

**Guitarist's**  
test products



**Yamaha HS50M**  
Rob Antonello



**Hughes & Kettner TubeMeister 36**  
Jamie Dickson



**Taylor 518e**  
Isobel Morris & Jim Kimberley



Three screws and some Allen key wiggling, and the new bridge is soon right at home

# Fender Cabronita Telecaster

Josh Gardner

**FINAL REPORT** It's been plain sailing with so far, but will its first mod be a bridge too far?



**Me and El Cab** are six months into our relationship now, and while it was initially a tryst based purely on the most superficial of desires, it's developed into something much more grown up.

To be honest, it could have played like a dog and sounded as pleasant as an *X Factor* rejects' choir, and I still would have taken it home and cooed over its Sunburst-y, chrome-y loveliness – that's how deeply shallow I am. But I needn't have worried: the Cabronita is one seriously good guitar.

As I've mentioned in previous reports, it's a joy to play and those Fidele'Tron humbuckers sound great no matter what you throw at them. I honestly have to keep reminding myself that this is a guitar that you can pick up for £500 online. Indeed, when I put it next to my 2004 50th Anniversary Strat, there's really not a lot in it, despite it costing barely half the price of the US-made instrument. It's a real testament to the ever-improving standards of Fender's Mexico factory.

And yet, there's something that has bothered me from the off – try as I might, I just can't get on with that hardtail bridge. It's psychosomatic, most likely. In six months I've had no issues with it and yet... I can't shake the feeling that one day I'm going to hit the bridge too hard in a fit of rock 'n' roll stupidity and the saddles are going to go walkabout. What's more, unlike its more expensive brethren, I've noticed that the string spacing isn't quite right for the pickups. It's 54mm at the bridge instead of 52.38mm on the USA models, so the top strings don't line up over the Fidele'Tron pole pieces. I'm sure it's had a far less detrimental effects on the guitar's sound than my Drunk Hulk-esque right hand, but as someone whose obsession with things *lining up nicely* is borderline sectionable, it's a problem that had to be rectified.

A new bridge then, but what? The guitar's not actually mine (yet!), so non-reversible mods were out, but getting a custom unit made to fit can be expensive. I was mulling these options over when an email

popped into my inbox from reader Brian Thomas. Brian had read my first report where I'd mentioned my early bridge reservations, and explained he'd had similar issues with his Cab, and had solved them the help of [Axecaster.co.uk](http://Axecaster.co.uk).

A quick trip to the site looked very promising indeed. Not only did they have a Hipshot-style six-saddle bridge that claimed to be compatible with the Mexican Cabronita for under £20, but there was even a step-by-step guide on how to fit it on the site itself – marvellous.

A quick email exchange with Gavin at Axecaster later, and the bridge was winging its way to me. Fitting it really couldn't have been easier. As someone who has managed to botch his share of guitar maintenance jobs, I'm wary of anything more advanced than string changes with my axes. But it was simply a matter of taking off the old

bridge, fitting the new one into the existing screw holes, fixing on the new block-type saddles, stringing it up, intonating, done.

I couldn't have been happier with the results. The new bridge feels more reassuring, the OCD-troubling string-spacing issues are gone, and in what is almost certainly a case of Emperor's New Bridge, it even sounds a bit better on the top strings – thanks, Axecaster.

In this job, I'm lucky enough to put my hands on some lovely guitars as they pass through the office, but as much as I might be temporarily be swayed by their charms, I don't think there's many that I'd swap for my Toaster-pickup'd *amigo* for.

It's a testament to how a new guitar, the *right* guitar, can put your head in a totally different playing space, and reignite your enthusiasm for the instrument. I've found it can even hold the raging GAS monster at bay (though if you're thinking of making a Mexican version of La Cabronita Borracha, seriously Fender, call me). A 'Little Bastard' it may be, but this is one guitar I'm happy to welcome into the family.

## Fender Cabronita Telecaster



- First reviewed:** 365
- Price:** £646
- Type:** Solidbody electric
- Origin:** Mexico
- Body:** Alder
- Neck:** Maple, bolt-on, 648mm (25.5") scale length, 22 medium jumbo frets
- Electrics:** 2x Fender Fidele'Tron humbuckers, 3-way selector switch, master volume
- Hardware:** 6-saddle, chrome-plated, strings-through-body hardtail bridge, Fender logo'd die-cast tuners
- Fender GBI**  
01342 331700  
[www.fender.co.uk](http://www.fender.co.uk)

In what's almost certainly a case of Emperor's New Bridge, the Cab even sounds better on the top strings