

Subject: Tobias serial numbers

Tim Sarter asked:

>I am wondering if anyone can tell me what Tobias serial number proceeded the Gibson
>buyout?

Mike Tobias sold Tobias Guitars to Gibson in January of 1990. The first Gibson Tobias serial number was 1094. Actually, this date is not particularly important, because nothing changed at Tobias after Gibson bought them -- at first. The California-made basses, whether pre-Gibson or post, were all made under Mike Tobias's shop, under his direct supervision. There are no significant quality or design differences between the pre-Gibson and post-Gibson California-made basses.

However, at the end of 1992 Gibson decided to move Tobias Guitars to Nashville. Neither Mike nor any of his California employees went to Nashville. The last California-built Tobias (which was the last one built by Mike) was serial number 2044. IMHO, there is a BIG difference between in quality between the California Tobias basses and the Nashville ones. By the time the Nashville quality improved, Gibson changed the design of the electronics, so it's fair to say that Tobias basses were never the same after the Nashville move.

Bottom line -- the real question is whether the bass was a California one or a Nashville one. There is a corresponding difference in price in the used bass market between the California and Nashville basses, too.