



Vintage Vibe Humbucker-Sized Single-Coils

TESTED BY DAVE HUNTER

IN A QUEST FOR HUMBUCKER-SIZED SINGLE-COIL ALTERNATIVES, I turned to Pete Bilttoft of Vintage Vibe pickups in Hawaii to see what he might be able to come up with. Vintage Vibe has a growing reputation for pickups that are not so much direct vintage recreations, but clever twists on several classic favorites that deliver unique tones in easily retrofitted sizes. Vintage Vibe pickups are also available with a wide range of stylish covers, such as the abalone tops featured in this selection. Among the four pairs to test were two sets of HS-90s (\$205 each) wound with 42 AWG and 43 AWG wire, respectively, the HS-AR with alnico poles (\$210), and an HCC set (\$210) designed to capture the hallowed Charlie Christian pickup in a humbucker size. In addition to the sets as they come, Vintage Vibe includes your choice of alternate magnets for each pickup, so you can make your own tone tweaks.

MODEL

HCC

SPECIFICATIONS

MAGNET	Alnico V (extra II, III or ceramic set included)
DC RESISTANCE	6.13k Ω bridge, 5.53k Ω neck
BOBBINS	Blue-pink abalone with open-top nickel covers
WIRE	42 gauge
POLEPIECES	Single un-notched mild-steel blade
KUDOS	A lusciously thick, juicy single-coil tone with surprising clarity in the pick attack.
CONCERNS	None.

HS-AR

SPECIFICATIONS

MAGNET	Alnico V (extra II, III or ceramic set included)
DC RESISTANCE	7.50k Ω bridge, 6.38k Ω neck
BOBBINS	Blue-green abalone with open-top nickel covers
WIRE	42 gauge
POLEPIECES	Six individual alnico V rod sections
KUDOS	A cool means of nailing "fat Fender" tones (think beefy Tele or Jazzmaster) from a humbucker-routed guitar.
CONCERNS	None.

HS-90 SW 42 AWG SET

SPECIFICATIONS

MAGNET	Alnico V (extra II, III or ceramic set included)
DC RESISTANCE	7.85k Ω bridge, 6.80k Ω neck
BOBBINS	Blue abalone with open-top nickel covers
WIRE	42 gauge
POLEPIECES	Six adjustable steel poles
KUDOS	Excellent vintage-P-90 tones with characteristic meaty midrange. Great look.
CONCERNS	None.

HS-90 SW 43 AWG SET

SPECIFICATIONS

MAGNET	Alnico V (extra II, III or ceramic set included)
DC RESISTANCE	9.93k Ω bridge, 8.77k Ω neck
BOBBINS	Red abalone with open-top nickel covers
WIRE	43 gauge
POLEPIECES	Six adjustable steel poles
KUDOS	A more contemporary take on the P-90 tone, with enhanced clarity and definition.
CONCERNS	None.

VINTAGE VIBE



Tested in a Koll Duo Glide through a Matchless HC-30 and a Bogner Goldfinger 45, the HS-90s wound with 42 AWG really nailed a traditional vintage-wind P-90 tone, with all that characteristic midrange grunt and a touch of upper-midrange grittiness. I particularly dug how the

alnico III magnets in the bridge pickup softened the spikes slightly, affording more buttery over-driven tones. The 43 AWG set copped a similar vibe, but with a more modern edge and some increased definition.

For more “alternative” alternatives, however,

the HS-ARs with alnico poles and the HCCs were real eye-openers. From beefy, Tele-like twang in the former to a lusciously slushy, fat-with-edge woodiness in the latter, these pickups took me farther than I could have imagined from the humbuckers that the Duo Glide’s routes were made for, yet remained entirely musical and able to handle every style I threw at them.

All in all, these Vintage Vibe pickups provide four outstanding points of departure from standard humbuckers, and are definitely worth considering if you are looking to change up your sound with the help of some magnum-sized single-coils. vintagevibeguitars.com

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> Get more info on the HS-90 and other humbucker-sized Vintage Vibe single-coils.