die-cast tuners – chrome-plated

**STRING SPACING, BRIDGE:** 52.5mm

**ELECTRICS:** Gretsch Broad'Tron BT-2S humbucker (bridge), P90 Soap Bar single coil (neck), 3-way toggle pickup selector switch, master volume and tone controls

**WEIGHT (kg/lb):** 3.53/7.76

**OPTIONS:** Colour only

**RANGE OPTIONS:** The G2210 Streamliner Junior Jet Club, with dual Broad'Tron humbuckers, unbound body and single-ply tortoise pickguard, is available in four colours and costs £320

**LEFT-HANDERS:** No. The only lefty Streamliner is the G2622LH Center Block Double-Cut with V-Stoptail and BT-2S humbuckers

**FINISHES:** Single Barrel Stain (as reviewed), Mint Metallic, Sahara Metallic – all gloss

**Fender Musical Instruments EMEA**

**01342 331700**

**[www.gretschguitars.com](http://www.gretschguitars.com)**



**9/10**

**PROS** Simple, tidy build; very much a Gretsch 'Junior' with excellent weight, feel and playability; unusual but effective control layout and a pretty big sound!

**CONS** Not your archetypal Gretsch voice – but it's hard to knock at this price; bags of modding potential here, too

## Gretsch, like other heritage companies, seems to get pigeonholed... But there's quite a Jekyll and Hyde character here

sound, but the bridge pickup, obviously brighter, is thinner and a little quieter, too, with an almost generic 'humbucker' sound. It might not shout 'Gretsch', but it's a perfectly good rootsy rock voice that laps up crunch and even heavier gained styles.

If you're not averse to using the volume and tone, you'll find quite a bit more here. The volume taper seems a little abrupt, but it noticeably thins out the sound – in a good way – and certainly gives a more typical Gretsch-y character. The tone has a subtle effect, too, again thinning things out before it gets typically woofy, fully anti-clockwise. The apparent vintage wiring is doing its thing here with subtle interaction between the two controls for those of us who like some slight tone shifts and how they affect the front-end of your amp.

Finally, after lowering the neck pickup as described, that output discrepancy is removed and some 'Gretsch' is restored. Not only does the P-90 sound a little more single coil, less hot and bass heavy, the mix is rather good – bouncy and balanced.

### Verdict

We're constantly surprised by the quality of 'start-up' guitars such as this. Gretsch was right there at the birth of rock 'n' roll and often – like other heritage companies – seems to get pigeonholed and stuck in time with that slicked-back-hair rockabilly style. But there's quite a Jekyll and Hyde character here.

As supplied with that pickup imbalance, the over-big-sounding neck pickup rather dwarfs the more classic-sounding bridge pickup, and it comes across as a bit of a roots-rock bruiser. But the rather unusual circuit means that if you're happy to use the volume and tone, you can clean things up a little and evoke more of that 50s/60s vibe. Remounting the neck pickup so we can lower it moves the guitar into a more conventional hum/P-90 style and restores some Gretsch, not least with the pretty cool pickup mix.

It's a lot of guitar, with plenty of potential: a grab-and-go axe that won't break the bank. Game on! **G**