

Moog Minitaur vs Grandmother Synths: Specs, Price & Uses

Meta Description: Moog Minitaur vs Grandmother compared on oscillators, filter, patching, keyboard, and price. See which Moog synth fits your setup at Sam Ash.



Alt text: Moog Minitaur bass synthesizer module.

Key Takeaways

- The Moog Minitaur is a sub-3-pound desktop bass module built around the Taurus sound, with two VCOs (sawtooth and square), the Moog ladder filter, and 128 presets recallable from the panel or the free editor software.
- The Moog Grandmother is a full-range semi-modular keyboard synth with two VCOs (triangle, saw, square, pulse) plus hard sync, 41 Eurorack-compatible patch points, a 32-note Fatar velocity-sensitive keyboard, and a hardware spring reverb tank.
- Choose the Minitaur if you want focused bass plus DAW-ready preset recall; choose the Grandmother if you want a self-contained, Eurorack-friendly synth you can play and patch without a separate controller.
- Price is the most concrete decision point: the Minitaur is \$599 and the Grandmother is \$999 at Sam Ash, a \$400 gap that buys you the keyboard, spring reverb, sequencer, and patchbay.

- Both Moog synths ship with expert phone and chat support, financing from \$25/month, 45-day returns, and free shipping on orders over \$49 from [Sam Ash](#).

Moog Sound Powerhouses: What Sets These Synths Apart

The Moog Minitaur is a \$599 desktop bass module with two VCOs, the Moog ladder filter, and 128 recallable presets, while the Moog Grandmother is a \$999 semi-modular keyboard synth with 41 Eurorack patch points, a hardware spring reverb, and a 32-note Fatar keyboard. Both share Moog's analog ladder filter and core voice character, but they aim at different jobs: the Minitaur is built to deliver Taurus bass into a DAW or stage rig, and the Grandmother is built to be played, patched, and integrated with modular gear. Which one fits depends on whether you need a bass voice that recalls presets or a full-range synth you can perform and patch on its own.

Moog has spent five decades shaping how analog synthesis sounds in modern records, and these two instruments represent two very different on-ramps to that sound: one tightly scoped, one openly modular.

If you're choosing between the two, the comparison below breaks down oscillators, filter behavior, modulation, connectivity, build, price, and the player each synth was designed for.

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Moog Minitaur: The Taurus Bass Legacy



Caption: The [Minitaur](#) is one of the latest additions to the Taurus line of Moog synthesizers that have been generating earth-shaking bass for nearly 50 years.

Alt text: Moog Minitaur analog bass synthesizer desktop module with knobs and patch jacks

Oscillator Architecture

Two voltage-controlled oscillators form the Minitaur's foundation, each offering selectable sawtooth (original Taurus) and square waveshapes. The sawtooth waves recreate the classic Taurus sound, while square waves and combinations of both open new sonic territory. VCO 2 can be detuned ± 12 semitones against VCO 1, creating thick, shifting textures with the rock-solid stability Moog oscillators are known for.

The oscillator calibration range spans 22Hz to 6.8kHz, but the playable note range is intentionally limited (approximately C0 to C4 at 8' setting) to focus the circuitry on exceptional bass performance. This isn't a limitation; it's optimization. Every component is tuned for authoritative low-frequency reproduction.

Firmware v2.2 added oscillator hard sync, opening a completely new sonic palette with syncopated metallic sweeps and surges when combined with the ability to modulate oscillator 2 independently.

The Legendary Ladder Filter

The Minitaur implements Moog's iconic 24dB/octave low-pass ladder filter, perhaps the most recognizable element of the Moog sound. The cutoff frequency sweeps from 20Hz to 20kHz, with adjustable resonance that delivers the classic Taurus 1 and 3 bass and boom.

What makes the Minitaur's filter special is its calibration for bass response. Even at extreme resonance settings, the filter preserves low-end power rather than thinning out the bottom like many synthesizers do. This careful tuning ensures that punchy, authoritative bass remains the instrument's defining characteristic.

Envelope Generators and Modulation

Two Minimoog-style envelope generators control the VCF and VCA independently. Firmware updates evolved these from the original ADS design to full ADSR envelopes with independent decay and release times, and even added a hold stage (AHDSR) for more complex contour shaping.

The MIDI-syncable LFO now offers six waveforms (triangle, square, saw, ramp, sample & hold, plus filter envelope as modulation source) with dedicated controls for rate, VCO LFO amount, and VCF LFO amount. The LFO can target both oscillators or VCO 2 only, enabling chorused sounds and dramatic sync sweeps impossible on earlier firmware versions.

Preset Storage and Software Editor

Unlike purely analog synthesizers, the Minitaur saves and recalls up to 128 presets, selectable from the front panel (using button combinations), via MIDI controller, or through the free Minitaur Editor/Librarian software. This makes it genuinely practical for live performance and studio work where consistent sound recall matters.

The Minitaur Editor software transforms the compact hardware into a deeper instrument, providing access to parameters not available from the front panel: extended envelope

controls, oscillator hard sync, modulation source selection, CV input reassignment, and full DAW integration via VST, AU, RTAS, and AAX formats.

Every parameter can be automated within your DAW, enabling complex sound evolution that belies the Minitaur's straightforward physical interface.

Connectivity

The Minitaur integrates into virtually any setup. 5-pin DIN MIDI and USB MIDI offer complete control of the sound engine. Four analog CV inputs (pitch, filter, volume, gate) can be reassigned via the editor to control any parameter. The CV inputs also function as CV-to-MIDI converters, translating control voltage from modular systems into MIDI data for your DAW.

An external audio input routes signals through the mixer and filter section, allowing you to process drum machines, guitars, or other sound sources through the Minitaur's legendary filter. The 1/4" TS audio output and 1/8" TRS headphone output with volume control complete the I/O.

Build Quality

The solid steel enclosure is built like a tank, compact yet rugged enough for touring. Dimensions of approximately 8.5" x 5.25" and a weight under 3 pounds make it ideal for laptop bags, backpacks, or tight studio spaces. This is the most portable Moog ever made.

Price

The Moog Minitaur is available at Sam Ash for \$599 with financing options, making legendary Moog bass accessible to working musicians. The price positions the Minitaur as an accessible entry into authentic Moog synthesis for musicians who need focused bass capability.

Who Should Choose the Minitaur

The Minitaur serves musicians who need authoritative bass sounds and nothing else. Producers working in electronic music, hip-hop, or any genre where sub-bass presence matters will find the Minitaur's optimized frequency range delivers exactly what they need without distraction. Studio musicians who want consistent preset recall for session work will appreciate the 128 presets and comprehensive software editor.

Live performers with limited stage space will find the sub-3-pound weight and compact dimensions practical. Musicians who already own keyboards and sequencers will integrate the Minitaur into existing setups without redundant features. Budget-conscious buyers seeking genuine Moog character will find the \$599 price makes authentic analog bass accessible.

Moog Grandmother: Semi-Modular Synthesis Playground



Caption: The Grandmother is a semi-modular analog synthesizer that harkens back to Moog's modular roots, where synthesis is about the journey of discovery and experimentation as much as the end result.

Alt text: Moog Grandmother semi-modular analog synthesizer with 32-note keyboard and patchbay

Two Oscillators Plus More

At the heart of the [Grandmother](#) are two voltage-controlled oscillators with hard sync capabilities, each offering four-position octave switches and four-position waveform selectors (triangle, saw, square, and narrow pulse). OSC 1 provides ranges from 32' to 8', while OSC 2 spans 16' to 2' with an independent frequency knob for detuning effects.

The LFO can be pushed into audio range and played from the keyboard, sequencer/arpeggiator, MIDI, or CV inputs. This effectively creates a three-oscillator architecture for huge, layered sounds.

A white noise generator adds another sound source, and the three-channel mixer (OSC 1, OSC 2, noise) includes an additional 1/4" external audio input for integrating guitars, drum machines, and other external signals into the signal path.

Classic Moog Ladder Filter Plus High-Pass

The Grandmother implements the classic 4-pole (24dB/octave) ladder filter spanning 10Hz to 20kHz. Unlike the Minitaur's bass-focused implementation, this full-range filter serves everything from bass to screaming leads to delicate pads.

Additionally, a patchable 1-pole high-pass filter adds another dimension to sound shaping. Combined with the low-pass filter, you can create band-pass filtering effects or route different oscillators through different filters for complex timbres.

Hardware Spring Reverb

The Grandmother's hardware spring reverb tank is a feature that caused excitement when announced. This is a genuine mechanical spring reverb that adds lush, expansive ambience to any sound.

What makes it especially powerful: the spring reverb has separate Eurorack-compatible 3.5mm inputs and outputs, allowing it to be used as a standalone effect for external sound sources. Route your drum machine, guitar, or another synthesizer through the Grandmother's reverb for that distinctive analog ambience.

Arpeggiator and Sequencer

The onboard arpeggiator provides instant musical results from held chords. But the sequencer takes creativity further: store up to three sequences with up to 256 notes each for instant recall during performance. The sequencer can send clock via MIDI or CV, receive external clock, and synchronize with Mother-32, DFAM, or Eurorack systems.

41 Patch Points: Semi-Modular Power

While the Grandmother requires absolutely no patching to start making music, the internal signal path is fully wired; its 41 patch points (21 inputs, 16 outputs, plus a 4-jack passive mult) transform it into a highly flexible modular instrument.

All patch points follow the 3.5mm Eurorack standard for instant compatibility with thousands of modules. Patching supersedes the internal connections, allowing each module to function independently.

This means you can use the Grandmother as a sophisticated external signal processor, a keyboard controller for other modular gear, or reconfigure the signal flow in ways the designers never anticipated.

32-Note Fatar Keyboard

The 32-note Fatar keyboard with velocity sensitivity provides immediate playability that desktop modules like the Minitaur cannot offer without additional controllers. Pitch and modulation wheels, glide controls, and arpeggiator/sequencer buttons complete the performance section.

No Presets, and Why That's a Feature

Unlike the Minitaur, the Grandmother cannot save presets digitally. Sound settings must be documented manually using the included patch sheets if you wish to recreate them later. Many synthesists consider this a feature rather than a limitation; it encourages exploration and prevents falling back on the same sounds repeatedly.

The semi-modular architecture means that even if you documented all knob positions, patch cable routing creates additional complexity.

Connectivity

MIDI In/Out/Thru via 5-pin DIN connectors and USB MIDI enable standard connectivity. The 1/4" unbalanced audio output, 1/4" instrument input (for routing external signals through filter and reverb), and headphone output provide flexible audio routing.

Price

The Moog Grandmother is available at Sam Ash for \$999. The price positions the Grandmother as an accessible entry into modular synthesis exploration with immediate playability.

Who Should Choose the Grandmother

The Grandmother serves musicians who want a complete, self-contained synthesizer that plays immediately without additional controllers or sequencers. Modular synthesis explorers will find the 41 Eurorack-compatible patch points provide a gateway into the modular world while remaining musically useful without patching.

Performers who need arpeggiator and sequencer capability built into their synthesizer will appreciate the onboard pattern tools. Musicians who want full-range synthesis from bass through leads and pads will find the Grandmother's frequency range essential.

Players who value velocity-sensitive keyboard response for expressive performance will find the Fatar keyboard delivers dynamics the Minitaur's module format cannot provide. Spring reverb enthusiasts will appreciate the hardware tank that functions as standalone effect processing.

Quick Specifications Comparison

Feature	Moog Minitaur	Moog Grandmother
Sam Ash Price	\$599	\$999
Type	Desktop bass module	Semi-modular keyboard synth
Keyboard	None (external required)	32-note Fatar with velocity
Polyphony	Monophonic	Monophonic

Oscillators	2 VCOs (sawtooth, square)	2 VCOs (tri, saw, square, pulse) + hard sync
Frequency Range	C0 to C4 / MIDI notes 0–72 (bass optimized)	Full range
Filter	24dB/oct Moog ladder	4-pole 10Hz-20kHz ladder + 1-pole HP
Envelopes	2 × ADSR (VCF, VCA)	1 × ADSR
LFO	1 (MIDI-syncable, 6 waveforms)	1 (audio-rate capable)
Spring Reverb	No	Yes (hardware tank)
Arpeggiator	No	Yes
Sequencer	No	Yes (3 × 256 notes)
Presets	128 (via firmware v2.2)	None (analog design)
CV/Gate Inputs	4 assignable	21 inputs
CV Outputs	None	16 outputs
Total Patch Points	4	41
MIDI	DIN + USB	DIN In/Out/Thru + USB
Audio Output	1/4" TS + headphone	1/4" TRS + headphone
External Audio Input	Yes	Yes (1/4")

Picking the Right Moog at Sam Ash

The Minitaur is the right call when you need a focused, preset-recallable bass voice that fits in a laptop bag; the Grandmother is the right call when you want a complete semi-modular synth you can play, sequence, and patch into a Eurorack rig. Both deliver the Moog ladder filter and analog voice character, so the choice comes down to whether you want bass specialization or full-range exploration.

Our keyboard and [synthesis](#) specialists include working electronic musicians who can walk you through the Minitaur's editor parameters, the Grandmother's patchbay, and how each one fits into your existing setup. Backed by a 45-day [return policy](#), financing from \$25/month, and [free shipping](#) on orders over \$49, Sam Ash makes either Moog easy to try in your studio.

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Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Can the Moog Minitaur produce sounds beyond bass frequencies?

The Minitaur's oscillators are intentionally limited to approximately C0 to C4 (MIDI notes 0 to 72 at 8' setting), focusing on bass frequencies. While this restricts higher-pitched leads or chords, it can produce a wide range of sounds within its range, from thunderous sub-bass to punchy midrange tones, percussive hits, and effects when creatively programmed. The limitation is by design, allowing circuitry optimization specifically for exceptional bass performance.

Which synth is better for a beginner learning synthesis?

The Grandmother provides a more comprehensive educational experience through its visual patch bay and complete synthesis architecture. Beginners can observe signal flow directly through patch cables, reinforcing synthesis concepts in a hands-on way. The colorful panel sections help identify each synthesis stage.

The Minitaur offers a gentler learning curve with fewer initial parameters, but ultimately teaches a more limited subset of synthesis principles focused on bass production.

Can I connect these Moog synths to my DAW without additional hardware?

Both synthesizers feature USB connectivity for direct integration without requiring separate MIDI interfaces. The Minitaur's USB implementation is particularly comprehensive, with the editor software providing full parameter control and automation via VST, AU, RTAS, and AAX formats.

Both instruments require audio interfaces to capture their sound into your DAW, as neither includes USB audio capability.

Can the Grandmother integrate with Eurorack modular systems?

Yes, extensively. The Grandmother's 41 patch points follow the 3.5mm Eurorack standard for instant compatibility with thousands of modules. It can function as a keyboard controller for other modular gear, receive control voltage from Eurorack modules, and its spring reverb can process external signals. It's specifically designed to work with Mother-32, DFAM, and any Eurorack system.

The Minitaur offers more limited modular integration with four CV inputs (pitch, filter, volume, gate) that can be reassigned to control any parameter. It lacks CV outputs but can convert CV to MIDI for integration with digital systems.

Can I get both Moog synthesizers at Sam Ash?

Yes, [Sam Ash](#) carries both the Minitaur and Grandmother alongside other Moog synthesizers, including the Mother-32, DFAM, Subharmonicon, and Spectravox desktop semi-modulars, plus accessories like the Matriarch SR Series Case. Our synthesis specialists understand the differences between these instruments and will help match the right Moog to your specific creative workflow.

Prices mentioned in this article are accurate at the time of publication and may vary. Please visit [Sam Ash](#) for the most current pricing and availability.