
Subject: Kustom Guitar Pickups

Posted by [BC](#) on Sun, 19 Jul 2009 20:25:02 GMT

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I was looking at the Chanute pictures at the various guitars and noticed that the pickups appear to be reversed on one or more of them. (Since I do not know which is correct or if it matters) So I consulted the literature section and found the ones in the pictures are not consistent either. Which is correct? Does it matter? BC

Subject: Re: Kustom Guitar Pickups

Posted by [pleat](#) on Sun, 19 Jul 2009 21:09:06 GMT

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Brad, Bryan and I talked about the facing of the pickups when we were in Chanute. Here is what I know about them.

Kustom guitars used DeArmond pickups. The three model guitars were the, K200A which had mother of pearl 4 dot inlays at the first fret and eventually went down to 2 and 1 after the 12th fret. Bigsby B5 vibrato and the two DeArmond Special Design Anti-hum Adjustable pole piece pickups.

The K200C model used the same dot pattern of the K200A, DeArmond Special Design sustaining adjustable pickups, (basic single coil) which I don't know about adjustable other than shimming up the whole pickup from the top of the guitar. I never saw the back side of that pickup so maybe there was some kind of adjustment, but you'd have to remove the pickup to do it. It has a hanger type tailpiece Kustom called Non-slip tailpiece.

The K200A guitar has screws that will actually raise or lower the magnet pole piece of what I would call the better pickup of the two offered on the guitars.

The K200D bass guitar had single pole piece that was not adjustable from the top of the pickup.

The K200B was pretty much the same as the K200C except it had 2 dots at the first fret and body and electronics were the same as the K200C.

Here is where it gets a bit strange and interesting.

The 67/68 catalog that first introduced the Kustom guitar is the K200A shown with the rectangle case. It was billed as two-piece neck with adjustable truss rod. The head stock shape was less pointed or horned.

In the 69/70 catalog the less pronounced headstock was billed as Short horned semi-professional head on the K200C guitar.

The K200A & K200B models had headstocks that were more horned but no mention of it. So my guess is they had more necks made up in the old style head stock design with the 4 dot necks they used as the C model.

Another interesting fact is the K200C had a retail price of 195.00 and it had more mother of pearl dot inlays.

The K200B retailed for 245.00 less dots and had the pointed headstock.

The K200A retailed for 395.00 in 67/68 with the smaller headstock and by 69/70 they dropped the price to 295.00 so it was apparent that they weren't selling by that time.

Here is another oddity, Bryan asked me about the facing of the pickups.

The black area that the adjusting screws and pole pieces have a chrome cover piece over the pickup that mounts the pickup to the body. The chrome piece is slanted at each end of the pickup. The red guitar in the 67/68 catalog the slants go opposite. Same catalog showing the black guitar the pickups look like they are same as the red.

The sunburst and blue guitar shows the same direction on the pickups but the bridge pickup is closer to the neck pickup. So it appears that who ever installed the bridge pickups, it depended on how much training they had.

The Better of the DeArmond pickups that were on the K200A guitars had a rectangle slot through the body for the adjustment screws and pole piece to go into the body. The pickup would fit in either direction, but once the mounting screws were drilled, it couldn't be turned the other direction.

So depending on who installed the pickups you might have a guitar with the pickups set closer together than the next guitar.

By the 69/70 catalog they did mention that they were two-piece neck, two-piece top and two piece back. So there is a lot of mystery as to why some pickups face the same direction and other guitars with the same pickups faced the opposite direction. You will also notice that the direction of the back pickup determines the distance from the the edge of the pickup to the bridge. Some are really close and other guitars there is a big gap between the edge of the pickup and the bridge. So some guitars will sound brighter on the back pickup if it was installed closer to the bridge.

Don

Subject: Re: Kustom Guitar Pickups
Posted by [BC](#) on Mon, 20 Jul 2009 01:57:03 GMT
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Si

Subject: Re: Kustom Guitar Pickups
Posted by [chicagobill](#) on Mon, 20 Jul 2009 18:17:32 GMT
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Pleat, that's quite an explanation!

At the Chanute show, I had asked you about the pickups, as I had never seen the non-adjustable pickups before.

While I was there, Gini and I had a chance to talk with Alan who was the final inspector at the guitar factory and then went on to work in the Customer Service dept at the amp factory after the guitar shop shut down.

I don't know if Neil or Bryan have any contact info for him, but if there are any unanswered questions regarding the guitars, he may be the guy to ask.

Subject: Re: Kustom Guitar Pickups
Posted by [pleat](#) on Mon, 20 Jul 2009 23:50:34 GMT
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Thanks Bill, I think Allen was the guy who played pedal steel saturday night at the jam. I didn't get a chance to talk with him. He may know why some pickups were installed one way and other guitars, they were the opposite. Still a mystery to us.
If you have his contact info, maybe we can ask him.
Don

Subject: Re: Kustom Guitar Pickups
Posted by [chicagobill](#) on Tue, 21 Jul 2009 16:05:18 GMT
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Yes, he did say that he was now playing steel guitar most of the time.

Unfortunately I did not get any contact info for him. Hey, I forgot to bring my camera and cell phone on the trip! I was not at my best that weekend.

Subject: Re: Kustom Guitar Pickups
Posted by [pleat](#) on Wed, 22 Jul 2009 00:05:38 GMT
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Well forgetting your phone and camera is one thing, but you brought the coolest Kustom collector buttons. I still have mine pinned to my grill on my K50.
Don

Subject: Re: Kustom Guitar Pickups
Posted by [Jc](#) on Thu, 23 Jul 2009 04:18:56 GMT
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That's right! I have mine on one of my amps too. It was very kool of you and Gini to make those Pins - Thanks Again. jc
