

REDMOND, OR

Beauty and the bass

A Central Oregon instrument maker has transformed barrel staves into bass beauties. The staves had been used for soaking cherries in Oregon's Willamette Valley, and the Douglas fir had bright pink veins from cherry juice wicking into the wood.

A wood recycler offered the staves to Lee Barker, owner of Barker Musical Instruments, who immediately recognized a craftsman's dream. He had enough wood to make four limited-edition basses, which look as if they've been touched by the pink rays of a sunset. Two of the instruments, which start at \$5,000, have been sold.

But all of the company's upright electric basses have a reputation for deftly combining the playing ease of an upright electrified double bass with the speed, precision and amplifiable signal of an electric bass guitar. Barker Musical Instruments has been in business just three years, yet its basses have already been on tour in New York City, San Francisco and Europe.

Renowned Los Angeles bassist Hussain Jiffry played a Barker bass on the Yanni Ethnicity

Lee Barker displays his limited-edition pink basses.

Tour, Barker says, and world-famous bassist Chuck Rainey also plays and endorses a Barker bass. Barker makes six models of the instrument, which begins at a list price of \$3,700. Contact: 888-899-8302; www.barkerbass.com.

—Amanda Schemkes



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