

Chronology and Dating - Instruments from 1980 through 1992

ABOUT THIS SECTION

The information in the table and text below the horizontal bar was compiled by Paul Bechtoldt, columnist for Vintage Guitar Magazine, and is included in his book **G&L: Leo's Legacy**.

While the serial number information below refers only to instruments produced through 1992, a significant change in serialization of instruments occurred in 1997, with the advent of 4-bolt neck guitars. The 4-bolt neck guitars and 6-bolt basses changed to serial numbers beginning with "CL". About one year later, the numbers changed to a "CLF" prefix. The prefix "CL" and "CLF" stand for "Clarence Leo" and "Clarence Leo Fender", respectively.

There is one exception to the changes above. The George Fullerton model, which when changed to 4-bolt neck attachment, continued with serial numbers using the prefix "GF", for "George Fullerton" until discontinued.

Enthusiasts interested in production dates and serialization are well advised to visit GuitarsByLeo.com to research the registry and accompanying text.

First Recorded Serial Number for each year.

YEAR	GUITAR	BASS	LOCATION
1980	G000530	B000518	Bridge
1981	G003122	B001917	Bridge
1982	G009886	B008525	Bridge
1983	G011654	B010382	Bridge/Neck Plate
1984	G013273	B014266	Neck Plate
1985	G014690	B016108	Neck Plate

1986	G017325	B017691	Neck Plate
1987	G020241	B018063	Neck Plate
1988	G023725	B019627	Neck Plate
1989	G024983	B020106	Neck Plate
1990	G026344	B021788	Neck Plate
1991	G027163	B023013	Neck Plate
1992	G029962	B024288	Neck Plate

Below are comments made by author Paul Bechtoldt circa 1992. Please note that his comments do not reflect changes to G&L; instruments since that time.

The serial numbers on guitars and basses started at #500, reserving prior numbers for special instruments or presentation.

Guitars and Basses had their own numbering system, the only other instrument to receive its own system was the Broadcaster. Prefixes are as follows: "B" bass, "G" Guitar, "BC" Broadcaster. All systems incorporate a seven-digit sequence i.e. BC00000 or G000000.

While designating serial numbers to instruments, not all numbers were used. Sometimes the bridge or plate was defective and unsuitable for use. In other cases on the "Black Crackle" finish plates, the number was stamped before spraying. When the plates were stamped the spray filled in the numbers making them illegible. Another problem with serial numbers is the stock piling of stamped bridges and plates, causing them to be used up sporadically.

Most G&L instruments are both body and neck dated, which also adds to the confusion of knowing when an instrument was built. Some instruments have only neck dates, which appear to have been stamped at their time of final construction, then stockpiled for later use.

The bodies that are stamped may have been stamped prior to the final finishing process, which would account for some of the signature series having 1987 and 1988 body dates. Some quick references for dating would be the shape of the headstock, the kind of volume and tone knobs used, and the plating of metal parts.

The first headstock used was the non-sculpted style that was quite similar to the old Music Man style. These necks also have the "skunk stripe" on the back of them. When G&L changed the construction method of the necks, the stripe disappeared and the sculpted "bump" on the headstock was added. The third and fourth versions were the modernistic design. This is sometimes referred to as the sickle headstock with or without the bump. The first style headstock mentioned was used from 1980 until early 1983. The second and current version was introduced in late 1982. The third and fourth styles were used from late 1983 to 1990 on different models. The third style was intended for the Interceptor (sickle-bump) only, but there were exceptions.

The original volume and tone knobs were a chromed plastic style with ribs. The only guitar to use this style was the F-100. The bass guitars used these knobs until the supply was depleted in 1984, however there are some early basses with actual chrome domed knobs. These knobs are the most common and are still in use today. Black-chromed knobs were first used on the G-200, then later used on some Interceptors, Rampages, Invaders and the Broadcaster.

Both guitars and basses had chrome-plated bridges and plates through 1982. The G-200 was the first to use black chromed parts. Black chrome was used for some pickguards on the early S-500 and Skyhawk models in 1983 and 1984. Black "crinkle" plates and pickguards started appearing in 1983. The most common pickguards are made of plastic with a black crinkle control plate common to the mid-eighties. Soon the pickguards were all one-piece plastic with control knobs mounted through them. Most models have a three-ply guard of either black/white/black or the reverse. The ASAT model generally has a single-ply pickguard that is either white or black. Exceptions do exist, such as three-ply guards on special orders.

The G&L vibrato has always been the same as it is today. For a while in 1984-1986, Kahler trem systems were available. They even has a Kahler option on the Interceptor bass. Leo developed a vibrato system with fine tuners in 1986, and it was available as a option for many years.

Color options in the 1980's were endless. At that time you could order a guitar with any color providing we could find the shade you wanted. Colors ranged from Russell Leach's Hot Pink Interceptor (not only is this a rare color, but the Interceptor has the second body style that was never put into production, only 8 – 12 of these "X" bodies exist in any color) to Jim DePitt's bright Yellow Invader.

As you can see if you check the details of G&L guitars, they went through many evolutionary changes as the years passed.

