

INSIDE

Vibrolux Deaux

3

Mr. Valco
&

The BFVR Lowdown

6

Vibrolux Reverb
Enhancements
Dave Boze

9

The 1958
Supro Rhythm Tone

11

Lollar
Summertime
Catch-up

12

State of
NOS Tubes
&
Homegrown Honey

14

Tom Guerra
Sentimental Junk

17

The Allen
Accomplice
Amp

18

The Beautiful Gift

the ToneQuest

The Player's Guide to Ultimate Tone

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Report™

Vibrolux Deaux

How now brutha's and sisters! So good to see you again. Yes, we know everyone is wondering what lies ahead, and I'm here to tell you the fine news—The ToneQuest goes on forever. My cherished amigo David Wilson dreamed up and created this beautiful magazine, and he would want nothing more than for it to be held on high and to continue celebrating everything tone. So, you better



1966 Vibrolux Reverb

believe we will. I'm here and always will be. If you have some cool stories of your own relative to guitars, amps, artists, let us know. The plain and simple truth is that we have a hundred lifetimes of gear and inspiring musician characters to write about. We are just getting started. In fact, you ain't seen nothing yet. Let's roll.

"I want to hear a telecaster through a Vibrolux turned up to ten."

—John Hiatt

The hallowed days of Clarence Leonidis "Leo" Fender have always been revered around here. Would any of this have happened if it wasn't for an unfortunate and strange vision setback? When he was eight, he lost an eye thanks to a tumor, and got a glass replacement. This later kept him from being in the war, and gave us endless fodder for joy, thanks to the amps and guitars he cranked out, let alone the lap steels. What is bizarre is that he couldn't even play guitar, since he

www.tonequest.com

diddled around with piano and sax some, but eventually fell down the rabbit hole of electronics, tinkering with them to his heart's content. It didn't hurt that his uncle built a radio out of spare parts at his automotive shop and little Leo dug the sounds barking out of it so much he taught himself to repair them. Somewhere around the early 1930s he was a delivery man and bookkeeper for an ice and cold storage facility and found a true love in Esther Klosky and they married soon after. He later got canned from a car tire shop and moved to Fullerton, borrowed six hundred bucks, and started Fender Radio Service. The rest was equal parts magical and gonzo. Some things are just meant to be in life —the path is the path, and don't you ever think otherwise.

The blackface era of Fender amps has always been the bar for me. I've kept the same 1965 Deluxe Reverb and the blonde 1966 Super Reverb for more than twenty years and have



Deluxe, 1966 Vibrolux Reverb, Super Reverb

played them around the clock. A decade ago, I got a 1964 Vibrolux Reverb, and something was funky about it, it just wasn't happening. I sold it to Mr. Valco at a steal of a price because that's what we do for people we care about, friends and family alike, and it turned out the amp had a lead ground wiring switch that had been lifted and wasn't firing off right. No wonder we didn't dig it. Mr. Valco serviced it and brought it back to such roaring glory that he still uses it today as his number one amp. We always knew we'd find another, but hadn't yet gotten around to it, thanks to the steep prices and already having a couple blackface amps we loved dearly. But watching the values start to truly soar out of range, many of which are now five grand plus, we knew it was time to make it happen or forever have missed our chance.

I quick call to Valco and he let us know there was a one-owner mint 1966 Vibrolux Reverb amp an hour or so away from him in Columbus, Indiana. The owner advertised it on Facebook only. We don't have Facebook here, we prefer the real face time, but Valco sent us pics and gave us the lowdown, offered to drive there and check it out if we sent the dough as backup preparation. You know we wouldn't pass that up. The owner wouldn't budge one hair on the price. We waited him out.

A few weeks later, same thing, not a penny off. Fine then, sometimes you have to pay to play.

We'd already looked at quite a few of them for sale around the country, and so many of them had changes in the original circuit board that we weren't interested. We could care less about the condition of the cabinets, a beater would be fine and worst-case scenario, the amp could be restored by Gregg Hopkins in Missouri. For the most part, it's the original trannies and circuit boards/speakers that make them sing. With Valco's old truck in the shop, he grabbed a rental car and hit the road for us to check it out.

The day of the drive, I thought back to the strange and beautiful circumstances that brought Mr. Valco into my orbit. In 2005, I found a 1953 National tweed amp in a Texas pawn shop. It was missing the back panel and needed to be worked on. I scored it, shipped it to him in Indiana, and the phone call back was nothing short of hilarious. "Riverhorse, this is Terry Dobbs. I got that amp here, real cool. You're not going



Terry Dobbs AKA Mr. Valco

to believe this, but I used to own it and still have the original back panel, so I'll put that on when I fix it." We did believe it, and with Mr. Valco, there is always a bonus story or two. "Something happened in the barn in my backyard and as near as I can figure, a raccoon must have got in there one night, accidentally cut himself a bit on some sheet metal, which probably freaked him out, so he ran laps around the perimeter of the barn and little spots of blood flew off onto the tweed of the amp panel. That's my guess, anyway. But it looks rad, doesn't hurt the tone." Needless to say, the amp came back to Texas and kicked ass, especially with the original back panel and blood spots on the tweed of the cabinet, as if Jackson Pollock himself had customized it.

Since then Valco and I have had some amps pass back and forth, as well as adventures you most likely read about here, that found us in a Super 8 parking lot together with Stevie

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Ray's amp and a drugged out guy holding a shotgun while we got the amp from the thieves and back to the Vaughan family, another rowdy time in Georgia where the aforementioned SRV amp blew up, let alone shenanigans in Nashville where we were launched by bouncers from three bars in a row during a power outage. Boys will be boys. We feel Valco is one of the smallest handfuls of absolute genius vintage amp repair savants left in the world —there will never be another like him, same as fellow whiz Jeff Bakos of Bakos Amp Works. Having Valco not only inspect this amp but offering to take it home and restore whatever need be for us if we did green light the purchase on our behalf, is as slam dunk an opportunity as they come. Maybe it would be a bust, but as TQ publisher David Wilson recently said, *"If you aren't failing here or there in the quest, you aren't questing hard enough."*

Leaps of faith matter in life. You have to take your shots. Valco called from the front yard of the seller's home to give us the lowdown before he pulled the trigger with the cash we sent. Turns out, the amp was in all original condition, even down to the 2-prong cord and original GE and RCA tubes, Jensens, and the Mullard rectifier. We asked if it was cranking up nicely, and about the reverb and trem, to which Valco responded, "Oh yeah, it sounds all there. In fact, I was cranking it so much the owner's wife freaked out and she's been hiding in the bathroom the whole time, she's still in there right now!" Well that sounds like a winner to us, and apologies to the former owner's wife for the hot shower of tone blasting through their casa. Sold.

We dig amps that are more than one trick ponies, so were game for Valco to do a few "no harm no foul mods" of the amp, along with all the other restoration decisions he taught



Mr. Valco & Band

us about and took care of. It was a six week wait, but well worth it, if even for the fun phone calls and anticipation of it.

Here's Valco with his version of the story, and to describe the mods and restorative repairs he made.

Mr. Valco And The BFVR Lowdown

The blackface Vibrolux Reverb amp, as most of you may know already, is one of the most desirable vintage amps on the market today. It wasn't always that way, though. Years ago, stage volumes in gig situations often required more powerful amps to keep up with required sound levels. The Showman, Pro, Twin or Super Reverb would be more in order back then when your other guitar player in the band was using a Marshall head with a 4 X12 cabinet. Times are different now and smaller amps rule the day for most players who get gigs where people want to socialize, dance and interact with each other. Anymore, they rarely come to hear a concert, sit in their seats and enjoy a rock and roll show at ear splitting, tinnitus inducing high decibel levels.

The Vibrolux Reverb is an amp that can deliver the goods at moderate volumes but pump out the sound if needed. It's versatile, not too heavy, 35-watts, with great blackface Fender tone. *Under 40-Watts of Whoop Ass*, indeed. A blackface Vibrolux Reverb has been my go-to amp for many years now, especially if we've booked a gig at a venue I've not played before. Using a pedal set to a slight clean boost, you can get sweet tones with good sustain at lower volumes with plenty more on tap if needed.

My setup is a 1971 Goldtop Les Paul with a set of 1962 Patent Sticker PAFs installed. She was already routed for a set of full-size humbuckers when I got it. I use just a few pedals: A Thomas Organ Crybaby Wah, a Timmy for clean boost, and an Ibanez CD10 Delay Champ for a bit of slap back effect.



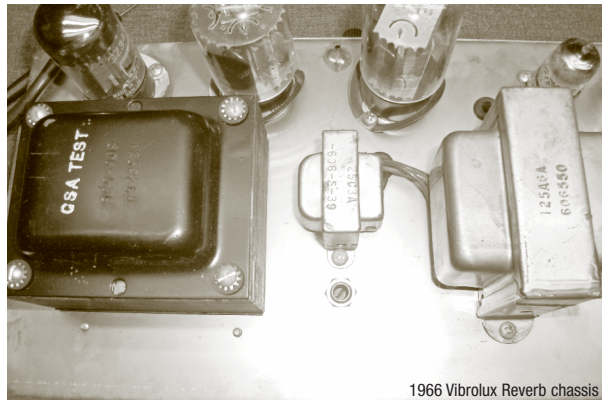
The Vibrolux is special to me because, with the two 10-inch speakers providing enough surface area to push a lot of sound

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if needed, the moderate sized output transformer to give up just enough saturation and harmonic content when pushed, the 5AR4 tube rectifier with just a hint of sag and the amp's slightly smaller power transformer —everything combines to really hit the sweet spot at moderate volume levels.

You can control your volume and the amount of clarity or overdrive from the amp by simply lightening up your pick attack or digging full-bore into the strings. This helps you connect with the amp and the way it responds, and in a touch sensitive way. If you are a player who tries to impart some emotional content into your playing, it's an amp that can respond to give voice to what you're feeling when you play. This is why I've held onto my Vibrolux Reverbs, including a great 1964 Vibrolux that I bought from Riverhorse about a decade ago.

Which brings us to a call I got from Riverhorse a couple months ago telling me he's looking for a good BFVR amp. I had my eye on an early 1966 with stock Fender label Jensen speakers, it appeared to be still all original including foot-switch and two prong AC cord. Riverhorse talked with the seller and was interested in the amp. It was close by where I live so I grabbed a guitar to test it with, went to look it over and play it. The seller had the amp already fired up and ready to plug into when I got there, and she sounded strong with the potential to be a very nice sounding example. I called to give the lowdown on the amp and Riverhorse pulled the trigger on it. After I got back with the amp, I pulled the chassis to look under the hood. She was bone stock all original, no solder connections had been touched, and she even had the



1966 Vibrolux Reverb chassis

original RCA and Mullard tubes from the factory save for one replaced RCA 6L6GC.

A grounded 3-prong AC cord was installed, and the ground reference capacitor removed. The ground reference capacitor is also known as the *death cap* and was used in many vintage amps that had only a 2-prong AC cord stock from the factory. The cap was installed straight to the 117Vac wall voltage from one leg of your 2-prong power cord, then to the chassis ground as a reference point to ground, often with a polarity switch allowing you to switch between hot and neutral for the

lowest hum setting. If the ground reference capacitor fails as a shorted capacitor, the amp chassis could then have the full AC wall voltage on the chassis. Your guitar cable is plugged into that chassis when using the amp and that's why it's called the death cap. You can see why it is very important to remove the ground reference capacitor, install a grounded 3-prong AC cord using best practices and only use a correctly wired grounded wall outlet. An inexpensive GRT-500 circuit tester is a tool you should have to test your wall outlet to make sure it is wired correctly. Google it and buy one.

The amp needed fresh filter, bias and bypass capacitors and I replaced the drifted out of spec B+, screen grid and bias resistors. The circuit eyelet fiber board also had some minor conductivity issues that needed addressed and I took care of that. Cleaned the pots, jacks, and tube sockets, checked all grounds and verified all voltages. The Fender labeled Jensen C10Ns sound fabulous, just a perfect set of speakers for this amp. The tremolo worked but sounded weak even after replacing the tremolo circuit bypass capacitor, so I made and installed a new custom tremolo LDR module. I installed a matched set of RCA Black plate RCA 6L6GCs and biased them up.

Riverhorse asked me to install a “Raw” control, this is a mod that is completely reversible using a 25K pot in the extension speaker jack mounting hole. Turning the 25K pot all the way

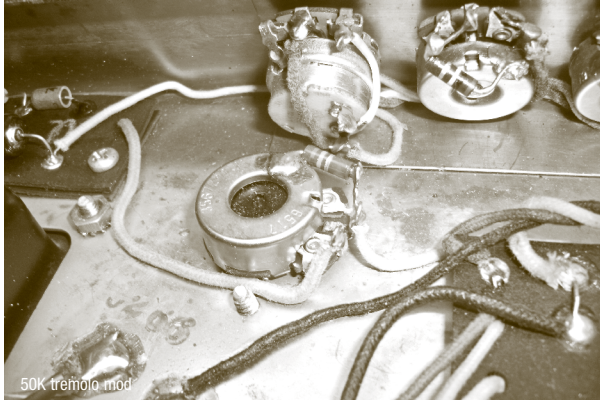


25K raw mod

down keeps the circuit stock with the 6.8K resistor to ground as a fixed midrange setting. Turning the pot up adds up to 25K more resistance in series with the 6.8K to increase the midrange dramatically if desired. I also installed two more easy mods that work well and keep the amp circuit settings dead stock if you choose to do that based on where you adjust the control of either mod. These mods require no drilling or other amp defiling hackery of such a cool vintage amp and are completely reversible back to stock using the parts saved for posterity.

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The next mod is a Tremolo Intensity pot lift mod using a 50kRA pot with an ON/OFF switch to open or close one



circuit connection to the pot. RA means “reverse audio taper.” That’s important so you will have the correct sweep of the intensity control and I keep the correct taper pots on hand for this mod. The circuit sees the 50K pot as a 50K resistance to ground. With the Intensity pot switch in the ON position, the tremolo Intensity sweep works as stock. Turning the pot counterclockwise where it clicks to the Off position, the 50K pot resistance is lifted from ground, the tremolo is disabled, and the amp signal is boosted. It’s a good mod I use on my amps, and you can always reinstall the original pot so no harm done. The last mod was to use a 3-way On/Off/On switch installed in the stock ground switch hole to have the ability to set the global feedback from the stock value of 820 ohms to 2.2K for less feedback, more gain and grit, and a setting giving the amp no feedback for even more goosing the signal. The 820-ohm resistor is in series with the 2.2K resistor in this setup. Both the lowered and no feedback mods can sound pretty good when the amp is set to lower volumes, especially when you need the amp to give up the goods early.

Engaging the feedback mod, turning down the amp volume and adjusting the Raw control and tone controls will give up vibes that are kind of Marshall like, that is, not really a Marshall sound, but a moderate overdrive with a more aggressive crunch we can all use on occasion. All three mods work well and sound best if the amp volume is set below 5 on the volume dial. Once you turn the amp up to 5 or above on the volume, the stock circuit and overdrive sound best to me, Leo Fender knew what he was doing when he designed these circuits. These mods take nothing away but only add some lower volume flexibility when you want it.

The Texas Vibro-Shuttle Landing

Yes, it’s a fine feeling unboxing a vintage amp and wondering how she fared in the journey to you. We take our time, just savoring the moment and reveling in the packing tape and our small well-worn carbon blade pocketknife from France, the sweet expectant glow of it all. Valco packed this amp with

the utmost tender and heartfelt care. Even the tubes had been pulled and placed into a separate box, small, bubbled foil around each one with a removable sticker number for layout V position, and the footswitch bubble wrapped inside yet another box, with a third box holding the original 2-prong cord and parts changed, and a fourth holding the tube shields. The amp had thick protective cardboard panels in the front and back of it, as well as was double boxed with a 3-inch space in between the layers. Amazing. This is how it should be done. We shall respect these vintage sweethearts and all they give back to us. Ship ‘em safe, insured to full value with a signature required, always and forever.

I decided to wait a few weeks and just stare at the amp lovingly to get used to it being here. My ass! I plugged that baby right in and warmed it up, broke out the sunburst Strat and the Evidence Audio Lyric HG cable and got down to it! There was a noisy bizarre static coming from the strings anytime I got near them, which was awful. Everything sounded ungrounded. I plugged in the vintage Deluxe Reverb in the same outlet to see if that had it, too. It did not, was quiet like it always is. With the Deluxe plugged into the second socket of the same outlet, not even turned on, though, the static went away for the Vibrolux when I played it again. Interesting. A quick call to Valco and we deduced the outlet in this old 1910 bungalow may have a 3-prong socket, but it was not really grounded. The reason the Super Reverb and the Deluxe Reverb when



cranked up in this room didn’t ever have the ungrounded static sound was because they still have the death caps, he had explained to us. I moved the amp into the kitchen where there are properly updated GCF sockets from someone who lived here before me, so I could get right back to it.

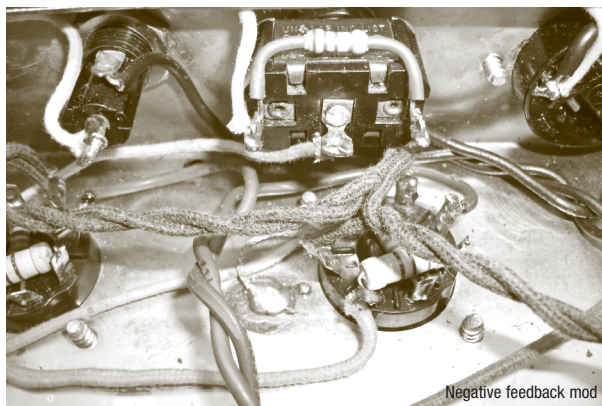
The beautiful tree hugger hippie blonde girlfriend who has put up with us for three years now was in the kitchen making

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a salad. Somehow, she was not surprised when I dragged the Vibrolux in there and plugged it in next to the sink. She has watched with bizarre fascination as I've labeled stashes of NOS tubes, and tested endless amps, pedals, guitars, you name it. The looks she gives me when I am fawning over the old Roger Mayer Octavia Fuzz pedal are priceless, if not concerning. She doesn't say anything, just observes. I wonder if something is wrong with us tone freaks, and then I think, heck no, everything is right with us. With all the BS out there in the world, making music that spans the range of all human emotions is why we are here. Know what we mean? Yes, by gosh, you do.

As Tom Petty said, "Don't bore us, get to the chorus." The Vibrolux has a perfectly unreal range of headroom which allows for glorious shimmering cleans, gradually warming up as you put it through the volume paces, into a big, gushing, and magical wide-glide drive. You can push it onto that gorgeous Dickie Betts almost infinitely sustaining soaring single note bends which are clear as a bell but still wickedly stout. The original Jensen C10Ns in this amp are the top shelf magic in here. We recommend finding one for any amp you have with a ten, but it is a tough and pricy search, for sure.

If the tremolo mod was not done a certain way, it would lose whomp, but Valco does his unique version that keeps everything there, with not an ounce of magic compromised. When we clicked out the tremolo intensity, the amp got richly fatter and louder. Of all three mods done, we were the most surprised by this one. As much as we love tremolo, using it often, this was a radical bonus for playing around the home (kitchen, too, ahaha), and for smaller venue gigs where we can't crank things as much as we'd like to. We are still getting used to the options the feedback mod offers, it is cool,



yet we have to take the time to adjust bass and treble, since depending on volume, you have to do this as you go with all blackface amps, mods or not, to find the sugary, balanced and unblanketed sweet spots. As for the RAW mod? That lets us get a fat, gristly, pissed-off juicy midrange which all guitars live for. Take or leave any of these but as far as we are concerned, RAW mod —ya gotta do it. We can now blend all

three mods if we care to. They are tools. Voices. With three vintage blackface amps here now, what have we learned? The Deluxe Reverb certainly meets the hype as the desert island amp. With the right speaker and when you have a good one brought up to specs by a tech like Valco, they are sublime. It will most likely remain the amp that gets the most playing time around here. The Super Reverb is the flat-out bluesiest and most powerfully inspiring of the bunch, indeed. Nothing feels as joyous as unleashing it and letting the neighbors hear what we are up to for blocks away, pushing heaps of air like no tomorrow. There is a reason it is here. While everyone out there says these big Super amps are too loud and too heavy, we disagree, the tone is incomparable. As for the Vibrolux Reverb, with the punch and clear resonant low-end and the upper spectrum patented Fender chime/sparkle of those two tens blowing away, the range of usable headroom, where it folds up and sings when cranked, and how portable it is for any gig imaginable, well that is an amp that can cover every base you'd ever dream of for a blackface. Unreal perfection. They may be getting up there in price, but we still think for a true player who will crank them and cherish them, they are all worth the dough if you can swing it, if not far more. Black is beautiful baby! Quest forth... TQ

—Riverhorse

DAVE BOZE

Vibrolux Reverb Enhancements

We caught up with Dave while he was juggling a Broadway gig playing in the pit and holding court teaching a high school jazz band, along with a big band gig, too. We love it, he's our kind of people, and yes, that was him who wrote the *Under 40 Watts of Whoopass* ToneQuest story back in the day. Here's what he has to say about the BFVR and potential mods:

Vibrolux Reverb "Enhancements"

It's hard to beat a Fender Vibrolux Reverb black panel amp for the almost perfect mid-size club gigging amp. The slightly lower plate voltage of the power tubes gives it a nice slight creamy break-up when pushed. When originally designed the plate voltages were spec'd at 410V versus the higher plate voltage on amps like a Super Reverb at 460V, keeping in mind the wall voltage in the U.S. at the time was a bit less than what we see today. The two ten-inch speakers seem to be just right for a good amount of low end yet giving the crystalline high end so famous in the black panel amps. Those tens seem to add to that creamy breakup I mentioned earlier.

A stock black panel Vibrolux Reverb (AA964) which was produced from 1964 until about mid 1967 can sound luscious as is. However, as most players and vintage tube amp owners

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know, your electrolytic caps should be updated so that they are not leaking and causing other ‘bad’ issues. These include all the main filter caps in the can underneath the chassis, as well as the one used for biasing the power section, and the other seven used for bypass on the phenolic board. Typically, most



coupling caps used in Vibrolux Reverbs don’t leak. By then, capacitor technology had improved to where coupler caps of that era tend to last endlessly without causing DC offset issues, so those rarely need changing. The brown *chocolate drop* couplers are not known for being great caps, however, they work. The good news is that Fender used those rolled blue *cigarette* caps as well as really nice poly caps on most of these amps rendering them very soulful.

These amps stay relatively clean up to about 5 on the volume knob. Past that they do tend to break up, but not like a Marshall. I constantly hear of VR owners who are mostly “at home” players wanting to know how their VR can start sounding like a Marshall at low volumes. That’s not going to happen. If you want a Marshall, go get one. The only way I know to get a VR to really break up is to use some kind of overdrive pedal. VR’s take them very well. Or, if you want more break-up for home playing, a smaller amp like a Princeton Reverb is more well suited. Vibrolux Reverbs are meant to be played out in a club on a bandstand. They just aren’t bedroom amps unless you can keep the volume at 2 which is really clean. That said there are a few things one can easily do to this amp to change the profile of it. So, let me explain:

Power Tubes

Increase headroom: Go with power tubes like a 7581A. A very clean power tube which can handle much higher voltages on the plates than a typical 6L6. They are totally interchangeable with a 6L6. These should provide a bit more clean headroom especially for lower notes. NOS are absolutely great tubes and virtually indestructible. I’m not sure about the newer ones but they are touted as being usable and cost effective. At high volumes 7581A power tubes will increase headroom, low end and low-mids, and give the amp a larger sound.

A bit more break-up: Try the smaller bottle 5881 power tubes. They can brown out sooner than 6L6s, which can render low notes in a VR a bit flabby, but the high end will certainly bust up sooner.

Remember to set your bias when using any power tube. The colder you bias, the cleaner it is. The hotter, the more edgy the amp can be especially when pushing it for higher volumes. I personally like 6L6s in these types of Fender amps to be at around 32mA but that is a personal preference. Your settings may differ depending on how you play. There is not a right or wrong answer here.

Add A Midrange Control

If you play on stage with your amp, I find this is invaluable to have. Every room is different. I can’t tell you how many times I’ve gone to a gig and no matter what I did with the Treble and Bass knobs, my amp was just too mid-rangy and nasally. This mid control fixes that. If it’s too mid rangy, I pop it down just a bit until I find the sweet spot. You can wire it up using the ‘AUX OUT’ jack in the back of your amp. It’s simple and



reversible, as I find that people don’t use the ‘Aux Out’ jack that often and even if you did you could get a “Y” cord and plug that into the regular ‘Speaker Out’ jack and it’s the same thing. I run a shielded cable over from the bass pot across the board, then ground the cable and the Mid pot on the chassis just below the new pot. Wire it up exactly like on a Super Reverb. The set point for mid-range on a Fender black and silver panel amp without a Mid control is 6800 ohms using a set resistor off the bass pot. I set the dial for this so I know where 6800 ohms is on the indicator, typically straight up. I like to use the knobs used on the Brown/White amps as they are smaller and have a nice indicator. A couple options:

Use a 10K audio taper pot exactly as is done on Super Reverbs and Twin Reverbs. I personally like this best. Using a 10K audio pot allows a good sweep between 0 ohms and 6800 ohms to make fine adjustments to trim the mids down. I rarely turn them up past 6800 but I can if I wanted. I like to

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set the indicator knob pointing straight up when it's at 6800 ohms so I know where the old "factory" setting was. Then go from there as needed for the room.

Use a 25K audio taper pot. There are pluses and minuses to this. If you push the knob all the way up to 25K, the amp really starts breaking up... a lot. It's really more than I personally use but I've wired it up for some players who really like this. However, since the whole sweep is through 25K ohms you lose control of the sweep from 0 ohms to 6800 ohms. If you are really only using this for trimming down the mids, as I do, then small turns on the knob translate into larger changes. You can still dial it down a bit, but you have less control.

Change the coupling capacitance from the pre-amp to the Phase Inverter. Black panel amps are factory spec'd at .001uF and they usually used a small disc cap. I've played with this until the cows come home. The answer is all over the map as what's "the best." I have found that if you parallel in another .001uF cap across this cap, it increases the value to .002uF. It's totally reversible. What I find is that it lets a few more frequencies through to the Phase Inverter and adds just a bit of low-end and low-mids. If you use any more it starts to get into the "way too mid-rangy" nasal sound so I cap it at no more than .002uF. A lot of the silver panel amps under the CBS design use a .01uF cap here. To me, it's way too much. You see this on the Vibrolux Reverb design of AA270. That use of a .01uF there is way too much for me.

Speakers

Fender used a variety of speakers in these amps starting with mostly the veritable Jensen C10N, which, to me, is the finest



Vintage Jensen C10N speaker

black panel ten inch they ever used. If you have a VR with these from the factory, most held up well as they were very efficient and easily handled the approximate 35-watts these

amps put out. Big magnets, large voice coils and nice light paper. These helped define the black panel sound. As CBS took over, they realized they could get other speakers for less money. Jensen was outsourced due to cost and Fender, under CBS, used primarily Oxford ceramics, CTS ceramics, and CTS alnicos for most of their ten-inch speakers. These never sounded as good as the Jensens, but just think of all the money they saved (said with a ton of irony). If you have a VR with Oxford ceramics, CTS alnicos, or CTS ceramics, then yes, I'm sure the amp sounds fine. BUT... if you take those out and put them in a box in your closet, then put in a more modern efficient speaker of your choice, that amp will sing much better. I prefer keeping with a speaker close to the sound of a Jensen ceramic C10N but all of that is up to the player. Go find your voice. But don't get hung up because you changed the original speakers. They just aren't the best for that amp if they are anything other than Jensens.

Tremolo

I happen to really like the opto-coupled tremolo in Fender amps. Yes, I know this amp is called a Vibrolux (after Vibrola) but Fender uses TREMOLO, a big difference. Vibrola effect is truly pitch changing. Tremolo can be described as pulsing the same pitch or turning it on and off quickly. Fender set up an array of components to pulse a light bulb. The bulb is read by a light dependent resistor. When the bulb turns on, that resistor shunts the guitar's signal to ground before it gets to the power section. This acts like turning the volume knob from zero to wide open quickly. I love to add one more capacitor to the cap array that sets up the timing. There are three capacitors in a row in the trem section. It's very easy to solder in another .01uF cap in parallel with the middle .01uF cap there. This slows down the pulsing of the bulb without turning it off all together. It makes the low setting of the SPEED control more usable. The original factory setting is now on about 3 or 4, with 1 being slower and dreamier. Some owners may hear a



Dave Boze Broadway

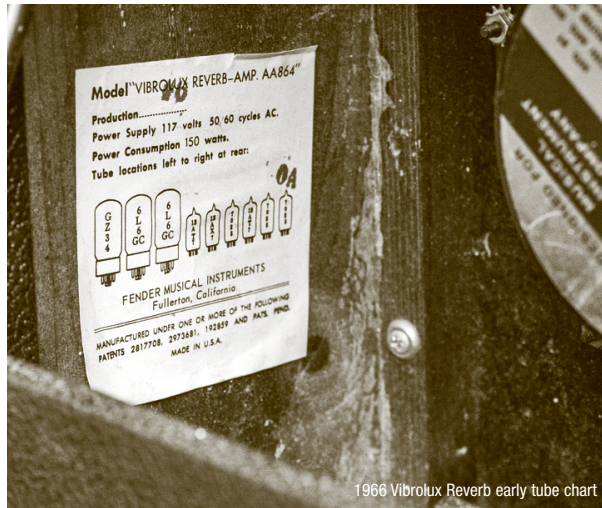
slight ticking even when the intensity control is still all the way down. One of the few things that CBS did that helped in their amps is add a .02uF suppression cap to the trem sec-

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tion across the 10M resistor there. Adding that same value should kill that “clicking” noise if you have that issue.

AA964 Specs

If you own a VR at anything BUT an AA964 version, I would highly recommend you get your amp rebuilt to AA964 specs. There are minor things that CBS changed but they were done to make that amp more “high fidelic.” Read that as colder,



1966 Vibrolux Reverb early tube chart

more sterile sounding. And yes, if you have something other than AA964 it sounds pretty darned good. If you play out with your amp (outside of your house) you WILL experience a notable difference in overall warmth and soul if you rebuild it. OK, so it won't be factory original anymore... who cares? Amps are our tools and I want them sounding as good as they can sound. Build it to black panel specs and you won't regret it. If you go to sell it later, it will have more desirability to a real player. If you want it in a glass case to sit in your house, then leave it as is. I play mine.

More

There are many other changes that “can” be made. Like eliminating the feedback loop or killing the trem. I just don't think those are worth it. Those are personal choices and you are free to experiment as I have over the years. Your call.

Always make sure you have nice high gain 12AX7s in V2 and V4, as that's where your tone is defined (in the pre-amp). And a good Phase Inverter 12AT7. I never use Channel 1 (the dry channel), but I leave it as is just in case I need it. Some pull out the V1 tube and play around here. Again, I just don't think it's needed. But that's me.

Vibrolux Reverbs are among my very favorites and they were meant to be played out where you can crank them up. As John Hiatt once sang, “I want to hear a Telecaster through a Vibrolux turned up to TEN.” Well maybe TEN is pushing it, but I love to run mine on at least 6 to 7 and let it sing if play-

ing soul, funk, or bluesy stuff. A real nice edge for leads when you turn your guitar up, yet it still stays clean with the guitar's volume knob rolled off just a bit. Just a few minor enhancements (reversible) can make this wonderful amp even better.

Go have fun. Quest forth...TQ

—Dave Boze

THE 1958

Supro Rhythm Tone



1958 Supro Rhythm Tone

Always in the mood for greasy slide and hip vintage off-the-radar guitars to inspire us around here, we went on the lookout for a Supro. There are quite a few out there, and through the years we've realized we prefer the full-size bodies, not the ¾ size that you sometimes see, as well as the earlier era guitars that have wood bodies, which were made up until around 1962. We found a beauty, with original soft case for well under a grand. It was up in the Pacific Northwest and shipped out the same day. The pickups in these guitars are legendary flamethrowers. We love them with the single neck pickup, although the guitars with this same setup in the bridge can be fun, too, just not what we are going for. Neck pickups are magic when done right.

The Supro arrived in three days and although the packing box looked no worse for the wear, thanks to the seller having completely taken the tension off the strings for the ship, the bolt on neck shifted enough that the low E string was hanging off the edge of the fretboard, with all other strings out of whack, too, for that matter. These guitars have two round flat steel discs on the back of the neck where the guitar is attached to the body. One of the screws is to push against the neck to hold it in place, the other screw is to adjust the tilt. A simple flathead screwdriver pops off the plates and lets you access the two screws. We gently yet firmly pushed the neck about half an inch right back into the deep pocket, and strung it back up to pitch, then checked and tightened the screw, and all was

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1958 Supro pickup

good to go. For fun, we weighed the guitar, and it comes in at seven pounds ten ounces. Perfect. What we were not prepared for was how wooly and wild this guitar would sound. A quick measure of the pickup and it rang in at 9.13, which is just plain rockin'. It melted down the old Deluxe Reverb beautifully with the volume of the amp set on just three. So much for clean tones. The Supro made the Deluxe turn into a late 50s TV front Tweed Pro, if the speaker had a hole or two in it. So warm and just absolute ragged glory, with sustain and this midrange we found awe inspiring. Dear lawdy! The neck profile is a fat one, reminding us of all the true 1959 Les Paul bursts we have played, it is absolutely in that territory, so full in your palms and comfortable. The fretboard looks like rosewood to us, and the setup on this guitar is low and fast. We'll most likely have Clancey Compton



Clancey Compton

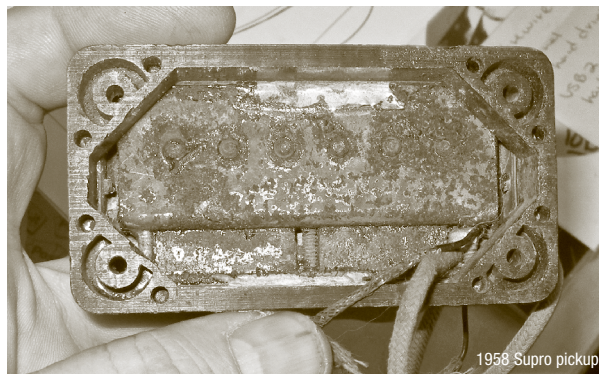
at Rockin' Robin Guitar Store in Houston make a new bone nut so we can put on 11 gauge strings and push it into open E tuning for glass slide. We plugged the Rhythm Tone into the 1959 tweed Gibson GA-40 with the Hellatone 12 in it, which is a Celestion G12H30 70th anniversary model. We use the same speaker in our tweed deluxe Jeff Bakos built for us that you read about here recently. It kicks hard.

Then we added in a big slab of slow tremolo from the Gibson, and you know that was heady as can be, Ry Cooder to the nth power. Oh, yes.

Researching these amazing pickups, it looks like Ralph Keller applied for a patent in 1952 via Valco Manufacturing. You can find the application online, its US2683388A. Some say the Keller pickup inspired Seth Lover to create the PAF. The man who knows these the best would be Jason Lollar. He cut his teeth on the wild west of lap steel pickups, and has no doubt

seen his fair share of these. We gave him a shout and here's what he had to say.

"Yes, the Supro pickup. I have a bunch of photos of the insides of that pickup, including some I made replacement bobbins for. I haven't made repros of them, though. It could be done; the only challenge would be to get the metal covers made. The rest of it is really doable for not a shitload of money. Closest thing I make is the Chicago steel. All the extra ferrous metal in that Supro is what gives it that gritty funk. The magnets are



1958 Supro pickup

the two rectangular blocks that are held between a couple pieces of steel to the side of the bobbin. If I recall correctly, what holds the pickup to the guitar and the mounting ring are the two outside pole pieces, but it's been a long time.

All of the ones I have repaired were badly rusted and were impossible to get the magnets out of the frame without cutting the screws holding the steel frame together. There is also a version with a pickup cover made of some kind of plastic with a leatherette applied to it. There are a number of older pickup designs that used a similar magnet structure."

Looking back at a Supro catalog from that late 50s era, there were quite a few models you could go for. The Super Single was \$74.50, the Ozark, the Super Twin, the Ranchero, Dual Tone, Coronado, and Del Mar all coming in at \$225 or less, were perhaps bargains since the price for a 1958 Les Paul Standard was a hefty \$279. Let's not forget the Supro/National Belmont from that period, which we have seen Derek Trucks playing slide with. For our money, Trucks is as special as they come as a musician. Check out his live song "Down in the Flood," where he opens the groove with that guitar in Apple Valley Park on July 10th, 2021, but switches to his favorite SG once the song is going for unleashing more soaring action above even higher frets:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=Y2_UVPC2AXY

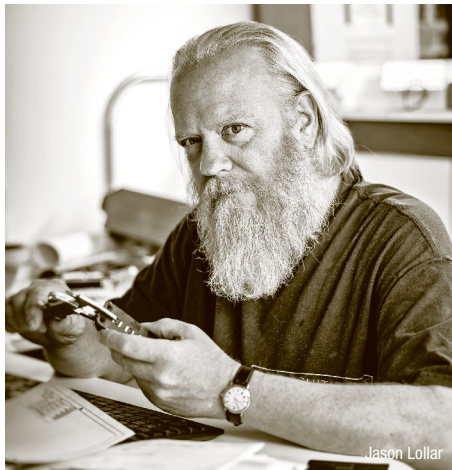
This vintage Supro is quite the supreme ride. They are out there for a grand or so if you take the time to dig one up and make sure the pickup is original, that everything is as it should

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be. Worst case scenario just ask for right of refusal and return it if it doesn't bring the Marie Kondo happiness for you. She is known for "tidying up lives" and has a book and television show helping people get rid of the clutter they may have, to cull things down to the sweet spots. We've done that with our gear through the years. Sort of, ahahaha! Here is her mantra from the Kondo website: "Tidying is a powerful tool, but it's not the destination. The true goal of tidying is to clear away clutter so you can live the life you want. When you put your house in order using the KonMari Method™, you have no choice but to listen to your inner voice —because the question of what you want to own is actually the question of how you want to live your life. When you reassess your belongings and organize your home, you set the stage for a huge transformation. This is the magic of tidying!"

When Marie asked us about it in a strange mezcal infused afternoon dream we had, we did not hesitate to respond. "Riverhorse san, does this Supro spark joy in you when plugged into the vintage Fender amplifiers or tweeds and cranked?" You betya Mrs. Kondo! And heck no, you can't borrow it, this one is ours!

Lollar Summertime Catch-up



While we had Jason on the horn to give us info on the gonzo Supro pickup, we thought it would be fun to ask him a couple questions so we could all hear how he is doing, what he's been up to...

TQR: How's it going over there, pandemic been gonzo for ya?

It has been. We've been busier than ever. We've had to hire a number of people in the last couple years, and we are not the only ones getting slammed—a lot of guitars and a lot of amps and parts are being bought up!

TQR: What does sourcing pickup parts look like these days with all the weird things happening in the world?

Well, that has been a problem, getting nickel silver due to

tariffs and covid has been a real nail biter. A lot of our parts are made of that. We've had problems with the acrylic we use for making P90 bobbins where they are now making it thinner than standard, so they get more sheets made per ton of material—it's being used for shields around tellers and grocery check outs. Ports are tied up, cobalt prices and copper have gone way up so we're getting squeezed with higher expenses while having deliveries pushed back. It's always been a problem and we've always had to keep months of raw materials on hand in order to not run out of humbucker covers for instance and now we are having to look a little farther ahead and sweat it out on occasion

TQR: You cranking out any music still?

Last year we only played two gigs, both were outdoors, and both were last August. A lot of places to play have closed in my immediate local area. Who knows how long that will take



to work out or what it will look like for club players? The band I play with are intending on booking more when the opportunity shows its pointy little head.

TQR: Any cool projects ahead for you or ideas, goals for them, or just busy as heck with the current designs?

We listen to customers and sometimes get ideas for new items through them, and we've just gone through a cycle of new items. The La Prima is a mini-bucker with a crazy chimey sound—really nice, and the El Dorado is really touch sensitive, almost over the top that way—a real formula one type of tactile action. However, we are getting worked to the nub by outstanding orders for pickups to install in newly made guitars by various manufacturers, so we are busy and trying to maintain a balance between supplying existing products and finding new niches to fill.

TQR: Making any guitars?

I have some great wood for building and have a number of

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half-finished guitars. The last one I finished was close to ten years ago, an archtop with two dog ears that I traded to a friend in Guam who I think is a ToneQuest subscriber. He crated up a 1950s B3 with a 122 Leslie and shipped it to my door in exchange. Thanks Bruce! Other than that, I have been working on a Mosrite combo that never left the factory and it needed new binding and the finish was not good, so I never liked how that model sounds—a little too soft on the attack with little spank so I am installing a center block. I'm looking forward to getting that put back together. Quest forth...TQ

—Riverhorse

lollarguitars.com

THE STATE OF NOS TUBES &...
Homegrown Honey

Through the years we've always enjoyed phone calls to Mike Kropotkin of KCA NOS Tubes for his wisdom, and plenty of great tubes have passed this way. We even made a long ramble into the Rocky Mountains together one summer to catch some music and enjoy hang time with beers and suppers shared. We got him on the phone from his Virginia home to get some thoughts on all things tubes.

TQR: What has been happening in the world of tubes? Any strange wild flurries of runs on them thanks to the pandemic, wars, and general shelves empty resembling toilet paper mania?

The pandemic has been good for tube sales and sales of *all things* guitars. All of the retailers I'm aware of posted strong sales growth with many of us under self-imposed lockdowns, looking for something music related to do at home.



NOS JAN Philips 6L6

The day of reckoning for NOS tubes that we knew was approaching, is here! Supply has become severely limited. I met with a trusty picker last week for the first time in over two years and pickin's were slim. I'm sure there are still collectors and hoarders sitting on moderate to massive collections

which may someday come to market, but who knows where they'll end up.

TQR: Are there even many great NOS 12AX7s out there still? If not, what should we look for?

Nothing that I'm aware of. My picker had about thirty pretty generic U.S. made 12AX7s... all good quality, but nothing like Mullards or Telefunks. Things like RCAs, GEs, Sylvania's, etc. All solid tubes but none of the big names from the glory days. Of the Russian stuff, I like the Svetlanas and Electro Harmonix. The TAD Redbase tubes look promising.

TQR: Any thoughts on tube factories in the east across the sea?

Shuguang, China has been closed since some time in 2021. There are various rumors including a factory fire, and/or a new factory coming online next year. JJ Electronics, Slovakia, is overwhelmed and has been delayed in meeting production need unfulfilled by China's output being cut. Then there are the supply chain issues that we've all heard about. Container ships full of "stuff" sitting off the California coast for weeks/months. New Sensor (brand names Sovtek, EH, Mullard, Svetlana, etc.) runs Russian tube production. There were supply chain issues since 2021 and then a scare in March that a total embargo would be enacted. That rumor was reversed in about a week. Now word is that supply would arrive in April but with increased cost due to a 35% tariff on Russian goods. Frankly, I'm surprised there's anything being imported.

TQR: Will there ever be an American tube factory? RCA comes back? What would it take for that to happen, endless billions of dollars of tooling and capital?



NOS RCA VT-107-A

RCA won't be coming back. But there's a company in Georgia, Western Electric, named after the famous Bell System manufacturing company that used to produce telephone equipment and

tubes until circa 1960s. They're famous for the 300B triode power tube used in old Western Electric audio amps (PAs, theatre amps, etc.) and more modern audiophile geek equipment. Old 300Bs sell for a lot of money! Even the new ones from Georgia sell for about \$1500 a pair! W.E. has said that

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they're interested in entering the general audio tube market and now may be the time. They've said that they don't plan on price gouging based on current market conditions, but what does that even mean to a company that sells \$750 tubes? We'll have to wait and see.

TQR: What bargains or tubes are left that you could hip players to?

No bargains at all. Some good options for guitar amps: 6L6s: JAN Philips or Sylvania 6L6WGBs. These are slightly lower powered than the ubiquitous 6L6GC found in many guitar amps. They're like the 5881 and wonderfully suited for lower powered Fender 6L6 amps like Tweed Bassmans, Vibroluxes, etc. They'll work in Super Reverbs, Pro Reverbs and Twins, but will produce a slightly lower power output and headroom than 6L6GCs. This may be a benefit for a lot of club players who can't get their volume controls past 4, anyway.

For 6V6GTs there are RCA blackplates, from the 40s and 50s, and JAN Philips still in my stock. The RCAs are classic in Fender and Fender clone amps. The JAN Philips are also great but generally brighter sounding. These do well in darker sounding tweed style amps but even blackface and silverface players are using them to good effect.



For a slightly lower gain 12AX7s, 5751s are still available at reasonable prices. Most US made 12AX7s are close to, or over, \$100 each! The JAN GE 5751s are a good

general-purpose tube and, like all 5751s, can be used anywhere a 12AX7 is used.

For reverb drivers and phase inverters in Fender amps and clones, the Mullard CV4024 is still relatively available and super high quality. These have the lowest microphonic tendencies I've ever seen in 12AT7s and have great tone. People looking for a lower gain alternative to 12AX7s have found these to be very useful. They lack the "thin" tonal quality that most 12AT7s have.

For AC15, AC30, Matchless, and other EL84 amp lovers, there are NOS Russian (Soviet era) EL84s which are very good and are rated for 5000 hours. I don't think I'd bet the ranch on the

longevity spec but these are military grade, rugged, tubes that have a good track record for longevity. The part number is 6N14N, or 6P14P depending on whether you prefer the Roman or Cyrillic alphabet. There's the non-suffix version plus the 6N14N-EP and the 6N14Nn-EB. All three are great and have a slightly different tonal character.

TQR: Are there any cool tips on tubes with strange names that could be sneaker substitutions for the most commonly used tubes without having to rework anything in our amps?

All the good ones I've known about have long been discovered, with the replacements becoming equally, or more, rare than the originals. Unless I'm forgetting something.

TQR: How does backyard beekeeping relate to being a vintage tube guru?

LOL! Nothing other than that this knucklehead is involved in both. Beekeeping is relatively new to me, about seven years. It started with my wife wanting to get involved and taking a beekeeping class. I decided to join her. We both got hooked and started a couple of hives/colonies. My wife's enthusiasm waned, and I became even more enamored. Now I do most of the work and am up to managing twenty-four hives. Aside from the limited commercial aspect, it's very engaging and working a colony can be very Zen-like... as long as you don't have a genetically bitchy colony with bees that attack you for no particular reason. Thankfully, these are few. I look forward to spending more time beekeeping as the tube biz fades into the background, and totally away.

TQR: We once had a pair of new production EL84s that sounded like a hive of bees attacking us. We ditched them for new old stock. Any hilarious or wild stories of greatest tube finds or bizarre deals through the years?



Mike Kropotkin with band

I've rarely dealt with source sellers face to face, rather dealing with "pickers" who are out in the trenches finding stuff but have no inclination, or enough knowledge of amplifiers, to

sell small quantities, retail. One of the more recent stories was

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about a guy from Egypt who tracked me down on the web. He had, apparently, come into a warehouse full of old US military stock... WWII vintage (that's early '40s for non-historians). There weren't a lot of interesting tube numbers though. Oddly, he also had a lot of Soviet era NOS tubes. Again, not a ton of good numbers besides the Russian EL84 equivalent: 6N14N.

He said that he had a few thousand RCA 6V6GTs. I was in total disbelief. How could anyone have this many of something so desirable, so late in the game? I asked for photos which he supplied. So, I thought I'd try him out on a smallish order in case I had to return everything, two hundred pieces. I informed him at this point that I would only pay upon receipt and testing. His response in broken English (but much better than my Egyptian) "I did not say anything different". So, the deal was on, and the rest is history! The guy was really sweet, sending Christmas greetings and digital Christmas cards. I reciprocated with appropriate season's greetings. Over the months of our dealings, he fell ill and was hospitalized. There was *radio silence* for a while and I got a little concerned. Eventually, he sent an email with a photo of him, out cold, in a hospital bed. I never actually figured out what had happened to him, but he recovered from whatever it was.

TQR: Closing wisdom for us after all these years of being in the tube game and wondering about the future?

Nothing other than if you see something for sale that you want...don't wait! The NOS stuff will all be gone soon. Quest forth... **TQ**

—Riverhorse

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TOM GUERRA

Sentimental Junk



No stranger to The ToneQuest Report, Connecticut based songwriter and former Mambo Sons guitarist Tom Guerra has just released his fifth solo album since 2016, the rocking *Sentimental Junk* on Thin Man Music. Unlike the 2020 largely acoustic

Sudden Signs of Grace, Sentimental Junk is an album filled with electric guitars and classic tones, from the up-tempo opener "Autumn Eyes" right through to the last track, a blues based instrumental written in tribute to a fallen band brother. We recently caught up with Tom as he was making the rounds to promote the new album.

TQR: Congratulations on your new release, *Sentimental Junk*, we were a bit surprised at the raucous nature of this disc since your last release was more acoustic. Where did that come from, and can you tell us where you got the title?

Ha! It is a bit of a return to my rock and roll roots, in fact, the mastering engineer said, "This record sounds like you had a lot of pent-up energy after two years in lockdown," and I think that is the case. Anyway, about the title, the last song I wrote



for the album was "She Don't Believe in Memories," which is about a lady who lives in the "now," vs. always looking to the past. It's a strange observation I made after seeing how old groups of friends often tend to look at the past and telling the same old stories time and time again. I was writing the verses and came up with "She will never talk of yesterday, no sentimental junk gets in the way...". I don't really know where that phrase came from, but it stuck, and I decided to use it for the album title.

TQR: What inspires you to write, and can you tell us about the process?

I really don't know what inspires me to write... I just do it because I always have as the creative process gives me a sense of satisfaction, purpose, accomplishment. I don't really have a formula because sometimes a verse will come to me, sometimes a guitar riff, a chord structure, etc. In some situations, I'll hear a phrase that I like or even say something that sounds

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profound (laughs), and I usually write these phrases or couplets down. I do try to carve out a regular time to write and go through the ideas to see what happens. Right or wrong, it is all about my perspective on the world, in the hopes that others can relate. I think of my favorite writers, guys like Jackson Browne, Warren Zevon, Steve Earle, Bob Dylan... I'm sure much of their writing is very personal to them, but it always seems to hit an emotion with me, a connection...

TQR: And you covered Bob Dylan's "Clean Cut Kid" on this album, in a version that is pretty far removed from the original, in some ways, more primitive...

I always liked that track, which is really a 1-5-1 type of song, but didn't like the '80s production. It has such great lyrics about a guy coming home from Vietnam and feeling out of place, something I previously addressed in my tune "American Garden." I thought if I could strip it down, make it into a sort of Chuck Berry meets Rory Gallagher 1-4-5 it might work for me. So, I went in with this approach, using the totally beat 1957 Stratocaster that I used on most of the songs here. That guitar seemed to point the way...

TQR: Speaking of the 1957 Strat, in the liner notes of your last few albums, you made it a point to reference the main guitars you used in the songwriting process, with the Gibson LG-1 serving that purpose on the last album and this particular Stratocaster on *Sentimental Junk*. Tell us about it.

Right after the last album, I was approached by the son and daughter of a Texas musician who'd just passed to see if I had interest in buying their dad's main guitar, a thrice refinished



1957 Strat

maple neck Strat. I did a Zoom call with the son, who told me his dad spent his five-decade career working this guitar in Texas roadhouses, and when I got a good look at the guitar, the phrase "ridden hard and put away wet" came to mind. On the call, I could see the neck date and at least three different finishes, but I took a chance and bought the guitar. When it arrived, I felt like I needed a tetanus shot before I even started working on it. I could see the frets had been changed to slightly larger frets and still had plenty of meat left, but what became very evident was that the two top layers of paint, a browned overcoat that was probably

transparent red and the gold bottom layer had started to decompose. I took my fingernail and scratched a few soft spots which revealed a gray auto body primer. I cleaned it up a bit and restrung and played it and it sounded amazing, sort of like Roy Buchanan's Telecaster, really biting with great overtones but very full. I was playing it one day and decided to take a Scotchbrite pad to the gray primer on one of the body contours and after about an hour, I was shocked to see the original two-color sunburst revealing itself. I then made a decision to slowly see if I could remove the rest of the three layers of paint, and for the next two weeks, using just the Scotchbrite pad and a razor blade, I removed all the paint on the front of the guitar revealing a super funky two-color sunburst. Doing this, I found the date 12/57 in the middle pickup cavity. The back of the guitar was another story though, as most of the



1957 Strat

original finish was worn down to the bare wood, so I kept it. I didn't touch the neck, which is ridiculously worn but had the original finish. Once again, I reassembled the guitar and plugged it in, and was blown away by how it just seemed to come alive. I immediately started coming up

with riffs on it, which led into several new songs.

TQR: On what songs does this Strat make an appearance?

It was used to write every song on this album, and is the main guitar that you hear on "Autumn Eyes," "All Love is Pain," "California's Got to My Girl," "Clean Cut Kid," "Think for Yourself," "Where's the New Rock and Roll" and "Let Me Learn to Let It Go." It's got such a strong sound, sort of grimy too.

TQR: When we first interviewed you in 2007, we learned that you owned Howlin' Wolf's 1963 Stratocaster, which you later loaned to the Rock and Roll Hall Of Fame. Do you have this back yet, and did it make an appearance on *Junk*?

Good memory... yes, I've owned it for over two decades and it spent several years in the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, in an exhibit right next to Muddy's red Tele and Freddie King's ES-345. It's a great guitar, well worn, though not as beat as the '57, and it is the main guitar you hear on "A Song for Mark Easton." It's got one of the best neck pickups I ever heard in a Strat, and you can hear me switch to it during one of the solos on this tune.

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interview

TQR: Tell me about Mark Easton?



1963 Strat

Mark Easton was a phenomenal New England guitarist and one of my guitar mentors growing up. He was the original guitarist in The Shaboo All Stars, a very popular

R&B band still playing today. We later played in a few bands together and I learned so much from him. He turned me onto all sorts of great music, most notably Kenny Burrell. Sadly, we lost Mark in the early days of the pandemic, and it was a tough time for all those he touched. Shortly after, I was messing around in the studio with a Kenny Burrell-like instrumental thing I was working on and decided to go all the way and write it as a tribute to Mark. I recorded it with Hammond B3 whiz Matt Zeiner, formerly of Dickey Betts' band and currently with Jim Weider's The Weight Band and it's a fitting tribute for a great guitarist and friend. It closes the album.

TQR: So, what were your main amps on *Sentimental Junk*?

Oh, let's see... since we were just talking about "A Song for Mark Easton" I played the Wolf Strat directly into my 1966 Vibrolux Reverb, which I also used on "Think for Yourself" and the Bob Dylan cover "Clean Cut Kid." I had the reverb up higher than I normally do, so you're committed to that when you're tracking, but I think that wet sound worked here. On the twelve-string tune, "All Love is Pain," I ran the Fender XII into the Vibrolux, and the Rick into a Presonus mic preamp, right into the board. For the tune, "She Don't Believe in Memories" I used my brown '62 Deluxe, which is a really hot amp. I used the Mitch Colby dtb-50 on several tunes, especially the solos,



Mark Easton (R)

and for the Leslie West tribute I did, called "Eyes of the World," I ran a P90 Les Paul through a pedal that a guy

named Jimi Photon built for me, called "The Statesboro Fuzz," into my 50-watt smallbox Marshall.

TQR: That explains the thick sounding lead guitar on "Eyes of the World." What specifically about Leslie West drew you to his music?

I just loved Leslie's tone and his choice of notes. He was very economical in a lot of his playing, but you'd never say his music needed more notes. Just a great, tasty player.

TQR: Any other pedals?

I used an old MXR Flanger on the solo to "Let Me Learn to Let It Go" which I double tracked to give a real spacey sound. And I used the Jimi Photon fuzz on the spoken word tune, "Where's the New Rock and Roll?" Otherwise, it was just straight amp distortion. I like to have both the rhythms and leads just on the verge of saturation, which I feel gives a bigger sound.

TQR: The bass on this record, especially on tunes like "Eyes of the World" sounds massive as well...

That's Kenny Aaronson, the legendary bassist who I've been fortunate to work together with for my solo records. Kenny actually played with Leslie West, so he totally got what I was trying to do with this song... in fact, he has many funny stories about Leslie in those days.

TQR: Talk about Kenny's contribution on *Sentimental Junk*...



Kenny Aaronson

I can't underestimate how important Kenny was to the overall sound of this album. He was a great

sounding board for me, as soon as I had written the core song, I'd play it for him and get his input. I love that guy. Besides coming up with some amazing bass parts, he did the horn and string arrangements on the first single "California's Got to My Girl" and the horn parts on "Think for Yourself." Both he and drummer Mike Kosacek formed the core band here.

TQR: Let's talk about the first single, "California's Got to

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My Girl.” Besides your vocals, you have a special guest on that one.



Jon Butcher & Tom Guerra

That’s my friend, the great musician Jon Butcher, who really sings the majority of that tune. I’d

wanted to write a real Motown-y, R&B tune for a while, and came up with this tune, which really took on a life of its own. Kenny had some ideas for some great production parts like the horns, strings and bells, I put a ton of harmonies and counter vocals on it, but I still felt it needed something more. One day, I was speaking with Jon, and he said, “What are you working on?” I played him the tune and told him that I wish I could do a better job singing soul and he said “Dude, I’ll sing THAT!” He then came up with a beautifully soulful lead vocal, and some additional harmony parts. You know, he’s recognized as a great guitarist, but he also has an incredible voice. Finally, we had all these parts, and though it took quite a while to mix this track, in the end I feel we captured something special...

TQR: It definitely has a “summertime, top-down driving song mode.”

It does, and I hope that it connects on an emotional level with people. I know it did for me, even with the lyrics about The Beach Boys hooking up with Manson (laughs). **TQ**

tomguerra.com

The Allen Accomplice Amp

What could be better than scoring a new amp with classic tones, that is supremely well designed, overbuilt and actually two amps in one cabinet?

The Deluxe Reverb can certainly be counted amongst the most desirable Fender amps ever built, especially today given the universal aversion to high decibel levels. In 1965 when we were playing through our first Deluxe, it was considered a garage band workhorse, but certainly not a gigging amp for



stages of any size. Fender’s 40-watt amps were far more suitable for dance halls and gyms, while the little Deluxe could cut a gig in a packed frat house basement. And our bass player was just fine with his Ampeg B15. Well, old Deluxe Reverb amps have become quite expensive now, \$4,000-\$5,000 for a ‘60s blackface model, slightly less for a ‘70s silverface or hand-wired reissue. If you’re determined to get an old amp, you need to do so with eyes wide open. Many of these amps have been “serviced” with new caps, a replaced speaker and sometimes a new output transformer. This can be good, or not so good depending on who did the work and the parts used. Or you might find an amp with all the original parts... preferable, but you’ll need to bring it back closer to the original specs to sound its best. Aside from installing a new speaker, one of the best mods you can do is to add a midrange pot where the extension speaker jack is located on any Fender lacking a mid-pot. Big, big change in the sound and punch of the amp. A night and day difference.

Old amps generally fall into several familiar categories... They usually start at 5-watts with an 8-inch speaker, graduate to 10 to 12-watts with a 10-inch cone, then 15 to 18-watts sometimes with a 12-inch, a few old amps will fall in the 28-watt range like old Magnatones and some Gibsons, then we graduate to the higher powered 40-watt and 80-watt Fenders. Today, the 15 to 18-watt category seems to dominate current



amp production, hence the remarkable popularity of the Fender Princeton Reverb, and prices have

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risen accordingly... For example, prices for Princetons on Reverb in January 2022 ranged as follows:

'65	'66	'67	'68	'76
\$5000	\$4850	\$4500	\$3400	\$2000

Meanwhile, clean early '70s Fender Twin Reverb amps are selling for \$800-\$900, now the cheapest silverface amps in existence. The venerable '60s workhorse and top of the line



Fender amp from the gilded age of rock and roll is now cheaper than a black-face Champ.

Given these upward trends with vintage amp prices, classic

amps built by contemporary builders have never seemed more enticing, and David Allen of Allen Amplification has created an enhanced version of the Deluxe Reverb called the Accomplice that offers all the authentic groovy tones of a Deluxe with some exceptional improvements. Can a new amp sound as good as an old one? Fifty years of age on an old amp are not always kind. Parts drift, caps dry out, speakers blow or rot... In our experience a new amp built to true vintage specs can outperform an old one, and the build quality can far exceed that of your ancient factory built Deluxe.

Dave sent us an Accomplice for review, and it's a real looker capable of running on 6V6 tubes at 22-watts or 6L6s at 35-watts. What could be better than that? The amp is A/B push/pull with adjustable fixed bias with bass, middle, treble and raw controls with a bright switch. Reverb is a three spring Accutronics pan with tone control.

The chassis is hand-wired point-to-point with tinned solid-core PVC wiring, featuring a G-10 glass epoxy circuit board with brass eyelets. You'll find carbon film resistors, Mallory M150 and CDM silver mica tone capacitors, Switchcraft jacks, Carling switches, and high-quality molded type sockets.

Additional features include rear-panel bias measurement jacks, a RAW mid/gain boost control, bright switch, impedance switch, extension speaker jack, and tone control for the reverb. Who does that?

Loaded with 6L6s the Accomplice reminds us of one of our all-time favorite old Fender amps—the brown Vibrolux. We

have owned three of them, two remarkably clean and original gems and a rough and tumble beater, and they all sounded better than you could imagine. The two clean ones were loaded with the original Tung-Sol and Amperex preamp tubes, and original Oxford speakers. With the Vibrolux amps we received a great education on just how versatile a 28-watt amp can be, and the Accomplice perfectly fills that rare space with adequate clean tones at stage volumes, and a sweetly overdriven voice at full volume. Back off on the guitar volume and the amp cleans up beautifully. Nudge it back up and you're treated to a perfect mix of sustain and thicker distortion that doesn't cover up or smear the fundamental cleaner tones of the amp. It's a clean distortion if you can wrap your mind around that. Allen's Raw control also gives you the ability to drive the amp harder without turning it up too loud in tight spaces—a very



Allen Accomplice amp

useful feature indeed. But even at full volume cranked the Accomplice sits beautifully in the mix without dominating the stage. It simply

blends with other instruments, bold as luv, but hardly intrusive—the perfect volume level for these times whether you're playing in a bar or a bigger room. Quest forth...TQ

—David Wilson

allenamps.com

The Beautiful Gift

"Before giving, the mind of the giver is happy. While giving, the mind of the giver is made peaceful. And having given, the mind of the giver is uplifted."

—Buddha

I knew it was shipped. Could feel it in my ribs as it was on the way from Georgia. David and I had shared some texts about a lightweight magical sunburst strat body he had gotten and was looking forward to building. But then he passed away. The pickguard was gold, which wasn't my thing, but he loved gold. It looked killer. It was a hardtail, which is always far more rowdy and kicking than a strat with a tremolo. It made it just fine, landed on the porch on a Saturday afternoon while I was baking a cake.

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For a few days as parts came in, I'd wander into the guitar room and sit with it in my lap, look at the strong lines of grain and turn it over in my hands with the Texas summertime sunlight streaming into the windows. Only the best parts would do. A Callahan hardtail bridge and string ferrules, plus neckplate with custom serial number 00001. Necks are

everything. I had Cody Gleason at Dallas Guitar Traders take a quarter sawn giant boat neck and shoot the sweetest amber finish, after he had hand-rasped the softest V in it and added The ToneQuest decal. What a neck. Gleason has been our absolute go to for so many guitars, and never lets us down. He is still a small batch shop but if you email him at cody@dallasguitartraders.com he might pick up the phone and say hey.

We took the parts down to see Clancey Compton at Rockin' Robin in Houston, and he wired everything in. "That is a man's neck!" exclaimed Clancey, when he put his luthier's hands around it. Yes, we know. There were a few sets of pickups on David's desk, but Talley and Liz sent along a set of Slider's that we think are his '57 set, which is a low wind. They measured 5.53 in both the neck and middle, and 5.83 in the bridge. With everything together and strung up, the guitar almost vibrated off the workbench when we strummed an open G chord. My lawd, this guitar is ALIVE.



We gave Clancey a big hug before we hit the road, as he could tell we were misty-eyed, our heart messed up inside, and thinking about the good days together for twenty years. The burst rode shotgun in the front seat of the truck, and when we got home, we immediately brought the blonde Super Reverb into the living room and plugged it in to warm up while The ToneQuest strat rested on the red

leather couch Big Tex once gave us. A kettle of water warmed on the stove and we made a French press of Sumatran coffee, poured into a ceramic cup with dollops of fresh cream to boot, and a slice of the Madagascar vanilla cake.



After one last sip of the Sumatran, we stood up and threw the strat across our breastbone, plugged it in, put the Super on 3 with a touch of reverb, and fired it off. Holy gorgeous. A just plain unreal full-bodied woody chime and sparkle rang out. The low wind pickups asked us to lean in and play like we mean it. Of course, this last guitar would turn out perfect. "There are no mistakes," David always told us. Born from a tree that lived its life drawing water from the soil and giving us air to breathe, set free from being rooted and now an instrument that can tell you any story a soul would care to sing... It is just ringing and vibrating as pure and true as any guitar possibly could, setup for the way we play like no guitar we've ever held. We realized, you are not gone, brutha, you are right here with us, from here on out, every time we hold this guitar and let it fly.



It was time to go full bore. We put the rare vintage Roger Mayer Octavia silver spaceship pedal from the early Jimi Hendrix stash on the floor, added a patch cord, and put the amp on 8. This guitar is soaring, flat out wailing for miles, growing wings, taking flight from our hands, as notes and chords are pouring out and blooming across the 100-year-old bungalow ceilings, up into the ether, and alive... to the horizon... floating into the skies. Quest forth...TQ

—Riverhorse

Resource Directory

Sound Better Play Better™

It's been more than just our motto for twenty years, it's a fact, and no other resource on the guitar offers you proven, time-tested, real world guidance in your personal quest for the mighty fine note. Our unbiased gear reviews promise to reveal simple solutions for the challenges you face as a guitarist, from electric and acoustic guitar reviews, evaluations of pickups, amplifiers, effects, and revealing interviews with accomplished pro players who have made the journey. No other resource on the guitar delivers the essential guidance provided by TQR, backed by our unconditional guarantee.

The companies you'll find in our [Resource Directory of Recommended Suppliers](#) are also dedicated to helping you sound your very best. Please review their listings and know that they are poised to assist you in crafting your very own signature tone with both stellar products and timely service.

Sound Better, Play Better™... More than just our motto, it's our promise. Quest forth and Enjoy!

News! Check It Out

Please join us in welcoming [CP Thornton Guitars](#) and [Fishguitars](#) as the newest members of our Resource Directory. These exceptional companies are poised to meet and exceed your expectations in providing sound advice and innovative products. Quest forth with the capable assistance of these excellent suppliers.

AllParts: Top players and guitar builders rely on Allparts for the right guitar and bass parts they need, in stock and ready to ship. AllParts offers a complete range of finished and unfinished guitar bodies in a variety of premium tone woods, including alder and swamp ash, with optional highly figured maple tops. Finishes include all of the most popular vintage colors, including see-through blonde! Premium necks are also available with maple, rosewood, and ebony fingerboards in

a variety of neck shape profiles, with or without binding. Custom design your next guitar with AllParts, including tailpieces, tuning keys, bridges, nuts and saddles, pickups, pickguards (that really fit), knobs, hardware, and electronics for many popular models. Bass players and lefties can also find the parts they need at AllParts! You can also rely on Allparts for hard to find parts, along with vacuum tubes and amplifier hardware.

AllParts, Houston, TX
allparts.com 713-466-6414

Kimsey Lutherie: Bryan Kimsey is an accomplished craftsman with a passion for fixing up old Martin guitars. He is also a cattle rancher who plays with dirt bikes and there is a fascinating blog on his website that chronicles the adventures of him and his son hunting elk on the high plains of New Mexico.

Bryan graduated from South Plains College in 1982 with a degree in Country/Bluegrass Music. Musically, he competed in the Walnut Valley National Flatpicking Contest five times and the National Mandolin Contest twice. He placed second at the Rocky Grass mandolin contest in 1998, second in the Wyoming State Championship in '94. He also won the Pagosa Springs Contest in both mandolin and guitar three times and has won the Santa Fe Flatpicking Contest seven times. He was the on ground Kamp Repair Doctor at Kaufman Kamp for eight years from 2002-2009 and Contributing Editor for Flatpicking Guitar Magazine for fifteen years.

With a B.S. in Wildlife Science, an M.S. in Biology, he worked as a raptor biologist for twelve years, including stints with The Peregrine Fund, The Snake River Birds of Prey Area, and private contractors. He has also been a licensed falconer since 1984 and wrote a top-selling book "Falconry Equipment."

He specializes in making '70s Martin guitars sound and play great. '70s guitars are notorious for having misplaced bridges and big rosewood bridgeplates. Bryan has repaired and restored hundreds of these guitars over the past twenty years. He will work on other vintages, but really likes making '70s come alive. He is capable of dealing successfully with neck resets, minor cracks, structural issues, bracing (including modest scalloping of straight, heavy braces), refretting, bridge plate replacement, pickguards, nut and saddle issues, K&K and other pickup installations. He does not do refin or restorations.

For more information visit Bryan's web site where you will find plenty of comprehensive and informative posts and videos of his work.

bryankimsey.com
bryankimsey@gmail.com

Celestion Limited: Nobody knows more than Celestion about guitar loudspeaker design and manufacture. Think of your all-time favourite guitar riffs and solos, chances are, they were played through Celestion guitar loudspeakers. For the last fifty years - since the birth of the Celestion Blue (the first ever purpose-built guitar loudspeaker) - our magical mix of metal paper and magnets has formed an essential part of the sound of guitar music.

Some of the greatest speakers available today are part of the Celestion Classic Series. Over the years, we've applied our design expertise to build a range of speakers that will give you classic Celestion tone, no matter what style you play. The Alnico Series and the Heritage Series, both hand-built in Ipswich, England, are the result of meticulous attention to detail, created for those who are absolutely dedicated to the pursuit of true Vintage tone.

For high-volume OEMs, Celestion Originals represent outstanding value

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Resource Directory

for money. We have the specialist experience coupled with the most advanced, high-volume manufacturing techniques to deliver Celestion tone, quality and brand appeal at extremely competitive prices.

Celestion International Ltd
www.celestion.com
sales@celestion.com
Office Tel: +44 1473 835300

Collings Guitars: Bill Collings' story provides a classic example of what can be achieved with an engineer's brain, a machinist's hand and an experienced repairman's eye. After dropping out of medical school in Ohio to work in a machine shop, Collings moved to Texas in the mid 1970's where the experience he gained repairing and restoring guitars guided his design of the first Collings guitars. His understanding of the flaws and shortcomings found in production instruments was instructive, and he set out to eliminate those shortcomings with the very first Collings guitars. After building about fifty guitars and a few banjos in Houston, he relocated to Austin, Texas and briefly shared shop space with like-minded instrument makers Tom Ellis and Mike Stevens. By the mid-1980s, Bill was building flattop and archtop acoustic guitars in his own small shop. His reputation for outstanding quality and meticulous attention to detail quickly spread. In 1989, he rented a 1,000-square-foot space and hired two helpers.

That same year, George Gruhn, the acclaimed collector and purveyor of vintage fretted instruments and owner of Gruhn Guitars in Nashville, asked Bill to make 24 custom "Gruhn" guitars, giving the Austin luthier national exposure. By 1992, musicians such as Pete Townshend, Joni Mitchell and Brian May were playing Collings instruments and demand was increasing steadily. As the business grew and processes were refined, one thing remained the same: Bill Collings' commitment to build the finest stringed instruments available.

Fueled by his fascination with the construction and design of a variety of instruments, Bill soon began crafting more than just acoustic guitars. In 1999, he introduced the first Collings mandolins, which like his guitars, quickly set new standards for the industry. In 2006 his interest in carved top instruments led him to introduce a line of electric guitars that players quickly embraced because of the instruments' exceptional craftsmanship and tone. In 2014, Collings founded Waterloo Guitars, a stand-alone line of vintage-inspired guitars designed to capture the tone and character of some of the best depression era instruments. In that same "vintage" vein, in 2016, and after years of development, Collings began to sell their own acoustic guitar and mandolin cases, designed and fabricated in their Austin shop, built to match the quality of their instruments.

After 40 years of innovation, Bill Collings' sadly lost his life to cancer in July 2017, yet his legacy lives on through his dedicated team of skilled luthiers and craftsmen that are carrying his vision into the future.

For more information on the complete line of Collings instruments and dealer locations, please visit our web site.

Collings Guitars, Austin Texas
collingsguitars.com, 512-288-7776

CP Thornton Guitars: Chuck Thornton builds his exquisite guitars in Sumner, Maine, a town of fewer than one thousand souls on the banks of the Nezinscot River.

Chuck fell in love with the guitar at the age of eight, he played in various bands through his teens and eventually attended the Berklee School of Music for a year, when he realized that a life as a guitar player might not be in his future. But he had a much stronger feeling for the bass guitar, he began playing bass professionally and in 1985 he built his first bass. He built

55 through neck basses between 85 and 92. In 1993 Chuck went to work in Maine with Dana Bourgeois doing fret work and set ups and built 33 of his own guitars on off hours.

In 1996 he began working with Jon Cooper, where he learned the craft of building violins and cellos. This is when he designed and built his first semi-hollow bodies. In 2000 Chuck went back to work with Bourgeois at Pantheon Guitars doing fret jobs and setups and as shop foreman and in off hours designed his 14 inch semi-hollow bodies that he still builds today and in 2004 he opened CP Thornton guitars.

Today Chuck builds seven unique models, both arch tops and solid bodies, and two bass guitars. They include his 14 inch semi-hollow bodies, the Elite, Jazz Elite, Professional and Blues Queen; his solid body models, the Classic II, The HTL "Homage To Leo" and the Contoured Legend plus his TR-4 and TR-5 basses.

"I don't want to make you sound like someone else — I want to make you sound like yourself."

Such is Chuck's philosophy on building guitars. And we can add that when you play one of Chuck's extraordinary instruments your guitar won't look like anyone else's either, for he possesses a rare ability to design and build inspiring instruments that are entirely unique yet comfortably familiar, and they play and sound as good as they look. We urge you to visit his comprehensive website and behold all the different models he builds. Savor the fine design lines and sweeping curves of his bodies... the generous carve of the necks, and his superb finish work. Having played and reviewed his guitars since 2007, we can assure you that they are masterfully built works of fine art with exceptional tone and resonance. Chuck is also very accessible via phone or email to discuss whatever you might have in mind for your next guitar. He is a true custom builder building legendary custom instruments.

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Resource Directory

CP Thornton Guitars
Sumner, Maine 04292
cpthorntonguitars.com
chuck@cpthorntonguitars.com
207-388-3578

Dave's Guitar Shop: Dave's Guitar Shop offers guitars by Fender, Gibson, PRS, National, Taylor, Gretsch, Ernie Ball, Rickenbacher, Martin, Suhr, Collings, Tom Anderson and many other fine new and used instruments, plus new and used amplifiers such as Fender, Victoria, and Dr. Z, plus hundreds of guitar effects, and aftermarket pickups from Seymour Duncan, and more. Due to their inventory of over 3,000 guitars, amps, and accessories, Dave's is an excellent resource for top of the line Custom Shop and Historic reissues, to intermediate new and used gear. Unlike some dealers' out of date stock lists on the web and in print, Dave's inventory is updated daily. The selection of new and used instruments is truly exceptional, and you can often select among several models of the same new guitars to find that special instrument that was meant for you. Dave's staff is friendly and extremely knowledgeable about the instruments and gear that they sell, because they are players, too. Please check the website for current inventory, and you are welcome to call for more information or an accurate, in-hand description.

Now at three Wisconsin locations: La Crosse, Madison, and Milwaukee.

Dave's Guitar Shop
davesguitar.com 608-785-7704

Eminence is proud to present the Patriot and Redcoat series of guitar speakers. Incorporating both British and American cone technology into speakers that we manufacture in the USA gives us the ability to provide you with virtually any tone you desire. Be it British or American, clean or

dirty, big bass or screaming highs, we have a speaker that will allow you to "Pick Your Sound." Choose from one of seventeen new models! Eminence has been building speakers to custom specifications for nearly every major manufacturer of guitar amplifier and sound reinforcement products since 1967. Their new Legend Series of guitar speakers captures the essence of the vintage American and British speaker designs that are held in such high regard today by so many discerning players. The Legend Series includes classic British and American designs for 6," 8," 10," 12," and 15" speakers utilizing ceramic and AlNiCo magnets, British or American cones, and Kapton polyamide voice coils for superior heat dissipation and durability. Best of all, because Eminence has been successfully competing for years with other speaker manufacturers as an OEM supplier, the Legend Series speakers are priced far below those of many other popular manufacturers of "reissue" and custom speakers. The Eminence Legend Series delivers all of the tone and durability you need, at a lower price, with no compromises in quality. To locate genuine Eminence dealers in your area, please visit their web site or call Eminence Speakers.

Eminence Speaker LLC
Eminence, KY
www.eminence.com 502-845-5622
Contact: Chris Rose

Evidence Audio: "Everything I do is voiced with the same goal in mind. All my cables are designed to "disappear" as much as possible without imparting any signature of their own on the signal path."—Tony Farinella, Founder, Evidence Audio.

We thought you might enjoy reading some comments from actual users of Evidence Audio cables:

Phil Taylor—The man singularly responsible for all of Pink Floyd's

and David Gilmour's equipment and instruments.

"We're careful about choosing equipment both for the Astoria and what David is going to play through. We did extensive listening tests, it was apparent that your cables—both the Lyric HG signal cable and the Siren speaker cable were the choice for guitars and bass. We were so impressed that we even replaced the 'captive' speaker cables in David's combo amps. They outperformed all other cables we tried. They are very well balanced and open across the entire frequency range with a lot of detail and dynamic in the mids and bottom end whilst still sounding smooth and clear at the top end. David is currently using them in the studio—working on a new project."

Carl Verheyen—Carl Verheyen Band, Supertramp

"I recently had my studio rack rewired by my friend Alan Cyr. The entire rack was done with Evidence Audio cable and it has never sounded better! The improvement was immeasurable; the difference is like night and day! For the first time since owning this gear I am finally able to hear it as it really sounds, which is fantastic."

Reeves Gabrels—Solo Artist, David Bowie, The Cure

"Evidence Audio cable is the sonic equivalent putting cream in your coffee after years of non-fat, non-dairy creamer. When I plugged in my first cable it was like hearing my guitar and amp for the first time. Once you play you won't be able to use any other."

—Scott Henderson

"The preservation of detail is remarkable. Every touch on the guitar I make gets through to the amp (which is not always a good thing!) The top end is sweet, and the bottom is fast and punchy. A really nice cable for when presence is a priority."

JJ French—Twisted Sister

"With the hearing I still have left, it's still obvious to me that these are the best cables I have ever heard."

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Resource Directory

Ross Hogarth— Grammy winner; Jewel, Roger Waters, Keb Mo, Coal Chamber, Black Crowes, REM, Shawn Colvin

"I am blown away with the noticeable difference in sonics between the Evidence Audio cables and general cables. I consider these cables a new and important tool in my never ending quest for better audio quality. I am still amazed at the depth and clarity I heard on first listen. Please don't trust me, you be the judge. I am absolutely certain you will be more than pleasantly surprised."

The ToneQuest Report

"Evidence Audio cable solves a potentially vexing problem for guitarists. Once you acquire an Evidence Cable you won't have to think about your guitar cable ever again."

Evidence Audio, Inc,
Lake Oswego, OR
evidenceaudio.com
info@evidenceaudio.com
949-306-7390

Fishguitar: In March 2021 we wrote: What inspires man to create artful things? How do hands and a creative mind work in concert to touch our souls? It is the mystery of life, as mysterious as a guitar builder's initial inspiration to render instruments from the carved images of fish...

There are quite a few custom guitar builders working today, but no one... and we mean no one builds eminently playable works of art like Billy Rhinehart in Athens, Ohio. His website pays tribute to his first fish guitar, but Billy crafts electric guitars and brilliant lap steels in many more varied shapes and winsome designs than mere fish... The Carp & Cod anchored our first review article on Billy's guitars, but he has also built an intriguing collection that includes the Big Chief and the Zulu Queen, Flat Snakes, the Fat Ass Dragon, Mighty Tears of Joy (the heads are phenomenal), the Octo-Fish, Silver River saddle Tele, the oh, so cool Sweet

and Hot Peppers, the Sulfur River horse and saddle Tele, the ice cream and cakes Sugar Buzz, and the Trouble Brothers with a BMW and Triumph headstock, among others. And his alligator lap steels will blow your mind.

Billy Rhinehart is an immensely talented artist and wood carver, but the guitars he builds are not merely "art guitars." They are exceptionally fine playing instruments made from traditional and exotic woods utilizing custom pickups and hardware, and Rhinehart is also very weight conscious, keeping the weight of his guitars at or below eight pounds. While his guitars are brilliantly sculpted pieces of art, they are also great players, featuring rosewood fingerboards, beefy necks and exceptional fret work. We urge you to visit his web site, where you will also be treated to poems dedicated to each guitar and his artwork. It is an experience you will not soon forget.

fishguitar.com

Fishman: Since 1981, Fishman has been dedicated to helping musicians of all styles achieve the truest sound possible wherever and whenever they plug in. With over forty patents granted, engineer/musician Larry Fishman continues to combine science and art to deliver the next generation of innovative product design.

The company's diverse, category-leading product line includes the industry-standard Matrix pickup, Aura Acoustic Imaging technology, and Loudbox amplifiers, the world's best-selling acoustic amplifier line.

Fishman has expanded beyond acoustic amplification with groundbreaking TriplePlay MIDI guitar controllers and, most recently, with the introduction of Fluence multi-voice pickups for electric guitar and bass, representing the first real re-imagining of electric guitar pickups in over 80 years.

Fishman products are sold to over 100 instrument manufacturers and

through a worldwide network of musical instrument dealers and international distributors.

Around the world and night after night, you'll see and hear Fishman products played by musicians on stages big and small.

Fishman
Wilmington, MA
www.fishman.com
978-988-9199

Just Strings.com: Now more than ever, guitarists are reaping the benefits of technical innovations in string making that have led to the widest selection of guitar strings ever available. Just Strings.com is dedicated to providing guitarists with the largest selection of acoustic, roundwound, and flatwound strings, complimented by exceptional personalized service and outstanding value. Trying different types of strings often results in amazing new discoveries that not only improve the sound of your instrument, but dramatically enhance your playing enjoyment. From traditional hand-crafted strings to high-tech exotics, **Just Strings.com exists to help you get the most out of your instrument. Try a new set today, or order your favorite acoustic or electric sets and SAVE!** Juststrings.com offers the best prices on all of the major and specialty brands, promptly delivered to your door. Shop online at JustStrings.com, or place your order by fax at 603-889-7026 or telephone at 603-889-2664.

JustStrings.com, Nashua, NH
info@juststrings.com

Lindy Fralin has been a creative force in the guitar and bass pickup industry for over twenty five years and his guitar pickups are relied on by some of the greatest and most accomplished guitarists on the planet. Fralin Pickups began in the historic

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Resource Directory

Fan District in Richmond, Virginia. Lindy's passion for guitars and the glorious sounds they make led him to begin acquiring broken pickups from local music stores and rewinding them with a winder built from a sewing machine motor and a variac in a coffee can. The enthusiastic response he received from local guitar players was overwhelmingly positive, and Lindy Fralin Pickups was born.

From his initial rewind business, Lindy was able to acquire some of the most sought after vintage pickups ever wound. Over the years he received pickups to be repaired from throughout the country, and his passion for music pushed him to examine all the details inherent in classic vintage pickups to understand and determine the source of their magic. He still enjoys talking tone with players never gets tired of listening to what they want from their guitars.

Today, Lindy Fralin Pickups is a nimble manufacturing shop offering a wide variety of single coil and humbucking pickups, including Stratocaster, Telecaster, Jazzmaster, humbucking and bass pickups, as well as creative new designs not found elsewhere. Lindy and his team continue to develop new pickup models while ardently honoring the great guitar tones of the past.

Fralin Pickups remains a small shop of ten employees taking great pride in their exceptional customer service, frequently speaking with their customers via email or over the phone to determine which Fralin pickups will best suit their needs. Fralin pickups are assembled from the highest quality USA-made materials in existence, and every pickup they build is wound and tested by hand with unsurpassed and meticulous attention to detail. Lindy Fralin's foremost wish is that his customers continue to be completely thrilled with the tone,

clarity, and articulate character of his pickups.

For more information on Lindy's vintage-inspired and innovative new pickup models, please visit the website or call. Lindy and staff look forward to working with you to achieve the inspired and inspiring guitar tones you seek.

Fralin Pickups, Richmond, VA
fralinpickups.com
804-358-2699

Lollar Custom Guitars & Pickups:

What started more than three decades ago with one man building guitars and winding his own pickups has become the standard of what a high-quality pickup should be. With a product and service lineup featuring pickups for electric guitar, bass, steel guitar, and more, as well as custom items and vintage pickup repair, Lollar Pickups has been an authority in the field since 1995—the choice of many of the most highly respected instrument manufacturers and found on stage and in studios with countless professionals around the world. Every Lollar pickup is handmade with pride in Tacoma, WA, USA and hand signed by its maker.

lollarpickups.com

Magnatone: There are a lot of guitar amplifiers being built today— more than you could ever experience in a single lifetime as a guitarist. At Magnatone, we understand that buying a new, hand-wired custom amplifier is a big deal and a very important decision. So naturally you might ask, "Why buy a Magnatone?" Our amplifiers quite literally speak for themselves... and all deliver True Dimensional Sound.

Yes, they are still American made... and include their patented pitch shifting vibrato, offered in mono or

stereo with dual output transformers, tremolo and reverb too. And our attention to first class build quality is as tastefully appointed both inside the chassis as well as the cosmetics on the exterior are pure luxury.

All cabinets are covered in a 100% cotton textile material that will age gracefully, have leather handles made by the Amish in Lancaster, PA and come with a Victoria Luggage protective cover made with the same material Rolls Royce makes their automobile convertible tops with, and spare no expense in every detail. Most importantly, you're able to dial in your tone within fifteen or thirty seconds time.

Neil Young and his long time guitar tech, Larry Cragg both have influenced the sound and tone of the Traditional Collection models. Their request was to make these models touch sensitive, have dynamic range, and are meant for those players that prefer amps with NO master volume. Larry Cragg demanded power tube saturation that achieve in his words.... "the tone of our time!"

The Varsity Reverb is the beginning of the Traditional Collection offered by Magnatone as a combo/head, two EL-84 power tubes for 15 watts of pure tube tone designed with a Princeton preamp, and British power section, tube driven full length reverb that vintage amp lovers will gladly take on the road or easily carry to the club.

The Panoramic Stereo features combo/head powered by two pair of EL-84 power tubes for 12+12 watts of stereo power. Add our patented stereo varistor pitch-shifting vibrato and full length Accutronics reverb tank, tube tremolo and you have the perfect 'grab and go' amplifier.

The Twilighter is our preeminent combo/head, 22 watt dual 6V6 amp with a GZ34 rectifier tube and the original Magnatone varistor based pitch shifting vibrato. Reverb and

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Resource Directory

tremolo of course. The perfect club and recording amp, the Twilighter possesses great clean and beautiful overdriven tones.

The flagship of the Traditional Collection is the Twilighter Stereo combo/head that also features our exclusive varistor-based pitch shifting vibrato and has 22+22 watts of stereo power with two pair of 6V6 power tubes, GZ34 rectifier and as with all Magnatone amps, the speakers are custom made and voiced by Warehouse Guitar Speakers for a truly vintage American sound.

Billy Gibbons helped design the Master Collection and these models feature a master volume with separate pre and power amp custom made knobs. In honor of ZZ Top's 50th Anniversary, Magnatone has released a limited edition gold and tan cosmetics just like what is currently on tour or the standard black levant and silver cosmetics.

The new Super Fifteen is 15 watts, has a pair of EL-84 tubes and master volume making it the perfect size for club work and is available as a combo or head with 1x12 cabinet. It also features a speaker emulation load resistor feature for silent practice with using the 1/4 inch head phone jack or go direct to a console or computer.

The Super Fifty Nine M-80 head/combo is two amps in one with both the previously released MK I and MK II models made by Magnatone. Featuring two EL-34 power tubes delivering 45 watts of power with the extra gain stage of the MK I and as with all Master Collection models, it has a tube buffered effects loop. The high and low gain modes can be foot switchable and are simply outstanding and eminently gig worthy.

The Super Fifty Nine MK II head/combo is also 45 watts, two EL-34 power tubes with 4-band tone stack like the M-80 but also include the Magnatone famous pitch shift-

ing vibrato and tremolo. This amp delivers powerful performance that is versatile and exceptionally toneful and capable of being heard with a full band.

We are very proud of the entire line of Magnatone amps, but you needn't take our word for their exceptional tone and custom designs. We never give away Magnatone amp, and the comments you are about to read are from players who bought their amps...

— Ted Kornblum — Magnatone

"Magnatone is a clean machine with a bunch of crunch!"

— Billy Gibbons

"The amps are really touch sensitive, just like my playing!"

— Jeff Beck

"You can tell the amps are well made just based on the detail that went into their workmanship. I mean, they just sound great the moment you plug in."

— Charlie Sexton

"You should get a medal for bringing the Magnatone brand back to life, and so well."

— Keith Urban

"The Super Fifty-Nine sounds like a really good old Marshall.... and I can't wait to use the Twilighter Stereo in the studio."

— Joe Walsh

"I fell in love with the Magnatone and threw it in the rig immediately. It's basically a really well-built boutique type amplifier but with the vibrato from the early days. There's really nothing else quite like it as far as amplifier vibrato goes, and I think shifting the pitch actually adds something extra to the tone that you don't really get otherwise. With the Twilighter, you can get a really huge sound that is way bigger sounding than the physical size of the amp actually is."

— Jason Isbell

"Congratulations on your new amp company. You did it... and you did it RIGHT!"

— Neil Young

"I'm proudly representing Magnatone amps out here on the road and in the studio... and you should be proud... your amps sound great. I'm getting some really good tones and the Twilighter sure does get "the tone."

— Lukas Nelson

"I really dig your new Magnatone amps, man. In fact, I played the Twilighter Stereo when I was honored at the Music Cares 2017 "Person of The Year" concert and it sounded really good."

— The late Tom Petty

"I think Magnatone is going to do really well filling the shoes of some of those famous amp companies that have been asleep for years, and the new Varsity Reverb does it and is on tour with me."

— David Crosby

"The sound of my Twilighter is just perfect. What else can I say... the amp speaks for itself."

— Graham Nash

"I didn't know new amps could sound as good as vintage ones, but the new Magnatone amps sure do."

— Alejandro Escovedo

"I own lots of amps, and recently sold a bunch of the ones I didn't really need, but I kept the new Magnatone Stereo Twilighter."

— Joe Bonamassa

"Ted Kornblum and his dedicated kickass all-American team have resurrected the mighty classic Magnatone amplifier line that I started out with in 1959, and I am celebrating the greatest guitar tone in the history of the world with the Super Fifty-Nine! Made in America by American badasses!"

— Ted Nugent

Magnatone Amplification
www.magnatoneusa.com

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Resource Directory

Ruokangas Guitars: Juha Ruokangas is the founder and sole owner of Ruokangas Guitars (est. 1995). He designs all the Ruokangas guitar models, and builds them together with his small dream team in Finland. Juha is one of the very few Finnish luthiers with a Master's Degree, and his guitars are regarded in various books, magazines and other independent sources as some of the finest in the world. Juha is also a co-founder and the vice president of EGB (European Guitar Builders association) and the chairman of Guild of Finnish Luthiers.

"In the world of boutique guitars, Ruokangas sets the bar as a standard by which all of the boutique guitar companies should be measured against for making an outstanding product. I am a very proud owner of these instruments!"

— Jay Jay French/Twisted Sister

"Ruokangas guitars are well-made and they sound really sweet. They're built in what I'd call the right tradition."

— Mick Box/UriaH Heep

"Last time I bought an electric guitar (Telecaster) in 1966, and now it was time to buy another one. The Mojo Grande is the most acoustic electric guitar I've ever played. This is superb!"

— Tommy Emmanuel

"My Duke is an indispensable tool in my toolbox. It is an exceptionally made guitar that sounds and plays like a top quality instrument should. The feel and finish is as good as it gets. It barks and growls like a P90 loaded 50's era guitar. It will always be a part of my arsenal. I use it all the time."

—Josh Smith

"Your attention to detail and sonic resonance is as good as it gets. The fret work is perfect and they almost have a bell like ring to them, even the solid bodies but especially the Unicorn Artisan. Great work, keep it up!"

—Bob Willcutt/Willcutt Guitars

"The Ruokangas guitars kick ass!"

— Matias Kupiainen
Stratovarius, Finland

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Stewart MacDonald: Stewart MacDonald offers a complete line of hard-to-find tools, parts, accessories, instructional videos and books for building, repairing, setting up, and optimizing the playability and tone of stringed instruments. Whether you are just getting started or you're a seasoned luthier, you'll find everything you need in the Stew-Mac catalog, including: fret wire, finishing supplies, glues and adhesives, wood, bodies, necks, binding, tuners, nuts and saddles, inlay, bridges, tailpieces, electronics, pickups, and free information sheets and professional advice! Their friendly customer service and technical support staff are trained to help you make the best product choices, and they also offer an Unconditional Return Guarantee. If you're not satisfied with an item for any reason, simply return it.

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For more information on the entire range of products available, please visit the Stewart MacDonald website.

In addition to their free online help service, your telephone call is also always welcome.

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Truetone: In 2022, Truetone is celebrating its 27th year as a world leader in pedalboard power supplies, effect pedals, and accessories. Launched by Bob Weil in 1995, the company was formed on a bedrock of innovative ideas, and plain old hard work. Weil's inspired labors landed him a spot as both a leading member of the vanguard of stompbox builders of the 90s and as a pedal power supply visionary via his 1 SPOT and 1 SPOT Pro line.

Truetone's brick-style power supplies, the 1 SPOT Pro CS-7, CS-12, and the low-profile CS-6 revolutionized the pedal power supply market with their lightweight designs and high power capacity. With the capability of powering just about any effect device and the freedom of being used anywhere in the world, the 1 SPOT Pro line quickly became the new standard for brick-style power supplies. 1 SPOTs are used by the top pedalboard builders and can be found on professional pedalboards across the globe.

Truetone's classic pedal lineup includes the VS-XO Premium Dual Overdrive, and the perennial favorite, the V3 Jekyll & Hyde. Although already a standard, the latest edition of the Jekyll is a carefully thought-out complete redesign of the original, with all new features and additional tones.

With top-of-the-line power supplies, Truetone also has the finest in pedalboard accessories. Offerings include the MA Milliamp Meter that can measure the actual power draw of just about any pedal, the handy TVD voltage doubler, and an entire line of power cables and converter plugs to

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Resource Directory

help any guitarist get their pedalboard gig-ready.

Check out the Truetone website for more information, videos, and news about all the great Truetone products.

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Warehouse Guitar Speakers® LLC: is an Internet-based retail speaker supplier and manufacturer based in Paducah, KY— an area of the country with a long history in speaker manufacturing that includes the original CTS company, Credence Speakers, Voice Communication Coil, and Hawley Products— the oldest cone manufacturer in the world. When an OEM speaker manufacturer needed to clear warehouse space in 2006, WGS was born and began manufacturing and selling American-assembled guitar speakers to the public.

Today we build a wide range of high-quality and reasonably priced 10 and 12-inch Alnico and Ceramic magnet guitars speakers that celebrate and reprise the golden era of speaker manufacturing in the USA and England during the '60s and '70s, including the 15 watt Alnico Black & Blue™, 50 watt Alnico BlackHawk™, 60 watt Veteran 30™, 25 watt Green Beret™, 80 watt British Lead™, 65 watt ET65™, 30 watt Reaper™, and 75 watt Retro 30™, among others. WGS also builds high-power bass and PA speakers, and we are constantly developing and adding new speaker models to meet the demands of today's guitarists.

Why should you consider buying WGS speakers? At a time when speaker manufacturers have moved production to Asia, compromising quality and reliability while prices

continue to increase, our speakers are proudly assembled in the USA by a team with decades of speaker design and building experience, at a reasonable price. Our employees take pride in building the very best speakers available anywhere. Selling direct via the Web enables us to keep prices low without compromising quality. You buy direct from the manufacturer, and we proudly stand behind our products with fast shipping and exceptional customer service.

For information on the entire range of WGS guitar and bass speakers, please visit our web site today.

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