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~ Rickenbacker Bass Models ~



"Rocketing Skywards"
1989 4001V63 Maplelo
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Rickenbacker Bass Models and Specifications

~ The 4000 Series ~

by David Axt

[The following article is a compilation of data from various sources describing the different Rickenbacker bass models. This article also gives a brief history as to when the different features were added or discontinued.]

(Note: Dates in parentheses are from various sources. If you can confirm or deny these dates please contact me.)

~ 4000 Series ~

The basses in this series have the following features, unless otherwise noted, neck through construction, cresting wave headstock, cresting wave body, finished Padouk fingerboard, 33-1/2" scale, 20 frets, Schaller Deluxe BM machine heads, combination tailpiece/bridge assembly with string mutes.

4000 MODELS

4000

This bass is the first bass model that Rickenbacker produced.

Original Features: Single pickup, chrome 1 volume and 1 tone control, mono output, unbound body, dot inlay, clear plastic pickguard with gold back painting, cresting wave headstock, unbound rosewood fingerboard, 8 dot inlays, clear plastic finger rest, Schaller BM nickel machine heads. Originally available only in Maplelo and older style Fireglo (2 tone brown sunburst) finishes.

1957 - Prototype sent for photographing in April

1957 - Introduced in June

1957 - (Late) movable bridge with string mute

???? - Chrome plated knobs replace black "flying saucer" knobs

1958 - Walnut neck replaced mahogany neck

1958 - White pickguard became optionally available

1959 - Neck width narrowed

1960 - Maple and walnut neck replaced walnut (or mahogany) neck

1960 - "Fireglo" (red sunburst) finish became optionally available

1961 - Body became sligher, slimmer and more contoured

1963 - Bridge/tailpiece with under string mutes replaced bridge with sliding mute.

1963 - Jetglo and Autumglo finishes became optionally available

1963 - White pickguard replaced gold pickguard

1963 - Black bakelite knobs replaced chrome knobs

1969 - High gain pickup and cover replaced horseshoe bridge pickup

1969 - Headstock shortened

(mid 70's) - Set neck design replaced neck-thru design

1971 - Grover sealed back machine heads replaced Schaller open back nickel machine heads

1974 - Gap in center raised lip of bridge eliminated

1974 - Gap in center raised lip of bridge eliminated

1974 - Pickguard shortened 1/2 inch

1975 - Cast chrome plated zinc bridge/tailpiece replaces chrome plated cast aluminum bridge/tailpiece.

1975 - Schaller BMC chrome open back machine heads replaced Grover sealed back machine heads

1984 - Model 4000 removed from price sheets

1987(1985?) - Discontinued

4000FL

This bass is the fretless version of 4000 model

Features: Single pickup, volume and tone controls, mono output, unbound body, dot inlay, gold pickguard, cresting wave headstock, 33-1/2" scale, unbound rosewood fretboard. This bass was a special order only.

1960 - Introduced

???? - Discontinued

4001 MODELS

4001

This is the deluxe two-pickup version of the 4000 model. The neck pickup was added to give greater tonal flexibility and greater bass response. This bass was originally designed for use with flat-wound strings.

Features: Bound body, bound Padouk fingerboard, triangle inlays, two pickups, separate volume and tone controls, mono-output, truss rods adjust at head. Originally this bass was only available in a Fireglo finish.

1961 - Introduced

1963 - Bridge with under string mutes was added

1965 - Black plastic seven-sided knobs with silver tops replaced all black Bakelite knobs

1965 - Maple finish became optionally available 1965 - Three special six-string 4001 basses were produced

1969 - Ric-O-Sound became standard instead of an optional feature

1969(1971) - High gain single-coil pickup and cover replaced horseshoe bridge pickup.

1969 - Headstock was shortened

(????) - 9th dot inlay position marker was added in between the 18th and 19th frets

(????) - Three special 30 inch scale 4001 basses were produced

1971 - Starr Stowe was featured in the February 1978 issue of Playboy magazine holding an Azureglo 4001 owned by Gene Simmons.

197? - Some set neck basses produced

1971 - Grover sealed back machine heads replaced Schaller open back machine heads

1972 - Maple headstock wings replaced contrasting walnut headstock wings

1972 - Center walnut stripe running the length of the instrument was introduced

1972 - High gain neck single-coil pickup replaced toaster neck pickup

1972 - Clear plastic finger rest was eliminated

1973 - Schaller BMC chrome open back machine heads replaced Grover sealed back machine heads

1973 - Single color (white or black) body binding replaced block binding

1973 - Smaller pearloid fingerboard inlays replaced crushed pearl large triangle inlays

1973 - Pickguard was shortened by moving back from bridge pickup surround

1973 - Large bridge pickup surround was made smaller and more rectangular

1974 - Gap in center raised lip of bridge eliminated

(mid 70's) - Set neck design replaces neck thru design

1974 - Neck pickup was moved 1/2 inch closer toward the bridge pickup

1974 - Pickguard shortened 1/2 inch

1983 - Discontinued

4001FL

This bass is the fretless version of the 4001 model. This model was only available as a special order.

Features: Two pickups, separate volume and tone controls, stereo and mono output, bound body, 9 dot inlays, bound Padouk fingerboard, truss rods adjust at head.

1960 - Introduced

198? - Some set neck models produced

1989 - Reintroduced with dot inlay (????) - Discontinued

4001S

The designation "S" stands for "Special"

This bass is a simplified "no frills" model of the 4001. This bass is also known as export model "1999" sold in Europe by the Rose, Morris & Company.

Features: Horse shoe bridge pickup, toaster neck pickup, separate volume and tone controls, mono output, unbound body, 9 dot inlays, unbound Padouk fingerboard, clear plastic finger rest, truss rods adjust at head.

1964 - Introduced

1967 - Bridge with understring mute was added (1967?) - Bridge with under string mutes was added 1969(1967?) - Discontinued being sold by Rose Morris

1980 - Reintroduced as standard US model with center stripe walnut laminate, high gain neck pickup, high gain bridge pickup and cover, no finger rest.

1986(1984?)(1985?) - Discontinued (replaced by 4003S model

4001V63

Vintage Reissue Series

This bass is similar to the 1963 model 4001S

Features: Horseshoe bridge pickup, no body binding, mono output, 9 dot inlays, no neck binding, toaster neck pickup, contrasting walnut headstock wings, (Kluson style) Schaller vintage machine heads and black knobs. Available only in Maple and Fireglo finishes.

1984 - Introduced

1986 - 8 dot inlays with 1 inlay removed from in between the 18th and 19th frets

1986 - Bass lengthened 9/16 inch to an overall length of 45 1/16" from 44 1/2"

1986 - Neck profile narrowed 1/16"

1999 - Currently still in production

4001CS "Chris Squire"

Limited Edition Series

This bass is the Chris Squire signature model similar to Chris Squire's 1965 model 1999. [Note: Chris Squire's original bass had finger rest mounting holes, different shaped headstock, different tuners, and stereo output.]

Only 1000 of these basses were produced.

Features: Horseshoe bridge pickup, no body binding, mono output, 8 dot inlays, no neck binding, toaster neck pickup, contrasting African Vermilion headstock wings, clear plastic back painted pickguard with signature, more rounded shaped neck profile. Available only in Cream Colorglo finish.

1991 - Introduced

2000 - Production completed March 15, 2000

4001V63PMC "Paul McCartney"

This bass was designed for the Japanese market and based on Paul's 1964 Model 1999.

Features: Horseshoe bridge pickup, no body binding, mono output, dot inlay, no neck binding, toaster neck pickup, large white pickguard, left handed only, right-handed headstock. Available only in Fireglo finish.

???? - Introduced

1999 - Currently still in production

4002 MODEL

4002

This is a deluxe version of 4001. The 4002 model was a limited edition and in terms of features the fanciest bass that Rickenbacker ever produced.

The two pickups were moved to have the same location as a Fender Jazz bass.

The original price tag in 1977 was \$1250. One white bass was produced.

Features: Ebony fingerboard, pearl dot inlays, block bound body, two humbucking pickups, low impedance (XLR) output, 3-ply black/white/black laminated pickguard, truss rods adjust at head, 21 frets, black headstock binding, black fingerboard binding, contrasting walnut headstock wings, chrome Schaller M-4 tuning machines. Available only in Mapleglo and Walnut finishes.

1975 - Introduced

1984 - Discontinued

4003 MODELS

4003

This bass is the improved version of the 4001 model. The improved 4003 truss rods in neck are designed for use with round wound strings.

Features: Two-piece pickguard, improved truss rod design, truss rod adjustment at body, triangle inlays, bound body, bound fingerboard, mono and stereo output, Grover sealed back machine heads.

1980 - Introduced (replaced the 4001 model)

1982 to 1983 Rickenbacker B Series of Fireglo colors (three-color sunburst finish: black/red/yellow)

1983 - Schaller BMC chrome machine heads replaced Grover sealed back machine heads

1985(1984?) - One piece pickguard replaces two-piece pickguard

1985 (1984?) - Bridge modified

1985(1984?) - Truss rod adjustment changed to headstock end

1988/1989 - Bridge pickup capacitor removed and replaced with a shunt.

1995 - Schaller strap lock system replaces standard strap buttons.

1999 - Currently still in production

4003FL

This bass is the fretless version of the 4003 model.

Features: Bound body, 9 dot inlays, single color bound Padouk fingerboard, mono and stereo output. (Refer to 4003 for specifications and changes.)

1980 - Introduced

1999 - Currently still in production

4003S

This model replaced the 4001S.

Features: No body binding, mono output, 9 dot inlays, unbound Padouk fingerboard, truss rod adjustment at body, two-piece pickguard. (Refer to 4003 for specifications and changes.)

1980 - Introduced

1995 - Discontinued in November

4003SB

This model is similar to 4003S and the 4001V63.

Features: No body binding, mono output, 9 dot inlays, unbound Padouk fingerboard, horns wider than V63, toaster neck pickup, clear plastic pickguard and logoplate. Only available in Mapleglo.

1982 - Introduced

1983 - Discontinued

4003S/5

This bass is a five string version of 4003S with a low B string added.

Features: Unbound body, 9 dot inlays, mono output, unbound Padouk fingerboard, Schaller M4 machine heads.

(1986)1987 - Introduced

1995 - Schaller strap lock system replaces standard strap buttons.

Still in production

4003S/8

This bass is an eight string version of the 4003S model.

Features: Unbound body, 9 dot inlays, mono output, unbound rosewood fingerboard, toaster style neck pickup, Schaller M4 machine heads.

1987 - Introduced

1995 - Schaller strap lock system replaces standard strap buttons.

1999 - Currently still in production

4003 "Redneck" or "Bloodstar"

Limited Edition Series

This bass is similar to the 4003 model.

Features: Ruby red finished fingerboard, black hardware, black pickguard and truss rod cover, 9 black micro dot inlays, Ruby red finished unbound body

(1987?) - Introduced

(1987?) - Discontinued

4003 "Tuxedo" or "Whitestar"

Limited Edition Series

This bass is similar to the 4003 model.

Features: White lacquered fingerboard, black hardware, black pickguard and truss rod cover, 9 black micro dot inlays, white finished unbound body.

1987 - Introduced

1987 - Discontinued

4003/SPC "Blackstar"

Limited Edition Series

This bass is similar to the 4003 model.

This is a Mike Mesaros (The Smithereens) signature model.

Only 200 basses were produced

Features: Jetglo finished fingerboard, black hardware, black pickguard and truss rod cover, 9 white micro dot inlays, Jetglo finished unbound body.

1987 - Introduced

1990 - Discontinued

4003 "Shadow"

This bass is similar to the 4003 model.

Features: Black bound Padouk fingerboard, 9 black dot inlays, black hardware, black old style knobs, black pickguard and truss rod cover, black binding, Jetglo finished body and neck.

(1986-89?) - Introduced

(1989?) - Discontinued

4004 MODELS

4004C "Cheyenne I"

This is an updated more contemporary bass model.

Features: Features: No pickguard, unbound natural oiled walnut body, unbound maple fingerboard, contrasting walnut headstock wings, gold-plated hardware, 9 black dot inlays, 2 humbucking pickups, tone and volume control, mono output, black truss rod cover, Schaller M4 machine heads, combination tailpiece/bridge assembly.

1994(1993) - Introduced

1995 - Schaller strap lock system replaces standard strap buttons. 1999(1997) - Discontinued

4004C "Cheyenne II"

This bass is the revised version of 4004C Cheyenne I.

Features: No pickguard, unbound character maple and natural walnut body, unbound Bubinga fingerboard, contrasting walnut headstock wings or matching body color headstock, gold-plated hardware, 9 black dot inlays, 2 humbucking pickups, tone and volume control, mono output, black truss rod cover, gold Schaller M4 machine heads, gold combination tailpiece/bridge assembly.

1999 - Introduced

1999 - Currently still in production

4004L "Laredo"

Features: No pickguard, unbound Jetglo hardwood body, unbound maple fingerboard, chrome-plated hardware, 9 black dot inlays, 2 humbucking pickups, tone and volume control, mono output, black truss rod cover, chrome Schaller M4 machine heads, chrome combination tailpiece/bridge assembly.

1994(1993) - Introduced

1999 - Currently still in production

4004LK "Lemmy Kilmister"

Limited Edition Series

This is the Lemmy Kilmister (Motorhead) signature series model.

Features: (To be announced)

(TBA) Introduced

1999 Not currently in production

4005 MODELS

4005

This bass is a hollow body model.

Features: Offset double cut semi-hollow away body similar styling to 1965 model 360-375 guitar, single bound edge on the back of the body, unbound rounded front edge, bound cat's eye soundhole, teardrop shaped pickguard, clear plastic finger rest, large crushed pearl triangle inlays, 2 toaster pickups, R tailpiece, 2 volume/2 tone/mix controls. Available only in Fireglo and Mapleglo finishes.

1965 - Introduced

1969 - Headstock shortened

197?) - Colorglo finishes available 1972 - High gain pickups replaced toaster pickups

1973 - Single color (white or black) binding replaced block body binding

1973 - Smaller pearloid inlays replaced crushed pearl large triangle inlays

1974 - Gap in center raised lip of bridge eliminated

1984 - Discontinued

4005S

This bass is also known as Rose Morris European export model "3261".

Features: Hollow unbound double cut away body similar to model 360 guitar, R tailpiece. Available only in Fireglo and Mapleglo finishes.

1965 - Introduced

1969 - Discontinued

4005WB or 4005OS

This bass is the double-bound version of the 4005 model. Originally this model was called 4005 OS.

Features: Hollow double bound double cut away body similar to model 360 guitar, R tailpiece. Available only in Fireglo and Mapleglo finishes.

1966 - Introduced

1984 - Discontinued

4005-6WB

This bass is the six-string version of 4005WB.

Hollow double bound double cut away body similar to model 360 guitar, R tailpiece. Available only in Fireglo and Mapleglo finishes.

Features:

1966 - Introduced

1984 - Discontinued

4005/6

This bass is the six string version 4005

Features:

1965 - Introduced

1978 - Discontinued

4005/8

This bass is the eight string version of 4005.

Features:

1967 - Introduced

1984 - Discontinued

4005 LS "Lightshow"

This bass is a special multi-colored light version of the 4005. It is the companion to the 331 model light show guitar. This was a special order item.

Features:

(1968?) - Introduced

(1968?) - Discontinued

4005/5

This bass is the five-string version of the 4005 model.

Features:

1972 - Introduced

(????) - Discontinued

4005-6WB or 4005-6OS

This bass is the six-string version of 4005WB. Originally this bass was designated as 4005-6 OS. Hollow double bound double cut away body similar to model 360 guitar, R tailpiece. Available only in Fireglo and Mapleglo finishes.

Features:

1966 - Introduced

1984 - Discontinued

4005/6

This bass is the six-string version of the 4005 model.

Features:

1965 - Introduced

1978 - Discontinued

4005/8

This bass is the eight-string version of the 4005 model.

Features: The headstock was elongated in order to accommodate the 8 tuning machines.

1967 - Introduced

1984 - Discontinued

4008 MODEL

4008

This bass is the eight string version of the 4001 model.

Features:

1975 - Introduced

1983 - Discontinued

~ Return to 2000-3000 Series ~

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