

# Yamaha BB vs TRBX Bass Guitar for Beginners: Specs, Price & Reviews

**Meta Description:** Compare Yamaha's BB and TRBX bass guitar series for beginners. Discover which entry-level Yamaha bass delivers the tone, playability, and value you need at Sam Ash with expert analysis and real player reviews.

## Key Takeaways

- The Yamaha BB234 delivers the legendary BroadBass experience with a solid alder body, classic PJ styling with protective pickguard, open-gear tuners, V3 ceramic pickups, and Fender-compatible pickup routing that makes it an outstanding platform for future upgrades.
- The Yamaha TRBX174 offers modern ergonomics with a solid mahogany body, a deep double cutaway for full access to all 24 frets, covered tuners, and ceramic PJ pickups that deliver versatile tone at the most accessible price in Yamaha's lineup.
- Both basses share passive PJ electronics, one-piece maple necks with satin finishes, rosewood fingerboards, 34-inch scale lengths, and the build consistency that has made Yamaha's entry-level instruments genuinely gig-worthy rather than instruments you replace as soon as you can afford to.
- The BB234 excels for players drawn to classic styling, traditional tone, and long-term upgrade potential, while the TRBX174 suits players who want modern design, extended range, and the lowest possible entry cost without sacrificing quality.
- Find your ideal Yamaha bass at Sam Ash with free shipping on orders over \$49, a 45-day return policy that lets you evaluate your new instrument in your actual playing environment, and flexible financing options that make professional-quality basses accessible.

## Shop These Bass Guitars at Sam Ash

- **Yamaha TRBX174** – \$249.99 → [Shop at Sam Ash](#)
  - **Yamaha BB234** – \$359.99 → [Shop at Sam Ash](#)
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## Classic Heritage Meets Modern Innovation

Yamaha's position in the bass guitar market represents something unique among major manufacturers: two distinct series that each deliver exceptional value while serving different aesthetic and functional preferences. The BroadBass series launched in 1977 as Japan's answer to American bass guitar dominance, quickly earning the nickname "Fender killer" among working musicians who discovered these instruments offered comparable or superior quality at significantly lower prices. The TRBX series emerged later as Yamaha's modern

interpretation of what a bass guitar should be, featuring contemporary body shapes, extended fret access, and ergonomic refinements that appeal to players who appreciate forward-thinking design.

Both series share Yamaha's commitment to quality control that consistently surprises players accustomed to the compromises typical of entry-level instruments. Where competitors cut corners on hardware, electronics, or construction consistency, Yamaha maintains standards that make their budget instruments genuinely gig-worthy rather than mere stepping stones to something better. This philosophy serves beginners particularly well, as it means the instrument won't hold back their development or require immediate upgrades to become playable.

Understanding the fundamental differences between these series helps new players invest wisely in an instrument that matches both their musical aspirations and personal style. The BB234 represents accessible entry into a legendary heritage, while the TRBX174 offers modern performance at an even more approachable price point.

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The logo for Sam Ash DIRECT is displayed on a dark blue rectangular background. The text "Sam Ash" is written in a large, white, cursive script font. Below it, the word "DIRECT" is written in a bold, white, sans-serif, all-caps font. Underneath "DIRECT", the phrase "Online Music & Sound Megastore" is written in a smaller, white, sans-serif font.

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- ✓ Large selection from the best brands in music and sound
- ✓ Fast, free shipping on 1000s of items within the USA
- ✓ Famous flash sales and mega deals

#### Get Expert Guidance:

Whether you're a savvy musician seeking confirmation or a beginner needing guidance, our Gear Expert Team helps ensure you make the right choice for your music and budget. From bedroom producers to professional studios – we've got your sound covered.

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## Quick Comparison

| Feature                   | Yamaha TRBX174     | Yamaha BB234       |
|---------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| <b>Sam Ash Price</b>      | \$249.99           | \$359.99           |
| <b>MSRP</b>               | \$299.99           | \$563.86           |
| <b>You Save</b>           | \$50.00            | \$203.87           |
| <b>Body Material</b>      | Solid Mahogany     | Solid Alder        |
| <b>Body Finish</b>        | Gloss Polyurethane | Gloss Polyurethane |
| <b>Neck Construction</b>  | 1-Piece Maple      | 1-Piece Maple      |
| <b>Neck Finish</b>        | Satin Polyurethane | Satin Polyurethane |
| <b>Fingerboard</b>        | Rosewood           | Rosewood           |
| <b>Fingerboard Radius</b> | 10" (250mm)        | 10" (250mm)        |
| <b>Scale Length</b>       | 34"                | 34"                |
| <b>Number of Frets</b>    | 24                 | 21                 |
| <b>Nut Material</b>       | Urea               | Plastic            |
| <b>Nut Width</b>          | 40mm               | 40mm               |
| <b>Pickups</b>            | Ceramic PJ         | V3 Ceramic PJ      |
| <b>Controls</b>           | 2 Volume, 1 Tone   | 2 Volume, 1 Tone   |
| <b>Bridge</b>             | Vintage-Style      | Vintage-Style      |

|                          |                                                              |                                                                |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Tuners</b>            | Covered                                                      | Open-Gear                                                      |
| <b>Electronics</b>       | Passive                                                      | Passive                                                        |
| <b>Pickguard</b>         | No                                                           | Yes                                                            |
| <b>Colors</b>            | Black, Red Metallic, Dark Blue Metallic, Old Violin Sunburst | Natural Satin, Raspberry Red, Vintage White                    |
| <b>Country of Origin</b> | Indonesia                                                    | Indonesia                                                      |
| <b>Best For</b>          | Modern players, extended range, budget-conscious beginners   | Classic tone seekers, modding platform, traditional aesthetics |

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## Yamaha TRBX174

**Sam Ash Price: \$249.99** (MSRP \$299.99 – Save \$50.00)

Financing Available: Approximately \$11/month for 24 months with Synchrony

*The Yamaha TRBX174 in Old Violin Sunburst showcasing the modern double cutaway body design and sleek aesthetics that have made the TRBX series a favorite among contemporary bassists seeking value without compromise.*

### Available at Sam Ash

Sam Ash stocks the TRBX174 in four striking finishes, each priced at \$249.99: Black delivers timeless versatility that works seamlessly across any musical context. Red Metallic offers bold visual impact with its eye-catching metallic sheen. Dark Blue Metallic provides a sophisticated alternative for players seeking distinctive style. Old Violin Sunburst presents classic aesthetics with warm amber-to-brown gradation. The TRBX174EW (Exotic Wood) variant featuring a flame mango top is also available at \$299.99 in Trans Black, Natural, and Root Beer finishes.

### Specifications

The TRBX174 builds on a solid mahogany body that provides warm, resonant tone with extended sustain compared to lighter tonewoods. The modern double cutaway design offers exceptional upper fret access, allowing players to explore the full 24-fret range without the body blocking their fretting hand. The one-piece maple neck features a comfortable C profile with satin polyurethane finish on the back that promotes fast, non-sticky playing during extended sessions. The rosewood fingerboard with 10-inch radius and 24 medium frets provides smooth playability across the entire range, with the extra three frets compared to 21-fret designs opening melodic possibilities for soloing and fills.

### Features

Yamaha equipped the TRBX174 with a ceramic PJ pickup configuration that delivers punchy, versatile tone suitable for virtually any musical style. The split single-coil P-style pickup in the neck position provides thick, supportive fundamental, while the single-coil J-style bridge pickup adds brightness, articulation, and growl when blended in. Individual volume controls for each pickup allow precise tone shaping, with a master tone knob for rolling off high frequencies when warmer sounds serve the music better.

The vintage-style bridge ensures stable intonation while maintaining classic aesthetics, and covered tuning machines provide reliable pitch stability without the visual complexity of open-gear designs. The body lacks a pickguard, presenting a cleaner visual appearance while requiring slightly more care when playing with a pick.

## **Price**

At \$249.99 from Sam Ash, the TRBX174 delivers extraordinary value for beginning bassists, providing genuine Yamaha quality at a price point typically associated with far more compromised instruments. The \$50 savings from MSRP makes this already accessible bass even more approachable. Financing through Synchrony at approximately \$11 monthly over 24 months puts serious bass playing capability within reach of virtually any budget.

## **Best Genres**

The TRBX174's versatile ceramic pickups and modern design make it equally comfortable across rock, pop, funk, metal, and contemporary worship contexts. The extended 24-fret range serves players exploring progressive styles, jazz fusion, or any genre where melodic bass playing and upper-register fills enhance the music.

The punchy midrange presence helps bass lines remain audible in band contexts without requiring excessive volume, while the ability to blend P and J pickups provides tonal flexibility that suits recording situations where multiple sounds may be needed.

## **Yamaha BB234**

**Sam Ash Price: \$359.99** (MSRP \$563.86 – Save \$203.87)

## **Available at Sam Ash**

Sam Ash stocks the BB234 in three finishes, each priced at \$359.99: Natural Satin offers understated elegance with visible wood grain beneath a smooth matte finish that feels fast under the fretting hand. Raspberry Red delivers bold visual impact with a rich, deep hue that stands out on any stage. Vintage White provides classic aesthetics that complement the traditional BroadBass styling with timeless appeal.

## **Specifications**

The BB234 builds on a solid alder body that provides balanced, resonant tone with the classic presence that has made alder the standard for countless professional bass designs.

The body follows the iconic 1977 BroadBass contours that have anchored recordings across every genre, with comfortable curves that feel natural whether seated for practice or standing for performance. The one-piece maple neck features a modern C profile with satin polyurethane finish on the back, matching the TRBX174's comfortable feel. The rosewood fingerboard with 10-inch radius and 21 medium frets offers smooth playability across the standard range, with the traditional fret count placing the neck pickup in the optimal position for warm, full tone.

## Features

Yamaha equipped the BB234 with V3 ceramic pickups in the classic PJ configuration, with a split single-coil P-style pickup in the neck position and a single-coil J-style pickup at the bridge. These pickups deliver punchy, high-output tone that serves rock, punk, and aggressive styles while retaining enough warmth and character for Motown, funk, and vintage applications.

The passive electronics feature individual volume controls for each pickup and a master tone knob for straightforward tone shaping. Open-gear tuning machines provide reliable pitch stability with visual elegance that complements the classic styling, and the vintage-style bridge efficiently transfers string vibration to the alder body. The black pickguard protects the body from pick scratches and wear while adding visual definition that enhances the instrument's traditional appearance.

## Price

At \$359.99 from Sam Ash, the BB234 delivers remarkable value for its price point, with the substantial \$203.87 savings from MSRP making genuine BroadBass quality accessible to developing players and budget-conscious performers. Financing through Synchrony at approximately \$15 monthly over 24 months spreads the investment manageably while putting legendary heritage within reach.

## Best Genres

The BB234's V3 ceramic pickups and classic BroadBass voicing make it particularly well-suited to rock, punk, Motown, soul, funk, and vintage-influenced styles where punchy presence and warm fundamental define the sound.

The alder body provides balanced tone that sits well in any mix without excessive low-end boom or harsh high frequencies, making it equally comfortable anchoring a garage band rehearsal or laying down tracks in a professional studio. Players exploring classic rock, alternative, indie, and singer-songwriter contexts will find the BB234's character serves these genres naturally.

## Why Buy from Sam Ash

Selecting your first bass guitar involves more than comparing specifications on a screen. The instrument must feel comfortable in your hands, inspire your playing, and deliver tone

that serves your musical vision. Sam Ash has equipped beginning bassists, serious students, and professional musicians since 1924, building expertise that helps match players with instruments they'll love for years. When you call the Gear Experts at 800-472-6274, you connect with working musicians who understand the practical differences between these Yamaha series and can help identify which matches your playing style, musical goals, and budget.

Sam Ash backs every bass guitar purchase with a 45-day return policy that recognizes instrument selection as a deeply personal decision. Take your new Yamaha home, play it through your actual amp in your actual practice space, and confirm it delivers what you need before committing. The 60-day price protection guarantee ensures you receive the best available price even if costs drop after purchase.

Financing through Synchrony and Affirm makes professional-quality instruments accessible regardless of immediate budget constraints, spreading your investment across manageable monthly payments. Free shipping on orders over \$49 means your new bass arrives ready to play without additional costs eating into your gear budget.

## **Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)**

### **Which bass is better for absolute beginners?**

Both basses serve beginners exceptionally well, but the TRBX174 at \$249.99 offers lower entry cost while still delivering genuine Yamaha quality. The BB234 at \$359.99 provides slightly better hardware and greater upgrade potential for players willing to invest more upfront.

### **Does the extra \$110 for the BB234 justify the cost?**

For players who value classic styling, plan to upgrade pickups or hardware over time, or simply prefer the BroadBass aesthetic, the BB234's better tuners, protective pickguard, and Fender-compatible pickup routing justify its higher price. Budget-focused beginners will find the TRBX174 more than capable of supporting their development.

### **Do I really need 24 frets as a beginner?**

Most beginners won't immediately use the extra three frets the TRBX174 provides. However, as skills develop, having access to the full two-octave range opens creative possibilities that 21-fret designs cannot match. If you anticipate exploring melodic bass styles or soloing, the TRBX174's extended range provides room to grow.

### **Which bass sounds better?**

Both basses use ceramic PJ pickup configurations that deliver punchy, versatile tone. The BB234's alder body tends toward balanced clarity, while the TRBX174's mahogany body emphasizes warm midrange. Neither is objectively "better"—the choice depends on which tonal character appeals to your ear.

### **Can I upgrade pickups on these basses?**

The BB234's Fender-compatible pickup routing accepts standard P and J replacement pickups without modification, making it an excellent platform for upgrading to premium pickups like EMG Geezers or Seymour Duncan Quarter Pounders. The TRBX174 also accepts replacement pickups, though compatibility may vary.

### **Does Sam Ash offer financing on these bass guitars?**

Yes. Sam Ash provides financing through Synchrony and Affirm on both models. The TRBX174 works out to approximately \$11/month and the BB234 to approximately \$15/month over 24 months, making either instrument accessible regardless of immediate budget constraints.

### **Which colors are available?**

The TRBX174 comes in Black, Red Metallic, Dark Blue Metallic, and Old Violin Sunburst at \$249.99, with the TRBX174EW exotic wood variant available in Trans Black, Natural, and Root Beer at \$299.99. The BB234 comes in Natural Satin, Raspberry Red, and Vintage White at \$359.99.