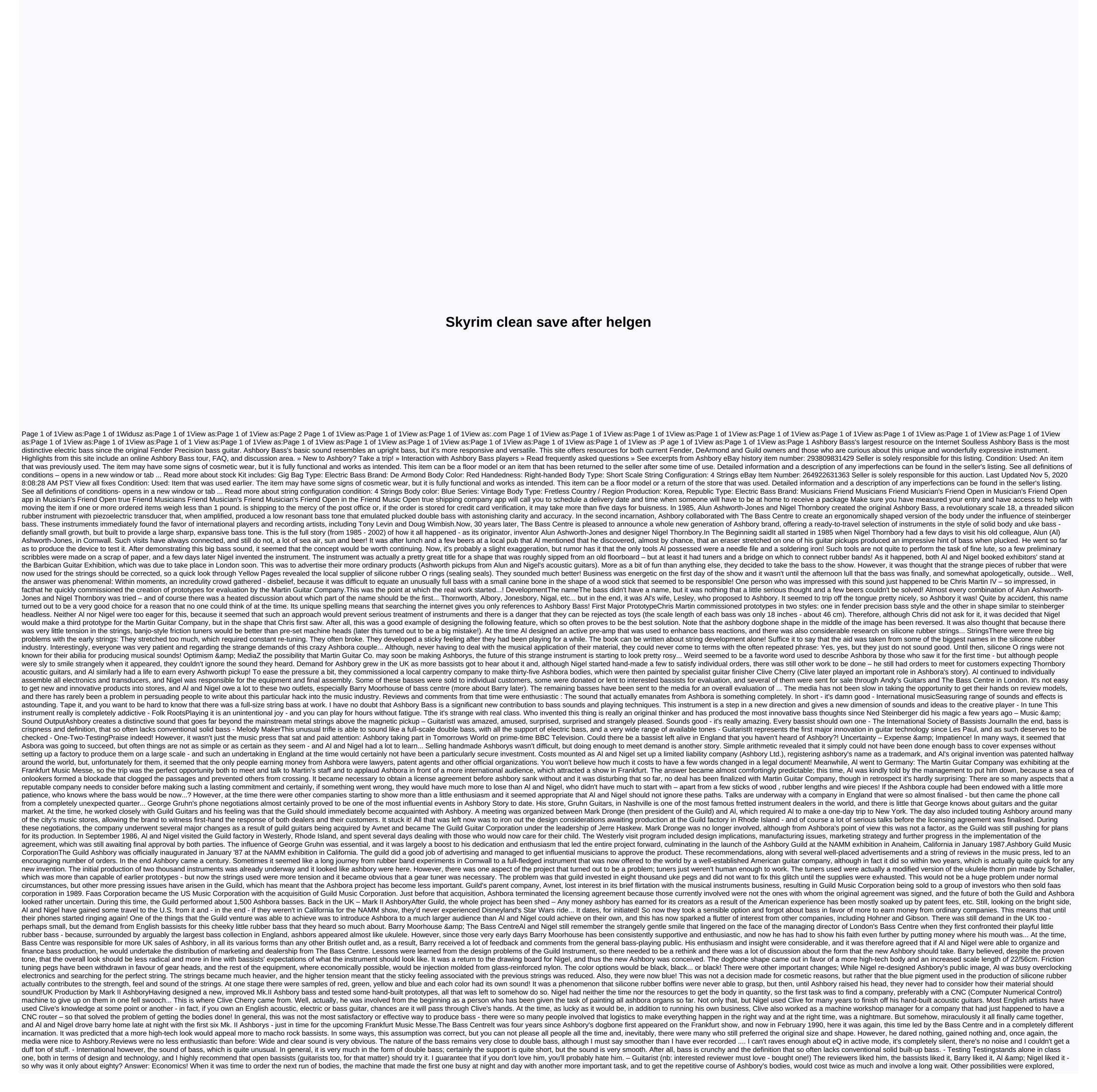
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including the formation of the whole body - but the cost of producing the tools would be astronomical. England was not a place to risk more time or effort on Ashbory: Production was too laborious, costs were too high, money was too short, the risk was too great, and ... Al and Nigel had had enough! The end? Well, that was the end of it! There is no point in absorbing a dead horse, and Al and Nigel have learned to say, No. Sorry if you know where I can get Ashb.. NIE Don't think that if you may have tried... NOT Have you ever thought about... BUT... NO, NO, NO The problem was that the Ashbors didn't want to lie down and die. People were still playing there and they wanted strings to the unfortunate thing, and worse - people still wanted to talk about it... Sorry, we don't hear very well today, GO BUT of course ashbory will not completely go away, and his admirers will not go away too. As for his production, there were a few nibbles including Gibson once again – this time President Gibson went back to Nashville, Ashbory in hand to run it alongside a few people. It must have run too fast and ended up in the cupboard somewhere because the net result was that it was never heard or seen again, and Nigel lost the last Mk II Ashbory in his possession - and still would like him back please. Fortunately, Al had ashbory much earlier and, in a true spirit of innovation, had come up with another use for him! (see photo). Cynical? Well, maybe just a little bit. Then - a request from Clive didn't know about Ashbory at the time. The whole of the UK has made instruments, from the first prototypes of the Martin Guitar Company, passed through his hands for spraying - and wrote the CNC program produced mk ii organs. He also happened to be a bassist, so he knew firsthand something from the mysterious functioning of the bassist's mind! Just when Al and Nigel gave up on the fact that Ashbory was well and truly dead, Clive decided that he could do it without much difficulty: He owned the necessary workshop and had all the machines and knowledge to do all the work from start to finish without involved, but now Clive doesn't have to rely on anyone. With each new ashbora look, there has always been some discussion about the price level at which they should be smashed. One approach was to go to the mass market with a basic product without additives that most players can afford. The second option will aim straight to the upper end, using the best materials and equipment and, adding some elegant cosmetics. Until then, the previous approach had always been followed. Now Clive has decided on the latter. The result was an elegant instrument by all standards. The body was made of Brazilian mahogany with a book matched to the fire surface on the front of the maple and head. The body was tied with a black edging to match the black fingerboard and equipment, the machine heads were of a closed gear type with large buttons of the bass butterfly, and the last finish was a very slightly sunburst honey-gold translucent polyester lacquer. The last instrument certainly looked and felt business! Clive's plan was to get them initially in a fairly small batch of ten or twenty at a time and sell directly to the public rather than going through the usual retail/retail network. In this way, the final cost would be good value for money at around five hundred pounds. The first batch of ten Ashborys was formed, and then, unfortunately, no more! This time the reason for his fall was completely out of nowhere and had nothing to do with the bass. Clive owned his own workshop premises, and although the idea of selling them had never come to his mind before, he unexpectedly made an offer that he could not reject for the whole lot. He has certainly worked harder than most people over the past few years, and the prospect of suddenly reaping comfortable financial benefits from the assets he has built has been extremely attractive. It was understandable that Clive should take advantage of the offer, which he quickly did, and then went on to devote his time to improving his bass playing and building a recording studio - good news for Clive, but not so good for poor orphaned Bass Ashbory! Maybe Ashbory will fare better as a board game! Don't donate IT, Don't collect £200, Go back to squared, etc. Influence this time Al and Nigel Nigel Ashbory to the document cabinet under the headline Life's Experience and, as someone once so perceptively remarked: Experience is something you get when you don't get what you want! There were so many promising opportunities, each of which could succeed, but even with the most urgently defined plans, happiness still plays a big role and there was a lack of luck in this endeavor. Twelve years have passed since Ashbory first appeared, and although there were many satisfied Ashbora owners around the world, it was now clear that it was not intended for historical books as a typical success story. And yet it was still reappearing, this time helped along with the undisputed success story. And yet it was now clear that it was now clear t would be when contacts were underway with the Guild in the early days! Now, of course, this is common and anyone can quickly and cheaply announce to the world and leave a steady record in the form of a website for everyone to see. Almost imperceptibly, references to Ashbora have found their way on websites and newsgroups around the world, particularly in America, which thanks to the Guild boasts more Ashbora owners. Public opinion and appreciation are extremely influential and Al and Nigel owe a debt of gratitude to all those who kept ashbory's name alive in this way. There are homepages dedicated entirely to Ashbory, hosted by individuals who each have their own unique way of publicizing, praising, promoting, or in some cases, ridiculing Ashbora. Depending on your point of view, it has been described as; brilliant, absurd, musical, non-english, bizarre, innovative, strange and wonderful - but one thing is certain, regardless of the motive, the result is that it is still more vulnerable! Although Al and Nigel abandoned the project even though the media found something else to write, and although Ashbory, for all interest beyond their enthusiasm - people who simply, simply enjoyed using it for good music, and did not want to see it disappear forever. These people, regardless of whether they realize it, have played - and play an active role in further development Ashbory. To illustrate the continued interest and enthusiasm, this chapter ends with an excerpt of an email sent to Nigel from Brock Frazier in Pittsburgh (curator of ashbora fansite LargeSound.com). Working myself and Alun Jones added joy to my life. Other than excellent sound and portability, Ashbory brings out additional features in my game. I was inadvertantly promoting since 1996 (I was fifteen years old and I didn't play when I were introduced in 1986) just talking about how great it is. Thanks, Brock! - and to all the others who were inadvertantly working so behalf of Ashbory. The Ashbory & someone who wants advice or strings or sometimes – just chat. One such person who was in communication with Al from time to time was Jay Pilzer of New Hope Guitar Traders in Tennessee, who, from time to time, ordered strings for those of his clients who owned Ashborys. During the interview, it emerged that he had several ties to Fender, and in particular was a friend of Bill Acton, whose role is as the guild's marketing manager. So it was that Jay, acting as an intermediary, put Bill and Al in touch with each other. Guild, of course, is now under fender umbrella, after being purchased by Fender Music. Through all the guild's problems and property changes in recent years, the name has been kept alive in Westerly by those who continue to build beautiful guitars in American tradition, and now once again, the Guild is finally back on course, this time under fender's proper leadership. Willie Fritscher, a longtime guild plant manager, is optimistic: When asked about Fender's takeover of the Guild, he said: We finally got home. After the first phone call with Al, Bill Acton went on to do some production costs to run a thousand basses, the reasoning is that if such estimates can be made sense, which meant ashbory was back in business! Fender also owns the name DeArmond, which now refers to instruments heavily made in the Guild tradition but produced in Korea under Fender's control. That was the name of DeArmond, which was now acceptable to Ashbory's past incarnations, phone lines humming between Cornwall and Oxfordshire as Al and Nigel returned to full full ness, a mail-driven Ashbory information and draft agreement, this time, was much easier to master the document based more on goodwill and good intentions rather than incomprehensible legal jargon, which is the stuff of most contracts, consuming a lot of paper and still leaving gaps anyway. The Guild's original 1987 contract was the size and complexity of War and Peace, but it still did not cover every eventuality. Tim Shaw, R&D Manager guild/DeArmond, was tasked with collect all the necessary for the design and construction of Ashbora, and thus, cooperation with a factory in Korea, which will create bass. Interestingly, although not surprisingly, it was decided on the original shape of the dogbone, not the later version of the Mk II. The reason was quite simple: Mark II never made it to America (apart from the one lurking somewhere in Gibson's factory, or maybe one or two other onlookers who managed to escape England), so little is known about it in the US. Ashbory, who created all the interest was the first version of the Guild and it's up to that DeArmond remains loyal, albeit with new improved tuners targeted! Speaking of Bill Acton and himself, Tim Shaw jokingly pointed to Nigel (in confidence): We would like to be described as people of extraordinary vision and spirit who brought musical instruments out of a period of hacked resemblance and into the new Golden Age... Oops! Sorry Tim (motto: never write anything, nor open your mouth when the person next to you has a pen in hand), but ... maybe it is quite close to the truth after all. Certainly the general feeling among people in the music industry seems to be: If anyone can. Fender can. See... Watch this space! DeArmond Ashbory's new improved bass was launched at Nashville Summer NAMM in July 1999 – and here are four people who are very happy with it! From the accompanying promotional leaflet: DeArmond re-publishes what the Guild literature of 1987 called the embodiment of originality... the most innovative bass guitar ever created. The 18-inch weight without thresholds and ashbora's super light weight make it easy to create a growl vertical or impact standard electric bass. Ashworth's patented transducer and silicone rubber strings are a major part of what makes Ashbory so special, but live audio and recording is what makes it a must for any recording studio and recorded with the original Ashborys Guild. They loved and valued these very collectible instruments. They have difficulty finding strings and parts for their beloved Ashbora basses, but replacement strings and parts will soon be available again as accessories from DeArmond. Now available worldwide in Black, Frost Red Metallic and Moon Blue, all with a concert bag included. And now? In England, Mark II may be slightly more popular, but it really has more to do with familiarity. The smaller shape of the dogbone results from having a larger bass sound, while the Mk II is perhaps a little more friendly to those making the transition from a conventional bass guitar. Who knows? - maybe in the future there will be room for both versions! At the time of writing (2002) Ashbory is fourteen years old rendating childhood. If you happen to fall for Alun Ashworth-Jones or Nigel Thornbory not to be put off by the odd lumpy feel of their handshake — it's just that they're keeping their fingers crossed in anticipation of blissful and restless puberty! Ashbory PlayersDuni selection of international musicians known for owning or playing Ashbory BassJack Bruce • Alec John Such • Pino Palladino • Doug Wimbish • Nathan East • Tom Hamilton • Mike Watt • Tony Levin • Rudy Sarzo • Paul Westwood • Chris Cross • Billy Sheehan • Vivian Stanshall • Guy Pratt • Bootsy Collins • Brad Lang • Simon Edwards • Peter Gabriel • Martin Simpson • David Gilmour • Les Claypool • Jair-Rohm Parker Wells • Gary Fletcher (The Blues Band)© 2002 Nigel Thornbory - Many thanks for allowing you to recreate ashbory's official history and the web version is archived on Wayback Machine HERE). Learn more about LargeSound.com Ashbory Bass Online Resource. Resources.

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