



FENDER® LAUNCHES ALL-NEW STORIES COLLECTION WITH ERIC JOHNSON "VIRGINIA" STRATOCASTER®

**"VIRGINIA" STRATOCASTER® HONORS JOHNSON'S ORIGINAL 1954
GUITAR USED TO RECORD "TONES" AND "AH VIA MUSICOM"**

HOLLYWOOD, Calif. (February 11, 2020)—Fender Musical Instruments Corporation (FMIC) today released the Eric Johnson "Virginia" Stratocaster guitar with the Grammy® award winning artist Eric Johnson. As part of this unique collaboration with the singer, songwriter and guitarist, Fender has recreated Johnson's 1954 "Virginia" Stratocaster in the Fender Custom Shop in limited quantity and on the Fender Corona production line for one year only. Available now at local musical instruments dealers worldwide and on Fender.com and fendercustomshop.com, the model is a reproduction of Johnson's prized 1954 "Virginia" Stratocaster with personal touches, celebrating his unique playing style and desire to inspire new musical journeys for guitar players everywhere. Johnson's "Virginia" Stratocaster will

be the first model in Fender's all-new Stories Collection: a celebration of modified Fender guitars that shaped history's most iconic music and the details that made them unique.

"Fender and I talked about doing a reissue of my '54 "Virginia" for the Stories Collection and I wanted to try it in Sassafras, like my original," said guitarist Eric Johnson. "When I got the prototype from Fender, it had the tone I had been looking for since my original guitar. It has a particular smooth sustained tone but as you turn it up, it has gain like a little violin."

For the first time, Fender has replicated and released Eric Johnson's beloved '54 "Virginia" Stratocaster, the instrument he used to record the *Tones* record (1987 Grammy® nomination for Best Rock Instrumental Performance) and the Platinum *Ah Via Musicom* (1991 Grammy® for Best Rock Instrumental Performance) albums that made him a hero to music fans and guitarists alike. Built in Corona, Calif., these "Virginia" Stratocaster guitars combine extraordinary history and exceptional tone. The rare sassafras body, custom switching and special set-up will thrill players and collectors by showcasing the guitar's unique silky tone and distinct fine grain appearance.

Models include the Eric Johnson "Virginia" Stratocaster (\$2,499.99) and Fender Custom Shop Eric Johnson "Virginia" Stratocaster (\$9,000.00). In the same spirit as the production line version, the Fender Custom Shop masterbuilt "Virginia" will take on the same aesthetic and tone as the original guitar, but in exacting detail with handwound pickups and a flamed maple neck – available in an extremely limited quantity. "When I first took on this project, I was a bit intimidated because of all the intricate specs involved with this guitar," said Carlos Lopez, Fender Custom Shop Master Builder. "From the Sassafras and flamed neck to the pickups - the challenge was to make sure Eric was happy with it and loved it the first time." Learn more about the creation process with Eric Johnson and Fender Master Builder, Carlos Lopez in this [video](#).

The Fender Custom Shop version is complete with the same specifications and features as his original, including a 6-saddle American vintage synchronized tremolo bridge with a 2-piece offset seam sassafras body, lacquer finish and custom wiring. Additionally, Eric added a number of personal touches to facilitate his distinctive technique and sound like a GraphTech® high E saddle, flattened 12" fingerboard radius and jumbo frets for optimal playability.

“To this day, Eric continues to release brilliant music, tours constantly and is, to the electric guitar community, a guitar wizard and widely-followed tastemaker,” said Justin Norvell, EVP Fender Products. “It was a perfect fit having Eric Johnson as the first artist in this Stories Collection celebrating modified instruments played by important guitarists that created music for the ages.”

In true tradition, the Fender’s Artist Signature Series honors iconic musicians through product progression and storytelling, creating instruments inspired by the unique specifications of the world’s greatest guitarists and bassists. In that spirit, the Stories Collection celebrates modified Fender guitars that shaped history’s most iconic music. Learn more about the Eric Johnson “Virginia” Stratocaster models and access product descriptions [here](#); product photos and images of Eric Johnson with his Signature Stratocaster can be found [here](#).

For technical specs, additional information on new Fender products and to find a retail partner near you, visit www.fender.com. Join the conversation on social media by following @Fender and @FenderCustomShop

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Fender Custom Shop Eric Johnson “Virginia” Strat (\$9,000.00) & Stories Collection Eric Johnson 1954 “Virginia” Stratocaster (\$2,499.99): Eric Johnson already had his 1954 “Virginia” Stratocaster when he recorded *Tones* and the Platinum *Ah Via Musicom*, groundbreaking albums that made him a hero to music fans and guitarists alike. In 2020, for the first time, Johnson’s 1954 “Virginia” Stratocaster will be replicated by both Fender Custom Shop and the Fender Corona Production line. With its rare sassafras body, lacquer finish, custom wiring and more, the Eric Johnson 1954 “Virginia” Stratocaster will thrill players and collectors alike with its distinctive look and exceptional tone.

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ABOUT FENDER

Since 1946, Fender has revolutionized music and culture as one of the world's leading musical instrument manufacturers, marketers, and distributors. Fender Musical Instruments Corporation (FMIC)—whose portfolio of owned and licensed brands includes Fender®, Squier®, Gretsch® guitars, Jackson®, EVH®, Charvel®, Bigsby®, and PreSonus® – follows a player-centric approach to crafting the highest-quality instruments and digital experiences across genres. Since 2015, Fender's digital arm has introduced a new ecosystem of products and interactive experiences to accompany players at every stage of their musical journey. This includes innovative apps and learning platforms designed to complement Fender guitars, amplifiers, effects pedals, accessories, and pro-audio gear, and inspire players through an immersive musical experience. FMIC is dedicated to unlocking the power of musical expression for all players, from beginners to history-making legends. In 2026, Fender celebrates 80 years of giving artists “wings to fly,” carrying on the vision of its founder, Leo Fender, and connecting players through a shared love of music.

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