



Vintage Style, Modern Innovation

The Super-Vee BladeRunner Tremolo

Replacement vibrato systems are nothing new, but innovations in the area can be worth noting. And among those who adore vintage gear in its original state, a vibrato that doesn't diminish the value or appearance of a classic instrument, yet still meets the needs of modern players, is worth a look. In 2005, luthier Jeff Lathrop and industrial designer/engineer Marc Caldwell introduced their Super Vee replacement vibrato (see VG's "Gear Reviews" March '07). The company's latest offering is the BladeRunner.

On the surface, the BladeRunner has the appearance of a standard vibrato, requiring no modification of that prized vintage gem or retro-fitted modern shredder. But compared to

a stock vibrato, it offers two key upgrades – its block and its patented Blade technology. The block is a proprietary material attached to the bottom part of the sound plate, while the plate is made of billet aluminum. Together, they aid sustain and reduce the overall weight of the system. And while the whole setup is pretty trick, arguably the coolest thing is the control that adjusts the tension of the vibrato bar – stiffer for more vintage-feeling vibrato, or looser for a more Floyd-Rose-like feel. The Blade attaches the bridge to the mounting plate. It's made of high-tensile-strength tempered steel, and eliminates the friction that hinders the classic design.



**SUPER-VEE
BLADERUNNER
TREMOLLO**

Price: \$139 (retail)
Contact: super-vee.com.

Our test unit was sent to us installed on an import Fender Stratocaster, and there was a noticeable improvement in sustain and the evenness/playability. Chords were full, and when we compared the guitar to a high-end Strat, the BladeRunner excelled, sonically.

The BladeRunner's strongest asset is most apparent when you experiment with its adjustable arm tension,

which can give this vintage-style unit the fluid motion of a Floyd Rose or Steinberger Trans Trem. This makes it possible to play pedal-steel-like parts one moment and go to flat-out rock dives the next.

The BladeRunner will be a welcome upgrade to a vintage Strat or a new boutique instrument. It's an impressive piece of hardware. – **Sean O'Bryan Smith VG**