

Magnetic Pickup recommendations for your Parker Fly.

Pickups installed in a Parker Fly will sound different than the same pickups installed in a conventional guitar, because the Fly is built differently. This is true whether your pickups are DiMarzio, Seymour Duncan, EMG, or custom hand-wounds. Pickups only copy the acoustic properties of the guitar. They can *shape* tone but they don't *create* tone. It all starts with the guitar. Before choosing pickups, consider the tonal character of your guitar and the ease of pickup installation.

Nothing sounds like a Parker Fly. They vibrate so much; you can actually feel it as you play.

All guitars soak up some of the "sound energy" of a vibrating string. Parkers soak up less "sound energy" so the pickups "hear" more overtone harmonics, which produces uncommon richness of tone. The frequency response extends much higher than other guitars due to the unique materials used in its construction (for example: lightweight tone woods, composite skin and stainless steel frets). Therefore a pickup, which sounds dark or muddy on another guitar, may sound more clear and bright in the Parker Fly.

Sound choices:

Building fine pickups is a real art, but it doesn't have to be mysterious. Basically, the guitar pickup is a coil of insulated wire wrapped around a magnetic core. It is positioned so the strings are within its magnetic field. These things can be altered to shape the tonal characteristics of a pickup. The main design factors for magnetic pickups are:

- Coil configuration and locations (for ex. a pair of Humbuckers, or three Single-coils, or two Single-coils plus a Humbucker)
- Wiring of the coils in relation to one another (for ex. series vs. parallel, in-phase vs. out-of-phase, hum-canceling vs. noisy)
- Magnetic field (several materials are available including Alnico II, Alnico III, Alnico V. Ceramic and Neodymium)
- Coil wire; diameter, length, number of wraps, and overall coil shape.
- Other things which have an effect on tone are: coil wire insulation type, potting, pickup covers, mounting plates, pole pieces, distance from string to pickup, pot values, etc.

The key point is, you can modify any number of these factors to impact your overall sound.

The Parker Fly is factory equipped with DiMarzio pickups*. If you want a different tone DiMarzio makes a dozen different models which are available in the Fly format ** (*see below*).

Other than DiMarzio:

There are three things to consider when retrofitting non-DiMarzio pickups onto a Fly.

- Our guitar body is so thin (just over 1/2" at the neck PU) that special pickup mounting is required. Fly Humbuckers are anchored with two pole piece screws going into threaded brass inserts in the guitar. If a pickup doesn't have pole piece spacing identical to the Fly, modifications will be required. (*The screws are 1.400" on center, on the diagonal of a 0.720" X 1.200" grid.*) A solidly mounted pickup is imperative for top performance when playing loud.
- Our base-plate corners have a 3/8" radius. Most other pickups have a smaller radius and won't fit into the pickup hole without modification.
- String spacing at the Parker Bridge is about 2.150". The pole pieces of our DiMarzio pickups are 2" apart (0.400" o.c.)***. Narrower spacing *may* diminish the sound of the E strings.

Keep an open mind and open ears when it comes to selecting magnetic pickups for your Parker Fly because your favorite pickup model may sound a little different in a Parker. Remember that magnetic pickups are only one link in a long chain that determines tone and output. Other important links to consider are: your guitar, strings, cables, amps and speakers.

Tech Notes:

* *Flys built since April of 1999 are equipped with DiMarzio newer Parker Fly Custom Neck #PHWP1, and Parker Fly Custom Bridge #PHWP2. These are identified by a DiMarzio logo, which is 5/8" long.*

From 1993 through March of 1999 Flys had the original DiMarzio pickups, which were based on the Air Norton for the neck position and the Tone Zone for the bridge position. These are identified by a DiMarzio logo, which is 3/8" long.

** *DiMarzio makes the following pickup models in the Fly format: The Humbucker From Hell, PAF, PAF Pro, Fred, Norton, Air Norton, Air Zone, Tone Zone, Breed neck and bridge models, Air Classic neck and bridge, and Virtual PAF neck and bridge models. They have also done Fly versions of the Evolution and Steve's Special.*

*** *Seymour Duncan's Trembucker models also have wide pole piece spacing, but they are not exactly the same dimensions as DiMarzio.*