

SOUND CHECK

James Tyler "Studio Elite" Guitar

*"A finely crafted guitar,
with full, balanced
sound."*

James Tyler has been dedicated to repairing and building guitars for L.A.'s top session pros for a decade. He's now introduced his own line of guitars for the discriminating player. The Tyler studio Elite is a finely crafted instrument and the controls are laid out in a very user-friendly manner. There is one master volume control and a variable midrange enhance pot, functioning with separate selector switches for all three pickups. Three-position switches are used for pickup off, series and parallel modes. There is also a toggle pre-set switch, which selects the rear humbucking pickup by itself (lead mode), or with



the two rhythm pickups and their pre-selected settings. This is a very nice feature, as it enables the guitarist to switch in and out of lead/rhythm without having to adjust all the knobs and switches.

The pickups are Jim Tyler's and have a full, balanced sound ranging from clean Strat-like tones to fat, woody Les Paul crunch tones. We found the mid-range boost, offering 15 dB of gain @ 100Hz, to be very useful in the lead mode, or for enhancing low end when using clean settings with a clean amp like a JC-120.

One of the instrument's most striking features is its craftsmanship and finish.

This one has a unique three-tone "Jimburst,"™ going from dark violet at the upper horns, to a light pink and then dark red. This showcases a really tasty flame maple top, which is laminated onto a basswood body. The neck is birdseye maple with a rosewood fingerboard, 1-11/16 inches wide at the nut. Although this particular ax was a bit wide, Tyler offers custom-tailored widths to suit any playing style.

The tremolo is an Ibanez/Floyd Rose design, and although a backplate is not standard, Jim insists, "No one has ever asked for it!"

Overall, the guitar has a very friendly feel and is very comfortable to play. If you're in the market for a custom-made guitar, this one deserves to be considered. The retail price is \$1,500. *James Tyler Guitars, 5009 Lankershim Blvd., North Hollywood, CA 91601; (818) 763-8697*

— Andy Brauer

A video review (on VHS) of this product is available. Contact Andy Brauer at (818) 763-8639.