

WIN! A FENDER CLASSIC PLAYER BAJA '60s TELE **INSIDE**

Guitarist

Issue 402

JANUARY 2016

GEAR *of the* YEAR

40 Essential Tone Machines 2015

FENDER
NIK HUBER
GIBSON
YAMAHA
MARTIN
EPIPHONE
PRS
GRETSCHE
MARSHAL
BOSS
& MANY MORE

WORLD
EXCLUSIVE
**YAMAHA
REVSTAR**

What the fork! First play
of new electrics

p116



Charlie Sexton,
Dylan's guitarist



John McLaughlin
on fusion technique



Ian Thornley on
virtuosic blues



Inside Orange's
amp-design shop



Kosoff's 'Burst
under the hammer

Future



IT'S ALL IN THE DETAILS.

THE BROOKLYN

D'Angelico Guitars' long history is defined by its commitment to quality. Designed and inspected in New York City, we've created exceptional acoustic instruments built for live performance by focusing on the small details that make a big difference.

- Onboard ease: The new Fishman INK-4 onboard preamp and tuner sounds incredibly clear and is easy to work in the dark.
- Guaranteed functionality: Grover Imperial Super-Rotomatic tuners stay in tune longer.
- Premium tonewoods: Rosewood, spruce, sapele and mahogany offer superior tone.
- Supreme resonance: FU-Tone brass bridge pins allow every note to cut through the mix.
- Subtle elegance: Mother-of-Pearl inlays, three-ply binding, stairstep-style pick guard and bridge, and a Skyscraper truss rod cover all amplify your look on stage.



Band For Life



As Christmas comes round again (where did all that time go?), you might already be thinking about what your New Year's resolutions will be in terms of next steps on guitar. As time goes by, the question often turns on whether this is going to be the year that personal deadlocks in playing technique are going to be overcome. If you're unsure how to climb to the next ledge in your ability, I would recommend not just joining a band, but *starting* one. There's something so gratifying about setting out to make some music you have always wanted to play, be it fully authentic covers of music you love, or music you've always wanted to get out of your head and into an amp. When practising at home, it's so tempting to confine yourself to comfort-zone stuff. Bands are good in the sense that they give you a goal to work towards that's hard to shirk. You have to tackle the problems and not just set them aside for a rainy day, otherwise nothing happens. And so you tend to get on and do it. I read somewhere that people don't choose the course of their lives – they choose their habits and *those* decide how their life pans out. If active music-making becomes a habit in your life, you'll be surprised how it sharpens your appetite for those practice sessions at home and puts a goal in view for what to work on next. So here's to making sweet music on guitar in 2016 – and maybe the odd 'essential' gear purchase or two! You'll find plenty of great suggestions for that in this issue. From all at *Guitarist*, we wish you a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Jamie Dickson **Editor**

Editor's Highlights



The Twang!
Elliott Randall played on legendary Steely Dan recordings – and now he wants to talk with you about guitar
p.38



Charlie Sexton
When you start life with Stevie Ray Vaughan as a babysitter, it's no wonder you end up in Bob Dylan's band...
Read more on **p.58**



Public Service Broadcasting
What could be more stirring than setting old footage of Spitfires to glorious guitar riffs? Good show! **p.74**

Guitarist

Future Publishing Limited, Quay House, The Ambury, Bath, BA1 1UA
Telephone 01225 442244 Email guitarist@futurenet.com Online www.guitarist.co.uk

EDITORIAL

EDITOR

Jamie Dickson

jamie.dickson@futurenet.com

DEPUTY EDITOR

David Mead

david.mead@futurenet.com

GROUP EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Daniel Griffiths

daniel.griffiths@futurenet.com

ART EDITOR

Rob Antonello

rob.antonello@futurenet.com

MANAGING EDITOR

Lucy Rice

lucy.rice@futurenet.com

REVIEWS EDITOR

Dave Burrluck

dave@daveburrluck.com

SENIOR MUSIC EDITOR

Jason Sidwell

jason.sidwell@futurenet.com

CONTRIBUTORS

MICHAEL ASTLEY-BROWN, OWEN BAILEY, RICHARD BARRETT, DARRAN CHARLES, ADRIAN CLARK,
TREVOR CURWEN, MATT FROST, GUTHRIE GOVAN, NICK GUPPY, MARTIN HOLMES, CORMAC JORDAN, ROB LAING,
ROGER NEWELL, NEVILLE MARTEN, ED MITCHELL, KERRY MOYLE, MICK TAYLOR, HENRY YATES

IN-HOUSE PHOTOGRAPHY

JOSEPH BRANSTON, HELEN CLARKE, OLLY CURTIS, ADAM GASSON, NEIL GODWIN, WILL IRELAND, JOBY SESSIONS, JESSE WILD

ADVERTISING

COMMERCIAL SALES DIRECTOR Clare Dove clare.dove@futurenet.com
SENIOR ADVERTISING SALES MANAGER Lara Jaggon lara.jaggon@futurenet.com
ACCOUNT SALES DIRECTOR Leon Stephens leon.stephens@futurenet.com
ACCOUNT SALES DIRECTOR Alison Watson alison.watson@futurenet.com
ADVERTISING SALES MANAGER Simon Rawle simon.rawle@futurenet.com

MARKETING

GROUP MARKETING MANAGER Laura Driffield laura.driffield@futurenet.com
MARKETING MANAGER Kristianne Stanton kristianne.stanton@futurenet.com

PRINT & PRODUCTION

PRODUCTION MANAGER Mark Constance mark.constance@futurenet.com
PRODUCTION CONTROLLER Frances Twentymen frances.twentymen@futurenet.com
SENIOR AD PRODUCTION COORDINATOR Gemma O'Riordan gemma.oriordan@futurenet.com

LICENSING

LICENSING AND SYNDICATION DIRECTOR Regina Erak regina.erak@futurenet.com

CIRCULATION

TRADE MARKETING MANAGER Michelle Brock 0207 429 3683

FUTURE PUBLISHING LIMITED

MANAGING DIRECTOR, FUTURE UK Nial Ferguson nial.ferguson@futurenet.com
HEAD OF MUSIC Declan Gough declan.gough@futurenet.com
GROUP ART DIRECTOR Graham Dalzell graham.dalzell@futurenet.com
CHIEF EXECUTIVE Zillah Byng-Thorne zillah.byngthorne@futurenet.com

FUTURE MEDIA STORE

ONLINE www.futuremediastore.com EMAIL mediastore@futurenet.com

SUBSCRIPTIONS & BACK ISSUES

TELEPHONE 0844 848 2852 ONLINE www.myfavouritemagazines.co.uk

Printed in the UK by William Gibbons. Distributed in the UK by Seymour Distribution Ltd, 2 East Poultry Avenue,
London, EC1A 9PT Telephone 0207 429 4000 Overseas distribution by Seymour International

Future

Future is an award-winning international media group and leading digital business. We reach more than 49 million international consumers a month and create world-class content and advertising solutions for passionate consumers online, on tablet and smartphone, and in print. Future plc is a public company quoted on the London Stock Exchange (symbol: FUTR). www.futureplc.com

Chief executive Zillah Byng-Thorne Non-executive chairman Peter Allen Chief financial officer Penny Ladkin-Brand

© Future Publishing Limited 2015. All rights reserved. No part of this magazine may be used or reproduced without the written permission of the publisher. Future Publishing Limited (company number 2008885) is registered in England and Wales. The registered office of Future Publishing Limited is at Quay House, The Ambury, Bath, BA1 1UA. All information contained in this magazine is for information only and is, as far as we are aware, correct at the time of going to press. Future cannot accept any responsibility for errors or inaccuracies in such information. Readers are advised to contact manufacturers and retailers directly with regard to the price of products/services referred to in this magazine. If you submit unsolicited material to us, you automatically grant Future a licence to publish your submission in whole or in part in all editions of the magazine, including licensed editions worldwide and in any physical or digital format throughout the world. Any material you submit is sent at your risk and, although every care is taken, neither Future nor its employees, agents or subcontractors shall be liable for loss or damage. Full Competition Terms & Conditions can be found at: www.futurenet.com/futureonline/competitionrules.asp



We are committed to only using magazine paper which is derived from well managed, certified forestry and chlorine-free manufacture. Future Publishing and its paper suppliers have been independently certified in accordance with the rules of the FSC (Forest Stewardship Council).



ALTER YOUR AXIS



'If he was



THE JIMI HENDRIX™ STRATOCASTER®



fender.com/alteryouraxis

©2015 Fender Musical Instruments Corporation. Fender®, Stratocaster®, and the distinctive headstock design commonly found on Fender guitars are registered trademarks of FMI. All rights reserved.
Photograph by David Markowitz © Bonetti Ltd. 2015/Markowitz.com



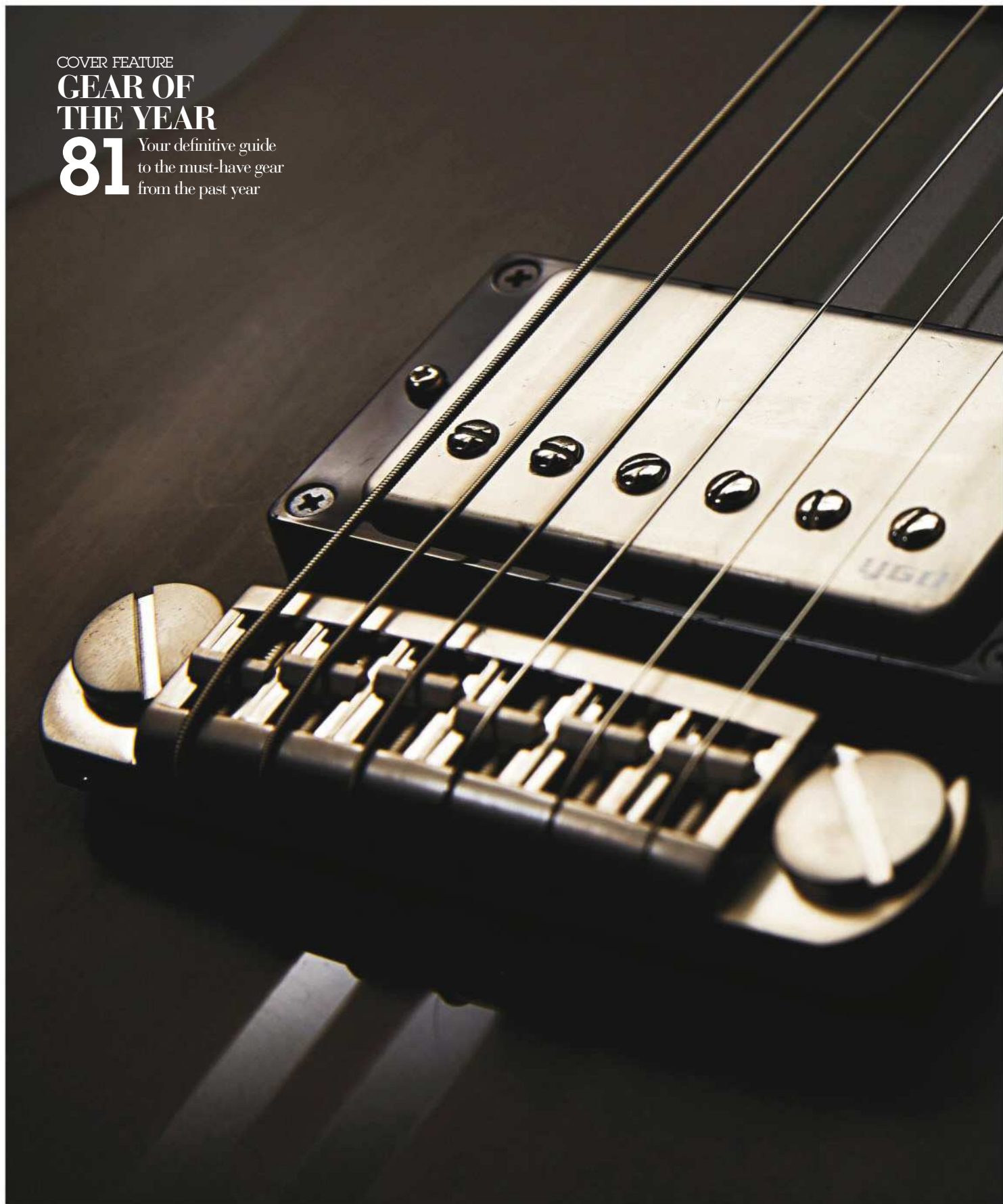
Fender

Contents

COVER FEATURE

GEAR OF THE YEAR

81 Your definitive guide
to the must-have gear
from the past year





REGULARS

- 003.....Editor's Welcome
- 033.....The Lineup
- 045.....Readers' Letters
- 048.....New Music
- 134.....Subscribe
- 148.....The Workshop
- 153.....Gear Q&A
- 160.....Old Gold
- 174.....Reader Ads

FEATURES

- 042.....Hugh Cornwell
- 050.....David Rhodes
- 052.....Arnaud Fradin
- 054.....Ian Thornley
- 058.....Charlie Sexton
- 066.....John McLaughlin
- 074.....Public Service Broadcasting
- 081.....Gear Of The Year
- 110.....Paul Kossoff's Les Paul

NEW GEAR

- 012.....G&L USA Custom Shop Fallout
- 018.....PRS S2 Standard Singlecut Satin
- 024.....Blackstar Artist 15 & Artist 30
- 116.....Yamaha Revstar RS502T & RS820CR

PEDALBOARD

- 138.....Boss DD-500
- 140.....DOD Meatbox Bass Subharmonic
Synth & Konkulator Ring Modulator
- 142.....Xvive D3 Duet Looper & Memory
Analog Delay

AUDITION

- 144.....Fender Paramount PM-1, PM-2 & PM-3
- 146.....Smooth Hound Classic Wireless
Guitar System
- 146.....MXR Iso-Brick

TECHNIQUES

- 72.....John McLaughlin Style File
- 162.....Guthrie Govan Masterclass
- 169.....Blues Headlines Gettin' Jazzy With It

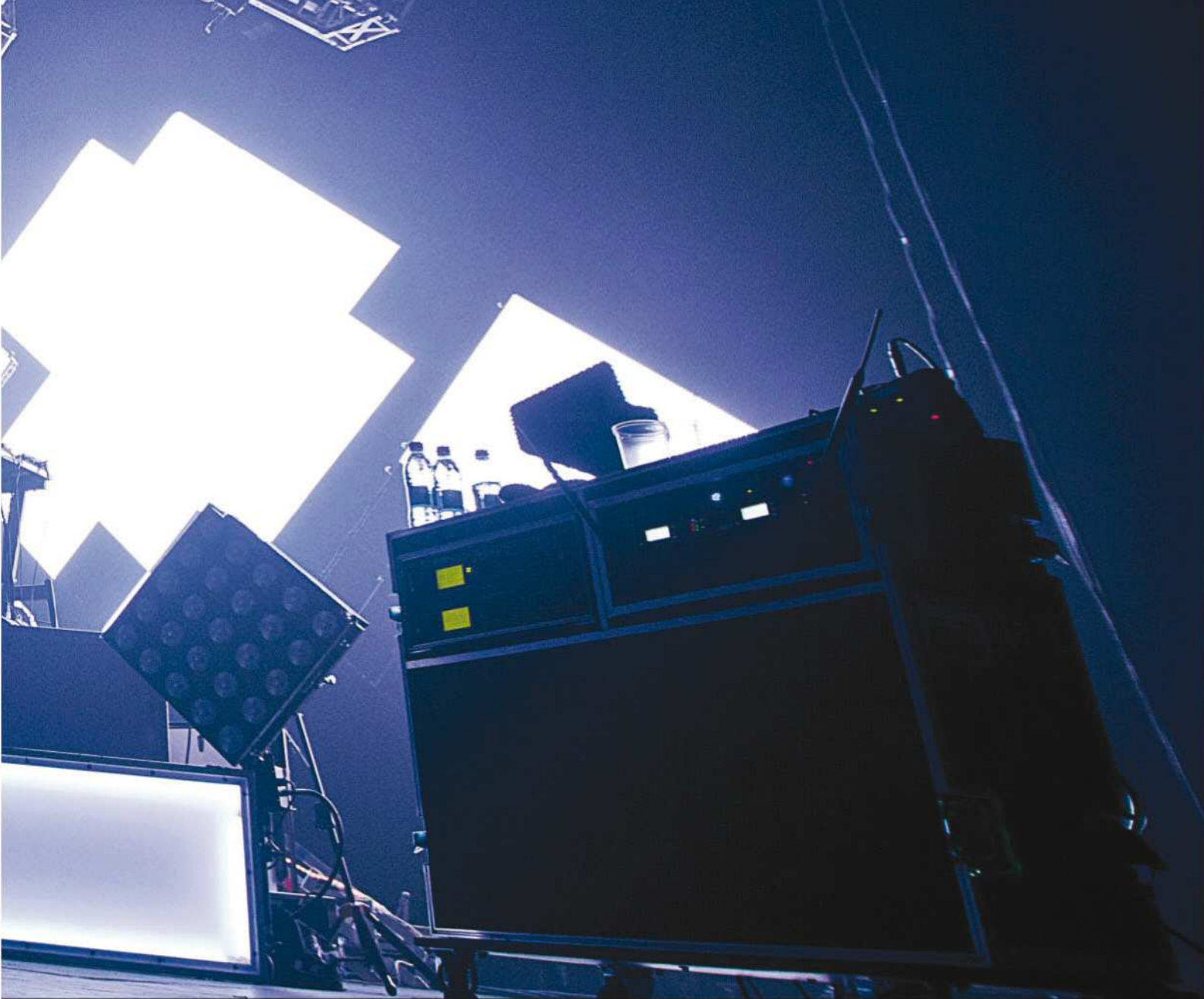
VIDEO & AUDIO

To enjoy all of the video and audio content in this month's issue, simply type the following link into your browser and follow the instructions on-screen:
<http://bit.ly/guitaristextra>



Zach Filkins from OneRepublic on stage with his Axe-Fx II rig.





THE PROFESSIONAL CHOICE

The Axe-Fx II XL+ is the latest upgrade to the industry standard for guitar processors. The Axe-Fx II is the benchmark against which all others are measured, and now with the new "G3" modeling technology that bar has been raised even higher. Don't compromise. Use what the pros use. Choose Fractal Audio.



EXCLUSIVE • ONLINE • DIRECT • IN EUROPE ONLY FROM G66
0049 461 1828066 • WWW.G66.EU • KICKS@G66.EU



ANDERTONS Music Co.

Order Hotline:
01483 456777

Order Online 24/7!
www.andertons.co.uk

Next Day Delivery on all 'in-stock' items.

THE HOTTEST DEALS

Fender American Deluxe Strats & Teles for LESS than the American Standard Series!!

That's right - we have 200 American Deluxe Series
Strats & Teles in all colours & neck options

Save Up to 22%!

From
£1049.00



PRS
GUITARS

PRS SE Custom Black Ace Edition LESS than £400!!

The PRS SE Custom Black Ace Edition is a limited edition, all
black guitar with the same spec as the popular Mark Tremonti
Custom. Solid mahogany body with maple top, wide thin
neck, SE245 Pickups, 25" Scale Length, PRS Trem System &
includes a deluxe PRS Gig Bag.

Was £699 - WHILE STOCKS LAST

Now
Only **£399.00**



ATOMIC AMPLIFIRE PEDAL

An exceptional amp tone and
multi-effects pedal. Small enough
to fit in the front pocket of a gig
bag yet potent enough to please
even the most discriminating
tube amp purists and effects
aficionados. Capable of being a
complete rig replacement or part
of a larger pedal board and/or
outboard processing rig.

**WATCH EXCLUSIVE
VIDEOS AT**

WWW.ANDERTONS.CO.UK/AMPLIFIRE

**ANDERTONS
UK EXCLUSIVE!**



Only
£469.00

GIBSON 2016 USA LINE UP

**WATCH OUR TRADITIONAL
VS HIGH PERFORMANCE
REVIEWS AT:**

WWW.ANDERTONS.CO.UK/GIBSON2016

There is something for everyone in the
2016 USA line up - Les Pauls, SGs,
Flying V's, Explorers & Firebirds. Every
guitar comes in both a Traditional Spec
& a High Performance Spec, so whether
you're a die hard fan of the 59 Les
Paul, or a player that likes to see guitar
innovation, you'll find something to
love in the Gibson 2016 USA range.



**VIDEO
REVIEW
ONLINE!**

From
£569.00

GIBSON CUSTOM SHOP "Blues Master" Les Pauls

You have to check out this exclusive run of
1958 re-issue Les Pauls featuring hand-picked
flame maple tops, custom wound low output
humbuckers & a neck pickup phase reverse
switch for the ultimate bluesy Les Paul.
Available in a range of burst finishes.
Find out more at:
www.andertons.co.uk/gibsonbluesmaster

NOW IN STOCK!

9 MONTHS 0%
FINANCE AVAILABLE



From
£3999.00

THE PERFECT CHRISTMAS STOCKING FILLER Tone City Pedals

Tone City pedals arrived
in 2015 & have quickly
become the bestselling
range of guitar pedals
we've ever done!!
FREE UK shipping on
all pedals.

Buy 2 or more Tone
City Pedals & get a FREE
5-Way Pedal Power!



From Only
£39.99

Takamine
Acoustic & Electric Guitars

ORANGE

Epiphone

YAMAHA

Marshall

Martin & Co

MESA/BOOGIE

Gibson

Fender

Blackstar
AMPLIFICATION

Jackson

ESP

BC Rich
GUITARS

Next Day Delivery
on all in-stock items!



on thousands
of items!

The Musician's No.1 Superstore
for Guitars, Drums, Keyboards,
Recording and more!



2006, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014

THE HOTTEST DEALS



Blackstar
AMPLIFICATION

NEW ARTIST Series Announced

The new Artist Series Combos are a throwback to the good old days of early valve amps. Simple design, vintage tones & sensible pricing. This is not an amp for the high gain guys, this is definitely a clean, blues & classic rock amp. Watch our video demo online now!

VIDEO
REVIEW
ONLINE!

From **£649.00**

9 months 0% finance available



MESA/BOOGIE
The Spirit of Art in Technology

COMING SOON Mark V:35 Amps

Hot on the heels of the super popular Mark V:25 head, Boogie have just announced that a bigger brother is on its way – and this time it's coming in both a head & a 1x12 combo format!

The great sounding Mesa V 35 Amps from Mesa Boogie. Made in California!

Prices From **£1749.00**

9 months 0% finance available

JIMI HENDRIX Fender Strats Out Now

Arguably the most iconic Strat player of all time, Jimi Hendrix changed the face of music forever. By playing a right handed Strat upside down, his Strat tone was always a little different to the tones that conventional right handed players would get. To help us right handed players emulate that, Fender have released two new Strats that are right handed, but with the bridge pickup & neck installed as if they were from a left handed guitar. For Jimi fans, this is the perfect guitar!

Jimi Hendrix
Strat in Black
Jimi Hendrix
Strat in Olympic White

From only **£661.00**

9 MONTHS 0%
FINANCE AVAILABLE



VAN WEELDEN Royal Overdrive

Watch our video run through on the Andertons Guitar Paradiso YouTube show! Just about the most expensive (apart from old Klons!), sexiest looking, beautiful sounding over drive pedal we've ever heard! This pedal has managed to perfectly capture what blues and rock artists have wanted for years. A true Dumble like tone in a box that has enough options that it can get a great sound with any guitar or amplifier. Watch our video demo online now!

9 months 0% finance available

**ANDERTONS
UK EXCLUSIVE!**

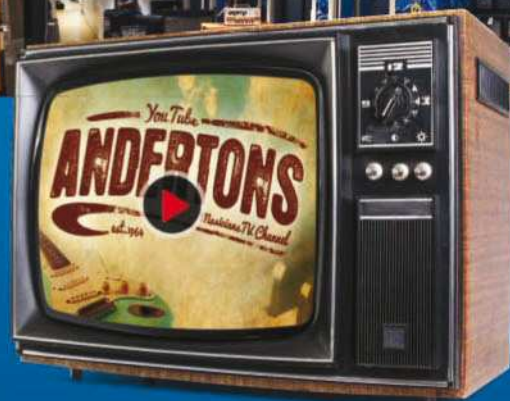


Only **£499.00**



Andertons TV

Home of great guitar
shows like Guitar
Paradiso, Sound Like
without Busting the
Bank, Top Shelf Guitars,
The Captain Meets, &
many, many more!!



www.youtube.com/AndertonsMusic

58 & 59 Woodbridge Road, Guildford, Surrey GU1 4RF

Visit Our Guildford Store Open 7 Days A Week!

Open Monday to Saturday 9.30am - 6pm & Sunday 11am-5pm

Just 15 Minutes
from the M25!

- ✓ Over 900 Acoustic Guitars in Stock*
- ✓ Over 2200 Electric Guitars in Stock*
- ✓ Over 1200 Guitar Amps in Stock*
- ✓ Over 3000 FX Pedals in Stock*

*Stock figures based on the total number of items in stock at Andertons including the store & warehouse - correct as at June 2014

Collect points
online or instore
& **SAVE!!**

Andertons loyalty points scheme:

Collect points on purchases and get a discount off your next purchase!



Retail
Finance

Instant Decision. No Paperwork!

Instant
Finance
Available
on selected products

APR Representative
0%

Spend over £300 & get
9 months 0% finance on
everything! 18, 24 & 36
months 0% finance also
available on selected items.

APR Representative

19.5%

Need to get the monthly payment
down? Spread the cost over 24, 36 or
48 months at a rate of 19.5% APR.

Representative 19.5% Example

• Purchase Price	£1399.00	• Total Repayable	£1596.90
• Deposit	£399.00	• Duration of Agreement	24 months
• Amount of Credit	£1000.00	• Rate of Interest (fixed)	19.5%
• 24 Monthly Payments	£49.90	• 19.5% APR Representative	

Andertons acts as a credit intermediary and only offers credit products from Moneyway via Secure Trust Bank Plc. Credit provided subject to age and status.

RIC
Rickenbacker

Two-Rock

Taylor
GUITARS

GRETSCH

Ibanez

VOX

FIRST PLAY



G&L USA CUSTOM SHOP FALLOUT £1,626

.....
An update of one of Leo Fender's classics with an enviable list of custom options

Fallout Joy

What would it be like to have Leo Fender tweak one of his classics just for you? Read on...

Words Ed Mitchell **Photography** Olly Curtis

It was back in 1983 that G&L – formed in 1979 by George Fullerton and Leo Fender – first launched a cute little retro-rocker called the SC-2. Loaded with two single-coil pickups, the SC-2 was accompanied in the G&L adverts of the day by the single-pickup SC-1 and triple-single-coil-toting SC-3. The SC models have since become a bit of a cult fixation, and the uncluttered slab body of the early guitars makes it a cracking little platform for customisation. Now, that chassis forms the basis of the USA Custom Shop Fallout model, a guitar that can be ordered as a bespoke spec build from the G&L workshop on Fender Avenue in Fullerton, California.

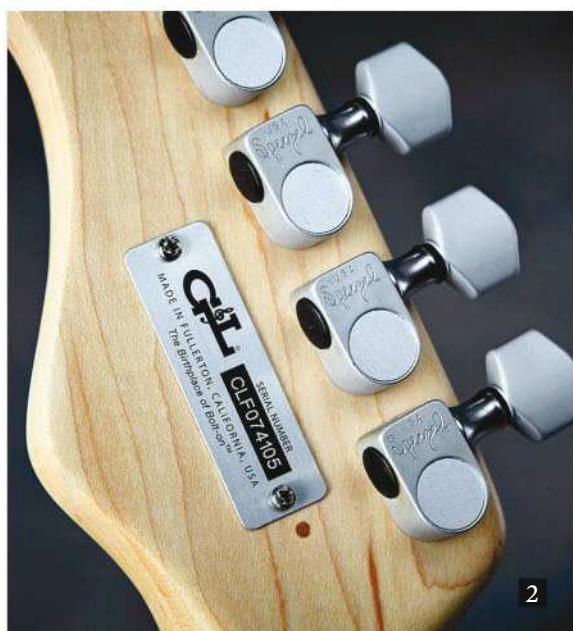
Lifting the lid on the Fallout's supplied hardshell case, you can see that the roots of its body design go way beyond the birth of the SC guitars. Design-wise, Leo Fender wasn't starting from scratch when he formed G&L, as the aesthetics of the firm's better known ASAT Special testify. In this case, we see the unmistakable influence of the short-scale Fender student models of the 50s and 60s (the Duo-Sonic and its vibrato-loaded brother, the Mustang) on the Fallout's lines.

Focusing on the spec list, proceedings kick off with an alder body with rear ribcage contouring and a flat front, top bound in white. The whole thing is finished in a flawless Ruby Red Metallic, while white pearl scratch and backplates constitute the plastic parts. The chrome Dual Fulcrum vibrato stands guard









2

over the body like the hood ornament on a classic motor.

Moving on to the pickups, you get a Seymour Duncan TB-4 humbucker in the bridge position, wired to a coil-splitter, and the house P-90 at the neck. The wiring loom is a simple layout of chrome-knobbed master volume and master tone controls and a three-way pickup selector toggle switch, while the aforementioned coil-split is engaged by pulling on the tone knob.

The Fallout has a full 648mm (25.5-inch) scale neck, formed from hard rock maple and attached to the body with four screws. The matching hard rock maple 'board has a 305mm (12-inch) radius and 22 medium-jumbo frets, their positions marked with black dot inlays. Aside from all that, you get a well-cut bone top nut and a set of non-locking Sperzel Standard satin silver tuners. The body, neck and all their constituents add up to a sturdy but manageable weight of 3.6kg (7.9lb).

While our Fallout is making us twitch in all the right places, we did mention earlier that you can order your own custom-made example, with a delivery time of nine to 12 weeks. The base price of the fixed bridge, non-bound Fallout is £1,387. Our guitar includes the DF vibrato unit (£105) and the white top-body binding (£133). Among the many options, you can choose locking tuners, a Graph Tech nut, along with a range of standard finishes like Sonic Blue or Belair Green. There's an upcharge for translucent premier colours (£88) and metal-flake hues (£133). A call to G&L's distributor or a visit to the website will help you initiate your dream spec. There are too many options to list here!

Feel & Sounds

Yes, the Fallout and its SC series predecessors share some DNA with those increasingly valuable Fender studio models. That said, you



3

can see the ghost of the original Volkswagen Beetle in the profile of a Porsche 911, and they're both very different machines. So, while the Fallout has some of the vintage curb appeal of its ancestors, its playability and feel are thoroughly modern.

The neck has what the Custom Shop team describes as a classic 'C' profile. In practice, it feels pleasantly plump, and increasingly so as you make your way to the 12th fret. It's one of those necks that feels like it would appeal to just about every guitarist. The medium-jumbo frets have been Plek'd to perfection, too. There are no rattles, buzzes or dead spots, and even extreme string bends above the octave ring clear and true through our amp.

Plugging in, our old pal the Seymour Duncan JB roars into life, here in its TB Trembucker guise. It behaves beautifully in its alder surroundings, bright and punchy as ever, with great note separation even in a high-gain scenario. It can, however, get a little raucous with extreme distortion, so perhaps notch back the amp's mid control to sweeten things

1 The 22 medium-jumbo frets are flawless. We didn't experience any rattles, buzzing or string-choking during our time with the Fallout

2 The distinctive headstock comes loaded with a set of Sperzel Standard tuners in satin silver. These are the non-locking versions, but they hold the guitar's tuning perfectly

3 The Fallout has the classic flat top of its SC series ancestor, but turn it over and you'll find a ribcage contour for added comfort



4. G&L has equipped its USA Fallout model with a Seymour Duncan TB-4, the Trembucker version of the iconic JB, and its own P-90 neck pickup. Our Fallout has been spec'd with the excellent Dual Fulcrum bridge. It's a floating vibrato, yet you can palm-mute without knocking out the tuning

The idea behind the custom-build Fallout was to imagine what the late Leo Fender would have done with the SC guitars if he was designing them today

a little. Running the JB in coil-split mode adds a reasonably authentic Strat-y tone to the Fallout's arsenal. It wouldn't trick Hank Marvin in a blindfold test, but for country licks and stinging blues, it works a treat.

Used both in combination with the JB and solo, the neck P-90 offers a pleasing level of warmth and clarity when clean and a rich, sustained singing voice with some overdrive engaged. A full-size humbucker and a P-90 can look like a weird combination on a guitar, but they don't half make for a versatile team.

We have a lot of love for Fallout's Dual Fulcrum vibrato, too: a chunky beast that somehow manages to feel unobtrusive. It's set up for a bit of pullback, but unlike many floating vibratos, you can palm-mute this one without knocking the tuning sharp. Factory fitted with 0.010 to 0.046 gauge strings, the unit itself doesn't wobble dramatically when you attempt doublestops or pedal-steel licks. Plus, dive-bomb or dump the strings down on the pickups and we find that the guitar holds its tuning perfectly.

Verdict

The idea behind the custom-build Fallout was to imagine what the late Leo Fender would have done with the SC guitars if he was designing them today. We think our Ruby Red Metallic example answers that question, with its flawless build quality, exceptional playability and wide tonal palette that would suit anyone from country pickers and jazzers to studio jobbers and metalheads. Without doubt, Leo would want us to have a great tool at the right price. Mission accomplished. **G**



G&L USA CUSTOM SHOP FALLOUT

PRICE: £1,626 (inc case)

ORIGIN: USA

TYPE: Solidbody electric

BODY: Alder

NECK: Hard rock maple, bolt-on

SCALE LENGTH: 648mm (25.5")

NUT/WIDTH: Synthetic/41.3

FINGERBOARD: Hard rock maple, 305mm (12") radius

FRETS: 22, medium jumbo

HARDWARE: Chrome-plated Dual Fulcrum vibrato, satin silver Sperzel Standard tuners

STRING SPACING, BRIDGE: 55mm

ELECTRICS: Seymour Duncan TB-4 humbucker (bridge), G&L P-90 (neck), master volume, master tone (with pull/push coil split) and 3-way toggle pickup selector

WEIGHT (kg/lb): 3.6/7.9

OPTIONS: The base model fixed-bridge USA Custom Shop Fallout costs £1,387. Options include Dual Fulcrum Steel Block upgrade (£105), Graph Tech nut upgrade (£31), locking tuners upgrade (£142)

RANGE OPTIONS: Tribute Series Fallout in Black, Fullerton Red and Sonic Blue (£349)

LEFT-HANDERS: Yes, no upcharge

FINISHES: Ruby Red Metallic (as reviewed) from a wide selection – see website

Tony Owens Guitars

01925 444696

www.glguitars.com

8/10

PROS Plenty of Leo's DNA, great build, well set-up vibrato and great sounds. Oh, and plenty of options

CONS Very little, but making the right choice of options for you is the key here



THE SJ-200

BOB DYLAN

PLAYER'S EDITION

THIS PREMIER SIGNATURE MODEL IS BASED ON BOB DYLAN'S PERSONAL CUSTOM GIBSON SUPER JUMBO GUITAR. CONSTRUCTED WITH ADIRONDACK RED SPRUCE AND HAND-SELECTED AAA FLAMED MAPLE. THE HEADSTOCK FEATURES THE ARTIST'S EYE LOGO WITH A BELLA VOCE MOTHER-OF-PEARL INLAY ON THE FRET BOARD. DOUBLE PICK GUARDS FEATURE AN ENGRAVED DESIGN, WITH BEAUTIFUL MOTHER-OF-PEARL DOT INLAY. THIS VINTAGE-STYLE MODEL COMES EQUIPPED WITH AN LR BAGGS™ ANTHEM PICKUP.



Gibson
Acoustic

gibson.com

FIRST PLAY



PRS S2 STANDARD
SINGLECUT SATIN
£999

WHAT IS IT? Satin nitro,
all-mahogany Singlecut.
A no-posh zone!

Thin Skinned

Stripped down and nitro-finished, this new Singlecut takes the posh out of PRS

Words Dave Burrluck Photography Olly Curtis

Just sneaking in at the tail end of PRS's 30th Anniversary year, the new S2 Standard Satins will probably be a highlight for many of us, ahem, less well-heeled guitar players. If you like your PRS guitars with multi-coloured 'dipped in glass' 10-tops and swathed in abalone-infested bird inlays, well, do not read on. If, however, you simply love your classic guitars and want your playing to tell your audience your status, you might well want to take a closer look.

Throughout its history, PRS has been constantly criticised for making über expensive guitars out of the reach of the everyman. Of course, over three decades, the company has made many attempts at creating more cost-effective USA-made models – like the CE and the EG – but in terms of longevity, it's only recently cracked the 'affordable' code with the 2013-introduced S2 range. Made in the same Maryland factory as the top-line Core models, the S2 guitars are built on an entirely different production line with, for example,





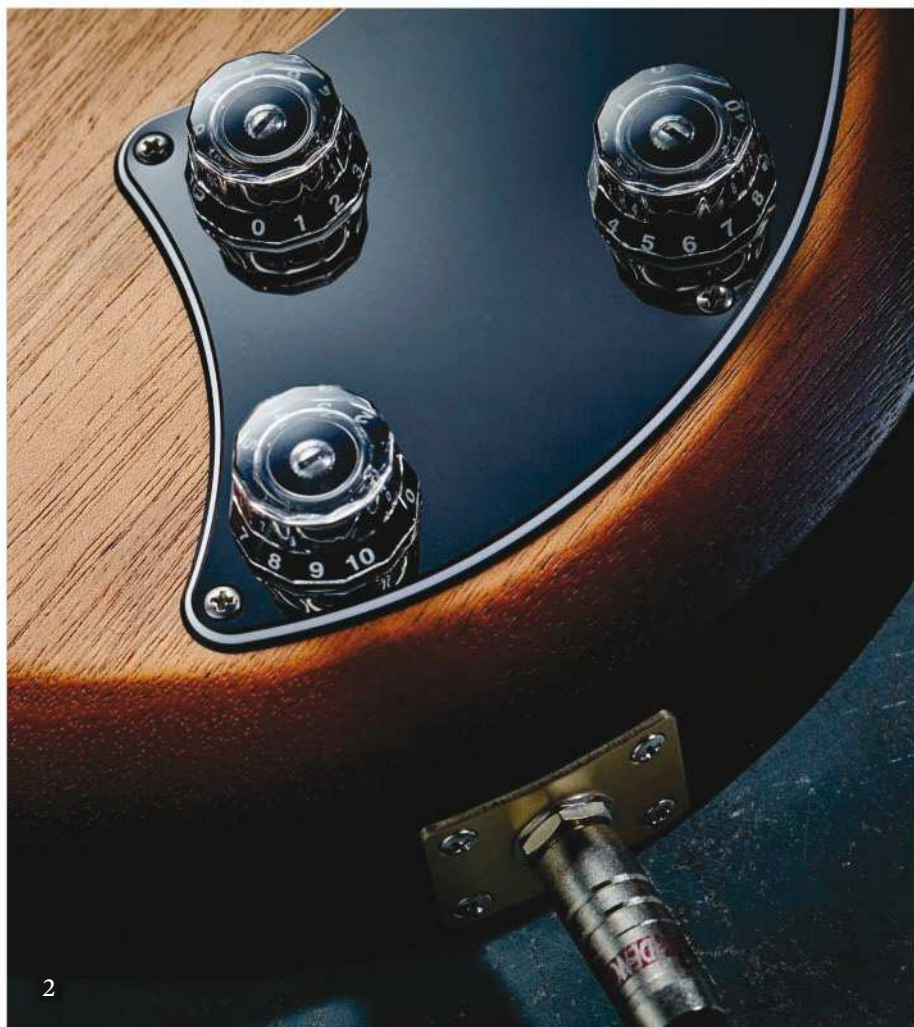


three-piece (as opposed to one-piece) mahogany necks, and asymmetrically carved bodies instead of the more complex violin-like top carve of the Core guitars. Most hardware and the pickups are USA-designed but are made in Korea, and the hugely expensive finishing process has been re-thought to cut production time. The net result is that the S2 models aim to offer all the playability and consistency of the Core models, but without the expense.

Of course, PRS's typically mahogany-backed, maple-topped guitar recipe accounts for the majority of the Core models and, indeed, the initial wave of S2 models. Since then, however, we've seen more all-mahogany S2 Standards, but up to this point all have used that new, faster S2-style gloss finish. For these latest Satins, however, the finish switches to an ultra-thin satin nitrocellulose, in a choice of four fairly dowdy colours. Unlike the more labour-intensive finishes used by PRS, and most other makers, this finish doesn't use a grain filler, so you can easily see the grain of the mahogany on the one-piece body and both see and feel it on the neck back. It's ultra thin, too: approximately a tenth of the standard Core or S2 finishes, says PRS.

As PRS completists will be aware, it's not the first time we've had satin-finished nitrocellulose models. The Modern Eagle, and most of its various incarnations, uses such a finish as did the SC 250 Satin (2007), the Singlecut Standard Satin (2006 to '07), the Standard 22 and 24 Satin (2006 to '08), the Singlecut Standard Soapbar Satin and the Singlecut Trem Satin (2006 to '13). But those didn't use the sort of open-grain finish we see here.

Finish aside, the three guitars all follow the specification of the existing all-gloss Standards (introduced at the tail-end of 2014),



including perhaps the most divisive detail: the scratchplate that not only holds all the pickups and electrics (with the exception of the shoulder-placed toggle pickup selector switch and the output jack, which remains side-mounted on its rugged metal plate), but profoundly changes the aesthetics of what we know as the PRS guitar.

The combination of that scratchplate, the satin 'open-pore' finish, the dot-only inlays (with no bird inlay options), not to mention our review sample's McCarty Tobacco finish – probably the most expensive-looking of the four offered finishes – add up to the most austere-looking USA-made instrument we've seen from PRS ever.

Feel & Sounds

Less chunky than a core Singlecut with a chamfered slab body some 50mm thick, the Satin weighs and feels very businesslike with a very traditional strapped-on hang: it's an old friend straight from its gigbag. The Pattern Regular neck profile – based on the original PRS profile – is a little skinnier in width than the Pattern Thin (wide-thin) or

1. Unlike the Core models, the S2 guitars use a three-piece neck design with a spliced headstock and additional heel piece. Hardly new, of course; classical guitar necks have been made like this for ages

2. The pickups and controls are all mounted on the scratchplate, much like the 'modular' design of the Fender Stratocaster. The pickup switch is rear-mounted, however, and the output jack is side-mounted on a solid metal plate

3. To keep the price tag affordable, the pickups are PRS-designed but made in Korea. Here, the #7 'buckers are versions of the USA designs used on the original PRS Singlecut



Pattern (wide-fat), but suits the everyman vibe perfectly. No horses have been spared in the fretting or setup, though: PRS doesn't need a Plek machine to do the job properly. Okay, PRS's four-control layout is different to Gibson's – if you're used to that, it takes time to adjust and it's not as easy to palm both volume controls in mixed pickup position – but with such positive playability, intonation and a lively resonance, it's a criticism that soon dissipates.

Warming up our valves with a 2001 Singlecut, the Satin comes across as its punkier sibling. There's no shortage of clarity, despite the all-mahogany construction and while that might well tame down with playing, it sounds and feels, to us, like we're playing a 50s Gibson Les Paul Special compared to a 'Burst. PRS's S2 version of the #7 humbucker (made by G&B in Korea) doesn't seem to have the power or thickness of the USA originals, first used on that first-era Singlecut, and they also have quite a pronounced upper-mid cut. While we were less impressed with their performance on the recently reviewed Singlecut Semi-Hollow, here on this all solid, all-mahogany platform, they seem to sit better.



4

4. The proprietary PRS Stoptail bridge used here is the same USA part that's used on the Core guitars. It's machined aluminium, unplated, with brass posts. The preset intonation ridge should work fine with 0.009s and 0.010s and the solid design ensures excellent resonance

PRS has also sorted its coil-split circuit – instead of dumping one coil, approximately 11 to 17 per cent of the coil is still voiced

PRS has also sorted its coil-split circuit (instead of fully dumping one coil, approximately 11 to 17 per cent of that coil is still voiced): pull up the tone controls and the lighter tonality has some of the percussiveness of your favourite Californian brand, especially with some gain added. It sounds edgy, but not overly crisp, and for players needing some older, classic voices – blues, country soul or classic 60s pop – it's effortless. The combined clout and cut, however, of the full-coil mode also makes this Satin a perfect fit for heavier, gained tones.

Verdict

On more occasions than we care to remember, we shy away from actually gigging whatever PRS it is we have on review, afraid that a belt-buckle or jean stud will ruin the all-too-perfect sheen of the finish. Not here. With big apologies, we'll be returning this one with plenty of marks and a few dings. The more you play it, the neck, for example, will burnish to quite a gloss. It's a finish that will age and wear. Put it another way: if your dentist or doctor is playing this guitar, choose another practice. It's taken 'em 30 years, but – finally! – here's a PRS guitar that you basically want to fuck up and play really, really hard. Standard? No. Exceptional? Yes. **G**



PRS S2 STANDARD SINGLECUT SATIN

PRICE: £999 (inc gigbag)

ORIGIN: USA

TYPE: Single-cutaway, satin nitro-finished solidbody electric

BODY: Mahogany

NECK: Mahogany, Pattern Regular profile, glued-in

SCALE LENGTH: 635mm (25")

NUT/WIDTH: Friction reducing/42.8mm

FINGERBOARD: Rosewood, cream dot inlays, 254mm (10") radius

FRETS: 22, medium jumbo

HARDWARE: PRS Stoptail bridge, PRS S2 locking tuners, nickel-plated

STRING SPACING, BRIDGE: 52.5mm

ELECTRICS: 2x covered PRS #7 humbuckers, 3-way toggle pickup selector switch, volume and tone (with pull/push coil-split) for each

WEIGHT (kg/lb): 3.82/8.4

OPTIONS: None

RANGE OPTIONS: Satin Custom 22 and 24 are the same price. The gloss-finished S2 Standard 22, 24 and Singlecut cost £1,099

LEFT-HANDERS: No

FINISHES: Charcoal, McCarty Tobacco (as reviewed), Vintage Cherry, Vintage Mahogany satin nitro

PRS Europe

01223 874301

www.prsguitars.com

8/10

PROS High-quality build, playability, ultra-thin nitro finish and versatile sounds

CONS Some might find the colour choices limited, but the Standards also come in numerous gloss hues



THANK YOU FOR VOTING TO MAKE OUR **CRUSH 35RT** AMP OF THE YEAR

MIA AWARDS - AMP OF THE YEAR 2015



ALL ANALOGUE SIGNAL PATH, TWIN CHANNEL HIGH-GAIN PREAMP DESIGN,
BUFFERED EFFECTS LOOP, HEADPHONE/LINEOUT CABINET SIMULATION,
REVERB & INTERGRATED TUNER, VOICE OF THE WORLD SPEAKER

ORANGEAMPS.COM/CRUSH35RT





**BLACKSTAR
ARTIST 15 1X12 COMBO**
£649

15-watt boutique-style combo
with valve/solid-state preamp
and valve power amp



**BLACKSTAR
ARTIST 30 2X12 COMBO**
£849

30-watt boutique-style 2x12
combo with valve/solid-state
preamp and valve power amp





Affordable Artwork

Boutique-style without the four-figure price?
Say hello to our new best friends...

Words Nick Guppy Photography Adam Gasson

It's been just eight years since Blackstar's Frankfurt debut. Fast forward to today, and the Brit brand is firmly established as a major global force in amp manufacturing, with an impressive user list and a broad catalogue covering practically any musical need.

As you might expect, high-gain amps feature in abundance for 2016, and Blackstar has added two much-anticipated new Artist Series combos. "The concept behind the Artist Series was to create an affordable boutique amplifier that's within reach of gigging guitarists," explains Blackstar's Joel Richardson. "The Artisan high-end, hand-wired amp range is incredibly popular with many pros, so we've recreated the tones of those amps, and added features that gigging guitarists need, like channel switching, reverb, speaker-emulated outputs and a proper effects loop, as well as making them very pedal-friendly."

Drawing on the Artisan's vintage tone and style cues, the Artist combos also reflect modern trends, with dual-channel low-gain hybrid valve/solid-state preamps driving a dual-6L6 output stage, which powers one or two 12-inch Celestion V-Type speakers.

Both combos have simple, understated styling. Ply cabinets covered in seamless heavy-duty vinyl combine with a custom vintage woven paper speaker grille cloth and a gloss black control panel. The electronics are contained in a vertically mounted, open-ended tray chassis, which is robust without being too heavy. Unlike the Artisans, the Artists are printed-circuit-board based, with one large board holding all the main components including the front-panel controls, and a smaller one for the rear-panel connections.



The boards are very high quality, double-sided and through-plated, with a typically neat layout featuring a mix of conventional resistors and capacitors alongside miniature surface-mount stuff and bases for the ECC83 preamp and 6L6 output valves.

Everything looks robust and built to handle regular use; the preamp valves are deeply recessed and held by large plastic grommets, which helps reduce noise pick-up, but makes routine replacement less easy. They also have DC filament supplies for the preamp valves – a feature normally found on high-end boutique designs – which keeps AC hum away from high-gain audio signals.

There are a couple of small but significant differences between the two combos: in addition to the extra loudspeaker, the Artist 30's output stage is fixed bias, while the lower-powered Artist 15 uses cathode bias. The Artist 30 also has a rear-panel tone switch for the built-in digital reverb, offering a choice of bright (modern) or warm (vintage) presets.

The front panel controls are easy to use. Channel 1 has a simple volume and tone control arrangement, while Channel 2 has standard gain, three-band EQ and a master volume, together with Blackstar's familiar ISF control, which continuously varies the EQ network from traditional British to USA response. The front-panel tour finishes with a global master volume and level control for the digital reverb. Rear-panel features include a series effects loop with switchable levels, a





1. Blackstar's patented ISF control continuously blends from UK to USA tone stack response for an exceptionally wide tonal range

2. Both Artist amps are fitted with Celestion's excellent G12-V type loudspeaker

3. The Channel 2 preamp gain controls real valve overdrive, but zeroed in on the elusive low- to medium-gain range

4. Whereas Channel 1 has a single tone control, Channel 2 has a fully featured EQ section

5. The Artist's unique sparkle grille cloth is woven from paper, like many vintage amps, and adds a touch of understated class

6. The Artist's digital reverb is superb and easily replaces a studio outboard. On the Artist 30, there's also a choice of bright or dark tone

speaker-emulated line out, a choice of speaker outlets and a footswitch jack for the supplied footswitches: a two-button one on the Artist 30 that switches channels and reverb, and a single-button channel changer for the Artist 15. Overall, both amps look smart and purposeful, with a style that manages to be vintage and modern at the same time.

Feel & Sounds

Switching on, the first thing that impresses us is how free of noise both amps are. Hum levels are practically non-existent, while the hiss you often hear on high-gain channels is so far in the background it's practically inaudible, even at whisper levels. We tried out both amps with several different guitars, including an old Strat fitted with regular low-ish output Duncan Alnico Pro II pickups, a PAF-loaded Les Paul Standard and an Ibanez AFJ95 archtop jazzier.

Channel 1 on both amps is a very clean, low-gain affair with clarity and transparency

that brings out every nuance of the guitar you plug in. The single tone control works smoothly to add or remove just the right amount of high frequency, making this channel very easy to dial in for any guitar. As well as sounding great for bright single coils, Channel 1 can be warmed up to provide some superb jazz tones. This works best for us on the Artist 15, where the cathode-biased output valves have a rounder and slightly less dynamic voice. It certainly teams nicely with our Ibanez archtop producing a fabulous jazz sound, enhanced by the Artist's digital reverb. Swapping to the Strat reveals astonishing treble clarity balanced with a tight bass and warm midrange.

If Channel 1 is clean, then Channel 2 is the Artist's 'nearly clean' channel. Here, with a fully featured EQ network, there's a lot more flexibility and the ISF control makes dialling in any sound very easy. There's just enough gain to take a Strat with regular low-output pickups into a mild crunch, but for serious overdrive sounds, an external pedal is needed, and that's an intentional part of the Artist's design logic. On many amps, the focus is often on high gain, but there are many players who want just a touch of drive combined with a dynamic touch-sensitive response, and the Artist 15 is perfect for this right out of the box, with many subtle nuances to enjoy on the gain control.

"The Artists are open-loop [no negative feedback] designs," comments Blackstar's MD, Ian Robinson. "So there is some clever

Many players want a touch of drive with a touch-sensitive, dynamic response, and the Artist 15 is perfect for this



EQ in the preamp that's needed to control the highs and lows properly. That's done with high-grade op-amps, it's just a better solution. However, the preamp overdrive effects are all-valve."

So, while the Artist 15 shapes up as a great small gig and home amp, as well as a solo guitar backline par excellence, the Artist 30 is perfect for the band player who wants to be heard: 30 watts, two speakers and a punchier, more dynamic response from the fixed-bias output stage give it a more 'in your face' response that works especially well with brighter guitars. We tried a variety of drive pedals, including vintage, budget and high-end boutique, all of which drove the Artist well, without any issues. The bigger amp sounds particularly impressive with the Les Paul – reproducing the PAF's complex highs better than many top-dollar boutique amps.

There's a generous 'sweet spot', where the power amp starts to really cook and the touch-sensitive dynamics make for effortless soloing.

Verdict

It seems many players are returning to simple non-master-volume vintage amps and using pedals for their drive sounds. If that description fits you, then Blackstar's new Artist series could be a real revelation, combining a vintage-inspired tone experience with modern features like the superb digital reverb. It is amps like this, dialled in for select





6

These amps remind us of those 'Eureka' moments, when we picked up a guitar and plugged into an amp for the first time

tones, which often end up exciting us more, reminding us of those 'Eureka' moments when we picked up a guitar and plugged it into an amp for the first time.

Blackstar's Artist amps have real character, but without the reliability issues that affect many older non-master-volume products. Blackstar doesn't have this niche to itself, of course – there are some sizzling competitors for the Artists, but most of them fall into the boutique bracket, typically costing twice the money, or perhaps more. That makes the relatively modest asking prices a real steal. If the new Artist range sounds right for you, our advice is don't delay; they're definitely set to be a new classic. **G**



BLACKSTAR ARTIST 15 1X12 COMBO

PRICE: £649
ORIGIN: China
TYPE: Valve/solid-state preamp and valve power amp
OUTPUT: 15 watts RMS
VALVES: 2 x 12AX7, 2 x 6L6
DIMENSIONS: 486 (h) x 612 (w) x 258mm (d)
WEIGHT (kg/lb): 18/40
CABINET: Ply
LOUDSPEAKER: 1x 12" Celestion V-Type
CHANNELS: 2, footswitchable
CONTROLS: Ch1: volume, tone. Ch2: gain, volume, bass, mid, treble, ISF. Master volume and reverb
FOOTSWITCH: 1-button switch switches channels
ADDITIONAL FEATURES: Series effects loop, speaker-emulated line out
OPTIONS: None

Blackstar Amplification
 01604 817817
www.blackstaramps.com

8/10

PROS Compact, portable and great tone at lower volume levels; price

CONS It can become a little flubby when wound right up



BLACKSTAR ARTIST 30 2X12 COMBO

PRICE: £849
ORIGIN: China
TYPE: Valve/solid-state preamp and valve power amp
OUTPUT: 30 watts RMS
VALVES: 2 x 12AX7, 2 x 6L6
DIMENSIONS: 540 (h) x 690 (w) x 260mm (d)
WEIGHT (kg/lb): 22/49
CABINET: Ply
LOUDSPEAKER: 2x 12" Celestion V-Type
CHANNELS: 2, footswitchable
CONTROLS: Ch1: volume, tone. Ch2: gain, volume, bass, mid, treble, ISF. Master volume and reverb
FOOTSWITCH: 2-button switch switches channels, toggles reverb
ADDITIONAL FEATURES: Series effects loop, speaker-emulated line out, reverb tone switch
OPTIONS: None



9/10

PROS Terrific tone and real punch from the fixed-bias output stage

CONS We could get by with just the glorious channel two on its own!





th.mann
MUSIC IS OUR PASSION

dv247

play perform record **music**

Huge price drops on 2015 Gibsons.
Only while stocks last!



Les Paul Studio
Manhattan Midnight
Code: 212013

£569



Les Paul Studio
Desert Burst
Code: 212014

£569



SG Standard
Heritage Cherry
Code: 212044

£799



Les Paul Studio
Wine Red
Code: 212015

£569



Les Paul Classic
Fire Burst
Code: 212021

£829

www.dv247.com

Mail Order : 020 3176 6247

Retail Superstore : 01708 771991

DV247, Chesham House, Chesham Close, Romford, RM7 7PJ

The Lineup

Don't miss it! Must-see guitar goings-on for the coming weeks...



2016 NAMM SHOW

21 to 24 January 2016, Anaheim Convention Center, California

Why is NAMM the highlight of the year when it comes to gear?

Frankfurt's Musikmesse in April and Nashville's Summer NAMM are both significant trade shows, but for new guitar gear, Winter NAMM in California is still where most of the action happens in terms of big product launches. The MI industry will descend on Anaheim's huge Convention Center in Orange Country for the yearly event on 21 January, and *Guitarist* has been putting out the feelers for what players can expect to be announced for the year ahead.

So, have there been any hints?

Understandably, many companies value secrecy ahead of NAMM to give their January announcements maximum impact. But there are some announcements about what will be on show ahead of NAMM.

Tell us more...

First up is Yamaha, who is celebrating its 50th anniversary producing electric guitars by launching its Revstars this month: a new, affordable design from the company that's been in development for over three years (see p116 for the full review and story). We

also hear it will be upgrading the FG acoustic range, another Yamaha mainstay.

Any other acoustic news for NAMM?

Taylor will have some news to share, including a focus on the 12-string in 2016.

What about Gibson?

The company has announced its 2016 models, offering two iterations of much of its core line-up of Les Pauls, SGs, Firebird, Explorer and Firebird with two very different feels: the classic-leaning Traditional line and the High Performance option, with the latter integrating G Force tuning, Titanium Zero Fret Adjustable Nut and Titanium Bridge with a new wider neck. It's good to see the SG Faded making a return, too.

Is Fender remaining tight-lipped?

Relatively speaking, but the Big 'F' has not been holding back everything for NAMM, as the recent Acoustic Pro and SFX amps attest. We've heard exciting word that a brand-new line of affordable amps is coming and fans of the American Deluxe range should also keep their eyes peeled... especially in our next issue.

Any more rumours of new amp launches?

Well, NAMM 2015 was relatively quiet for Marshall, but this time, we've heard there's a new range coming.

PRS recently announced new baritone models – is that all we can expect in terms of new product?

No. There's another new guitar model coming for NAMM. We just can't say any more right now, but we're pleased to say you can expect a review in the next issue.

We're just scratching the surface here in terms of NAMM. We haven't even mentioned the bevy of new models that will surface from the likes of Ibanez, ESP (who have already been previewing new prototypes on Facebook), Gretsch, Washburn and Schecter at the show. Then there are new effects and many other brands... Stay tuned!

To follow the news from NAMM 2016 at it happens, see *Guitarist's* reports from the show floor on MusicRadar.com as well as our Facebook and Twitter. For our views on the very best gear from the show, make sure you watch this space for issue 405's full show report.

What's Goin' On

All the best guitar events happening over the next few weeks, in one place

Steven Wilson 25 to 30 January 2016

Various UK venues

Wilson's UK run is part of a European tour as he heads into the final stage of supporting this year's excellent *Hand.Cannot.Erase* album, with touring guitarist Dave Kilminster continuing to shine in a role that's found him replacing Guthrie Govan in the line-up while the latter fulfils commitments to The Artistocrats. Wilson has affirmed himself as a national prog treasure with his recent solo output and this 'evening with' show promises to be special with two distinct halves. A full performance of the album will open proceedings before an interval, which is then followed by cuts from forthcoming mini album 4 ½ (see p49 for the review) and highlights from the Wilson solo back catalogue. The mini album – set for release on 22 January on Kscope – includes four from the *Hand.Cannot.Erase* sessions and Kilminster himself even appears on a reworking of Porcupine Tree's *Don't Hate Me*.

<http://stevenwilsonhq.com>



Tremonti Various UK venues 11 to 16 December

The Alter Bridge guitarist brings his metal-leaning solo band to the UK for a five-show run between the release of this year's *Cauterize* album and its other half, next year's *Dust*. Support will feature another talented player in Andy James, together with his band Wearing Scars.

<http://fret12.com/mark-tremonti>

Celtic Connections 14 to 31 January Various venues, Glasgow

The annual Glasgow festival features 2,100 artists across 300 events in 20 venues, but we'd recommend making a beeline for Glasgow Royal Concert Hall for Larry Carlton on 17 January then Robert Plant, Bernard Butler and Ryley Walker on 31 January among the artists celebrating the music of Bert Jansch.

www.celticconnections.com

Django Amsterdam 22 to 24 January Kapitein Zeppos, Amsterdam

A celebration of the Gypsy jazz legend returns for its second year with a weekend of concerts and workshops in central Amsterdam. The Netherlands' own Rosenberg Trio will perform, alongside the Robin Nolan Trio and the European debut for the Tokyo Django Collective from Japan.

www.djangoamsterdam.com

Jason Isbell 19 to 24 January Various UK venues

Another artist appearing at Celtic Connections (on 24 January), the US Americana songwriter will also play four more UK dates in January supporting superb fifth album, *Something More Than Free*. Find out why John Mayer, Ryan Adams and even Patrick Stewart are all admirers of the former Drive-By Truckers.

www.jasonisbell.com

The Winery Dogs 31 January to 5 February Various UK venues

Ritchie Kotzen, Billy Sheehan and Mike Portnoy are the most underrated supergroup we've heard in recent times, a feast of chops and hooks from a true power trio. Second album, *Hot Streak*, lives up to its name and we're hoping it continues for this run.

www.thewinerydogs.com

Lee Ritenour Quartet 4 to 6 February Ronnie Scott's Jazz Club

His sessioneering has seen collaborations with artists such as Pink Floyd, Frank Sinatra, Steely Dan, BB King and Ray Charles and now the Grammy Award-winner hits the capital for this three-night residency with Melvin Davis on bass, Jesse Milliner on keys and drummer, Lee's son, Wesley Ritenour.

<http://leeritenour.com>

Dream Theater 18 to 19 February London Palladium

It will be a case of Theater at the theatre when the progressive titans will launch their ambitious double album, *The Astonishing*, playing it in its entirety during two nights at the prestigious venue. The concept is based on a story written by guitarist John Petrucci and fans can expect a new benchmark of musical ambition.

www.dreamtheater.net

The Guitar Show 27 to 28 February New Bingley Hall, Birmingham

Ron 'Bumblefoot' Thal has already been announced at the Vigier stand, with other confirmed exhibitors including PRS, Peavey, Fender, Patrick James Eggle, Gordon Smith, Manson Guitar Works and Blackstar. The full live line-up is yet to be announced, but check the site for updates.

www.theguitarshow.co.uk

The Players

News and happenings from the world of your favourite guitarists



Runnin' Down A Dream

Mike Campbell's Broadcaster gets the Custom Shop treatment

A faithful recreation of the workhorse guitar synonymous with one of rock 'n' roll's greatest sidemen sounds promising enough in principle, and now the result of the Fender Custom Shop's collaboration with Tom Petty And The Heartbreakers' Mike Campbell delivers aplenty, with visual mojo to spare.

The Fender Custom Shop Heartbreaker (£2,949) is a limited-edition relic'd run cloned from Campbell's original Broadcaster, which has deep roots in the band's history. When Campbell loaned Petty his Strat for the first Heartbreakers album in the mid-70s, he was a guitar short. He went into a Hollywood store for a Tele, but walked out \$600 lighter with a Blonde Broadcaster. "I've bought hundreds of guitars since then," says Campbell, "but every time I go back to that one... I was lucky, I got a real good guitar that day."

Campbell has only ever allowed a fret to be changed on the 1950s original, and the rest remains stock – he won't even allow techs to clean the grime between the frets. The elite team at the Custom Shop, led by Master Builder Dale Wilson, have painstakingly recreated the neck wear and every scar on the body, including nail scratches, soldering iron burns and even a chipped nut.

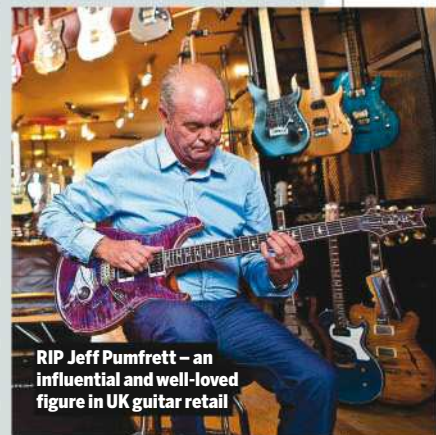
As the man himself says: "With a blindfold test I might not be able to tell the difference – that's how close it is."

www.fendercustomshop.com

Guitarist was deeply saddened to hear of **World Guitars owner Jeff Pumfrett's** death following a heart attack last month. Jeff was a charismatic and influential force in UK guitar retail, sharing his passion for quality service and high-end gear with customers for many years. Jeff's friend, *Guitar Techniques* editor Neville Marten, shared his thoughts and memories with us: "I'd known Jeff since 1983 when we both worked for CBS Fender, me as guitar repairer and him as service manager. I loved his brash humour and absolute honesty. When he left to open Machinehead Music in Harlow, I made him a plaque out of birdseye maple with a Fender Precision tuner screwed to it and a little inscription. In later years, World Guitars – a fabulous shop full of six-string gems – opened just up the road from me, so I'd pop in to borrow instruments for cover shoots and often come out quite a few quid short, but never without a fabulous guitar, a great deal and a few friendly insults ringing in my ears. I loved that guy, as did all his friends and customers. He was such a force of nature, it's hard to believe he's gone. Our thoughts are with Jeff's family."

Silvertone was the starter brand for everyone from Bob Dylan to Chet Atkins and Jack White, while Mark Knopfler, Chris Isaak and Beck have all been seen onstage with original 60s models, too. Now UK players can enjoy the reissues under the returning Silvertone brand based on its 50s, 60s and 70s models. See the range via www.gear4music.com.

Another guitar is getting the Custom Shop treatment with the news that **Gibson** has announced a limited run of **Peter Frampton 'Phenix' Les Pauls**, based on the 1954 triple-pickup Les Paul Custom that earned its nickname when Frampton was miraculously reunited with it 32 years after it was initially lost in a cargo plane crash in Venezuela in 1980.



RIP Jeff Pumfrett – an influential and well-loved figure in UK guitar retail

Jimmy Page unexpectedly grabbed a guitar and joined musicians including Paul Rodgers, Jerry Cantrell, Duff McKagan, Rich Robinson, Krist Novoselic, Rick Nielsen and Kim Thayil on stage playing tribute to him in November at Seattle's **Experience Music Project Museum**. The makeshift supergroup delivered a spirited version of Zep's *Rock And Roll*.

Ritchie Blackmore has at last confirmed that he is returning to rock... if only for one night in the UK. The Deep Purple and Rainbow legend will focus on a set of songs from the two legendary bands at Birmingham's Genting Arena on 25 June, under the **Ritchie Blackmore's Rainbow** moniker. Relative unknown Ronnie Romero will be the vocalist, although considering Blackmore's role in bringing David Coverdale and Ronnie James Dio to worldwide attention, we're trusting his judgement. "I'm doing it for the fans, for nostalgia," says Blackmore, "and the singer I found is very exciting; he's a cross between Ronnie James Dio meets Freddie Mercury." Bob Nouveau will play bass, with David Keith on drums, and Stratovarius keyboardist Jens Johansson.

Finally, **Animals As Leaders'** eight-string virtuoso **Tosin Abasi** has been enthusiastically sharing footage and pics of a striking new Ibanez prototype signature he's testing with a body shape sure to spark debate...

Headroom

New gear and guitar arcana you need to know about. This month: Gifts for the guitarist who has everything

1 Fender Guitar Case Stand £380

Why hide our pride and joys away, when we can keep them on hand for our next recording session (or gig, if you're not travelling light)? The plush interior of this Guitar Case Stand from the Big 'F' folds itself down into a traditional-looking Fender guitar case, and the two versions available can house up to three (£280) or seven guitars. Available in tweed or black. We've also noted that street prices are considerably cheaper, too.

www.fender.com

2 Lewitt DGT 650 £509

This USB microphone offers a portable recording solution for guitarists by also serving as an interface for PC, Mac and iOS devices. The DGT 650 offers 24-bit/96kHz with a 110dB dynamic range, and its four different recording modes make it versatile enough to handle a range of guitar situations. The Singer/Songwriter mode can capture an acoustic and a line source (eg, vocal mic) on separate tracks for an easy demoing solution, while the Stereo Line-In mode is aimed at capturing a stereo line signal such as mixing-console output from your next live gig.

One of its trump cards as a USB microphone is that it isn't reliant on power from a USB source; an in-built 950mAh battery will also provide in excess of three hours' recording time when recording with Apple's iPad and iPhone.

www.jhs.co.uk

3 Peterson StrobeClip SC1 Tuner £54.99

Peterson's Strobe tuners have a reputation that precedes them for one very good reason: accuracy... from a company that focuses exclusively on its tuning technology. Here, it brings the sensitive 1/10-cent accuracy of its big-brother models' Strobe technology to your headstock. The StrobeClip also includes 29 Peterson Sweetened Tunings, optimised offsets for specific instruments and tunings, from Dobro to modal DAGDAD and for guitars

equipped with the Buzz Feiten Tuning System. The StrobeClip's stainless steel case will also help it withstand the rigours of travelling around in your gigbag, too!

www.petersonsintuners.com

4 Abbey Road Studios Store Notebook £10 and Logo Mug £7

The world's most famous recording studio has opened a shop, both at its base in St Johns Wood and online, selling a range of merchandise including apparel, homeware, stationary and a range of Beatles items, too. Channel Macca's magic in your next lyric with this luxury notebook and bring that Studio Two vibe to your next home recording with a branded mug.

www.abbeyroad.com

5 Bulldog Dragon One £299

Naturally enough, guitar stands are usually more functional than aesthetically attractive, but Belgian company Bulldog is seeking to turn that notion on its head with the Dragon One range. The wood options available right now are Bubinga (pictured), Tineo and Zebrano, with a hanger fitting made from aluminium. The stands are suitable for electrics, too, of course, although we suspect this is really one for the acoustic aficionados out there.

www.thomann.de

6 Mono M80 Dual £229

A simple solution to a situation all gigging and recording players find themselves in, the M80 is a high-quality gigbag that can hold two standard-body electric guitars at once. Mono's priority was to offer the same protection to both guitars that its single model M80 provides. The company spent a year prototyping its Z-form design that allows players access to each guitar from the left and the right side, respectively. The military-grade materials and patented Neckbrace design (keeping the headstock suspended inside the case) all combine to make this a hard-wearing case for the road or Tube. There's even a hidden upper pocket to conceal your valuables.

www.monocreators.com



1



2



3



4



5



6

Vintage®

REISSUED SERIES



**Stunning looks,
excellent playability
and awesome tones!**

The VS6V encapsulates all those great features with the added bonus of a Wilkinson-designed Vibrola tailpiece, which offers unparalleled return-to-zero performance every time.



www.jhs.co.uk

Acoustic
magazine



"A travel guitar with impeccable build qualities and a great sound"
VIATOR

iGuitar
online magazine



"A smooth and pleasurable playing experience... isn't that the greatest praise I can give, that this guitar made me instantly want to play?"

Acoustic
magazine



"Compact, loud and musical, with benchmark playability... Both these guitars are greater than the sum of their parts."

Guitarist
magazine



"An endearing travel guitar offering a completely different vibe from the big American-name options"
VIATOR

Acoustic
magazine

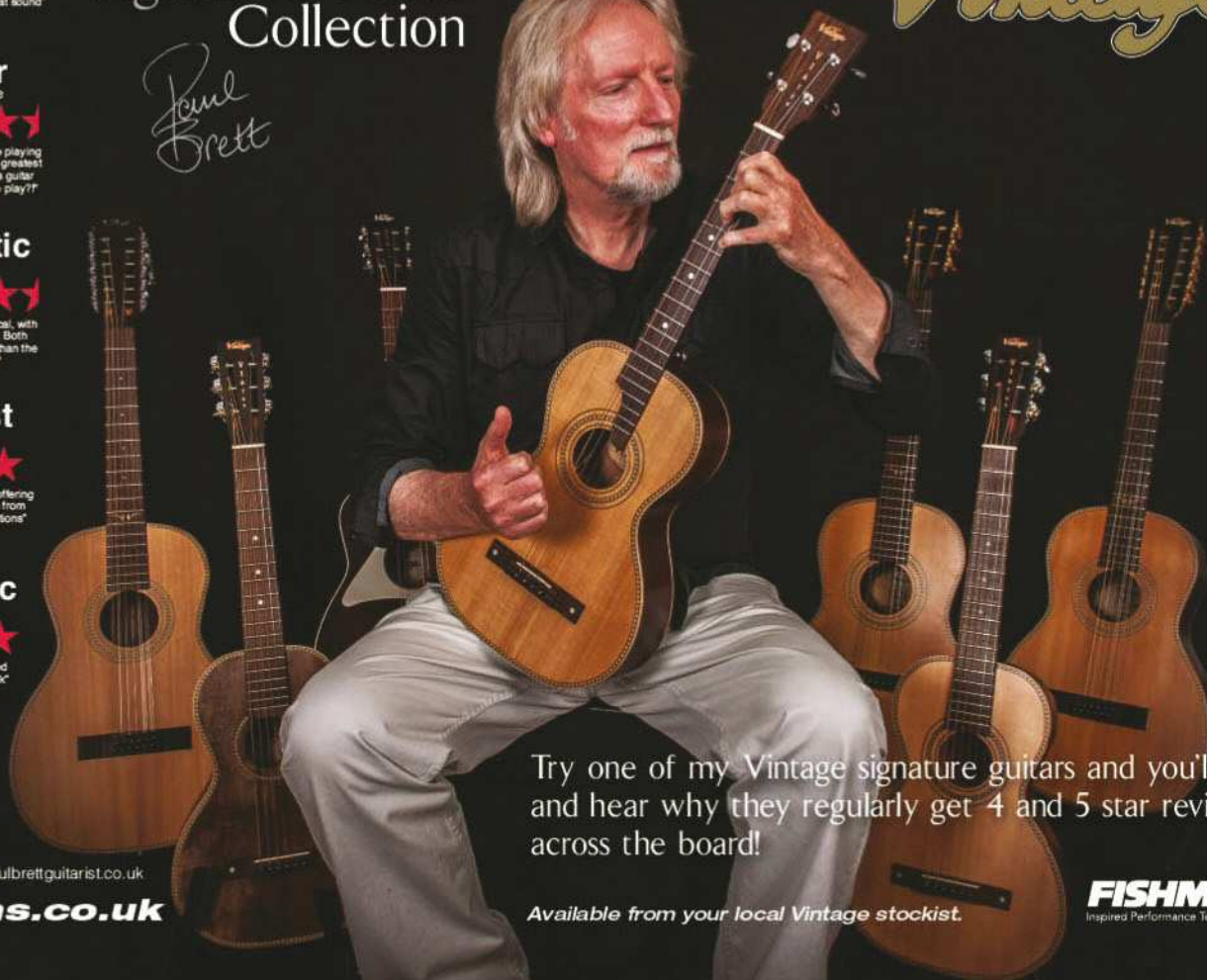


"Great look, nice balanced tone, lovely V profile neck"
GEMINI

PAUL BRETT
Signature Series
Collection

*Paul
Brett*

Vintage®



Try one of my Vintage signature guitars and you'll see and hear why they regularly get 4 and 5 star reviews across the board!

Available from your local Vintage stockist.



www.paulbrettguitarist.co.uk

www.jhs.co.uk

FISHMAN
Inspired Performance Technology™

THE TWANG!

Opening a dialogue

In a new column, Steely Dan guitarist and session legend Elliott Randall wants to talk about the art of playing better – and learn what *you* think matters most in guitar music...

I began this piece with the intent of writing solely about the teaching experience, but, like a lot of my solos, it seems to have found its own way. There's so much to discuss! I was fortunate to have had three fine tutors in the first eight years of my guitar development. It was an incredible growth process. Each teacher's curriculum was different, and each brought a different spectrum of awareness to this young aspiring guitarist. I am forever indebted.

Of course, many fine guitarists have developed on their own, without the aid of one-on-one tutelage. Sitting with a student face-to-face, however, brings another dimension to the learning process. An experienced teacher can spot a student's weaknesses, and offer advice on how to 'up their game' whether it's fingering, picking, chord and position alternatives... the list is virtually endless. *YouTUBE cannot do that.*

A very wise educator once told me: "the best way to learn is to teach". My students are varied in their needs, wants and approaches. Some are uber-professional; others are 'weekend warriors'. Some only do it at home in the privacy of their music rooms, or with their mates in a garage like the good old days. But most importantly, their aim is enjoyment and self-fulfilment. And I just love it when one asks me, "Why did you play those particular notes?" or "Why did you play those chords in that inversion?" – and, as often as not, I have to ask myself those 'Whys' – and I become clearer on just what it is that I'm doing. Exciting.

All the same, becoming musically educated doesn't guarantee that you develop something crucially important: your own voice on guitar. There certainly are a good number of guitarists graduating from prestigious universities. These folks can sight-read at dizzying speeds, are well-versed in chord construction and improvising/soloing. Many have invested a fair sum in sets of boutique pedals and amplifiers. It is also hard to tell their playing apart. When I speak of 'voice', it's about

a uniqueness of sound and playing that makes you immediately identifiable – Wes Montgomery, Duane Eddy, Manitas de Plata, Ry Cooder and Jimi Hendrix come to mind. Finding that personal voice is something every serious guitarist should strive for.

Making Conversation

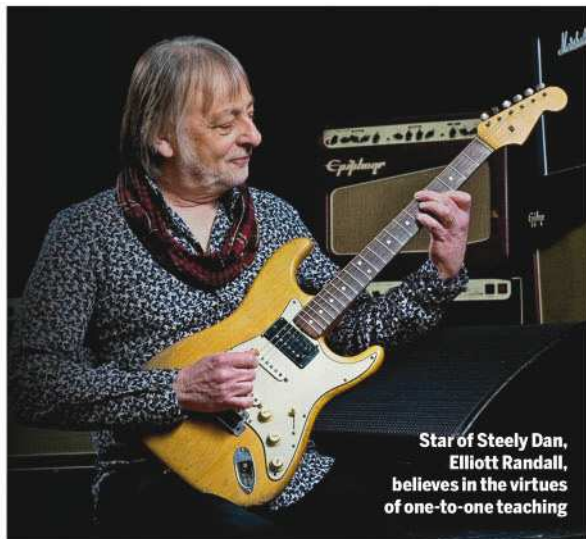
Last week, I found myself mentioned in a Facebook thread, and someone mentioned a 'gunfight' – as in guitar duel. I was compelled to respond: "I don't do gunfights – I do musical conversations". So, in that spirit, I'd like to engage in some meaningful musical conversations with *Guitarist* readers in this column. Below are some of the questions I've been turning over in my mind about making music on guitar recently. What I'd like is your feedback, your wish-lists of what to cover, and I will be happy to oblige. I will leave you now with a couple of riffs I just pulled out of the air:

"Let's hear what that sounds like when you turn all the effects off."

"Take it easy – you're not getting paid by the note."

"Seriously? There's no dressing room?"

I await your replies. Perhaps we can do a 'call and response'? See you next month. **G**



Star of Steely Dan, Elliott Randall, believes in the virtues of one-to-one teaching

*"I'd like to engage in some meaningful musical conversations with *Guitarist* readers in this column"*

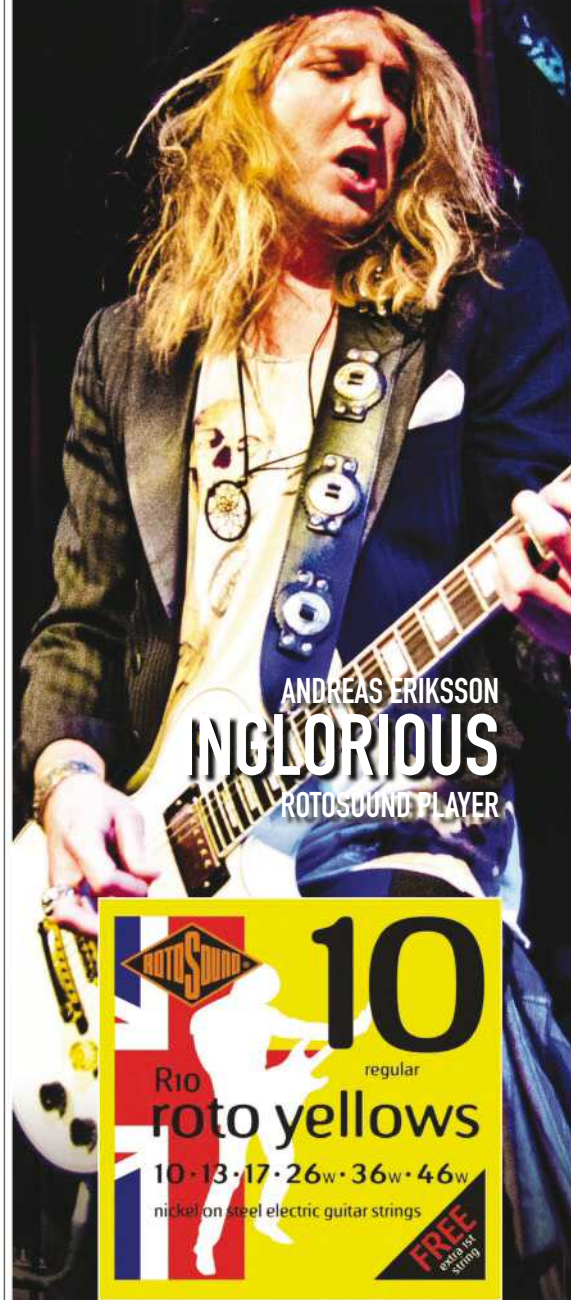
ELLIOTT RANDALL





LEGENDARY MUSIC STRINGS

SINCE 1958



ANDREAS ERIKSSON

INGLORIOUS

ROTSOUND PLAYER

10 regular
R10
roto yellows
10 · 13 · 17 · 26w · 36w · 46w
nickel on steel electric guitar strings
FREE extra set string



WORLD FAMOUS MUSIC STRINGS

WWW.ROTSOUND.COM

FACEBOOK.COM/ROTSOUND

TWITTER.COM/ROTSOUND_UK

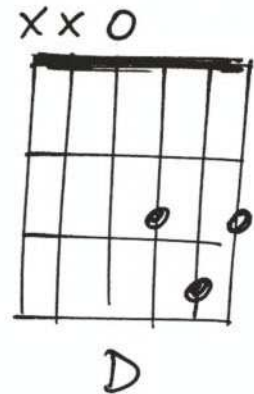
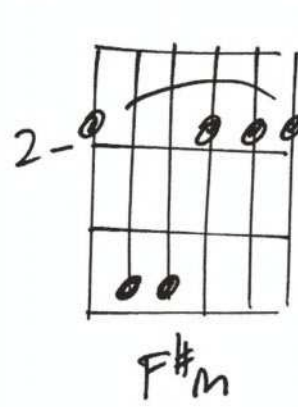
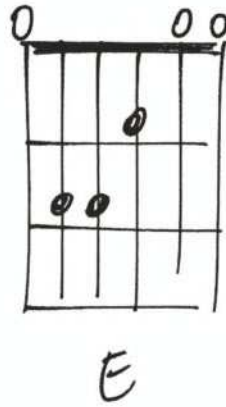
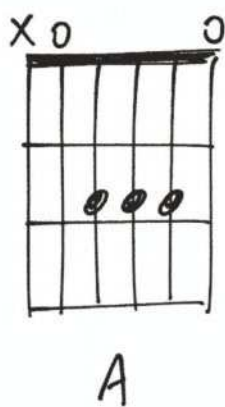


PROUDLY MADE IN ENGLAND

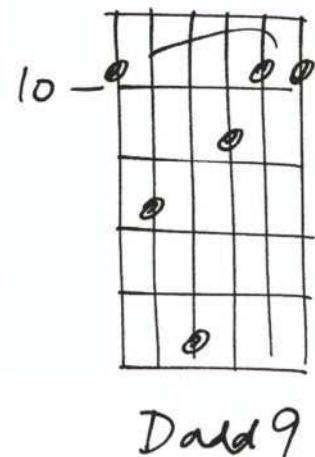
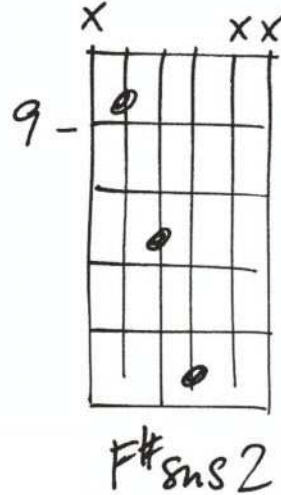
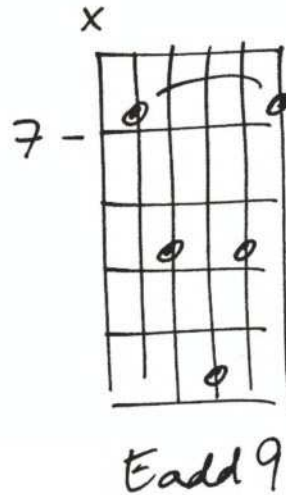
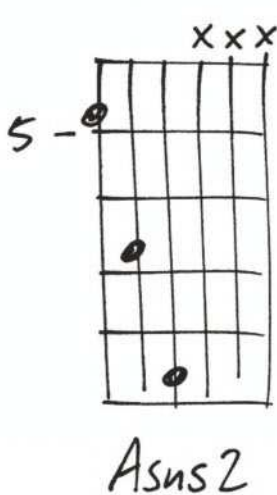
Substitute

This Issue: Anyone For Seconds?

One of the obvious ways to make a chord more interesting is to add notes to it. That's easy enough in isolation; an interesting new chord can be a great starting point for fresh inspiration. But adding notes to a whole progression is a bit daunting, especially for beginners. You might get one chord sounding great, but then it won't work with the next chord any more!



THAT might be because you don't understand how a given note functions in relation to the chord; some notes (especially 4ths) can be quite disruptive to the progression. But one note is usually a safe bet, and that's the 2nd, lying a whole tone above the root. You have two choices. You can either add it to a regular major or minor chord, or you can use it to replace the 3rd, keeping things simple. We'll use both approaches with this tired old progression above...



SO, our first chord was A major, which is built from the 1st, 3rd and 5th notes of the A major scale (A, C#, E). We're going to replace the 3rd with the 2nd (B), which is known as a 'suspended 2nd', hence the chord name of Asus2. The notes are now A, B and E.

FOR the E chord, we'll simply add the 2nd (F#) to the existing E major chord (E, G#, B). In this case, the 2nd is called the 9th (it's a music theory thing), so the resulting chord is called an 'add9'.

NOW we come to a crucial difference between sus2 and add9 chords. Even though we started here with F#m (F#, A, C#), we've ended up with F#sus2 (F#, G#, C#). By replacing the 3rd with the 2nd, we remove the major/minor distinction... sus2 chords are neither major nor minor.

THIS is the same process as chord 2, adding the 2nd (E) to the existing major triad (D, F#, A). For variety, we've positioned the chord with the root on the sixth string, so you get to learn a different shape. These add9 shapes are quite a stretch, so take care!

THIS IS THE SOUND

VINTAGE MODIFIED
'68 CUSTOM
GUITAR AMPLIFIERS

VIBROLUX
REVERB-AMP



Facebook.com/fendergbi



Twitter.com/fendergbi

© 2014 Fender Musical Instruments Corporation. Fender®, Vibrolux®, Princeton®, Twin Reverb®, and Deluxe Reverb® are registered trademarks of FMIC. All rights reserved.

fender.com/68-custom

NEW TO THE FAMILY – '68 CUSTOM VIBROLUX®
DISTINCTLY ROCK 'N' ROLL

Fender

Hugh Cornwell

He's the guitarist from The Stranglers and a successful solo performer, but how will he deal with the 10 nice 'n' sleazy questions we ask everyone?

1 What was your first guitar and when did you get it?

"It was a homemade bass I bought for £5 from a school friend. The neck was a piece of wood three inches wide and two inches deep, so was very difficult to play at first. Once I'd played that for a while, I bought a Hofner violin bass, with a beautiful thin neck, so it was a doddle to play."

2 If the building was burning down, what one guitar from your collection would you save?

"Obviously, my Fender Tele. It's the guitar I've had the longest, and is my go-to instrument. It's been all over the world with me and got me through some hard times. It's a '74, and stays in tune whatever the weather conditions, which is an important thing to bear in mind when you play festivals in the UK. Or my black Fender Tele. It's been modified from the standard issue. It has Grover tuning pegs, a brass end plate and a brass nut. This was done for me many years ago, and gives the sound a deeper resonance and sustain. Good when there's only one guitar in the line-up."

3 What plectrums do you use?

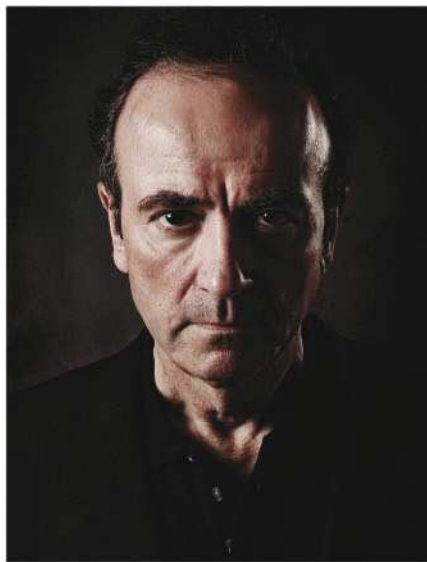
"Grey Dunlop 73s. The 88s are too thick, and I couldn't feel the strings when I tried them. Plectrums do have a habit of going AWOL, though."

4 If you could change one thing about a recording you've been on, what would it be and why?

"There's no point even going there. A recording is about where and what you were at a particular moment, and should reflect that. Once you depart from that and try to deny it, you'll never stop fiddling."

5 What's the worst thing that has happened to you on stage?

"Breaking a string. It happened during the first song of an acoustic set in Phoenix once, and with no spare guitar at the time, I had to restring on stage. It makes you feel incredibly vulnerable, especially when you've only just begun your set. In general, I always like to change my strings myself, then if one breaks, the buck stops here. I have developed a process of string



•
"I almost ruined the neck of an earlier Tele I had by sawing through the strings with a hacksaw on stage at the Roundhouse during a number"
 •

stretching over the years that will more or less fully stretch a set before going on stage. Rotosound rule."

6 What are you doing five minutes before you go on stage and five minutes after?

"Probably a last minute leak, as it's irritating and distracting to have a full bladder on stage. Afterwards, it's probably a drink and a cigarette, although I know I shouldn't be smoking as a singer."

7 What song would you play on acoustic around a campfire?

"I wouldn't, because I would probably be tipsy at the time and I don't like to play in that state. I can never remember the words or the chords, and I end up looking a complete idiot."

8 What's the closest you've come to quitting music?

"This morning, when I couldn't find a guitar strap. They're one of the things you overlook when you travel a lot. I ended up using some string and cushioning it with a folded-up towel. That and guitar stands. I haven't ever really considered myself as a serious guitar player. It was all the rehearsing that got me down. Now I'm more into it, probably because I don't carry a keyboard player when I tour, so I have to cover more territory."

9 What aspect of playing guitar would you like to be better at?

"All of it. I really only began playing guitar in order to accompany myself while I sang. That's the thing I began with in music, my voice. I have never had great technical ability and can't really play twiddly bits. Almost all of my solos are written pieces that don't vary from show to show, and sometimes, I can't even play those correctly. This morning, I played through our current set in preparation for a festival this weekend. The current set has been a mix of old Stranglers songs and most of *Totem & Taboo*, but that's about to change to a *Fall And Rise...* set for a German tour."

10 What advice would you give your younger self about the guitar if you had the chance?

"Look after them and they'll look after you. I was terribly abusive of my guitars and didn't respect them at all. Perhaps it was a sign of too many roadies pampering me. I almost ruined the neck of an earlier Tele I had by sawing through the strings with a hacksaw on stage at the Roundhouse during a number." [DM]

The Rise And Fall Of Hugh Cornwell is available now on the Invisible Hands label. More details at www.hughcornwell.com

THE BEST AMPS IN THE WORLD

THE PROFILER

"With profiling, Kemper changed the world for all guitar players, making it a better place indeed.

Because all the best guitar amps in the world – with their tones meticulously designed, thoroughly mic'ed and recorded in the best studios – are available with the Profiler. Ready to be taken to the studio, the stages around townand around the globe!"

The Profiler comes loaded with the finest Rigs created by artists, producers and performers who are famous for their tone.



NEW:

PROFILER REMOTE

All Performances and Rigs can be controlled without further setup.



m.i.p.a.

AWARD 2013: BEST GUITAR HEAD
AWARD 2012 & 2013: MOST INNOVATIVE PRODUCT

KEMPER-AMPS.COM
facebook.com/kemperamps

"The JDX captures my sound with previously unobtainable control and clarity, offering our soundman a direct injection of sonic rage! Radial gear rules."

~ Kerry King
(Slayer)

"The Radial Headload is the heart of my guitar system. The voicing of the direct signal is so natural I often prefer it over a mic. I own all the other major speaker emulators but the Headload is THE ONE!"

~ Michael Thompson
(LA session guitarist - David Foster, Babyface, Seal, Michael Buble)

"I've been using the Radial SGI and JDXs for a while now... Talked about them bitches in several guitar mags too! SGI is mandatory. Best thing ever for bigger stages and big pedal boards. It's Da pro chit"

~ Scott Holiday
(Rival Sons)

"My Headbones give me easy access to all of my amps and I only have to carry two cabinets. Radial gives me the transparent tone I love and the reliability I need."

~ Tommy Johnston
(The Doobie Brothers)

"Spent years trying to combine all of my favorite tones on stage without carrying a ton of amps and cabs... the Headbone helps me get there. I only wish I had it years ago... I love my Headbone!!"

~ Mark Tremonti
(Creed, Alter Bridge)

"My annoying inability to compromise has lead me to some odd places in music, and fortunately, has also lead me to the ultimate no-compromise total solutions from Radial."

~ Devin Townsend
(Guitarist-songwriter-producer)

"The JDX accurately emulates the sound of a perfectly-placed mic without any of the downsides. The tones that come out of this thing are clean, articulate, and easy for any engineer to work with!"

~ David Sanchez
(Havoc)

"The JDX is the best tool for live performance! My guitar sound is really clear and HEAVY! Radial Rules!!!"

~ Alan Wallace
(Eminence)



PowerTools™... for Amp Heads!

At Radial, we care about tone. ... and know you are passionate about it too. That's why we work with players and techs around the world to develop tools that help our 'amp head' friends get the great tone they are looking for.

Headload™ amplifier load box:

The ultimate load box! The Headload lets you attenuate your amp down to any level, emulate 6 different cabinets and send your signal to the PA or recorder with the built-in JDX direct box and Phaser!

Headbone™ VT head switcher:

Use your two favourite amps on stage and switch between rhythm and lead with one stomp of a footswitch! Safe, efficient and noise-free!



Headload Prodigy™:

Combination load box and DI that lets you drive your guitar amp at a higher output in order to maximize the tone, yet produce a lower stage volume when needed.

Twinline™ amp effects loop router:

Use your effects on two different amps! The Twinline lets you remotely switch your entire pedalboard from one amp to another when using your amp's built-in effects loops.

JDX48™ Reactor amplifier DI:

Capture the sound of your amp and cab for consistent tone night after night. No more worries about mic placement, poor acoustics or bleed from drums and bass.



Check the latest Radial videos:
www.blog.radialeng.com

radialeng.com

1588 Kehler Way, Port Coquitlam, BC, V3C 5M5 Tel: 604-942-1001

Authorized Radial Distributors:

Australia: AMBER TECH ambertech.com.au	Austria: 4AUDIO 4audio.at	Belgium: FACE-BE face-be.eu	Denmark: ALFA AUDIO alfaaudio.dk	Finland: MSONIC msonic.fi	France: ALGAM algam.net	Germany: SHURE DISTRIBUTION shuredistribution.de	Hungary: GEM KFT gemkft.hu	Italy: EKO MUSIC GROUP ekomusicgroup.com
Poland: LAUDA AUDIO lauda-audio.pl	Netherlands: TM AUDIO traudio.nl	Norway: DRAMMEN drammenly.no	Russia: SLAMI slami.ru	Sweden: ARVA TRADING arva.se	Spain: SEESOUND seesound.es	Switzerland: MGM AUDIO mgmaudio.ch	Turkey: ELIT elit-tr.com	United Kingdom: SHURE DISTRIBUTION shuredistribution.co.uk

Radial
engineering

...PowerTools for Power Players™

Feedback

Your letters to the *Guitarist* editor. Drop us a line at guitarist@futurenet.com

Star Letter



SIMPLE, CLASSIC

When I started out, in the mid-60s, there was not the selection of equipment available that there is today. You had your guitar (mine was a Strat), your amp (mine was an early Marshall and 4x12) and that was it. Then, through the 70s, 80s even the 90s, changes came along in profusion: different neck profiles, different pickups, hundreds of effects pedals etc. But recently, I've noticed a big step, or at least a look, backwards to simpler setups.

There seems to be a trend towards thicker necks, for example, lower-output pickups, lower-powered amps and even a 7.25-inch fingerboard radius – all of which, in my opinion, help generate better tone. Heavier strings, higher actions and less audio

processing... you get the idea. And this makes me wonder whether we oldies had a lot of things right first time around.

Yes, there have been technical improvements – no one would deny that – but it amazes me just how many people are just beginning to discover the joy of just plugging a good old Fender or Gibbo straight into an amp and playing. There's nothing better than being able to get all your kit into and out of the venue in one run and getting an ace sound when you play. Do you and your readers agree?

Martin Scott, via email

Thanks, Martin. There's no denying that the eternal, simple ingredients of a great valve amp, a short cable and a fine guitar usually add up to stellar tone, even now. A host of little ways in which tone can leach away in more complex rigs just aren't there to spoil things. All the same, we think good modern design is really about being able to have your cake and eat it: the best of today's gear designs often combine vintage tones with modern useability – to pick just one example, we like the fact that Mesa/Boogie's Mark 5:25 brings together many eras of the company's amp designs in one tweakable box. Likewise, a lot of vintage-styled Custom Shop guitars out there have subtly updated elements, such as fretboard radius and bigger frets which aid useability, but don't detract from the overall vibe 'relic' vibe too much.

As for taking it all out to the car in one trip, what could be more efficient than today's 'lunchbox' heads and micro-pedalboards? Change is great, we say – so long as we can keep one foot in the past!



Reader Bruce Newton's handmade, surf-inspired electric

SURF'S UP

G'day guitarist crew, I read with interest your article on Nik Huber's Dolphin Surfmeister guitar in issue 396. In 2014, I made myself a semi-hollow styled around a Ric' 660 with a surf theme throughout. The guitar is constructed of mainly non-traditional timbers. For the body, it uses Australian white cedar (looks like ash), with a cap of Hoop pine. The neck is Tasmanian Oak (salvaged from school shelving), while the fingerboard is ebony with hand-cut beachy inlays. The bridge is Gotoh roller-style and I've fitted TV Jones pickups, wired Tele-style.

The guitar chimes like a bell and and I would be lying if I said it didn't have surf twang in excess, usually played through an old Twin with a Seymour Duncan Twin Tube Blue for overdriven tones. As an aside, I have a string-saving tip for your readers. Every time I change strings, I clean the fingerboard with lemon oil, then smear a very light coating of petroleum jelly on the board and buff before restringing. This coats the strings with petroleum jelly every time you play, acting like coated strings without that horrible feel. Strings last many times longer. NB: I only use this on ebony and rosewood 'boards. Cheers from an Aussie reader.

Bruce Newton, via email



KORG

Each issue's Star Letter wins a Korg Pandora Stomp – an ingenious compact multi-effects pedal with a wealth of options in one tiny package worth £119!

www.korg.co.uk



Thanks for sharing your gorgeous creation, Bruce, it's a real surfer's delight. Just a hint of Charvel Surfcaster in there, and the Ricky-style 'breaking wave' body shape couldn't be more apt.

Now all you need to do is emulate those classic old Fender adverts dreamt up by Bob Perine, where a guy is playing a Jaguar while catching a wave on an old longboard!

BEAUTY BEFORE AGE

I have just read and watched the accompanying video of the Gibson True Historic 1960 Les Paul Murphy Aged. I am at a loss to understand this trend of creating artificially aged instruments and why it only applies to electric guitars. In fact, it predominately applies to Les Pauls, Strats and Teles. Why are there no artificially aged 335s, SGs, Rickenbackers or PRS guitars? The kind of damage that seems to be cool to a number of guitarists doesn't signify years of use; it should be more correctly defined as representing years of abuse.

It took me a long time to be able to afford instruments that were 'professional tools'

and keeping my guitars in perfect playing condition has involved a lot of learning, investment in a few luthier's tools and some inexpensive polishes and oils.

However, the rewards from taking the time to set up and keep my guitars in great playing condition far outweighs the financial cost of the initial outlay and the time taken after each gig to properly clean the guitar and strings before putting it back into its case.

The result is, my guitars, which are regularly gigged, show very few signs of wear and abuse. Do they feel played in? Yes they do, the years of playing have gently rounded the edges of the necks. Do they look like they have been left out in the back of a leaky shed for decades? No they do not!

I can't imagine anybody wanting to buy a new Super Car but stipulating that you want a few dents in the body, some scratches here and there, some areas where the panels have had all the paint rubbed off and finally some strategically placed rusty components such as grilles and door handles.

What makes this even more incredulous is that people are prepared to pay an additional cost for this pointless abuse.

Tony Konieczny, via email



Go and see the Tedeschi Trucks band if you want to witness unselfish mastery of the instrument

Oh dear! We venture upon this old chestnut once again with some trepidation. Ageing is a love-or-hate issue, especially as it tends to be expensive when it's done right. We should add that Gibson does offer guitars that are treated to look merely like they have been played and loved for a few decades, rather than heavily worn.

Those are the VOS (Vintage Original Spec) instruments which, outside actually owning a nice old guitar, is a nice compromise between the charm of a lightly played-in guitar and the wilder excesses of the ager's art. And, after all, you can still buy shiny new ones, too, if you want. We should also add that some petrol-heads do in fact artificially wear and age valuable cars: look up 'Rat Rods' on Google. Nowt as strange as folk, as they say...

KEEP ON TRUCKIN'

Dear *Guitarist*. I read issue 401 on the plane to Berlin this weekend. Your comment that the closest musical relation to the guitar is the human voice really resonated with me. It

Send your letters to: guitarist@futurenet.com



made me think of the way in which the guitar greats use that fact to create expression and emotional impact. It even made me question even more fundamentally, what are we aiming to achieve when we pick up and fall in love with the guitar in the first place? All that learning, the search for chops and the ultimate tone? I found my answer in the clearest possible terms at the Tedeschi Trucks Band gig on Saturday.

We made the long journey from Cornwall to Berlin for the gig because I'd already been hooked by Derek's playing and Susan's vocals. It was obvious that they valued the same musical heritage as me and so I was expecting great things.

Nothing could have prepared me for the emotional impact of their performance. The 11-piece band was packed with spectacular musicians, but there were no egos on show at any point. Every player was always focused on doing the right thing to support and build each song or featured solo performance. The dynamics, light and shade, melody, harmony, tension, groove and downright force of energy on tap was incredible. Derek (self-effacing man with beard, T-shirt and jeans, who didn't speak a

word all night) reduced me to an emotional wreck for two hours. He played like Aretha Franklin sings.

Is he a virtuoso player with monster technique? Yes. Does he play a single note designed to impress you with this fact? No. For example on the brilliant cover of Leonard Cohen's *Bird On A Wire* which seemed to be crying out for a trademark Derek solo, he didn't play at all – letting Susan and the band shine. Nothing more was needed.

The total goal at all times seemed to me to be emotional connection between players and audience. It would be tempting to say I'll never achieve those heights. But I won't give up trying. At least I now know exactly what I'm aiming for! Keep up the great work at the magazine.

Mark Richards, via email

To have enough technique to be at the point where technique, in and of itself, is irrelevant and pure expression can reign – tastefully restrained or dazzling as the moment requires – is the ultimate goal of many a musician, most likely Derek included. We envy you the chance to see a modern master attain it in Berlin.



Kevin Antreassian

**THE
DILLINGER
ESC
PLAN**

Plays an Excalibur Indus - Vigier Artist since 2014

Vigier

GUITARS AND BASSES SINCE 1980



/htduk



/VigierGuitars

HIGH TECH
htd-uk.com

VIGIERGUITARS.COM

Music

The month's best guitar music, plus top players in the studio



Andy Summers

Metal Dog (Cargo Records)

8/10



Ex-Policeman goes instrumental

Andy Summers' career has been a long and varied one. Before he reached international fame with power popsters The Police, he was active on the 1960s rhythm and blues circuit, in particular with Zoot Money's Big Roll Band. He also enjoyed brief tours of duty with Soft Machine and The Animals, before heading off for California State University to study music. During the 1970s, he worked with a variety of artists, including Neil Sedaka and Kevin Ayres before meeting up with his fellow Policemen, Sting and Stewart Copeland. So, in many ways, The Police might have only demonstrated a single facet of Summers' capabilities – so it was no real surprise that once the Police retired that Andy immersed himself in a variety of ventures. His jazz leanings came to the fore in collaborative efforts with John Etheridge

and his more experimental nature was given an airing with *I Advance Masked*, which saw him link musical arms with King Crimson's Robert Fripp.

Coming up to date, *Metal Dog* is an instrumental album that encompasses most, if not all, of the aforementioned influences. It's a true solo project, with Summers composing, playing, recording and producing the project himself. He even took the photographs that adorn the sleeve. Musically speaking, the tracks hop from the metallic percussive-loop effects of the title track to the more Eastern-flavoured *Ishango Bone*, each draped with multi-textured guitars, including brief appearances of Summers' signature Police chorused-arpeggio style. It's an album of mini soundtracks, ambient and consistently compelling. **[DM]**

Standout track: *Mare Imbrium*
For fans of: *The Police, David Byrne*

Supersonic Blues Machine

West Of Flushing,
South Of Frisco

Provogue

7/10



Southern blues with stellar guests

Essentially, at its central core, Supersonic Blues Machine comprises bassist/producer Fabrizio Grossi, guitarist/singer Lance Lopez and drummer Kenny Aronoff – but the fun doesn't stop there, because this, their debut release, also includes contributions from some of the blues genre's brightest stars. So, during the album's 13 tracks, you get to hear from Billy Gibbons, Warren Haynes, Walter Trout and Robben Ford, among others. Even without the attendance of some superstar guitar power, the Blues Machine can certainly kick up the dust, as this is superbly crafted blues rock with a distinct Southern edge to it, ably demonstrated by the album's opening track, *Miracle Man*. When Billy Gibbons' contribution – the feelgood boogie outing *Running Whiskey* – started life, it was headed in ZZ Top's direction, but was diverted at the last minute in order to fuel the Blues Machine. If you're in the market for a powerful dose of well-wrought down 'n' dirty blues with, it has to be said, some pretty fine guitar playing throughout, then you need not look any further. **[DM]**

Standout track: *Let's Call It A Day*

For fans of: The Allman Brothers Band, Lynyrd Skynyrd

Danny Bryant

Blood Money

Jazzhaus Records

6/10



UK bluesman strikes back with stellar guests...

"I've wanted to make this album ever since I began my musical journey 20 years ago..." so says Danny Bryant, speaking about his new CD. The plan on *Blood Money*, he says, was to return to his roots and to pay homage to all his influences, as well as inviting two of his heroes, Bernie Marsden and Walter Trout, along for the ride. There are hints of Albert Collins, Albert King and Jimmy Reed during the album's course, but it's the title track and *Just Won't Burn*, the two duets with Trout and Marsden respectively, that really get the blood pumping. Danny Bryant will be taking his band out on the road in February and we suspect that it will be on the live stage that this new material will really ignite. Meanwhile, the album will whet the appetite nicely. **[DM]**

Standout track: *Just Won't Burn*

For fans of: Walter Trout, King King

The Boom Band

The Moon Goes Boom

Boom Recordings

7/10



High-explosive live blues from UK's premier journeymen

What happens when five musicians with an impressive array of credentials get together and decide to form a band to play a little recreational rhythm and blues? The Boom Band might just be able to provide an answer, for this is exactly what happened when Jon Amor, Marcus Bonfanti, Mark Butcher, Matt Taylor and Paddy Milner decided to fuse their creative impulses and create an ensemble which they describe as "The Allman Brothers meets Little Feat meets The Beatles". Certainly, The Boom Band have since gained a reputation for being a great live act as this album, recorded at The Half Moon, proves beyond doubt. **[DM]**

Standout track: *Waste My Time*

For fans of: Little Feat, The Blues Band

Mortal Tides

Light In/Light Out

Wild Sound

7/10



Get the folk out!

When a group of teenagers get together to form a band, you might be tempted to assume that it's strictly pop territory that they would name as their collective destination. In Mortal Tides' case, you couldn't be more wrong. With an average age that hovers around 17, this four-piece have made the folk-rock genre their home, with a surprising degree of maturity and finesse. Armed with guitars, violin, viola, double bass, keyboards and drums, Mortal Tides offer a refreshing take on traditional folk-inspired music with self-penned originals that are bound to be a big hit at festivals and folk clubs everywhere. **[DM]**

Standout track: *Naiad II*

For fans of: Bellowhead, Lau

Steve Forbert

Compromised

Rock Ridge

6/10



Life on the edge with one of the USA's most enduring songsmiths

Steve Forbert has survived the comparisons to Bob Dylan that plagued his early career to go on to be a formidable singer-songwriter in his own right. After quite a buoyant career during the late 1970s, the dawn of the 80s saw his fortunes change for the worse, resulting in him being dropped by his record label. However, such bad fortune wasn't to last and the 90s and 00s and the rise of the independent labels offered him the second chance he needed. *Compromised* sees him back in the saddle and doing what he does best, writing and performing songs that marry together the country and rock idioms to produce some edgy, uncompromising original material. **[DM]**

Standout track: *When I Get To California*

For fans of: Bruce Springsteen, Tom Petty

Tedeschi Trucks Band

Let Me Get By

Fantasy

8/10



The slide master returns...

There was some considerable mourning when The Allmans disbanded, having been the brightest lights of Southern blues-rock since the early 1970s. For 15 of those years, slide maestro Derek Trucks was very much part of the band, and the Tedeschi Trucks Band – formed with Truck's wife, Susan Tedeschi – was something of a side project. This looks set to change now, as Trucks is on record as saying that, since The Allmans' demise, he's putting 100 per cent into this band and "not going back to anything else". This commitment definitely shows through on this album, the first where all the tracks are all penned by the husband-and-wife team. Great material and some exemplary slide playing are the order of the day with some grooves to die for – superb! **[DM]**

Standout track: *Don't Know What It Means*

For fans of: The Allmans, Bonnie Raitt

Simo

Let Love Show The Way

Provogue

7/10



They're red hot

When someone of Joe Bonamassa's stature recommends a band to his record label, commenting that their guitarist is "one of the best out there right now", then it's appropriate that we all sit up and take notice. The guitarist concerned is JD Simo and the band is a Nashville-based blues-rock combo who blow their way through this mixture of covers and originals with all the down-home grit they can muster. JD's guitar playing shines throughout the album's 13 tracks, sometimes ripping up the fretboard with some white-hot blues, on other occasions with some deft slide playing. The material will satisfy anyone who favours blues with the thermostat turned right up! **[DM]**

Standout track: *Can't Say Her Name*

For fans of: Leslie West, Joe Bonamassa

Vinnie Moore

Aerial Visions

Mind's Eye Music

7/10

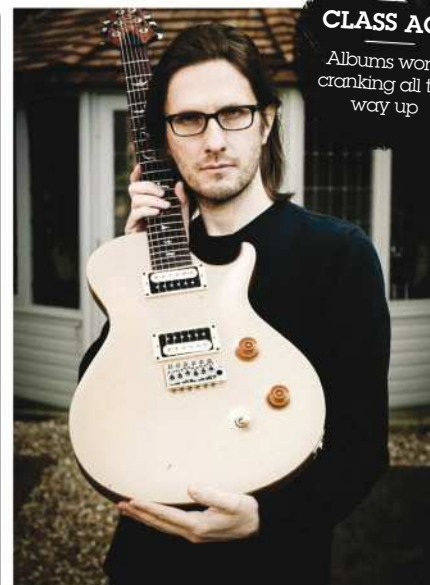


Shred lives!

To many, instrumental rock guitar is a bit of an anachronism these days. Born in the mid-1980s courtesy of Vai and Satriani, it's true to say that the genre hasn't worn too well. However, Vinnie Moore can lay claim to being one of the original practitioners, too, and, on this new album, he stakes his claim in a fiercely melodic fashion. True to say that there's a fair amount of shred excess in evidence, but it retains much of the excitement and drive that made shred such a force to be reckoned with, back in the days when men were men and headstocks were unanimously pointy. **[DM]**

Standout track: *Faith*

For fans of: UFO, Joe Satriani



CLASS ACT
Albums worth cranking all the way up

Steven Wilson

4 1/2

Kscope

9/10



It's prog, Jim...

Steven Wilson's rise to fame since his Porcupine Tree days is nothing short of phenomenal. The last album, *Hand. Cannot. Erase.* has claimed the higher regions of the charts internationally and live dates have been consistently sold out. So what of this release? The title explains it all: it's called 4 1/2 because it's meant to fit in between solo album number four and five. At only 37 minutes in length, the tracks seem to comprise music in hand from previous releases, including a revisit to the old Porcupine Tree track, *Don't Hate Me*. But don't expect a disc full of leftovers or cast-offs; the standard here is on a par with everything the progmeister has released so far. **[DM]**

Standout track: *Happiness III*

For fans of: Porcupine Tree, Genesis

Bruce Soord

Bruce Soord

Kscope

8/10



The pineapple head

Back in 1999, Bruce Soord founded The Pineapple Thief and began to build a fanbase that was intrigued by his band's individual style of progressive rock. Since then, they have gone from strength to strength with the band's 10th studio album, *Magnolia*, released in September 2014. This is frontman Soord's first solo outing and it finds him exploring the more melancholy side of his songwriting capability. The material is certainly introspective, too, based around sombre themes involving urban decay and lost love, but the delivery is always imaginative, the arrangements well wrought and sensitive – and occasionally punctuated by the superb guitar playing of *Guitarist's* very own Darran Charles. **[DM]**

Standout track: *Field Day Part 1*

For fans of: The Pineapple Thief, Steven Wilson



David Rhodes

He's played with Peter Gabriel and Kate Bush, experienced hair-raising cycle rides to gigs and got locked out of venues...

Words

David Mead

How did your first-ever gig go?

"It's difficult to remember the very first one, but two early ones were notable. I was in an experimental duo; a tape loops and noise band. We were doing shows with a puppeteer at the Rotherhithe Theatre. We did our little set, then worked with the puppeteer. He then did an adult Punch And Judy show. Over four nights we performed to 24 people. On the last night, only four were there and we ended up taking them for a drink in the local pub!

"After that night, we decided to have a band and write songs. The second memorable night very early on in my history with the band [Random Hold], was playing at the Rock Garden, supporting Adam And The Ants, when they were a punk band. We were spat at, shouted at and had pints of beer flung at us. We lasted five songs. Later, the police arrived as there'd been stabbings and the bouncer had been bottled. We'd got off lightly."

What's on your rider?

"Beer, wine, cheese, bread, fruit, nuts and raisins, water... normal stuff. With the Gabriel band, there's just a bit more of everything."

Describe your current stage rig...

"On big shows, I have a few guitars which my tech, Chris Lawson, looks after and tunes.

I go through my pedalboard, which was put together by Chris and Daniel at TheGigRig. Then I go into a TC 2290 and out, in stereo, to a pair of big Rivera amps and into a stereo 4x12. On the Kate Bush shows last year, I used a pair of small Rivera combos, rather than the big setup. On my shows, I take as little as possible, because I have to look after it!"

What's your best tip for getting a good live sound?

"Give the sound engineer what they need. Keep it clear. I stay well away from reverb."

Your best tip for getting the audience on your side?

"Do what you do with commitment. If they don't like it, they can leave. I remember hearing a story that Tom Petty would say that his mum was from whatever town he happened to be playing in. I'm sure that would always work. Tricky, though, if you get called on that one in Europe and your language skills aren't great."

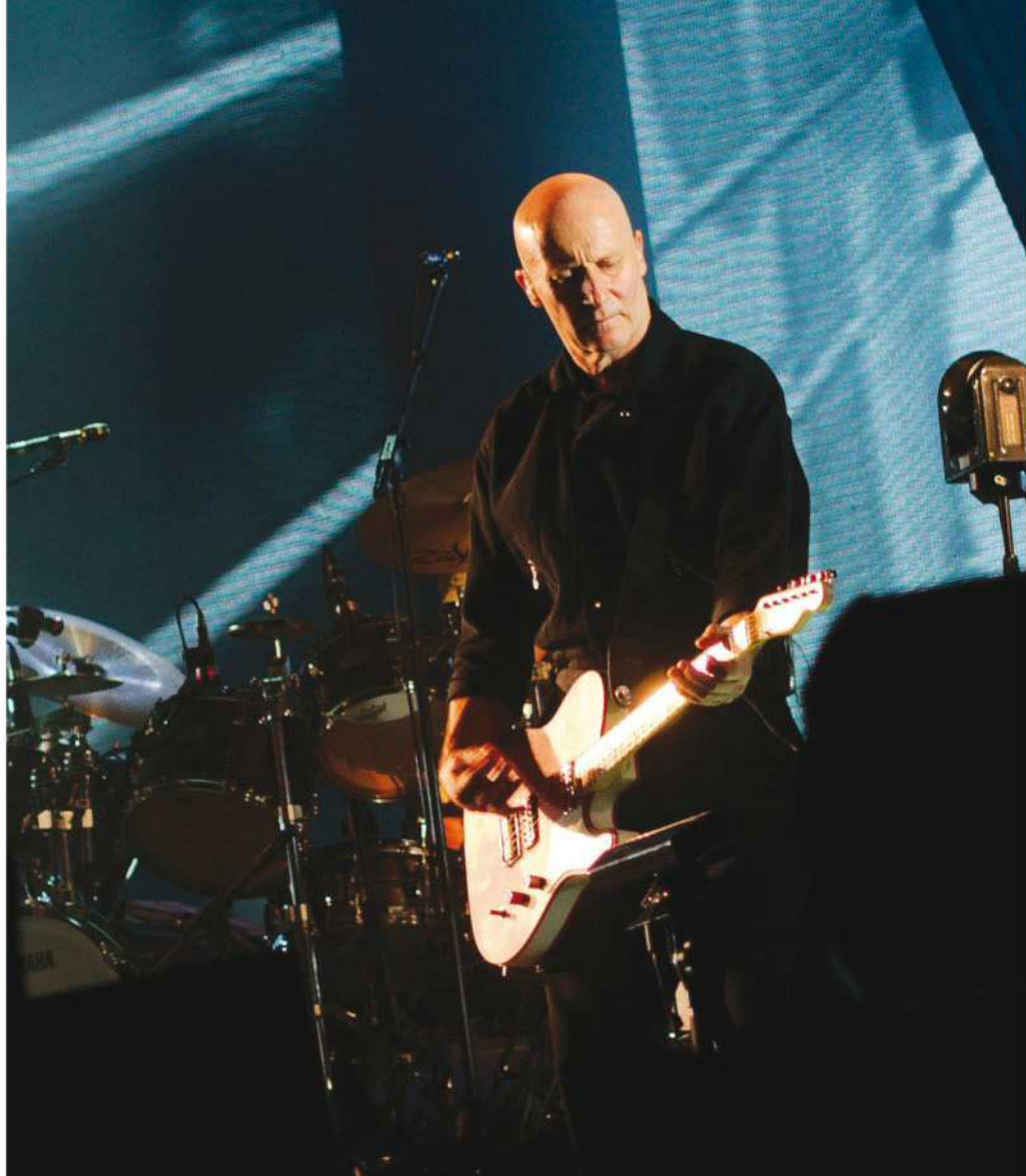
Which is the best venue you've played in, and why?

"That's a tricky one. Some places are great because of the audience, some for the backstage or stage areas, some for fabulous

catering, some just for the vibe. The one that comes first to my mind is the Blue Note in Milan, where I played with my band. It had a wonderful feel to it. There were fantastic photos on the walls of some of the jazz greats who've played there. It had a reverential atmosphere. People go there to listen to good music. Now I'm starting to think that the amphitheatre in Verona is maybe the most dramatic. The view of the building's architecture from the stage is spectacular. Having said that, the view from the stage of the amphitheatre in Taormina [Sicily], includes Mount Etna smoking in the distance. I've been lucky to see these things."

What was your worst gig journey?

"Many years ago, I chose to ride a mountain bike from Amsterdam to Den Haag on the afternoon of a Gabriel show, Secret World. I thought I could do it riding gently in about three to four hours. I'd looked at a map and seen that it wasn't too tricky a journey. I cycled out to the coast and then hit a head wind, which slowed me right down. I hate to be late for anything, and in bands, it's generally only the singer who has a licence to be tardy. I rode for hours, missed the soundcheck and didn't know where the venue was. I stopped at some traffic lights on the





ABOVE David used this T-style guitar, made by Tona Morsky, for some songs in Peter Gabriel's live set

edge of town and asked a woman next to me the way. She kindly led me to the arena, which was not in the direction she wanted to go. I thanked her and offered her tickets for the show. She politely declined them. I was shattered and very apologetic to whomever could be bothered to listen."

What's the best heckle you've had?

"'Poser', from the Adam And The Ants fans."

What's the weirdest thing you've witnessed on tour?

"One of the strangest things was when performing with an Italian singer, Franco Battiato, in an arena in Naples, seeing an elderly nun in the front row. It made me feel a bit self-conscious – however, she looked as though she was enjoying herself."

What's the nearest you've come to a 'Spinal Tap' moment on tour?

"I guess it had to be one time when, with Gabriel, we used to walk through the audience at the opening of the show, playing drums. We were playing in an old theatre in New York. Somebody had figured out that our best route was to go outside – it was winter, so very cold – and come in through a side door and then through the crowd. Unfortunately, nobody was manning the door, so we were stood outside for some minutes wondering what to do, hearing the intro music droning on."

What do you bicker about on the road?

"'Bicker', sounds a bit strong. Coffee and food seem to cause the most grumbles. Punctuality, or lack thereof, can make me a bit spiky, particularly with repeat offenders."

Which airline, as a musician, do you find is easiest to travel on?

"The occasional private jet on a Peter Gabriel tour! British Airways seem easiest with carrying instruments on, so I try to use them. My worst experience was with Air Berlin; unhelpful and unbending."

What's your favourite live album?

"The one I listen to most is Keith Jarrett, *The Köln Concert*, which still sounds fantastic. I first owned it soon after its release [in 1975]. I read a short while ago that the reason Jarrett barely goes into the upper register is because the instrument was out of tune up there. Perhaps even the most talented musicians have a need for parameters and rules that help focus their intentions." **G**



The David Rhodes Band album is available now on Glassville Records

<http://david-rhodes.uk>



www.worldguitars.co.uk



With over 30 years knowledge and experience in guitar sales and one of the most impressive collections of high end guitars in Europe, we promise you a shopping experience to remember.

The Old Magistrates Court, High Street,
Stonehouse, Gloucestershire. GL10 2NA
Telephone +44 (0) 1453824306
Email info@worldguitars.co.uk

START ME UP



ARNAUD FRADIN

New and notable guitarists you need to hear

Who Is He?

Arnaud Fradin is the guitarist from soul, funk and R&B sensations Milk & Green – or Malted Milk & Toni Green, to give them their full title. Arnaud was born in France, his interest in music, and blues in particular, being established at the age of 15 when a friend gave him a Lightnin' Hopkins album. From there, he moved on to the songs of Bob Dylan, discovering the guitar along the way. It wasn't long before he began experimenting with slide playing, too. "I started to play in a little acoustic blues band in Nantes, my hometown. I didn't know so much, but it was cool because it was a really good way to learn to play in front of people."

Who Has He Listened To?

After a while, Arnaud discovered the playing of Robert Johnson, which was to go on to form the foundation of his music career, as well as being the reason why his band is called Malted Milk. Playing at France's Cognac Blues Passions festival at the age of 20 allowed him to learn from the older players performing there. Pretty soon, he was playing at every festival he could find, meeting up with people who shared his passion for the blues. "At this time, we were more into the blues than we are right now. We play soul, funk and blues, but I've still got my roots. I always try to keep a little of the blues in everything I do."

What's So Great About His Playing?

Milk & Green have attracted five-star reviews from the music press, praising their intoxicating blend of genres. Arnaud's guitar sings atop the band's upbeat repertoire and complements the powerful soul vibe provided by vocalist Toni Green. Despite all this, he's quite happy to go back to basics when he comes off the road. "I come back from Malted Milk tours – nine guys on the road, horn section and everything – and I'm really happy just to play my guitar and a harp. Right now, I'm thinking about doing an acoustic CD – you know, really deep roots blues. I feel I'm ready."

Why Do You Need To Hear Him?

If you like your music both soulful and funky, then it's quite likely you'll take to Milk & Green immediately, Arnaud making sure that his band never strays too far from its blues roots. In fact, future Milk & Green releases are likely



"I come back from Malted Milk tours – nine guys on the road, horn section and everything – and I'm really happy just to play my guitar and a harp"

to move even closer to enveloping his love for Dylan's music, too... "We recorded a video with Toni in the studio playing an acoustic version of *It Ain't Me Babe* with slide guitar, and the ambience is really blues. It's kind of different compared to what we did on the last CD, but it's important for me to keep that roots thing in my music."

What Gear Does He Use?

Arnaud is a self-confessed geek when it comes to gear. His acoustic guitar was made for him by French luthier Cyril Guérin in 1999 and resembles a small Martin guitar, Arnaud adding that its sound is really open and perfect for blues playing. He has a Dobro and a Recording King, too, to bolster his armoury of acoustic instruments. After playing a Gibson 335 on stage for 10 years, he's now switched to a T-style guitar made by Haar Guitars. As far as amps are concerned, he uses Fender amps – a Deluxe Reverb or a Twin – or a Custom Barber... "I can use the [Barber] amp without any pedals. The crunch is really natural; it's not as aggressive as a Fender. You can have more midrange, so it helps me not to play too loud on stage."

Where Should I Start?

The recently released album from Milk & Green is a good place to begin exploring Arnaud's subtle brand of blues and funk – and, of course, as always, YouTube will reveal some official live videos of the band in action. But you really need to see the band live! **[DM]**

Hold Back This Feeling: Check out this smouldering example of soulful funk, with Arnaud providing tasty rhythm work

Slipped, Tripped And Fell In Love: An uptempo blues that recalls the golden era of Motown, with a great vocal performance from Toni Green

As Long As I Have You: With an intro that shows where Arnaud learned his trade, there's a 50s vibe in evidence, combined with country blues and 60s soul!



Malted Milk & Toni Green's album *Milk & Green* is out now via Nueva Onda Productions
www.milk-green.com

INTRODUCING THE CRY BABY MINI.

cry baby
MINI



FIND A DUNLOP DEALER: WWW.QUICKFIND.ME/DUNLOP





Headstock

IAN THORNLEY

The Big Wreck man on canoodling his Suhrs, the cardinal sin of “heartless wanking”, and the time he almost became the singer for Velvet Revolver...

Words Henry Yates Photography Nikki Ormerod

Watch Ian Thornley on stage with Big Wreck and he's every inch the untouchable rock god. Meet the 43-year-old in person, though, and it turns out he sees himself in less grandiose terms. “I'm a guitar nerd,” he shrugs, plainly. “I've always been drawn to music and sorta had a knack for it.” Big Wreck's catalogue has plenty of evidence of that knack. Since 1997's multi-platinum *In Loving Memory Of...*, the Canadian alt-rockers have dealt in heavy, hooky anthems, always driven by Thornley's assured touch, quicksilver chops and palpable passion for the instrument.

Make A Good Start

“I remember, I'd gotten a guitar as a birthday present and it had just sat in my closet for a year. Then a friend of mine came over and we were hanging out. He just started playing Led Zeppelin songs and I was like, ‘Wow – it's that easy.’ There was an immediacy about it. It was the exact same sounds that I'd heard on the records. When music is so important to you and all of a sudden you can duplicate it... there's just something about that.”

Pick Your Spot On Stage

“I'm more of a Jimmy [Page] than a Robert [Plant]. I guess it comes down to your personality and what you gravitate towards. I would feel silly without a guitar on stage. It's sort of a shield. It's a comfort zone.

It's not through a lack of wanting to be an exhibitionist. I think anybody who does this for a living wants to be in front of people, and is seeking praise on some level. I just think that having a guitar is the route I took initially, and now I can't see myself without one. I still think of myself as a guitar player first and a singer second.”

If It Ain't Broke...

“I'm always changing pots and pickups, just messing with things. But my Suhrs are the only guitars I've never gone inside and tinkered around with, because they're perfect the way they are. Particularly the ones I've spec'd out myself. I seem to go with the alder body, a bigger maple neck and the rosewood board. Then I love the V60LP Single Coils, and for the humbuckers, I love the SSH. I also have a Suhr Modern that has the DSH+ humbuckers. It shaves a bit of that top end off, because I'm one of those guys who hits the pickup selector down to the bridge to play a solo, and then my first instinct is to reach for the tone knob to shave off some of that high end.”

Make It Easy On Yourself

“I practise more these days, and what made me step it up, I think, was using lighter strings and a lower action. I used to play 13s with a really high action. I just wanted to be a macho man, Stevie Ray Vaughan kinda guy. Now, it's a set of 11s, and I've lowered

the action and got it nice and cosy. There's just a lot more that you can do physically, and that opens up a whole new world of things to learn.”

Learn From The Best

“Stevie Ray Vaughan, Mark Knopfler, Eric Johnson, Steve Morse and Jimmy Page were huge for me. There's certain songs where I'm like, ‘Well, here's me doing my best Stevie Ray.’ The solo in the middle of *Ghosts* is right out of that Stevie Ray or Albert King book, and that was by design. It's not like, ‘Well, I'm just another clone guy.’ I wanted it to be right out of his bag. But there's certain things in there – little diminished runs and stuff – that I don't think he would have done. And hopefully those are the things that you go towards as you try to find your own voice.”

Love The One You're With

“Certain guitars just hug you. I have a few Suhrs that are like that. You pick them up, put them in your lap or strap them on, and they say, ‘Hug me.’ And you're just like, ‘Hug me.’ And this whole love affair happens.”

Pick The Right Tools

“I don't think there's any such thing as too many guitars. I'm not really a guitar collector per se. I'm not like, ‘Here are my early Teles.’ That's not really a thing for me. They're all tools. They all serve a purpose.”

“What impresses me in a guitar player is somebody who has their own voice. Somebody who is in the moment, every time they touch the instrument —”



Ian's new solo album, *Secrets*, is an intimate acoustic showcase

Practice Makes Perfect

“I work at a technique until I have it nailed. If I learn a new lick or trick, I’m not one of those guys who’s like, ‘Oh, I’m gonna throw it in the show tonight.’ I have to wait until it sorta absorbs into my skin and becomes a part of me. Then it’ll come out. Sometimes, I can take six months. Sometimes, I can take even longer. You kinda want to learn everything – then forget it, and just have it be part of you.”

Sometimes, Simple Is Best

“I do a lot of things that are still within the pentatonic box. You can find all of these choice notes that are still right in that comfort zone, and you can do that with each of the boxes, as you move up the neck. Then you can start digging around with the notes in between and find some money notes, like, ‘Ooh, that’s a sweet one.’ Then you can maybe build a phrase around that, and end it with something familiar, like a pentatonic lick. I generally keep things close to home. I might throw in Whole Tone scales, but I’ll still be in and around the pentatonic box. I might throw in chromatics or Double Diminished scales, but to my eye and ear, I still know where I am. I never stay outside for too long.”

It’s All About Heart

“What impresses me in a guitar player is somebody who has their own voice. Somebody who is in the moment, every time they touch the instrument: that impresses me. When you can’t hear them thinking: that impresses me. What doesn’t impress me is heartless wanking. Anyone can learn technique. And anyone can learn

tricks. It’s what you do with them; it’s what music you can actually make with them. When a unique voice just happens – those are the really special ones. Like, Eddie Van Halen is an incredibly flashy guitar player, but it’s not just, ‘Oh, look what I can do.’ There’s something that’s so innately fun and bad-ass about it. And something tells me Eddie just picked up a guitar and that started happening.”

You Need To Know When The Suit Fits... And When It Doesn’t

“I flew down to jam with Velvet Revolver. This was years ago, just after Scott Weiland was out. The music sounded great. It was like, ‘Three guitars playing these riffs, this is fucking awesome.’ But at the end of the jam, we both just kinda knew, Slash and I. They were looking for a specific thing, and I just knew that I wouldn’t feel comfortable doing that thing. It wouldn’t feel authentic to me, all of a sudden taking the guitar off and doing the whole front-guy thing, like, ‘Let me see your hands!’ It would feel like I was putting on a suit that doesn’t fit, y’know?”

Keep Learning

“All the time, I just love the feeling of chasing something down and then catching it. That never ends. I’m definitely a guitar nerd, and when something piques my interest, I want to get to the bottom of it and throw it in my bag of tricks...”

Hone Your Tone

“There’ll usually be something in my head that I’m going for. You just sort of follow it until it’s right. Sometimes, it’s a case of having someone else there to sorta take the

drawing away from the child, like, ‘Okay, you’re done: that’s the sound.’ Because it can be an endless search if you don’t pick your head up and say, ‘Is this working?’ My favourite Big Wreck guitar tones? Well, *A Place To Call Home*, the song that opens the *Ghosts* record, some of those fuzz tones are pretty neat. Generally speaking, a Suhr Rufus ReLoaded is what you can use to get that tone, and my trick is to roll almost all the tone off on the bridge pickup and then play 5ths. It gives you a certain growl.”

Solos Should Speak To You

“I’m not gonna put out a song to showcase guitar playing. That’s not my bag, and I wouldn’t know where to begin. If there’s something where I can showcase guitar playing that serves the song, then certainly, I’ll limber up and have a go. It’s not that I don’t like shredding solos or drawn-out guitar parts – I’m a big fan of that stuff. But it has to fit. I’m not thinking, ‘Well, let’s play the song in this bpm so I can get my 16th-note triplets in at top speed.’ I don’t look at it that way. When I’m playing a solo, I generally start with the vocal melody, mess around with that, see if I can find something in there. Because you want it to have a vibe, as opposed to just showing off. I mean, I am a big fan of guitar players who show off, don’t get me wrong. I love the Guitar Olympics kinda approach. I think it’s great. But it doesn’t move me in the same way as something where it’s like, ‘Okay, this guy is actually saying something. I can feel what he’s feeling...’”

Secrets by Ian Fletcher Thornley is available now via iTunes. See the website for tour dates

www.ianfletcherthornley.com



Vela

Guitarist
CHOICE

The S2 Vela: A New Breed

Born in our Maryland factory, the new S2 Vela is a wholly unique guitar for PRS. Featuring a brand new plate and barrel style bridge, a Starla treble pickup and an all new type-d singlecoil this guitar has all the spunk, sparkle and vintage vibe you could want. American made, reliable, great sounding and easy on the wallet.

Paul Reed Smith®
30th ANNIVERSARY
1985-2015

www.prsguitarseurope.com

info@prsguitarseurope.com



Austin Power

Solo artist, session player, producer and sideman – we caught up with Charlie Sexton to talk life, tone and being on the road with Dylan

Words Mick Taylor Photography Olly Curtis

An everyday Cardiff cab pulls up at the city's Musicbox Studios on an overcast October morning. Shades on, coat collar upturned, its lone passenger emerges with a gigbag and smile, proffering a handshake and cigarette as we say our hellos.

"We got here around 4am, I think," blinks the guitarist as he recounts the tour bus journey from Manchester just a few hours previously. "The gigs were great, though," he smiles. "And The Albert Hall, too, just great." Charlie Sexton is on tour with Bob Dylan, the latest of stints in the music legend's evolving band. It's a gig that requires the right mix of ability and attitude, not to mention the kind of demeanour that's both confident and cool around rock's cognoscenti. Charlie Sexton, as it turns out, has plenty of form in all of the above.

Tools for touring

As we prepare to chat, Sexton pulls a well-worn Collings SoCo from the gigbag, with 'Doghair' back and neck finish and solid black-finished spruce top. It's as good a place to start as any: presumably that's among the tour instruments? "Oh yeah, for over 50 per cent of the show. It's a real tank," he says, offering it for closer inspection. "More and more, this guitar is becoming Old Faithful because of the material we're doing; the chord count is pretty big."

The chord count to which he's referring is courtesy of Bob Dylan's 2015 Sinatra/

Nelson Riddle-inspired *Shadows In The Night* release. "Yeah, on the recording of that material with Bob, about halfway through it I was having problems with tuning on this old Les Paul I was using. So I said, 'Give me the Collings!' It's just totally reliable. I never touch this guitar, tuning-wise, the whole show, and it plays great up and down the neck."

And the others, what else is out on tour? "There's this early Burst Brothers '58/'59 [Gibson Les Paul] reissue," he continues. "We went through about eight and this one was really like, 'Whoa'. So that's in the mix, and there's also a '54, Alnico, black [Les Paul] Custom. And that does a thing; that got used on records before the Collings was around. I mean, a '54 Les Paul with an Alnico pickup – yep! There's also a Strat with old Chandler lipstick pickups, which is the twin of the guitar I used in the Arc Angels [Sexton's band with former Double Trouble rhythm section Tommy Shannon and Chris Layton, and also guitarist and vocalist Doyle Bramhall II]."

"Part of the deal with me is that if something sounds unique – it sounds like 'a thing' – that's what really draws me to it," he expands. "A Strat, a Tele and all those bits, you know what that is, right? I also play [James] Trussart's guitars. Largely based on the Tele mostly, but it doesn't sound like it looks – it's metal, so you think it's going to be all tinny, but it's actually super fat. The point being, everything has its purpose."

We're dying to ask: does Mr Dylan give the nod about which guitars are cool or not cool to use?

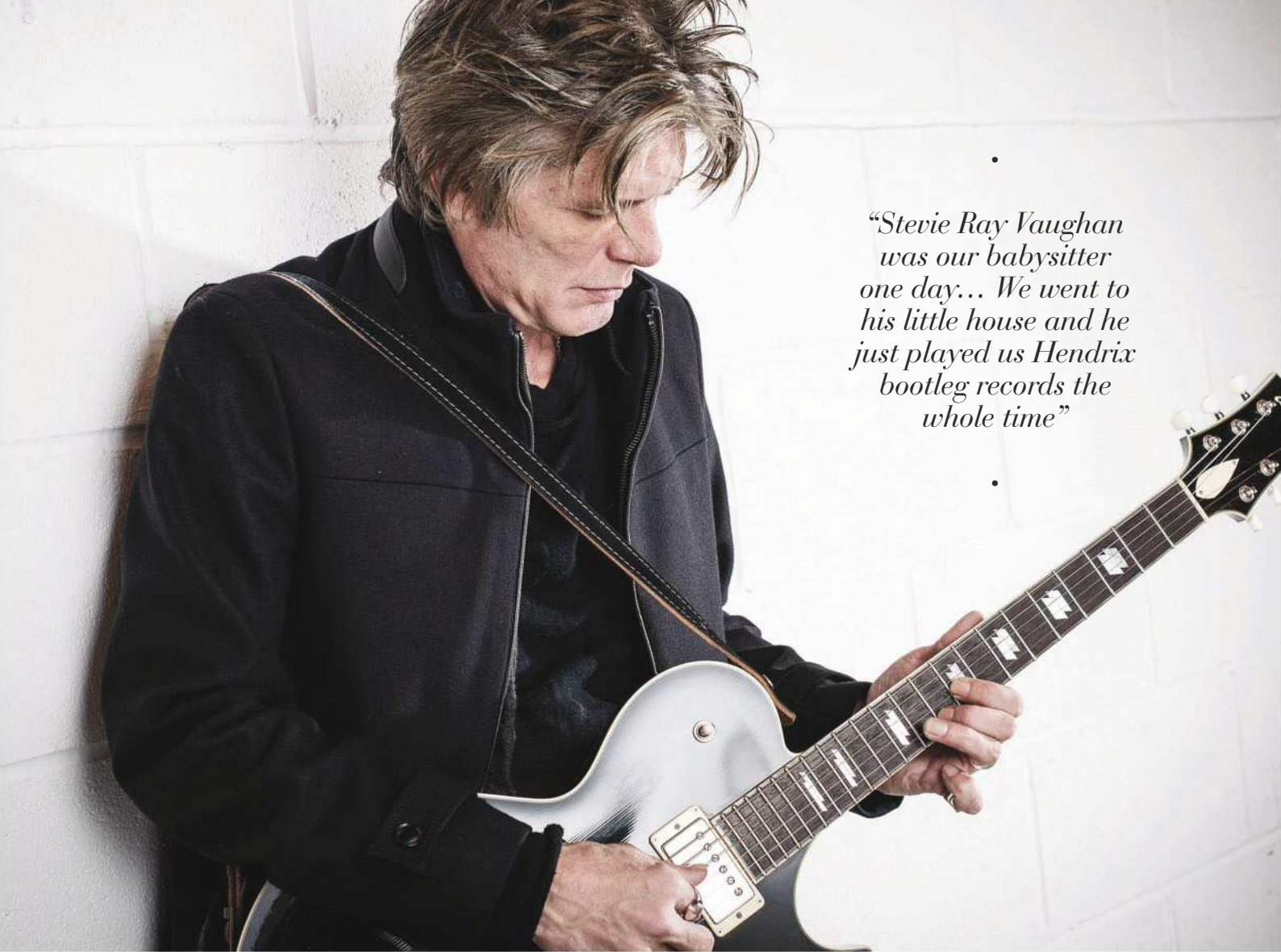
"Sometimes he'll... Well, I identify with requests made by Bob," begins Sexton, clearly being careful not to mis-represent his boss. "I would never say I have the same aesthetic or thought process as him, but certain sounds and certain aesthetics, they achieve instantly what you want, whether that's some nasty Sun Sessions Tele thing, or a Scotty Moore-type thing. Or a more warm, jazzy tone... Y'know, things make sense in the context of the song."

And how does the live show work – with Dylan's massive repertoire, presumably there's a great deal to learn?

"When I began with him in 1999, there was a list of songs in rotation that needed to be ready to be played, around 120 or 130 songs," explains Sexton.

"By the time I left the first time in '03, roughly, that book I had going of all the songs was up to around 225, maybe 240 that had either been rehearsed, played or might get played. That number just kept going up and up with new records or outside material that he wanted to play."

"There's always been some form of list," he expands, preempting our next question, "and recently, he's been really methodical about how he puts the show together and we've been doing one kind of show with a few little things getting switched out here and there."



“Stevie Ray Vaughan was our babysitter one day... We went to his little house and he just played us Hendrix bootleg records the whole time”

Back To Austin

Sexton's journey to Dylan's band has been as varied as it's been unlikely. From the bright lights of the modern tour stage, we ask him to look back to his formative years as a musician. Having moved with his mother to Austin, Texas, he was transplanted into the heart of a musical hotbed as he grew up. What does he remember about the 80s, for example? Legend has it that Austin was alight with music, so was that all just normal to him?

“Well, nothing was normal!” he laughs. “I moved to Austin in '72. I was four years old and immediately started going to gigs. My mom was a single mom and we never had babysitters. Except for Stevie Vaughan – he was our babysitter one day!”

Really? “Hilarious, huh,” he continues with the kind of smile that says it must be true. “Yeah, we went to his little house and he just played us Hendrix bootleg records the whole time. We lived on the outside of town and he would play this little town, San Marcos, near where we lived. There was never anybody there, just three or four people. But me and my brother would go and we'd play with him every week. I would walk in, and I was maybe 12 years old, in a club in Austin. It'd be the end of the night, 1:15, and I'd go there to see Stevie

and he'd see me and say, ‘Hey, come here...’ So I'd go up to the stage, he'd give me his guitar and he'd go to the bar. That's how I met Tommy Shannon [friend and Double Trouble bassist with whom Sexton later collaborated widely]. He was on stage and wondering why Stevie was giving his guitar to this kid. So yeah, ‘Elmore James in E!’ And off we'd go.”

And looking back before that, how did playing begin for the young Charlie?

“I had a guitar ever since the age of about two,” he recalls. “By the time I was about nine was when I decided I'd set off to try to learn how to play by watching people at gigs. Or trying to teach myself my favourite record that my mom had given me, which really screwed my head because it was *Magical Mystery Tour* by The Beatles. I had an acoustic, and I was trying to teach myself to that.”

“From there, I guess, I had my first gig at The Continental [Club, legendary Austin venue] the day before my 11th birthday. It was a Chuck Berry song and I think we took some rifle to the pawn shop and traded it in on an electric guitar. I didn't know anything about keys, so there I am just trying to play by ear. Then I realised I really had to get busy and that's when I started working on it much harder.”

And presumably it wasn't hard to find great guitar players to learn from in Austin?

“Hell, no!” he exclaims. “Like I say, I'd see Stevie every week, play with him, and there was one of our mutual mates who ended up playing with Bob Dylan, too: Denny Freeman. And, of course, I'd get to see Jimmie [Vaughan] play,” continues Sexton, clearly still respectful of Vaughan Sr. “I met him for the first time, and I remember this specifically because it was a monumental day. It was December 6 at a place called The Armadillo, it must have been '81. It was a Rockpile gig, who I was crazy for. I was backstage and there was Jimmie Vaughan in a sharkskin suit and man, he looked like Elvis. Oh my God! He said, ‘Hey, bring your brother out to the gig next week and come play.’ So the next week, half the T-Birds leave the stage and we're up there playing for 20 minutes or something. I also learned a lot from the guy named WC Clark, he used to play with Joe Tex among other people. A great soul guitarist and singer and I played with him weekly for a year and a half.”

Anglo-Sexton

Given the young guitarist's teenage environment and the kind of music with which he was surrounded, it comes as a slight surprise to learn that he didn't feed



Tour Gear

Sexton's rig with Bob Dylan

On the end of Sexton's tour guitars is a reasonably simple amp and effects rig, starting with an amplifier collaboration from a few years back. "The amps that I'm using are by Budda," he explains. "A friend of mine works there, Chris Kelly – he's worked with Satriani and lots of guys – anyway, he says, 'I want to make you an amp...'"

Sexton explains how his favourite amps are old Vox AC50s, which were the starting inspiration for the prototype creations. "It's just a tank, it sounds great. I don't think it's been re-tubed in about six years. It doesn't break down, it's just awesome. It's called a CF50 and to me, it sounds like a Neve – fat and punchy – the EQs are like the Neve [recording console/strip]. Strong and bold; if you ever work in a studio, you'll know the sound of that board."

"Before the Buddas came back, I had this amp from Analog Outfitters. It's called The Sarge, a 15-watt thing. The stage levels for Bob had gone way down, and we found this thing out of Chicago from a guy who worked on organs! He'd made this amp that comes in this little science box; no taller than an Echoplex. It's EL84s, but it doesn't sound like it – those are not my favourite tubes. But the transformer, I'm convinced that's what it makes so fat. I used that for about the first year and a half I was back with Bob." Both amps run into a 65 Amps 4x12 stereo cabinet.



1. Charlie's 1954 Les Paul Custom was 'Old Faithful' before the Collings SoCo guitar came along
2. Charlie's pedalboard features: Xotic SP Compressor, TC Electronic Alter Ego and Nova Delay, Sarno Music Solutions Earth Drive, Fulton-Webb Textosterone, and the Durham Sex Drive (read more about this one over the page)
3. A Dunlop volume pedal and J Rockett Josh Smith Dual Trem are joined by the TC Electronic PolyTune 2 Noir
4. Sexton's main amp is a Budda CS50 model, designed specifically for him
5. A James Trussart SteelCaster also features in the Bob Dylan live show



Charlie Sexton started playing with Bob Dylan in 1999 and continues to join him on the road today

© CHINA TOPRESS/GETTY IMAGES

straight into the blues or country machine, or follow the child-guitar-prodigy route. Instead, having got his first break with Joe Ely aged 13, Sexton then signed a major deal with MCA aged just 15, aimed at a far wider audience. Chance meetings all along put him in some fairly serious British company.

"By the time I did my first record, I knew that the next-in-line for the blues thing was Stevie," he explains. "I had other aspirations

towards all kinds of stuff – Bowie, U2, what have you. I specifically chose not to do that and got a lot of flak in Austin, because people thought I was supposed to be the new blues guy.

"One of the earliest records I had was *My Aim Is True* by Elvis Costello," he continues, "and even though Texas is known for country and blues, I saw Zappa play in '79, Todd Rundgren – the more abstract kinda

things. My father loved Dylan, so songs were always around; that depth of song. I also had *Rumours* [Fleetwood Mac]. I mean, Lindsey Buckingham is one of the most awesome under-the-radar guitar players. If I was inspired to be anything, it would be a Lindsey or a Mike Campbell [of Tom Petty And The Heartbreakers]. They're as brilliant as anybody."

And before all that, The Clash were part of the picture? "Oh yeah," he remembers fondly. "We had this rockabilly band, and there was an agent, a promoter that would do shows. The girl that worked the office, I'd ring her up and ask if there were any shows that we could open for, other than the club gigs. Then one day she says, 'The Clash are coming through town to do this tour for the US festival...' And I knew Joe [Strummer] and them through Joe Ely, and we'd hung out.

"So, we ended up opening that little tour, did all these weird places. I mean, opening for The Clash every night and watching them? That really lit the fire."

And the first meeting with Bob Dylan was shortly after? "Yeah, I've been pretty damn lucky! Before I made my first record, my first gig for the label was to go to New York to work with Ron Wood. He was doing a soundtrack, so I go and me and Woody

Drive, Don't Scream

The Durham Sex Drive is still Number 1 for Charlie

Sexton collaborated with his friend, Austin gear tech, Alan Durham to create a very particular pedal back in the early 2000s. Here's how it happened...

"Alan used to work on all my Voxes," he begins. "You know, they run hot and blow up, so that's how we met. So particularly in Austin, you know that whole Tube Screamer thing? I hate it, and the reason I don't like it is because you hit it, and all your low end goes away. Now, Alan is really pretty clever, so I said, 'Hey, you wanna make a pedal for me?' Yep. I needed a clean boost but also a little gainy thing and we talked about the compression and circuit... It was months and I just tortured him. He was testing it at the shop he was working in, and a few guys were, like, 'What is that?!' So he asked me if he could sell it because he'd had a gazillion hours in it, and I said, 'Of course!' It got him out of the shop and was the basis of his pedal company. It does *that thing* for me. The tone circuit is really good. I have it on around 90 per cent of the time!"

Sexton also uses the Durham Electronics Reddverb; see more of his gear on p61.

Unplugged since 1833.



Martin & Co.
EST. 1833
D 35
TURNS
50

This 1939 000-42 (EC) was built during a time when everything was unplugged.
And it still sounded sweet during its legendary 1992 performance.

Find your Martin Guitar at a UK Authorised Martin Centre. To find a dealer go to www.quickfind.me/martin.



•

“When I began working with Dylan in 1999, there were about 120 songs in rotation. By 2003, it was up to 240, and that number keeps going up and up”

•

hit it off immediately. Since I was aware of certain bluesy bits and I’d come up that way, even though there was an age difference, we had all that in common.

“Then Keith [Richards] shows up and he was really sweet and kind, too. We had a play and Woody asked me to stick around and invited me to play on his solo record and stay at his house. So I’m in the studio the next week, and Bob [Dylan] walks in and that was the first time I met him. So that week was Woody, Keith and Bob!

“Then I go to LA to make the first record, and the guy that was supposed to produce it – who I did the demos with and spent a lot of time with – was [Mick] Ronson. Unfortunately, he didn’t end up doing the record, but he was awesome, so cool. I had the most charmed life, when you look at it like that.”

Full Circle

Back to today, however, and with time running short, our brief insight into Sexton’s musical life has revealed a heady mix of solo releases, band projects, session work and, of course, playing alongside rock royalty. If he could choose a combination of those things for the future, what would it look like?

“I like the mix,” he replies, after a short pause for thought. “It all seems to naturally happen when it needs to, to a certain extent, in terms of keeping you inspired and engaged. The only thing that I’m honestly disappointed in – and it’s all on me – is the amount of records I’ve been able to put out myself, given that I signed my first record deal when I was 15.”

High time for the next one, then, perhaps? “I’m working on it,” he replies with a smile. “In theory, it’s a three-part thing that will hopefully cover all the things that people *think* I am, depending on who you ask! The blues guy, the pop guy, the country guy, the folkie guy and what have you. Do I have a timeframe?” he asks, repeating our question and breaking into a laugh. “Uh, no.” **G**

Nope To The Nauts

Supergroup rumours quashed

Various online sources, including RollingStone.com, announced a new supergroup had formed in late 2014 called The Nauts, featuring Mr Sexton and his brother, Will. “I guess we say it’s not happening at this point,” confirms Sexton. “It started out as a collaboration with my brother Will, Brady Blade [Brady L Blade Jr, composer, producer, drummer] and his brother Bryan [drums]. We’d been talking about it for a year or so, then we finally found some time. Then I get a call, ‘Oh, Jakob Dylan [singer songwriter, son of Bob] is going to be involved.’ It was all naturally happening and it was cool and organic. Then Brady knew [Dave] Matthews [world-famous singer-songwriter], and so that sounds like fun and he came down so there was more and more material. Then there were some sort of strange complications, and I don’t think we’ll ever see anything. Still, I got to hang with my brother and work on songs which is always good, Jake and I wrote some stuff together and that was great. And Dave Matthews is a genius. He is so good: astonishing! But no, it’s not happening at this point.”

Studio in a box

Everything you need to record,
produce and release your music

Just
£139

AudioBox iTwo Studio is the perfect music creation bundle for guitarists, singers and producers, simplifying recording and production with your Mac, PC or iPad*.

Built around the pristine, low-latency AudioBox iTwo interface, the package also includes the studio-quality M7 microphone, HD7 pro headphones and acclaimed Studio One Artist DAW software - enabling you to record, mix and master your music straight out of the box.

And we even include a Nimbit Free account, so you can promote and sell your finished songs online!



AudioBox iTwo Studio contains: AudioBox iTwo audio interface • Studio One Artist and Capture Duo recording software
• M7 studio mic • HD7 pro headphones • Nimbit Free account

*iPad not included. Mac and iPad are registered trademarks of Apple Inc.

 **PreSonus**

SOURCE

Exclusively distributed in the UK by Source • T: 020 8962 5080 • W: sourcedistribution.co.uk/presonus

 facebook.com/sourcedistribution

 twitter.com/sourcedist



JOHN MCLAUGHLIN

A new album from John McLaughlin is something of an event in the guitar world. We caught up with him to talk about the ethos behind the music he makes, the gear it takes to realise it – and a rather lovely custom PRS...

Words David Mead

John McLaughlin is one of the truly unique voices on the guitar. To define him merely as a jazz-fusion pioneer is only telling half the story, as his playing defies categorisation. When the Mahavishnu Orchestra released their debut album, *The Inner Mounting Flame*, in 1971, guitarists were immediately aware that there was a new master in their midst, and he has remained fiercely individual throughout his career. Equally at home on both electric and acoustic guitars, he has explored Indian music and many other genres, each bearing the stamp of his singular style. A fearless experimenter with technology, McLaughlin is one of the only guitarists who has persevered with the guitar synthesiser. The new album, *Dark Light*, is a showcase for the instrument, a state-of-the-art system that manages to keep pace with some lightning-fast playing. Our first question revealed his experiences with a guitar synth on his latest CD.

"It's always an experiment with a guitar synthesiser. I'm using a Paul Reed Smith guitar with a Triple Play, from Fishman, that was actually invented by an old friend of mine from Budapest called András Szalay. He's been working with Larry Fishman for a few years now and it's quite an amazing unit, because it's wireless and it's got really good latency – or should I say 'really bad latency', in so far as there's very little delay and it's really the best thing that's around. It's not perfect, but getting

MIDI out of a guitar is a real tricky problem. Converting to frequency and then to MIDI, it's a big thing – and you're talking about technology that's really a tough nut to crack. I think they've got it. I think it's a question of developing it from now."

Do you amplify the synthesiser separately to your guitar signal?

"I have a dongle that comes with the Triple Play, like a USB plug, and I just plug it into my laptop and I run Logic. In Logic Audio, there's all kind of built-in soft synths and there's a patch that I've been tweaking for 10 years now that sounds a bit like a flute, and I continue to use it because I like it. I like how it speaks and it makes me play differently, too. You'll hear it on the opening of *Being You Being Me* and it's the melody in *Gaza City*. It's got a kind of melancholy, a nostalgic character to it, but I'm constantly tweaking it to go looking for more 'naturalness', I suppose you could call it."

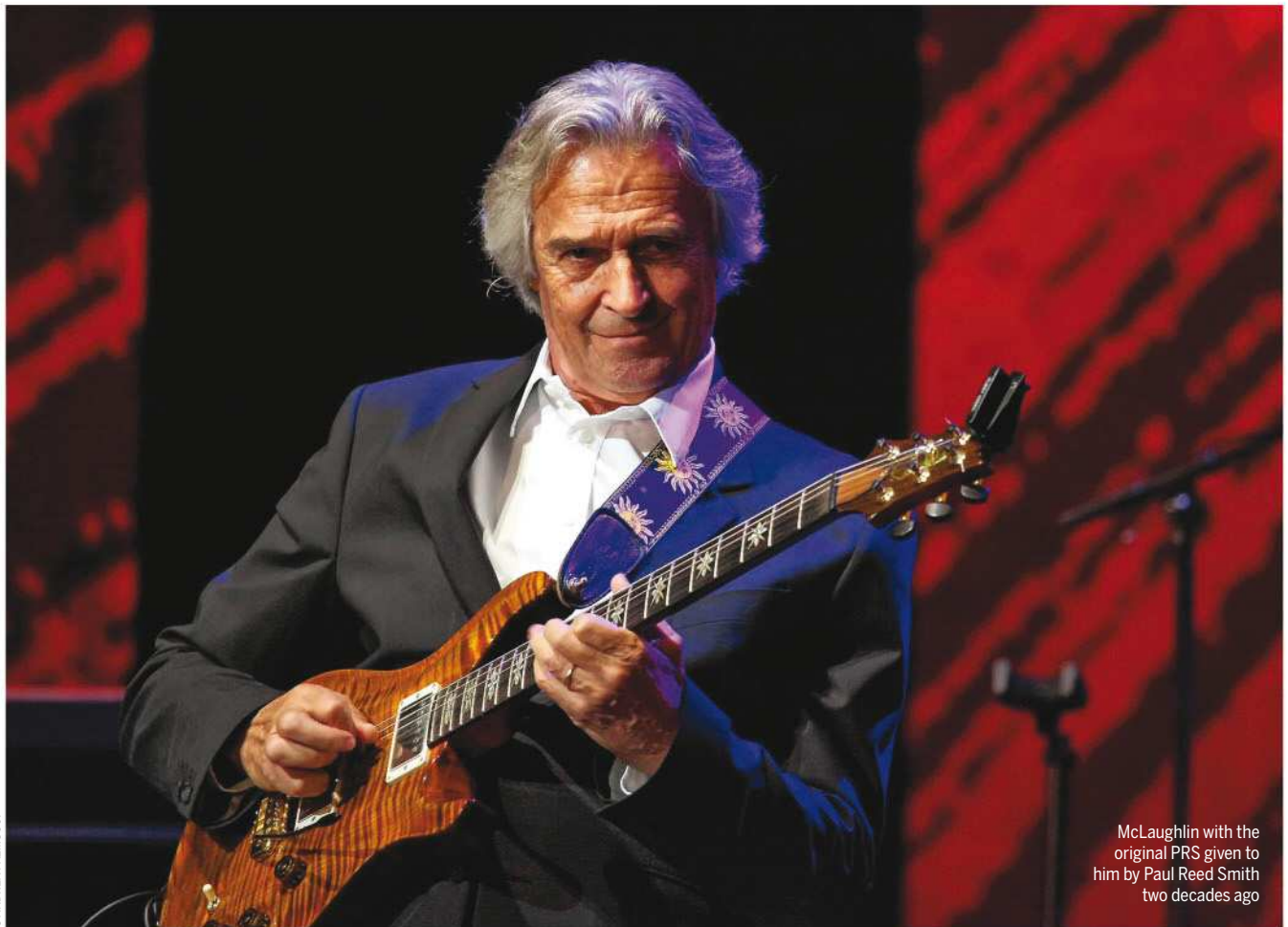
How does the synth work for you live? They're kind of renowned for being unreliable on stage...

"They are capricious – let's say, still 'in development'. Sometimes it's freaky. For some reason, they're sensitive to mobile phone signals, I think they're sensitive to the big antennas that are broadcasting at very high frequencies and that can play havoc, it really can. That actually happened to me and I spoke to András about it. He's

constantly working on development, but there are nights when it works perfectly – and you haven't done anything except set it up – but the next night, it's glitchy and you don't really know why. He feels a big part of the problem is the volume of microwaves in the air, especially because the Triple Play is wifi, which is really fantastic because you don't need this big MIDI cable – you know, the 13-pin Roland cable – you don't have that, it's fantastic."

MIDI played a large role in your DVD, *This Is The Way I Do It*, too...

"The concept I had was to have a music score running in sync along the bottom of the screen and that was a tough nut, actually. The solution was quite simple, but then difficult in its realisation. What I ended up doing was I had to record MIDI and audio simultaneously. That's the only way, and the best guitar I could find at that time with a MIDI capture on it was the Godin. I used to go through the Roland half-size unit which converts the signal to MIDI and into the computer. There was some latency there and also there were glitches going on, so what I did was I recorded the audio guitar with the MIDI, took the MIDI file and cleaned it up and quantised it so it became readable. I then converted that to an mp4 video file through the laptop and exported it back into the main frame, where the main video taping was going on. And then it was really just a



McLaughlin with the original PRS given to him by Paul Reed Smith two decades ago

© ANDREA PALMUCCI

question of syncing it up, which actually wasn't difficult."

What sort of signal path are you using for your guitar rig at present?

"I'm using three kinds of tube preamp, depending on what sort of mood I'm in. The old one is a Mesa/Boogie V Twin, which I really like because I used to play Mesa/Boogie amps back in the 70s and 80s. Then I have a [Hermida Audio] Zendrive2; this has one valve in it. The last one is a Seymour Duncan Twin Tube Classic and this album has been recorded with the Seymour Duncan from start to finish.

"But it all depends on the mood, really, because the last live CD I did was recorded with the Zendrive2 and it sounded great, too. I just go with my instincts, really, but I like all of them for different reasons. They're all good."

Do you use any foot pedals?

"I use a Line 6 wireless system [Relay G30], which is the best one I know – really top class and it even has a virtual cable switch if you want to get the cable sound, but I don't bother with that. I go straight into the tuner and from the tuner into the preamp, whichever one I'm using, and from there it goes into an MXR [Carbon Copy] Delay – I really like MXR for quality – and from that

•

"I love New York to this day – Miles Davis was there, Tony Williams was there, it's where I met Jimi..."

•

into an MXR Stereo Chorus, and that's it. Then the output goes to the monitors and to the front of house."

So you don't have a power amp on stage?

"Not any more. I've got a wonderful power amp from Paul Reed Smith, but it's, like, 60lbs. It is so heavy to lug around and to go on tour with, it's a nightmare. The thing is, the control I have over the sound from these tube preamps is excellent. I'm really happy with the way they work. I'm particularly happy with the sound on this recording with the Seymour Duncan."

What was it that attracted you to Paul Reed Smith guitars?

"They're great! Do I need another reason? [Laughs.] Paul and I go back about 20 years when he gave me the first guitar, the PRS that I have loved since forever. It's a fantastic guitar. And then I ran into Paul again in Frankfurt, at the Musikmesse, about seven or eight years ago and I hadn't seen him in a while. He said, 'So how's your guitar?' and I said, 'It's beautiful, but it doesn't have MIDI.' So he said, 'I want to make you another one and I can do it with MIDI, too.' So, he made me three guitars: one had MIDI built-in, but of course it was the Roland kind of pickup, but Larry Fishman gave me the Triple Play to test and it's really the best one. But since then, Paul's built me the one on the cover of *Black Light*. It's a work of art and the sound is just out of this world."

Is this the one with the New York skyline down the fingerboard?

"Yes, New York is very dear to me. [The 'board has] even got the Twin Towers on it. They were going up when I was living there and I used to go down on my bike to Lower Manhattan just to see them go up. It was so impressive. I love New York to this day – Miles Davis was there, Tony Williams was there, it's where I met Jimi... New York

-Faith®

Artist: James Oldman - Recording by Gabe

Photo: Courtesy of Ben Olsson/Photo.com



FAITH GUITARS®



One of McLaughlin's Godin guitars has True Temperament fretting for accurate intonation

is a very special place and Paul put it on the guitar just like that – totally amazing.”

Do you write on the guitar?

“Yes, but sometimes I can’t actually sit down and write music, I have to wait until I hear something. That’s why I like my iPhone: I get an idea and I can sing it directly into my phone and it’s archived. It might be just a melody or it might be an idea I have for a particular chord progression or it might just be a rhythmical idea. So I actually do so much with my iPhone and my voice. And who knows where I might be? I’m not necessarily going to be home when I get an idea and if I don’t record it, it’s gone. I’ve had great ideas and thought, ‘Oh, I’ll remember that...’ and I’m busy doing something and when I get back, it’s, ‘What was that again?’ and it’s gone; gone forever and it never comes back.

“So now I’ve learned my lesson, I sing it into my iPhone and it’s fantastic. I did a

track recently with Cindy Blackman and the piece came from exactly that – something I sang directly into my phone and it worked out fantastic.”

The new album employs Konnakol, a South Indian art of vocal percussion...

“I studied Konnakol in the 1970s with Pandit Ravi Shankar and he was marvellous. And, of course, working with Shakti, I was able to develop the Konnakol to the point where, about eight years ago, I released an educational DVD on how to master it. It’s a fantastic system because you can sing rhythms so easily, I would recommend it to anybody. I use it all the time and when I’m with the band and we’re in rehearsal, I will just sing a rhythmical idea to them and they know exactly what it is. Ranjit [Barot, drums and vocals] can sing it but Gary [Husband, drums and keyboards] picks it up like lightning. I sing it to Ranjit and he will sing something to me. He’ll say,

•


“I studied Konnakol in the 1970s with Pandit Ravi Shankar... In rehearsal, I will just sing a rhythmical idea to the band and they know exactly what it is”

•

“What about if we do a development of that rhythm?” and sing it back at me in Konnakol so I understand exactly what he’s doing. So if you can sing Konnakol and understand it, you can play it.”

There’s also a track on *Dark Light* in memory of Paco de Lucía...


“Oh I miss him, I miss him terribly. This tune was one of the pieces that we were due to record last year together. We had planned to do a duo album and I talked to him just before he left for Mexico; that must have been early February, because it was on 25 February that he had his heart attack in Playa Del Carmen. We’d traded pieces already and this was one piece he was very fond of – and then we lost him.

“I was devastated, to tell you the truth. It took me a while to get over it and when I’d calmed down, I thought, ‘Well, I should do this piece for him because he really liked it.’ It was supposed to be for two guitars, originally – acoustic guitars – that’s why I play acoustic guitar on it. I did an arrangement for the band and I thought it came out really well. It’s got the kind of atmosphere that Paco would like. The title, *El Hombre Que Sabia*, means ‘the man who knew’ and he really knew. He was such a human being and what a guitar player. Holy moly! But there is some good news because, finally after 28 years, I’ve got Eagle Rock to release a concert Paco and I did together in 1987 at the Montreux Jazz Festival and that’s going to be coming out, I think, in January. It was a fantastic night and we were both nuts, you know. I’m really thrilled about that.” 



John McLaughlin’s new album, *Black Light*, is available now on Abstract Logix

www.johnmclaughlin.com



“We truly are in the golden age of the acoustic instrument and, yes, there is plenty of choice out there.”

The thing is that Larrivée, in terms of sounds, build and price, is becoming a very hard act to beat.”

Guitarist Magazine

**Guitarist
CHOICE**

The new Larrivée **-40 Legacy Series**, featuring Jean Larrivée's first new bracing pattern in over 46 years, is born from years of research and testing. The new *Scalloped Parabolic Hybrid bracing* system perfectly merges the strength, tonal balance, and clarity of Larrivée bracing, with the bass response, depth and volume you'd expect from a vintage guitar. Made in the USA. From RRP £1249 inc VAT.



Larrivée Guitars are distributed in the UK by Sound Technology Ltd
01462 480000 | info@soundtech.co.uk

Larrivée

Find your nearest Larrivée dealer at
www.soundtech.co.uk/larrivee



LarriveeGuitars

STYLE FILE

John McLaughlin

Here, we cast a spotlight onto the 60s- to 70s-era playing of the prolific and varied guitarist to deliver three licks that give you a taste of his unique style

Words Adrian Clark

With a career reading like a history of modern jazz and various hybrid styles, John McLaughlin is not the easiest artist to summarise in a few short examples. We've taken one particularly fertile period, from the end of the 60s up to the mid-70s, when he forged many musical ideas that would continue throughout his career.

McLaughlin recorded three solo albums between 1969 and 1971: *Extrapolation*, *Devotion* and *My Goal's Beyond*. They're diverse, demonstrating different elements of his creative processes in the transition from

Miles Davis sideman to Mahavishnu leader. The second of these had a harder edge, giving an early hint of what was to come with the Mahavishnu Orchestra.

The ferocious Mahavishnu fusion sound also involved some ideas for fusing Indian rhythms and scales with Western music. This was key to McLaughlin's next move. Returning to the acoustic sound of *My Goal's Beyond*, he joined forces with virtuoso Indian musicians in the group Shakti. In the space of six years, he'd worked on some of Miles Davis's most influential albums, recorded three solo albums and fronted two very different groups... not a bad result!

Example 1

'EXTRAPOLATION' is possibly the most obviously 'late 60s jazz' of John's early solo albums, with some lovely modal improvisations. This example is broadly in E minor, but the descending phrase (in quintuplets for a picking workout!) uses B minor pentatonic (B D E F# A). The lack of G or G# gives an ambiguous sound, neither E major nor E minor.

$\text{♩} = 108$ Em11

The musical notation for Example 1 is presented in two systems. The first system shows a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a 4/4 time signature. The tempo is marked as 108 quarter notes per minute. The key signature is Em11. The notation shows a series of notes and rests, with some notes beamed together. Below the staff, there are fret numbers (0, 2, 5, 7, 9, 10) and a sequence of notes (B, D, E, F#, A) indicating the B minor pentatonic scale. The notation also includes a descending phrase in quintuplets for a picking workout.



Superior Service

Superimposing loops, electronica and live guitar on old filmstock is all in a day's work for Public Service Broadcasting... Pathé News meets indie rock!

Words Matt Frost Photography Will Ireland

Public Service Broadcasting and their tweed-attired leader J Willgoose Esq have been pioneering their unique mix of sample-strewn cinematic electronica and melodic indie-rock for over half a decade. While their two albums – *Inform-Educate-Entertain* (2013) and *The Race For Space* (2015) – have both garnered significant critical acclaim, as well as impacting the upper reaches of the album charts, the duo have also built a reputation for being a major crowdpleaser on the festival circuit.

J Willgoose's dramatic compositions are often centred around sample threads taken from the British Film Institute's vast library of archival footage and public information films. The conquering of Everest, the Blitz and the Apollo program are just a few of the concept-based tracks produced under the Public Service Broadcasting moniker. From a musical perspective, the humble guitar is often as significant as the synths and samplers that litter both Willgoose's home studio and the group's onstage setups. J, who counts Mogwai, Radiohead, The Walkmen and Manic Street Preachers as some of his main six-string influences, is also a master of looping, often going to impressive lengths to maintain a vibe-fuelled feel to the band's energetic shows.

We drop by the PSB recording HQ where J wields his unique magic, to talk complex loops, maligned banjos and J's conversion to the joys of the Strat.

Public Service Broadcasting are commonly categorised as an electronic music outfit. How far do you think having live guitars, bass, drums and other instruments helps build a rapport with your audiences?

"Well, it is primarily electronic music at heart, or it certainly was at the start. I can get frustrated with watching electronic music live and how musically un-engaging it can be, and how you're often not really given a lot to go on as an audience member in terms of what's happening and what's making the sounds in front of you. I find that really, really off-putting and alienating for the audience. Even putting together the solo shows back when it was just me was always about making certain sacrifices. You might have some stuff that does come off backing or that you're not going to do live, but at the same time, you're giving people an obvious, live spontaneous musical point of engagement – whether it's the guitar or banjo, or adding a bass player, as we have done now. The drums are maybe the biggest part of it; they're such a great instrument to watch. It's a lot more work to do it that way, and to do all the looping stuff – which is very technical and takes a lot of pre-production – but it's really paid off when we get in front of crowds who appreciate it."

How do you balance playing guitar on stage versus synths and sequencers?

"I tend to operate on the principle of, 'Try and do the most obvious musical element

and try and do that live.' I never have a lead line that's not live, so I'll either try and loop something before it or hand it off somewhere else and try and get somebody else to do it.

"Wriggles [Wrigglesworth, the other half of the duo] can do quite a lot of electronic stuff while I'm playing the guitar. We're all doing various things and keeping various balls in the air, but, I just think you have to focus on whatever the main instrument in the song is and make sure you're playing that – and that it is live."

What amplifiers do you use on stage?

"It's actually all software live at the moment. All of it. And there's a good reason for that, in that there's so many loops happening that go into the computer and have to be processed in a certain way, going through one set of presets and then coming through another, I can't see any other way of doing it unless you were to tour something the size of a bus!

"I've just bought this Kemper [Profiler profiling amp], so the early stages are there of taking it outside the box, although only into another box... but at least it's a different kind of box! It's Guitar Rig 4. It's not even the most recent version. I've got a Roland MIDI foot controller and just a little signal pad for when I'm using the Gretsch Country Gentleman, because it's hotter than the rest of them, but otherwise it's just straight into the sound card."



Fender American Vintage '59 Stratocaster (2014)

"I wrote *Gagarin* and there's one section of it in particular where I was like, 'Oh God! I'm going to have to buy a Strat! I hate Strats!' So I tried a few out and found one I actually really liked. I ended up recording the song and then realised I really like Strats. They're fantastic and extraordinarily versatile... but maybe they're not viewed as that rock 'n' roll any more and are more 'establishment'. I remember John Squire said that playing a Strat on stage would be like wearing a school tie on stage and that's been the attitude I had towards them ever since. But they're beautiful, amazing guitars. Ever since I got it, I can't stop playing it."

Rickenbacker 330 (2002)

"The Rickenbacker 330 was my first serious guitar and I love it. There used to be a band called Six By Seven; [Chris Olley] played a Rickenbacker and he played it in a way that I hadn't heard before. I had never necessarily associated it with heavier music. If you catch it right, it's just beautiful."

Gretsch Country Gentleman (2014)

"My most recent guitar is the Gretsch Country Gentleman. I wrote a song and I felt that it needed to be a big sort of hollowbody sound, like a really big warm humbuck-y sound... That track was *Valentina* and it ended up being on *Tomorrow* as well – with really sort of gentle, nice picking to it – and it was also on *The Other Side*. It's the guitar doing the really long delay and also the fingerpick-y stuff in the build-up."

Larivée dreadnought

"A beautiful-sounding guitar. I went in with the aim of buying a decent acoustic for about £400, but the guy in the shop saw me coming because he was like, 'Try this!' You know when you play a guitar and within two or three strums, you're like 'That's it!'? It was the same with the Gretsch."

Fender Twin Reverb

"Valentina and the more delicate stuff went through the Twin. It's just all about having a real spring. You can emulate it, but being in the room with it and actually being able to feel the air hitting your face is just great. That's definitely a direction I want to go more into in the future."

Countryman Banjo

"It can give you different textures. It's percussive, it's upbeat, but you can also get a melancholy sound playing it in that more melodic style with the open strings and moving across strings more quickly... it's surprisingly versatile."

Fender Jaguar '62 Reissue (Japanese, 1998)

"The oldest guitar in the setup is this Japanese 60s-reissue Jag, which is much loved, but not very well treated – so it's not very reliable! That comes out occasionally."

Fender Blues Junior

"Recording guitars, I use a mixture of going straight in and amps. The first album [*Inform-Educate-Entertain*, 2013] was all straight in, but I got a Twin and a Blues Junior for the second album. I used the little one on *Go!* to get that driving aggressive sound, where it's slightly overdriven. Stick a Tele through that and it just sounds beautiful."

Fender American Vintage '52 Tele (2013)

"After the Rickenbacker, I think the next guitar I got was a Tele because I really like the aggression and the percussive bite you can get. There's something about fast downstrokes on the Tele you can't really get on another guitar. *Go!* was on the Tele. Most of *Sputnik* was done on that guitar. We did a really heavy drop D song [*Elfstedentocht Part One*] in between albums about Dutch ice skating, which was very definitely Tele... if it's good enough for Rage Against The Machine, it's definitely good enough for everyone else."



Gretsch electrics and Fender amps make a stellar combination



The Kemper Profiler may yet become Mission Control for PSB's guitar sounds



The Fender Twin's spacious spring reverb provides plenty of inspiration

Give us an example of a track that's particularly complex to looping live...

"*Spitfire* is a good example. It starts off with just a very basic guitar riff, F octave picking and then going into F major picking. It's an eight-bar loop, I think. So you play that once and you've only got one chance to play that: if you muck it up it's going to go round and round... so make sure you don't muck it up!

"As soon as the drums come in, I have to whack the pedal down to get the sort of wah tremolo effect – I'm doing that and muting it, so it's going 'digadigdugdug' while the original one is still playing through the original preset. Once that's looped, I go to the keyboard and loop the percussive keyboard part. Then I flip that up so it's going to the octave as well, and then set it up for the next verse, and then quickly come back to the guitar in time to change the preset to do the solo for the chorus. At the end of the chorus, you flip back to another preset so the guitar isn't feeding back horribly throughout the main bit.

"*Spitfire* is actually the hardest: by the end, I'm doing one melody with right-hand keys and another melody with left-hand guitar, and hammering on and stuff. I can't think about it! If I think about it, I'm dead, basically, so I just let my hands do it."

"I'm doing one melody with right-hand keys and another melody with left-hand guitar, and hammering on and stuff. I can't think about it!"


Do you write many of your songs on guitar?

"Some of the writing starts on a guitar and some is done on synth. *Go!* started out on a synth and *Everest* is definitely a synth-based song. *Spitfire* started with just the guitar riff that you hear at the start. I knew I really liked it and it could be something good if I worked at it. Every single song comes from one very, very simple original idea that is then layered. Sometimes, the original idea is thrown away because you layer it up and it ends up going somewhere else and you realise you don't need the original thing. It could be a guitar I start with, or it could be a banjo, or it could be something that is a

more drummy, percussive idea. I just like mucking around on my phone and having the luxury of being able to record, loop stuff and try to work out melodies on top. As a guitarist, if there's one area that I think I'm all right at, it's probably melodic lines and actually coming up with something that's relatively memorable and catchy to put on top of the more layered stuff."

Is the third Public Service Broadcasting album going to be concept-based, too?

"I have got a concept for it, and I know in my head what the titles of about three or four of the songs are. I've also got musical ideas for them, but I haven't yet seen any footage to match to them yet, but there should be some footage and I should be able to find it and I should be able to use it, hopefully.

"I've already made basic enquiries with BFI and other people about using certain footage. We kept the lid on *The Race For Space* until we were ready and we'll do the same with this!" 



The Race For Space by Public Service Broadcasting is out now. See the site below for UK tour dates publicservicebroadcasting.net



Attention! Your guitar is not a fridge

Things to look out for with house insurance

- You may be given a replacement you haven't chosen
We let you pick
- You may have to pay a large excess
We have no excess*
- Your home insurer may not understand musicians needs
We are music specialists
- **We also provide cover for**
 - Accidental damage
 - Theft outside of the house
 - Optional unattended vehicle cover
 - When you're performing

**We are music
insurance specialists.
Talk to us to find out more**

Get a quote:

 allianzmusic.co.uk

 **0330 100 9626**

Allianz 

*£100 excess applies to computer equipment. Terms and conditions apply.
Allianz Musical Insurance is a trading name of Allianz Insurance plc.

dv247

play perform record **music**

Huge price drops on 2015 Gibsons.
Only while stocks last!



Les Paul Standard
Premium Quilt
Honey Burst
Code: 212037

£1599



Les Paul Classic
Sea Foam Green
Code: 212020

£1129



SG Standard
Heritage Cherry
Code: 212044

£799



Les Paul Classic
Cherry Burst
Code: 212019

£1129



Les Paul Standard
Premium Quilt
Ocean Water
Code: 212038

£1899

www.dv247.com

Mail Order : 020 3176 6247

Retail Superstore : 01708 771991

DV247, Chesham House, Chesham Close, Romford, RM7 7PJ



GEAR *of* the YEAR 2015

So, once again we're under starter's orders for a grand reckoning of the best kit that's crossed our transom in the past 12 months, to quote from the holy book of *Spinal Tap*. First, let's explain the rules by which we chose our winners here. Firstly, there are the tell-tale signs: someone comes back from a demo and just has to tell the rest of us how good something was. No matter how forensically you pry apart the qualities and shortcomings of a piece of gear when you review it, that first current of excitement is often the best indicator that a guitar, pedal or amp is not merely competent and fit for purpose, but potentially something outstanding. As you'd expect, gear of that calibre usually comes out of the review process with a *Guitarist* Choice or even Gold award, so the price of entry into Gear Of The Year is just that: we select the winners from a long list of products that have received one of those accolades, with one or two exceptions. Now, about those exceptions. When it comes to weighing up our winners, we get debating in the office. Even the best, most rigorously objective reviewer represents but a single viewpoint. Just occasionally, when we really get down to the nitty gritty, a wild-card entry makes it into the final by consensus among *Guitarist's* writers and reviewers, because when it comes to Gear Of The Year, a little bit of extra subjectivity is allowed to creep in. Did something excite us? Did it seem to embody something original and genuinely progressive? Above all, did it help us or inspire us to make more *music* this year? A little tincture of those personal impressions enters the mix when it comes to Gear Of The Year. In the following pages, you'll read our verdict. Enjoy.

CONTENTS

82.....Solidbody Electrics	92.....Acoustics	102.....Pedalboard
84..... Rig One: <i>Progressive</i>	94.....Acoustic Performance	104..... Rig Three: <i>Innovation</i>
86.....Semi-Acoustic Electrics	96.....Combo Amplifiers	106.....Innovation
88.....Prestige Electrics	98.....Amplifier Heads	108.....Conclusion
90..... Rig Two: <i>Tone Monsters</i>	100.....Home & Studio Amps	

GEAR *of the YEAR*

SOLIDBODY ELECTRICS

Four workhorse guitars with thoroughbred tone



I LEARNED FROM THAT...

Don't dismiss extra strings as metal-only

BY DARRAN CHARLES



"Last year I made a transition to seven-strings and this year, maybe due to an irrational fear of odd numbers (disparnumerophobia, no less!), I almost went one string further by moving up to an eight-string. This flirtation

began when reviewing the Strandberg Boden 8 for issue 394, the prospect of which didn't initially didn't fill me with much excitement, as I thought an eighth string was possibly a string too far – and would perhaps result in irreconcilable differences between me and our the bass player of our band Godsticks, Dan Nelson, if I ever brought it into rehearsal.

"However, the review happened to coincide with my discovering the music of Meshuggah – themselves pioneers of eight-string prog-metal riffing – and while I enjoyed constructing a demo track in the style of those guys, I didn't think I could find a musical application for the Strandberg that wasn't entirely metal-based. Gavin Bushell, who is our other guitarist, has recently ended up with a Strandberg eight-string himself, and it seems that almost every week he comes into rehearsal churning out ideas that are not metal based at all, but actually quite funky and progressive. I've also recently discovered the Animals As Leaders main man Tosin Abasi, who is also doing some really interesting things with a signature eight-string Ibanez, which, again, isn't necessarily metal.

"So my prejudices – or perhaps laziness – prevented me from my own experimentation on this occasion, but at least those guys have inspired me to have another crack at the eight-string in the future."



YAMAHA REVSTAR RS502T £565

Yamaha's new Revstar guitars are yet to hit the stores, but we've been very impressed with the diverse seven-strong range, all centred on a new double-cut outline redolent of Yamaha's past. The set-neck, maple-topped 502T features dual soapbar single coils and an adjustable tailpiece, along with Yamaha's Dry Switch high-pass filter, which is designed to work with humbuckers but is surprisingly effective here.

uk.yamaha.com



PRS S2 Vela £1,289

Launched in 2013, PRS's S2 range is USA-made but much more affordable than the Core guitars. A new aesthetic has emerged and the Vela is the first S2-specific original design. Its off-set mahogany body hints at a Jazzmaster, while the low-wind S2 Starla bridge pickup, old Gretsch-style neck pickup and new bridge create a very different – and very contemporary – sound. Cool? We think so.

www.prsguitars.com



FENDER CLASSIC PLAYER BAJA '60s TELE £826

Just too late for last year's awards, the '60s Baja Telecaster looks like a standard 60s alder/rosewood Tele, but along with a flatter fingerboard radius, it has a four-way selector and S-1 switching. So the fourth position selects bridge and neck pickup in series for a thicker 'secret weapon' sound. Depress the S-1 switch and the parallel and series combined pickup selections are out-of-phase.

www.fender.com

CORT MANSON MBC-1 MATT BELLAMY SIGNATURE £499

What do you get when you combine the considerable talents of one of the UK's veteran guitar makers with one of the few true guitar heroes of contemporary times, and one of the world's super-sized guitar-making factories in Indonesia? The Cort Manson MBC-1, that's what. Now, Matt Bellamy's relationship with his guitar-maker, Hugh Manson, goes back some years and the duo have conceived some of the most forward-thinking custom instruments ever. They come at a price, of course, meaning many of Bellamy's legions of fans have been excluded. But while the MBC-1, which includes a gigbag, may be highly affordable, it's far from a cheap knock-off. Yes, its sort-of altered Telecaster shape emulates Bellamy's custom instruments, but it's a very simple, no-frills guitar concentrating on quality build, a great resonance and, of course, a smart setup all reflected by Hugh's hands-on involvement in the lengthy three-year project.

The guitar has a 648mm (25.5-inch) scale length, compound radius rosewood 'board, matt black basswood body and tune-o-matic/stud tailpiece setup, and is powered by a Manson-designed bridge humbucker and neck-placed single coil, with three-way toggle pickup selector, master volume and master tone and a kill button.

www.cortguitars.com



RIGS of the YEAR

PROGRESSIVE

WHY IT WORKS – AND THE ALTERNATIVES...

Matt Bellamy's crazy-low-priced signature guitar is a more-than-fitting choice here, but extended-range/scale players might want to check out the **Schecter Stealth C-7** (£585) as a seven-string option, or if you really want to, er, progress, the eight-string/27-inch-scale **Ibanez RGIX28FEQM** (£830).

Amps-wise, a digital modelling/transistor device really isn't for everyone, especially live, and despite the THR's undoubted versatility, a valve amp such as **Victory's VX The Kraken** (£829) is aimed right at the heart of this category. If you need less volume and a lower price, the **EVH 5150 III Lunchbox** (£450) is a no-brainer.

Regarding the **Boss SY-300**, leaping into the guitar-synth world is something nobody should do lightly, as you're dealing with a whole different set of transients and EQ, meaning they can be very difficult to integrate into an existing live rig, with a huge amount of trial, error and, frankly, frustration and mental pain. So, if accurately mimicking other instruments isn't your main goal, you can discover endless otherworldly textures and effects via Electro-Harmonix. For filtering, oscillation, glissando and hold, try the **Superego Synth Engine** (£199). Polyphonic octave generation is basically owned by the ever popular **POG 2** (£259) and we also have to mention the **Key 9** (£199), which does electric pianos for guitar superbly well for the price. If you're set on doing the guitar-synth thing, however, **Fishman's Triple Play MIDI Controller/Pickup/App** (£399) is a must-audition alongside the SY-300.

WORDS MICK TAYLOR

We always say guitarists are afraid of change – so full marks to Manson and Cort for doing something brave and making a crisply original electric that has boutique lineage at a high-street price

Build your own amp at the twist of a dial, then build another one on the other 'channel'. The flexibility of the THR100HD is stunning but, crucially, the tones are compelling, too, especially in a studio context

It's a powerful, polyphonic synth that doesn't need hexaphonic pickups that could open lots of doors for sonic explorers, although synth-sceptics will probably remain unconverted



The advertisement features a tall, slender black column speaker standing vertically. At its base is a wider, rectangular subwoofer. To the left of the speaker, an acoustic guitar with a natural wood finish and red binding is leaning against a light-colored wooden stool. A small, silver, handheld microphone lies on the floor in front of the subwoofer. A smartphone is placed on top of the subwoofer, with a cable connecting it to the system. The background is a light, abstract geometric pattern.

just add **you.**

MAUI® 5 ULTRA PORTABLE COLUMN PA-SYSTEM

The **ultra-light** MAUI® 5 delivers **800 watts** of peak power and a maximum SPL of 120 dB. Providing both sound reinforcement with **extended coverage** and **feedback resistant monitoring**, the subwoofer base and 3-piece column system **assembles in seconds**. The built-in **4-channel mixer** features **Bluetooth®** technology for **wireless streaming** as well as microphone, line level and hi-Z inputs.

LD
SYSTEMS
PRO AUDIO
IN MOTION

DESIGNED & ENGINEERED IN GERMANY
WWW.LD-SYSTEMS.COM

f You Tube BLOG
www.facebook.com/ldsystems
www.youtube.com/ldsystemsvideos
blog.adamhall.com
LD Systems® is a brand of the Adam Hall Group.

549,- € RRP

GEAR of the YEAR

SEMI-ACOUSTIC ELECTRICS

Four hollow victors from the class of 2015



I LEARNED FROM THAT...

Don't let myths make your mind up for you

BY JAMIE DICKSON



"It's funny how easily one can become snared by 'accepted truths' when it comes to guitars. Long-term testing the Gibson Memphis '59-spec ES-330TD this year was a refreshing reminder that it's worth trying guitars that aren't necessarily the mainstream choice in a given area of guitar design. In the case of the 330, it's the lack of a centre block that makes it potentially problematic in a gig setting if you use hot drive pedals. Without support from a block of timber directly beneath, the arched laminate top of an ES-330 is more prone to feedback than, say, that of the more widely used 335. That much is true. But if we're not careful, we can end up defining really classic guitars by their limitations, rather than their strengths. The flip side of 'no centre block' is a gloriously open, airy tone that has palpably more bloom and character than many centre-block semis. It harks back to a time when jump blues and big, raucous solos with lots of bite and actually not a whole lot of sustain ruled the 50s roost. And sounded glorious, by the way. You only have to think of T-Bone Walker's tone to be convinced of that point.

"So, am I arguing that there should be more guitars that feed back fairly easily and have less focus than a modern semi? Well, yes, because, it's another voice that you can use to good effect in the right setting. I like Joni Mitchell's voice but I don't want every female singer to sound exactly like her. And coping with the 330's period-correct quirks was really not a lot of trouble. The only concession to feedback-avoidance I made during gigs was to avoid stacking drive pedals for lead tones. Not much of a sacrifice to make in exchange for that big, fat P-90 voice the ES-330 has. I also had to become a little more active on the guitar's volume controls than I would be on a Tele in order to nobble feedback before it reared its head. But I became more engaged with the instrument and with what I was playing as a result. So don't be quick to define guitars by their 'faults'. They might just be strengths, too."



EPIPHONE GARY CLARK JR 'BLAK & BLU' CASINO W/BIGSBY £649

Gary Clark Jr's signature Casino is bringing little new to the table aside from its colour. Yet it's a timely reminder of Gibson and Epiphone's past: the Casino, Epiphone's version of Gibson's hollow ES-330, is still valid for the modern musician. Think P-90-powered blues and soul, retro pop or wailing feedback laden soundscapes. Even if you're not a Gary Clark Jr fan, here's an affordable firecracker.

www.epiphone.com



GIBSON MEMPHIS 2015 ES-339 SATIN £1,699

Alongside Gibson's wonderful repros of its past, instruments like this continue to inspire. While the iconic ES-335 is a hard act to alter, its dimensions put many a player off. So, the ES-339 is the downsized version. We concluded it's "a step closer to a Les Paul compared to the airier, slightly more scooped voice of the ES-335... A very good guitar indeed."

www.gibson.com



GRETSCH G6120 BRIAN SETZER NASHVILLE £3,149

Brian Setzer is virtually the face of Gretsch, and this nitro-finished top-of-the-line signature features Gretsch's 1959-style 'trestle' bracing and 'flat handle' Bigsby B6CB vibrato. It comes with TV Jones pickups upgraded especially for Setzer, with asymmetrically wound coils in each bobbin, one dark, the other bright, providing sparkle while maintaining that renowned low-end growl.

www.gretschguitars.com

PRS P245 SEMI-HOLLOW £3,575

It's extremely rare that we give any instrument a *Guitarist* Gold award. In fact, this PRS was the only one we awarded to an electric in 2015. So, what's so special about it? Well, aside from PRS's usual ultra-high specification and detailed build that's become a byword in the guitar industry, the P245 is actually two guitars in one: a great-sounding electric with more than useful acoustic-like piezo sounds. Okay, that's not new, but the way it's implemented ticked all our test boxes, especially on this relatively-rare-for-PRS semi-hollow design.

Highlights include the latest in PRS's 'date series' humbuckers, the 58/15s, which ensure a very clean, bell-like tonality, best described by long-time PRS user Geoff Whitehorn as "the way we always thought PAFs sounded". The relatively new partial taps ensure highly usable 'single coil' sounds and that's before we switch in the PRS/LR Baggs piezo system, with its mono or stereo output, which we observed has "a very acoustic-like character that even with flat EQ is really nicely balanced and underpinned by a very long sustain". Of course, it's far from cheap, but when we said "it's one of the most versatile, creative electric instruments money can buy," we meant it.

www.prsguitars.com



GEAR *of the* YEAR

PRESTIGE ELECTRICS

Sumptuous six strings to satisfy your high-end cravings



RAISING THE TONE

A quest to find a 'boutique' guitar with soul

BY MICK TAYLOR



"Until recently, I'd pretty much given up altogether on what you might call 'boutique', very high-end electric guitars. The charms of Fender American Vintage/ Custom Shop, Gibson Memphis and Gibson Custom are as 'high' as I ever thought I'd go, alongside my PRS DGT. Sure, they're all 'premium' guitars, but boutique? Not really. You can walk into guitar shops up and down the land and buy one right off the shelf.

"No, by boutique I mean really low-volume brands that are perceived by many to be 'superior' to those mentioned above. Yet all too often for me, their dreamy maple tops and 'effortless' 'modern' playability traits leave me struggling to engage mentally or physically. Too posh to rock, I reckon, or at least too valuable to damage!

"What I do love about the best low-volume-production boutique guitars, however, are the exacting materials selection, the cleanliness in the build, and the direct connection to the vision and values of the person with their name on the headstock, and with that in mind two guitars changed my perception of what a boutique guitar could be during 2015.

"One is Daniel Steinhardt's Spanish-cedar-bodied Nik Huber Krautster II, an instrument of unbridled purpose and integrity, and likewise, a Collings 290 DC S. Having dinged the simple double-cut almost the second I took it from the case, I instantly stopped worrying about how valuable it was (or indeed now wasn't), and I'm certain I commit to it more when playing as a direct result. Both guitars sound and feel like how I imagine a brand-new vintage guitar would feel, if you follow me, which is really not what a lot of those other brand-new new guitars feel like. I'm talking about the best timbers, proper big necks, lightweight bodies, old-school hardware and pickups, staggering build. That's my kind of boutique guitar."



GIBSON TRUE HISTORIC LES PAUL 1960, MURPHY AGED £7,999

'True Historic' is the latest level of accuracy in Gibson's ongoing quest to make 'em like they used to. Our sample was hand-aged by Tom Murphy, which kicks up the price, but with its delightful two-piece flamed maple cap, gorgeous Lemon Burst finish and wonderful set of vintage tones, this is an incredibly desirable instrument. If this doesn't do it for you, there are plenty of other 'Burst-alike options.

www.gibson.com



PATRICK JAMES EGGLE MACON £2,995

One of the UK's foremost luthiers reinvented himself as an acoustic-maker par excellence, but Mr E is quite a rocker at heart and is now also making a limited number of these slightly over-sized LP Special-style guitars that combine some unusual woods – like bog oak – with a low-gloss nitro finish, aged metal parts and Bare Knuckle 'buckers. Inspired, beautiful and with a contemporary rock 'n' roll voice.

www.eggle.co.uk



NIK HUBER DOLPHIN SURFMEISTER £3,699

Like Eggle, Nik Huber likes his old double-cut Les Paul Specials and though he makes some of the most prestige 'furniture' guitars anywhere, in recent years a more rock 'n' roll aesthetic has permeated his designs. Essentially a semi-hollow Dolphin model, the Surfmeister loads on a Bigsby vibrato, tune-o-matic bridge and Harry Häussel's TroneBucker pickups. Superb art with highly evocative sounds.

www.nikhuber-guitars.com

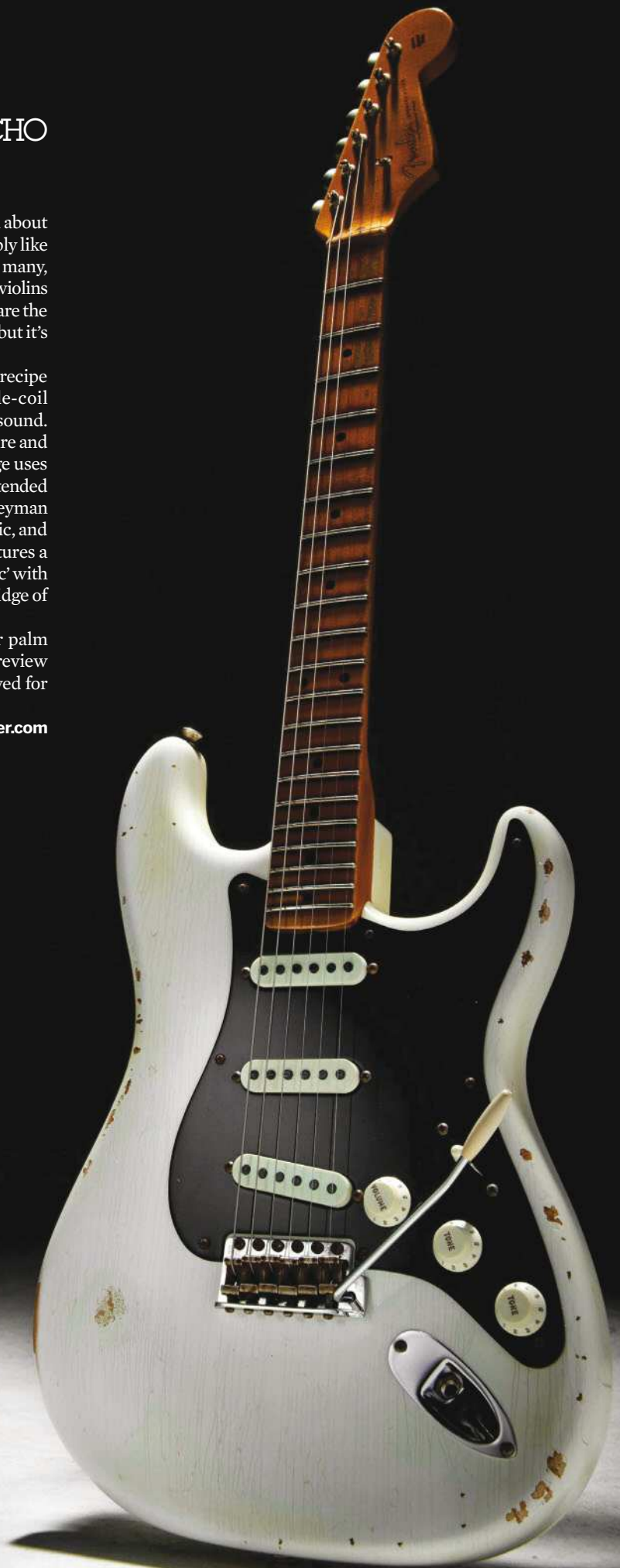
FENDER CUSTOM SHOP ANCHO POBLANO STRAT £2,639

Time and time again we're asked, "What's so special about a Custom Shop Fender guitar?" In answer, we'd simply like to place this Strat in the hands of the questioner. To many, one Strat is like any other, but that's like saying that all violins must be the same, or that all concert classical guitars are the same simply because they look pretty similar. Sorry, but it's all about the detail and, as in this case, the concept.

The Ancho Poblano Strat is a vehicle for the new-recipe Custom Shop Ancho Poblano hand-wound single-coil pickups, aimed to add a little more 'spice' to your sound. The neck and middle have heavy Formvar-coated wire and custom staggered Alnico III magnets, and the bridge uses heavy enamelled wire with Alnico V flat magnets intended to offer a big, balanced sound. Also new is the Journeyman Relic, which sits between the Closet Classic and Relic, and is classed as 'used but not abused'. Our AP Strat features a version of that classed as 'Shattered Journeyman Relic' with dings around the top and bottom edges and on the ridge of the rear belly cut.

With one of the biggest necks we've held in our palm and a thick balanced sound, we concluded in our review that it's "one of the most evocative Strats we've played for some time". And then some.

www.fender.com



RIGS of the YEAR

TONE MONSTERS

WHY IT WORKS – AND THE ALTERNATIVES...

The **Ancho Poblano Strat** was all about the pickups, adding 'spice' while retaining vintage tonality. To get closer in your own Strat, you're looking for slightly overwound Alnico III/heavy Formvar-wound neck and middle pickups, with an even more overwound, flat-stagger Alnico V/plain-enamel-wound bridge pickup. Alternatively, some kind of simple boost pedal, set almost off – **TC Spark Mini** (£55) or **Xotic BB Preamp** (£199) – can bring some very welcome extra sizzle.

The **Tone King**'s ace in the hole, apart from its wonderful tones, is the superb inbuilt Ironman attenuator, which enables you to dial in the right amount of power-section saturation at lower volumes. Sadly, that's no longer available as a separate product in the UK, but there are other attenuators on the market. The **Palmer PDI06** (£179) is simple and inexpensive; the **Radial Headload Loadbox** (£949) adds a tonne of features for live and studio use, while the **Two Notes Torpedo Reload** (£499) is a comprehensive studio tool complete with a superb plug-in for your DAW. If your loud amp needs taming, one of these has the perfect answer for you!

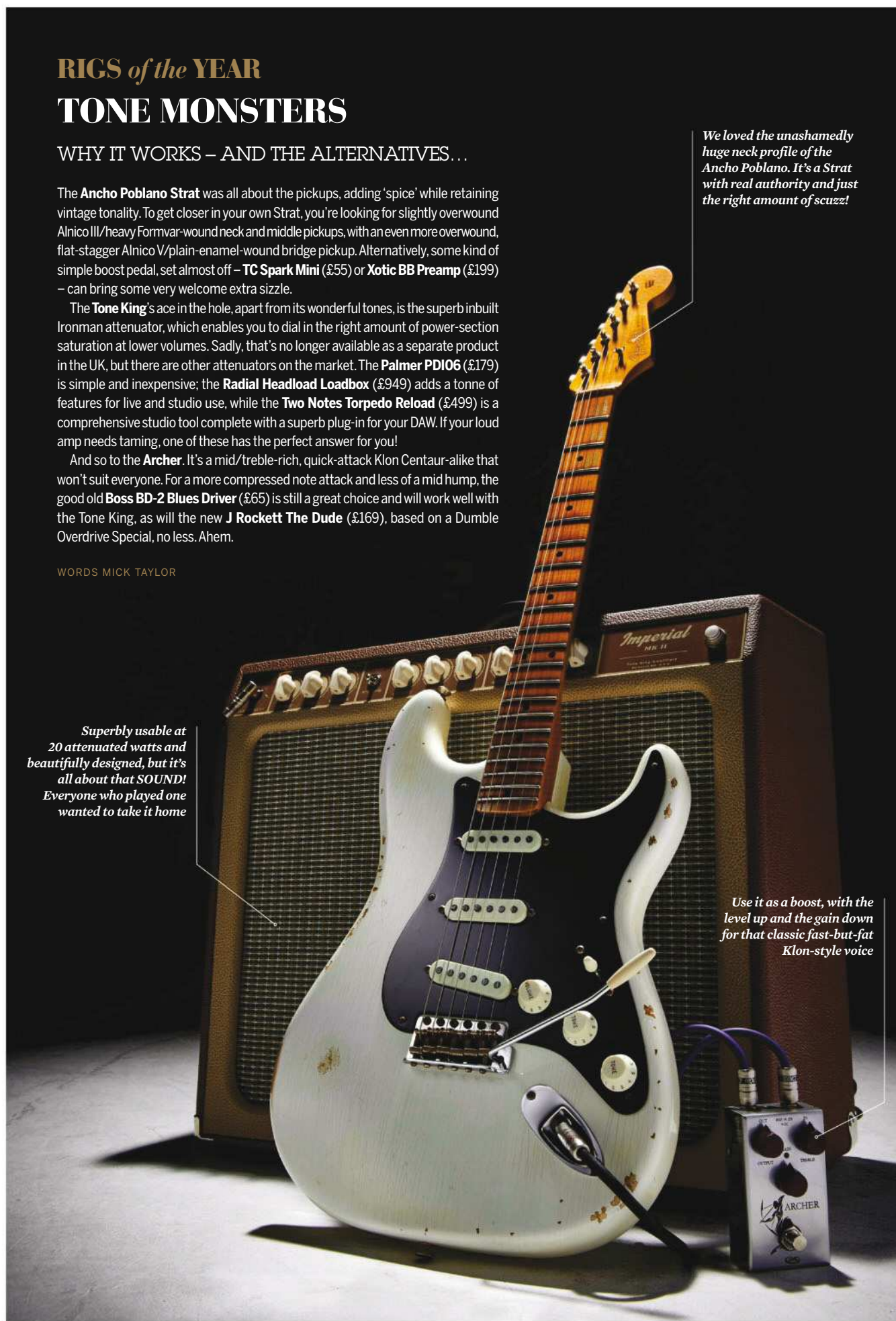
And so to the **Archer**. It's a mid/treble-rich, quick-attack Klon Centaur-alike that won't suit everyone. For a more compressed note attack and less of a mid hump, the good old **Boss BD-2 Blues Driver** (£65) is still a great choice and will work well with the Tone King, as will the new **J Rockett The Dude** (£169), based on a Dumble Overdrive Special, no less. Ahem.

WORDS MICK TAYLOR

We loved the unashamedly huge neck profile of the Ancho Poblano. It's a Strat with real authority and just the right amount of scuzz!

Superbly usable at 20 attenuated watts and beautifully designed, but it's all about that SOUND! Everyone who played one wanted to take it home

Use it as a boost, with the level up and the gain down for that classic fast-but-fat Klon-style voice



THE NEW CLASSIC.



ARTIST SERIES

Drawing on decades of valve amplifier design experience, the Artist Series delivers the ultimate in clean and classic overdrive tones. Simplicity and purity coupled with flexibility
– The New Classic.

• Two channels each configurable as Clean or Crunch • 6L6 power amp • Reverb • Effects Loop • Patented ISF • Celestion V-Type speakers • Birch ply construction

 Designed & Engineered
by Blackstar Amplification UK

Blackstar[®]
AMPLIFICATION
the sound in your head

#ARTISTTONE
Find your nearest dealer at
www.blackstaramps.com

GEAR of the YEAR
ACOUSTICS

It's all about retro chic in the acoustic winners' enclosure



WHAT DID YOU BUY?

CHRIS GEORGE CE-N 7-STRING £2,700

BY DAVE BURRLUCK



"Working as a solo acoustic player, with a vocalist, you face numerous challenges – not least in arranging songs so that they can work in such a stripped-down environment.

Having already commissioned a stage-specific electro nylon-string from Lincoln luthier, Chris George, my interest in a seven-string with fan frets (so I could increase the bass-side scale length and drop easily down to a low A) produced not only a challenge for Chris, but one for me, once I'd received the guitar. It's a veritable orchestra! But going custom is a brave step for any guitarist.

"Why? Well, you really don't know if the instrument is going to do the job you expect. Then there's the cost – handmade guitars are certainly not the cheapest route, although we have numerous highly talented makers in the UK which, compared to big-company USA custom shops, are surprisingly cost-effective. Ideally, you should be familiar with the luthier's work. That point, as an owner of previous Chris George custom guitars, wasn't in question. Equally important, you have to find a maker that listens to what you want but isn't afraid to say if they think your ideas seem, frankly, daft. Now the latter point, when I suggested my concept, did have Chris raising both eyebrows but, hey, we both like a challenge. Your relationship with the maker is crucial. Chris and I spent a considerable time mapping out the instrument's specs.

"As a seven-string and fan-fret 'virgin', the build was a leap in the dark for Chris. But using a loaned Godin Multiac seven-string as our base model, we at least had something tangible to create our design from. The result is one of the most beautifully inspiring and challenging instruments this writer has encountered. At the time of writing, I still have to take to the stage with it, but in the meantime, practice hours are long. Going custom is not for everyone, but when you're ready... If you're curious, the Chris George CE-N 7-String (£2,700) is featured in the Winter edition of our quarterly journal, Guitarist Presents Acoustic."



ATKIN RETROSPECTIVE 000-28 £2,849

In the electric guitar marketplace, the idea of relic'ing has now become established as an economically viable alternative to more costly vintage models. It's much rarer on the acoustic front, though, which makes this instrument from hand-builder Alister Atkin even more intriguing. While this guitar has the appearance of a seasoned OAP, Atkin offers varying degrees of ageing on his acoustics. But it's not all about the looks; the tone on offer here is astonishing, too!

www.atkinguitars.com



FENDER PARAMOUNT PM-3 STANDARD £519

Despite a long list of innovations in the electric and bass markets, Fender has struggled to break through in the acoustic guitar field. But matters might just be set to change. Aiming more at a traditional design strategy, this Paramount is a Chinese-built cutaway 000 with a Fishman PM pickup system and case. A solidly built all-rounder capable of embracing every musical style with aplomb.

www.fender.com



MARTIN DREADNOUGHT JUNIOR £599

We're getting used to seeing reduced-size acoustics, but whereas some of these Lilliputian lovelies are a tad slight of voice, this feisty 15/16ths-size dreadnought has bags of tone and projection, not to mention the ability to turn heads: it's hard to believe how much sweet tone can emanate from such a slight frame. An onboard Fishman Sonitone and custom gigbag complete this bundle of joy.

www.martinguitar.com

MARTIN 00-15E RETRO £1,549

Martin's Retro series aims to combine old-time good looks with modern onboard technology, thus providing a near perfect balance for today's performers. The 00-15E joins the ranks amidst a range that consists of four dreadnoughts, a 000 and an OM, but is the only mahogany-topped model available thus far. There's something about the 00 body size that makes it an everyman within guitar circles: fingerpickers love it for its compactness and easy manageability when played sitting down; singer-songwriters praise it, too, as its balanced tonal range and lack of boominess in the bass makes it a flawless partner for vocals.

There's little doubt that the mahogany top on the 00-15E pushes it past the winning post in this category, as the added warmth on offer affords it a timbre that instantly appeals to everyone who picks it up. Opinions are split on the F1 Aura+ pickup – some finding it fussy and complex in use while others found it offered a whole new spectrum of tonality. However, nothing can detract from its overall playability, sweetness of tone and general feelgood factor, at a hugely competitive price point.

www.martinguitar.com



GEAR *of the* YEAR

ACOUSTIC PERFORMANCE

The gigging strummer's onstage essentials



BE PREPARED

Why it's time to get personal with monitoring

BY DAVE BURRLUCK



"Good ol' Baden-Powell – the scout leader, not the great Brazilian guitarist. His motto might not have been too important on 'Bob-a-Job' week back in the day, but for the gigging acoustic player it should be a mantra. One piece of kit that has gone from 'just in case' to 'essential' this year is TC Helicon's VoiceSolo FX150 (£189).

"As we mention opposite, what is primarily designed as a vocal 'spot' monitor has been a huge help on stage. Running an output from your pedalboard into one of its channels means you can control what you hear of your guitar, exactly when you need it, without upsetting what is going to the out-front PA. As for any monitor, placement is, of course, crucial in avoiding increasing the risk of feedback, but with its simple-to-use EQ you can easily cut your lows a little, and floor placement – in front to one side of our (seated) playing position – has worked really well.

"When we turned up to a gig without our usual main monitor, it stood in ably, too. Of course, if you're lucky enough to turn up at a proper venue you probably won't need your own personal monitor, but the VoiceSolo is extremely compact and won't take up much additional car space if it's not needed. However, if you're a grass-roots acoustic musician, you'll know most of the time you're playing in the corner of a pub or bar where you have to compete with an often high ambient-noise level, even if people are actually listening to you. These can be surprisingly tough gigs and there's nothing worse than struggling to hear yourself.

"Before we take the leap into in-ear monitoring, the VoiceSolo is doing a fine job: insurance, when you need it."

FISHMAN PLATINUM PRO EQ £289



Most acoustic-pickup makers offer some kind of outboard preamp, which can be a lifesaver on stage or even for recording sessions. Fishman has a new mini range, of which the Platinum Pro EQ is the most expansive, offering broad EQ, compression, boost, phase and notch filter for feedback suppression plus effects loop, XLR or jack outputs and onboard tuner. If you're serious about your live sound this is an exceptional preamp, but it's also extremely handy for DI recording with both acoustic, clean electric or bass – or, indeed, virtually any other pickup-equipped stringed instrument you can play.

www.fishman.com

LANEY A1+ £279



Acoustic amps can be eye-wateringly expensive, but this two-channel UK-designed Chinese-made 80-watt combo packs an impressive spec. With broad EQ (including sweepable midrange), onboard effects, effects loop, feedback suppression and numerous hook-up options, it's ideal as sound reinforcement for smaller venues (for guitar and vocals), or simply used as a personal monitor on bigger stages. "An absolute value-for-money no-brainer," we said, and if you're new to acoustic performance and want a little more control than the plug-in-and-play scenario of an open-mic slot, it's a great place to start.

www.laney.co.uk

TC HELICON VOICESOLO FX150 £189



Designed primarily as a personal vocal monitor, the VoiceSolo FX150 is also an extremely compact 'acoustic amp/monitor' with 150 watts of Class D power, which, for those of us playing smaller 'café-style' gigs, comes highly recommended. You can use it, via two neat rear clips, on a music/mic stand, a mic stand (adaptor supplied), table or floor, and with two channels (with combi jack/XLR inputs), plus a third auxiliary channel with mini-jack input for your mp3, you have plenty of choice and flexibility. There's phantom power and USB connectivity, too, and an optional carry bag. It's no surprise that this under-the-radar monitor has seen extensive use this year.

www.tc-helicon.com

YAMAHA SLG200S £515

Designed as a practice guitar, along with a wide range of other Silent instruments, Yamaha's studios concept is more than usable for the performing musician, too. Why? Because, thanks to its skeletal but solid-centred design, it doesn't feed back. Typically Yamaha, however, its clever design (in both steel-string and nylon-string 'classical' versions) includes a screw in/screw out bass-side frame that packs away into a rifle-sized carry bag. With excellent playability, it's the newly configured 'SRT Powered' onboard electronics that elevate it to Gold Award status. Yamaha's Studio Response Technology is a digital convolution processing system that emulates a real studio-mic'd acoustic guitar. Plug into your acoustic amp, PA or just plug in your headphones, and with treble and bass EQ, three digital effects, plus an aux input for an mp3 player, like us, you might be surprised by what you're hearing.

Aside from its practice/performing duties, it's a great way of putting down surprising mic'd-like parts into your laptop's DAW. Oh, and turn up on stage, unpack and assemble the SLG and, trust us, your audience will take notice. As surprising as it may seem, every practising, performing, songwriting guitarist should have one.

uk.yamaha.com



GEAR *of the YEAR*

COMBO AMPLIFIERS

2015 saw boutique tone filter into mainstream combos



RAISING THE TONE

'Blank canvas' clean amps can be perfect for pedals

BY NEVILLE MARTEN



"The trend for pedals gains momentum every day. And why not? They're relatively cheap, and can be inspirational and fun in equal measure. I've long since foregone using amp overdrive in favour of some nicely chosen stompers.

I locate the amp's clean 'sweet spot', then fine-tune my drives to suit. Thus my simple, single-channel amp becomes a three- or even four-channel monster – clean, overdrive, distortion and both on together. And that's before we even mention all those other wonderful things like fuzz, wah-wah, delay, reverb, flange, chorus and so on. To that end, this year, I traded in my trusty Matchless SC-30 for a Morgan SW22R. Basically a 'clean only' machine, it's described by some as 'Deluxe meets Dumble'. Not a bad combination, really! We've loved Morgan amps ever since we encountered the AC20 Deluxe a couple of years back, and this one – with its two 6V6 power tubes and conservative 22-watt output – suits my purposes perfectly. I've only tried it with relatively 'non-boutique' stompboxes: a Carl Martin Quattro multi-effects, an old Boss Blues Driver, DigiTech Hardwire pedals and Fulltone OCD. But it loved every one of them, bringing out their particular nuances in a totally fuss-free manner. The plain truth is, no pedal can transform a rubbish amp tone, but a great amp tone can enhance almost any pedal.

"My advice, therefore, is to find a clean amp you love, locate its sweet spot where valves, transformers and speakers are working for their living but before it shifts into natural drive (and preferably with no extreme EQ settings), then set your pedals to taste. Treating the amp's clean tone and my various overdrives as 'channels' works for me; plus, there's the added bonus of the pedals' own EQ to tweak the sound to your exact liking. If your amp's switchable, you can still use its dirty channel, but you'll need to route your delay, chorus, and so on, through the effects loop – delayed distortion sounds gorgeous, but distorted delay is just a confusing mess. So, why not try going clean? I think you'll like it!"

LANEY L20T 212 COMBO £869



Laney has (not-so) quietly been making some of the best-sounding mainstream valve amps out there in the past couple of years. The L20T occupies that oh-so usable 20-watt zone, but its clever use of four EL84s wired in single-ended configuration is the real

attraction, giving it chiming, harmonically detailed crunch tone, especially at lower gain levels. Its use of asymmetrical-spec 12-inch speakers, a Matchless-style touch, adds yet more tonal light and shade. Boutique tone at a workmanlike price.

www.laney.co.uk

MATCHLESS NIGHTHAWK £2,350



Valve rectified, producing just 15 watts from a pair of EL84s, the Nighthawk ain't an amp for those who want to summon up javelins of glassy clean tone. But for players who live in that bluesy, saggy zone between clean and crunch, it's a dream.

Very responsive to player input, it graduates beautifully from warm, pliable clean tones to molten crunch just by varying pick attack. Those characterful drive tones are partly due to the use of an EF86 pentode valve in the preamp, which lends a complex, Vox-esque grit to its voice. Hand-wired with true point-to-point construction, it's a thoroughbred player's amp, at a price.

www.matchlessamplifiers.com

BLACKSTAR ARTIST SERIES 30 £849



Still warm from the reviewer's bench, the Artist Series 30 is a non-master volume combo that's intended to bring 'boutique' design elements from Blackstar's hand-wired Artisan range to an attainably priced PCB-based combo. What you get in this 30-watt, fixed-bias

6L6 format, is a punchy but sweetly voiced 2x12 combo which really comes alive at moderate gain levels. The drive channel, in particular, blew us away with the heft and clarity of its bottom end (a more commanding voice than that of its little brother, the Artist 15), plus the complex character of its crunch tones. Versatile and quiet, it's a very 'pro' proposition for the price.

www.blackstaramps.com

TONE KING IMPERIAL £1,949

Mark Knopfler, interviewed back in issue 392, was full of praise for the Tone King Imperial II, which he described as a “killer amp”, making it his go-to combo for clean tones and slide work – even using it for live dates with Bob Dylan. He’s not the only one who was impressed by this exceptional combo. Designed in Baltimore by Mark Bartel, but built in the California workshop of boutique makers Two-Rock, this revised version of his fine valve-rectified 20-watt combo is built around a pair of 6V6 valves in the output section with valve tremolo, spring reverb, and the excellent Ironman II attenuator. The latter allows the Imperial to produce full-throated performance, with the all-important extra dimension power-valve clipping brings, even at bedroom volumes. And trust us, you’ll want to unlock the bass-rich, tweedy drive tones the Imperial can produce whenever you play it: every one of us who played this amp fell head-over-heels for its 50s-inspired sound and touch-sensitive, organic feel. Vindicating the use of intelligently designed PCB circuits in high-end amps with every note, it promises reliability as well as stonking tone. Pricey but superb.

www.toneking.com



GEAR of the YEAR

AMPLIFIER HEADS

The amps on top, if you value versatility and heart-stopping power



VICTORY V40 THE DUCHESS £829

Victory has cherry-picked the best aspects of traditional US tone here, but has started with a clean slate when it comes to performer-friendly features. The result? One of the most capable, sonorous, giggable amps out there. A duo of 6L6s provides a broadly Fender-ish tonal foundation, but it's the intelligently chosen controls, including saggy and tighter voicing options, reverb and a mid-push switch, that really appeal, letting you dial it in perfectly to suit your style.

www.victoryamps.com



MARSHALL ASTORIA CUSTOM £1,899

One early indicator of a standout piece of gear is the buzz of excitement around from staffers who've got their grubby paws on it first. Unashamedly growly and gainy, with impeccable build, a thoughtful feature set and a brace of KT66s in the output stage like the original 1962 Bluesbreaker combo, this is Marshall taking on the hot-rod modders at their own game – and winning. Welcome back, guys.

www.marshallamps.com



MESA/BOOGIE MARK 5:25 £1,379

2015 was the year 'lunchbox' ceased to signify a container for Dairy Lea Triangles and, instead, a trend for small-but-potent heads packing plenty of mumbo in terms of tone and features. Mesa presents a highly tweakable, twin-channel take on its Mark 5 heritage, featuring the company's powerful five-band, toroidal inductor EQ, its CabClone DI output, plus a 'greatest hits' selection of Mesa preamp modes.

www.mesaboogie.com

HEAD FIRST

Combos or heads – which wins after decades of gigs?

BY NEVILLE MARTEN



"Even among serious guitarists there's no definite consensus on what's 'best': heads or combos. You see Jeff Beck with both; you see Joe Bonamassa with both; you saw Gary Moore with both; and most of us have dabbled with each at one time or another.

"One argument in favour of combos might be their portability. Well, let me tell you, I actually traded in my Matchless DC-30 combo for a head and cab since I could no longer justify the chiropractor's bill every time I hauled its 83lbs in and out of my car's boot. Amplifier engineers will tell you another advantage of the piggyback stack is that it's not constantly trying to shake itself to pieces, as combos most definitely do. Closed-back cabs, such as the 100-watt Marshall I used for years, also provide unmatched 'thump', while an openbacked Fender Twin (I sold my 'red knob' one – fool!) is open sounding and sweet. The choice is yours.

"The recent plethora of lunchbox-style heads is a very cool development. One of these and a 1x12 cab is great for small gigs and rehearsals (Mick Taylor and I used his Victory V40 like this in our duo), but sit the same box on a 2x12 or something even bigger, and it will move more than enough air for a sizeable club or pub.

"At the end of the day I prefer combos, as my darkest fear is to forget to plug in the speakers (done that), or even leave the cable at home (done that, too). After all this, though, it has to be said there's nothing quite so evocative as a gorgeous amp head sat atop a large and commanding speaker cabinet (or two). That's a rock 'n' roll statement if ever there was one. And compared to such a sight, combos are a bit... well... twee. Blimey! I've almost talked myself into it."

YAMAHA THR100HD £755

A digital amp that sounds fully authentic is a kind of Holy Grail for many amp makers. Fractal Audio Systems' Axe-FX and Kemper's profiling amps changed hardened opinions on that score and now Yamaha has moved the game on again.

A very grown-up cousin to its dinky THR series of mini-amps for the home, the THR100HD expands on the same concept by adding stage-capable power, tweakability and extra tonal authority. At the core is Yamaha's Virtual Circuit Modelling (VCM) technology, which uses powerful processors to model the performance of individual amp components, from resistors to valves themselves. The results sound uncommonly convincing. The other big draw here is that each of the THR100HD's two apparent 'channels' is, in fact, a fully independent amp that can be set up to emulate just about any classic combo or head you can think of, from valve spec to speaker

characteristics. In other words, it's a twin-amp rig in a box. You can, for example, set up one 'channel' like a pristine 100-watt, class A/B amp with an ultra-efficient speaker for clean tones, but run the other as a greasebucket Class A combo with a 25-watt driver for crunch sounds. You can also run the two amps simultaneously, but route your pedals through one and not the other and... well, you get the idea. You can fettle your sound to a nicety.

Editing software lets you select from three different types of booster (basically a choice of built-in overdrive pedals), various reverb types, a noise-gate and more. Meanwhile, cabinet-emulated XLR and USB outputs make the THR100D a natural partner for DI work, too. At well under a grand for the head, it'll be a preconception changer for some and a sonic panacea for many others.

uk.yamaha.com



GEAR *of the YEAR*

HOME & STUDIO AMPS

All you'll need for practice and low-level recording



I LEARNED FROM THAT...

Light, low-power amps get the gig

BY JAMIE DICKSON



"How much power do you need on stage these days? I saw Richard Thompson play a while back with a couple of Princetons and he sounded great. Okay, he had a very good crew making sure his tone came across well in the big auditorium of Colston Hall in Bristol, but that little revelation has echoed throughout my year. First, if you push a small valve amp you unlock more clipping (dirt, to you and me) from its power valves rather than the preamp section. The sound of power valve distortion is a much deeper, more complex crunch than a 12AX7 having a bad hair day in the preamp. You get it by winding up the master volume to where the whole amp is performing in the middle of its power band, to borrow a bit of terminology from two-stroke motorbikes: in other words, you've opened up the throttle to where none of the key parts is simply idling and everything is working at full chat. Now, unless you need glassy clean headroom at all volumes – some players do, of course – you're going to find it much easier to keep an amp in that happy place (without deafening everyone) if it's of moderate output. I used to think that was about 30 watts, to be usable on stage.

"Now, I think I can probably go lower. Firstly, more venues than ever seem to have a proper sound engineer on hand who's prepared to mic up backline and, on a good night, you might hear a decent amount of that come back at you through the monitors, obviating the need for a bigger amp. And, as time goes by, another factor becomes – shamefully – important, too: lower-wattage amps tend to be lighter. Despite my love for the sound of stacks and heavyweight 2x12 combos, the ease of the perfect one-trip-to-the-car, featherweight rig is powerfully persuasive on a rainy night. Victory's V40, with its excellent lightweight 1x12 cab, is about the best combination of punch, tone and portability I've used this year but my Mesa Recto-Verb 25 combo is on a par, too. But, comically, the amp I've had the most compliments on at bar gigs is even smaller – a humble Marshall Class 5 combo! If you want to gig easy, don't get any big ideas."

ORANGE CRUSH 35RT £199



Though oft-derided, solid-state amps have surprising potential for refinement in the right hands. Orange has pulled off a coup in making the Crush 35RT sound so chunky, substantial and credibly valve-like. For less than the price of a high-end overdrive pedal, you get two channels with digital reverb, a built-in tuner, plus cabinet-simulated DI out. As practice-room workhorse or first amp for a neophyte rocker, it's near-perfect.

www.orangeamps.com

SUHR CORSO £849



Built around an unusual power stage of two dual-triode 12BH7 valves, the five-watt Corso reminds us of warmly jagged 6V6-powered combos such as Fender's Princeton, but with a little more focus and sting. An array of front-panel voicing switches permits you to sculpt its tone to be hotter, brighter, tighter... you name it. That makes it an ideal studio tool or boutique 'bedroom' amp. Laney's excellent L5-Studio has more features for half the price, but the Corso just edges it for us on core tone and general mojo.

www.suhr.com

FENDER '65 PRINCETON REVERB LACQUERED TWEED SPECIAL EDITION £1,009



Sooner or later, if you're into small amps, the magic appeal of the 15-watt Princeton will bite you, as it has players of the calibre of Jim Campilongo, Richard Thompson and others. Fender's latest version is decked in lacquered tweed and sounds wonderfully saggy and woody, thanks to valve rectification. Slather on the reverb and vibrato (Fender's mis-labelled tremolo) and you're in either in surf city of halfway down the Mississippi. Not cheap, but we can think of few combos we'd rather equip a small studio or adorn our lounge with.

www.fender.com

BLACKSTAR ID: CORE BEAM £229

Not everyone who shares a guitarist's life appreciates a brooding half-stack squatting in the corner of the lounge and only rarely bursting into ear-shattering life. Clearly something else is called for in the genteel setting of a drawing room or study (or your nearest equivalent at home), and that call has been answered by a new generation of digital amps with styling that wouldn't look out of place in John Lewis, plus full-range speakers that allow such devices to double up as hi-fi units for streaming music from your mobile devices, via Bluetooth.

Yamaha and Line 6 both make very good amps of this type, but we'll stick our neck out and say that Blackstar's ID:Core technology, which uses small

speaker cones and clever psycho-acoustics to fill the room with eerily big sound, is the most compelling technology of the bunch. And in the diminutive BEAM, that technology has found its perfect carriage – the styling is sharp enough to blend in with your other home-entertainment boxes and it has an ample feature set, which includes multiple electric and acoustic amp voices plus a raft of effects, a USB DI output and a built-in tuner. Oh, and it sounds great. It also performs tidily as a hi-fi, with a surprisingly solid bass and detailed highs – and it's well priced. Every player's home should have a digital amp, and we suspect many players will find room for a BEAM.

www.blackstaramps.com



GEAR of the YEAR

PEDALBOARD

Stompboxes that made us meddle with our pedals in 2015



I LEARNED FROM THAT...

Why your amp is crucial to choosing overdrive pedals

BY MICK TAYLOR



"I'd always known that a boost, OD or distortion can sound very different into different amps. In fact, sometimes you could swear it was a different pedal entirely – take your Ibanez Tube Screamer or Boss SD-1 and plug it into a Fender Hot Rod and Marshall DSL to prove the point. Now, thanks to the fun I've been having with That Pedal Show on YouTube, I've become slightly obsessed with finding the right 'main' overdrive for my two main amps, a Victory V40 and Two-Rock Studio Pro 35. Talk about disappearing down the rabbit hole! Half of me (and all of my bank account) wishes I'd never started thinking about it, but the other half now has a far better understanding of what works with what. The result is that my two amps can now cover way more ground than ever before with judicious pedal choice.

"I still meet people who think pedals are 'cheating' and that amp overdrive sounds best. Maybe it does when you're lucky enough to really crank that Plexi, Super Reverb or what have you, but it's just not realistic for 99 per cent of us these days, and it's not very versatile either. It's one reason I started getting fascinated with high-quality analogue pedals right back in the 1990s.

"The slightly depressing truth is that many of my personal goosebump-inducing stompers are also expensive and/or hard to find. Interestingly, my fave TS-808 reissue, Klon Centaur and Analog.Man King Of Tone tend to work well with most amps, the way I have them set. My other current faves – JHS Angry Charlie, Lovepedal Amp 11 and Free The Tone SOV-2 – certainly seem to favour one or other of the amps. Moral of the story? Try to hear your potential new dirt pedal with your amp: it'll probably save you a lot of money!"

DUNLOP CRY BABY MINI WAH £89



Great design is sometimes the art of building a better mousetrap – Dunlop's full-size Cry Baby is a certified classic among wah effects, but this year, it was placed into a tiny but effective chassis that fits smaller pedalboards perfectly. The devil is in the detail, of course,

and the overly abrupt graduation from one end of the tonal spectrum to the other that we've seen on some other mini-wahs has been avoided here thanks to some thoughtful calibration of the pedal's range. And, of course, this iteration retains that famous melancholy infant voice.

www.jimdunlop.com

STRYMON DECO £279



Is it a chewy drive, a tape-compression emulator, a vintage delay – or simply the first flanger we've heard in ages that sounds warm and widely usable? In truth, it's all that and more. Leave it to Strymon to bring us a compelling medley of retro tones in a wholly unexpected package. Like its excellent Flint

reverb and tremolo, the Deco closely emulates vintage analogue tones via high-quality digital processing, to give us warmly saturated tape-compression and very cool short delay effects in one unit, meaning you can range from Les Paul-style slapback to Itchycoo Park flanging at will. Original and deftly executed.

www.strymon.net

BOSS DD-500 £275



In the DD-500 (see full review on p138), Boss has made a very giggable, intuitively programmable library of delays, from bleeding-edge to vintage, that measures up very well against Strymon's all-conquering TimeLine for quite a bit less loot and offers some

unique Boss sounds, too, including the recent Tera-Echo TE-2, plus greatest hits from Boss's Space Echo and rackmount-delay heritage. Props also to Boss's capable, well-priced ES-8 pedalboard Switching System, which just missed the cut here.

www.roland.co.uk

J ROCKETT ARCHER £149

Let's shoo the elephant from the room right away. The Archer overdrive is very clearly inspired by Klon's fabled Centaur, created by Bill Finnegan back in 1994. Even its name is an open nod to that lineage, alluding to the Centaur-shaped constellation Sagittarius, which is also known as The Archer. No, neither did we. No matter, designer Chris Van Tassel has done a stunning job of evoking the now-discontinued Centaur's sound and tonal character: as you'd expect, it's somewhere between a boost and conventional drive with plenty of clarity and headroom, and he's reproduced it here in a small-footprint package.

Recent times have seen quite a few Klon clones, if you will, break cover – including EHX's inexpensive Soul Food – but the detail, warmth and fast transient response of the much-hyped original Centaur is particularly well rendered here and for a reasonable outlay. It's the kind of pedal many will use as an always-on boost as often as they will a full-bore drive. It gives a gentle mid-push, but doesn't completely mask the natural voice of your guitar. It's also worth checking out J Rockett's excellent Chicken Soup drive.

www.rockettpedals.com



RIGS of the YEAR

HOME & STUDIO

WHY IT WORKS – AND THE ALTERNATIVES...

Want to get it all covered for recording? For flat-out do-anything amp versatility, it's hard to beat the **Kemper Profiler** (£1,119) in our opinion. We're still not in love with it for live use at normal pub and club gigs, but used direct-to-DAW, it has to be heard to be believed. Meanwhile, if the thought of digital modelling fills you with horror for your home practice amp, the **Suhr Corso** (£879) is for you: beautiful styling, all-valve, fab set of sounds.

As for versatile electric guitars, we'll throw in a bone of contention and say they don't come much more versatile than the **Fender American Vintage '52 Telecaster** (£1,319). Prices have dropped considerably since last year and it'll twang or grind with the best, especially through that Kemper. The '64 variant gives you a rosewood fingerboard if you prefer that, lest we forget that countless timeless tunes were recorded with a simple, vintage-style Tele.

Your dream acoustic is a very personal affair. The **00-15E Retro** is there for its all-rounder, ace-for-recording body size and impressive digitally enhanced preamp. The all-mahogany tone is certainly old-school in character, but if vintage tone is what you're really after, how about the **Waterloo Guitars WL-14 X** (£1,999)? There are countless modern acoustics that all sound very similar, but precious few – if any – that capture the Depression-era Kalamazoo/country-blues tone so spectacularly well.

WORDS MICK TAYLOR

The old meets the new with Martin's little mahogany-bodied 00-15E acoustic. Plus, it combines golden-age tone with space-age electronics, thanks to the Fishman F1 Aura+ pickup

The P245 sings – absolutely sings – and the shortish scale gives it a lovely, pliable feel during play. Pickups, not always PRS's strong point, are really well matched to this guitar. With piezo tones as well, it packs a huge punch

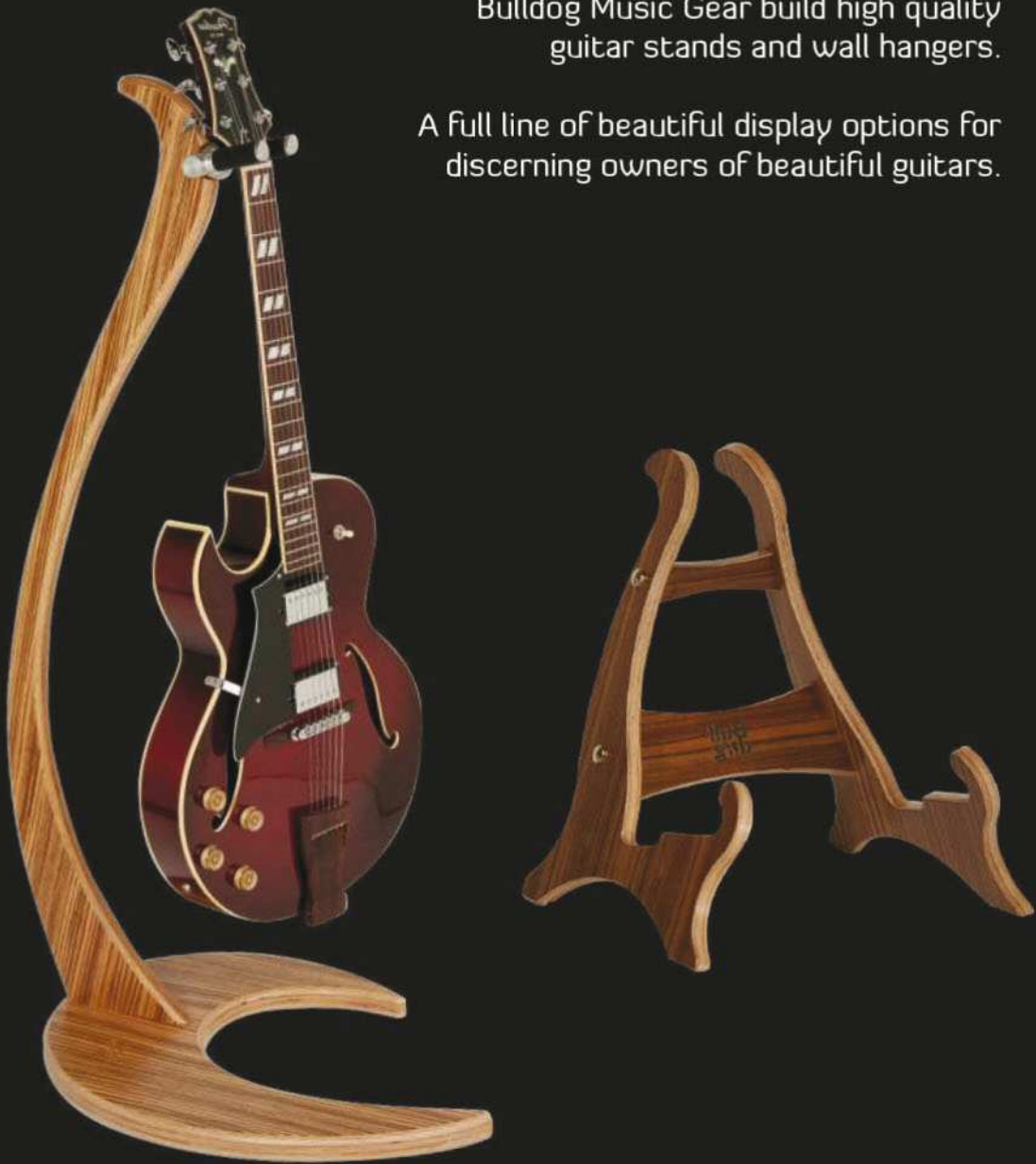
It's a decent modelling amp, a recording interface and a home entertainment station in one. Blackstar's ID:Core tech sounds massive, too



Born to stand out

Bulldog Music Gear build high quality
guitar stands and wall hangers.

A full line of beautiful display options for
discerning owners of beautiful guitars.



G
GEAR of the YEAR
INNOVATION

Gear so cutting-edge you could trim your strings with it...



I LEARNED FROM THAT...

Surviving stompbox failure in front of a festival crowd

BY RICHARD BARRETT



"I re-thought my pedalboard earlier this year – running an OD and various other effects in series into the input of a clean amp, after hearing a friend of mine get a monstrous sound from a '59 Bassman Reissue and just a handful of pedals. So tidy and easy to use with only two leads – and no more dread of relying on the drive channel and effects loop of tired, hired backline in Manila or Grimsby. I had previously felt this kind of setup wouldn't work for me at stage volume, but this has not been the case at all. Modern PA systems have rendered blisteringly loud backlines fairly obsolete these days, anyway. I was thoroughly pleased with myself – until it completely stopped working... In front of 25,000 people at Rewind North Festival.

"It was seconds before the drummer counted into Separate Ways by Journey – with Steve Augeri singing! There wasn't much time available for calmly figuring it out, but the first suspect was my power supply, as all the lights were out. I had no spare power supply and no batteries. Luckily, I had a very calm, competent tech (thanks, Claire!) who began systematically wiggling this connection and that lead... All to no avail. On walked Steve Augeri, to loud applause. Cue drums: ONE, TWO, THREE! It's hard to explain the horror that filled me at that moment – my blood actually ran cold.

"Then, in slow motion, I saw the beautiful little red light illuminate on my Fulltone OCD... FOUR! Somehow, I was able to start the song without missing a beat – musically, anyway.

"I made it through the rest of the set, shutting my eyes whenever I had to switch anything. I had obviously disturbed something when re-routing cables for my new configuration. I now always carry new power cables, a spare power supply and back-up batteries!"



HUGHES & KETTNER TRIAMP MARK 3 £2,799

Modelling amps are getting good these days, but this is the real McCoy: an all-valve head that allows you to mix and match classic, octal-base power valves, from 6L6s to KT66s, in three discrete groups – to make a unique range of tones possible, from saggy, tweedy cleans to brutal Brit grind. The TriAmp is MIDI programmable, so you can recall your favourite combinations of valves and other parameters at the press of a switch. No need to re-bias each time you swap valves, either, as that's handled automatically. Pioneering tech.

www.hughes-and-kettner.com

LANEY IRT-PULSE £199



Laney is on a bit of a roll this year, and the IRT-Pulse is a potent example of the novel thinking it has been doing with regard to using valve tone more flexibly – especially when it comes to getting great sounds into studio recording software without the hassle of conventional mic'ing. As well as being a cool-sounding, valve-preamp recording interface, with a zero-latency USB output, it'll handle re-amping, can be used as a drive pedal with four cascading gain stages, and has speaker simulation onboard, so you can plug it straight into a desk if your main amp goes down.

www.laney.co.uk

BOSS SY-300 £549



Guitar synths are aural rat poison to some, but electronica is an integral part of modern music-making, so the advent of a powerful, credible synth driven by standard, magnetic pickups feels timely and purposeful rather than whacky. The SY-300, which tracks perfectly and

doubles as an effects processor, can even cope with slide licks and will definitely push buttons for guitarists who struggle to record or perform expressive synth parts using a conventional keyboard or sequencer.

www.roland.co.uk

DIGITECH TRIO BAND CREATOR £178

Ever wanted to quickly flesh out a chord progression with drums and bass so you can practise playing over your arrangement and get your chops honed fast? Or maybe you need a flexible, automatic backing 'band' for busking or bar gigs? In the TRIO Band Creator pedal, DigiTech has created something surprisingly inspiring, which deals with both scenarios and more. You simply plug in and record a chord progression in a similar way to using a looper. TRIO then takes over and creates a looping backing track for your chord progression, in your choice of 12 song styles, from alternative rock to jazz. You can create up to three parts for each song – verse, chorus and bridge, for example – and switch between them as necessary, meaning the TRIO is more than just a basic vamp generator. For a little more money, there's an optional footswitch to make seamless transitions between parts and songs easy on the fly. With dedicated amp and mixer outputs, plus level controls for the bass and drum parts, it's not a toy, but a rapid, inspiring way to add flesh to the bones of your musical musings.

www.digitech.com



GEAR^G_{of} the YEAR CONCLUSION

So, those are our champ amps, guitars and effects from 2015. What lies in store next year? With the January NAMM Show right around the corner we won't have long to wait. Already, at time of going to press, we've seen teasers for what is apparently a new range of valve amps from Fender, dubbed the Bassbreaker (might that just be a Bassman/Marshall JTM45-inspired crossover, we wonder? The styling alone is an intriguing departure for Fender). Plus, there are distant rumblings that Gretsch have some interesting new guitars in the pipeline... We'll bring you more as we have it. But what innovations would we choose, if we could present the music industry with a wishlist? Well, we'd love to see more quality compact heads in the style of Victory's V40 that are made to be played live: lightweight, powerful, great-sounding and well-priced. If we started seeing that from more big, long-established makers, with vintage styling to boot, then we'd start to get excited. And isn't it time for some *really good* new electric guitar designs from the big makers? Yamaha has shown how it can be done with the Revstar series, let's hope some other big makers will take the plunge. We can't wait to find out – and when we do, we'll share it with you first in these pages.



WIN A FENDER BAJA TELE!

This Classic Player Baja '60s Telecaster could be yours

Fender's Mexico-made Classic Player range incorporates design savvy from Fender's Custom Shop, and many of the models offer a fresh twist on classic Fender DNA. So it is with the beguiling Classic Player Baja '60s Telecaster in Faded Sonic Blue, which combines a classic rosewood 'board, and '60s neck profile with Fender's modern S1 switching and four-way pickup selector, expanding its tonal options. Thanks to the folks at Fender, you can answer the question below to be in with a chance of winning one.

WHERE IS FENDER'S MEXICAN PRODUCTION FACILITY BASED?

A] TIJUANA B] ENSENADA C] ROSARITO

To enter, visit: futurecomps.co.uk/GOTY and follow the instructions on screen. Good luck!

YOUR NEW BAND MEMBER IS **YOU**

ARTIST PICTURED: JOHNNY VASILEY.CO.UK

BARNES & MULLINS
Voted the UK's Best Supplier
2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013 & 2014

DISCOVER HOW TO PLAY FOR FREE
WWW.LEEOSKARQUICKGUIDE.COM

Lee Oskar
HARMONICAS

**OWN THE
TONE™**
DANELECTRO®

LEGENDARY TONE - MAKE IT YOUR OWN.

'59M NOS DANO

These DC '59 NOS are loaded with Lipsticks made in 1999, and have the best vintage Danelectro tone ever!



www.jhs.co.uk

www.danelectro.com



Paul Kossoff's 1959 Les Paul

With the auctioneer's hammer poised to fall on another iconic instrument, *Guitarist* reveals the story behind the Paul Kossoff Les Paul

Words David Mead Photography Courtesy of Bonham's

The tale begins when guitarist Arthur Ramm was playing with a band called Beckett back in the 1970s. One night, they were booked at Newcastle's Mayfair Ballroom as a support act to Free and tragedy struck when Paul Kossoff's treasured '59 Les Paul was damaged, rendering it unplayable. Rushing back to the venue's dressing rooms, Koss sought out Arthur and asked if he could borrow his guitar, a late-60s Les Paul. By the time they had completed their set, the Free man had become quite attached to Arthur's guitar.

"He said he really liked the guitar and asked me if I would sell it," Arthur remembers. "I said I wasn't really interested, but he said, 'I've got another one, I may be able to swap with you...'"

Kossoff then offered Arthur the Les Paul he'd played at the Isle Of Wight Festival, but Arthur decided that if a swap was in the offing, then he'd like the one that Koss had damaged that night. Surprisingly, Koss agreed, saying that he would get the guitar repaired and then do the deal. Meanwhile, the two guitarists exchanged instruments, Arthur taking the Isle Of Wight guitar and Koss heading off into the night clutching Arthur's 60s Sunburst.

A few months later, Arthur was watching BBC Two's *Old Grey Whistle Test* one night when he thought he spotted Kossoff's LP.

"Roxy Music were playing and I noticed straight away that Phil Manzanera was

playing a Les Paul and I was quite certain that it was the Kossoff guitar. So I rang Paul up and said, 'Is that the guitar?' He goes, 'That's correct.' So I said, 'Well, can we do the deal?'" But it was too late. Since the two guitarists had exchanged guitars, Koss had fixed his guitar and traded it for a black Les Paul that belonged to Roxy Music's bass player. What's more, a few days later Kossoff phoned Arthur and said he'd like to give Arthur his own guitar back in exchange for the Isle Of Wight Les Paul. "Of course, I could have refused," laughs Arthur, "but I was so deflated about it, I said, 'Yes, okay – the next time you're in London I'll bring it for you.'" A few months later, they swapped back and Arthur thought that was the end of the story.

Later still, Beckett broke up and their singer, Terry Slesser, went on to work with Kossoff in Back Street Crawler and would meet up with Arthur when the band played in Newcastle, offering him the opportunity to reacquaint with Kossoff.

"I didn't ask him if he was going to sell the guitar; I didn't bother about that, I thought that episode was finished," he says. "And then it was such a shock to find that he had passed away on that flight to New York. I asked Terry what would be happening with the guitars and he said, 'Well, I don't know. I'll find out,' and he kindly asked around, got in touch with Sandy Chard, who was Paul's partner, and she got in touch with David Kossoff, Paul's father, and Sandy said

to me, 'David Kossoff would like to speak to you, because you really deserve the guitar because I think Paul let you down.'"

During their phone conversation, David Kossoff told Arthur that he wanted the guitar to go to someone who would play it and not just add it to their collection. Arthur assured Paul's father that he would indeed be playing the guitar and that clinched the deal, along with Arthur's assurance that if he was to sell the guitar at any time in the future, it would be offered back to David Kossoff first.

"I had to pay for it, of course," says Arthur. "I went down and picked it up from Paul's house in Tilehurst, Reading and I've used it since 1976. I got it in May 1976 and used it right up to 1989."

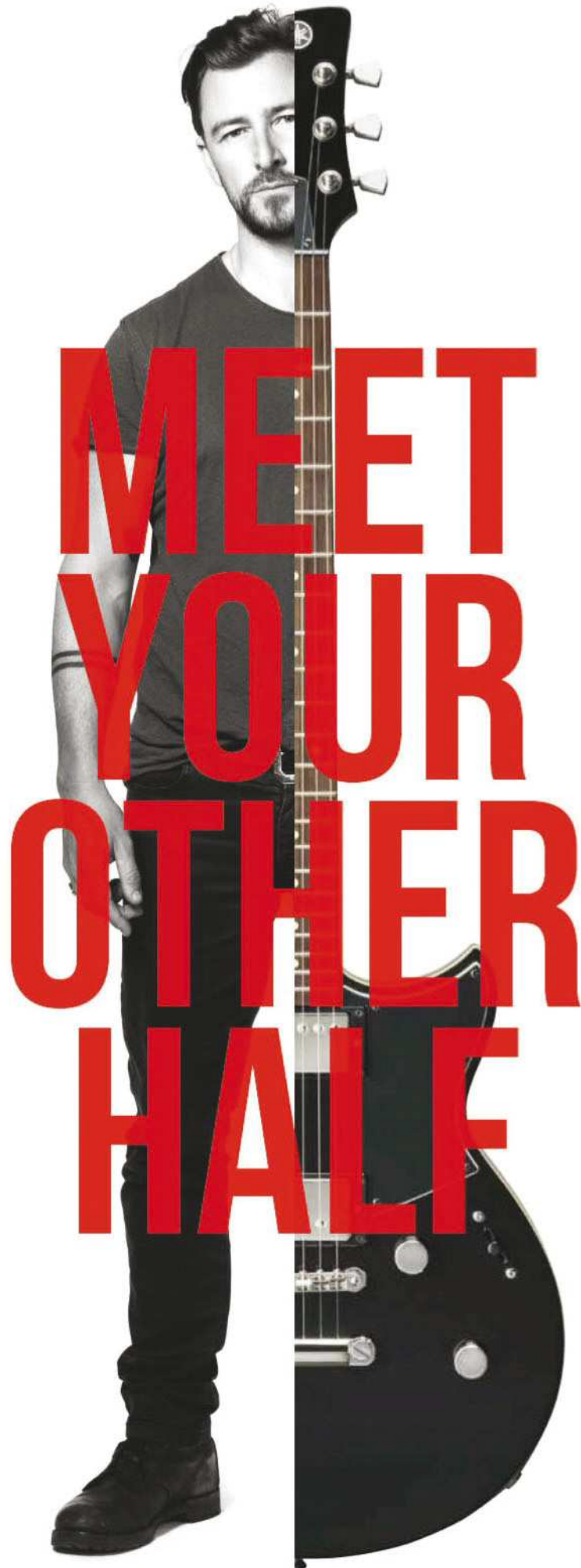
We wondered what the motivation was to retire the Les Paul at that time.

"I started to get some very risqué questions when I was playing it locally," he recalls. "I was playing it in clubs and pubs and sometimes the universities, whatever gig we got. We got three or four gigs a month when things were good – there was plenty work up in the North East at that time. But I was getting to these gigs people were going, 'Oh, is that Paul Kossoff's guitar?' and I was a little bit worried to admit it. They'd say, 'It's expensive isn't it?', and I would say, 'Well, it's a '59; they do command a little bit more money than the normal ones.'"

So, Arthur began to feel concerned that keeping a valuable, rare instrument of this



1. Judging from the many pictures available, Koss liked to remove the pickguard on his Les Pauls and the '59 follows suit!
2. The current state of the fretboard shows a little fret wear, but the 'board itself looks to be in very good condition
3. Difficult to tell if this jack socket surround is the original – it certainly looks old and battered
4. At some point the original top-hat volume and tone controls have been changed in favour of the more modern speed knob variety
5. The Kossoff Les Paul's case displays its own 'Access All Areas' pass for a Joe Bonamassa gig

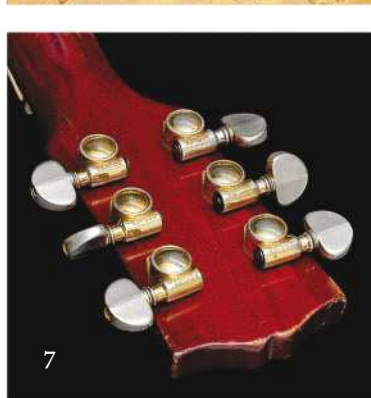


THE NEW  REVSTAR

 YAMAHA



Arthur Ramm, formerly of the band Beckett, with Kossoff's '59 Les Paul



6. Battle scarred and beautiful – a close-up shot of the flame top

7. When the guitar was repaired a new neck section and headstock was grafted on, explaining the lack of serial number

8. The back shows a respectable amount of wear for a 56 year old!



sort in the house and using it on the live circuit was taking a bit of a risk.

"You daren't leave the stage to go to the loo in case someone wants to half-inch it. I mean, in the past, in the North East, quite a few guitars have gone missing with guys grabbing them and rushing out the door. So I decided to retire it from playing. I've played it once in a while – I would take it to a very close pub if it was only a mile away – but I wasn't going to play it long distance."

After a while, the decision was made to sell the guitar.

"I'm in my mid-60s now and coming up to nearly 40 years of having this wonderful machine. I think it's time I let somebody else have the privilege of owning it."

Looking at the pictures of the Les Paul's battered case, we notice that one of the stickers is an Access All Areas pass to a Joe Bonamassa show. We all know that Joe collects late 50s flame tops, so does this mean that he has expressed an interest in the Kossoff guitar?

"Well, Pat Foley, who's part of the Gibson Custom Shop, knows Bonamassa very well and he just mentioned it to Joe, who was coming to Newcastle City Hall. I live in Sunderland, which is only 30 minutes away from Newcastle, and Joe said, 'Oh, I'd love to meet the guy who's got the guitar. Maybe I could see it?' So I was absolutely bowled over. I was invited to go over to City Hall and let him see it and I opened the case and he went, 'Oh, that's a lovely guitar.' He plugged it in and said, 'My God, it's the loudest Les Paul I've ever heard!' It really is a loud guitar, I don't know why."

"Joe asked me to come over to two gigs a couple of years ago. I took it up to him, so I've actually seen Joe now three times and I've watched him play it twice." **G**

By the time this issue of *Guitarist* hits the streets, the sale price of the Kossoff Les Paul will be known as the auction takes place at Bonham's in Knightsbridge on the 10 December and another owner will be enjoying a piece of rock history

"I started to get some very risqué questions when I was playing it locally... You daren't leave the stage in case someone half-inched it"

Martin & Co
EST. 1833

Taylor

Lowden
GUITARS

Ibanez

Bedell
GUITARS

Sigma Guitars
EST. 1970

RESO
NATIONAL
PHONIC

Collings
GUITARS



Acoustic Store

Acoustic guitars are a huge part of our business, to such an extent that we now have a completely separate showroom only fifty yards from our electric store. ... Two floors packed full of acoustic instruments from world famous builders including Martin, Taylor, Lowden, Collings, Bedell, National, Gibson and more, all available for you to play in a quiet and relaxed environment where you will not be disturbed by electric guitar players!

Electric Store

Our electric guitar store has always stocked a huge range of Fender and Gibson guitars, in fact we are one of the largest Fender Custom shop centres in the world and have been enthusiastically selling them since the Custom shop began back in the 1990's. Many other products are stocked in depth, as you would expect from a full line guitar store, including directly imported guitars, amps and FX from around the world that up until now have not been readily available in the UK...



Fender YAMAHA Gibson Epiphone GRETSCH fano B3 Rickenbacker



Rising Stars





After three years in development, Yamaha ‘re-enters’ the electric guitar market with a new range that nods to the brand’s considerable heritage

Words Dave Burrluck **Photography** Adam Gasson



YAMAHA REVSTAR RS502T & RS820CR **£565 & £807**

CONTACT **Yamaha** PHONE **01908 366700** WEB <http://uk.yamaha.com>

What You Need To Know

1 **Revstar? What's the deal?**

Simple: a new range of affordable, original Yamaha electrics that feature a new-for-Yamaha body outline that's inspired by its 50-year heritage of electric-guitar making.

2 **50 years? Don't Yamaha just make the Pacifica?**

The Pacifica – Yamaha's update of the Fender Stratocaster – has indeed been a huge seller. But there's little of that concept here. All the guitars, for example, are set-necks, not bolt-ons, and feature a more Les Paul-like mahogany (or nato) construction, mainly with a thin maple top.

3 **Who's gonna play 'em?**

With highly focused marketing, Yamaha sees the Revstar as a 'yoof' guitar, but even if you fall outside of the intended demographic, they're pretty classic-style guitars with an almost retro, albeit new, design.

It's been some time since Yamaha has unleashed a really new electric guitar. And while we reveal the convoluted story behind the birth of these new Revstar instruments elsewhere in this issue, new they most definitely are.

Having said that, the body outline owes much to the original Yamaha 'Les Paul beater', the SG2000, but the Revstars are a shade broader across the lower bouts and the pointed horns are offset compared to the SG2000's symmetrical outline. The mahogany body has a rib-cage contour on the back and a forearm contour on the front, giving it a less slab-like feel compared to the start-up 320 (see Revstar Range gallery, p132), but less of the violin-carve Les Paul-like geometry of the SG2000. There's still quite a chunky vibe, however, although the overall depth of 44mm is more akin to a Telecaster than the fatter Les Paul, or indeed SG2000.

All the seven guitars in the new range employ the same Gibson-like 629mm (24.75-inch) scale length, which suits the mainly mahogany construction and set neck. There is a thin 5mm maple cap on both of our review guitars, and cream edge binding around the top edge only.

Neck profiles are consistent from the 502 upwards – the 320 and 420 have slightly thinner depth necks – with a biggish rounded C profile that measures 21.3mm at the 1st fret and fills out to 24.8mm by the 12th. The slightly flatter-than-Gibson radius fingerboard with nicely installed jumbo wire, however, hints at a more rock intention – but these really don't feel like 'shred' guitars to us.

Headstocks are never easy to create but here, inspired apparently by the Yamaha SA-15 from 1966, the head looks way less, ahem, functional than, for example, that SG2000, and there's only the classic Yamaha tuning-fork logo – no 'Yamaha' is visible on the guitar. On the reverse of the head, however, along with the model number and serial number, there's a Japanese hanko stamp-like decal, which, we're told, says Revstar – a nice touch.

The designs are full of nice touches. There's satin-nickel hardware – the hand-cut steel woolled 'satin' finish of the 820CRs front with the subtly visible dual stripes creating a little more of the original Café Racer design concept, hence the CR suffix. Then there's the height-adjustable aluminium tailpiece and tune-o-matic on the 502, contrasted by the TonePros wrapover of the 820. While the 502T sticks with its gloss Bowden Green-only finish, we have two colour choices on the 820, plus that copper-coloured anodised aluminium and its satin nickel-covered humbuckers – as opposed to the 502's more classic-looking cream-covered soapbar single coils. Pickups are designed by Yamaha and built by Far Eastern pickup giant G&B, which makes pickups for numerous big brands, not least PRS (SE and S2) and Godin.

Sounds

We first got our hands on a pre-production prototype 502T, strung it up with 0.011s and headed off to a gig. As ever, a rather hasty setup meant the first time we hear the guitar is as we edged into the first number, a mid-tempo swinging blues, and although



1. This tailpiece was part of the original concept and is height adjustable for a more 'trapeze' or 'stud' tailpiece-like tonality

2. Each Revstar has a Japanese hanko stamp-like decal. It means 'Revstar'

3. The RS502T's Alnico soapbar single coils add to the retro vibe in both looks and sound



Rivals

Any new electric guitar at these price points faces a host of serious competition. Gibson's new 2016 range is USA-made and more traditional in design than its 2015 offerings. Store pricing puts the SG Faded and SG Special at £599, with the Les Paul Studio Faded at £649. PRS has just announced the S2 Satin Standards (a Custom 24, 22 and Singlecut) with a suggested street price of £899 with satin nitro finishes. Schecter's Korean-made Diamond Series is right in the same price point, too, with new, more retro designs like the S-1 Custom selling in store around £599.



These guitars will sit happily in a sonic stew alongside the well-worn classics we all love

4. All the Revstar pickups are designed by Yamaha, but made by G&B. Here, the Alnico humbuckers have aged-looking nickel covers

5. Inspired by Yamaha's 1966 SA-15, the range's three-a-side headstock doesn't have a Yamaha logo; just a classic 'tuning fork' emblem

6. Instead of standard coil splits, both guitars use a simple passive high-pass filter, called a Dry Switch, which thins out the sound to produce a more 'single coil'-like character

7. The 820CR sports a businesslike TonePros wrapover tailpiece

a more direct tone than this writer's go-to Guild Starfire, and a little more powerful, we have no problem getting into the correct tone zone with the mixed pickup position on rhythm duties and the fuller neck pickup for solos. Next up, a more rock 'n' roll classic requires a bit more 'single coil', and although, of course, we're using single coils, the pull/push passive Dry Switch on the tone control acts like a high-pass filter and thins out the low end. It's all an easy drive.

The neck profile will certainly appeal to an older demographic: it's really well shaped, with plenty of girth as you move up the fretboard; the chunky frets, too, really suit and aid top-fret access, not least with the double-cut design and the shaped heel joint, making this dead easy. It's hardly rocket science, of course, but the 'I've played this before' feeling is comforting, and the combination of the balanced voices, three-way lever pickup selector, volume, tone and that Dry Switch all make for a pretty intuitive experience.

The 820CR is pretty similar, although its humbuckers give us a different basis to the sounds and with it, a more generic Les Paul-ish tonality. That's no criticism, as many players will simply feel more at home here. We'd probably class the pickups as 'hot vintage' and, although we don't have a Les Paul's four-control layout, in conjunction with the Dry Switch, there's surprising versatility. With cleaner amp settings, the full pickup tones have a rich thickness, though not in a muddy sense; pull up the Dry Switch on the neck pickup and, along with a perceived slight volume drop, your sound cleans up – with more 'attack' that's definitely more single coil-like. But kick in your dirt channel and push the tone switch down and you'll wail like any of the Les Paul greats. It's a similar story on the bridge pickup. With the Dry Switch engaged and

plenty of power amp, earlier Townshend springs to mind – there's no lack of ring here – but up the gain and push that tone switch back down, and it's everything from classic rock forwards. The mixed pickup sound, again with the Dry Switch engaged, certainly drops us into Fender-y territory and we wonder if a five-way lever switch that offers a selection of full coil and the Dry Switch tones wouldn't have been more useful. Certainly, if you're unused to using coil taps and your volume and tone controls to create your sounds, there's a lot you'll miss here.

So, all good? Well, you might not want to use the 502's single coils for out-and-out metal, although they certainly take gain pretty well. And, yes, things can get a little noisy (at least both pickups on together are hum-cancelling) but with more classic rock, or indeed some more retro-y fuzz tones, the 502T sits really well. Both guitars, too, are quite weighty – not overly so – and there's a slight neck pull on the strap, but nothing that bothers us.

Verdict

Combining the words cool and Yamaha into a sentence is, if we're honest, a rarity. 'Value for money' and 'fit for purpose' are the phrases we'd normally attach to one of the biggest names in the MI industry, but cool? Of course, that's all down to the player, but the careful, considered design of these guitars is refreshing and the resulting guitars – rather like Yamaha's 'third amp' concept with its original THR amps – are not only, we think, cool-looking but surprisingly classic in feel and sound, and would sit happily in a sonic stew alongside the well-worn classics we all love. In other words, apart from being pretty fine guitars in their own right, they'll make excellent additions for drop or alternate



8. The gloss top is cut back with wire wool to create a used-looking satin finish. The scratchplate is anodised aluminium, all part of the Café Racer vibe

9. The shaped heel contouring aids upper-fret access

tunings, mean slide guitars, or simply an instrument for someone who actually dares to be a little different.

Of the two guitars on review, for us, the 502T epitomises the Revstar concept, with its diverse design inspiration and slightly more retro style. That said, the 820CR makes the 'Café Racer' concept a little more prominent and really looks and feels more like a small-workshop custom guitar than a mainstream, big-factory construct.

Is Yamaha bringing anything 'new' to the sonic table with these two, and indeed, the entire Revstar range? No, not really, but we guitarists are a peculiarly conservative bunch and perhaps the key to the concept is that they're different, without being out-there in terms of style, sound or indeed price. Nice job. **G**



YAMAHA REVSTAR RS502T

PRICE: £565 (inc gigbag)

ORIGIN: Indonesia

TYPE: Double-cutaway, solidbody electric

BODY: Mahogany with thin maple cap

NECK: Mahogany, glued-in

SCALE LENGTH: 629mm (24.75")

NUT/WIDTH: Black synthetic/42.8mm

FINGERBOARD: Single-bound rosewood with cream dot inlays, 350mm (13.75") radius

FRETS: 22, jumbo

HARDWARE: Satin nickel-plated tune-o-matic-style bridge, height adjustable aluminium tailpiece, enclosed tuners

STRING SPACING, BRIDGE: 52.5mm

ELECTRICS: 2x YGD-designed V5 Alnico soapbar single coils, 3-way lever pickup selector switch, volume and tone (with pull/push 'Dry Switch' high-pass filter)

WEIGHT (kg/lb): 3.98/8.76

OPTIONS: The RS 502 (£485) has an adjustable wrapover bridge and satin-top finish in Bowden Green and Shop Black

RANGE OPTIONS: See p132

LEFT-HANDERS: No

FINISHES: Bowden Green (as reviewed)



9/10

PROS Refreshing, intelligent design, classic sounds and neat 'single coil' Dry Switch

CONS It's a little weighty and there are no colour options



YAMAHA REVSTAR RS820CR

PRICE: £807 (inc gigbag)

ORIGIN: Indonesia

TYPE: Double-cutaway, solidbody electric

BODY: Mahogany with thin maple cap

NECK: Mahogany, glued-in

SCALE LENGTH: 629mm (24.75")

NUT/WIDTH: Black synthetic/42.8mm

FINGERBOARD: Single-bound rosewood with cream dot inlays, 350mm (13.75") radius

FRETS: 22, jumbo

HARDWARE: Satin nickel-plated TonePros AVT-II adjustable wrapover bridge and enclosed tuners

STRING SPACING, BRIDGE: 52.5mm

ELECTRICS: 2x YGD-designed V5 Alnico humbuckers, 3-way lever pickup selector switch, volume and tone (with pull/push 'Dry Switch' high-pass filter)

WEIGHT (kg/lb): 4/8.8

OPTIONS: None

RANGE OPTIONS: See p132

LEFT-HANDERS: No

FINISHES: Steel Rust (as reviewed) and Rusty Rat and w/ 'hand-cut steel wool' top finish and anodised aluminium scratchplate



9/10

PROS Refreshing, intelligent 'Café Racer' design, versatile sounds and neat 'single coil' Dry Switch

CONS Again, it's a little weighty and limited colour options

MAXIMUM INSPIRATION

"... a hugely impressive effects processor, especially considering its tiny footprint."

—Guitar Interactive

"... a completely enveloping and potentially life-consuming sonic experience."

—Tone Report Weekly



Eventide® H9

The H9 Harmonizer® replaces most of your old, heavy pedal board with a road-tested stompbox full of Eventide's iconic reverb, delay, modulation and pitch-shifting effects (plus new ones invented specifically for the H9). The H9 features stereo I/O, accurate tuner, full MIDI compatibility and room for much more in the future.

EVENTIDEAUDIO.COM/H9

Eventide and Harmonizer are registered trademarks. © 2015 Eventide Inc.

SOURCE

Exclusively distributed in the UK & Ireland by Source • T: 020 8962 5080 • W: sourcedistribution.co.uk/eventide



facebook.com/sourcedistribution



twitter.com/sourcedist



Rev'ing Up The Future

As a fly-on-the-wall observer, *Guitarist* has had exclusive access to the evolution of Yamaha's new Revstar guitars. It's been quite a ride...

It's 50 years this year since Yamaha entered the electric-guitar market and, although it wasn't a pre-planned celebration, the new 2016 Revstar guitars are the result of the longest and most expensive development of any Yamaha electric throughout that half-century history.

Our story starts some three years ago, when *Guitarist* was summoned to the offices of south London-based design company, forpeople, to observe some new guitar designs. Expecting to see prototype instruments, we were surprised to see, instead, design concepts reflecting both Yamaha's long history of guitar design married with broader concepts of contemporary Japanese youth culture alongside a motorcycle inspiration – Yamaha started making motorbikes back in 1955 and is now one of the world's leading manufacturers. Invited experts, including dealers and players, were simply asked their opinion on the concepts and the 2D instrument renderings.

Some months later, we were invited to a second evaluation session. This time, the concepts had been honed and, again, the invited VIPs gave their thoughts. Of course, these evaluation sessions weren't just limited

to the UK, but it was becoming more than obvious that whatever it was that Yamaha planned to come up with, it was in it for the long haul.

Yamaha's guitar product planning manager, Julian Ward (essentially the director of the project), confirmed this saying, Yamaha's "long-term strategy is to genuinely get back into electric guitars. Maybe our next step will be different, but this is the first new design since the AES620, and that was some 10 years ago."

Fast-forward to the NAMM show 2015 and, some two years into the project, we actually get to see some actual guitars, albeit in a hotel room. It'll still be a year away until they're launched to us guitar players, but this slow filtering of hugely diverse design inspiration and opinion was clearly working. Behind the scenes, of course, Yamaha's design and engineering teams had been burning the midnight oil. Guitars don't just make themselves and to find out how the project had moved forward, we went to Yamaha HQ in Hamamatsu, Japan.

Just Different Enough

If forpeople's designers had no specific experience in instrument design, we were surprised to learn that the

ABOVE Our early experiences of what were to become the Revstar guitars were walls of design ideas, like these at Yamaha's Design Lab in Hamamatsu in September 2015: the results of three years of design work



ABOVE, TOP RIGHT
One of the key design concepts was the 'café racer' style motorbike. With Yamaha's long history making motorbikes, inspiration was easy, not least that three-fork emblem on the petrol cap

BOTTOM RIGHT
At forpeople's design offices in south London, after each evaluation session copious notes were made from each VIP's comments. It was "one reason why the project took over three years," says Yamaha's Julian Ward

primary designer of the new guitars, Piotr Stolarski, was also an instrument-design 'virgin'. Clearly, he wasn't Japanese either, joining Yamaha from his Polish homeland only a little while before. We learn, too, that what was to be called Revstar was his first job for his new employers and that it was only after *Guitarist* had visited that he realised it might be quite a big deal.

"We had to change the way of thinking," muses Piotr, reflecting on the design process. "We didn't just want to think about the guitar; we wanted to consider it as a design project. To me, as a designer, lots of guitars seem to be created by trying to make the 'perfect' instrument in the taste of the sole maker. Our process was a lot more democratic. The main problem we faced was to create something original but not freakish – people want old guitars, they don't want new guitars."

But if that was the sole case, there are plenty of old designs in Yamaha's 50-year electric-guitar-making past that could surely have been reissued. "No, this is part of our future," states Julian Ward emphatically. "Not a reissue of our past. But that's not to say the new design couldn't be the guitar we never made, for example, in 1973..."

Piotr flicks through pages of sketches before finding what he is looking for: the first rendering of what was to become Revstar. It's surprisingly close to what we now see as the RS502T. "Some people suggested it should be a bit more Jazzmaster, a bit more Telecaster... but it seemed like it was a younger brother of the original Yamaha SG and that's a big part of our electric-guitar history. Some of the other designs I really liked," laughs Piotr, "but it was decided they were too niche." In truth,

Yamaha was more than aware that the last thing the world needs was just A. N. Other electric guitar.

Senior designer Toshihide Suzuki reaffirms that the underlying concepts for the design were twofold: to express 'Yamaha-ness' and 'Japanese-ness'. Then there was the Café Racer inspiration from forpeople that remains at the heart of the Revstar concept: "A classic guitar that we've tuned up," interjects Piotr by means of explanation. "For example, the pickguard: it's cropped, cut in – totally inspired by the Café Racer. Also there's the raw materials, an engineering inspiration, beautiful details... the beauty of a specific part."

"I designed the tailpiece," he continues. "It was about customising. Originally, the idea was to have the strings anchoring through the body or to attach them

Did You Know...?

The Yamaha brand name derives from the name of the founder of Nippon Gakki Co., Ltd (presently the Yamaha Corporation), Torakusu Yamaha. Born in 1851 as the third son of the Charge for Astronomy to the Tokugawa Clan of Kishu, Torakusu was sent at a young age to study Western machines like clocks and medical equipment in Nagasaki. At the age of 35, he was asked to repair a broken organ at the primary school in Hamamatsu. From this experience, he decided to try making organs himself. In 1887, Torakusu Yamaha succeeded in building the first organ ever made in Japan.



to the tailpiece, like a convertible. So, the final design is adjustable – higher or lower – but not string-through.” Typically, it’s function and beauty combined – all part of the ‘Japanese-ness’: “It shouldn’t just be for decoration,” concludes Piotr.

It might also be surprising, especially with the intent of displaying ‘Yamaha-ness’, that the Revstars don’t display a Yamaha logo – apparently the first Yamaha electric guitar not to do so, though they do have the simple Yamaha tuning-fork logo on the headstock (see below for more). “This is not about hiding,” Julian says of the design decision. “We should celebrate the Yamaha-ness, but not having the logo was not about being Yamaha, but about being right for the guitar. From a branding point of view, via the tuning fork logo, it says ‘Yamaha’, but in a cooler way.”

Design To Engineering

With the concepts all in place and a strong idea of what the new guitars were going to be by the tail-end of 2014 – there were in fact two distinct prototyped designs at this stage: what we now know as Revstar, designed by Piotr, and another by Toshihide – the project slowly edged forward. With the decision made to focus on the Revstar design in early 2015, the project entered the real world: how they were actually going

to be manufactured, the precise materials, parts, the engineering drawings... on it went. Of course, at this stage, thoughts about the final retail pricings had to be brought into the instruments’ specifications, too.

To take us through some of the decisions, we’re led into a large concert hall at Yamaha HQ where the whole Revstar range is assembled, as well as the key members of the engineering team. It’s the first time we see the fruits of nearly three years’ work and we’re impressed by the diversity of the final models.

“The project was easier than some,” says engineering manager, Kiyoshi Jackie’ Minakuchi. “We had a very clear design concept. In the past, that wasn’t always the case, but with the ‘Café Racer’ concept, we could imagine what the guitars should be. You see, most players are happy with their Fenders and Gibsons, so we always ask, ‘Where does Yamaha fit in?’”

“We fight with price, too,” continues Jackie, “and obviously, with the lower price of the 320, it has the most basic specification. We might have the standard-spec humbuckers from our vendor, but the Café Racer concept suggests, well, it’s not a big heavy bike – it’s a lighter weight, easier to manage, so the pickups shouldn’t be too heavy sounding. So, on the 320, it’s still a high-output humbucker, but it’s balanced sounding, not aimed at a specific genre. It’s a ceramic-loaded pickup and we went through some 50 prototypes before we were happy.”

Next up, Jackie shows us the 420, which adds a 5mm maple cap that Jackie believes adds to the sound making it a little “harder and more defined”. Along with its belly cut, bound fingerboard edges and chrome-plated knobs, the covered pickups here differ from the 320s with Alnico magnets: “They have a pretty similar specification, with a slightly brighter

ABOVE Yamaha took its styling cues from Café Racer custom motorbikes, such as this

BELOW The headstock inspiration comes from the mid-60s Yamaha SA-15, which was then tweaked by designers at forpeople and Yamaha

Those Tuning Forks...

The symbol mark (the company crest and trademark) of Nippon Gaki Co., Ltd (presently Yamaha Corporation), is the three tuning forks – a very similar design is also used on Yamaha’s motor bikes.

The original meaning ascribed to the three tuning forks was, “Let us venture boldly onto the world stage with a strong union of Manufacturing, Marketing and Technology.” Today, the three forks have also been assigned meanings of ‘The Customer’, ‘The Society’ and ‘The Individual’.



*Jan Akkerman chooses
Smooth Hound Classic
Wireless Guitar System*



JAN AKKERMEN SMOOTH HOUND WIRELESS GUITAR

Wireless freedom.
Legendary tone.



www.smoothhound-innovations.com

“We didn’t really like the original rendering of the 502T, but it had such a good response, we had to change our mind”

tonality,” adds Jackie. The 420 also introduces the so-called ‘Dry Switch’ circuit: “It’s a simple passive circuit [one resistor and one capacitor] that acts as a low cut [a high-pass filter],” explains its designer, Hirotaka Niino. “It’s not a real ‘single coil’ sound. The advantage over a traditional coil-split is that, in both modes, it remains humbucking.”

“We had been experimenting with various circuits,” continues Jackie. “We started with a passive booster on the bridge pickup, but with the Revstar project, we forgot about that; we didn’t want to confuse our customers. So, we looked at ways of making a ‘single coil’ sound from a humbucker in a simple, single function. We didn’t want it to be unusual: it has to be something that the player is used to.”

The 502, like our reviewed 502T, stays with the all-mahogany construction with a maple cap. “But the difference is that the top is slightly carved, adding a forearm contour. We have a bound fingerboard and satin nickel hardware as opposed to the bright chrome of the lower number models,” explains Jackie. “We also have a satin finish to the top, which is all part of the Café Racer concept. We actually use steel wool to cut back the [gloss] finish on both the front and the headstock face.”

Of the 502’s P90-style soapbar single coils, Jackie honestly reflects that he “wasn’t a big fan, to be honest. But we found a good recipe from our prototypes. Now, it’s my favourite! It’s close to, for example, the Seymour Duncan SP90-2 high-output soapbar, but with Alnico magnets. We’re using heavy Formvar-coated wire for the humbuckers for a slightly brighter ‘open’ tone but



ABOVE Creating 3D models of the guitar enabled the designers to get a real feel of the instruments and add in, as pictured, the ideas for the body contours. Here’s chief designer, Toshihide Suzuki at work

BELOW Yamaha’s designer Piotr Stolarski. Having only recently moved to Japan, Revstar was Piotr’s first design job for Yamaha!

on the P90s, we’re using plain enamel-coated wire for more of a solid, cut-through sound.”

Aside from its gloss top, the 502T is a close cousin to the 502; the most obvious difference is that tailpiece and its tune-o-matic-style bridge – very close to the original Revstar concept rendering.

“The tailpiece is cast aluminium,” says Jackie. Four bolts hold it in place and the top two are sprung, so you can actually use it as a [pitch rising] vibrato and you have a choice of setup. Lowering the tailpiece behind the bridge increases the back angle, and Jackie believes this “creates a slightly tighter bass response”. Raising the tailpiece – reducing the back angle – creates more of a ‘trapeze’-like sound: brighter and ringing.

Slow Burner

“We didn’t really like the original rendering of this guitar,” offers Jackie, “but it had such a good response from all the various evaluations we had, we had to change our mind. It has a sort of Gretsch character.” Initially, internally at least, it seems almost no-one liked the 502T. But Jackie admits, “I like it better now – I’m actually very proud of this guitar!”

“It’s true,” reinforces Julian. “It was the model we’ve had most discussion about. Do we really need it, or is it a designer’s folly?”

The 620 seems a safer bet. Essentially, it’s the same as the 502, but with humbuckers and flame-maple top (maple veneer over solid maple). Again, the top and headstock face are steel-wooled. “It features superior-grade versions of the 420 humbuckers with satin nickel-plated covers,” says Jackie, who then points to the different inlays, inspired, he says, by the early 70s Yamaha SF700 – sort of dual split parallelograms.

The 720B is basically a 620, but with a licensed Bigsby vibrato creating a different look and sound – not least from its more Gretsch-looking pickups. “I didn’t know too much about this style of pickup,” admits





Natural Matt

Handmade In Japan
Caparison®
GUITARS

WWW.CAPARISONGUITARS.COM

Charcoal Black

DELLINGER7
FX-AM

CRANK IT UP....
LOUDER!!!

Watford Valves

24 HOUR ONLINE ORDERING AT www.watfordvalves.com

All valves individually multi-tested and digitally matched.
Expert advice on all valve amps.

THE MUSICIANS CHOICE

☎ 01923 893270

CRYOGENIC
MERRY CHRISTMAS

Groove Tube 12AX7 Mullard Cryo-Bluesbreaker Tone

The Groove Tubes 12AX7 Mullard Cryo reissue is unique to GT and follows the Mullard design and production techniques meticulously. More importantly, sonically they have made an absolute classic, as these have all the dynamics and the bite of the originals. The Cryo treatment will ensure that you get the best CLAPTON Bluesbreaker tone with more bite and clarity and incredible dynamics. So if you want to put back the pile driver crunch and the Sparkling highs in your sound then the GT 12AX7 Mullard is for you, outstanding valve at only £24.00 each

JJ Tesla Trade offer

JJ Tesla valves have a worldwide reputation for excellent sound quality. These valves are one of our most popular ranges for our trade and service customers. Our Full trade and quantity details on JJ and other popular valve brands are on our website with quantity prices starting as low as 10 pieces per type. Here are some examples of our JJ quantity prices:-

ECC81	10 Pcs	£7.80 Each	EL34 mk 2	16 Pcs	£12.90 Each
ECC82	10 Pcs	£7.80 Each	E34L	16 Pcs	£12.72 Each
ECC83-S	10 Pcs	£7.20 Each	EL84	16 Pcs	£7.80 Each
ECC83-S	20 Pcs	£6.60 Each	6L6GC	16 Pcs	£12.72 Each
ECC83-S	40 Pcs	£6.00 Each	6V6GTS	16 Pcs	£11.40 Each
ECC83-MG	10 Pcs	£9.60 Each	5881	16 Pcs	£12.60 Each
ECC83-MG	20 Pcs	£9.00 Each	6550	12 Pcs	£21.60 Each
5751	10 Pcs	£9.00 Each	KT88	12 Pcs	£22.80 Each

AC/DC, Oasis, Brian May, Manics, Radiohead and Peter Gabriel buy our valves

*** SPECIAL OFFER ***

6V6GT PHILIPS ORIGINAL USA

The Philips 6V6GT is the benchmark for that classic Fender sparkling clean sound with a top end chime that no other 6V6GT can match. They are built to a higher spec than any other 6V6GT and are noted for their vibrant top end with a nice crunchy distortion when overdriven. Guaranteed to upgrade your 6V6GT amplifier, so take advantage of our special offer on these now extremely rare tested and matched military grade American Philips 6V6GT at only £28 each

HARMA SUPERIOR GRADE raising the standard

Our own brand, the best selected and tested valves in the industry. All preamp valves are drive tested. All output valves are high plate volt tested under full working conditions for maximum reliability. Used by the industries biggest names including Brian May, Thunder, Iron Maiden and the We Will Rock You shows worldwide.

ECC81-STR	£14.40	EL84/E84L burst tested	£16.80
ECC83 STR	£14.40	EL84 Retro	£18.00
ECC83/7025	£14.40	5881-Mil Spec	£18.00
EL34STR	£19.20	6L6GC STR	£21.60
EL34 Retro	£21.60	6L6GC- Retro	£21.60
EL84/E84L standard	£14.40	GZ34 -Retro	£18.00

HARMA GUITAR SPEAKERS

All Hand Made in England. Full range in stock see our website for details and prices

☎ Tel: **01923 893270**



See our website
www.watfordvalves.com



That Hanko Stamp

On the reverse of each Revstar's headstock is an unusual-looking decal that replicates a Japanese hanko stamp used instead of a signature for signing official documents (see p119 of the review for a close-up). Apparently, hanko refers to the actual stamping object and the ink impression it makes is called an inkan. On the Indonesian models, the decal means 'Revstar'; on the Japanese-made Pro model, the decal means 'Made in Japan'. Just in case you were wondering...

ABOVE (TOP) Left to right: Dry Switch designer, Hiroataka Niino, engineering manager, Kiyoshi 'Jackie' Minakuchi and designer, Korenki Yamanaku

ABOVE Veteran Yamaha engineering manager Jackie has been responsible for many Yamaha guitar designs and his input — from the spec of the pickup wire to the final finishing — is crucial to the Revstar guitars

Jackie. "It has fewer turns — around half — so it's got a lower output; we added two Alnico magnets stacked underneath. It has a pretty bright tone — not as bright as a TV Jones — but with power and with more bass response. We also have locking tuners on this model."

The final two models, the 820CR and P20 Pro, look very similar, but the latter is made in Japan, not Indonesia like the other models. The 820 is like the 502, but with a satin nickel TonePros wrapover bridge and two humbuckers, while its pickguard is a copper-coloured anodised aluminium.

Plugging in the Pro version after the 820, there's a noticeable difference in the quality of sound and the resonance. "It's essentially the same guitar," says Jackie, but with aged pickup covers and an unplated copper pickguard, along with black Tusq nut. It's the only model to include a hard case and also employs Yamaha's IRA (Initial Response Acceleration) that simulates hours of playing "and gives a 'played in', mature guitar from day one", states Yamaha's explanation.

Just as we go to press, however, Yamaha tells us it's suspending the release of the Pro until later in 2016. Internally, it seems the company is unsure whether it's different enough to the 820, bearing in mind its cost would be higher, around £1,200. Ah, well...

In early November, we attended the premiere of Revstar at London's iconic Abbey Road studios. The final marketing materials were all in place — although the final pricing is still being hotly debated — and we can reflect on what has been quite a journey. We have no idea if Revstar will be the success Yamaha hopes. Only time will tell. One thing's for certain, though: it won't be for the lack of trying. **G**

FOR ~~DISPLAY~~ ONLY



 Made ^{TO} BE Played SINCE 1953

GuildGuitars.com



The Revstar Range

Yamaha's Revstar range includes something for everyone in terms of style and price. We take a closer look...



YAMAHA RS320 £323

While all the Revstar guitars feature the same body and headstock outline, scale length, dual pickups with master volume and tone with three-way lever pickup selector, this start-up model features all-nato construction with an unbound slab body. Pickups are uncovered YGD H3 ceramic 'buckers and colour options are Black Steel, Red Copper and Stock Yellow.

Guitarist says: Think 'Les Paul Special on steroids' – a great rock 'n' roll guitar!

YAMAHA RS420 £404

This takes the 320 platform and adds a rib-cage contour and a thin maple top. Like the 320, it features medium-gauge frets and a thinner neck profile than the other Revstars. Pickups move up to YGD V3 Alnico humbuckers and the Dry Switch is added to the tone control. Colour options are Black Steel, Fired Red and Factory Blue.

Guitarist says: This more shapely and more classic-sounding version of the 320 adds versatility with that Dry Switch

YAMAHA RS502 £485

The Revstars' three digits are explained as follows: the first is the grade, the second the number of humbuckers, and the third the number of single coils. The 502 has two YGD V5 Alnico P-90-alikes, as on the reviewed 502T. The differences here are the hand-cut steel wool top in either Shop Black or Billet Green and the wraparound bridge. From here, prices include a sturdy gigbag.

Guitarist says: A cousin to the 502T, but with some of the Café Racer design and more colours



YAMAHA RS620 £646

The 620 is a posher-looking Revstar, with its flamed maple veneered maple top (on mahogany body with mahogany neck, like the 502 models) and Brick Burst and Burnt Charcoal finishes, not to mention its split parallelogram fingerboard inlays. Like the 502, it uses an adjustable wrapover bridge and has a hand-cut steel wool top finish. Pickups are YGD V3 Alnico humbuckers.

Guitarist says: Perhaps the most generic-looking Revstar, the 620 seems aimed at Les Paul lovers

YAMAHA RS720B £807

Using the platform of the 620, the 720 comes fitted with a licensed Bigsby B50 vibrato, hence the B suffix, and more Gretsch-like YGD VT5 humbuckers. Again, we have the hand-cut steel wool top in Ash Gray and Wall Fade finishes. All the Revstars from the 502 onwards feature a deeper neck profile with jumbo frets, too.

Guitarist says: The only vibrato-equipped Revstar, the 720's cleaner, low-output humbuckers offer instant retro tone

YAMAHA RSP20CR £TBA

This was to be the only Japanese-made Revstar, an upmarket version of the reviewed 820CR, with Yamaha's proprietary Initial Response Acceleration (IRA) technology to give a "played in, mature guitar tone from day one". Other features included YGD V7 Alnico humbuckers, unplated copper scratchplate, Tusq saddle and hardshell case. Artists might get one; the rest of us will have to wait and see.

Guitarist says: Yamaha Japan makes great guitars. A distinct tonal upgrade from the 820CR!

Subscribe to **Guitarist** for as little as **£3 for 3 issues**

As part of Guitarist's transformation, we're giving you a fresh new look with more gear, tuition and interviews to fuel your passion for guitar.

Experience your first three issues from just £3...



Print Edition

Delivered to your door at
a fraction of the cost

3 ISSUES ONLY £3



The Complete Print + Digital Package

Every new issue in print and on your
iPad, iPhone and Android device

3 ISSUES ONLY £5



Digital Edition

Instant digital access on your
iPad, iPhone and Android device

**6 MONTHS
ONLY £13.50**

ORDERING IS EASY. GO ONLINE AT
www.myfavouritemagazines.co.uk/guisubs

OFFER ENDS: 07 JANUARY 2016

Terms & Conditions: Prices and savings quoted are compared to buying full-price UK print and digital issues. You will receive 13 issues of *Guitarist* in a year. If you are dissatisfied in any way, you can write to us or call us to cancel your subscription at any time and we will refund you for all unmailed issues. Prices are correct at point of print and subject to change. For full terms and conditions, please visit: <http://myfavm.ag/magterms>

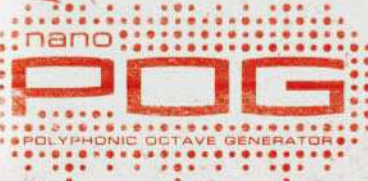
PERFECTION



PolyTune® Clip perfectly combines state of the art tuning technology with an unprecedented attention to aesthetics and functionality. Unmatched in speed, precision and grace, PolyTune Clip isn't just the best PolyTune we've ever made - it's the best tuner by any measure.

Cock Fight

Guitar gods like Slash, Michael Schenker and Mick Ronson have used the cocked wah sound to create monster riffs that have earned a permanent place in the rock lexicon. That required finding the sweet spot in their wah pedal's sweep. The Cock Fight lets you achieve that cool cocked wah sound without the wah pedal. Tune in the tone you want. Add the built-in distortion for more grind and growl, or switch to the Talking Wah mode for a stuck voice-box sound. If you plug in an expression pedal, you can sweep the Cock Fight for jaw dropping wah and talking pedal effects, with or without distortion!



The smallest member of the polyphonic POG clan designed with the super space conscious in mind. Same legendary tracking and sound. Dial in an amazing 12-string guitar or turn your guitar into a convincing bass. Generates organ-like harmonic structures. Separate controls for dry, sub octave and octave up, plus silent footswitching provide the perfect formula for this compact jewel.



THE SILENCER

Are noisy effects, single coil pickups and 60 cycle hum messing with your sound? The Silencer is a sophisticated noise gate that can tame 'em. Threshold, Reduction and Release controls guarantee precise fine-tuning. Direct I/O or a built-in effects loop for maximum flexibility. Silence the noise!



22500

dual stereo
looper

Combining a compact foot-print, comprehensive feature spec and an intuitive user interface, the 22500 delivers powerful looping capabilities in an affordable, easy to use package. It records high quality, non-compressed audio direct to a removable SDHC card (4 to 32GB) and each card holds up to 100 individual loops. Includes an 8GB card for up to 12 hours of total recording time. An optional Bank Up/Down Foot Controller is available.



NEW FROM
electro-harmonix

WWW.EHX.COM

Est. 1968



Completing the powerful trilogy forged by the B9 and C9 Organ Machines, the new KEY9 pedal emulates the world's most coveted electric pianos and more. With 9 presets, you can transform your axe and lay down a cool "Riders on the Storm" style groove or some hot funk ala "What'd I Say!" Each preset lets you control the fundamental parameters that help define that instrument's sound. Many include adjustable modulation like tremolo, phaser and chorus. Take it from Mike Matthews who says: "You'll dig the way the Key9 turns you into a Rhodes Scholar!"



PEDALBOARD

From do-it-all delays to little loopers and the return of ring modulation, we round up four on the floor



p138



p142



p140



p142

Delay is one of those effects that doesn't ever seem to stop generating fascinating spin-offs and sonic permutations. But the rub is in finding a package that you can use effectively on stage. In the studio, or jamming at home, being able to switch rapidly between precise settings is not such an issue, but in a varied set on stage, many guitarists want more than just tap tempo to help them navigate quickly between delay voices and settings that may be essential to the character of the tracks they're playing. Strymon has been king of the hill when it comes to the large-format, programmable dictionary-of-delay pedal. That's a category Strymon's TimeLine has more or less owned since it came out, usurping Line 6's

ubiquitous DL-4 on many pro 'boards. So it's refreshing to see Boss returning to the category of programmable do-it-all delay. It plays to Boss's strengths – producing a solid, technically and tonally advanced product at a mainstream price. Check out Trevor Curwen's review of the new DD-500 on page 138 for the full story. Of course, there's always room for a twist on a classic concept, and Xvive's shamelessly-inspired Memory offers that for a modest outlay, while its Duet looper goes further in search of originality by offering two-loop functionality in a tiny enclosure – though some fancy footwork is required to get the best from it (see page 142). Classic DOD ring mod and octave effects round out this month's pedal parade (see page 140). **G**



BOSS DD-500 £275

Boss breezes in with a do-it-all digital delay

Words Trevor Curwen **Photography** Neil Godwin

No-one can deny that Roland/Boss has been a pioneer and a big player in the delay game through its Space Echo tape echoes, BBD analogue delays such as the DM-2, and digital delays from the rackmounted SDE series to its current DD compact pedals. Lately, though, there has been an absence in its roster: one of the new breed of all-singing, all-dancing, large-format delay pedals such as those made by Eventide and Strymon among others. But not any longer: the empire is striking back with the DD-500, a large format, triple-footswitched, digital delay stompbox with 12 different delay types, plus a looping facility, plenty of programmable patches and loads of parameter tweaking and control options.

While it's stuffed with functionality, the DD-500 is pretty straightforward to use. To get started, you can choose a delay type with the Mode knob and immediately tweak its major parameters with five knobs that set delay time, feedback, effect level, tone and modulation depth – grab any knob and the display

will refresh to show you its numerical value. Now, while setting up a sound like that is quick and easy, the power of the DD-500 lies in its ability to store patches. There are 198 of them in 99 banks of two, and each one can store loads of parameters beyond those that are tweaked with the knobs, including semi-parametric four-band EQ and ducking.

The two presets (A and B) in each bank are selected with the first two footswitches, while you can hold down two footswitches (A and B; B and Tap) to change banks. That third footswitch is ostensibly for tap tempo, but it can alternatively be assigned within a patch to fulfil a control function, so you can use it for such things as fading in the delay sound or outputting it only when you hold down the switch, cutting the delay time to a fraction of its current setting, holding the feedback for infinite repeats, or adjusting multiple delay parameters at once. The switch can even be set up to select a patch so you can have three patches available for instant recall, such as a Line 6 DL4 or the larger TC Flashbacks.

ABOVE Boss's new stompbox has 12 different delay types and enables you to go deep with your editing, storing up to 198 patches in total



ABOVE The MIDI I/O ports allow for additional control options

RIGHT A variety of modes presents a choice of standard digital delays, through vintage examples in the style of 80s rackmounts, plus darker sounds and tape echoes



Tech Spec

ORIGIN: Taiwan

TYPE: Digital delay pedal

FEATURES: 12 delay modes, 198 patches, phrase looper, tap tempo, true or buffered bypass

DELAY MODES:

Standard, Analog, Tape, Vintage Digital, Dual, Pattern, Reverse, SFX, Shimmer, Filter, Slow Attack, Tera Echo

CONTROLS: Mode selector, Time/Value, Feedback, E.Level, Tone, Mod Depth, 4x edit buttons, 3x footswitches

CONNECTIONS:

Standard inputs A/ Mono and B, standard output A/ Mono and B, CTL/EXP jack, MIDI In, MIDI Out, USB

POWER: 4x AA batteries, AC adaptor (not supplied)

DIMENSIONS: 170 (w) x 138 (d) x 62mm (h)

OPTIONS: AC adaptor: PSA series

FOOTSWITCH: FS-5U, FS-5L, FS-6, FS-7

EXPRESSION PEDAL: Boss FV-500L, FV-500H, Roland EV-5

Roland UK

01792 702701

www.roland.co.uk



There's also provision to add extra footswitches or an expression pedal for parameter control, plus there's MIDI I/O for more control options.

Sounds

With 32-bit/96kHz delay processing and analogue dry signal, there are no sound-quality issues and you can choose true or buffered bypass, the latter enabling you to use the 'carryover' function where the delay trails decay naturally rather than cutting dead when the effect is bypassed.

The 12 delay types cover a host of options, including some familiar Roland/Boss emulations. While there is a pristine Standard digital delay, you also get a Vintage Digital mode that offers the differently flavoured repeats of the SDE-2000 and SDE-3000 rack units, and the DD-2 pedal. Analog mode recreates the darker echoes of the DM-2, while Tape mode has options for a single-head Echoplex-style emulation as well as a simulated RE-201 Space Echo where you get to choose various combinations of the heads. Coming right up to date, you also get a Tera Echo mode, derived from the Boss TE-2 pedal and offering intriguing ambiances that lie between delay and reverb.

Beyond those, there are the processed delays: Reverse, SFX, Filter and Shimmer where the repeats are pitch-shifted, and the gorgeous Slow Attack where you can make use of your playing dynamics to determine how the delays fade in. Pattern Delay, with 16 different delay lines, has 10 fixed rhythmic patterns,

but also has a 'User' pattern, which, with careful programming, can approximate head spacings on vintage multi-head tape echoes other than the RE-201. Finally, Dual mode offers two different delay lines that can be connected in series or parallel. That's not to be confused with another of the DD-500's functions: a mode that can set up the A and B footswitches so that both can be active simultaneously, allowing access to layered sounds by combining two patches.

Verdict

With the varied delay types, all their editable parameters and the control options available for expressive effects, not to mention plenty of patch memory, the DD-500 is a delay powerhouse that lets you easily create, store and recall a massive array of effects that includes – but also goes beyond – all the common bread-and-butter types. While there are several quality contenders for your coin out there, Boss has managed to put the features that most players will likely need into a relatively compact space for a competitive price. The DD-500 is a timely product that builds on and continues a fine heritage. **G**

PROS A practical pedal that should supply all the delay sounds you need with various ways to deliver them on stage

CONS It eats batteries; the USB connection allows data backup, but there's no matching software editor as yet

9/10



1 DOD MEATBOX BASS SUBHARMONIC SYNTHESIZER £154

ORIGIN: China

TYPE: Octave pedal

FEATURES: True bypass

CONTROLS: Octave, Output, Sub, Low, bypass footswitch

CONNECTIONS: Standard input, standard output (TRS)

POWER: 9V DC adaptor (not supplied) or 9V battery

DIMENSIONS: 70 (w) x 119 (d) x 55 mm (h)

Sound Technology
01462 480000
www.soundtech.co.uk
www.dod.com

DOD's 2015 take on the Meatbox adds modern features and updated components. More than just an octave pedal, the Meatbox adds a lower octave to your original note, plus a synthesised note 30Hz below that. You can dial in the amounts of octave and sub with separate knobs, while the Low knob tweaks the bottom end at the output to suit your signal – the pedal's effect goes really low, so if you're worried about your speakers, you can split the output using a TRS jack to send the Octave/Sub signal to something better equipped to handle it.

Now, on a standard-tuned guitar, you can use the Sub and Low knobs for overall EQ, but the octave effects lose potency above the lowest octave. Drop-tuned guitars and baritones fare better, but the effect seems tailor made for basses, where you'll get everything from solid tone-thickening, through doubling with a low octave, to floor-shaking synth bass with no dry sound present. **[TC]**

VERDICT A powerful bottom-end enhancer. Just what you'd expect to find in a meatbox: plenty of beef!

7/10

2 DOD GONKULATOR RING MODULATOR £154

ORIGIN: China

TYPE: Ring-modulation pedal

FEATURES: True bypass

CONTROLS: Gain, Dist, Output, Freq, Ring, bypass footswitch

CONNECTIONS: Standard input, standard output

POWER: 9V DC adaptor (not supplied) or 9V battery

DIMENSIONS: 70 (w) x 119 (d) x 55 mm (h)

Ring modulation might not be a universal choice as an essential pedalboard item, but when used judiciously, it's a really interesting effect that can range from a mildly otherworldly texturing to almighty levels of atonal freakout. With very few ring-modulation pedals on the market, DOD's re-imaging of the increasingly rare Gonkulator is most welcome.

What you are getting with this new variant is two effects in one: there's the ring mod, but there's also raucous fuzzy distortion that runs in parallel. The two can be heard individually or layered, dependent on the position of the Ring and Dist knobs. The Freq knob adjusts the ring mod's carrier frequency over a range of several octaves, so you can tune it to suit your playing and key or dial in some dissonance. The result transforms your whole dry sound with weird metallic cadences. Mix in some of the variable-gain distortion for some off-kilter blends – a lot of distortion with some ringmod adding flavour underneath probably being the most musically useful. **[TC]**

VERDICT Distortion with a weird edge, or metallic textures doubled with dirt. Take your pick...

7/10



HANDCRAFTED IN THE UK SINCE 1974

Spec your very own Gordon Smith online or at one of our GS hubs.
Merchant City Music, Glasgow | Forsyth Brothers, Manchester | The Guitar Spot, Nottingham
Richards Guitars, Warwickshire | The Music Gallery, Berwick-upon-Tweed

gordonsmithguitars.com

Gordon Smith

01933 391234

1



2



1 XVIVE D3 DUET LOOPER £79

ORIGIN: China

TYPE: Looper pedal

FEATURES: True bypass, 5 minutes maximum loop length

CONTROLS: Level, Undo/Redo and Verse/Chorus switch, bypass footswitch

CONNECTIONS: Standard input, standard output, stereo output, USB (for future updates and upgrades)

POWER: 9V DC adaptor (not supplied)

DIMENSIONS: 43 (w) x 93 (d) x 45 mm (h)

JHS

01132 865381

www.xviveaudio.com

The **Duet** is not the only micro stereo looper, but it's said to be the first in its size class that allows series recording and playback of two loops.

There are two modes, which are selectable by a toggle switch: Undo/Redo mode supports one five-minute loop with overdubs that you can undo or redo, while Verse/Chorus mode allows two separate loops of up to five minutes each that can be recorded, overdubbed, or played separately. Operation is down to how you hit the footswitch – a tap, double tap and a long press all have different functions and you can see where you are via two LEDs that can each light up red, purple or blue and can be solid, flashing or pulsing. That might sound complicated on paper, but in practice, it doesn't take long to get up to speed.

The result here is a handy little looper that's great for laying down chord sequences to play over – or even for storing two different loops that you can switch between. **[TC]**

2 XVIVE MEMORY ANALOG DELAY £109

ORIGIN: China

TYPE: Analogue delay pedal

FEATURES: Buffered bypass, 600ms maximum delay time

CONTROLS: Delay, Blend, Feedback, Drive, Depth, Speed, bypass footswitch, modulation footswitch

CONNECTIONS: Standard input, standard output, stereo output, expression-pedal input

POWER: 9V DC adaptor (not supplied)

DIMENSIONS: 108 (w) x 120 (d) x 55 mm (h)

One of the most well-respected of vintage analogue delays, the Electro-Harmonix Deluxe Memory Man is where the Xvive Memory Analog Delay – from the original DMM designer, Howard Davis – takes its inspiration. It builds on the original while using Xvive's own long-time-in-development proprietary version of Panasonic's MN3005 BBD chip that powered it. With mono or stereo output, the pedal offers up to 600ms of delay time and has two footswitches, the extra one bringing in modulation set by the Speed and Depth knobs. Delay time, feedback and dry/wet blend are all adjustable (delay time with an expression pedal if desired), while an input 'Drive' knob can dial in a lovely degree of extra grit.

With delay time right down, you can conjure up cool chorus and rotary speaker sounds, but the main attraction is a great delay sound with repeats that blend naturally with your tone as they melt away, with or without a little extra warble or shimmer from the modulation. **[TC]**

VERDICT Lots of fun. Not as intuitive as TC Electronic's Ditto, but those dual loops could seal the deal

7/10

VERDICT Familiar vintage analogue delay sounds in a reasonably sized (and priced) box

8/10



Forsyth

Your Complete Music Store in Manchester, since 1857

Visit our website for more great products

An afternoon with AUDEN AND GORDON SMITH

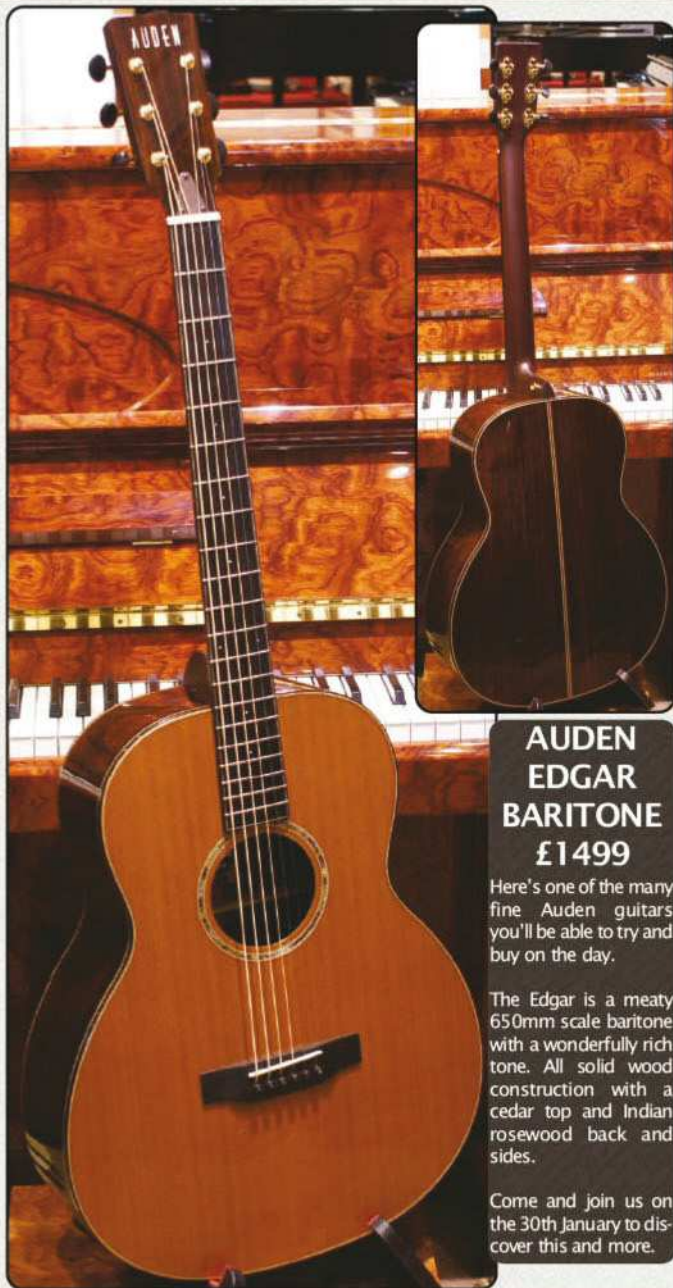
SATURDAY 30th JANUARY 2016 11am-4pm

Forsyths are delighted to welcome the luthiers at Auden and Gordon Smith for a special in-store event with live music, a chance to see some exciting new builds and to meet the people behind the brand.

We will be running special offers on Auden guitars throughout January and we will be offering a chance for anyone who has bought an Auden from us to have their guitar set up by Auden on the day.

We will also be unveiling our new Northampton made Gordon Smiths, including a very special custom model exclusive to Forsyths...

No need to book, just turn up on the day, call or visit the shop for more information: 01618343281 extension 606



AUDEN EDGAR BARITONE £1499

Here's one of the many fine Auden guitars you'll be able to try and buy on the day.

The Edgar is a meaty 650mm scale baritone with a wonderfully rich tone. All solid wood construction with a cedar top and Indian rosewood back and sides.

Come and join us on the 30th January to discover this and more.

More than 150 Years of expertise in musical instrument retail. Spacious city centre location, 15,000sq ft spread over five floors. Extensive range of strings, brass & woodwind, acoustic pianos, digital pianos & keyboards. Huge sheet music department. Vinyl, DVDs, CDs & software. Piano tuning & servicing. Insurance valuations & more.

www.forsyths.co.uk/guitars

Forsyth Brothers Ltd, 126 Deansgate, Manchester M3 2GR
0161 834 3281 ext. 606 guitars@forsyths.co.uk

@ForsythMusic Forsyths.Music.Shop

aclamGUITARS
PRODUCT DESIGN
BARCELONA

YOUR NEXT STEP SMART TRACK PEDALBOARD

Take care of them with our new fasteners concept!



NAMM SHOW 2016 - HALL E Booth #1741

FEEL THINK PLAY
www.aclamguitars.cat



NOTTINGHAM CITY Guitars

QUALITY

VINTAGE & USED GUITARS

NOTTINGHAM
CITY GUITARS...

stock quality vintage, rare and used guitars and amps. We have an excellent range of electric, acoustic and bass guitars, all are set-up and have a twelve month guarantee.

Our in-house workshop offers set-ups, repairs, re-frets, restorations, hand wired pickups and electrical work. Fast turn round and loan guitars.

We stock Cornell amplification and pedals, D'Addario strings and a range of guitar accessories and spares.

We buy and part exchange quality instruments world wide.

T: 0115 950 5909

M: 07850 586 625

E: andy@nottinghamcityguitars.com

www.nottinghamcityguitars.com



15% off Cornell Amps in January

SET-UP • REPAIRS • PICKUPS • SPARES • RESTORATIONS

7 Woolpack Lane, Lace Market, Nottingham NG1 1GA



|||||

Audition

We test the best of the rest
of the month's new gear

Photography Joby Sessions & Adam Gasson

|||||

FENDER PARAMOUNT PM-1, PM-2 & PM-3 £519, £629 & £519

CONTACT **Fender** PHONE 01342 331700 WEB www.fender.com

While most of us would happily give houseroom to a classic Fender electric or amp, a Fender acoustic is a less obvious choice, especially in the lower market area where we are swamped with choice. On one hand, the raft of Asian-made brands offers very high specification for relatively little, while the big boys like Martin and Taylor have been highly active with their Mexican-made models. Fender, of course, has its own Mexican factory, but while that concentrates on its core amp and guitar products, its new Paramount range has USA design with Chinese build.

The Paramount range centres on three body styles – the PM-1 dreadnought, PM-2 parlour and PM-3 triple O – with all spruce-topped solidwood construction, with scalloped X-bracing, and gloss finishes in two specification levels, Standard (at £519) and Deluxe (at £629). The Standards have mahogany back and sides in a toned natural finish; the Deluxes have rosewood back and sides and come in either natural or a same-price old-style sunburst. A nine-strong range that all come with hard cases.

Despite the quite generic body styles, Fender maintains there's plenty of 'Fender DNA' here: aside from being conceived over a two-year period by Fender's top luthiers, we have '60s 'Concert Tone' inlays (on the Deluxes), '60s checkerboard rosette and purfling, a headstock shape inspired by the '70s F series acoustics, a '70s bridge design, a late '40s-style Fender logo and the 'cloud' pickguard seen on Kingman acoustics.

All Paramounts are electros with a unique Fender/Fishman preamp. The modern-style design has a small squashed-oval screen displaying the onboard tuner, with three rubber-knobbed rotaries below it for bass, treble and overall volume. You engage the tuner by pressing on one side of the display and there's a phase push-switch on the other side. Each preamp is apparently voiced to suit the different body styles, too.

Our three review samples (the PM-1 and PM-3 are Standard and the PM-2 is a Deluxe) are all light and resonant, with a full-shouldered C-shape neck profile that subtly differs in depth from model to model. Acoustically, the dread offers plenty of roomy projection with quite a

'new guitar' sounding upper-mid push. The parlour, the only 12-fret in the range, size-wise is in stark contrast but retains the mid push, albeit with a tighter bass. The triple O, in size and sound, sits midway between the two with a more restrained midrange that's more balanced. It's the only cutaway, too.

Sounds

Each guitar certainly has its own character, not least that both the dread and triple O have a longer 643mm (25.3-inch) scale length and a 43mm (1.690-inch) nut width with regular Fender bridge spacing of 55mm, while the parlour swaps to a shorter 628mm (24.7-inch) scale, but with a wider nut at 45mm (1.750 inches).

The new-design pickup and preamp system is both classy and functional. The tuner is fast, the bass and treble EQs offers plenty of range, and that phase switch can be really handy on stage for feedback rejection. For the most part, each style's acoustic character comes through amplified and, overall, there's a modern, 'enhanced' tonality to the trio: all have a near ubiquitous piezo tonality, which, frankly, we all take for granted, even though it's really not that natural sounding. So, on stage, you might need to tame the expansive lows of the dread a little; open out the mids and tune the crisp highs to your taste.

Verdict

There's a lot here to like, not least the price-to-spec ratio. These are light in weight and feel and sound just as good acoustically as they do amplified. While the dread offers excellent strum-friendly projection and the classy looking fingerpicking friendly parlour offers a more middle-y kick, it's the triple O that'd take our cash – although we'd check the Deluxe version – as an all-rounder for home, practice, stage and studio. Affordable, familiar but with just enough style to be noticed... Try them. **[DB]**

Fender Paramount PM-1 Standard, PM-2 Deluxe **8/10**

Fender Paramount PM-3 Standard **9/10**





SMOOTH HOUND CLASSIC WIRELESS GUITAR SYSTEM £149

CONTACT **Smooth Hound** PHONE N/A WEB www.smoothhound-innovations.com

Eliminating cable runs from your guitar can result in a lot less clutter and freedom of movement on stage. If you fancy some of that, a new Cambridgeshire-based company Smooth Hound Innovations has recently introduced its Classic Wireless Guitar System, described as a completely original design from the ground up and designed for really high-fidelity sound.

In Use

The Classic is a light and easily portable system. The transmitter is powered from a nine-volt supply and is very compact compared to most competition. Sporting LEDs that indicate signal and charge levels, it will sit unobtrusively on your amp or pedalboard, although you'll need to be mindful not to stamp on the two small antennae in the latter setup. Where most wireless transmitters are designed to be fixed to your guitar strap or belt, the one here, not much bigger than a PP3 battery,

has an integral jack plug (with over 270 degrees rotation) and will happily plug into the output socket of most guitars, even Strats. Our only concern really is a flimsy battery cover.

With a decent range for stage use, the Classic gives us a solid signal at all times – it automatically changes channels to avoid interference, transmitting on four channels while testing four more for backup. Sound-wise, there are no tonal deficiencies, and we like the nice clear top end, which, if desired, can be toned down by switchable simulation of 10-, 20- and 30-foot cables.

Verdict

Small size, competitive price and a really good sound make this home-grown product well worth checking out. **[TC]**

7/10



MXR ISO-BRICK

£129

CONTACT **Westside Distribution** PHONE 0844 326 2000 WEB www.jimdunlop.com

A pedalboard festooned with various wall-wart power adaptors for individual pedals isn't practical; the smart option is an all-in-one power supply to power all the pedals that runs from a single mains outlet. There are several factors to be taken into account when choosing one, not least that it can supply the correct voltages and current requirements for your pedals – especially if you have high-current ones. Obviously, the more outlets it has, the better, but then there's the size... Yet MXR may have it sussed with the Iso-Brick, which offers 10 fully isolated outputs in a compact housing.

In Use

MXR has got around the size issue by powering the Iso Brick from its own 18-volt wall-wart rather than going the robust mains lead/toroidal transformer route of Voodoo Lab and Cioks, which some might prefer, but it's still quiet and ground loop-free. You get two each of nine-volt outlets at 100mA, 300mA and 450mA plus two 18-volt outlets at 250mA. On top of that there are two more outlets at 250mA, which each have a knob to vary the voltage between six volts and 15 volts – great if you want to simulate a weak battery in a fuzz box or power a 12-volt pedal, for example.

Verdict

With plenty of options for a mixed range of power-hungry pedals that will cover most pedalboards' needs, the Iso-Brick offers great value for money. **[TC]**

8/10

the bass pedal your
guitarist wants to steal...

NEW



full frequency response
bass fuzz suboctave

keep yours close

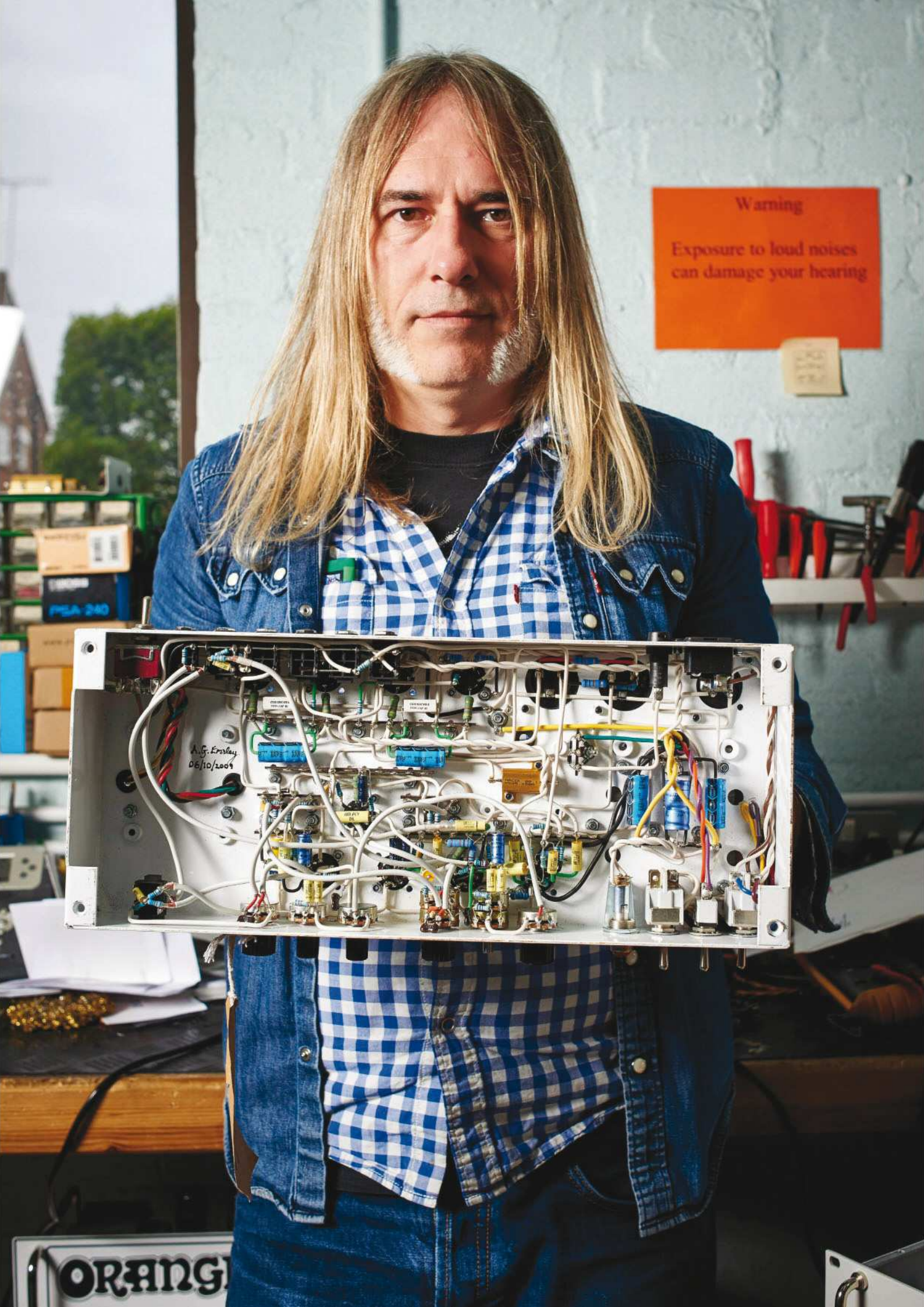
- dual independent controls
- 100% analog • dual internal master volumes
- totally new • totally unique

RED WITCH

original chrome series

To watch demos and find your nearest authorized dealer,
visit www.redwitchpedals.com





Warning
Exposure to loud noises
can damage your hearing

A.G. Enslay
06/10/2009

ORANGE



ADRIAN EMSLEY

Adrian Emsley is Orange's amp-design wizard. We take a look round his R&D workshop to find out how solder, instinct and software help him conjure up stunning tone...

Words Jamie Dickson Photography Joe Branston

It takes a special sort of engineer to build a great guitar amplifier. They must have a sure scientific knowledge of circuit design – but also a great set of ears and a certain gut feel for what will sound great. And, as if that isn't enough, they need to be gigging guitarists, too, so they understand what players want from amps and pedals and how they can build pro-grade amps to survive the road.

Adrian Emsley of Orange is the walking, riffing embodiment of all those virtues and it shows in the line of hellacious-sounding and thoughtful amp designs he's worked on, from the brutal Rockerverb MKIII to quality entry-level combos such as the Orange Crush 35RT (see *Gear Of The Year*, p100). As he ushers us into his lair, Orange's R&D workshop in Hertfordshire, he explains that solder runs in his veins, so to speak.

"My dad actually taught me the basics of electronics and fixing valve stuff when I was a kid," he says. "So I was kind of brought up with valves. I started off modding guitar amps back in the 80s, primarily to get more gain. And then I went into restoring vintage pieces – getting them back to their original condition in terms of components... then just got into building one-off pieces for players and then just started working for Orange, really."

According to Adrian, the R&D process behind building a new Orange amplifier,

whether it's a high-end hand-wired head or an entry-level combo, is a blend of engineering rigour and instinct, ultimately based on experience.

"I just follow my gut, he says. "I never design by committee. I just think. 'What would be a good amp for Orange to have at this moment in time?' And I'll set about building a point-to-point prototype of it once I've got the topology in my head of what I'm going to do, then I'll shoot all the bugs in the circuit at that stage, so it'll be fully working. And then I'll try to lay out a PCB that sounds as close to that as possible. But sometimes it won't be on a PCB, even, when it goes into production: sometimes, it'll be a point-to-point model, in which case we just get the factory to copy the prototype."

So what are the most important elements of good amp design, in his view?

"Start off with good transformers and a good circuit design," he says. "PCB layout is a fundamental thing. I don't use any right angles – everything's curved, because it sounds better. We use two-ounce copper instead of one-ounce on the UK-built stuff, too. When the lead-free [solder] legislation came in about 10 years ago, that helped serviceability and it actually sounded better. But transformers are the heart of the amp: if you've got rubbish transformers, it's never going to be a great amp. It might sound okay in the bedroom, but when you push it, it's

going to blow up, so it's never going to be a great amp," he adds.

He also has to make careful choices in terms of tone and reliability about which valves to fit in production amps – especially as they're not always made to a standard, established spec.

"There are some good valves available – although Svetlana closed down a few weeks ago in St Petersburg – and at the moment, the Chinese EL34 is the best one. But it was made wrong for 15 years," Adrian says. "What they did was, they wired the cathode via the suppressor grid – so the entire current of the valve was going through the suppressor grid. And there were still certain applications it wouldn't like. It wouldn't like to run Class A: stick them in a Matchless and they'd be like frontline soldiers. So, me and a couple of guys identified this and got it fixed. And now they're really good."

It's clear that attention to detail is important, as far as Orange amps and effects go. All the same, fairly simple values underpin the whole enterprise of getting great tone.

"We try to just make them honest, properly built amps," Adrian concludes. "And then we try to keep making them even better, really." And with that, he takes us to his workbench (see overleaf) to show us the tools of the trade he couldn't live without. **Q**

orangeamps.com

01 Soldering Iron

"I've got a couple of solder stations, one for leaded solder, one for unleaded. I keep them separate so they don't get inter-contaminated. The one for unleaded solder runs at a higher temperature. If you're prototyping or doing intricate stuff that might have to be re-worked, there's no point in using lead-free solder [as it's harder to work]. But if you're building a pre-production amp, it's got to be lead-free. Or if you're repairing an amp that was made later than 2006, it's got to be lead-free as well. I use mainly lead-free these days, but having said that, this week, I've been using leaded because I've been designing discrete op amps, which are very small – and sometimes you want to re-work or change components. And you don't want to be using lead-free for that, because you're more likely to lift a pad."

02 Prototype Amps

"There are always a few prototype amps kicking about that have just been built. We hang on to all of the prototypes after we've built them, though. Ones that aren't on my shelf behind me are on a pallet in the warehouse, sealed up. Occasionally, you'll have to unwrap that pallet because you'll think: I need to have another look at this, because it might help you develop an idea. Which is a pain in the arse if it's been palletised, because it's, like, 20 feet up in the air!"

03 Enamelled Copper Wire

"This is a bit of a tip: enamelled copper wire is a good way of getting components out [that have previously been soldered in place]. You sort of hook it round and you can remove stuff a lot quicker and less destructively that way. Especially for components you might want to use again: you don't want to scrape all the enamel off a resistor trying to tear it out with pliers or something."

04 Warton Metals Lead-free Solder

"We use lead-free solder that's got quite a lot of silver in, and it tends to flow better than most and doesn't bubble or get honeycombed like a lot of stuff does. We use one from Warton Metals, which is really good. It actually gets nice solder joints: it's harder than the lead stuff and it has a higher melting point, but actually, you can get nicely finished joints on it. The big enemy with lead-free solder is 'tin whiskers' [conductive crystalline growths]. There's not a lot you can do to stop that from happening over a period of time, so you do sometimes have to clean joints. It's good to have a service technician go over it with a clean toothbrush occasionally. But this solder we use is less prone to that than a lot of the stuff out there. When it first came out, lead-free solder was dreadful. It's taken us a while to find one we like to work with."

05 Computer

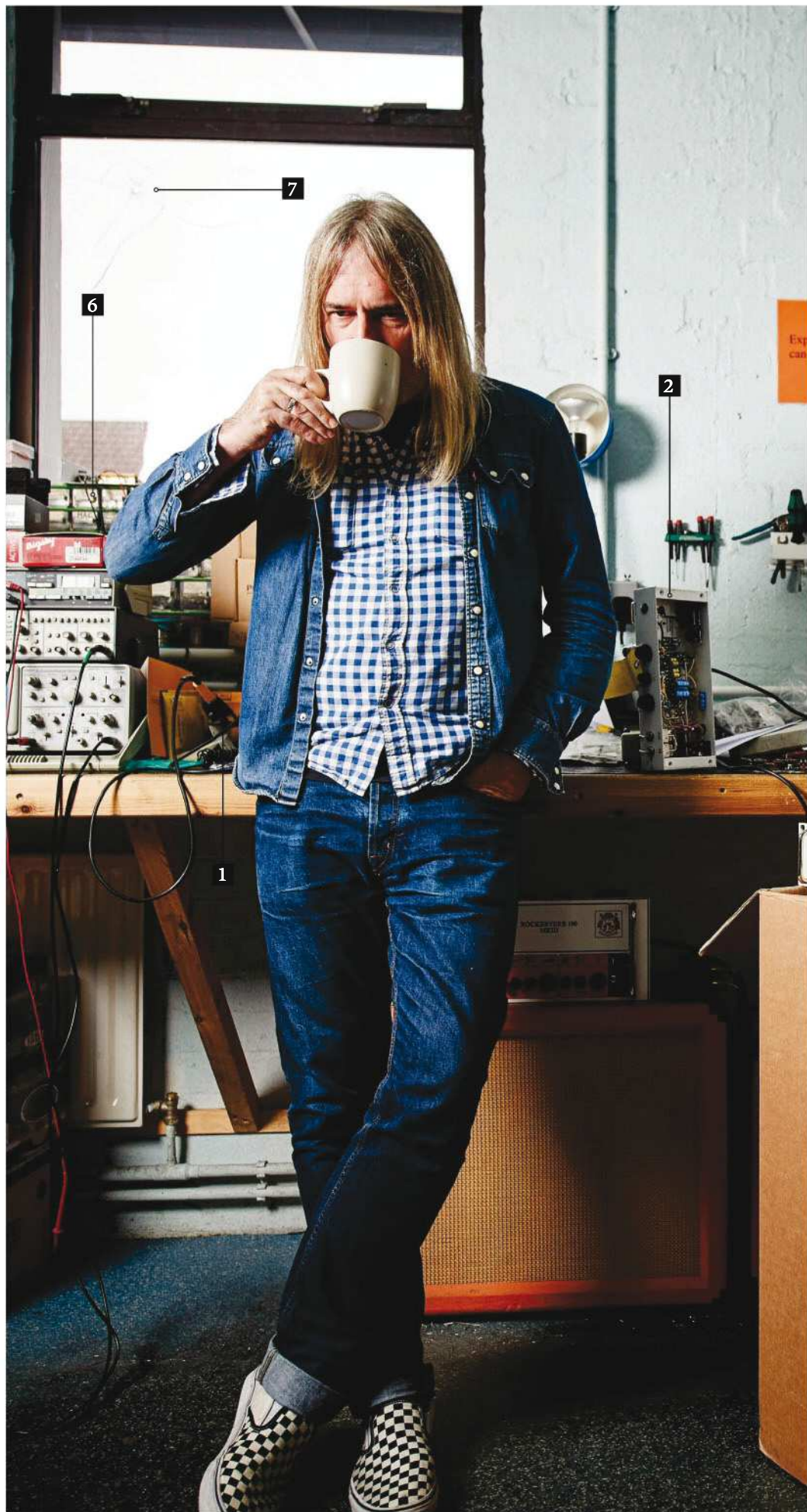
"I do a lot of stuff on Spice, which saves me a lot of time working out amp topologies and impedances and stuff. It's circuit-simulation software, so it's got parameters of components in there and you can build the circuit up really quickly in there and then run a 'current' through it and so judge all your output levels and impedances. I normally do that first. I do a lot of pedals with Spice as well: it's great for that. I can get things working roughly how I want them, then lay out the pedal's PCB and go for it, really. But with valve amps, it's always a point-to-point prototype first, because I can change components. And my OCD kicks in, because I don't want it to look really untidy if I have to change something. I want it to look like it was built like that on purpose! With PCB, if you have to do a re-work or totally change something, it's gonna look bad. So it's horses for courses, really."

06 Component Racks

"I've got R&D racks that hold various parts: I've got pedal racks, racks for amps that use different voltages: there's stuff for everything. My end of the workshop is more of an R&D place but next door, we've got the service shop as well."

07 'Bullet Hole'

Adrian clearly works in a rough bit of Hertfordshire!







VINTAGE PICKS



1964 FENDER
JAGUAR REFIN
£2,495



1972 FENDER
TELE THINLINE
£3,650



1973 FENDER
TELECASTER BLONDE
£2,250



1968 FENDER
MUSICMASTER II
£1,395



1966 FENDER
MUSTANG OLYMPIC
WHITE £1,695



1955 GRETSCHE
JET FIREBIRD
£5,250



1957 GRETSCHE
CORVETTE
£1,295



1968 HARMONY
ROCKET
£750



1956 GIBSON
ES-125
£1,495



1964 GRETSCHE
COUNTRY GENT
£3,250

NEW FENDER USA VINTAGE **CENTRAL LONDON'S BIGGEST FENDER DEALER!**



NEW AMERICAN
VINTAGE '59
STRATOCASTER
£1,333



NEW AMERICAN
VINTAGE '59
STRATOCASTER 3TSD
£1,449



NEW AMERICAN
VINTAGE '56
STRATOCASTER AGED
WHITE BLONDE
£1,333



NEW AMERICAN
VINTAGE '56
STRATOCASTER BLACK
£1,333



NEW AMERICAN
VINTAGE '65 JAGUAR
SONIC BLUE
£1,850



NEW AMERICAN
VINTAGE '65
JAZZMASTER
FIREMIST SILVER
£1,362



NEW AMERICAN
VINTAGE '65
JAZZMASTER
OLYMPIC WHITE
£1,362



NEW AMERICAN
VINTAGE '64
TELECASTER
FIESTA RED
£1,266



NEW AMERICAN
VINTAGE '52
TELECASTER BLONDE
£1,266



NEW AMERICAN
VINTAGE '58
TELECASTER
AGED WHITE BLONDE
£1,266

NEW GIBSON VOS SALE! **20% OFF**



'59 VOS LES PAUL
STD - LEMONBURST
WAS £4,699
NOW £3,759



'59 VOS LES PAUL
STD - WASHED CHERRY
WAS £4,699
NOW £3,759



'59 VOS LES PAUL STD
- SUNRISE
TEA BURST
WAS £4,699
NOW £3,759



'59 VOS LES PAUL
STD - FADED TOBACCO
WAS £4,699
NOW £3,759



'59 HEAVY AGED LES
PAUL STD -
LEMON BURST
WAS £5,899
NOW £4,719



#28 COLLECTORS
CHOICE '58 "STP"
BURST -
RONNIE MONTROSE
WAS £4,499
NOW £3,599



'58 VOS LES PAUL STD
- ICE TEA
WAS £3,399
NOW £2,719



'56 VOS GOLDTOP
WAS £3,399
NOW £2,719



'59 VOS ES-335 -
VINTAGE SUNBURST
WAS £3,799
NOW £3,039



'59 VOS ES-1750 -
VINTAGE SUNBURST
WAS £3,499
NOW £2,799

NEW GRETSCHE



NEW GRETSCHE
G6129T
1957 SILVER JET
£2,399



NEW GRETSCHE
G6136T
WHITE FALCON
£2,899



NEW GRETSCHE
G6120
SHLV - BRIAN SETZER
HOT ROD
£2,509



NEW GRETSCHE
G6122
1962 CHET ATKINS
COUNTRY GENT
£2,619



NEW GRETSCHE
G5622T
ELECTROMATIC CENTRE
BLOCK GEORGIA GREEN
£759



NEW GRETSCHE
G5420T
ELECTROMATIC
HOLLOWBODY
SILVER SPARKLE
£719



NEW GRETSCHE
G5420T
ELECTROMATIC
HOLLOWBODY ORANGE
£719



NEW GRETSCHE
G5422TDC
ELECTROMATIC
HOLLOWBODY
£749



NEW GRETSCHE
G5435T
ELECTROMATIC PRO JET
£445



NEW GRETSCHE
G5441T
ELECTROMATIC
DOUBLE JET
£445

ACOUSTIC PICKS



1930 GIBSON
L-0 BLACK
£3,995



1942 GIBSON
L-0 BLACK
£3,250



1965 GIBSON
LG-0
£850



1957 GIBSON
LG-1
£1,395



1965 GIBSON
DOVE
£3,250



1950 GIBSON
L-50
£1,795



1966 EPIPHONE
FRONTIER
£3,650



1954 MARTIN
000-18
£3,995



1954 GIBSON
J-45
£3,850



1963 GIBSON
J-50
£3,095

*Welcome to the newest and finest
purveyor of guitars in London.*

Authorised Dealers for...
GIBSON CUSTOM, GIBSON USA, EPIPHONE, FENDER, GRETSCHE, FAITH,
ERNE BALL, D'ADDARIO, SQUIER... & more!

Q&A

This issue: Cabs for questions, knobs, nuts and other entendres...

Expert Panel



Jamie Dickson

Guitarist editor Jamie is as happy with steel wool in his hand as he is with Steely Dan in his headphones, and loves vintage-gear restoration and ambitious signal chains.



Dave Burrluck

Guitarist's assiduous reviews editor is also the author of numerous guitar books. Very handy with a fret file and indeed any aspect of a finely fettled six-string.



Mick Taylor

Ex-editor of *Guitarist*, Mick has wielded Allen keys, screwdrivers and sandpaper from an early age; he also has a worrying obsession with pedalboards.



Neville Marten

Edited *Guitarist* for 13 years, after working for both Fender and Gibson as a repairer. From desirable Les Pauls to dream Strats, he's owned and worked on the lot.



Nick Guppy

Guitarist's amplifier specialist has built up a wealth of experience gained from collecting, repairing and restoring all kinds of guitar-related audio.

Email us your questions: **guitarist@futurenet.com**

or write in to
Guitarist,
Future Publishing,
Quay House,
The Ambury,
Bath, BA1 1UA

'MAZIN' SADDLES

I am writing to ask your opinion about saddles for acoustic guitars. Whenever I read reviews in *Guitarist* and other guitar media, the use of bone as a material for saddles – and nuts while we're on the subject – is often praised as being a 'good' choice. However, many of the world's top brands don't use bone on many of their guitars, instead opting for man-made materials such as Micarta and Corian. What are the advantages of these materials? I have a Taylor 414ce and I'm wondering if a bone saddle might improve it.
Callum Smith, via email

The more 'vintage' a guitar becomes in style and intent, the more likely it is to have a bone nut and saddle. They're generally considered 'premium' features, perhaps because of the extra work, cost and time it takes to make, fit and finish them. Bone is a natural material, so you're going to be dealing with some level of inconsistency; it can break, chip, discolour... things that hamper large-scale manufacturing. Ergo, the man-made stuff's principal advantage is that it's more consistent and can be machined to a more finished state before it hits the guitar.

The second advantage is that the consistency extends to tone and response, too, which becomes critically important when you're dealing with under-saddle pickups. According to some makers, the man-made materials are more consistent and predictable than bone in terms of string pressure and tone transfer through the pickup.

However, for pure acoustic sound on a high-end guitar,



you'll find that the vast majority of the leading brands use bone for their guitars or, as in the case of Taylor, offer it as an uncharge option. All the best trad-style acoustics we've played use bone nuts and saddles; accepted wisdom dictates that bone sounds more 'natural' and 'full', and less 'brittle'.

CAB Q

Having been a combo amp user for many years, I've started to look at the more compact head-and-cab options on the market. For example, amps such as the Orange Tiny Terror, Victory V30 and Peavey Classic 20 have caught my eye because of their portability, and also because I think it might give me more versatility than my old Peavey Classic 50 4x10 that I rarely get to turn up properly these days. However, amp choices aside, I'm confused about cabinets: 1x12, 2x12, horizontal or vertical?

John Masters, via email

Obviously, your cab choice depends a lot on the amp, John, and where you're going to be playing. Different speakers can really help an amp shine, or the opposite, so driver choice is

essential. A lot of people don't get the point of 1x12 cabs when you could just buy a combo, but the extra air volume in the cab can make the world of difference. A closed-back design can suit rock styles where you need projection and a 'tight' tone, whereas an open- or partial open back will give you more 'air' and less directional/focused sound.

It's no coincidence that a lot of blues, rock 'n' roll and country players like open-back cabs. A lot of classic and contemporary rockers tend to go closed-back.

All of that also applies to a 2x12 design (and 410s and 412s), the extra speaker offering you extra power handling and a bigger/wider spread of sound. You might enjoy a 2x12 or 4x10 cab given your Classic 50's configuration.

Finally, upright or horizontal? Not so long ago there really wasn't the choice, but vertical 2x12s are making a comeback. You might find the perceived frequency response is a little different given that less of the cab is adjacent to the floor, and that one of the speakers is closer to your ear, but less stage space is required and you can hear yourself better!

Email us your questions: **guitarist@futurenet.com**

What Should I Buy?

Acoustic for keeps

Q I've decided to buy an acoustic guitar, with a budget of around £800. I've tried quite a few, but find it difficult to decide on whether a 'cheap Aston Martin' or 'expensive Skoda' would give me better long-term satisfaction in both holding its price and developing its character over the years.

Are manufacturers of lesser-known brands able to produce guitars that match the standard of more famous brands at the same price, and can these guitars mature positively in the same way as more fabled brands?
Colin Briggs, via email

A Can 'lesser' brands make guitars as good as the established brands, Colin? Yep, without a doubt. Will they hold their value as well? Almost certainly not. Will they age as well? Impossible to say, but at your budget, we'd say you're better off with the 'expensive Skoda'. You also don't state a body preference, so we're going for an all-rounder shape. Conventional wisdom would suggest solid timbers, and avoiding over-thick poly finishes, given that nitrocellulose is out at this price. How it feels to you is the most important thing, of course. Three to try...



1. Faith Hi Gloss Venus £859

This gloss-finish electro uses solid rosewood back and sides beneath a solid Engelmann spruce top with ebony 'board and bridge. Sacrifice the preamp and cutaway to bring the price down. Faith's about the best bang-for-buck brand currently available.



2. Sigma SOMR-28H c£700

At this price level, we'd go Sigma rather than Martin, and this solid rosewood/solid spruce take on the fabled, vintage-style OM-28 model is the traditionalist's choice. Bone nut and saddle, ebony fingerboard and bridge: it's all the right stuff, albeit no nitrocellulose lacquer.



3. Taylor 214 DLX £887

Now, premium brand, same-ish price as the Faith and we're talking a three-layer laminate rosewood for back and sides beneath a solid Sitka spruce top. On paper, it's the 'lesser' spec, but that really doesn't mean anything to your hands and ears when playing. Within your budget, it's really a must-audition.

Email us your questions: guitarist@futurenet.com



Help with knob/
shaft? Spoons, Mr
Gimlet, spoons!

KNOB OFF

Any tips on how to get a Strat knob off the pot? I don't want to pull too hard in case it comes off completely in my hand. I realise this is turning into a massive Finbarr Saunders entendre-fest, but I'm struggling to slide it off the shaft. Can you relieve me?

Mr Gimlet, via email

Titter. Right, you need some kind of protection for the pickguard – a soft cloth will do – and a couple of teaspoons. Place the cloth around the pot, put the tips of the spoons underneath the flange (missus) on opposing sides, and use the spoon backs as a pivot to lever the pot directly upwards. Apply even pressure both sides and it should come off nicely. And for gawd's sake let's stop this and get on to the next question.

SQUEALLY ANNOYING

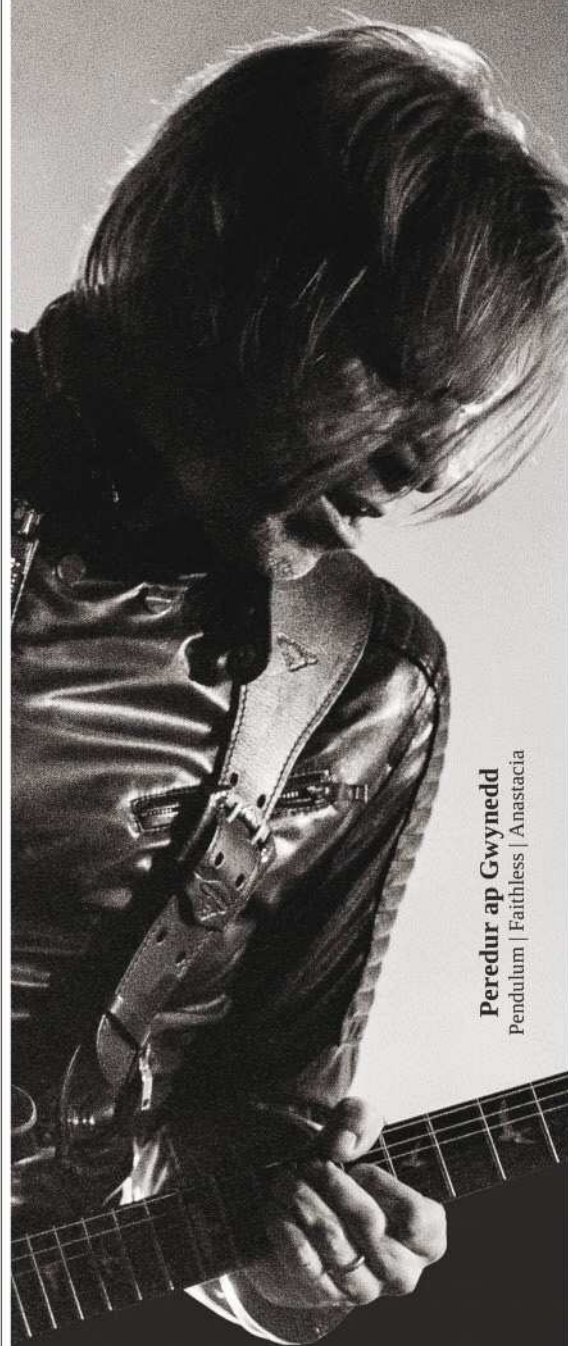
I've been really enjoying my [Fender] Cabronita Tele lately, mainly playing at home at low-ish volume, so I took it to rehearsal to see how it sounded, cranked. I play with a fair amount of gain and as soon as I got the volume up a bit, it started to feed back terribly. Is this a common problem with Fender pickups? I can't seem to find any replacements for them by a well-known maker, TV Jones aside. I've found some potentials from The Creamery but it's a fair amount to spend only to find I still have the same problem.

Jay Cowley via email

As far as we're aware, the Filter'Tron-style pickups in your Cabronita are not wax potted, or at least not fully saturated or indeed completely vacuum potted. That might sound crazy, but for context, many Gibson PAF-style pickups aren't/weren't heavily potted (both coils fully saturated with wax within the cover). Many believe not heavily wax-potting a vintage-style 'bucker is a significant contributor to a classic 'vintage' tone, and that includes Filter'Tron-style pickups. While Filter'Trons aren't *highly* susceptible to microphonic feedback, they certainly will squeal more than a fully vacuum-potted humbucker as you increase the gain and volume. To whit, Filter'Tron-style pickup expert TV Jones offers pickups with what it calls a 'light' wax saturation as standard.

A custom option is to have them 'double-dipped', a heavier wax potting favoured by higher-gain players. All of which is to say yes, you can find what you're looking for from TV Jones. A quick call to The Creamery would let you know whether it's an option from them.

Finally, microphonic feedback with Filter'Tron-style pickups is exacerbated by vibration in the covers or polepiece screws – any part of the pickup. Having them sat on foam rubber 'feet' at each end in a solid guitar is a good place to start. Also check the bottom of the pickup and cover to see if anything can vibrate.



Peredur ap Gwynedd
Pendulum | Faithless | Anastacia

*"One of the finest guitar
straps in the world"*

Guitarist Magazine

Board Games

Pedalboard problems solved

The background

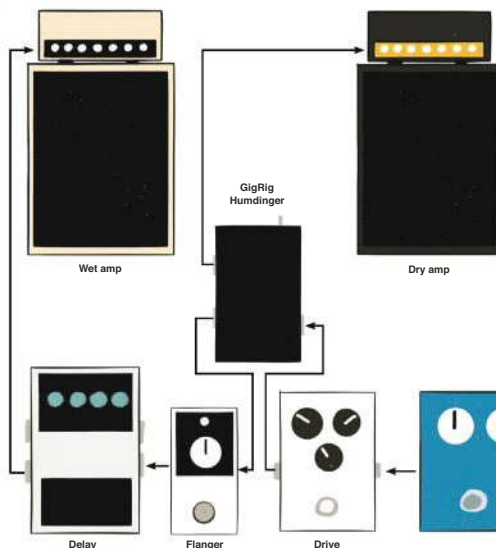
James Roberts, Guitarist reader: I've been playing in various bands for years, both covers and original material. I've been through many amps, pedals and multi-effects, but have never tried using two amplifiers. I've noticed more players doing this, either with two different amps (presumably for mixing different sounds), or two of the same amps for a stereo setup. I'm interested in getting a bigger sound at lower volumes and wondered if using two smaller valve amps instead of one big one might be doable, hence writing to you lot. Currently, I use a Fender Hot Rod Deluxe and a pedalboard with a Dunlop Cry Baby wah, Fulltone Full-Drive 2, Fulltone OCD, Mooer Flanger and Boss DD-7.

The questions

1. What's the minimum wattage I should be looking at for two smaller amps, for small/medium gigs alongside a live drummer, bassist and keys?
2. Would you recommend a wet/dry approach, or full-on stereo-wet via the Boss delay for the two amps?
3. How do I go about connecting the amps together from my pedalboard, and what are the technical issues I should be aware of?

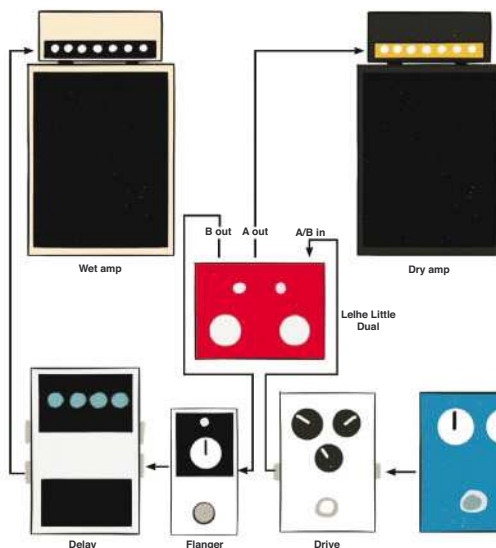
The answers

1. It's impossible to say, because some players like using more powerful amps set lower for more headroom, while others like smaller amps, cranked. Plus, of course, it depends how loud your band plays, your monitoring and mic'ing situation and so on. You're talking about 'lower volumes', though, so Fender Blues Junior, Orange Tiny Terror, Victory RD1, Laney L20H... two of those will create a huge sound. In the interests of cost, adding a second amp – anything you like – to your existing Hot Rod would make sense.
2. Again, it's really down to what you need. Looking at your pedalboard, we're guessing you're not into a lot of massive, ambient, textural reverbs where stereo can really work



Option 1: Both amps always on

Use TheGigRig HumDinger to split the signal after the overdrive pedals. One output is buffered, one isn't. Both amps are always on. To run your delay and modulation in the loop of amp two, send the HumDinger's second output to amp two. Where you place the splitter or switch in the FX pedal chain determines which amps get which effects.



Option 2: Amps switchable on/off

This is the same as the first option, but introduces an A/B-Y switch to proceedings, meaning you can have either, or both amps on, switched from the Lehrle Little Dual or similar. The same applies for using the amp's effects loop as in option 1.

wonders. So, if your modulation and delay effects are there for enhancing/occasional use, we'd say the wet-dry approach is the way to go. There are two benefits: you keep the immediacy of the dry amp and the integrity of your drive sounds, but you can also add in the wet amp (that also gets your drive sounds) to really spread out the sound. This is especially relevant if you've ever found your overall tone becoming a bit drowned in delays, reverbs and modulation.

3. There are lots of ways to achieve this, and lots of different boxes to help you do it. The

most obvious route is to set up your DD-7 pedal for one wet and one dry output (see the manual for instructions on how to do that). However, you're still left with the high possibility of ground-loop hum and phase issues between the two amps, and the flanger will remain running through both. Much better, in our opinion, is to get some kind of signal router/switcher/isolation device and place it on your pedalboard, which solves all the isolation and phase issues. This is where it gets slightly complex, depending on what you want to do. Take a look at the diagrams above for the two simplest options. **G**

Email us your questions: guitarist@futurenet.com

REVOICED. REDESIGNED. REBORN. REIDYS.

The New Taylor 800 Series.

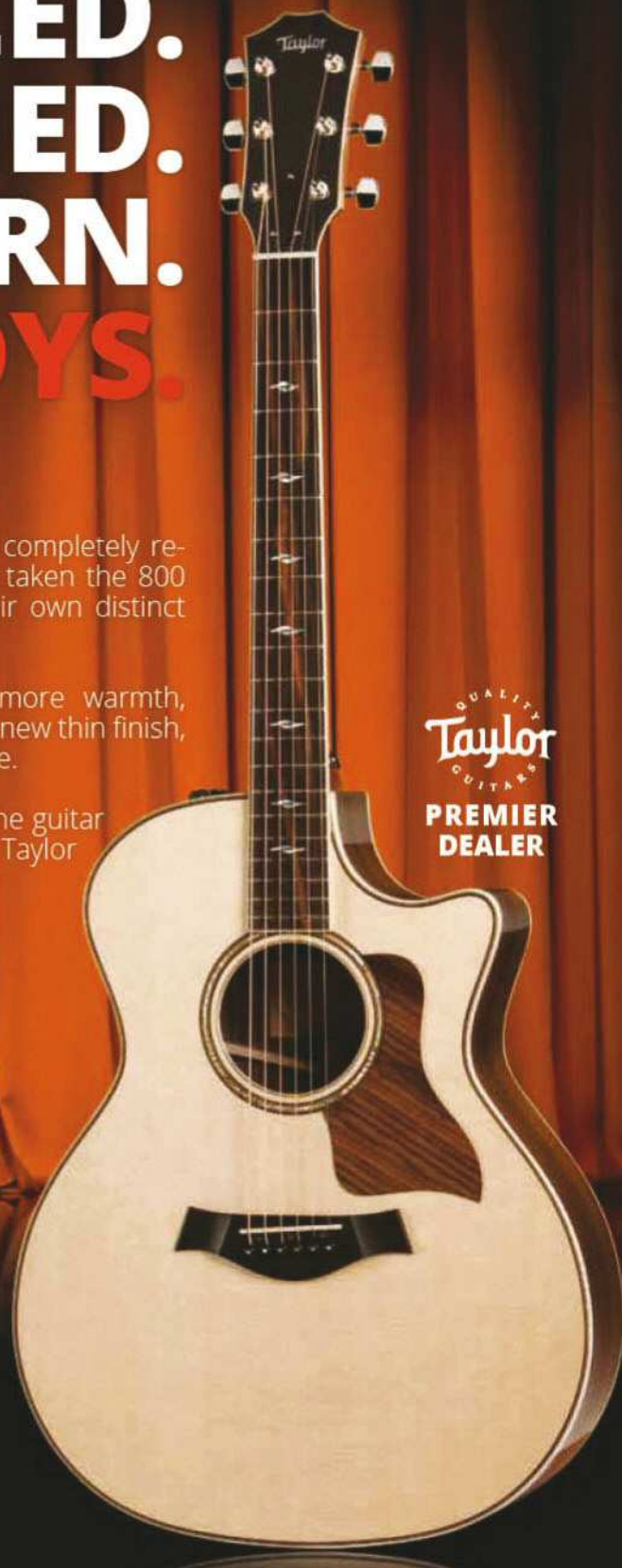
In the past year the flagship Taylor 800 series has been completely re-designed by their new master luthier, Andy Powers. He's taken the 800 series, and re-defined each body shape, giving each their own distinct character and feel to suit every player's style.

By individually re-bracing each model, Andy's added more warmth, presence and mid range across the series. There's also the new thin finish, which allows the tone woods to really breathe and resonate.

Adding the new ES-2 pickup system makes the sound of the guitar come alive on stage, leaving you with the best sounding Taylor ever made.

Full range in stock. Buy now at www.reidys.com/taylor

QUALITY
Taylor
GUITARS
PREMIER
DEALER





GARY MOORE

Gary's gear up close – with guitar tech Graham Lilley

CHRIS REA

The bluesman on the Deluxe re-release of *La Passione*

JOHN SCOFIELD

The jazz master on new album, *Past Present*

Next issue on sale: 08 January 2016

Save up to 56% on an overseas subscription to *Guitarist*

Subscribe to the digital edition available on your iOS and Android device, the glossy print edition, or the complete print and digital package ■ Never miss an issue ■

Get your copy delivered direct to your door each month as well as instant access to our digital edition ■ Save up to 56% off the store price ■ From only \$/€36 every month

ORDERING IS EASY

Go online at: www.myfavm.ag/GUloverseas

Terms & Conditions: Details of the Direct Debit guarantee are available on request. You will receive 13 issues per year. Your subscription will start with the next available issue. Minimum subscription term is 12 months. If at any time during the first 60 days you are dissatisfied in any way, please notify us in writing and we will refund you for all unmailed issues

gear4music.com



Up To **90 Days** Money Back Guarantee ✓

Up To **5 Years** Extended Warranty ✓

Choose From Over **26,000 Products** ✓

Based In The **United Kingdom** ✓

Highly **Competitive Prices** ✓

Flexible Delivery Options ✓

www.Gear4music.com

email: info@gear4music.com

telephone: 0843 155 0800

A 1954 Gibson Les Paul Goldtop guitar is the central focus, leaning against a vintage Fender amplifier. The guitar has a warm, aged gold finish, a dark fretboard with mother-of-pearl block inlays, and two P-90 pickups. The Fender amplifier is a black, rectangular model with a silver grille cloth and the 'Fender' logo in script. The background is dark and moody, with some blurred elements suggesting a studio or backstage setting.

|||||
Old Gold
|||||

1954 Gibson Les Paul Goldtop

Photography by Joby Sessions

It's a strange turn of events when an early 1950s Les Paul is not considered to be quite as collectable as the more highly prized 1958 models. Such thinking doesn't necessarily transfer to Fender Stratocasters, for instance, where a 1954 coming on to the market would be as eagerly pursued as, say, a '56 or '59. Popular thought is that the early versions of Gibson's most famous son are considered to be 'works in progress' and representative of the gradual evolution towards the latter end of the 1950s and the flame-topped, humbucker-laden models that we're familiar with now. In reality, early Les Pauls might just be victims of bad press, as many of the P-90-loaded models (such as our specimen here) have a distinct magic all their own. True to say, perhaps, that the stud bridge/tailpiece was never quite as player-friendly as the later Tune-o-matic, and that the intonation could be questionable. Yet no-one complained when Les Paul himself had a string of hits with his wife, Mary Ford, playing just such a model.

Also it's an undeniable fact that it was players like Freddie King and Hubert Sumlin playing Goldtops that inspired Eric Clapton to search for a Les Paul in the 1960s – and

when it came time for the current king of blues-rock, Joe Bonamassa, to create his signature Gibson, a Goldtop was his first choice. So this 1954 Les Paul could be considered as something of a pioneer – a great sounding, revolutionary instrument that played its part in changing the face of popular music forever. (Guitar courtesy of the Vintage Guitar Boutique, London.)

Godin

GUITARS

rethink your tone

Joseph Arthur

"If you want to paint with
true tone....Godin."



Now available - The Ballad of Boogie Christ: Act 1 & 2

Photo : Michelle Shalloo Gadeikis

godinguitars.com

Godin Guitars are handcrafted in Canada and the USA
Godin Guitars, 19420 Ave. Clark-Graham, Baie D'Urle, Québec Canada H9X 3R8
© 2014 Godin Guitars (Godin is a registered trademark of Harmonilab Inc.)

josepharthur.com
twitter: @josepharthur
[facebook.com/josepharthurpage](https://www.facebook.com/josepharthurpage)



Bending Rules Part 5

Combining bending & tapping

For the final instalment of this series, we'll be looking at various ways to combine string bending with picking-hand tapping techniques, with some surprising results...

SOME of the following licks are decidedly unconventional and there is much to explain so, without further ado, let's just dive straight in and have a look at **EX. 1**. The core of this lick is a simple repeating three-note pattern that can be executed using the following steps: 1) Tap the third string at the 12th fret; 2) Pull-off to the 7th fret and immediately bend the string up one tone (preferably by bending downwards towards the floor – in this particular instance, I find that bending in this way facilitates a little extra speed); 3) Simultaneously release the bend and hammer on at the 9th fret.

This is essentially a fancier version of the Jan Hammer-esque idea, which we first encountered several months ago. The new developments here are the addition of the tapped note and also the fact that the lick is played as a series of 16th notes: this four-notes-per-beat spacing effectively displaces the feel of the basic three-note pattern each time it recurs, adding more rhythmic interest.

To execute the notes in the second bar, you would start by pulling off from the tapped note to the third-finger note at the 9th fret. Then, slide up to the 14th while bending the string up a tone (this time in the direction of the ceiling rather than floorwards) and finally tap the bent string at the 19th fret, taking care to avoid colliding with the neighbouring strings. (You should be able to use part of whichever fretting-hand fingertip you're using for the bend, to maintain a certain distance between the third and fourth strings...)

You'll see a few square 'hammer on from nowhere' markings in the tab for the next example, **EX. 2**: your picking hand will largely be occupied by its tapping duties, so you'll need another approach to make sure that

the first note on each new string rings out properly. Simply hammering on should elicit the desired effect, as long as you perform the movement with enough force and conviction – this should come naturally once the lick is in mid-flow – but when playing the very first note of the lick, you might want to try flicking the string using your tapping finger.

It can be hard to notate stuff like this clearly in tab form, but hopefully, the markings in the music over the page will provide sufficient clarity in terms of exactly where the pre-bent string needs to be tapped in order to produce the required pitches. (The third note of the lick, for instance, is tapped at the 18th fret, but the perceived pitch sounds like the 20th fret as the string has already been bent upwards by one whole tone...)

The underlying concept of this lick is to illustrate how you can evoke certain country-style inflections with the use of a decidedly atypical technique (ie, tapping.) It's good to mix things up sometimes!

To continue our theme of mixing things up, **EX. 3** starts out like a typical fluid-sounding tapped run, but then it throws in a few bends that are intended to evoke the sound of a keyboard player's pitch wheel. You'll need to use two different fingers on your tapping hand for this one: this admittedly makes things a little more technically involved than the well-worn *Eruption*-style triad clichés that we all know and love, but... it's still significantly easier than full-on eight-finger tapping, so there's really nothing to be scared of here!

Fun though it may be to indulge in the occasional tapping lick, it's always comforting to know that you can revert to a more conventional playing style at a moment's notice: for this reason, I would recommend

storing your pick somewhere that's easily accessible when you're playing licks of this nature. My own pick always seems to find its way into the crook of my slightly-bent picking-hand first finger, so I personally find that it feels most natural to use the second and fourth fingers of my tapping hand for the 14th and 16th fret notes on the third string. (This whole arrangement would simply shift one fret higher for the final few second-string notes at the end of the lick.)

For this kind of lick, my personal preference is for the fingers of the tapping hand to pull off towards the inside of the palm (rather like a mirror image of what your regular fretting hand would do), but there's really no 'right' or 'wrong' approach here: some other players prefer to execute their picking-hand pull-offs by flicking their tapping fingers outwards, towards the floor. I would urge you simply to figure out what feels easiest (and sounds cleanest) for you.

EX. 4 is one of those licks that I think will probably make much more sense on the accompanying video lesson than it does in tablature or music! Essentially, we're using tapped trills in conjunction with bent notes to emulate the sound of a blues-harmonica lick – which, of course, means that a gnarly overdriven sound will probably yield the most satisfying results, particularly if you use the bridge pickup of your guitar with the tone control wound down slightly...

Beat 1 sets things up by pre-bending a B note from the 11th fret and then briefly visiting the unbent B, before returning to the bent pitch. During beat 2, hold that semitone bend and trill between a tapped note at the 14th fret and the original bent note at the 11th. (This pair of notes should sound like B and D.) To

lead into beat 3, release the bend and slide your fretting finger down to the 10th fret, continuing to trill your tapping finger at the 14th. (This should now yield the notes A and C#.) The rest of the lick should look normal enough! Note that the little bend between the B \flat and the B is what makes this lick sound like a blues-harp lick, rather than just a simple series of trills...

EX. 5 marks our return to more pedal-steel-flavoured territory: it should sound somewhat reminiscent of the ideas we explored in last month's column, even though the technical approach is rather less orthodox this time. The main new technique introduced in this example is the idea of using two picking-hand fingers to tap (and subsequently pull off from) a doublestop. We're using the fretting hand to execute all the bends here: that means whenever one of the notes within a tapped doublestop is being bent, the fretting hand should actually be doing all the hard work while the tapping finger 'goes with the flow', simply trying to maintain its contact with the string as it moves.

Some additional fingering notes: during the first tapped doublestop shape (beat 1), you should have the third and fourth fingers of your fretting hand stationed on the second and first strings, behind the tapped notes,

so the fretting-hand third finger (perhaps backed up by the second) will be responsible for the bend on the second string: this will all be revealed in beat 2, after the double-string pull-off.

Less immediately apparent is what happens during the second doublestop shape: at this stage in the lick, I find it easiest to use my fretting-hand second and third fingers to fret the third and second strings respectively, so the second finger is tackling the bend there. Oh, and one other thing: note how the fretting hand repositions itself during the first half of beat 4, so it can sneakily 'reveal' that new 7th-fret doublestop when the tapping hand pulls off...

Well, all good things must come to an end and, alas, **EX. 6** will be our final lick for this whole series, so naturally, I wanted it to be something bizarre! Once again, this one illustrates how tapping and bending can be combined to create quirky pedal-steel effects and in some ways, it's reminiscent of Ex. 5, but with one key difference: this time, the two notes in each tapped doublestop are both hammered and pulled off individually. This might feel counter-intuitive at first, but hopefully the unusual sound of the end result will prove worthwhile. In general, you should aim to let the notes ring into each other as

much as possible for maximum effect. The accompanying video breakdown should make everything suitably clear, but it probably couldn't hurt to break down the first few notes in detail here. Bar 1, beat 1: start with third and fourth fingers of your fretting hand silently positioned at the 10th fret, on the second and first strings respectively. Now tap the first note with your picking-hand first finger, use the fretting-hand third finger to bend it up a tone and then hold that bend.

Beat 2: tap the high G note on the first string with your picking-hand second finger and then pull off to reveal the D (which your fretting hand will have had in position even before you tapped the first note. (Weirdly enough, I seem to prefer executing the pull-offs in this lick with a floorward flicking motion, rather than the palmward curl we discussed in the notes for Ex. 3.)

Beat 3: while continuing to hold the bend, you can now (finally) pull off from that tapped note on the second string, to reveal the bent note held by the fretting hand at the 10th fret. Then release the bend... and revel briefly in the fact that the rest of the notes in this bar are played relatively conventionally!

The rest of this lick uses essentially the same movements in different parts of the fingerboard. Happy string bending!

Example 1

THIS is an extended version of the Jan Hammer-esque lick we explored last issue, with a three-note pattern at its core.

Example 2

THIS lick depends on a clear note as you change strings. Hammer on with conviction, or flick each string with your tapping finger.

IS THIS A CUSTOM GUITAR?

Meet the Ashburn, from John Page Classic: elite custom design in a breakthrough production guitar. Designed by John Page, formerly Fender Custom Shop Co-Founder and among the greatest living custom luthiers. Built to spec, set up in the USA by John Page authorized techs. With Bloodline® by John Page JP-1 pickups and backed by a Lifetime Performance Guarantee™.* And ask about the new **Ashburn HH**, featuring Bloodline® by John Page JP-2 Dual Humbuckers on the Ashburn's S-style guitar body. Visit johnpageclassic.com

"The Ashburn has all the design features in my hand built custom guitars. It's the culmination of my nearly 40 years building custom guitars." John Page




JOHN PAGE CLASSIC
The Custom Production Guitar™
johnpageclassic.com

Coda Music **Sound Affects Premier**
coda-music.com soundaffectspremier.com

• For additional European dealers visit johnpageclassic.com

*See johnpageclassic.com for terms & conditions
Fender is a registered trademark of Fender Musical Instruments Corporation
John Page Classic and Bloodline® Pickups are HRS Unlimited brands

HRS
UNLIMITED

Example 3

THIS tapped run throws in a few bends and brings two fingers of the tapping hand into play, for a keyboard-pitch-wheel effect.

Example 3 is a musical notation for a tapped run. The notation is written on a single staff in 4/4 time, with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The tempo is marked 'Em'. The notation features a series of eighth notes, with some notes marked with a 'c' (crescendo) and 'm' (marcato). The run is divided into four measures, each containing a sixteenth-note triplet (indicated by a '6' below the notes). The first measure is marked 'BU' (bend up) and 'RP' (release pick). The second measure is marked 'BU'. The third measure is marked 'BU'. The fourth measure is marked 'BU'. The notation includes fingerings (1-4) and a final note marked '15-17'.

Example 4

TAPPED trills in conjunction with bent notes recreates the sound of a howling blues-harmonica riff in this lick.

Example 4 is a musical notation for a tapped trill with bent notes. The notation is written on a single staff in 4/4 time, with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The tempo is marked 'Em'. The notation features a series of eighth notes, with some notes marked with a 'tr' (trill) and a '1/4' (quarter note). The run is divided into four measures. The first measure is marked 'PB' (pick bend) and 'RP' (release pick). The second measure is marked 'BU' (bend up) and 'Hold bend, tap trill at 14th'. The third measure is marked 'Release bend, tap/trill at 14th'. The fourth measure is marked 'BU' (bend up) and '10-12'. The notation includes fingerings (1-4) and a final note marked '8'.

Example 5

THIS pedal-steel-style lick centres around using two picking-hand fingers to tap and then pull off from a doublestop shape.

Example 5 is a musical notation for a pedal-steel-style lick. The notation is written on a single staff in 4/4 time, with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The tempo is marked 'G'. The notation features a series of eighth notes, with some notes marked with a '3' (triple) and a '1' (first). The run is divided into four measures. The first measure is marked 'BU' (bend up) and 'RP' (release pick). The second measure is marked 'BU' (bend up) and 'RP' (release pick). The third measure is marked 'BU' (bend up) and 'RP' (release pick). The fourth measure is marked 'BU' (bend up) and 'RP' (release pick). The notation includes fingerings (1-4) and a final note marked '8'.

Example 6

THIS fireworks-display finalé lick incorporates many techniques we've covered in the series into a quirky pedal-steel bend.

Example 6 is a musical notation for a fireworks-display finalé lick. The notation is written on a single staff in 4/4 time, with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The tempo is marked 'G'. The notation features a series of eighth notes, with some notes marked with a '3' (triple) and a '1' (first). The run is divided into four measures. The first measure is marked 'BU (hold)' (bend up, hold) and 'RP' (release pick). The second measure is marked 'BU (hold)' (bend up, hold) and 'RP' (release pick). The third measure is marked 'BU (hold)' (bend up, hold) and 'RP' (release pick). The fourth measure is marked 'BU (hold)' (bend up, hold) and 'RP' (release pick). The notation includes fingerings (1-4) and a final note marked '5'.



PROGRESSIVE

EXPRESSIVE

DEFINITIVE

MARTYN EVANS / BLACK HAWK

SID GLOVER / MULE & RIFF RAFF

ADAM 'NOLLY' GETGOOD / MAILBOMB & HOLYDIVER

GUITAR TONE LIKE NO OTHER

www.bareknucklepickups.co.uk

Bare Knuckle



K LUSON CELEBRATING A WHOLE NEW LINE-UP

REVOLUTION



G-MOUNT TUNING MACHINES

- 19:1 HIGH GEAR RATIO
- NON-MOD DIRECT RETROFIT
- SEALED DIE-CAST HOUSING

90TH ANNIVERSARY

GUITAR WORLD BEST SHOW 2015 NAMM

+44 (0) 1233 820082
SALES@WDMUSIC.CO.UK

GUITAR GALLERIES

01723 370613

16 Bar Street, Scarborough, YO11 2HT

GUITAR-GALLERIES.CO.UK



Fender
Gretsch
Orange
Martin
Ibanez
Taylor
Godin
Seagull
Blackstar
Duesenberg
Simon And Patrick
Paul Reed Smith
Rickenbacker
And Much, Much More.....

Unrivalled Customer Care

GUITARZONE.co.uk
2 Crossley St, Halifax, HX1 1UG
01422 355668



Fender AUTHORIZED DEALER

Tanglewood

PRS GUITARS

Godin

Blackstar AMPLIFICATION

Duesenberg



GRETSCH

EVH

Freshman

TOUCHSTONE TONEWOODS

Musical Instrument Makers' and Repairers' Supplies
The best source for guitar and instrument wood, guitar parts, materials, tools and plans

Schaller

Albert Road North, Reigate, RH2 9EZ
Tel: 01737 221064
www.touchstonetonewoods.co.uk

Blues Headlines

Richard Barrett's in-depth lessons in blues playing technique will make you a better player – with full audio examples and backing tracks



Robben Ford combines a rich theoretical knowledge of chords and scales with the raw, emotive power of the blues

Gettin' Jazzy With It

Difficulty ★★★★★

10 mins per example

Tutor: Richard Barrett | Gear used: Fender Strat, Vox AC15 C1



HELLO, and welcome to another Blues Headlines. This month I'm looking at adding some jazzy touches to blues soloing, in a broadly similar style to players such as Larry Carlton and Robben Ford. Neither of these could be described as lacking in technical prowess or chord/theory knowledge, but they both choose to express themselves most often in a raw, emotive style that is more traditionally associated with the blues, adding occasional flashes of jazzy brilliance. That said, these examples don't require monster

'chops' – they're developments on the pentatonic shapes.

The idea is they will whet your appetite to explore some chord-based phrasing and make it more accessible. The backing track features a few more chord changes than your average 12-bar, but after a couple of listens should feel pretty comfortable, as it doesn't stray into 'bebop' territory – though there is lots of scope for 'playing over the changes'.

Coming at this from a 'pure' blues angle, you could solo pretty convincingly using only the standard blues 'boxes'. With this in

mind, though, it's interesting to go back and have another listen to some of those classic solos by SRV, BB King and Jimmy Page (I'm thinking particularly of *No Quarter*) and you'll hear some non-pentatonic lines that could imply all sorts of chord extensions and alterations over straight major/minor, powerchords, or even just bass and drums with no chord 'information' at all. It's quite intuitive – those players didn't study music as an academic subject, but they certainly know how to choose the right notes. The more you experiment, the better you'll get. Have fun!

Example 1

THIS cheeky little intro phrase is essentially a stretched pentatonic shape, giving an F and F# (minor/major 3rd respectively) rather than the E and F you would normally play when using this shape 1 pentatonic. Just a simple alteration like this can be enough to freshen up what might otherwise feel like a 'standard' blues lick. There's another F/F# bookending this in bar 2.

Swung
♩ = 104

A7#5 F9 D9

BU

E B G D A E

12 (14) 10 13 14 13 10 10 12 10 11

Example 2

ONE of Larry Carlton's favourite approaches is to superimpose a triad over a different, but related chord. Here, the first phrase employs a C major triad (Cmaj7 if you want to include those Bs at either end) over A minor, the relative minor. For the second half of bar 2, we outline a D triad, ending on a ♭7, which could be described as a D7 arpeggio, this time over its 'home' chord of D7.

Am7 Dsus9

E B G D A E

9 10 9 8 8 7 8 10 7 7 10

Example 3

THIS D blues scale line over the descending chords really pulls us back into blues territory, from what could easily have gone very jazzy. I've basically gone for the blues scale in the 'home' key (D) and been careful to avoid too many clashing notes. F natural and A_b are very effective as fleeting/passing tones, but don't get caught out pausing for thought on them!

D^{6/9} C^{6/9} B7#5 Em11

BU BD BU

Not swung

E B G D A E

12 (13) (12) 10 10 13 (15) 10 13 10 12 13 12 10 12 12 10 11 12 10 11 12 10

Example 4

OKAY, this is partly lifted from Robben Ford's solo on *Help The Poor*. What looks a bit like A7(#5) jazz trickery could also be seen as a modified D blues scale with a little imagination. This approach might help you assimilate other scales and arpeggios into your playing more naturally.

Hear It Here

Larry Carlton

Larry Carlton



This album, containing fusion classics like *Room 335* and *(It Was) Only Yesterday*, sees Larry harnessing the characteristics of a distorted, sustaining electric guitar in a very different context than people were accustomed to, loud and proud.

Robben Ford

Talk To Your Daughter



Robben's jazz-tinged playing employs many classic blues motifs, seamlessly integrated with sophisticated jazz lines and chord voicings. *Help The Poor* and *Ain't Got Nothin' But The Blues* are particularly fine examples of this.

Matt Schofield

Far As I Can See



Flying the flag for the UK, Matt is a different generation to Larry and Robben, but brings an authentic yet modern blues sensibility to unusual pentatonic soloing and jazzy lines. Absolutely loads of great ideas to be stolen/borrowed here.

Save on broadband, TV, phone!

Save
up to
£577*
per year

83% of our customers save!**

- 1 Call free and speak to a UK based impartial expert.
- 2 We review over 6,000 deals from the top UK providers to find the right one for you.
- 3 Our experts do the hard work, answer your questions and even arrange your installation!

PRICE COMPARISON
CALCULATOR
APPROVED BY
Ofcom

THIS MONTH'S TOP DEALS



sky

Call us for best value up to 20Mb broadband + TV + calls package



virgin
media

Call us for a great value, superfast fibre-optic broadband deal



*Let us do the hard work for you!
All it takes is one quick call.*

Call us free and we'll do the hard work!

0800 840 1712

Experts available: Monday-Friday 8am-8pm,
Saturday 9am-5.30pm, Sunday 10am-5.30pm

www.techradarstores.co.uk/digitalsave

simplifigital



PURE CLASS

"Clearly the product of witchcraft, this pedal takes your sound and simply makes it better!"

The Silver Box Booster is so much more than simply a clean boost, giving you huge tonal options and everything from clean sparkle to mild distortion - coupled with all the boost any sane person could possibly desire...."

PETE CALLARD
Shpongile, Lionel Richie, Shirley Bassey, Solo Artist, GT contributor and more

SILVER BOX BOOSTER
NEMPHASIS

Hand crafted, pure analogue, true bypass effects for guitar and bass

see madisonandfifth.co.uk for dealer information

Guitarist

DESIGN RETRO WORKS

DRW

IT'S NEW! IT'S HOT!

SONIC ARTISTRY FOR GREAT MASTERS

www.designretroworks.co.uk

Charles Guitars

SELECTED COMPONENTS TO UPGRADE OR BUILD YOUR GUITAR

Custom Built Guitars

Electronic Upgrade parts
Boutique Pickups
Metal & Plastic Hardware
Shielding Kits
Callahan Guitars
RS Guitarworks
...and much more

www.charlesguitars.co.uk

The **TOTNES SCHOOL** of **GUITARMAKING**

ESTABLISHED IN 1985

- A 12 week, comprehensive course
- Every kind of guitar / related instrument
- Beginner to working professional
- Full details, including photos of instruments made by past students, are in our prospectus / on our website

The Totnes School of Guitar-making
Collins Road, Totnes, Devon TQ9 5PJ
01803 865255
www.totnesschoolofguitar-making.co.uk

Recycle your magazine and seven days later it could come back as your newspaper.

recycle

The possibilities are endless.

www.recyclenow.com

www.**guitars4you.co.uk**

Specialist in fine new and used classic guitars

Tel: 01335 345777 - 7 days - 9am-7pm
E-mail mark@guitars4you.co.uk

Ibanez Prestige RG1520BK Team Craft + Roland Ready GK p/up.....	£650
Heritage H555 semi acoustic circa 2005 - old style burst.....	£1,790
Fender USA 60th Diamond Anniversary Strat - sunburst - very clean.....	£1,099
Fender Yuriy Shishkov Builder Select '63' Strat - aged artc white.....	£3,899
Fender Custom Shop '63' Joumeyman Relic Strat + Ancho Poblano p/ups.....	£2,599
Fender Masterbuilt '62' Heavy Relic Tele - DWilson - lake placid blue.....	£4,330
Fender John Cruz M/Built '57' Strat - sunburst NOS finish.....	£4,299
Fender Custom Shop '53' Heavy Relic Tele - Nocaster blonde.....	£2,699
Fender Custom Shop Ancho Poblano Strat - sunburst and blonde in stock.....	£2,479
Fender Custom Shop '57' Heavy Relic Strat - black - limited edition.....	£1,930
Fender Tele Deluxe - Olympic white - circa 1975 - original and clean.....	£2,899
Fender Tele Custom - black - circa 1974.....	£2,775
Fender USA Highway One Start - crimson transparent - 2002.....	£499
Yamaha SG1000 tobacco sunburst - circa 1979 - original + clean.....	£1,099
Gibson Custom Shop 58 Les Paul VOS + figured top - 2014 tobacco burst.....	£2,679
Gibson Flying V - white - 1986.....	£1,190
Gibson Firebird 1976 Bicentennial - natural mahogany.....	£2,299
Collings i35LC - choice in stock.....	£3,899
PRS Custom 22 gold top - stop tail - 2006.....	£1,599
PRS SC245 10 Top + birds - vintage natural - 2007.....	£1,690
PRS SC58 artist pack - black gold wrap - 2011.....	£2,459
PRS Modern Eagle Limited Edition sunset s/burst - 2010.....	£3,249
Gretsch Country Gent G7670 - walnut - circa 1979.....	£2,190
James Trussart Steekaster Deluxe - cream on red + roses - 2009.....	£2,649

More fine guitars in stock - visit www.guitars4you.co.uk

WANTED - QUALITY USED GUITARS | **EXPRESS MAIL ORDER**

Guitarist

To advertise here contact

Kate Butterfield

01225 687439

or email

kate.butterfield@futurenet.co.uk

Hartnoll's Guitar Centre

Run by guitarists, for guitarists in Plymouth,
Taunton and online. Best products, best service!

Plymouth 01752 255121
Taunton 01823 283307

Shop online 24/7 on our mobile optimised website:
www.hartnollguitars.co.uk



Online Orders: Free Delivery on all orders over £100. All guitars checked and setup before dispatch.



Tokai Japan

Some of the best
single cut, solid
body guitars money
can buy, now available

Recording King

Beautiful and highly
sought after traditional
instruments
from only £149!

RECORDING
KING



Recording King, South West Service Centre



Workshops
Guitar Repairs
Modifications
Amp Repairs
(vintage & modern)
Keyboard Repairs

Tokai LS95 GT £999
Fender Dlx Jazz £749
Fender Japan 52 Tele £777
PRS Starla £999
Gibson SG Bass £899
The Loar LH 204 £344
RK RP-1-16C £410
RK RP2-626 £691
RK ROH-07 £149
RK ROS-616 £525
RK RD-126-FE2 £611

Scan to like
us on Facebook



/hartnollguitars

Shop In Store/Online
Best Prices Available
Great Service
Knowledgeable Staff



We match any UK Official Dealer Price
Prices same online & in store
pay Later Interest Free Credit
Apply Online



HOT ROX UK

Parts, Boutique Fx, Guitars, Accessories

TEI: 0115 9873163
Email: sales@hotroxuk.com
www.hotroxuk.com

PLEASE VISIT OUR STORE
Unit 6, Millview Court
Newark Street
NOTTINGHAM NG2 4PS



Near
Nottingham
Train Station

Supplying Musicians and the Music Industry WorldWide

CIOKS



Probably the only
Power Supply
You will need

The **VT1000**
Valve Tester
Only £285
(Free UK Delivery)



Compact and easy to use

ROCKBOARD Pedal Boards
By Warwick from Germany



Soft Cases - Flight Cases - All Sizes

TAD



Highly Tuned and Matched
Selected for Superior Performance



Xotic
Wah Pedal
Now in store



The New **NANO POG** by Electro Harmonix
Just one of many new pedals released - Check them out now



JENSEN



5/8/10/12/15 Inch Speakers
Ceramic, Alnico, Neo



www.hotroxuk.com

We Ship to the UK, Europe and WorldWide

We Ship to the UK, Europe and WorldWide



CIOKS
DC5
IN STORE NOW

Great
Savings

Ernie Ball
Slinky 3 Packs



Great
Savings



Digitech Trio Band Creator Pedal
The TRIO listens to the way you play and automatically
generates bass and drum parts that match your song
SEE THE VIDEO...

STRYMON



News Letter Sign Up
and Receive Huge Savings

DISCOUNT
CODE
VALVE-KITS

We are Here
To Help
0115 9873163

Best Prices
Need A
Price Match?



Visit our Store where you can choose from
1000's of Boutique Fx and Guitars

NEED VALVES?



“Bring Back The Power!”

Restore the vitality and
sparkle to your guitar
amplifier with a new set
of valves.

For your new preamp
and power valves visit:

www.ampvalves.co.uk

Ampvalves

Unit 6 The Meads Business Centre,
Swindon SN5 7YJ

Readerads

Free Adverts for *Guitarist* readers to buy, sell and exchange

Electrics

Collings 290 TV Yellow plus original case as new £1,800 or swap for Custom Shop Strat, rosewood 'board, of same value. Phone Dave, 01865 765667.

Fender Mustang 1969 reissue, Lake Placid Blue with competition stripes made by Fender Japan, excellent cond. £595 call Giles 01453 885630

Fender Stratocaster SRV Artist Series 2003 Texas Special, all original, tweed case £925, pick up only, Essex 01277 626595

Fender Telecaster '52 reissue beautiful Blonde, bell tones, tweed case, £850 pick up only Essex 01277 626595

Gibson, limited-edition Jimmy Page Black three pickups, 460 of 500. Rare. Some paint damage to headstock. Otherwise pristine. £8,000. Email mdugg@aol.com.

Gibson Night Hawk Cherry, three pups, no Bigsby, jazz/blues delight. Hard case, £775, pick up only. 01277 626595

Gretsch White Falcon 7593 excellent condition, orig. hard case. £1,950. Jimi 07796 141231 or email kathryn@bellenger.fsnet.co.uk Oxon

Rickenbacker 360 Maple Glo, 1995, stunning maple figuring, in superb condition with minimum wear on frets inc Rickenbacker case. £1,295 01386 861873

Job lot of early 60s guitars. Guyatone, Starway, Vox Stroller Burns Weill Bass. £260 the lot. All working. Call Mick 07445 849911. Heathrow area

Acoustics

Martin 000-18, 2009. Excellent condition. Spruce top, mahogany back/sides, rosewood 'board, bone nut/saddle, 24.9-inch scale.

Original receipt, Martin hard case. £1,150. andybailey21@btinternet.com. 07762 174964. Bucks.

Martin 000-28, 1971, crack-free, awesome tone, low action, fitted pickup, beauty. £1,850, call 07903 243873

Amps

Aiken Tomcat head, rare 12-watt EL84 P2P, US built. 4/8/16ohm, attenuator, bright and drive modes. Excellent. Bristol area. £1,250.

nas1552003@yahoo.co.uk

Ampeg Jet J-20 combo. 2x6V6, 20 watts, 12-inch Alnico Eminence, point-to-point wired. Excellent condition. £350ono.

Call Ian on 01904 270079 E-mail janderson.jnr@gmail.com. York.

Fender Custom Vibrolux Reverb amp. VGC, 40 watt, beautiful reverb and tremolo. Includes Fender footswitch and cover. Downsizing due to baby! £800. 07973 293083. Kieran, North Devon

Fender Blues Junior III 15-watt combo, Groove Tube valves, less than 12 months old, mint condition, £380. Call Giles 01453 885630

Fender Super Champ, Paul Rivera era, 1982, handwired 18 watt, vgc, custom footswitch, great tone, rare. Mick 01844 354051. Email mcmewett@aol.

com. Oxon £850

Fender Vibrolux, original '64 'blackface', very rare 1x12 model. Superb vintage amp. Pictures available. £1,800ono. Call Tom 07748 813813

Marshall JVM210C with padded leather cover and programmable footswitch. Recently serviced and revalved. £700 ono. Email darknight74@hotmail.co.uk or phone 07519 983324. Devon

Bass

Fender Jazz Bass, Standard series, USA pickups, Olympic White with rosewood 'board, pro set up, mint condition, £525. call Giles 01453 885630

Effects

Analogue Man King Of Tone version 4, hi-gain on yellow channel. Mint condition, boxed, bag, stickers etc. £350 plus p&p. Call 02392 468532 or email keithwpurnell@btinternet.com for photo.

Misc

Celestion G12H Heritage Low Resonance speaker. Barely run in. £70ono. Also, Jensen C15N speaker, baffle mounted to fit Fender TR. £60ono. Call Ian on 01904 270079, email janderson.jnr@gmail.com.

Pickup clearout, Gibson 57 Classic set and hardware, £65. Gibson Burstbucker #2 (bridge) and surrounds, £35. Also various other Fralin, Lollar etc. Call Ian on 01904 270079. Email janderson.jnr@gmail.com.

Before you submit an advert...

Guide example to formatting your adverts

CATEGORY: Electrics **ADVERT:** Fender Stratocaster, USA Standard, 2001, black, white scratchplate, three Lace Sensor pickups, vgc, never gigged, Fender hard case, £435ono. Call Joe on 01234 567890 E-mail joeblogs@youreemail.co.uk Runcorn

Send your ads to: guitarist.readerads@futurenet.com

PLEASE NOTE: Due to the section's popularity there can sometimes be a period of around a month before your advert will appear. We are unable to send a notice of receipt for your advert. *Guitarist* magazine reserves the right to omit or change any reader ads which fail to meet the above guidelines or infringe any company's registered trademarks, ie Strat copy, Gibson copy, and so on. Please write concisely and double check phone number and e-mail address! You get 21 words max, and they're all free! FREE we tell you!

ORDER HOTLINE | 01905 723951

✓ TRUSTPILL
★★★★★

STORE OPEN 7 DAYS A WEEK | MON-SAT 10AM-6PM | SUN 11AM-4PM



WAS... £645
NOW £529



EX DEMO
WAS... £1799
NOW £1499



WAS... £699
NOW £679



WAS... £458
NOW £389



PRE USED
WAS... £749
NOW £649



WAS... £774
NOW £699



WAS... £579
NOW £345



PRE USED
WAS... £749
NOW £549



MASSIVE CHRISTMAS SALE!!!

Ibanez

James Neligan

Alvarez



WAS... £349
NOW £235



WAS... £329
NOW £315



WAS... £249
NOW £235



WAS... £339
NOW £319



WAS... £349
NOW £329



WAS... £189
NOW £165



WAS... £429
NOW £395



WAS... £408
NOW £389



WAS... £329
NOW £299

WWW.WORCESTERGUITARCENRE.CO.UK

COME AND SHAKE YER BOUTIQUE WITH RED WITCH EFFECTS!!!



RED WITCH SEVEN SISTERS - £89each



RED WITCH



VIOLETTA DELAY
£105



ZEUS BASS FUZZ
£219



FUZZ GOD II
£159

HUGE RANGE OF TOP BRANDS!!!

- NEXT DAY DELIVERY *
- FREE DELIVERY OVER £99
- HASSLE FREE RETURNS
- SECURE PAYMENTS
- UK PRICE MATCH
- TRUSTED SHIPPING

* IF ORDERED BEFORE 3PM



A REAL CHRISTMAS
CRACKER OFFER!!!
5% OFF ALL GUITARS
WITH THIS CODE
'WGCSANTA'*

* CAN ONLY BE REDEMED ON WEBSITE FOR LIMITED TIME ONLY

6 REINDEER COURT | WORCESTER | WR1 2DS

Ibanez ORANGE PRS Guitars Alvarez LACE MXR Marshall Airline

GIBSON ACOUSTIC

2016 LIMITED SOUTHERN JUMBO
MYSTIC ELECTRO AUTUMN BURST



GIBSON ACOUSTIC

2016 LIMITED 12-FRET ADVANCED
JUMBO ELECTRO VINTAGE SUNBURST



GIBSON USA

2016 LES PAUL TRADITIONAL T
ICED TEA



GIBSON CUSTOM

M2M CS8 50'S STYLE LES PAUL STANDARD VOS
BEAUTY OF THE BURST P.52



GIBSON MEMPHIS

ES-349 GLOSS 2015 WALNUT



GIBSON CUSTOM

HANDPICKED HISTORIC SELECT
1959 LES PAUL 2015 GREEN LEMON
VINTAGE GLOSS



GIBSON MEMPHIS

ES-LES PAUL BASS 2015
GOLD TOP



GIBSON MEMPHIS

1963 ES-335 BLOCK VOS 2015
VINTAGE NATURAL



GIBSON USA

LIMITED FLYING V
CLASSIC WHITE



GIBSON USA

LIMITED FIREBIRD
NON-REVERSE
FADED PELHAM BLUE



WWW.GAK.CO.UK

**LOOKING FOR FINANCE OR SEEN A BETTER DEAL?
WE WILL MATCH OR BEAT ANY UK OR EUROPEAN PRICE!**

**LINES OPEN 'TIL 10PM MONDAY TO FRIDAY!
STORE OPEN 7 DAYS A WEEK!**

PRS

**30TH ANNIVERSARY CUSTOM 24
FINAL RUN BURNT MAPLE LEAF**



PRS

**30TH ANNIVERSARY CUSTOM 24
FINAL RUN CHARCOAL**



PRS

**30TH ANNIVERSARY SE CUSTOM 24
AMETHYST / VINTAGE SUNBURST /
CHESTNUT**



PRS

**S2 STANDARD
ICE BLUE FIREMIST / EGYPTIAN GOLD**



PRS

S2 MIRA SEMI-HOLLOW ICE BLUE FIREMIST



PRS

**30TH ANNIVERSARY CUSTOM 24 w/STAINED FLAME MAPLE NECK
GREY BLACK**



PRS

**30TH ANNIVERSARY CUSTOM 24 w/STAINED FLAME MAPLE NECK
BLACK GOLD BURST**



PRS

S2 VELA EGYPTIAN GOLD



BUY NOW PAY 2016

AND FINANCE DEALS UP TO 48 MONTHS FROM 0% APR AVAILABLE ON THOUSANDS OF PRODUCTS!

All prices correct at time of going to print. Offers & conditions changed.

GAK

THE BEST PRICE • THE BEST SERVICE

THE GUITAR, AMP & KEYBOARD CENTRE

76-81 NORTH ROAD, BRIGHTON, EAST SUSSEX, BN1 1YD

ORDER HOTLINE 01273 665 400

NEXT WORKING DAY DELIVERY IF ORDERED BEFORE 3PM

FREE DELIVERY ON ORDERS OVER £99



VISIT OUR STORES!



LOCATED IN BRIGHTON'S HISTORIC NORTH LAINE!
LONDON VICTORIA TO BRIGHTON STATION IN LESS THAN AN HOUR!



WWW.GAK.CO.UK

CONNECT WITH GAK! [f](https://www.facebook.com/gakmusic) FACEBOOK.COM/GAKMUSIC [@GAK_CO_UK](https://twitter.com/gak_co_uk) [▶](https://www.youtube.com/gakvision) YOUTUBE.COM/GAKVISION

LOOKING FOR FINANCE OR SEEN A BETTER DEAL?
WE WILL MATCH OR BEAT ANY UK OR EUROPEAN PRICE!

LINES OPEN 'TIL 10PM MONDAY TO FRIDAY!
STORE OPEN 7 DAYS A WEEK!

UP TO 48 MONTHS

0%

FINANCE AVAILABLE
ON THOUSANDS OF PRODUCTS!

CALL NOW
FOR INSTANT DECISION!
01273 665 400

BUY NOW PAY 2016

AND FINANCE DEALS UP TO 48 MONTHS FROM 0% APR AVAILABLE ON THOUSANDS OF PRODUCTS!

All prices correct at time of going to print - errors & omissions excepted

FIND YOUR SOUND.



We have given the acclaimed DSL5C a Country & Western makeover. Whether chicken pickin' or rocking hard, this special edition DSL5C combines classic Marshall tone and versatility in a striking Americana look. Featuring an all-valve signal path and Power drop function, the DSL5C produces sparkling pure-valve cleans and rich Marshall overdrive at 5 Watt or 1 Watt. But be quick. There are only 200 special edition DSL5C Country & Western amplifiers available for the whole UK.

For more information contact your Marshall Dealer.

MARSHALLAMPS.COM | #LIVEFORMUSIC

Marshall