

JodyJazz DV JC ‘Jody Custom’ Alto Sax Mouthpiece

Design Modifications Boost Fatness, Sweetness, Darkness & Warmth

The JodyJazz DV series of saxophone mouthpiece upended expectations when it was introduced in 2005. With a name inspired by the book *The Da Vinci Code* and featuring design elements incorporating the Golden Mean proportions found in nature, the line offered free-blowing power and projection without sacrificing a fat-sounding mid-range and bottom end: a problem saxophonists had frequently encountered when playing metal mouthpieces that appealed to their desire for increased thrust and more tonal presence when wailing in the higher registers. The DV proved to be a welcome exception to the unwritten rule that metal mouthpieces were overly shrill.

Since the DV’s debut, JodyJazz founder and saxophonist Jody Espina has made a series of modifications to his personal version of the mouthpiece to make it better suit the range of acoustic and amplified musical environments he encounters on his gigs. Now he’s making those customizations available in a regular production model: the JodyJazz DV JC, which stands for “Jody Custom.”

“As we occasionally made changes to my personal DV, it was getting better and better,” said Espina. And when he began to consider new designs for a limited edition mouthpiece to honor the company’s 25th anniversary this year, Espina started tweaking his personal DV even more. “We came upon a version that I just freaked

out over. I loved it so much that I decided it was too good and would be too universally embraced to make it a limited edition only. So, we’re launching it to be a regularly offered model in our DV lineup.”

In terms of sound capabilities, the DV JC falls somewhere between the company’s DV and the DV NY mouthpieces, according to Espina. In play-testing, it responded with a little extra warmth and slightly more rounded tone compared with the original DV alto model, likely the result of subtle changes made to the baffle. It retains the long facing of the original DV and responded most reliably when I used a medium-hard or hard reed. When I put on a medium reed, I found the DV JC Alto to be extremely flexible, opening the door to another realm of soulful and expressive playing where pitch bends, thick vibrato and dramatic dynamic shifts are more paramount.

“There is a characteristic about this mouthpiece that makes it feel even less like a metal piece than the others,” Espina said. “Big, fat and warm with enough power to do all the variety of jobs I do, but sweet and dark enough to play beautiful ballads.”

Made from gold-plated virgin bell brass and featuring a “Jody Custom” engraving, the DV JC Alto comes in size 6, 7 and 8 tip openings. A tenor version is due sometime this year. —Ed Enright



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