

Lundgren Pickups Grey Monterey Strat

Hip hip hooray for the Grey Monterey!

It's happened again! Our local pickup specialist Johan Lundgren has wound pickups, where he has got inspiration from a time where everything was much better, at least in the case of music. We have taken a peak at his Strat set 'Grey Monterey'.





We have understood both mounting pickups in an appropriate Stratocaster-inspired guitar, as well as playing and listening really thoroughly. One must do so to get a serious judgement and test (not direct translation). And when it applies to news from Lundgren Pickups, we must do a really serious job, because it's exactly what we feel Johan wants. It is how he himself works. It is that impression we got after all of the contact that we've had together this past year. But first, a quick look back...

Monterey Pop Festival

1967 was a year that will never be forgotten. In June that year, something was held that people often refer to as the first 'real' music festival. Three days packed with world-class artists such as Otis Redding, Ravi Shanker, Janis Joplin, Grateful Dead, Simon and Garfunkel, Jefferson Airplane, the Mamas and the Papas, The Byrds, Electric Flag, Butterfield Bluesband, and many, many more. Many British artists such as Donovan, Rolling Stones and the Kinks were intended, but didn't get their visas for different reasons; many of them for earlier drug related

offenses. The Beatles were also intended, but they were busy preparing for their big TV show that would be sent across the world later in the year. With Paul McCartney's recommendation, the event holders booked both The Who and an at-the-time unknown band with a promising guitarist, Jimi Hendrix Experience. And even though Stones couldn't appear as a band, one of the founders, multi-instrumentalist Brian Jones, attended, and he even introduced Hendrix to a music-loving public.

The Monterey Festival also meant the start of 'The Summer of Love' that we remember. During the same year came the 'Swinging Sixties' for the first, but absolutely not the last, time. It also wasn't all that bad either, but Monterey had undeniably sat very deeply in the minds of the youth.

Lundgren Pickups

Johan Lundgren is the kind of person that you can't help but like. He is someone who is as eccentric as a someone who is as skilled at what they do usually is (creative licence, the translation is bad into English) – a number of people would argue that he is amongst the best

in the world (something I gladly agree with) – and at the same time a generally friendly and sympathetic person. In truth, a fairly lucky (and yet unusual) combination in our industry.

One will inadvertently think of the old Swedish saying, 'put one's light under the bush'. This can be interpreted as someone who should not hide how knowledgeable or skilled they actually are. I believe that Johan Lundgren is a craftsman with a tendency to do just that. As a result, I see it as my mission to inform the world and all of our readers about just how good I think Lundgren is. He always holds the highest standard for everything he tackles. It is therefore no coincidence that I chose to mount pickups from Lundgren in many of my instruments: my only bass guitar, an old lap steel, many Stratocasters, my ES-335, and a Telecaster. Lundgren Guitar Pickups has wound pickups for both electric guitars and basses for over 30 years. Today he sends pickups to Ibanez, Hagström, Jackson, Vigier, Schecter and many, many more.

When MM visited him in his workshop a few years ago, he showed us with pride his winding machine from 1957 that he still uses to wind humbucker pickups.



When talking about news from Lundgren Pickups, we simply have to do a really serious job, as it is exactly what we feel Johan wants.

Grey Monterey

It is then of course appropriate to do a transition to the new pickups that Lundgren now presents under the name Grey Monterey. When the Monterey Festival owned the room, Lundgren's winding machines had already spun for 10 years. Monterey also meant that the young Hendrix showed his musical acrobatics for the first time in front of a large and enthusiastic audience. It is just that sound he had in his Stratocaster that year that Lundgren wanted to capture. Johan describes it himself as 'unsurpassed clarity, strong low end, woody sounding mids and clear string definition'. But it is not 'only' the sound that one wants to emulate; it has of course taken many hours to find it. Lundgren has even captured the appearance in its classic vintage beauty. It uses AlNiCo 5 magnets where the D and G string poles are the same height, higher than the other poles, vulcanized fiber bobbins stamped with Lundgren's own stamping tool. It even gives the right surface on the edges, it is claimed. And one has chosen to use a thread typical of the time in the form of simple lacquer

coating (plain enamel) thread, to differentiate between the formvar insulated thread that Fender used between 1964-65. In the same way has the Grey Monterey of course received the grey bottom plates that gave the original its name (grey bottom). The textile covered connection cables have blue/yellow pushback insulation, and the middle pickup has not been phase reversed, which some manufacturers do to get a humbucker-like effect in the middle/edge positions. Every pickup is sealed and dated with a serial number and DC resistance value on the underside of the base plate. These values are around 5.7, 5.8 and 5.9 k Ω respectively starting from the neck pickup.

In addition, you can have Lundgren's special induction plate mounted under the bridge pickup so that it gives it more focus and firmness. This type of plate is mounted in Lundgren's BJFE set that I equipped on my first Stratocaster-inspired home build, and I was very happy with the result, so I decided to get the Grey Monterey set with the induction plate.

The set ships complete with pickup ►

TYPE Guitar Pickups

PRINCIPLE Matching set of single coil pickups for mounting in Strats

DC RESISTANCE 5.7, 5.8 and 5.9k Ω from neck pickup measured

EXTRA Shipped with optional cases, mounting screws and rubber spacers

PRICE 299 Euros for a set with 3 pickups, 99 euros individually

MANUFACTURER Lundgren Guitar Pickups, www.lundgren.com

INFORMATION www.lundgren.se

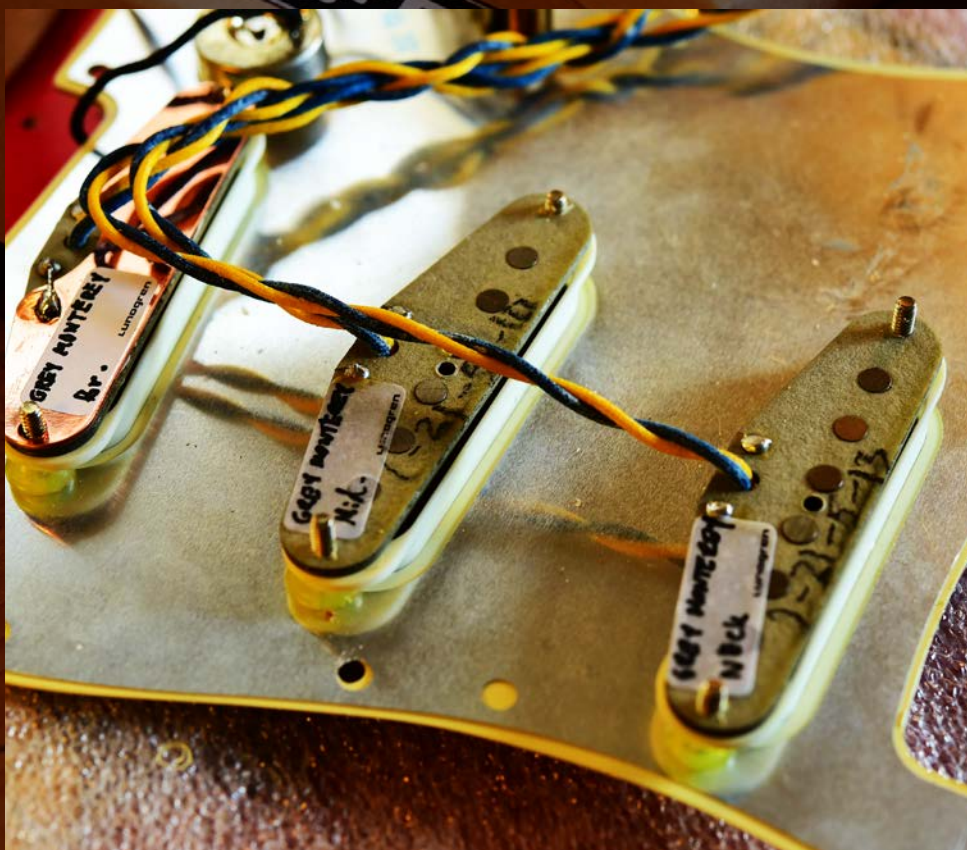


+ PLUS

- Always sounds excellent
- Lots of vintage feeling
- Excellent quality
- Beautifully built
- Feels really authentic

— MINUS

- Can be very addictive



A good tip can be to twist the connection cables to minimise humming.

covers, countersunk screws and rubber spacers. Johan points out that the customer themselves can choose which covers they want. The options are white, off-white or black, with or without the logo. He chose to send off-white covers with the logo alongside the pickups he sent for our test. An excellent choice, we think, because it is obvious that one is proud, or maybe even feel a little bit fancy, when one has Lundgren pickups in one's guitar, right?

Mounting and First Impressions

The appearance of the Grey Monterey has hit right on target. The pickups are gorgeous and breathe the highest quality. Changing the pickups in a Stratocaster takes just a couple of minutes and most of the time is spent removing the strings and screwing the screws in all of the pick guard in place. If one has a fragile finish on the Stratocaster's body, one must protect it with some fabric or foam both against the chosen surface and the top, when one turns over the pick guard. Soldering involves soldering loose the three cables that go to grounding the back of one of the pots (if there is already a set mounted) as well as the three cables that sit on the three contact points of the five-way switch. When one has unscrewed the three



Every pickup is sealed and dated with a serial number and Dc resistance value on the bottom of the base plate.

original pickups, one only has to screw in the new ones and solder the six cables that were unsoldered on the original set. If one doesn't want to use the original screws with matching spacers, Lundgren will send something that will work great, if you have countersunk holes in your pickguard. In any case, you get either countersunk holes yourself or find screws with a domed head. It depends on how you want it to look. A detail that amused with when I mount single coil pickups is that I usually twist both of the cables for the pickup to minimize hum. I imagine that it makes some difference with the so called paired single leads. I have even been amused that to cover the pickup cavity with copper tape for the same reason. Everyone trusts what they believe. Lundgren's pickups relatively free from humming so I decided not to line the cavity with copper tape. Sure, they are normal single-coil pickups, but also... and the fact that one ignores that the phase-swapped middle pickup makes it so that the two 'edge positions' sound better, and more Mark Knopfler, than otherwise. And sure, one doesn't get the humbucker-effect with these positions, but I prefer a more authentic sound before hum-silencing any day of the week.

Sonically, the Monterey set is held to a really

high quality. To my ears, it stands somewhere between Lundgren's BJFE set and a more vintage-sounding set. Clearer than Fender's Texas Special and Klein's 63's, with more bit and a more emphasised mid-range. The bridge pickup is strong and mellow without any tendency to sound sharp and scratchy (that often is the issue with single coil pickups in the bridge position) thanks to the induction plate under the pickup, I think. The neck pickup is unbelievably clear and well defined without too much bottom, and with lots of string feeling. The middle pickup is also very clean and clear in the mid-range, but also with a satisfyingly warm low end. In other words, an ideal sound from a pickup in the middle position of a Strat. I should not hesitate for a second to use it to play 'Kon-Tiki', 'Apache' and other classic Shadows hits. Every pickup selection has an attack and an openness that is you aren't spoilt with using Strat pickups, and both edge selections get full points. Exactly how I want them to sound. Thankyou Johan!

The Dc Resistance measurements for the Grey Monterey are between 5.7 and 5.9 k Ω for the neck pickup. This can be compared with Fender's own production where at the beginning of the 60's, the pickups had a little over

6 k Ω (between 6.2 and 6.4 k Ω or so) up until when CBS took over in 1965, where the next year the output went down to a little under 6 k Ω (between 5.76 to 5.88 k Ω), so even there, the Lundgren pickups have it spot on.

Summary

As we said in the beginning: Lundgren has done it again! The Grey Monterey is a matching set of single coil pickups where one gets a lot of inspiration, both when applied to sound and appearance, from the pickups Fender worked on right in the beginning of the period that characterised the transition between Leo's ownership to when CBS took over. The Grey Monterey pickups manifest as an excellent way that the era that we associate with the first music festivals, heaps of really good music, and loads of creativity. For those who want to have something with more attack and clarity in their sound than what is associated with traditional vintage pickups inspired by the 50s, the Grey Monterey is an obvious first choice.

And for those who haven't seen the film from the Monterey festival, there are many clips on YouTube. They are recommended almost as strongly as these pickups. Thankyou Johan Lundgren for existing. **mm**