



STONEFIELD

C-Series C1-4C and C1-5S

The surprise hit brand of LBGs 2016 now has a wallet-friendly range.
Mike Brooks gets the full lowdown

Stonefield Musical Instrument Company
www.stonefieldmusic.com

Bass Direct
www.bassdirect.co.uk

£2,350
 and
 £2,699

Like many bassists, we were struck by Tomm Stanley and his Stonefield M-Series instruments at last year's London Bass Guitar Show - and with good reason. Here was an independent luthier, starting out with a product range that didn't really conform to the traditional bass designs we all recognise. The high price point of the M-Series was an initial issue, so Stanley went back to the drawing board and came up with this new C-Series of basses which maintains a premium product at a lower price. How do these new creations match up?

Build Quality

Stonefield's striking wooden visuals have been maintained, with



both basses sprayed with a satin lacquer to allow the timber grain and figuring to shine through. The curvaceous body design with deep cutaways gives the player a stable platform to work against: the comfort aspect is excellent, as is the balance. Both basses feel substantial without being excessively weighty, and although there is a bulky feel, they still feel playable.

Both basses have a full, deep D-shaped neck profile. The string spacing is set at 19mm on the four-string, a classic string spacing, and 16mm on the five-string. This naturally places the strings on the five closer together but with the full neck profile, there are no issues.

GEAR

Stonefield C-Series C1-4C and C1-5S £2,350 and £2,699



TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION

Stonefield C-Series C1-4C

- Price** | £2,350
- Made In** | New Zealand
- Colour** | Natural
- Body** | Salusalu with New Zealand-grown cypress top
- Neck** | Okume, keruing and aircraft-graded laminates, 34" scale
- Neck Joint** | Full through-body neck and core (35 laminates)
- Nut Width** | 42mm
- Fingerboard** | Massa
- Frets** | 24
- Pickups** | OEM humbucker
- Electronics** | Passive
- Controls** | Volume, tone, tone finesse
- Hardware** | Stainless steel Tomm Stanley Tuning System, jarrah bridge
- Weight** | 3.7 kg
- Case/gig bag included** | Yes, lite-flite case and extra strings
- Left-hand option available** | Yes

WHAT WE THINK

- Plus** | Strong visuals, strong tones
- Minus** | Still not cheap! Won't appeal to every player
- Overall** | A very playable and comfortable instrument

BGM RATING



The standard of neck and fret finishing on both instruments is excellent, as you would expect of handmade instruments, and the clean natural visuals mean the dark massa fingerboard remains clean with no position markers (white dots have been used on the side of the neck).

Stanley's patented stainless steel and anodised aluminium tuning system has been retained, as has the through-body stringing, while a single-piece floating bridge has now been utilised. With the string retainers positioned on the headstock, the balance is fabulous, helped by the upper strap button's location behind the top horn on both instruments. Even with the added weight of the five-string, the instrument balances very well.

Sounds & Playability

We were struck by the level of tonal flexibility provided by the passive electronics of the M-Series, but have no fear, the C-Series instruments certainly aren't lacking in that department. Both basses have an extremely resonant tonal character – the five-string maybe slightly more so, due to its increased timber mass – and the sustain of both instruments is pleasing. Holding the bass, you can feel every note you play. It's also good to hear equal string volume across all the strings on both instruments.

The C1-4C provides a good cross-section of tones with a variety of traditional rounded passive sounds: there's a good degree of light and shade in all the tones on offer. Although there isn't the glass-shattering top end of a three-band EQ, that's not really what either of these basses are about. I was quickly able to pick out some great plummy fingerstyle tones, but also some honkier, tighter-sounding sounds that would work very well in a funk context. And don't dismay, all you slappers out there – there is a noticeable twang that helps this particular bass cut through.

The C1-5S is a slightly different beast. Due to its larger dimensions, it has a somewhat darker tone: the low B-string in particular is throaty and powerful. It feels, and sounds, as if each string carries a little more weight and power than the four-string instrument: the five-string has a solidity to its signature core tone that stands out, which is no bad thing. Passive five-strings can sometimes be a little underwhelming in the low register, so it's pleasing that this particular bass has plenty of presence at that end.

Conclusion

Judging from these examples, Stonefield now have a product to compete with other manufacturers at this price-point. With this range now available at Midlands dealer Bass Direct, I suggest you track one down to see what the fuss is about.

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION

Stonefield C-Series C1-5S

- Price** | £2,699
- Made In** | New Zealand
- Colour** | Natural
- Body** | Salusalu with New Zealand-grown cypress
- Neck** | Okume, keruing and aircraft-graded laminates, 34" scale
- Neck Joint** | Full through-body neck and core (35 laminates)
- Nut Width** | 50mm
- Fingerboard** | Massa
- Frets** | 24
- Pickups** | OEM humbucker
- Electronics** | Passive
- Controls** | Volume, tone, tone finesse
- Hardware** | Stainless steel Tomm Stanley Tuning System, jarrah bridge
- Weight** | 4.1 kg
- Case/gig bag included** | Yes, lite-flite case and extra strings
- Left-hand option available** | Yes

WHAT WE THINK

- Plus** | Great resonance and tone
- Minus** | A lot of competition at this price
- Overall** | A fine instrument and worthy of consideration

BGM RATING

