



Triple Play

FISHMAN FLUENCE OPEN CORE CLASSIC HUMBUCKERS

By Chris Gill

▶ THE FLUENCE CORE design of Fishman’s revolutionary Fluence pickups, which is an alternative to the wound copper wire construction of traditional magnetic pickups, is an ingenious innovation. Fluence pickups can deliver the same tones as any previous pickup from vintage classics to modern hot-rod models and also provide significant advantages like quiet operation and consistent performance at any volume setting or when using longer cables. Those features are undeniably great, but the most ingenious feature of Fishman Fluence pickups that should persuade even the most technophobic, tradition-loving guitarist to try them is their ability to provide several distinct pickup voices that truly are like swapping pickups with the flick of a switch.

FEATURES We tried a set of Fishman Fluence Open Core Classic Humbuckers installed in a Gibson Les Paul Stan-

dard to see how well they delivered on that promise. Open Core Classic Humbuckers are Fishman’s first uncovered Fluence humbuckers, available with black, white, zebra and reverse zebra bobbins and in six-, seven- or eight-string models or sets. Each pickup provides three individual classic, passive-sounding voices. The bridge humbucker offers vintage PAF with a 2.25kHz peak, classic hot-rod with a 1.6kHz peak and slightly overwound single coil with a 4.5kHz peak.

The neck humbucker’s voices include vintage PAF with a 2.6kHz peak, clear, airy chime with 4.5kHz and 350Hz peaks and vintage single coil with a 5kHz peak. Both pickups utilize the traditional Alnico V bar magnet with pole pieces.

The pickups can also be custom configured with a high frequency tilt setting that simulates the rolled off high end of using a traditional passive pickup with a long cable, and the single coils in a pair can be set to

either inner coils (factory setting) or outer coils upon installation.

PERFORMANCE The Fluence pickups’ three distinct voices are accessed via push/pull pots on the tone controls. The differences between the vintage humbucker, hot-rod humbucker and single coil voices are quite distinct. The vintage humbucker tones have that classic, desirable midrange but the overall tone is also notably clearer with better note-to-note definition. The hot-rod setting has a more aggressive bark and is slightly darker without the slightest amount of mud. The single coil settings are revelatory, sounding like true single coil pickups instead of the more common “wimped out” humbucker tones delivered by coil splitting. The pickups can be powered with a 9-volt battery, but the optional, rechargeable lithium-ion battery pack is an even better way to go, providing more than 200 hours of use on a single charge.

CHEAT SHEET



STREET PRICE:

\$249.95
(six-string set)

MANUFACTURER:

Fishman,
fishman.com

- Push/pull tone pots (included with the set) allow users to instantly access a total of three distinct voices — vintage, hot-rod and single coil.

- The optional rechargeable lithium-ion battery pack provides more than 200 hours of use on a single charge.

● THE BOTTOM LINE

Fishman’s Fluence Open Core Classic Humbuckers may look like vintage humbuckers, but their ability to produce three distinct voices and deliver noise-free, consistent performance are truly revolutionary.