

JodyJazz Saxophone Mouthpieces: *Individual Focus*

JodyJazz mouthpieces clearly reflect attention to detail and finish with superb craftsmanship throughout. All the critical elements are present—accurate intonation, flexibility, centered sound, comfort, appearance and versatility. The brain behind JodyJazz Mouthpieces is Jody Espina, a working musician in the New York City area who creates rubber and metal mouthpieces for soprano, alto, tenor and baritone saxophones. With years of research and testing behind him, his goal is for each piece to play like it was custom-tweaked for the individual player's needs.

One special element of JodyJazz mouthpieces is the custom-fitted spoiler, a removable wedge with a secondary vibrating reed patented by veteran mouthpiece maker Santy Runyon. The mouthpiece response is the same with or without the spoiler in place, but the sound clearly has more edge and volume with the spoiler. Espina designs and custom-fits the spoilers so they are easy to remove yet secure.

Soprano sax mouthpieces (\$135–\$299) are available in metal or injection-molded from a blend of high-tech plastic and synthetic rubber. The Soprano ESP Gold 75 mouthpiece is

metal and created on CNC machines from a solid bar of brass then plated with 24k gold plating. It produces a focused sound, not too thin with good intonation throughout the range and no spoiler needed. The Soprano Ruby Red or Classic Black 8 is a rubber mouthpiece that is available in either red or black. This is an excellent piece that produces a sweet sound with good intonation and a nice center throughout.

For alto mouthpieces (\$127–\$329), I tested the Classic Black 8 rubber. Available in blue or black, this superb mouthpiece provided an even response and warm sound with a little edge throughout and a comfortable altissimo response. I did not need the spoiler to achieve the sound I like, but if you need to cut through on a contemporary or rock gig, the spoiler will definitely do it for you. I also tried the Alto ESP Gold .090 metal, which, like the metal soprano, is machined from a solid brass bar with 24k gold plating. Although I'm partial to rubber on alto, this metal alto piece surprised me with its clear, warm sound.

Regarding tenor mouthpieces (\$137–\$349), the Tenor Ruby Red or Classic Black 10 rubber sounds terrific with a nice sound up and down, and a unique darkness with an

edge without the spoiler. The Tenor ESP Gold 105 is metal (CNC-machined with 24-karat gold plating) and plays responsively and even with a meaty sound. The Tenor ESP-X 110 metal features a slightly larger tip and also plays great. I prefer the 105 because the tip was similar to my own mouthpiece. Regarding the spoiler on the metal tenors, I could go either way. Without the spoiler, the sound was a shade dark and with the spoiler inserted it was slightly bright.

I tested several baritone saxophone mouthpieces (\$147–\$379), including the Baritone ESP Gold 90, which is machined from a solid brass bar. This is an excellent mouthpiece—smooth, even, in tune and full on every note from top to bottom. I did not need the spoiler but it would provide extra edge if desired. The Baritone ESP Gold 110 has a tip opening two steps larger than the 90 and delivers more punch. Reminiscent of the Brillhart level-air, the Baritone Classic Black "Q" 10 has a design unique to the baritone with a smaller profile to fit the mouth. This mouthpiece screams with a more aggressive sound yet delivers solid intonation. Designed to deliver more cut and clarity, it's made from high-tech plastic created on CNC machines.

—Pete BarenBregge

Ordering Info: www.jodyjazz.com

