

Wood & Steel

12

Strings & 12-Frets

Diverse new
designs for
every player

The 2016 Guitar Guide

The Revoiced Mahogany 500s

The 300 Series Branches Out

QUALITY
Taylor
GUITARS

Letters



Better Late Than Never

Seeing America on the latest cover of *Wood&Steel* brought back a lot of memories. They were my first concert back in Providence in the early '70s. General admission tickets cost us \$4.50 each, a buck cheaper than the lower level. The opening act was Jackson Browne supporting his first album, which everyone was calling *Saturate Before Using*. It was amazing to see someone singing and playing exactly what we were hearing on the radio.

America came on next, and we were fortunate to have Dan Peek playing with Dewey and Gerry. All night long, beautiful 6- and 12-string guitars graced the stage, along with tight vocal harmonies. That set off a lifetime of going to concerts and a desire to play guitar. It took until I was in my 50s to buy a Big Baby and get lessons from someone who could teach adults. With the right instructor, it is never too late to learn. Within weeks I was playing "Brown Eyed Girl" and working towards my bucket list of playing a few songs at the local open mic. When I reached my goal, I upgraded to a Taylor 312ce.

Time to start working on a tune by America.

Brad MacPherson
Wilbraham, MA

Played in America

First off, I own two Taylors already – a 314ce and a T5 – and am very happy with both; the sound and playability are fantastic. I was reading the fall edition of *Wood&Steel* and noticed Gerry Beckley's Taylor GA 12-string. I was thinking what a great sound he has and that maybe I should look at getting a 12-string to change up my sound. I had two of them years ago but sold them. I went down to Island Music in Neenah, Wisconsin, and played a few of the 12s

they had. One was the Taylor GA6-12 – [similar to] the model Gerry uses with America. Wow! I was blown away by the sound. The maple gave that guitar a tone that just jumped right out at me. I couldn't put it down. The next week I tried a few Taylors at another store. They were great guitars, but the GA6-12 was calling to me.

I went back to Island Music and talked to salesman Steve Dioreto. He knew how much I loved that guitar and said he'd like to see it go home with me. Well, it did. Steve and I worked out a great deal, and I can't believe this great-sounding guitar is in my collection. I'm thinking my collection has to be complete now – I guess until I meet the next new Taylor that turns my head. Thanks for producing such great guitars.

Joseph Walus
Abrams, WI

Shades of Ben

Ben was not supposed to have a docked tail. He was supposed to have a sweep-the-wine-glasses-off-of-the-coffee-table-type tail that you would find on a Golden Retriever or a Gordon Setter (his breed). In any event, the people that owned him before me thought that he was perhaps a Doberman or a Rottweiler (because of his coloring) and had his tail docked. He was left with this little Hare Krishna-type caudal appendage that was mostly black but had a little stripe of tan running through it.

The week after he passed, I went to buy a new guitar, a Taylor GS Mini. When I looked at the guitar, I noticed that the ebony fretboard had this light tan stripe running down its entire length. Ben's little tail sprang to mind. That clinched it. I was buying the guitar no matter how it felt or sounded. Thankfully, it feels great and sounds wonderful. Benny is now my go-to guitar.

Kim Zayac

Making a Spiritual Friend

My Taylor story begins in Mesa, Arizona, walking into Milano's Music store. I was getting ready to head back to Nashville with my producer Johnny Mulhair (LeAnn Rimes's *Blue* and *Unchained Melody*), and I needed a great guitar to unleash on the record label folks and the patrons of the different hot spots in town to play music.

I walked into the acoustic room

and – *blam* – there she was, hanging right at eye level: a K24ce. It was love at first sight. But how did it sound? The first touch of the strings had me wrapped around her finger. It was a godsend. In Nashville, the guitar got several "A" reviews from top producers and from the VP of Sony Records. One guy at the Bluebird Cafe found me after my session and had to know what my



K24ce

guitar was and what kind of wood she was made of. My Taylor has traveled all over the country with me and has never, ever, let me down. I named her Ho Aloha Lani, which translates into "Spiritual Friend." I can't think of a better way to describe her. She moves me to inspiration, and the ideas flow freely from her. My Taylor has changed my life. Having her in this world with me has been a truly moving experience. Thank you for the "Spiritual Friend" you made for me.

Finch Williams

Reasons to Smile

I bought my first Taylor in 1995. I had just moved to Texas, and my wife had promised me a new guitar if I stayed in Chicago and sold the house. So when I got to Dallas, I started a search for the perfect guitar. I spent weeks going to guitar stores all over. I wanted a Taylor but couldn't find the selection I was looking for, so I

widened my search. I saw a place in Garland, Texas, and decided I would go there after a noon meeting. This was a special day to me: the anniversary of one year clean and sober. I went into Guitar Express, which from the outside did not look too promising. But when I walked inside, there was a wall of Taylors. I made a few selections, an 810, 610 and a couple of others. They put me in room with my selections and let me be. The 810 was really nice, but I kept coming back to the 610. I was sold. My friend Tom once told me, "If you're gonna pay that much money for a guitar, it better make you smile every time you open the case." A week from Sunday the guitar will be 20 years old, and I'll be sober for my 21st year. That guitar still makes me smile every time I open the case. I also smile now when I open the case of my GC7. The 610 and I have been through a lot together, and we're both still happy and making music.

Rich J.

High-End Bargain

Last year, I made the decision to invest in a "high-end" acoustic guitar for a classic country album that I'm writing. I set out early one morning to shop all day with a maximum budget of \$4,000. I was 100 percent certain that I'd be coming home with a dream guitar from one of those (other) big guitar makers... after all, it *is* classic country, right?

One disappointment after another ensued at three different stores as I played through no less than a dozen "high-end" guitars.

As I headed home empty-handed and disappointed, I stopped at one last music store. The guy very kindly handed me one guitar after another; I barely looked at what I was playing. And then it happened. I put a guitar on my lap and hit an open low E string, which caused my eyes to fly open. I sat straight up. Then came the big strum of a G chord. The guitar resonated throughout my entire body while filling the room with perfectly balanced and stunning tone from top to bottom. I was in love. "Yeah, but how much is this guitar?" I asked the man. "It's just over \$600. It's a Taylor 114c Grand Auditorium," he replied. Sold.

Michael Yolch

Guitar Hook

I'm a fly-fishing guide in Montana and have been for almost 40 years. My drift boat is covered inside with all sorts

of stickers from fly-fishing companies or conservation groups I belong to. I recently added a Taylor headstock sticker I picked up at a Taylor event in Bozeman this summer, and I placed it in a really obscure part of my drift boat. Very few people comment on these fly-fishing stickers, but my Taylor guitar sticker is something else. Here's how the normal conversation goes when a guitar player sees my Taylor sticker: "So, you play guitar?" "Yeah, a little bit." "You have a Taylor?" "Nope...I've got two."

I had no idea that one small Taylor sticker could grab the eye of so many people in a sea of fly-fishing propaganda. Your guitars and your stickers rock as far as I'm concerned. Soon my response will be, "Nope...I've got three."

Dave Corcoran
Bozeman, MT

Granadillo Goodness

I was the first of our jam group to lay my hands on a Taylor guitar. It was about the time the GS Mini hit the streets. My music teacher had a Mini and made such a fuss I had to get one. My group now has two GS Minis, but I have moved on to a Taylor 2013 412ce-SLTD Grand Concert. I can't tell you how special it is to own such a unique guitar. No matter where I go, players seem drawn to its beauty, attention to detail, sustain and distinctive sound. It blends nicely with the resonance of all other guitars in my gigs. Please thank whoever cut the fine solid granadillo wood for the back. They had the insight to appreciate the two dark knots in the wood that are six inches apart and painstakingly centered at the waist, perfecting the overall beauty of the guitar. I have not seen anyone else in this area playing a guitar with the beauty of a granadillo body and sides or the unique sound it makes. Special limited editions are indeed special.

Dan
Nanaimo, BC, Canada

We'd like to hear from you

Send your e-mails to:
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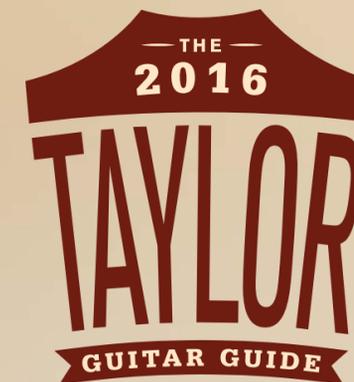
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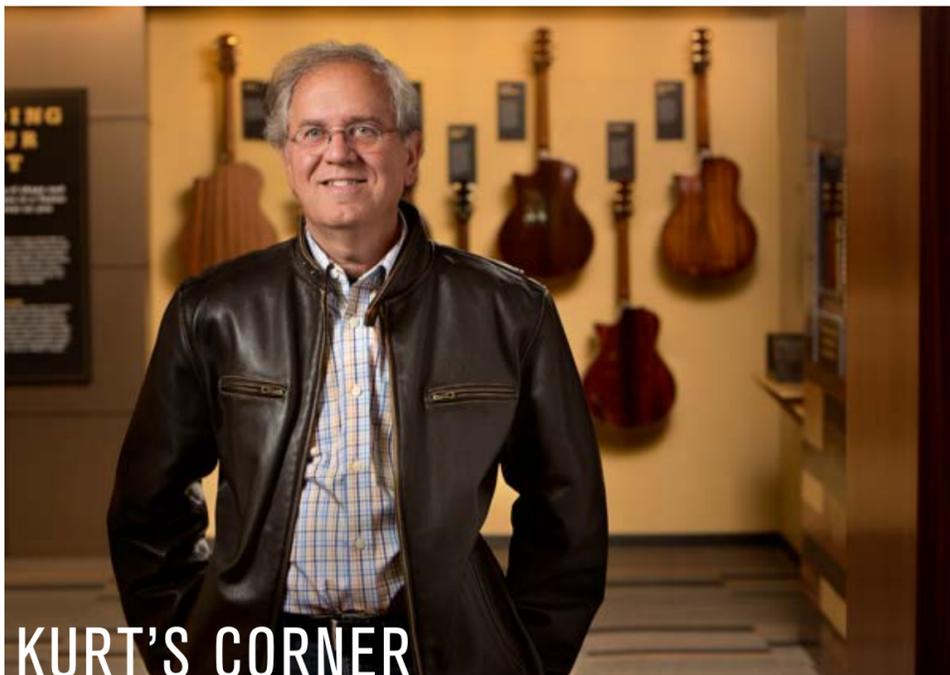
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KURT'S CORNER

Setting the Course for Growth

Every year in business is different. A few years are easy, some are hard, and most are somewhere in between. Each year you face a different set of circumstances: changing economic, political, social and musical trends. It's rare to have a year where everything lines up in your favor. The challenge is navigating through the changes and headwinds, and still executing the plan you crafted for the year.

Last year was no exception. There were unpredicted shifts in currencies and oil prices, and other societal unrest. Yet, in spite of this, 2015 ended

more guitars than were planned for. We still weren't able to make all the guitars needed to fill demand, but we will be better equipped to do so once we're fully moved in. Nevertheless, between our El Cajon and Tecate factories we produced more than 165,000 guitars! That's up from 147,000 in 2014 and 133,000 in 2013.

On the sales side, Taylor has been very strong, almost dominant in the U.S. Our guitars are extremely popular, and very visible with artists. In the U.S., Taylor has been the top-selling acoustic guitar brand for 26 straight months,

Since then, we've completed dedicated Taylor rooms or displays in 12 additional music stores around the world, and that will grow to at least 30 in 2016.

The company has grown to nearly 1,000 people working worldwide. I'm very proud of how our Human Resources department has grown and matured, and how well we treat people. It's a huge undertaking to provide

jobs to people, treat them fairly, give them worthwhile work, provide training and supervision to allow them to succeed, provide a safe workplace, and be in compliance with the laws of the land. Being a great employer is one of the most rewarding aspects of the company, and one of the most challenging. You have to have both the employees' and the company's best interests at heart...at the same time. You have to find that balance, which is no easy thing. The strength of our HR department is one of the keys to our success, and one of the big differentiators between Taylor and other musical instrument companies.

We're very excited about our new guitars, which you'll read about in this issue. Thank you for being an important part of the extended Taylor family. Here's wishing you a safe, prosperous, and musically fulfilling 2016!

— Kurt Listug, CEO

and the overall top-selling guitar brand (acoustic or electric) for 18 straight months. We're quite strong in European and other countries, but still have room for growth in many other regions of the world.

It's been a year since the Guitar Center store near our El Cajon facility factory opened a dedicated Taylor room, and it has seen tremendous sales growth from the larger guitar assortment and sharpened brand focus.

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BOBSPEAK

Forestry for the Future

We're building guitars during a unique time in our world. One, the market is bigger than ever, and the world's doors have opened so that far-off countries are just a shipment away. It's a big world out there, and we are not afraid to grow in order to supply much of the demand. Someone will fill it, so if we think we're best suited by feeling we do the best work, then naturally we will work to fill it. Two, we are living at a time when taking materials such as wood requires that one gives back. A word that has now become part of my daily vocabulary is "forestry."

Let's talk about forestry first. Taken straight from Wikipedia, forestry is the science and craft of creating, managing, using, conserving and repairing forests and associated resources to meet desired goals, needs and values for human benefit.

It goes on to include concern for wildlife habitat, water quality management, landscape and community protection, employment, aesthetics, biodiversity, and so on, and it's interesting to me because in my heart I have these ideals about a world that could work well in regard to where our materials come from, and I know that players have the same exact concerns. Just look at some of our "Ask Bob" questions in this issue and nearly all for the past few years. You feel like I do, and don't quite know what to do. Some say stop using wood. Others ask if we

plant. Others want to change species and use common American timbers, while still others want to use synthetics. Everyone, however, is looking for the same safe feeling of a solution that helps the world in a way that they feel but might not be able to express or know how it's done. Sound bites in the news, or articles about the logger who needs to be stopped, or the conversion of forest to palm oil all fuel more sound bites, but they don't teach a person like you or me what to actually do about it other than protest and recycle our cans and bottles.

I have good news. I've found the people whose profession it is to actually accomplish much of what we all want to see done. They're called foresters, and I've listed a bit of what they do above. It's the most fascinating topic, and good foresters, if allowed to work, have many of the answers. The only problem is, foresters work for clients, and if the client doesn't have these same measures in mind, the forester can't do well. The foresters I've met are mostly very good and brimming with concern, ideas and skills to help us all. And they're frustrated because they work in a structure that often doesn't allow them to work. Their work takes committed clients, and it also takes time. Maybe they feel like a public school teacher or some medical professionals who just want to teach and heal, but the system gets in the way.

My supplier, colleague and partner in a new business, Steve McMinn, introduced me to foresters. It's his deep knowledge and passion that rubbed off on me. I've learned a lot from him, and now I feel like I'm part of the team. In fact, it's a big part of my daily work and budget now. My work is as a client more than as a forester, but a client is who allows the forester to do what they are doing. Watching Steve's work with maple, and our work together with koa, and my work on ebony, has given me a deep appreciation and admiration for the foresters we work with. They're amazing, gifted, dedicated and under-utilized. At least that's my opinion.

But forestry is the way out of this mess we're in. It has been done before in many places where good forestry meets all the qualities I listed. It's grabbed me in the same way that guitar building grabbed me when I was 16 years old, and you see what I did about that passion. I'm all-in on this one, too.

The market: What can I say, it's big and we've grown. But at the same time, as we've grown we've kept to the basics, which is good guitar making. Now that I'm nearly 61 years old and have done this for 41 years, I know that our guitar making could suffer if left alone, which is why we're so blessed to have Andy Powers on our team. His talent, youth, knowledge and passion are focused on good guitars, and you've found that to be true just by playing the

guitars he designs. They're the best we've ever made.

But we also make a lot of guitars, and we've got a great team to help us do that. I'm going to toot my own horn just for a second to say I have a talent for figuring out how to make a process that works, which I think you've gathered over the years. And this also is something that I spend my days doing. Between talking with Andy about what the guitars are, and being amazed by his work, and then spending time with our super team of engineers and machinists, and then wrapping up with some learning on how to grow trees

like ebony, maple, koa or mahogany in a forest, I have a full and satisfying body of work to do, and I'm grateful for it.

For those of you who are fans of our guitars and have enjoyed them over the years and wonder what the future holds, I'll tell you that we're working on a good future, night and day, near and far, and putting resources into it like we've always done, only more than ever. I trust you to trust us to do the right thing and keep it good. We're excited about that, and we're passion-driven to make it better all the time.

— Bob Taylor, President



2016 Taylor Factory Tours & Vacation Dates

A free, guided tour of the Taylor Guitars factory is given every Monday through Friday at 1 p.m. (excluding holidays). No advance reservations are necessary. Simply check-in at the reception desk in our Visitor Center, located in the lobby of our main building, before 1 p.m. We ask that large groups (more than 10) call us in advance at (619) 258-1207.

While not physically demanding, the tour does include a fair amount of walking. Due to the technical nature, the tour may not be suitable for small children. The tour lasts approximately one hour and 15 minutes and departs from the main building at 1980 Gillespie Way in El Cajon, California.

Please take note of the weekday exceptions below. For more information, including directions to the factory, please visit taylorguitars.com/contact.

We look forward to seeing you!

Factory Closures

Monday, February 15
(Presidents' Day)

Monday, May 30
(Memorial Day)

Monday, July 4- Friday, July 8
(Independence Day/Company Vacation)

Correction: Last issue on our Calendar page, a caption for a Taylor Road Show photo mistakenly identified the location as The Guitar Bar in Santa Barbara, CA. It was actually Danville Music in Danville, CA. We regret the error.

Ask Bob

Ebony follow-up, scale length myths, and cutting tops

Bob, I was gratified that you took the time to respond to my concerns about Taylor Guitars' promotion of ebony in the Fall 2015 edition of *Wood&Steel*. While we disagree on approaches that would best ensure the preservation of this threatened and unique wood, I do appreciate your efforts, which have brought the issue of ebony to the fore.

Unanswered, however, was the question of any efforts Taylor is making to reduce the overall use of ebony by forcefully promoting alternative woods and synthetics to replace the use of ebony for fingerboards, bindings and the like. As you know, Martin's new Dreadnought Junior entry into the GS Mini market uses synthetic Richlite "ebony" for its fingerboard. Three or four years ago, I took one of your fantastic factory tours. I was quite impressed. I did ask the tour leader about any efforts Taylor was making to develop and use synthetic substitutes for some of their woods. The tour leader responded, "Bob doesn't do that" While I know the guides don't speak for you, if ebony is at such a risk, why develop a new line of guitars such as the GS Mini with its ebony fingerboard, which will only increase the use of ebony, when some synthetic like Richlite would seem to be well-suited for the fingerboards of such a guitar?

At this late date in the decline of woods worldwide, I don't believe the response, "Bob doesn't do that" can remain an appropriate answer to the critical question of synthetics and the role they must play in helping address the global wood issues in the musical instrument industry.

Thank you again for listening and continuing this important discussion.
Peter H.D. McKee
Seattle, WA

Peter, I'll take another stab at it, although I feel I gave you a pretty thorough run-down last time. Forcing the use of synthetics would not reduce the amount of ebony cut. Our using it the way we do won't increase the amount of trees cut. As I said before, we cut much less ebony in Cameroon than we did four years ago. That's my direct answer. I'll restate the sheer volume of guitars we

make from wood we buy that was previously discarded, and that creates economy there. It creates legitimate jobs there. Even their forestry laws improve. Expectations on bad operators increase. When I arrived in Cameroon four years ago, our 60 employees hung their heads and wouldn't speak except to grumble that they couldn't afford to eat lunch, made super low wages, worked in poor conditions, and had no hope for the future. We were working there just a month ago, and before I left, we all gathered together to dedicate our new building and machines. They made speeches of how their lives are changed for the better, how they have a future, and then they all sang "Amazing Grace." No kidding. We teared up, and they all had their cell phones out, shooting videos of the moment. They are seeing conditions they never thought they'd see: good machines, benefits, good pay, training, respect, and it all centers on good use of the material and the money staying there. I leave for Cameroon tomorrow to end the year with them and see them off to their Christmas vacation.

We have uncovered not only more ways to use the same trees, but we're learning to replant ebony. Replanting is key. We have our second nursery growth underway, with higher success than last year, and we're learning more each month with the help of experts who've had nobody to implement their ideas until they met us. Over the next few years it's safe to say that we may plant 10 trees for every one we take, with a plan that helps ensure their viability. And the replanting will eventually come from others who see the potential in the future, so it can expand beyond what we can do. This has never been done before. You might not agree with our using ebony and perhaps feel you have a better approach worked out for saving ebony, but I am very tuned in on the matter and believe very much in this work, including the use of the material. We also have the agreement and support of most of the Congo Basin agro-forestry institutes that we've met while there and are now working with to improve the species and regrow. I know 60 employees and three times that many villagers who agree with my approach. Things there could not improve without a good operator, and we are becoming that good operator.

None of these good things would happen if we at Taylor Guitars decided to use synthetic fretboards and left Africa. I assure you the trees would still be cut, but none would be planted and tended. It's more than just about trees; it's also about people. When our employees first saw me promise that I can make a guitar from the high percentage of the so-called bad wood, they were in disbelief and incredibly excited to hear it. They hate the waste way more than you do, believe me. And it's the huge volume of it I use that makes them happy, because the normal business of cutting any wood produces that. We don't cut more trees; we cut fewer.

The musical instrument market isn't all that huge, which is another important thing to know. We use a portion of the ebony we cut, and the rest is distributed by our Spanish partner, Madinter, to other makers of guitars and bowed instruments. Madinter is as passionate about this good work as we are. But you might be surprised to know that we can't sell much more into the industry than we already sell. There are others who cut and sell ebony too, more than equaling what we sell. Together we satisfy the appetite for ebony used for musical instruments with a limit set by the government. In reality it isn't all that much. But that's the size of the appetite for ebony in instruments, and the annual legal cut from Cameroon satisfies the need. You should also know that all ebony permits last only one year. We never even know if we'll be allowed to cut next year. Only operating well within the law and our permit confines helps to ensure one year's permit renewal, and all cutters face the same limited permission.

I think we'll make a pamphlet for visitors on our factory tour who ask questions like the one you asked. As you can see, a tour guide can't fully answer it, and would be incapable of arguing against your points, as the subject is very complex. I'm proud of our work on ebony, and the way we use it, and I'm going to press on to try to change what's been a bad system and leave a legacy of more trees growing in the ground than we ever took, by a big factor. It's a lot of what I'm living for right now. The people who know me would attest to that.

Ed. Note: For more on Taylor's commitment to sustainable forestry, see this issue's BobSpeak column on page 5.



Bob, has there been any more progress with the development of a classical guitar? I can understand the difficulties in producing such instruments on a large scale. You guys produce the best production-built guitars in the world, so come on, don't miss out on the opportunity to break into such a huge market. Lots of people out there do it with their fingers.

Paul Stevens
Shropshire, UK

Ha! That's it, Paul, that's just the push I needed. I was just waiting for this letter! But seriously, steel-strings have been keeping us busy. Boy, Andy has really made some nice-sounding classical prototypes, and I'm not trying to tease you, but we just don't have the bandwidth at this time to get them into the market. How I wish we did! I have a great desire to see it done.

I am the proud owner of two great Taylor guitars. I have an early '90s 410ce and a 2004 710ce L7, which is the short-scale. I have had several people tell me the short-scale is not desirable because it has inferior tone and low projection. Mine has an Engelmann top and is absolutely beautiful. I am in my 70s and started playing guitar when I was 11. The only difference between the scale lengths that I can tell is the 710ce is easier to play, and is especially good for an older player with small hands like me.

Why do people think these instruments are inferior? I don't believe an audience can tell the difference, and they sure can't see the difference. So, where did this idea come from, and why does it persist?

Don Fitzpatrick

Don, I'm with you! Do these people hear your guitar and then try to figure out why it doesn't sound good and then discover as they expected that it's a shorter scale? I really doubt it. They're likely talking about things they've heard and passing on the same kinds of judgments that people argue about all day long with cars: what's better and what's not. It's a hobby to be interested and to have opinions. But your short-scale guitar sounds great, I know, and it's easier for you to play, so play it proudly, and if you don't tell anyone it's short, then who even knows? By the way, this idea of short and long is also a funny idea. Guitars are made with lots and lots of different scale lengths. We have two, 25-1/2 inches and 24-7/8 inches, and there are shorter scales and longer scales than those two in the world. Just play and enjoy it.

Are any Taylor acoustic guitars made with a one-piece solid top? And whether the answer is yes or no, would a one-piece top make for a better sound than a two-piece top? Please correct me if I'm wrong, as I am no expert by any means, but would a 16-inch top have to be cut from a tree at least twice that big around to avoid using the center, or can the center of the tree be used? And do humidity changes enter into the thought process as well as the strength of the top? This subject has come up before, but we are all a bunch of non-experts, and we value your expert opinion.

Dan Mueller
Bay City, MI

Dan, there are a few things that are good about a two-piece top. One, the

tree can be smaller. Two, the wood is pretty when it's symmetrical. Three, it's nice to work with symmetry in the grain for sound, with a center and edges that blend identically from the middle out. You can't cut through the middle of a log. That wood in the middle isn't very good and is usually rotted anyway on old trees. Even if you had a one-piece top, it wouldn't really be better or worse in the practical sense. Yes, we could chat all day about it, but a guitar maker could do a good job with either. In fact, Dan, as time goes on we'll probably be making more tops from farmed wood rather than forest wood, and that will mean four-piece tops. But don't worry, the guitar makers will make them pretty, and they'll sound great. Oh, and to answer your humidity question, the control of humidity would be the same for a one-piece or multi-piece top.

I saw a photo of a felled ebony tree from a past issue of *Wood&Steel*, and the heartwood was the desirable jet black but the sapwood was white. I was wondering if the whiter sapwood was being used in any capacity (as it seems to be a huge waste if only the black ebony is used and the rest discarded). It made me think that if the sapwood has the same great traits of the heartwood that it could be used for blond fretboards, bridges, etc., and the WHOLE tree could be utilized. I think blond ebony or maple fingerboards would look fantastic, and we are used to seeing lighter woods on electric guitars. Taylor could be the company that revolutionizes acoustic guitar fingerboards being known for a black or blond ebony (or a maple) option. What do you think?

Bob S

Bob, I think that's a great idea. I really do. But you can't get there from here right now. Why? One, the wood isn't really white or blonde; rather it's gray and usually stained and often bug-eaten. Two, it's hard to dry. Three, it's not as hard as the black and has to compete with the perfect whiteness of maple. Now, it's harder than maple, so that's good. And it's helpful in that it can be stained through and through to a black color, because its pores are big. (You can't stain the heartwood; only the sapwood.) So there are possibilities. It's very complicated, but the laws in Cameroon are very specific and have some unintended consequences. One of these almost insists that the sapwood be left in the forest. But it's a good idea nonetheless, and one for the future.

My wife and I just bought two Taylors in the new 600 Series: a 612ce 12-Fret for her and a 618e for me. Both are extremely easy to play (typical Taylor), the brown sugar finish is gorgeous, and the tone quality is exceptional. I have played for years, but my wife just started playing. We were hooked when we played them at Willcutt Guitars in Lexington, Kentucky. From what I have read, a major contributor to the sound quality is the torrefied top. Since the top has been "baked" to "hurry up" the aging process, will the top age any more naturally? We're just wondering if we can expect the tone quality to increase as the guitars age.

Charles Vance
Barboursville, WV

Good question, Charles, and here's my best answer. First, I have to set the record straight that the heat-treated top is not a major contributor. Our literature doesn't give it that much credit. It's one factor among many. We did it as much for color as sound. It does change the nature of the spruce to be more like older spruce. But the guitars are still not done. A lot more natural torrefaction will take place, and the back, sides, and neck still have to age naturally. So, yes, your guitar will age and change for many years to come. The world is sort of all over this topic of torrefied tops on guitars now. Our opinion is to use it sparingly and for very distinct reasons. For instance, we are using a lot of plantation mahogany from Fiji now. There are oodles of this wood that the British planted 80 years ago. The wood isn't as good as ancient forest wood, but we can help it behave better, in fact very well, through some heat treatment. You could call it torrefied, I suppose, but it's not for sound, it's for relaxing the fibers.

By the way, I'll put in a plug for growing ebony here since I have the chance. We are making guitars from mahogany that people planted 80 years ago, who are no longer living, and didn't live in that country. One day, someone will write about using the ebony or koa that we planted, long after we're gone. I like that thought and am dedicated to pursuing it.

There are many tonewoods that are commonly used in electric guitars, like ash, korina and basswood, that don't seem to be used in acoustic guitars. Are they not compatible with acoustic guitar requirements, and what would then make them good for an electric guitar but not for an acoustic?

Bob

Bob, let's start with basswood. That would really not work for acoustics because it's not very acoustic, but rather, mostly dead. Korina is cool, especially for electrics. It's a mahogany substitute from Africa, also known as limba, but there's not a viable supply. Acoustics like harder wood than korina. Sapele is better pound for pound. Ash? It would make a good acoustic, and so would oak. But it's not the look people are accustomed to. In the end, we've distilled our tastes down to the woods that have the right availability, the right size tree, the right weight and density, and the right look and sound. Oh yeah, sound! Sound is very important, and many woods do sound great. But if they look wrong they never get picked up and tried. It's quite a little matrix. So, that's the story. It's not that they can't, but that they're in competition with other species and lose.

I love my Taylor 512ce 12-Fret. I have been told a guitar gets better as it ages. I have also been instructed to keep my guitar humidified. It seems to me that humidifying a guitar would hinder the aging process. Please educate me.

Greg
Toledo, OR

That's a good question, Greg. When you're told, "humidified," it's like keeping yourself hydrated. Nobody is asking you to make your guitar wet any more than they're asking you to be wet, but we all know that you and your guitar are more healthy and comfortable at 50 percent relative humidity than at 20 percent. So, yes, you need to keep it humidified, and don't confuse that with wet. If you do that, the guitar will still age. As I mentioned earlier, it will actually torrefy over time. It really will. And when all that wood ages, it will sound better, even if humidified. Look at the artifacts of wood or paper in a museum. They're old, fragile and always humidified, right? There is a process that happens on a molecular level in the wood. It would take a long boring article that I'm not smart enough to write in order to fully address it, which is why I use museums and your body as

examples. But the long and short of it is that the wood will age, and keeping it humidified properly will prevent it from over-shrinking and cracking and destroying itself along the way.

I am a woodworker and an admirer of wood's natural organic beauty. Needless to say, I was smitten when a buddy handed me the Fall 2013 issue of *Wood&Steel*. I was taken aback by the cover photo of a 514e Fall Limited featuring beautiful curly mahogany back and sides and all-wood appointments. Seized by lust, I started my search with Gruhn Guitars in Nashville and had the beauty in my hands by the end of the week.

Move forward two years, I saved up enough beans to pick up a new K22ce. Again, the wood selection and all-wood appointments left me mesmerized. Now my question: What, if anything, can be done to maintain the vibrant color of the fingerboard inlays? These guitars get played, and I am concerned that finger oils may cause some fading and discoloration. Are the inlays treated with anything to help prevent this?

Brent Ewen
Chesterton, IN

Brent, probably the best way to treat them is by rubbing them with boiled linseed oil. Just a dab and a cloth, and rub it into the fretboard, head to toe. Yes, we put a couple of coats on before our guitars ship, and a couple more will help. Don't do five or six, though, just a couple. Over the years, I do expect that they'll lose a little vibrancy compared to new, even if you didn't play the guitar. Andy [Powers] pointed out something to me the other day that is so true, yet I'd never thought of it before. That's how almost all wood wants to become a medium color tone over time. Light wood gets darker, and dark wood gets lighter over the years. He's right. But I think the aging of your inlays should be appreciated rather than prevented. It might just take a change of perception, like that of an old leather coat, or a worn, stained chopping block. There's beauty to be seen there, too.

Got a question for Bob Taylor?

Shoot him an e-mail: askbob@taylorguitars.com

If you have a specific repair or service concern, please call our Customer Service department at (800) 943-6782, and we'll take care of you.

STRIKING TWELVE

Taylor's heritage of easy-playing 12-strings grows with a pair of enticing Grand Concerts, new Grand Orchestra models, and more

By Jim Kirlin



The 12-string guitar will forever occupy a special place in Taylor Guitars history. When a teenage Bob Taylor spied a 12-stringer Eko Ranger in a local music store in 1972 and realized he couldn't afford it, he decided to make one so he could play the Gordon Lightfoot and John Denver tunes he was listening to at the time. It would be the first guitar he built, a 12-string Dreadnought with mahogany back and sides, a four-piece spruce top, and a maple neck, in his 11th grade wood shop class, with some guidance from his instructor, Mr. Kaiser. The project ignited a passion in Bob that would blossom into a life-changing career path.

The 12-string would go on to play a key role in helping Taylor Guitars establish a niche in the guitar world as a fledgling company. Ignorant of guitar-making conventions, Bob followed his own creative instincts, shaving his necks to a slimmer profile and lowering the action, which made his guitars much easier to play. On a 12-string neck in particular, the benefit was even more palpable. At the time, playing acoustic 12-strings was often a physical chore, given their notoriously beefy necks, extra string tension, and higher action. Many had to be tuned down to D just to make them playable. But around San Diego and beyond, word began to spread that Taylor made playable 12-strings that could actually be tuned to concert pitch. And with their higher profit margin, the company's ability to sell its rosewood/spruce 12-string 855 models helped keep the shop afloat financially, especially during their early struggles in the late 1970s.

Taylor's proximity to Los Angeles helped Bob and Kurt get their guitars into music stores like McCabe's in Santa Monica and Westwood Music, which exposed their 12-strings to some of the stores' high-profile artist clientele. One of those 855s made its way into the hands of Neil Young and would end up featured prominently in Young's 1979 concert film *Rust Never Sleeps*, giving Taylor its first big-time shot of street cred.

The list of Taylor 12-string owners grew to include the likes of David Crosby, Peter Frampton, Kenny Loggins and Roger McGuinn. Others followed, including John Denver, Gerry Beckley from America (profiled last issue), Prince, R.E.M., Smashing Pumpkins, Dave Matthews and the Goo Goo Dolls. One of the most resounding artist testimonials came from fingerstyle virtuoso Leo Kottke, whose deep, propulsive attack had helped him forge a signature 12-string sound. But years of aggressive playing had led to a chronic bout of tendonitis and forced him to

retire the 12-string from his live repertoire for close to a decade, until he discovered a mahogany/spruce Jumbo 555 at a Taylor dealer in Clearwater, Florida, in the mid-'80s. The hand-friendly feel of the 555 lured him back and helped resuscitate his 12-string playing career.

Kottke connected with Bob Taylor after buying the guitar, and the two bonded during subsequent conversations about instruments. Kottke shared his preferences for a 12-string that would help him articulate his rumbling, piano-like sound: a guitar designed to be played at a lower pitch, a mahogany body, looser string tension, and a lot of soundboard movement. In response, Bob made Kottke a custom 12-string with a modified, scalloped bracing pat-



Neil Young with his 855 during his *Rust Never Sleeps* tour

tern — the first time scalloped bracing had been used on a Taylor 12-string — which reduced some of the bracing mass and loosened the top, enabling it to be tuned down. Kottke loved it.

The prototype spurred the development of Taylor's Leo Kottke Signature Model (LKSM), a 12-string mahogany/spruce Jumbo designed with custom bracing and heavy gauge strings that were tuned to C#. Kottke still plays his Taylor signature models in concert. (We also made a 6-string version.)

For Bob, the design project helped him understand that his former blueprint for a 12-string acoustic wasn't the only option, and that offering other 12-string voicings could expand the sonic palette and playing applications of a double-course instrument. In the ensuing years, Taylor released Jumbo 12-strings featuring other tonewoods like walnut, koa, sapele and ovangkol, and later introduced Grand Auditorium 12-strings to the line.

Shapeshifting from the Jumbo to the Grand Symphony

For years Taylor's 12-strings were designed for the Jumbo body style, with the big body serving as the prevailing industry standard in order to produce a full, lush voice with enough low-end presence to balance the octave shimmer. Bob had inherited the Jumbo shape from his pre-Taylor days at the American Dream shop, and in those days, the Guild F212XL was a benchmark in the industry.

Taylor's ongoing voicing refinements eventually led to an evolution in design approach toward the 12-string. The debut of the Grand Symphony body style in 2006 introduced a robust tone profile that featured a deeper, more piano-like bass, greater volume, rich low-end sustain, and greater responsiveness, all in a body shape that was more compact than a Jumbo. In 2012, following the arrival of Andy Powers, the GS replaced the Jumbo as the featured shape for our 12-strings, and the Jumbo took a hiatus from production as Andy redesigned it. The result was a transformation into a new shape and sonic identity as the Grand Orchestra. One of its standout traits was that it was designed to be more responsive to a light touch — a unique feat given that big-bodied guitars typically require a lot of energy from the player to set the top in motion and get a good sound. But the trade-off for the GO's responsive bracing scheme was that its internal structure precluded it from being a viable option for a 12-string.

"Twelve-string guitars have a massive amount of preloaded string tension on them, so the whole structure needs to be built very strong to maintain its integrity," Andy explains. "It's compounded by the fact that each individual string on a 12-string is proportionally tiny. Instead of a gauge of 12 [.012 inch] or 13 as the high E string, you're looking at a 10. Granted, there are two of them, but you've got these little strings working really hard to produce a tone from this big, strong guitar. That's a hard thing to do."

Using the slightly smaller Grand Symphony body as the chassis for our 12-strings, Andy says, has worked well.

"It's inherently a fairly strong design, being a little smaller than a traditional Jumbo, but it still has the kind of low-end resonance you want for that powerful, wall-of-sound kind of 12-string response," he says.

Bob Taylor described the compatibility of the GS with our 12-string design in our winter 2012 issue, when the GS 12-strings made their debut.

"We've found that the GS makes a great 12-string because the waist has been shifted a little higher and pushed out a little more than a traditional Jumbo, so the top is a bit more flexible in some of those curves," Bob explained. "Players get a more resonant, colorful sonic picture. It turned out that the GS shape delivers a lot of what players want to hear from a 12-string guitar. You have this beautiful, rich low end, with an even balance from low to high that gives it a pleasant ringing quality."

The Case for Smaller-Body 12-Strings

Even with the successful downsizing of the Taylor 12-string to the GS body, Andy felt that a smaller-body 12-string guitar like a Grand Concert had a lot to offer, from both a design and a playing standpoint.

"As a builder, I've always felt small bodies lend themselves well to a 12-string design," he says. "For starters, I find it to be an efficient design. Being physically smaller, there is a certain amount of strength inherently there — the smaller something is, the stronger it becomes in this case — so I don't have to brace it quite so heavily. I can optimize it for the smaller individual strings of a 12-string set. As a result, a player can set it in motion easily. Plus, that smaller resonant cavity wants to accentuate the kinds of frequencies that the smaller strings and octave courses are making. I like how that works out physically."

From a player's perspective, Andy recognized that the traditionally bigger physical size of most 12-strings — certainly a Jumbo and even the Grand Symphony — made them too unwieldy for many players. And as someone who performs live in a band setting and has logged a lot of hours in the recording studio, he can appreciate the role a different type of 12-string voice can play for a musician.

"Most of the time when I use a 12-string, it's not for that wall-of-sound, huge strumming voice," he says. "It's more of an accompaniment piece; it's a layer on a track. If I'm recording, maybe I'll add a 12-string sound for that really shimmery, chimy kind of response. A traditional large-body 12-string is often too overwhelming a presence in a full mix."

12-Fret Grand Concerts

In designing a Grand Concert-size 12-string, Andy chose the mahogany-body 500 Series, which had already been slated for voicing and aesthetic refinements for 2016. Wanting to make these 12-strings as inviting a playing

experience as possible, he also chose to incorporate a 12-fret neck. Two different model options were selected: the 552ce 12-Fret, featuring a cedar top, and the all-mahogany 562ce 12-Fret. The 24-7/8-inch scale length, together with the 12-fret neck, gives players a slinky handfeel that makes these arguably the most playable 12-strings we've ever offered.

"In a way it's another step forward in Taylor's tradition of making a very easy-to-play 12-string guitar," Andy says. "We made these guitars physically smaller, more intimate, and easy to hold. Changing the physical balance of them allows the player to be able to get on top of the instrument a bit more. With the 12-fret neck, the guitar sits in your lap nicely, and it's complemented by the soft handfeel. Less tension in the strings makes it easy on the fretting hand and a little looser yield to the right hand."

The design approach calls to mind the philosophy behind Taylor's nylon-string guitars, which weren't crafted to appeal to the pure classical player, but instead to blend the nylon sound with the familiar feel of a steel-string to make it an easy crossover.

"You might say these guitars are catering less to a traditional 12-string player and more to a 6-string player who's looking to cross over and add that 12-string flavor," he says. "It gives them a different texture for recording or a live set. It's a different kind of voice that's a little more 6-string-player-friendly than your typical 12-string guitar."

Andy says it was fun to observe the initial reaction to his first prototype, the all-mahogany model, from fellow Taylor employees at the factory.

"I hung it on the wall here in the shop, and people would walk by and do a double-take," he says. "Then they'd pick it up and play it and go, 'Oh, *that's* a 12-string I could use."

One of the immediate fans was Terry Myers, a 27-year Taylor veteran, and one of the best players in the company.

"I'm really not a 12-string player, but this guitar made me want one," he says. "I was simply blown away by the tone, depth and volume it had for being such a little guitar. Having been around our guitars for so long, I'm not always easily impressed, but this was impressive enough for me to think, this is a guitar I have to own."

Taylor's Service Network Manager, Rob Magargal, also a great player, had a similar reaction.

"Honestly, acoustic 12-strings have always been too big and too heavy for me," he says.

"This smaller body works well for the person who wants a 12-string without the baggage that comes with it. And having the neck join the body at the 12th fret instead of the 14th makes the smaller body not feel so headstock-heavy like other 12-strings can be. This would make a killer recording guitar."

Andy agrees.

"You have a very focused, clear, well-behaved 12-string sound," he says. "You could think of it as the utility musician's 12-string guitar. It can slide in the mix between other guitars, mandolin, pedal steel, piano, whatever. It's an instrument that plays well with others. It can also accompany a singer-songwriter."

Having the option of a cedar or mahogany top gives players two slightly different sonic personalities. Andy shared his take on each.



"What I like about the cedar-top model (552ce 12-Fret) is the warmth you get from the cedar," he says. "You have that nice, clear, robust initial attack. It responds immediately to someone with a light touch, so in that way it's a strong fit for a fingerstyle player. You have the clarity and warmth from the mahogany back and sides. You have the focus and articulation the Grand Concert design lends to a 12-string sound, and at the same time you have this easy-speaking character the cedar top imparts. That's a real treat."

The effect of the hardwood mahogany top on the 562ce 12-Fret, Andy says, is a slight compression on the initial attack.

"It gives you the impression of a very smooth decay on the note," he explains. "It's really even, balanced, almost compressed, but in a good way. So when you strum chords on that guitar, it sounds like the most perfectly mixed 12-string; it's the ideal balance — all the octave courses, everything about it just fits perfectly. It's very linear, very consistent in its articulation, in the way the notes ring; everything is smooth and clear. It will work amazingly well amplified, on stage, in front of a microphone. It's the perfect 12-string guitar for tracking."

Going Big: Grand Orchestra 12-Strings

At the same time Andy was developing the smaller Grand Concert 12-strings, he didn't want to neglect the traditional 12-string player who craves a lush, potent sound, so he also designed a 12-string version of the Grand Orchestra. Two models debut this year: the rosewood/Sitka spruce 858e and the ovangkol/Sitka spruce 458e.

"Those are the yin to my yang," he says. "I thought it would be interesting to build the flip side to the Grand Concert: a classic, massively powerful 12-string guitar for that player who's strumming from the elbow, accompanying their voice with this huge wall of sound. That's undeniably cool in the right context. It gives you something powerful and gets people's attention."

These new guitars have an entirely different internal architecture to make the Grand Orchestra work specifically as a 12-string. They preserve the dynamic range and balance the Grand Orchestra is known for, but have more structural integrity to accommodate the amount of tension the 12 strings impart on the top."

Andy says he was also thinking about Bob and Kurt's early 12-strings during the design process,

and wanted to honor the tradition of what those guitars gave players, with the Grand Orchestra as the modern interpretation of the classic Jumbo form.

The rosewood/spruce 858e is loaded with the same type of tone-enhancing material refinements as its 800 Series siblings, including customized bracing, optimized wood thicknesses, the use of protein glue for the bracing and bridge, and ultra-thin 3.5-mil finish. The result is a fully enveloping 12-string sound.

"It's an authoritative kind of response," Andy says. "It feels like you're standing in front of a Marshall or something — it's big and powerful!"

The other Grand Orchestra 12-string, the ovangkol/spruce 458e, leverages ovangkol's naturally full-range tone profile to create an expansive, well-balanced 12-string sound.

"The ovangkol has some tonal similarities with rosewood," Andy says. "It still has this massive, powerful kind of presence. It's a really fun guitar to play."

The Dreadnought 360e

Another Taylor body shape that showcases a new 12-string voice this year is our Dreadnought. In 2014, our layered sapele/solid spruce Dreadnought 150e was introduced, giving players an easy-playing, great-sounding, affordably priced 12-string option, and it soon became the best-selling acoustic 12-string in the industry. (Source: MI SalesTrak.) For 2016, Andy wanted to offer an all-solid-wood Dreadnought 12-string and embraced a new wood pairing that joins the 300 Series this year: blackwood back and sides with a mahogany top.

"Having decided to use Tasmanian blackwood with a mahogany top in our 300 Series, I knew I wanted to make a 12-string version based on a Dreadnought shape," he says. "Tonally, blackwood is sort of halfway between rosewood and mahogany, with a little extra shimmer and chime that shows its family resemblance to koa. Pairing blackwood with the mahogany top gives you that roll-in effect associated with a mahogany top, that real smooth attack and balance, but with extra complexity as the note decays. On a 12-string guitar, that extra sparkle accentuates those octave courses and gives you an especially thick shimmer."

Together with the Dreadnought body, Andy says, the broader waist helps bring out the lower midrange frequencies.

"You get this husky low-end power bringing some reinforcement to the part of the 12-string voice that can sometimes be lacking as a result of the extra

2016 Taylor 12-Strings by Shape

All Taylor acoustic 12-strings feature a 1-7/8-inch neck width.

Grand Concert

552ce 12-Fret
562ce 12-Fret

Grand Auditorium

254ce-DLX

Grand Symphony

358e
356ce
456ce
556ce
656ce
756ce
856ce
956ce
K66ce
PS56ce

Dreadnought

150e
360e

Grand Orchestra

458e
858e

Electric

T5z-12 Custom
T5z-12 Classic

small strings," he says. "You're still getting the 12-string crispness and shimmer, but the whole middle register is a little thicker, a little fatter now."

The Grand Auditorium 254ce-DLX

At various points over the last two decades, the Taylor line has featured 12-string Grand Auditorium models to give players a smaller-sized option that would be more suitable for stage or recording applications with other instruments. After the downsizing shift from the Jumbo to the Grand Symphony as our standard 12-string shape in 2012, we made gradually fewer GA 12s. But this year's emphasis on making the 12-string experience inviting to a broader mix of players led to the return of the GA 12 with the layered rosewood/solid spruce 254ce-DLX. Andy wanted to bring a smaller-body 12-string option to the more accessible price range of our layered-wood series. The success of the 12-string 150e suggests that 12-strings are a desirable sound among players.

"We recognize that for many players, a 12-string isn't their first or primary guitar," Andy says. "It's more like another musical arrow in their quiver. They might be buying it for the three recording dates a year they'll use it on, or the two or three songs in their set that they want a 12-string guitar for."

The comfortable body size and musical versatility of the Grand Auditorium make the 254ce-DLX a great option for someone looking to add the 12-string flavor to their playing repertoire at an appealing price point. And since the GA is a popular shape, players who already own a 6-string GA model will enjoy the familiar feel of the body. It also brings a cutaway 12-string to our layered-wood model mix.

"This is an attractive utility 12-string guitar because it intonates well, plays well, has a strong sonic focus, and plays well with others," Andy says. "It does what a working musician would need it to do."

So, a Taylor 12-string in every body style. Reflecting on the diverse range of 12-string options now available to players, what does Andy hope these guitars accomplish as an ensemble?

"In part it's about building on Taylor's strong heritage of making great 12-strings," he says. "It's also about recognizing that 12-strings aren't just some funky sub-species of guitar, and that each 12-string instrument can play a uniquely different role for each player. That's why we've pursued different designs. We want people to be able to apply the 'find your fit' approach to the 12-string guitar. I think this collection gives players a lot of different and inviting options." **W&S**



How to Use a 12-String to Enhance Your Repertoire

By Shawn Persinger

A 12-string not only sounds different, it makes you play differently. Here are four ways to enhance your repertoire by allowing a 12-string to do most of the work for you.

1. Double-Tracking

Whether strummed or arpeggiated, doubling a part on 12-string not only thickens up the sound but adds a shimmer that can't be achieved by six strings alone. Led Zeppelin's "Over The Hills and Far Away" (not to mention "Stairway to Heaven"), The Beatles' "A Hard Day's Night," and the Eagles' "Hotel California" are three radically different examples of doubling chord progressions.

2. Solos and Fills

"Eight Miles High" by The Byrds has arguably the most iconic 12-string guitar solo of all time, delivering a catchy four-note hook, pseudo-Indian sound, and wonderfully chaotic performance that could only be attained on a 12-string. Other classic 12-string solos and fills also stand out more for their tone and texture than for their actual notes. Check out licks on The Who's "I Can't Explain" (is that Pete Townshend or Jimmy Page?), The Cure's "Just Like Heaven," and any number of Beatles songs, including "I've Just Seen a Face" and "If I Fell."

3. Blues

The blues is a great way to get into the 12-string. Several of the early bluesmen were notable for their 12-string playing, such as Blind Willie McTell — be sure and listen to his original 1928 recording of "Statesboro Blues" — and Lead Belly, known as much for his contributions to folk music as the blues. There is also the legendary video of Jimi Hendrix playing his country-blues song "Hear My Train A Comin'" (though you'll need to tune down two whole steps, C-F-Bb-Eb-G-C, to match his pitch). A slightly more contemporary performance from 1990's *MTV Unplugged* is available from Stevie Ray Vaughan.

4. Fingerstyle

When it comes to fingerstyle guitar, Leo Kottke is the master of the 12-string. Unfortunately he sets the bar so high that few players can ever hope to accomplish what he does so fluently. Nonetheless, there are several Kottke pieces that even newcomers can play: "Easter," "Easter and the Saragossa Sea," "Easter Again." Okay, so they're all the same song, but at least that's one! As it turns out, searching for beginner 12-string fingerstyle music will leave most players coming up empty, but there is an alternative. Simply play *any* fingerstyle piece on the 12-string. Don't let those extra strings intimidate you. Sure, there are some nuances you'll need to get used to — getting a good tone out of those octave strings in the bass can be particularly challenging at first — but by taking it slowly and using your ears as a guide, you should find that the 12-string is not that much different to play than the six.

12-FRET INFUSION

Our modern revival of the 12-fret guitar picks up momentum with inspiring new voices for 2016

By Jim Kirlin

One of the sweet dividends of our guitar revoicing efforts of the past few years, showcased notably in the 600, 800 and 900 Series, has been greater sonic differentiation between body styles. Among the mix of more defined musical personalities, one inspiring discovery for many has been our 12-fret Grand Concert (GC) models, which have emerged as a player's favorite. Part of the appeal stems from the design's compact playing framework, which blends the lap-friendly GC body style with the slightly condensed fret spacing of the 24-7/8-inch scale length and the shorter 12-fret neck orientation to create a slinky handfeel and easier fretting. Factor in the surprising tonal power and midrange warmth for a smaller body, thanks to the bridge's position near the center of the lower bout and a bundle of tonal enhancements under the hood, and in almost every way the 12-fret design makes the playing experience more accessible. It's definitely been a go-to choice in the musical tool-box of designer Andy Powers.

"The 12-fret is very accommodating of many styles," he elaborates. "It's comfortable, and there's a nice singing quality that you can get out of that guitar. I like the vibrant character of the midrange. This design is very physically efficient, so it has strong projection. Despite its smaller physical size, it sounds like a huge instrument. I like that I can get this husky power from a compact guitar."

Andy's redesign approach with our 12-frets is meant to revitalize what he considers a uniquely compelling design that traces back to an early point in the steel-string guitar's history, in the first decades of the 20th century. It was gradually supplanted by the 14-fret neck starting in the 1930s as part of an evolution influenced by the mandolin, whose necks had been getting longer, and the banjo, which featured a much longer neck.

"Gibson started building their archtops with longer and longer necks, settling in with 14 frets clear of the body," Andy explains. "Shortly after, under the influence of banjo players, particularly Perry Bechtel, who realized that the sound of guitars was becoming more popular than banjos, Martin started building what they called their Orchestra Model guitars. These joined the body and neck at the 14th fret instead of the 12th. They also made the neck a little slimmer, a little narrower width, and longer. It worked really well.

To this day, guitar makers have settled on a 14-fret neck as being a good compromise between playable neck length and a good bridge position on the body. For the longest time, the 12-fret has been viewed as an old-fashioned style, but in the last 10 to 20 years, players have started to recognize the uniqueness of that design."

Andy has channeled his own long-time appreciation into revamping the 12-fret to suit the modern player.

"The 12-fret neck has a lot of good reasons to exist," he says. "Especially when combined with the modern-day accessibility of a cutaway. Cutaways weren't popular back in the '20s and '30s when 12-fret necks were common. Cutaway bodies evolved from mandolins, and they didn't come into popularity until the late '30s on archtop guitars. Pairing a 12-fret neck design with a cutaway body blends the unique response from the bridge sitting back a little farther on the lower bout with the accessibility to the upper register – you still get to play the high notes!"

New 12-Fret Flavors

The growing attraction of our 12-frets among players has inspired us to broaden our model offerings for 2016 in conjunction with other updates to the line, specifically within the 500 and 300 Series. This year the 500s debut a tonal and aesthetic makeover, which means our cedar-top and mahogany-top 12-fret models (the 512ce 12-Fret and 522ce 12-Fret, respectively) will be warmer, more powerful, and more responsive than ever.

Andy got even more adventurous with another pair of 500 Series 12-fret models, which break new ground for Taylor, integrating the 12-fret neck with a 12-string Grand Concert configuration in the form of the cedar-top 552ce 12-Fret and mahogany-top 562ce 12-Fret. The fusion of the small body,

12-fret neck, and 12-string voicing together creates a uniquely captivating playing experience. (For more on those guitars, see our 12-string and 500 Series stories this issue.)

Meanwhile, our 300 Series welcomes new 12-fret models: the sapele/spruce 312ce 12-Fret, and the 322ce 12-Fret (both are also offered without a cutaway), which features a different tonewood pairing of blackwood back and sides with a mahogany top. Across the rest of the Taylor line, 12-frets continue to be offered within our 600, 700, 800 and 900 Series, giving players a healthy array of options to explore.

As for suitable playing applications, Andy tends to personally favor a 12-fret for fingerstyle and other lighter playing due to the slinkier handfeel, but he's reluctant to prescribe any definitive playing parameters for others because he says it's a matter of personal preference. One could make the case that players with a heavier attack might have a tendency to overdrive the strings and top due to the bridge placement, but Andy says it's up to the player to decide.

"It really depends on how you approach the guitar," he says. "I've heard players who love strumming or digging in and playing blues or rootsy music on a 12-fret design. I've also heard some really articulate, meticulous fingerstyle players, including some jazz players, who have embraced it. Hearing all this great music coming from players with different approaches, I'm hesitant to draw brackets around what these guitars can do."

One test-driving approach that players might enjoy is an A/B comparison between 12-fret and 14-fret Grand Concert models within a series. It should help distinguish the unique handfeel and tonal response of each. Look for our new 12-fret models at your local dealer starting in February. **W&S**

12-Fret Models in the 2016 Taylor Line

312e 12-Fret	522ce 12-Fret	812e 12-Fret
312ce 12-Fret	552ce 12-Fret (12-string)	812ce 12-Fret
322e 12-Fret	562ce 12-Fret (12-string)	912e 12-Fret
322ce 12-Fret	612e 12-Fret	912ce 12-Fret
512e 12-Fret	612ce 12-Fret	PS12ce 12-Fret
512ce 12-Fret	712e 12-Fret	
522e 12-Fret	712ce 12-Fret	

EXTENDED FAMILY

Our 300 Series welcomes Tasmanian blackwood and branches out with new Dreadnought and 12-Fret models

By Jim Kirlin

The release of last fall's vintage-look 300 Series special editions – featuring shaded edgeburst mahogany tops along with new 12-string Dreadnought and 12-fret offerings – struck such a sweet chord with players that we simply couldn't leave them out of the series for 2016. As it turns out, those inclusions dovetail wonderfully with another noteworthy update to the 300s this year: the addition of Tasmanian blackwood. The resulting series expansion now offers players a two-pronged tonewood tandem: Spruce-top models remain paired with sapele back and sides, while mahogany-top models are matched with blackwood back and sides.

As with last year's special editions, all mahogany tops feature a shaded edgeburst with a satin finish. Spruce-top models will continue to showcase a gloss top finish. Another aesthetic refinement that appeared exclusively on last fall's 12-fret model – Italian acrylic small diamond fretboard inlays – is now the standard inlay motif on all 300 Series models. Add to that our slightly shorter 24-7/8-inch scale length on 6-string Dreadnoughts, and our 300s boast more options than ever, making our gateway series for an all-solid-wood playing experience especially musically inviting.

Blackwood's Broadening Appeal

"Blackwood is one of my all-time favorite tonewoods," declares Taylor's master guitar designer Andy Powers, reflecting on the Tasmanian timber's addition to the series. "I've enjoyed its characteristics in every guitar I've built with it. It always sounds good."

A lot of us at Taylor, in fact, are fans of the tonewood. Our product development team has crafted several series of limited edition blackwood guitars in recent years (including our 2014 500 Series Fall Limiteds) in the hope of broadening the appreciation among guitar players who haven't been exposed to it. While blackwood has been a staple among guitar makers in and around its native region of Australia, its usage has been more limited in North America due in part to its lack of geographic proximity.

"That's one of the factors blackwood had going against it," Andy says. "It's a long way to America from Australia. Historically, in the formative years of the steel-string guitar, it was a lot easier to get mahogany and rosewood here because they were already being imported for furniture."

Despite its more limited usage in this hemisphere, blackwood has earned a loyal following across the industry.

"Martin has built some nice guitars with heavily figured blackwood, and they

sound great," Andy says. "And I know a number of small builders who work with it and live in the same camp as me; we all feel it's amazing."

The supply is also sustainable, with a healthy sourcing outlook for the future. From a guitar-making point of view, blackwood's relatively rapid growth cycle can often yield guitar-quality wood in under 40 years, and the abundant supply of older, bigger trees produces a lot of straight-grained wood that is easy for guitar makers to work with. We purchased our blackwood from Tasmanian wood supplier Bob Mac Millan (profiled in our Fall 2014 issue), who also sourced the much rarer blackheart sassafras we recently used for limited edition models.

As an acacia wood species, blackwood sometimes draws comparisons to Hawaiian koa, another member of the acacia family, although, in reality, Andy says, the two species are unique.

"People sometimes refer to blackwood as the old cousin of koa, a more prehistoric version," he explains. "While that may be so, blackwood has some distinct working characteristics, color, and grain structure, which distinguish it from koa."

While blackwood will occasionally display exotic figure, Andy says our grading specifications for the sets used with the 300 Series call for more of a classic, straight-grained structure.

"We wanted a staple wood we could count on," he says. "It's a high-quality guitar wood, clean, clear and straight-grained. In terms of color and overall appearance, it's not a dramatic change from the classic mahogany or sapele aesthetic. It has a similar look a lot of times, especially paired with the mahogany tops and with a nice shaded edgeburst. Frankly, a lot of players may not even visually notice the difference unless they're really looking for it."

A color-matched stain for the blackwood back and sides and mahogany top and neck brings a seamless visual cohesion to the guitars, adding a rich undertone to the natural cinnamon-brown hues and highlighting the similar grain structure of both woods. Tonally, blackwood yields a strong midrange focus – dry and clear yet also warm, like mahogany and koa – with a splash of top-end shimmer and richness similar to rosewood. Its musicality, Andy says, suits a variety of body sizes and musical styles. Paired with a mahogany top, players can expect plenty of dynamic range.

New Dreadnoughts and 12-Frets

Beyond the addition of blackwood, our new Dreadnought and 12-fret Grand Concert models bring new

voices and unique playing experiences to the series. With both the blackwood/mahogany 12-string Dreadnought 360e and the sapele/Sitka spruce 350e, the powerful low end produced by the Dreadnought shape provides a robust counterbalance to the 12-string octave shimmer. The natural compression of the mahogany top on the 360e lends a smooth linear balance to the overall volume. Meanwhile, our 6-string Dreadnoughts, the spruce/sapele 310e and blackwood/mahogany 320e, now feature a hand-friendly 24-7/8-inch scale length, giving Dreadnought fans a slightly slinkier handfeel. Unlike their 500 Series counterparts, these feature our standard neck profile (rather than the V-carve featured on those) and a solid headstock instead of the slotted peghead. Finally, our love of the 12-fret design led to the addition of the mahogany-top Grand Concert 322e/ce 12-Fret and spruce-top 312e/ce 12-Fret to the series for 2016. Players will be impressed by the warmth, midrange punch, and surprising dynamic range for a small-body acoustic.

You'll find our 300 Series models at local Taylor dealers starting in February. For complete specifications, visit taylorguitars.com. **W&S**

The 300 Series

Wood Pairings

- Sapele/Sitka Spruce
- Blackwood/Mahogany

New Appointments

- Italian acrylic small diamonds fretboard inlay
- Shaded edgeburst on mahogany tops
- Mahogany-top models: satin finish; spruce tops: gloss finish; all back and sides: satin finish

New Models/Specs

- Dreadnought 310e/320e models (24-7/8-inch scale length)
- 12-string Dreadnought 350e/360e models
- Grand Concert 312e/ce 12-Fret, 322e/ce 12-Fret

L-R: Sapele/Sitka spruce 312ce, blackwood/mahogany 360e, blackwood back/sides on a 324ce

YOU KNEW IT WAS JUST A MATTER OF TIME BEFORE

our mahogany 500 Series would get its turn in Taylor's design studio for some remodeling love. The past few years have brought a transformative sonic and aesthetic overhaul to our rosewood 800 and 900 Series, along with our maple 600 Series, earning raves from discerning reviewers and players ever since. This year we honor another tonewood with a rich musical heritage, applying our creative strokes to invigorate the 500 Series in several exciting – and surprising – ways. Among the refinements: a dynamic new bracing scheme that helps produce stronger, richer tone; top wood updates led by a bold-voiced hybrid species of spruce; a pair of game-changing 12-fret/12-string Grand Concert designs; Dreadnoughts that sport a hand-friendly V-carve, 24-7/8-inch-scale neck; and a drizzle of fresh aesthetic touches that tastefully enhance mahogany's natural personality. The end result: a colorfully retooled series that delivers as much guitar-playing diversity as any in the Taylor line.

MAHOGANY MAKEOVER

A flexible new bracing system fuels the transformation of our 500 Series into a robust mix of musical personalities

By Jim Kirlin

L-R: Mahogany/Lutz spruce 12-string 556ce, mahogany/cedar 12-string 552ce 12-Fret, all-mahogany 522ce 12-Fret

If anything, this year's updates to the 500 Series ramp up an evolution that began slowly a couple of years back. In 2013, mahogany-top models joined the mix, expanding the tonal palette of the series with a hardwood top option that helped smooth out the tonal response for hearty strummers. Aesthetically, the appointment package was modified to include our grained ivoroid Century inlay. More recently, in the wake of the voicing refinements applied to the 600, 800 and 900 Series, Andy Powers and our product development team implemented a few related ideas in ways that would capture all the great character of mahogany's tone profile – an earthy midrange, a clear, focused response, and a natural compression that helps level out a player's attack – while giving players a wider range of expression.

"We weren't looking to completely revamp these guitars," says Andy, who led the redesign project. "We made some changes under the hood. The idea was to bring out more volume, low-end richness, and projection. At the same time, we wanted the guitars to respond quickly to every type of articulation."

Those dynamic tonal enhancements, Andy says, make a difference on both sides of the guitar.

"We wanted these guitars to be louder both to the player and to listeners," he explains. "Volume is loud to the player; projection is loud to the audience. We wanted both, and at the same time make these instruments more responsive and more touch-sensitive, with a more deeply complex sonority."

Performance Bracing: A Flexible Framework

The central idea behind the revoicing efforts was to create an internal bracing architecture that could be adapted to optimize the tone of the different kinds of guitar designs planned to live within the 500 Series. The new bracing concept, dubbed Performance bracing, is grounded in the X-brace tradition, a staple within the steel-string world, with additional modifications that allow for subtle adjustments in shape and placement to influence how the top moves in relation to the back and sides.

continued

One unique design component of Andy's bracing scheme, a two-part bridge plate, marks a departure from the single-piece plate typically used to anchor the strings to the underside of the top, beneath the bridge, and protect the top from being damaged by the stress of the string tension.

"The two-part plate is something new I devised in conjunction with this altered X pattern," Andy explains. "It allows specific flexibility while redistributing incoming string energy in a unique way. It's actually made of two materials, spruce and maple, rather than a traditional single piece of maple or rosewood. It changes how the bridge plate works in conjunction with the bridge and braces and helps produce a louder, more powerful tone."

Introducing Lutz Spruce Tops

A noteworthy tonewood update within the series is a shift among spruce-top models from Sitka to Lutz spruce, a naturally occurring hybrid of Sitka and White spruce (sometimes also referred to as Canadian spruce). Lutz is an intriguing form of spruce that Andy has been studying for the past few years together with Taylor's long-time spruce and maple supplier, Pacific Rim Tonewoods, located in Concrete, Washington. (Readers might recall our story last year on PRT's research into propagating figured maple trees for the future ["Why Maple Matters," Winter 2015].) If Lutz sounds vaguely familiar to some readers in the U.S., it might be because the Capitol Christmas Tree, which is decorated and displayed on the West Front Lawn of the U.S. Capitol each holiday season, was a Lutz spruce in 2015.

While both Sitka and White spruce are native to the Pacific Northwest, Alaska and Canada, Sitka grows in more coastal areas, while White spruce thrives in interior regions. Lutz has proven to be an alluring hybrid blend. It tends to grow in climate zones between where Sitka and White spruce are found, and is considered very adaptive within those microclimates.

"What's interesting is that Lutz isn't a 50/50 mix of the two," Andy elaborates. "Closer to the coast it will be more like Sitka, and closer to the interior, it will be more like White spruce. Because of its adaptability, it has a promising future."

That adaptability, says Dr. Dave Olson, who works as wood research consultant for Pacific Rim Tonewoods and has focused a lot of attention on Lutz, gives it what geneticists call "hybrid vigor," meaning that the combination of the two species can yield

properties that are superior to either species alone. From an environmental perspective, Olson says, research suggests that Lutz populations might be more adaptable than either Sitka or White spruce to climate change.

"As we head into an uncertain future, it may be that Lutz simply grows better when replanted after the mature trees are cut," Olson says. "This is an area of active research in the forestry community."

In terms of acoustic properties, Lutz blends the positive characteristics of Sitka spruce with White spruce and its close cousin, Engelmann spruce.

"White spruce is almost never used as a tonewood," Olson offers, "because it tends to be too small and twisty, even more so than Engelmann. But it does have a beautiful luster, and it is quite low in density, both of which are positive attributes for tonewood."

The Lutz that Taylor has secured for the 500 Series, sourced by Pacific Rim Tonewoods, comes from a particular area in Alaska where, thanks to its "hybrid vigor," the wood exhibits the characteristics of another historically desirable spruce for guitar tops: Adirondack.

"This is really good spruce," Andy says. "It grows straight, clear and clean. It has a unique light reflectivity, or chatoyance, so it sparkles in a way that other spruces don't. In fact, because it's growing in a good area, it takes on the characteristics of what old Adirondack used to be like. We're seeing pieces that feel like tops I've worked on in old '30s and '40s-era guitars when Adirondack was a lot more plentiful and very high-grade material. That's what this wood looks, feels, and most importantly, sounds like. I'm excited about this spruce. When combined with this new internal bracing architecture, the guitars are more powerful, richer and louder than before. You won't be able to outplay those guitars. You've got some real horsepower there."

For 2016, the Lutz is reserved for Grand Symphony and Dreadnought body styles, with mahogany-top editions of those shapes also offered. For Grand Concert and Grand Auditorium models, the top options will be cedar (512ce/514ce) or mahogany (522ce/524ce).

"That cedar/mahogany pairing is wonderful, particularly in the context of a smaller body," Andy says. "It's warm, clear, rich, and easy-speaking."

12-Fret/12-String Grand Concerts

One of the benefits of the new bracing scheme for the 500s is the

ability to adapt it to enable the creation of some breakthrough guitar models that join the series this year. One envelope-pushing example is a pair of 12-fret/12-string Grand Concert models: the cedar-top 552ce 12-Fret and mahogany-top 562ce 12-Fret. Although 12-strings aren't traditionally associated with a smaller-size guitar body, the bracing design played a major role in articulating a clear 12-string voice for a more compact and comfortable playing experience. For more on the design and tonal personalities of those models, see our 12-string and 12-fret stories this issue.



Hand-Friendly Dreadnoughts

Another unique design that joins the 500s is a 24-7/8-inch-scale Dreadnought with a V-carve neck and slotted headstock.

The shorter scale length and slightly reduced string tension create a softer handfeel that makes this a Dreadnought perhaps less suited to a robust, bluegrass-style picking attack and more compatible with a singer-songwriter who's drawn to the Dreadnought aesthetic. In some respects, it might remind vintage acoustic guitar aficionados of the clas-

sic Gibson J-45, a round-shoulder Dreadnought-style guitar with a shorter scale length that developed a strong following.

"This Dreadnought is a very comfortable playing guitar," Andy says. "It responds well to chord strumming and has a sound that accompanies a singer's voice really well. It's focused and clear. With the shorter scale length, you get a crisp high end and a real soft, almost squishy-feeling low end. Combining the dynamic response of the Lutz spruce top works especially well with the dry, woody sound of mahogany – you end up with a bal-

anced overall voice that supports a lot of different kinds of music and plays well with other instruments."

The choice of a slotted headstock adds an extra bit of snap that balances the flex from the top due to the Dreadnought's wide waist.

Another distinctive fretting-hand feature, the V-carve neck profile, was incorporated to give players an inviting handfeel that plays into the classic mahogany flattop personality of these guitars, Andy says. Two model options are available: the Lutz spruce-top 510e and the all-mahogany 520e. Another

pair of 24-7/8-inch scale 6-string Dreadnoughts also makes its debut this year within the 300 Series. (For more on those, see page 15.)

Aesthetic Updates: Faux Tortoise Shell + Shaded Edgeburst

In terms of appointments, the 500 Series retains most of its aesthetic details, featuring our grained ivoroid Century fretboard inlay, with a few minor refinements. New touches include a return to faux tortoise shell binding (celluloid nitrate), which graced

our 500s more than a decade ago, with a matching rosette and pickguard (mahogany-top models come without a pickguard). On our all-mahogany models, a shaded edgeburst wraps the body and neck in vintage warmth.

"Between the faux tortoise and ivoroid detailing, it creates a classic look that real suits mahogany's personality," Andy says.

Look for our new 500 Series models at authorized Taylor dealers starting in February. For additional model information, including photos, specifications, and more, visit taylorguitars.com. **W&S**



Our revoiced maple 610e blends power, clarity and responsiveness into a versatile modern-day Dreadnought

Last year's revoiced maple 600 Series dramatically reshaped the maple sound, surprising many with a level of warmth, richness and sustain that seemed pleasantly out of character after years of being typecast in acoustic circles as having a bright, one-dimensional tone profile. Our redesign efforts addressed virtually every material ingredient of the guitars, from bracing and glues to wood and finish thicknesses, including the crafty time-machine trick of torrefaction, a method of specially roasting the spruce soundboards to accelerate the natural tone-enhancing benefits of the aging process. The results spoke, or rather sang, for themselves, winning over seasoned guitar reviewers and even maple naysayers, earning critical accolades in the process. Best of all, the redesign was informed by a bigger-picture drive to transform maple cultivation into a new paradigm of long-term sustainability for future generations.

Because of the demanding nature of crafting our 600s, our rollout came in several waves of different body shapes, which enabled us to smoothly integrate the models into our production process. The final model of our release schedule, the Dreadnought 610e, blends a traditional body style with a wood that historically hasn't been a preferred match among players craving a robust low-end response. But as Andy Powers, the design architect of the series, pointed out last year, our version of the shape/wood combo makes plenty of musical sense.

"This guitar is voiced for power and clarity with an ultra-fast response," he shared in our story on the 600 Series redesign ("The 600s by Shape," Vol. 81). "Maple in concert with the spruce

top makes for a beautifully balanced guitar." More recently, he compared it to Taylor's venerable 810, a classic rosewood Dreadnought that debuted its own comprehensive revoicing in 2014.

"If you compare it to an 810, the 610 is distinctly different in a good way," he explains. "Both are really loud and very powerful, but the 610 has a real transparency to that power. It's clear and unfiltered, like a piece of musical glass. You can 'look' through the sound and see the musicality of player's expression without the sonic tinting influence of a tonewood."

As with all of our revoiced maple models, that transparency enables the player's unique expressiveness to shine through. It also brings more musical versatility to the Dreadnought. So far it's been well received in Nashville and even among bluegrassers.

"Some of the traditionally minded bluegrass players have tried them and been surprised at the response," Andy says. "The transparency also makes it microphone-friendly. With traditional Dreadnoughts, there's often a preconceived notion of what that sound is – a somewhat tubby, bass-heavy kind of guitar. In this case, the 610 is a guitar that has all the power you want from a Dreadnought, without any flabbiness in the low end. It's just really clear and strong. I don't mean a particularly trebly or bright sound, because it's actually quite warm. In other words, the guitar's warmth is perfectly clear."

In addition to the non-cutaway edition, a cutaway 610ce is also available for players whose hands crave access to the guitar's well-defined upper register. Check your local Taylor dealer for availability, and access complete specifications at taylorguitars.com.

THE
2016
TAYLOR
GUITAR GUIDE

HOW TO FIND THE TAYLOR GUITAR
THAT FITS YOU BEST

Welcome to our annual guitar guide, designed to arm you with helpful information about finding a Taylor guitar that's right for you. Whether you're already a happy Taylor owner, new to our guitars, or new to playing guitar altogether, we want to help you get the most out of your guitar-playing experience.

Elsewhere in this issue, you'll find stories that reveal our latest guitar developments, including new 12-string and 12-fret designs, our revamped mahogany 500 Series, and fresh offerings within our 300 Series. In the pages ahead, we'll take a closer look

at the playing experience, starting with the idea of handfeel and the different design factors that can impact the way a guitar feels and responds in your hands. Then we'll break down the fundamental components of our guitars – body shapes and tonewoods – to help you understand the different sonic personalities of our guitars. From there we'll give you a brief tour of the Taylor line by guitar series, highlighting the distinctive wood pairings and aesthetic details offered for each. We'll also share an update on our ebony sourcing work in Cameroon. (For a thoughtful perspective on Taylor's commitment to sustainable sourcing and social

forestry, be sure to read Bob Taylor's "BobSpeak" column on page 5.)

In the end, choosing a guitar is a personal process, and we know there are a lot of options to consider. The good news is that we believe we have something inspiring to offer players at every level. If you're considering a guitar, our advice is to take your time and enjoy the exploration process. If you pay attention to how a guitar feels and sounds in your hands, chances are you'll know when you've found the right one. And if you need help along the way, both our dealer partners and our expert staff will be happy to assist you any way we can.





ALL ABOUT HANDFEEL

The way a guitar feels in your hands when you play is important. Here's everything you need to know about finding the handfeel that's right for you

By Jim Kirlin

In a recent interview, the celebrated tunesmith James Taylor was asked what drew him to the acoustic guitar as his instrument of choice as a young man.

"It speaks back to you really quickly; it's good for accompanying you," he said. "That's the point with any instrument. That sort of magic point at which you can't put it down, when it starts really giving you what you want to hear."

That musical bond with a guitar often begins with the tactile sensation of the instrument in our hands. We literally embrace the guitar body. We use both hands to pluck, rake, squeeze and glide across the strings in an effort to coax the sounds we want from them. Some would say that the sound ultimately is *all* about feel. It certainly seems that way when we hear our

favorite players and marvel at their ability to evoke such deep feeling through a guitar.

Regardless of our skill level, whether our playing is primitive or refined, a guitar becomes an expressive musical conduit for our feelings through our hands. It responds immediately to our touch, and we in turn respond to what it gives us back. And when we find a guitar that feels right, the music becomes more accessible. That musical exchange translates into the truest expression of ourselves.

In its simplest form, the idea of handfeel is easy to relate to if we play guitar.

"It simply means how the guitar strings feel in your hands when they are stretched over the neck," says Taylor master guitar designer Andy Powers.

"What's the tactile experience like?"

But a closer look at handfeel reveals the many nuances that contribute to the overall feel, and consequently, the sound.

"You've got two hands doing totally different things," Andy points out, "but they're both playing on the same strings, which are presumably stretched to the same tension evenly. So how does that play on my left hand versus my right hand? For me as a player, these things matter a lot."

Comfort is one important consideration. Another is the ability to play certain styles of music effectively, as Andy explains.

"For certain playing styles and guitar designs, I like to feel a little resistance, some string tension, in my fretting hand," he says. "It feels bold and strong.

At the same time, on those guitars usually I like to feel some pushback on my picking hand, because it feels like I can put some muscle behind the pick. Our 25-1/2-inch-scale Dreadnoughts are cool for that reason. If I'm playing some bluegrass or a rhythm style where I really want to drive the strings hard, I feel like I can put some muscle into it with both hands and have the guitar respond with muscle of its own. It won't back down. With other types of guitars, I might want the handfeel to be a lot slinkier or touch-sensitive. On a 12-fret Grand Concert, I love how loose the strings feel in both my hands because I'll probably play that instrument with more finesse. That seems appropriate for the type of voice that guitar has."

For most Taylor players, the first impression of handfeel is the playability

that comes from our sleek neck profile, low action, and accurate intonation up the fretboard. Other design factors also affect the string tension and overall playing experience, like the neck angle, fretboard radius, scale length, neck-to-body configuration (12-fret versus 14-fret), string break angle, and string gauge.

As part of this year's guitar guide, we thought we'd take a closer look at some of the above design attributes and share how they contribute to the handfeel of a Taylor guitar. Hopefully this information will help you differentiate between models in the 2016 Taylor line, and perhaps clarify the kind of handfeel that's most suitable for your hands and playing preferences.

> Taylor's Patented Neck Joint: A Stable Foundation for a Better Playing Experience

Let's start with this basic idea: A guitar's performance is all about geometry. The alignment of the neck and body together, the tension of the strings in relation to the top, the string height – virtually everything that defines a guitar's feel and sound – come down to angles and how the relationship of the components facilitates the playing experience. Bob Taylor has described guitars as being built within a few millimeters of their lives, all in the interest of making them easy to play and producing the best tone, while keeping them light yet structurally sound.

For this reason, it's hard to overstate the value of our patented neck joint design, introduced in 1999 as the NT (New Technology) neck, which took Taylor's bolt-on approach to connecting a guitar neck and body to a new level of precision in terms of setup, long-term stability, and easy serviceability.

"That's a really big deal," Bob emphasized in our story about the redesign of the 800 Series for 2014. "It gives us incredible control over the geometry of the entire guitar. It allows us to build a guitar that can be both strong and light, where the guitar forces are balanced so that it can be built to last."

In many respects, it's been the linchpin of our guitar construction ever since. Andy Powers was thrilled to inherit the neck design as a guitar builder, because it gave him a stable platform for introducing additional tonal refinements like the revamped 800s, 600s and 900s, and our new 12-fret and 12-string designs for 2016.

"It's not until you have a good-playing neck that you can start to refine the way you want it to sound," Andy said in our story on the 800 Series. "It's a practical necessity."

The combination of precision and consistency allows Taylor to work up to the very edge of what the materials will allow to bring out the best in a guitar's feel and sound.

Taylor Customer Service Manager Glen Wolff echoes Bob and Andy's sentiments, emphasizing our ability to give players a consistently great playing experience.

"Since we can set every neck angle exactly where we want it, every guitar has a consistent setup," he says. "All of our bridges are the same thickness; all of our saddles are the same height. Other manufacturers will vary these pieces to avoid having to remove and re-glue the neck to get the correct angle. While their action may measure okay, these differences change the string tension, tone and response. With a Taylor there are no such compromises. It's consistent every time."

> Neck Profile

A guitar's neck profile refers to the shape of the back of the neck in relation to its width. When Bob Taylor first introduced Taylor's sleek-profile necks, they stood in stark contrast from those of other acoustic guitars, which featured thicker, deeper dimensions in proportion to their width – a traditional aesthetic that traced back to the guitar's outgrowth from the mandolin family. Those neck designs evolved in

very approachable for a lot of different playing styles. Whether a player has big hands or small hands will change where their thumb sits on the profile, whether they wrap it over the edge of the fingerboard, whether they're playing with their thumb in the middle of the back of the neck, or somewhere in between."

For players who want to go one step thinner, we also offer a slim-carve



different ways on flattop steel-strings, from more of a V-shaped profile (which made sense on a mandolin) to a rounder profile as steel-string guitars were influenced by both nylon-string guitars and banjos. Still, the necks of the early '70s were cumbersome for a lot of playing styles, for people with small hands or short fingers, and for electric players, who turned out to be some of Taylor's early customers.

"If you were a player trying to do more lead work or if you were used to playing an electric guitar and trying to translate some of your electric repertoire to an acoustic, this was a very approachable kind of a neck shape," Andy says. "It was an acoustic guitar that an electric player could play."

Currently, Taylor's standard neck profile would be classified as round, which fits most people well.

"When you compare the width to the depth, it's not a deep neck – measuring the depth from the very center, in between the D and G strings, to the apex of the arc on the back side – and it doesn't grow much in thickness as you get towards the body," Andy says. "It's a relatively consistent profile along the whole fingerboard. This shape is

neck profile option through our Custom program.

"The thin-carve is a very low-profile neck," Andy says. "It's still very round, but it's basically so thin in relation to its width that the profile feels a little flatter in your hand. Your thumb is getting close to your fingertips at that point. Some players love that feel!"

The neck profile on our T5 is somewhere between our standard and slim-carve profiles.

One other neck profile option formerly limited to our Custom program that joins the Taylor line for 2016 is the V-carve, for players who crave a slightly thicker feel. It's a standard spec on our redesigned 500 Series Dreadnoughts. (For more on the new 500s, see our story on page 16.)

"The V-carved neck is a more traditional acoustic guitar feel," Andy says. "Dimensionally, the V-carve is marginally thicker than our standard carve near the heel, but the curves in between the numbers suggest a neck rooted in older era. It benefits the thumb wrapper without turning off the lead player."

continued



> Neck Width

A related component of the neck profile and another important element of a guitar's handfeel, the neck width (measured at the guitar's nut) will determine the string spacing and impact the fretting experience for players. Taylor's standard neck width for its guitars early on was 1-11/16 inches (43 mm), which was the most common neck width for acoustic guitars, although as Bob Taylor noted in his "Ask Bob" column last issue, there were also guitars on the market with a 1-5/8-inch (41.2 mm) width. With the resurgence of solo acoustic fingerstyle guitar in the '80s and '90s, Taylor started offering a slightly wider 1-3/4-inch (44.5 mm) neck to give players more room for their fretting adventures. Due to its popularity, eventually it became our standard neck width.

With the arrival of the more compact Baby Taylor, a 1-11/16-inch neck width was chosen to suit its scaled-down size and to make it comfortable for the smaller hands of kids. As Taylor's other layered wood guitar series were born, including the

100 and 200 Series and the GS Mini, we kept that size, because, as Bob noted, many guitars in the world still are probably closer to that, being just a little smaller. We didn't want to force people into the wider neck knowing that these series are often bought by people with less playing experience. At that level, the slightly narrower neck makes forming barre chords a bit easier.

Our nylon-string models feature a 1-7/8-inch neck to make them a comfortable crossover for steel-string players (traditional classical guitars usually have a neck width of two or more inches). The slightly wider width compared to our steel-strings is necessary to enable enough space for clean fretting due to the slightly thicker diameter of the nylon strings, as well as their tendency to roll around under the player's fingertips. Likewise, our 12-string models feature a 1-7/8-inch neck to accommodate the additional strings.



> Action



Another key ingredient of a guitar's handfeel, the action, for most players refers to the distance between the strings and the fretboard. Low action, which our guitars are known for having, means the strings are closer to the fretboard, making it easier to form chords. But Andy points out that the size of the frets is also a contributing factor.

"What I consider the action to be is actually the measurement from the bottom of the string at rest to the tops of the frets, not to the fingerboard wood," he explains. "The string doesn't hit the fingerboard like on a violin; it hits the top of the frets. Complicating matters even more, what our fingertips feel is the distance from the top of the string to the fingerboard wood. That's what we actually press down; it's a different dimension. You can have really tall frets and very low action and still feel like the strings are a mile away from the fingerboard. That's a distinctly different playing feel than if you have tiny little frets with low action."

On our acoustic guitars, we use what's considered a medium-size fret, which fits a broad range of playing styles. The fret wire is a nickel silver alloy with a custom design specification.

"It's a very hard, long-wearing fret," Andy says.

Our standard action setup for our guitars is low to give people a comfortable playing experience.

"It gives you good dexterity with your fretting hand," Andy says. "It's fast, it's easy to fret cleanly, and it makes it easy to play complicated chord shapes or that F major barre chord."

A related point that impacts tone, Andy says, is that the distance between the tops of the frets and the bottom of the strings will serve as a limiter for the volume potential. That means if a guitar has higher action, conceivably it can be played harder and produce more volume. The downside is that higher action tends to be harder for the fretting hand to play cleanly.

"It means the action, or string height, is always a balance between how much dynamic range the player needs for the guitar to sound good versus how easy it is to play," he says.

Taylor Customer Service Manager Glen Wolff says the most common setup request among Taylor owners having their guitars serviced is for the lowest possible action without buzz.

"But that threshold, or balance, between string height and fret buzz is

different for every player," Glen explains. "For that reason it's not a set string height or a request we can always accommodate without seeing the person play the guitar. That's why it's often helpful for customers to work with a local certified Taylor service technician who can see them play in person. It helps with custom setups."

In terms of how fret size can relate to the playing experience, a higher fret gives the player a slightly more nuanced control over the string.

"You can create vibrato just by changing your finger pressure," Andy says. "With higher frets you can get sideways on the string to bend it a little easier. That's typically why we use a bigger fret on an electric guitar, where you're looking for a little more nuance in your left hand to manipulate the notes you play. We use a bigger fret on the T5z for that reason."

The downside to taller frets, Glen says, is a player can squeeze the strings out of tune by fretting too hard.

"It takes a little practice to learn to apply just enough pressure to get a clean fretted note from the guitar," he explains. "This practice will make you a more efficient player and help reduce hand fatigue."

> Fretboard Radius

A guitar's fretboard radius, or the measure of the curvature across the width of its surface, also plays into handfeel. It can vary based on the type of guitar and the specifications of the guitar maker. Traditionally, a classical-style guitar features a completely flat fretboard. The fretboard radius of steel-string and electric guitars can vary significantly. Andy explains the playing benefits of a radius.

"If you look at your hand there are no straight lines," he says. "With a flatter fingerboard you can actually set a little lower string height and bend higher in pitch, or farther, before it runs into the fret in front and chokes itself out. More radius is actually a little easier to play on. If you're playing complicated chords, barre chords and things like that, your fingers naturally have this curve to them – they don't want to lay flat. So in order to make it easier to fret the notes cleanly, a little bit of radius to the fingerboard and corresponding string arc pushes the string into your finger a little easier. The simple takeaway is that the more arc you have, the easier it is to fret the notes. If you have a flatter radius, the easier it is to bend strings."

The 15-inch radius we use on our steel-string acoustic guitar fingerboards lands in the middle of the range across the industry and through guitar history, Andy says.

"It's a happy medium; it fits a lot of different playing styles comfortably."



Nylon-string guitars, by contrast, traditionally have a flat fingerboard in part due to the unique variance in string sizes.

"The G and B strings are physically very large diameter, so if you put that over a highly arched fingerboard, it ends up with a very unusual fretting feel – those strings poke you right in the middle of the fingerboard to the extent that it becomes annoying," Andy says.

Because Taylor's nylon-string models were designed to be more compatible with the feel of a steel-string guitar to give steel-string players an inviting crossover feel, our nylons feature a 20-inch radius, which is a very small bit of arc.

"Functionally it's almost flat, but it gives you just enough radius so that someone who's comfortable on a steel-string guitar feels at home on that instrument," Andy says.

One of the distinctions between our T5 and T5z models is the fretboard radius. The T5 features a 15-inch radius, while the T5z has a 12-inch radius. Electric guitars typically have more highly arched fingerboards to enhance the fretting hand's agility. The extra curvature on the T5z, when coupled with jumbo frets, makes it easy to bend strings and easy to fret, giving the T5z a handfeel that's closer to that of an electric guitar.

> Neck Angle



As mentioned earlier, the neck angle, and specifically Taylor's patented neck design, controls the geometry between the neck and the body of the guitar. Changing the neck angle has the effect of changing the top's stiffness and how the strings articulate the top of the guitar. This will impact the playing experience in a few different ways, Andy says.

"It will change the tonal response and volume of the guitar, and it will change the perceived tension on the strings because you're changing the deflection the top undergoes as soon as the string is plucked. A low neck angle (with the fingerboard more parallel with the top of the guitar) will typically make the strings feel like they're yielding a little more; they feel slightly slinkier, mostly in the articulating hand. A higher neck angle will tend to focus the sound."

The ability to precisely set and micro-adjust the neck angle enables every Taylor guitar with our patented

neck joint to have the exact geometry we want for an optimized playing experience throughout the entire life of the guitar. This is a huge benefit to the player, Andy says, in part because a guitar will change over time as it settles in, gets played, and acclimates to its environment.

"The angle *will* change over time," he adds. "The brilliance in the whole design is that 10 years from now, 30 years from now, the player still gets to choose exactly the optimal angle they want."

During a recent trip to Asia, members of Taylor's Sales, Marketing and Service departments spent time with staff from our Chinese distributor, and members of their team marveled at what the micro-adjustability of our necks means for Taylor owners there, who often have to contend with the need for a neck reset due to humid conditions. They saw firsthand how easily Rob Magargal from our service team was able to reset necks during a

re-string event. For the guitar owners, it was like getting a new guitar. Glen Wolff, who was also there, emphasizes that having the benefits of a Taylor neck doesn't eliminate the need for proper humidity control, but that the micro-adjustability of the neck can help.

"An over-humidified guitar will have high action as the top swells in that environment," he explains. "People living in areas that have a humidity level of 80 percent year-round may struggle to maintain the guitar at the acceptable range of 40-60 percent. It takes some effort, but it's really important. If it's 80 percent somewhere and the customer is able to maintain 60 percent in their case, their guitar will be a tad puffy but won't suffer any damage. In that scenario, we can set the neck angle to match the slightly swollen top, which will get the guitar playing like new again."

> Scale Length

A guitar's scale length refers to the maximum vibrating length of the unfretted open string. It's typically measured from the nut to the saddle. Changing the scale length changes the tension on the tuned strings, and as a result, both the handfeel and tone. While the scale length can vary on acoustic (and electric) guitars, typically it has to be limited to within about a two-inch window for guitars that will be tuned to concert pitch because of the nature of the vibrational patterns of strings that are set in motion.

"I'll try not to get too geeky here," Andy says. "A vibrating string has two different primary waves: a longitudinal wave that travels back and forth from the saddle to the nut, like water sloshing from one end of a bathtub or pool to another, and a transverse wave that moves in a side-to-side or circular form. Outside a certain scale length range, the two waves tend to interfere with each other and create unusual sounds because the string is basically out of tune with itself."

Generally this range for acoustic guitars with typical strings is from about 23-1/2 to 25-1/2 inches. What

has been considered standard scale length for full-size Taylor steel-string models is either 24-7/8 or a longer 25-1/2-inch string length – the medium to longer end of this range. Our smaller guitars, like the GS Mini, are designed around the shorter margin of the string length range, at 23-1/2 inches. The parameters affecting the tuning of these two waves are the string's length, tension and weight. If a guitar is designed to be higher or lower in pitch, the other two parameters need to be adjusted to bring the string into harmony with itself. The scale length will change, as will the weight or size of the string. Case in point: Our baritone guitars, which are tuned to B and feature heavier-gauge strings, have a longer 27-inch scale length.

In certain respects the shorter scale lengths can make the playing experience a bit easier, between the slinkier handfeel and slightly condensed fret spacing. That's why it can be an especially appealing choice for players with small hands or less hand strength.

"Often times, if somebody is first approaching the guitar, I encourage

a shorter scale length for their instrument, because there's a little less perceived hand pressure, a little less tension, and the space between the frets is a little bit smaller," Andy says. "It can also be an asset for a very advanced player who might be pursuing interesting voicings or complex chord shapes, or where they've got unusual reaches. If a fingerstyle player plans to stretch over a long range on a fingerboard, having incrementally smaller fret spacing can really help with those back-of-the-book chords."

For guitarists who frequently play in alternate tunings, Andy says the longer 25-1/2-inch scale length might be a better choice.

"More often than not, using alternate tunings means tuning down from concert pitch," he explains. "For that reason, I like to use a little longer scale. I prefer a 25-1/2-inch scale if a player is often using tunings like drop D, DADGAD, or similar. The slightly lower pitch, and therefore lower tension, benefits from extra scale length to help keep those notes really clear."

"Often times, if somebody is first approaching the guitar, I encourage

> Neck-to-Body Configuration



The point where an acoustic guitar neck meets the body plays a big role in both the handfeel and tone. Within the Taylor line, the prime example is the distinction between our 14-fret and 12-fret guitars, offered in separate versions of our Grand Concert in several series, including our 300 Series and a pair of new 12-string 500 Series models this year. The 14- and 12-fret naming designations refer to how many frets are clear of the body, which means that since both have the same 24-7/8-inch scale length, the shorter 12-fret design essentially pushes the bridge toward the tail end of the guitar body, closer to the center of the lower bout. As Andy pointed out in his comparison of our 12- and 14-fret versions of the 612ce in our Summer 2015 issue, where the strings are anchored to the top impacts the soundboard movement, and consequently, the tone.

"With the 12-frets you'll have more midrange swagger," Andy says. "The

guitars have a little more attitude. By moving where the top is articulated from, from closer to the soundhole to a more central location in the lower bout, we get more amplitude out of that top because it's a more flexible spot. This gives you a little extra warmth and midrange power, with a sleek, slinky handfeel because the top is actually flexing and yielding every time a string is struck, so it effectively lessens that attack tension more immediately.

"When you compare a 14-fret to a 12-fret, the 14-fret will have this chimey, long-sustaining kind of character because the strings are held under a little more solid tension," Andy adds. "It's a little more uniform. The 12-fret version will be a little bit warmer because the top will allow this flexing to a minute degree more."

For more on our 12-fret guitars, see our feature on pages 12-13.

> Headstock Type / String Break Angle

Another design variable that plays into handfeel is the use of either a solid or slotted headstock because each impacts the string break angle, and as a result, the string tension, in different ways. Among steel-string models in the Taylor line, we use a slotted headstock specifically for 12-fret models, which Andy says is common among guitar builders who offer a 12-fret.

"Typically the preference is for a slotted headstock on a 12-fret neck

length because the angle of the strings as they bend over the nut is a little more acute, which puts a little more downward pressure on the nut and changes the flexibility of the lower portion of the strings," he explains. "So to my fretting hand, it has what feels like a bit more clear tension. It's a little more precise, a little better behaved. The note doesn't want to bend quite so easily close to the nut. At the same time, I'm usually combining a slotted

headstock with a 12-fret neck and corresponding body design, which creates a slinkier handfeel on the strings because the top wants to move a little more. So you'll feel a little extra tension close to the nut by your fretting hand, and a little less tension on the articulating hand. They kind of equalize each other, but it's a different distribution.

"On a 14-fret solid headstock design, these two are reversed. I have a little less downward pressure on the nut, therefore a little less perceived tension in my fretting hand and a little bit more on my articulating hand, closer to the bridge. It's not a big difference; these are just subtle little things that you can pick up in the tactile qualities of what the strings feel like when your fingertips touch them."



The more acute string break angle on a slotted headstock



String break angle on a solid headstock

12-Fret/Slotted Headstock:

More downward pressure on nut = more rigid anchoring at the nut and slightly looser feel at the body end

14-Fret/Solid Headstock:

The tension profile is reversed – slightly less rigid at the nut/headstock end and a little more rigid at the body end

> String Gauge Tips

Here are some basic ideas on the impact of different string gauges on the feel and tone of a guitar, courtesy of Taylor's Service department:

- Our factory string gauge specifications are listed so people know what we install on a new guitar. That way, if you like the feel and sound, you know what to use.
- Experimenting with different strings is an inexpensive way to customize the sound of your guitar. We encourage that if you're looking to do so.
- Changing to a lighter than recommended gauge will not hurt the guitar. Switching to a heavier string is where you have to be careful. Most of our 6-string guitars can handle a set of mediums (.013-.056) tuned to standard pitch. On our 12-strings, don't use a heavier gauge than what's recommended (.010-.047) unless you're tuning down.
- A basic rule of thumb is to tune down a half step for every increase in string gauge. For example, if you want to use 14s (.014) on your 6-string Grand Symphony rather than 13s (.013), tune to Eb. If you want to use 12s (.012) on your 12-string rather than 10s (.010), tune down to D. This formula can also be applied for people whose guitars are constantly tuned down and who want to know how much heavier a string gauge can safely be used.
- If you're thinking of switching to lighter strings because your guitar feels difficult to play, consider getting the guitar's setup checked by a Taylor-certified service technician. Heavier strings with a good setup shouldn't feel heavy.
- In general, switching to lighter strings comes with a trade-off of slightly reduced richness and volume.

> String Gauge



The size and brand of strings used on a guitar is, not surprisingly, another big contributor to both tone and handfeel. The general rule with steel strings is that the larger the string, the more tension it will have when you tune it to a certain note.

"Most people think of string size only as it relates to tension, but it's not exclusive," Andy says. "The tension is controlled by the core wire size. That's where the strength of the string comes from. You control its weight by what you wrap it with, because the wrapping actually doesn't have any strength laterally. It just changes its weight. As an industry we've sort of standardized which tensions go through which wraps, but you do see some slight variations from string maker to string maker."

With string gauges and tension, players often have to take into account the impact on both the tone and feel.

"A little more tension usually translates into a bit more volume and a more robust, clear note at the expense of a little stiffer feel," he adds. "But it's not a hard rule. Sometimes you can put so much tension on a guitar that you start to lose volume, so in certain cases a smaller set of strings could actually be louder."

One recent example of recalibrating string gauges to improve feel and tone would be the redesign of the

800 Series in 2014. Andy worked with our friends at Elixir Strings to develop a customized string gauge set, HD Lights, to better complement the revoiced construction of Grand Concert and Grand Auditorium models. The specially calibrated set changed the tension profile at the bridge, bumping up the gauge on the treble strings to add more boldness to the tone without overloading the soundboard with too much extra tension. The revised gauging also brought a more balanced handfeel across the strings. We currently put HD Lights on all steel-string Grand Concert and Grand Auditorium models in the 300 Series and up.

All the standard string gauge specifications used for models in the Taylor line (we use Elixir's Acoustic Phosphor Bronze NANOWEB for our steel-string acoustics) were chosen to complement each guitar's other design nuances and optimize the tone profile and handfeel.

Keep in mind that many of the tactile differences explained within these handfeel categories are subtle. But if you use them as a guiding framework to explore and compare different Taylor models based on your playing preferences, you may discover a new "feel" that makes your playing experience more comfortable and expressive than ever. **W&S**



TAYLOR BODY SHAPES

Choose from five distinctive body styles

A guitar's body dimensions are important for two key reasons: 1) They help shape its voice; 2) The resulting "fit" in relation to your body will impact how physically comfortable it is to play.

Taylor's five body styles range from the compact Grand Concert to the big and shapely Grand Orchestra. As you compare different body styles, pay attention to how each guitar's overall size, curves

and body depth feel against your body and with your picking arm draped over the lower bout.

In general, a smaller guitar body yields a more controlled voice, often with a bit more upper-end chime, while a bigger body produces a louder voice, often with more low-end depth. But don't be too quick to rule out a body style before playing it. Because of the way a guitar is voiced internally,

you might find yourself pleasantly surprised by the tonal depth and volume of a smaller body or the responsiveness of a bigger one.

We've highlighted some general personality traits associated with each body style, along with a few compatible playing applications. These aren't meant to be definitive, but they should give you a helpful reference point for comparison.



SMALL

GC Grand Concert
(Models end in a 2; e.g., 812)

Body Length: 19-1/2"
Body Width: 15"
Body Depth: 4-3/8"

Our smallest full-size body shape yields controlled overtones, so the sound won't occupy a lot of sonic space. This is often a key consideration when other instruments are in the mix, such as a performance or recording environment, and it allows the guitar to be heard more clearly. The Grand Concert is also the featured body style for our 12-fret guitars.

Playing Profile

- Articulate voice with top-end chime and controlled overtones
- Intimate size is lap/couch-friendly
- 24-7/8-inch scale length reduces string tension for a slinkier feel
- Fits well in a mix with other instruments

Good Fit For:

- Fingerstyle players and light strummers
- Players who find small bodies more physically comfortable
- People with small hands, and others looking to reduce stress on their fretting hand
- Recording applications

MEDIUM

GA Grand Auditorium
(Models end in a 4; e.g., 814)

Body Length: 20"
Body Width: 16"
Body Depth: 4-5/8"

A Taylor original, the Grand Auditorium helped establish the Taylor acoustic sound. The popular body style makes for a versatile guitar that yields ample volume in response to light fingerpicking, and reacts to medium strumming and flatpicking with a clear, balanced sound across the tonal spectrum. If you want a great all-purpose guitar, the GA is an excellent choice.

Playing Profile

- Taylor's most popular and versatile body shape
- Balanced blend of warmth, clarity and sustain
- Well-defined midrange
- Responds well to many music styles

Good Fit For:

- Generalists who want a multipurpose guitar
- Recording and live performance
- Singer-songwriters and musicians fronting a band
- Almost anyone other than aggressive pickers/strummers

MEDIUM

GS Grand Symphony
(Models end in a 6; e.g., 816)

Body Length: 20"
Body Width: 16-1/4"
Body Depth: 4-5/8"

Compared to the Grand Auditorium, the Grand Symphony has a bigger, rounder lower bout and a slightly wider "waist" area, and the bigger soundboard means more tonal output. Expect a meaty lower midrange and strong treble shimmer. Try a GS if you want a guitar with a robust low end, strong volume when strumming or flatpicking, and clear articulation in response to a light fingerpicking attack.

Playing Profile

- Slightly bigger than the GA with more tonal output
- Very dynamic: rich, powerful voice that also responds to a light touch
- Piano-like bass, meaty midrange, strong treble shimmer

Good Fit For:

- Dynamic strummers and pickers
- People who crave more tonal horsepower than the Grand Auditorium
- Gigging singer-songwriters looking for a deep and rich tonal palette

MEDIUM

DN Dreadnought
(Models end in a 0; e.g., 810)

Body Length: 20"
Body Width: 16"
Body Depth: 4-5/8"

The Dreadnought is one of the most traditional acoustic guitar shapes. Our version has been refined to blend its trademark robust low-end tone with a snappy midrange and brilliant treble notes, producing a pleasing balance of power and articulation. If you're a flatpicker or strummer who likes to dig in on lead or rhythm, the Dreadnought should serve you well.

Playing Profile

- Taylor's refined take on a traditional shape and sound
- Wider waist causes the body to sit higher in the player's lap
- A robust "modern vintage" voice
- Low-end power, snappy mids

Good Fit For:

- Traditional flatpickers and strummers with a strong attack
- People who crave the traditional look and feel of a wider-waist guitar
- Pickers and strummers who want a strong low end and throaty midrange

LARGE

GO Grand Orchestra (GO)
(Models end in an 8; e.g., 818)

Body Length: 20-5/8"
Body Width: 16-3/4"
Body Depth: 5"

The Grand Orchestra unleashes Taylor's boldest, richest voice. With a slightly bigger footprint and a deeper body than the Grand Symphony, it yields a stronger low-end response. Proprietary bracing helps produce louder, more complex tone with impressive sustain and balance. Unlike other big-bodied guitars, which often require an aggressive attack to drive the top, the GO is responsive to a light touch. Try the GO if you crave a guitar with power and rich detail.

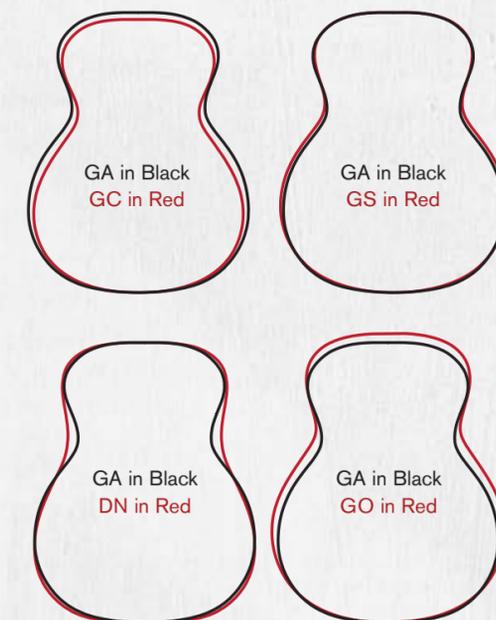
Playing Profile

- Our biggest, deepest body shape
- Our richest, most complex voice
- Incredibly balanced for a big-bodied acoustic guitar
- Specially braced to also respond to a light touch

Good Fit For:

- Players who want the richest, most powerful acoustic voice
- Players who like a voluptuous, Jumbo-size guitar
- Solo performers looking for an expansive palette of sonic colors and textures

Body Shapes Relative to the Grand Auditorium (GA)



TAYLOR TONEWOODS

Explore a rich assortment of musical flavors

A guitar's woods supply the core ingredients that help flavor its sound. But other nuanced techniques of a guitar maker (like internal bracing) also help season it. That's one reason why trying to describe the tonal properties of woods can be limiting. Another reason is you the player. Your playing style, the type of pick you use, and the brand and gauge of strings you choose are other factors that influence the sound of a guitar.

So how do we at Taylor talk about the tonal personalities of

woods? We tend to paint in broad strokes to call out basic attributes and share comparative points of reference. But the proof really is in the playing. That's why it's fun to test-drive guitars made from different woods. The more you tune in to the tonal nuances, the more discerning your musical palate will become.

Once you find the Taylor body shape you like best, try playing different models with that same shape but different woods. This will help you isolate and compare the sonic differences of the woods. Pay atten-

tion to whichever one inspires you the most, whether you can explain why or you just feel it.

Solid vs. Layered Woods

In general, a guitar made with a top, back and sides of solid wood will produce the most complex sound and continue to improve with age. Our all-solid-wood guitars start with the 300 Series. We also make several series of guitars crafted with layered wood back and sides, featuring three layers of wood, paired with a solid wood top. These include

the 100 and 200 Series, the GS Mini, and the Baby Taylor.

Crafting guitars with backs and sides of layered woods allows us to conserve tonewood resources (a veneer log will produce eight times the yield of a log that's sawn for solid-wood guitar sets) and offer players a resilient, affordable and great-sounding instrument.

Our construction features three layers of wood: a middle core of poplar with a veneer on each side. The process allows us to bend an arch into the back of the guitar for

added strength, and together with the layered approach produces a durable guitar that travels well. Our layered wood options include sapele, rosewood, and koa. Because all layered wood Taylor guitars feature a solid wood soundboard, their sound will improve as they age.



Back and Side Woods

THE CLASSICS

Known for their rich heritage in the acoustic world

Indian Rosewood

Models: 700, 800, 900 Series

Tone Profile

- Its sweeping frequency range has made it one of the most popular tonewoods
- Deep lows assert a throaty growl, sparkling highs ring out with bell-like, high-fidelity clarity
- Slightly scooped midrange
- Full-range acoustic voice with complex overtones and extended sustain
- Yields the strongest bass response among the tonewoods commonly used for guitars

Maple

Models: 600 Series

Tone Profile

- Revered in the bowed instrument world for centuries for its linear, transparent response; very reflective of the player
- Traditionally known in the guitar world for having a bright, focused tone, quick attack, and fast note decay
- Revoiced for the 600 Series in 2015 to yield greater warmth, complexity, volume, sustain and responsiveness, while retaining maple's naturally clear, linear qualities

Tropical Mahogany

Models: 500 Series

Tone Profile

- Known for a meaty midrange featuring a strong fundamental focus without adding a lot of ringing overtones
- Responds well to players with a strong attack who like dry, earthy, low-fi sounds; natural compression creates a volume ceiling that smoothes out loose right hand technique
- Clear and direct tonal character makes it a great option for playing with other instruments

THE EXOTICS

Admired for striking looks and their musical properties

Hawaiian Koa

Models: Koa Series

Tone Profile

- Fairly dense tropical hardwood with a strong midrange focus similar to mahogany, with a bit of extra top-end brightness and chime
- The more a koa guitar is played and has a chance to open up – especially an all-koa guitar – the more its midrange overtones add a sense of warmth and sweetness to its voice

Macassar Ebony

Models: Presentation Series

Tone Profile

- Dense hardwood produces a clear, focused sound with good projection and volume
- Strong bass and lower mids, clear highs, and a scooped midrange like rosewood
- Rich overtones complement slower, softer playing
- Also responds well to aggressive playing
- It can sound bright or dark, depending on the technique of the player or pick choice

THE MODERN ALTERNATIVES

Lesser-known tonewoods but with familiar tone profiles

Ovangkol

Models: 400 Series

Tone Profile

- An African relative of rosewood that shares many of rosewood's tonal properties, including a wide spectrum from lows to highs
- Slightly fuller midrange than rosewood and a bright treble response resembling koa
- Bass response adds a pleasing depth to the overall tone

Sapele

Models: 300 Series (paired with spruce tops)

Tone Profile

- Comparable to mahogany but with a slightly brighter sound featuring more top-end shimmer
- Consistent and balanced output across the tonal spectrum
- Responds well to a variety of playing styles and fits nicely into an instrument mix

Blackwood

Models: 300 Series (paired with mahogany tops)

Tone Profile

- Strong midrange focus – dry and clear yet warm, like mahogany and koa
- Top-end shimmer and richness similar to rosewood
- Its all-around musicality suits a variety of body sizes and musical styles

Soundboard Woods

A guitar's top, or soundboard, is the primary filter and distributor of vibrating string energy through the guitar, which means it has a huge impact on its sound. Think of the top like a speaker driver. It's also one reason why the soundboard bracing pattern is important – it helps orchestrate the movement of the top and voice the instrument. The back and sides help flavor the overall sound.

Sitka Spruce

Models: Many Taylor models

- The most prevalent soundboard of the modern era
- Its blend of stiffness and elasticity translates into broad dynamic range, with crisp articulation
- Accommodates a wide range of playing styles

Lutz Spruce

Models: 510, 516

- Naturally occurring hybrid of Sitka and White spruce
- Blends tonal characteristics of Sitka with Adirondack spruce to produce extra power, richness and volume

Western Red Cedar

Models: 512/514 steel- & nylon-string models, 552ce 12-Fret, JM5M

- Less dense than spruce, producing a warm, played-in sound
- Midrange bloom adds complexity to the tone
- Responds best to a lighter picking/strumming attack
- Pairs well with nylon-string models

Hardwood Tops (Koa, Mahogany)

Models: Koa Series (Koa), 500 Series, 300 Series (Mahogany)

- Produce a natural compression, yielding more of a controlled, "roll-in" effect to a note
- The compression evens out a lively attack for a more linear response
- Mahogany top: strong fundamentals, clear and direct focus
- Koa top: Similar to mahogany with extra top-end shimmer and chime

THE TAYLOR DIFFERENCE

5 things that set a Taylor guitar apart

1. Unmatched Build Quality

We've set the standard for modern-day precision craftsmanship to create the best possible playing experience. Our blend of proprietary, innovative technology with impeccable hand-craftsmanship has led to unparalleled quality and consistency in the production of our guitars.



2. The Most Stable, Playable Necks

The ability to maintain the proper geometry between a guitar's neck and body is essential to a great playing experience. Our guitar necks are widely considered the most stable and playable in the industry, thanks to our patented neck joint and sleek, comfortable neck profile. Our precise neck assembly process allows every neck angle to be set with extreme accuracy and to easily make micro-adjustments if ever necessary throughout the entire life of the guitar. No other acoustic guitar company can match this capability.



3. A Vast Array of Tonal Options

Our drive to consistently refine our guitars blends the design vision of master guitar designer Andy Powers with our sophisticated manufacturing capability. This has allowed us to constantly push the envelope with tone-enhancing design ideas and materials to give players at every level an inspiring array of tonal flavors and a musically richer playing experience.



4. Eco-Conscious And Ethically Sourced Raw Materials

Our belief that the best guitars are made from real wood drives our emphasis on safeguarding the future of the natural resources we use. This has led us to many pioneering initiatives around the world, from co-ownership and management of Crelicam, an ebony mill in Cameroon, to innovative mahogany-sourcing partnerships with remote forest communities, to investment in the propagation of wood species such as maple and koa for future generations. We want Taylor customers to feel assured that when they purchase a Taylor guitar, they are supporting the highest levels of ethical, eco-conscious business.



5. A Lifetime of Service & Support

Our commitment to a great customer experience includes personalized service wherever guitar owners may be along their playing journey, whether they need help choosing a guitar or taking care of it after purchase. From our friendly and knowledgeable staff to our network of repair technicians, we want to provide customers with a lifetime of great Taylor service.

A GUIDE TO TAYLOR ACOUSTIC MODEL NUMBERS

The majority of Taylor's acoustic guitars are offered in three model variations:

- **Cutaway body with onboard electronics (e.g., 516ce)**
- **Non-cutaway body with onboard electronics (e.g., 516e)**
- **Non-cutaway body with no onboard electronics (e.g., 516)**

Most models are organized by series, featuring the 100 through 900 Series along with our Presentation (PS) and Koa (K) Series. Here's how our numbering system works:

• **The first digit** (or letter) identifies the Series. Most guitar models within each series share the same back and side woods and appointment package.

• **The second digit** designates two things: first, whether the guitar is a 6-string or a 12-string, and second, whether the top features a softer tonewood like spruce or cedar, or a hardwood like mahogany or koa. The middle number "1" or "2" designates a 6-string guitar with a softwood (1) or hardwood (2) top. For example: 516ce = 6-string with a spruce top; 526ce = 6-string with a mahogany top

The middle number "5" or "6" designates a 12-string guitar with either a soft (5) or hardwood (6) top. In this case: 556ce = 12-string with a spruce top; 566ce = 12-string with a mahogany top

• **The third digit** identifies the body shape according to this numbering system:
 0 = Dreadnought (e.g., 510ce)
 2 = Grand Concert (e.g., 512ce)
 4 = Grand Auditorium (e.g., 514ce)
 6 = Grand Symphony (e.g., 516ce)
 8 = Grand Orchestra (e.g., 518ce)

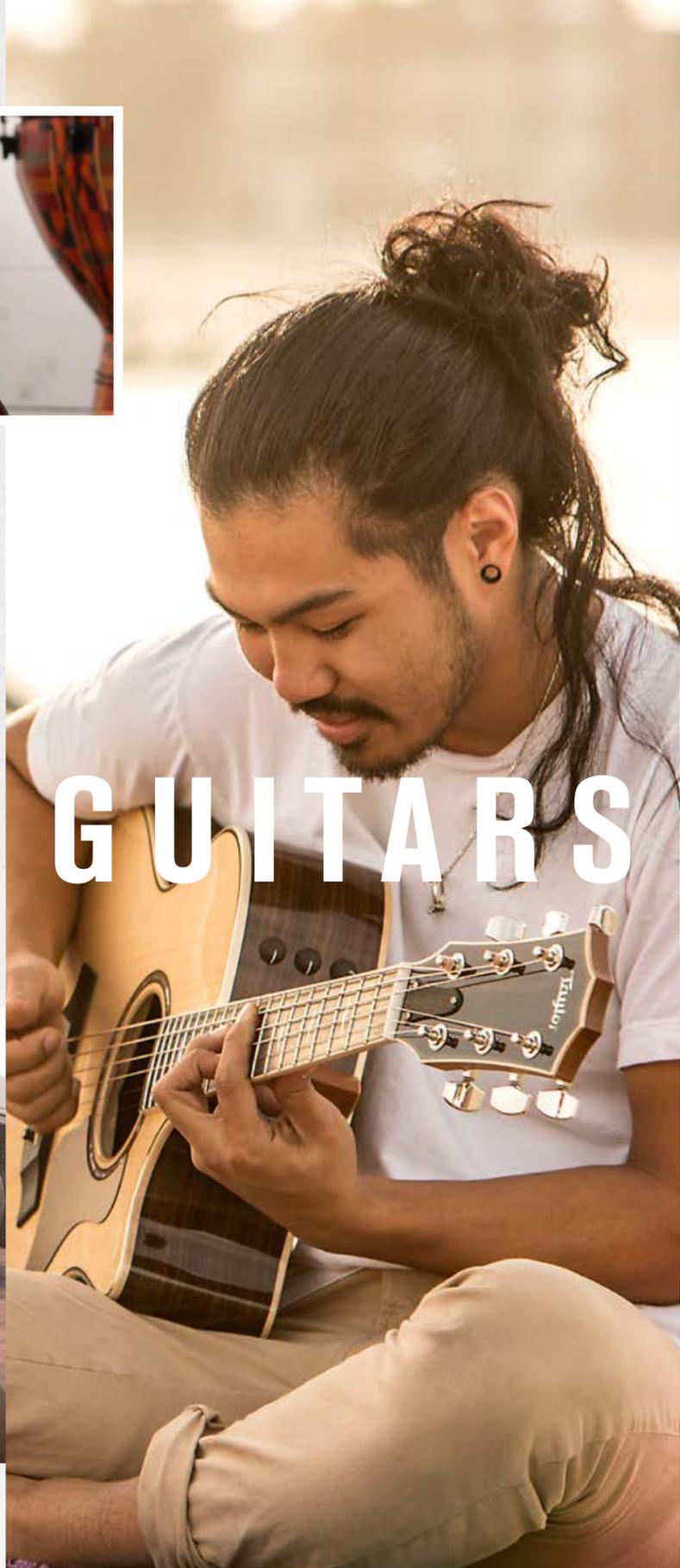
• Indicates a model with a cutaway

• Indicates a model with onboard electronics

5 1 6 c e

Taylor nylon-string models are integrated into the 200-800 Series and are designated by the letter "N" at the end of the model name. For example, a nylon-string Grand Auditorium with a cutaway and electronics within the 500 Series is a 514ce-N.





THE 2016 TAYLOR GUITARS LINE



With our rich mix of wood pairings and aesthetic personalities, we've got a guitar to please every type of player

One thing is for certain: the Taylor guitar line never stops evolving. Whether it's the debut of a breakthrough guitar design, like this year's new Grand Concert and Grand Orchestra 12-strings, a fresh recipe for tone-enhancing refinements, like our redesigned 500 Series, or the addition of new tonewoods like Tasmanian blackwood (300 Series) or Lutz spruce (500 Series), our guitar line consistently delivers the very best of what Taylor has to offer. It's always exciting to unveil the latest configuration of the Taylor guitar family, knowing that for some it might spark their next Taylor discovery, and for others it might open a door to the Taylor experience for the first time.

If you're unfamiliar with the line, our guitars are largely organized by series. Each series is defined by specific tonewood pairings and a cohesive design aesthetic distinguished by decorative details such as the inlays, binding and finish treatment. The appointment packages can range from simple to elaborate.

Among our acoustic models, our guitar line's framework progresses from the 100 through 900 Series, and includes two other premium series, the Koa and Presentation Series. We also offer several subcompact-size, travel-friendly guitar options: the three-quarter-size Baby Taylor (along with its larger sibling, the Big Baby), and the GS Mini, a scaled-down version of our Grand Symphony body shape.

All Taylor acoustic models feature solid-wood tops. Models in the 300 Series and up feature solid-wood back and sides, while the 100/200 Series, Baby Taylor, and GS Mini feature layered wood back and sides. For a guide to our acoustic model naming convention, see page 33.

We also craft three families of electric guitars: the hollowbody electric/acoustic T5, its more compact and electric-leaning sibling, the T5z, and the semi-hollowbody electric T3. All feature proprietary Taylor pickups.

The pages ahead will provide a scenic tour of our model lineup. You'll find plenty more information on all of our models, including complete specifications, descriptions and photos, at taylorguitars.com. Our website is also equipped with great tools to help you browse the line based on criteria like shapes, woods and other features, and compare the specs of different models side by side. Ultimately, you'll want to visit an Authorized Taylor Dealer and test-drive some models for yourself.

We'll also be rolling out more of our award-winning in-store Road Show and Find Your Fit events this year, where our factory experts explain our model lineup and demonstrate an assortment of guitars to help you hear and compare their tonal properties. Be sure to check the Events page of our website for the most up-to-date calendar of Taylor events.



PS

Presentation Series

The dramatically variegated sets of Macassar ebony selected for the back and sides of our Presentation Series are each unique and always spectacular. Together with the many other finely composed design details that adorn these guitars, our rich aesthetic forms a vibrant visual symphony that's highlighted by sparkling paua abalone inlays and trim. A hand-sculpted ebony armrest elevates the playing experience in elegant and ergonomic fashion, making an artistic statement about the inspirational nature of thoughtful craftsmanship.

Series Specifications

Back/Sides: Macassar Ebony

Top: Sitka Spruce

Finish (Body): Gloss 6.0

Rosette: Single Ring Paua

Fretboard Inlay: Paua Nouveau

Binding: Ebony

Electronics: Expression System 2

Premium Features: Ebony Armrest, Paua Trim (Top, Back, Sides, Fretboard Extension, Fretboard, Peghead, Armrest), Macassar Ebony Backstrap, Peghead/Bridge Inlays, Bone Nut/Saddle, Abalone Dot Bridge Pins

Available Models

PS10ce, PS12ce, PS12ce 12-Fret, PS14ce, PS16ce, PS56ce, PS18e



PS14ce

Left: PS10e

Koa Series

Words fail to adequately convey what might be referred to in Hawaiian as the *nani kōki* (supremely beautiful) appearance of our Hawaiian koa guitars, especially those featuring an all-koa body. We celebrate that beauty with an all-wood appointment scheme that features our fluid Island Vine fretboard inlay in blackwood and maple, along with rosewood binding and maple top trim. A hand-sprayed shaded edgeburst enhances koa's rich blend of color, figure and grain structure, adding a tasteful vintage aura. The best part: With time and extended play, a koa guitar's voice will only grow sweeter and warmer, especially in the midrange.

Above: Singer-songwriter Cody Lovass with an older model K22ce.
Photo by Emelie Andersson (emelieandersson.com)

Opposite page (L-R): K26ce, K28e

Series Specifications

Back/Sides: Hawaiian Koa

Top: Hawaiian Koa (Options: Sitka Spruce or Cedar)

Finish (Body): Gloss 6.0 with Shaded Edgeburst (Entire Guitar)

Rosette: Single Ring Rosewood/Maple

Fretboard Inlay: Blackwood/Maple Island Vine

Binding: Indian Rosewood

Electronics: Expression System 2

Premium Features: Maple Top Trim, Peghead Inlay, Bone Nut/Saddle

Available Models

K22ce, K24ce, K26ce, K66ce, K28e



900 Series

Last year's lavish redesign of our most sophisticated class of rosewood guitars blended the same voicing enhancements first introduced on Taylor's iconic 800 Series with a finely calibrated aesthetic makeover. The result is a luxurious look that delivers premium-grade tonal complexity. Impeccably rendered appointments strike an elegant balance between wood and abalone shell trim, with ebony binding and koa purfling framing colorful abalone. The contoured ebony armrest embodies the highest levels of woodworking, enhances the playing comfort, and bolsters the tonal output by reducing the damping effect one's strumming arm might otherwise have on the top. The three-way harmony of looks, feel and sound makes any 900 Series guitar hard to put back in its case.

Series Specifications

Back/Sides: Indian Rosewood

Top: Sitka Spruce

Finish (Body): Gloss 3.5

Rosette: Single Ring Paua Edged with Koa/Ebony

Fretboard Inlay: Abalone/Pearl Ascension

Binding: Ebony

Electronics: Expression System 2

Premium Features: Custom-Calibrated Wood Thicknesses/Bracing for Each Shape, Protein Glues (Bracing/Bridge), Ebony Armrest, Paua/Koa Trim (Top, Back, Sides, Fretboard Extension, Fretboard, Peghead, Armrest), Ebony Backstrap, Bone Nut/Saddle

Available Models

910e, 912e, 912ce, 912e 12-Fret,

912ce 12-Fret, 914ce, 916ce, 956ce

Opposite page (L-R):
912ce 12-Fret, 956e





800 Series

The essence of the Taylor playing experience lives within our rosewood/spruce 800 Series. With the debut of its comprehensive redesign in 2014, master guitar designer Andy Powers took what was already Taylor's flagship guitar series and deployed an array of voicing enhancements, ranging from customized bracing and wood thicknesses for each body style to the use of protein glues and ultra-thin finish, to bring out another level of musicality. Together, these refinements deliver much more than the sum of their parts. For everyone from pros to hobbyists, they make the playing experience more expressive, inspiring and fun.

Opposite page (L-R): Back of an 810e, front of an 858e
Above (L-R): Liz and Michael (814ce) from our Electronics department

Series Specifications

Back/Sides: Indian Rosewood

Top: Sitka Spruce

Finish (Body): Gloss 3.5

Rosette: Single Ring Abalone Edged with Rosewood

Fretboard Inlay: Pearl Element

Binding: Pale Non-Figured Maple

Electronics: Expression System 2

Premium Features: Custom-Calibrated Wood Thicknesses/
 Bracing for Each Shape, Protein Glues (Bracing/Bridge),
 Rosewood Pickguard, Rosewood Top Trim

Available Models

810e, 810ce, 812e, 812ce,
 812e 12-Fret, 812ce 12-Fret,
 812ce-N, 814e, 814ce, 814ce-N,
 816e, 816ce, 856ce, 818e, 858e

700 Series

It's a testament to Indian rosewood's broad and deep-rooted musical heritage in the steel-string guitar world that we've given the tonewood three distinctive aesthetic personalities within the Taylor line. For rosewood lovers who favor a darker top treatment, the 700s conjure classic Americana with a smooth Vintage Sunburst on the spruce soundboard and mahogany neck to match rosewood's deep mocha hues. Another traditional material, ivoroid, etches a creamy counterpoint with binding and rosette lines that accentuate each body's shapely contours. Tonally, Taylor's precision design brings out the dynamic fullness of rosewood's voice with the help of our sleek necks and clean intonation. Whichever era you want to channel, you'll have fun getting there with these guitars.

Series Specifications

Back/Sides: Indian Rosewood

Top: Sitka Spruce

Finish (Body): Gloss 6.0/Vintage Sunburst Top/Neck

Rosette: 3-Ring Grained Ivoroid

Fretboard Inlay: Grained Ivoroid Heritage Diamonds

Binding: Grained Ivoroid

Electronics: Expression System 2

Available Models

710e, 710ce, 712ce, 712e 12-Fret,
712ce 12-Fret, 714e, 714ce, 714ce-N,
716ce, 756ce



714ce

Opposite page (L-R):
716ce, 712e 12-Fret



600 Series

For a while maple might have been a bit misrepresented in the acoustic world, developing a reputation for being too bright for some, and lacking the richer character of other classic tonewoods. But historically, maple has actually been one of the classic tonewoods for other stringed instruments in the violin family. Last year we revoiced our maple 600s to re-introduce its true voice to guitar players, and the results have been amazing. If you have preconceptions about maple, check them at the door, because these guitars deliver plenty of the warmth, depth, richness and sustain your ears crave in an acoustic guitar, without losing the clarity and transparency that allows maple to reflect the player and fit into a mix with other instruments.

Opposite page (L-R): Back of a 618e, front of a 614ce

Above: Megan (612e 12-Fret), a key accounts rep from our Inside Sales team

Series Specifications

Back/Sides: Maple

Top: Torrefied Sitka Spruce

Finish (Body): Gloss 3.5 with Hand-Rubbed Brown Sugar Stain (Back/Sides/Neck)

Rosette: Paua Edged with Ebony/Grained Ivoroid

Fretboard Inlay: Grained Ivoroid Wings

Binding: Ebony

Electronics: Expression System 2

Premium Features/Appointments: Custom-Calibrated Wood Thicknesses/Bracing by Shape, Torrefied Top, Protein Glues (Bracing/Bridge), Grained Ivoroid Purfling, Ebony Backstrap with Grained Ivoroid Wings Inlay, Side Braces, Grained Ivoroid Purfling (Body, Peghead), Striped Ebony Pickguard

Available Models

610e, 610ce, 612e, 612ce, 612e 12-Fret, 612ce 12-Fret, 614e, 614ce, 616e, 616ce, 656ce, 618e

500 Series

Our revitalized mahogany guitars are brimming with appealing refinements, starting with new bracing that boosts the volume, low-end richness and projection, while also making the guitars more responsive. A new top wood, Lutz spruce, joins the mix on Grand Symphony and Dreadnought models, producing a powerful sound reminiscent of Adirondack spruce, while cedar tops on the Grand Concert and Grand Auditorium respond with warmth and richness. Meanwhile, our all-mahogany models continue across the series, deepening their vintage character with a shaded edgeburst body and neck. Other tantalizing new designs include a pair of 12-string/12-fret Grand Concerts, available with a cedar or mahogany top, and a pair of Dreadnoughts: the spruce-top 510e and mahogany-top 520e, which feature a V-carve, 24-7/8-inch-scale neck, making them comfortable chord strummers. You might need to block out some extra time to sample all the compelling new flavors our 500s offer this year.

Series Specifications

Back/Sides: Tropical Mahogany
Top: Mahogany, Lutz Spruce (GS, DN), or Cedar (GC, GA)
Finish (Body): Gloss 6.0 with Shaded Edgeburst (Mahogany-Top Models)
Rosette: Faux Tortoise Shell/Grained Ivoroid
Fretboard Inlay: Grained Ivoroid Century
Binding: Faux Tortoise Shell
Electronics: Expression System 2

Available Models

510, 510e, 520e, 512ce,
 512 12-Fret, 512e 12-Fret,
 512ce 12-Fret, 522ce, 522e 12-Fret,
 522ce 12-Fret, 552ce 12-Fret,
 562ce 12-Fret, 514ce, 514ce-N,
 524ce, 516ce, 526ce, 556ce

Opposite page (L-R):
 512e 12-Fret, 562ce 12-Fret





400 Series

Though they've been a staple of the Taylor line for years, our ovankol 400s continue to be discovered and embraced by players, thanks in part to a compelling full-range tone profile that's comparable to rosewood. Ovangkol's natural tonal breadth and dynamic range fits many different playing applications and body styles, which is one reason we added the Grand Orchestra 418e to the series last year. This year the series welcomes the 12-string Grand Orchestra 458e, making it one of two new GO 12-string models (along with our rosewood 858e) to join the line for 2016. An all-gloss body adds a burnished complexion that ties ovankol's toasted golden color tones together with the buttery Sitka spruce top.

Series Specifications

Back/Sides: Ovangkol
Top: Sitka Spruce
Finish (Body): Gloss 6.0
Rosette: 3-Ring White
Fretboard Inlay: 4mm Italian Acrylic Dots
Binding: White
Electronics: Expression System 2

Available Models

410e, 410ce, 412e, 412ce, 412ce-N, 414e, 414ce, 414ce-N, 416e, 416ce, 456ce, 418e, 458e

L-R: 458e, 416ce



412ce



300 Series

Our 300 Series has introduced countless players to the pleasures of the all-solid-wood acoustic experience. This year the 300s, like our 500s, widen their welcome with a new tonewood and fresh models. Players can now choose between the pairings of sapele/spruce and blackwood/mahogany. The latter wood tandem inspired our new 12-string Dreadnought 360e – bold yet smooth – and the warm and lively Grand Concert 322e 12-Fret. Another tweak for 2016 is a hand-friendly 24-7/8-inch scale length neck on 6-string Dreadnought models. Aesthetic updates include a shaded edgeburst on mahogany-top models, while all models in the series now sport our Small Diamonds inlay.

Series Specifications

Back/Sides: Sapele (Spruce Top) or Blackwood (Mahogany Top)
Top: Sitka Spruce or Mahogany
Finish (Back/Sides): Satin 5.0
Finish (Top): Mahogany: Satin 5.0/Shaded Edgeburst; Spruce: Gloss 6.0
Rosette: 3-Ring Black
Fretboard Inlay: Italian Acrylic Small Diamonds
Binding: Black
Electronics: Expression System 2

Available Models

310, 310e, 310ce, 320, 320e, 360e, 312, 312e, 312ce, 312e 12-Fret, 312ce 12-Fret, 312ce-N, 322, 322e, 322ce, 322e 12-Fret, 322ce 12-Fret, 314, 314e, 314ce, 314ce-N, 324, 324e, 324ce, 316ce, 326ce, 356e, 356ce

Left: Bob from our Customer Service team with a 360e



326ce

200 Deluxe Series

Our popular 200 Deluxe collection strikes a sweet balance between tasteful design constraint and aesthetic variety, bringing Taylor's signature tonal clarity and playability into a stage-worthy mix of guitar options. Available body styles include the Grand Auditorium and Dreadnought, and all models feature solid Sitka spruce soundboards. Layered wood back and side options include koa, rosewood, and sapele, while color choices include a sunburst top with layered rosewood or an all-black Grand Auditorium. All models feature a full-gloss body, optional Expression System 2 electronics, and come in a Taylor hardshell case. New to the series for 2016 is the 12-string Grand Auditorium 254ce-DLX, a great option for someone looking to add some double-course richness to their acoustic toolbox without breaking the bank.

Series Specifications

Back/Sides: Layered Rosewood, Koa or Sapele

Top: Sitka Spruce

Finish (Body): Gloss 6.0

Rosette: 3-Ring White or Single Ring Italian Acrylic (BLK & SB Models)

Fretboard Inlay: Italian Acrylic Small Diamonds

Binding: White or Cream (Layered Koa Models)

Electronics: Expression System 2

Available Models

210 DLX, 210e DLX, 210ce DLX,
210ce-K DLX, 214 DLX, 214e DLX,
214ce DLX, 214ce-K DLX,
214ce-BLK DLX, 214ce-SB DLX,
254ce DLX



210e DLX



L-R: 254ce DLX, 214ce-SB DLX



200 Series

The 200 Series delivers all the essentials of a great guitar – smooth playability, a full and articulate voice, impeccable intonation up the neck, and a professional-grade pickup – at a price point that's within reach of many. A solid Sitka spruce top is paired with layered rosewood back and sides to create a classic look and a sound that will improve as the top ages. With the array of options offered within the 200 Deluxe Series, the model mix here is refreshingly streamlined, featuring a cutaway steel-string Grand Auditorium or Dreadnought with our Expression System® 2 electronics, and a cutaway nylon-string Grand Auditorium with our ES-N pickup. A crisp appointment scheme features white binding, dot inlays, a faux tortoise shell pickguard, and satin-finish back and sides with a glossy top. All three models ship in a lightweight but sturdy hardshell gig bag.

Series Specifications

Back/Sides: Layered Rosewood
Top: Sitka Spruce
Finish (Body): Satin 5.0
 Back/Sides; Gloss 6.0 Top
Rosette: 3-Ring White
Fretboard Inlay: 6mm Dots
Binding: White
Electronics: Expression System 2

Available Models

210ce, 214ce, 214ce-N



210ce

L-R: 210ce, 214ce



100 Series

Like our 200 Series, our 100 Series makes a great guitar-playing experience accessible to nearly anyone. For people taking the first or next step in their musical journey, these instruments promise to accelerate players' growth and enhance their enjoyment. Layered sapele back and sides are paired with a solid Sitka spruce top, while a slightly narrower 1-11/16 inch neck on 6-string models (compared to the 1-3/4-inch necks of our steel-string models in the 300 Series and up) makes it easier for developing players to form barre chords. Choose from cutaway and non-cutaway Grand Auditorium and Dreadnought models, along with the 12-string Dreadnought 150e, a bestseller in its category. New for 2016, all models are now equipped with our Expression System® 2 pickup. Standard appointments include black binding, a black pickguard, and matte-finish body, and all models include a Taylor gig bag.

Series Specifications

Back/Sides: Layered Sapele
Top: Sitka Spruce
Finish (Body): Matte 2.0
Rosette: 3-Ring White
Fretboard Inlay: 6mm Dots
Binding: Black
Electronics: Expression System 2

Available Models

110e, 110ce, 150e,
 114e, 114ce



110e

L-R: 114ce, 150e



GS Mini Series

In a little over five years, the GS Mini has amassed an enormous fan base of happy owners, and the demand continues to grow.

There's something undeniably inviting about the Mini's scaled-down size, yet a single strum reveals the impressive voice of a full-size guitar. That mix of portability and musicality has proven to be a winning combination that fits into so many scenarios in life, from the couch to the campfire to the concert hall, as we like to say. It's not too big, it's not too precious, and it's not too expensive, and that broad-based accessibility has given it a resounding universal appeal, not to mention a built-in fun factor. The shorter 23-1/2-inch scale length makes forming chords a breeze. New for 2016, our two premium acoustic/electric models, the layered rosewood/solid spruce GS Mini-e RW and the layered koa/solid koa GS Mini-e Koa, enjoy a sweet upgrade to our ES2 electronics.

Series Specifications

Back/Sides: Layered Sapele, Rosewood or Koa

Top: Sitka Spruce, Mahogany or Koa

Finish (Body): Matte 2.0

Rosette: 3-Ring White

Fretboard Inlay: 5mm Dots

Binding: None

Electronics: Pre-Fitted for ES-Go or Expression System 2 (GS Mini-e Koa, GS Mini-e RW)

Available Models

GS Mini, GS Mini Mahogany, GS Mini-e RW, GS Mini-e Koa

Above (L-R): Daniel (GS Mini-e Koa) from our Recruiting team, Matt (GS Mini-e RW), from our Body department, and Cynthia (GS Mini Mahogany), an accounts receivable specialist in our Finance department

Opposite page (L-R): GS Mini-e Koa, GS Mini-e RW





Baby Series

Although the guitar that was conceived as a starter guitar for kids is now technically the age of a college student, the lovable Baby Taylor has maintained its enduring appeal in part by being a legitimate musical instrument that anyone can enjoy. The three-quarter-size Dreadnought helped touring musicians like Taylor Swift sketch new musical ideas on the road, and it's been a reliable musical accomplice for travelers seeking inspiration while trekking the world. Even its scaled-up sibling, the Big Baby (15/16-size), makes a sleek travel companion with its svelte four-inch body depth, which is about a half-inch shallower than the depth of a standard Dreadnought. Both the Baby and Big Baby are also available with the Expression System Baby™ (ES-B) pickup, which incorporates piezo design elements from the Taylor ES2. It's powered by an onboard preamp that includes a built-in digital chromatic tuner, an LED display for tuning and low battery indication, and Tone and Volume controls.

Series Specifications

Back/Sides: Layered Sapele
Top: Sitka Spruce or Mahogany
Finish (Body): Matte 2.0
Rosette: Single-Ring Black
 (Screen-Printed Custom for TSBT)
Fretboard Inlay: 6mm Dots
Binding: None
Electronics: ES-B with Onboard Tuner

Available Models

BT1, BT1-e, BT2 (Mahogany Top),
 BT2-e, TSBT (Taylor Swift Model),
 TSBTe, BBT (Big Baby), BBT-e

L-R: TSBT-e (Taylor Swift model), Big Baby Taylor-e, Baby Mahogany-e



BT2



Nylon String

One of the seductive traits of a nylon-string guitar is the way its evocative tonal character can instantly change the complexion of any song. This makes a nylon an indispensable tool for songwriting or for weaving a different flavor or rhythmic texture into a musical mix. Our nylons were designed with Taylor steel-string players in mind, offering a smooth crossover with a sleek-profile neck (1-7/8-inch width compared to a much wider traditional classical-style neck) and a slight radius (20-inch compared to 15-inch on our steel-strings). Add in modern features like a cutaway, onboard acoustic electronics, and other Taylor design details, and you can really feel the Taylor family resemblance. Of our two available body shapes, the Grand Concert nylon models sport a 12-fret design to optimize the tone for the body shape, while the Grand Auditorium necks are joined at the 14th fret. Models run from the 200 through 800 Series, in a range of wood pairings and aesthetic details. With a Taylor nylon-string in your acoustic toolbox, you might be surprised by how often you end up reaching for it. Your Taylor steel-string will understand.

Series Specifications

Series: 200-800
Body Styles: Grand Auditorium or Grand Concert (12-Fret)
Neck Width: 1-7/8 inches
Strings: D'Addario Classical Extra Hard Tension
Electronics: ES-N

Note: For additional specifications, refer to each series

Available Models

812ce-N, 814ce-N,
 714ce-N, 514ce-N,
 412ce-N, 414ce-N,
 312ce-N, 314ce-N,
 214ce-N, JMSM
 (Jason Mraz Signature Model)

L-R: 312ce-N, 814ce-N



714ce-N

Custom

A custom Taylor guitar is something truly special. After all, it's *your* Taylor, designed to satisfy your unique musical and aesthetic cravings. We've made the idea of owning a custom guitar more accessible in every way, with a typical turnaround time of less than eight weeks.

You might not even have to wait at all; you might discover an irresistible one-off beauty that our sales team has designed and brought to a Taylor Road Show or Find Your Fit event. We love showcasing custom configurations, because sometimes you don't know what you want until you can see, play and hear it. And one of our special designs might provide the inspiration that sparks a design of your own.

You'll be able to choose from a rich menu of options, from special tonewood pairings to inlays, purflings and other design details. Your favorite Taylor dealer is a great resource. Many have been to the Taylor factory to select woods and design custom models for their stores with our guitar experts. Our sales and production teams also bring extensive expertise to the table, having designed thousands of custom guitars together over the years. Tonally and aesthetically, we know what works and what doesn't, and we love helping customers hone their ideas into a guitar that inspires them in a unique way.

Our custom categories cover all of our standard acoustic shapes, along with baritone, 12-fret, nylon-string, T5 and T3 options. Tonewood choices include species not offered through our standard line, like walnut, sinker redwood, and Adirondack spruce, along with premium grades that boast rich figure. Of course, our commitment to responsible sourcing means that wood availability is subject to change.

For a current list of custom categories, along with a list of standard model options within the existing Taylor line, refer to our price list at taylorguitars.com. For design inspiration, see our custom guitar photo gallery at taylorguitars.com. To see a comprehensive inlay guide, visit your local Taylor dealer.

If you live in the U.S. or Canada and have questions about our Custom program, contact your preferred dealer or call us at 1-800-943-6782. For customers outside North America, contact your local Taylor dealer.

Opposite page (L-R): Grand Symphony featuring AA quilted maple back/sides, Sitka spruce top, Florentine cutaway, Desert Sunburst, figured koa binding and rosette, and offset abalone dot inlays; T5z with A-grade quilted maple top, Brown Sugar top stain, and abalone dot inlays



Grand Concert with AA-grade walnut back/sides and shaded edgeburst





Taylor Acoustic Electronics

Our commitment to great acoustic tone doesn't end with the guitar. It includes the realm of amplified sound, which is why, years ago, we poured our acoustic expertise into the development of a proprietary acoustic pickup capable of capturing the nuanced tonal personality of a Taylor guitar and the player for performance or recording applications. In the years since our original Expression System® was introduced, it has continued to evolve just as our guitar designs have.

In 2014 we introduced our latest pickup/preamp design, the patented Expression System 2 (ES2), which marked a breakthrough advancement in piezo pickup technology by harnessing more of a guitar's dynamic properties, thanks to an innovative behind-the-saddle design.



Between its plug-and-play simplicity, natural tonal qualities, and performance reliability, the ES2 has quickly earned broad acceptance among touring guitarists, live sound engineers, and other players who plug in on a regular basis. And the studio-grade preamp and tone controls make it easy to shape the sound to fit a variety of different live and recording environments.

The ES2 has become a standard feature on an ever-expanding range of our acoustic/electric models, and this year we're installing it in nearly every steel-string acoustic/electric model in the Taylor line (including the 100/200/200 Deluxe Series and our GS Mini-e models).

Baby and Big Baby models continue to receive our Expression System Baby (ES-B) pickup, which also includes a built-in tuner, while our nylon-string models incorporate our ES-N® pickup.

Singer-songwriter Tori Kelly, a Grammy nominee for Best New Artist, performs with her ES2-equipped 714ce on the Taylor performance stage at the Winter NAMM Show



T3 Series

Semi-hollowbody electrics have always offered players tonal versatility, boasting a flavorful musical resume that spans jazz, rockabilly, classic rock, vintage country, power pop and more. We've built on that diverse heritage with innovative Taylor designs to create the T3. At the heart of it all is our proprietary pickup design. Our standard setup features our high-definition humbuckers, with optional vintage alnicos that respond with extra warmth. A three-way switch covers full neck, neck/bridge and full bridge configurations, while a coil-splitting application (pulling up the volume knob) transforms the humbuckers into single coil pickups. Roll the tone knob to boost the mids and pull it up to activate another level of control that dials in mellow warmth without giving up clarity.

We've also refined the playing experience with designs that include our rock-solid T-Lock® neck joint, a roller bridge that preserves tuning stability, and tailpiece options that include a stoptail (T3) or Bigsby vibrato tailpiece (T3/B). In tandem with the roller bridge, the Bigsby delivers smooth pitch control that makes vibrato bends fun to explore. Together with a figured maple top, several color/burst options, and nickel hardware, the T3 blends neo-vintage style with top-shelf performance.

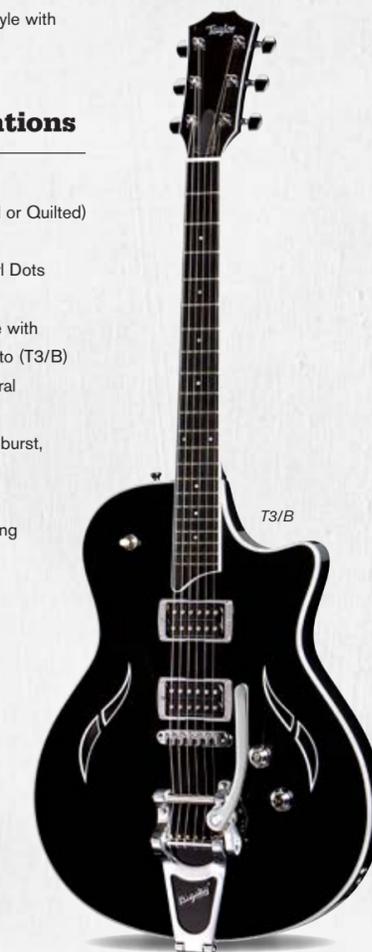
Series Specifications

Body: Semi-Hollow Sapele
Top: Layered Maple (Flamed or Quilted)
Finish: Gloss
Fretboard Inlay: 4mm Pearl Dots
Binding: White
Bridge: Chrome Roller-Style with Stoptail (T3) or Bigsby Vibrato (T3/B)
Color/Burst Options: Natural (Standard), Ruby Red Burst, Black, Orange, Tobacco Sunburst, Honey Sunburst
Electronics: Taylor HD Humbuckers with Coil-Splitting Capability (Optional: Vintage Alnicos)

Models

T3, T3/B

L-R: T3/B in Orange and Tobacco Sunburst



T5 Series

Our hollowbody hybrid electric/acoustic T5 family has flourished and grown since the debut of the original T5 in 2005. The game-changing design bridged the electric and acoustic worlds like no other guitar, giving gigging players a dynamic range of electric and amplified acoustic flavors, all in one guitar. The magic is in our blend of proprietary pickup designs and switching capability. An active soundboard and a magnetic acoustic body sensor capture a natural-sounding acoustic voice, while a pair of electric pickups – a concealed neck humbucker and a visible bridge humbucker – crank out an array of electric sounds. Five-way switching and onboard tone controls enable players to flick from warm jazz to vintage blues to heavy distortion in an instant. The T5's dual compatibility with electric and acoustic amps (or both with an A/B box) translates into a broad sonic palette for players to tap into.

The T5's newer sibling, the T5z, packs all that great capability into a more compact body size (closer to a solidbody), appealing to electric players with its 12-inch fretboard radius (compared to 15-inch on the T5), jumbo frets that making bending strings easier, and slightly more feedback resistance with high-gain distortion.

Both the T5 and T5z share four model options, each distinguished by soundboard choices of flamed koa, curly maple, Sitka spruce or mahogany, with corresponding appointment packages and color options. Two 12-string T5z models (Custom and Classic) are also available.

Series Specifications

T5/T5z Custom: Flamed Koa Top, Hollow Sapele Body, Gloss Finish with Shaded Edgeburst Top, Italian Acrylic Spires Fretboard Inlay, White Binding, Gold Hardware (T5z Custom also offered as a 12-string.)

T5/T5z Pro: Curly Maple Top, Hollow Sapele Body, Gloss Finish, Italian Acrylic Spires Fretboard Inlay, White Binding, Nickel Hardware

Colors/Bursts: Borrego Red, Pacific Blue, Gaslamp Black, Tobacco Sunburst

T5/T5z Standard: Sitka Spruce Top, Hollow Sapele Body, Gloss Finish, Pearl Small Diamonds Fretboard Inlay, White Binding, Nickel Hardware

Colors/Bursts: Black, Honey Sunburst, Tobacco Sunburst

T5/T5z Classic: Mahogany Top, Hollow Sapele Body, Satin with Classic Mahogany Finish, Pearl Small Diamonds Fretboard Inlay, Black Binding (Fretboard Only), Nickel Hardware (T5z Classic also offered as a 12-string.)



T5z-12 Classic



THE FACTORY ↔ FORESTRY CONNECTION

Our sourcing and manufacturing efforts are linked by innovative thinking and a commitment to social forestry By Chalise Zolezzi

Through the years, we've detailed many of Taylor's forward-thinking wood sourcing initiatives. The same innovative thinking that drives our guitar design and manufacturing advancements also fuels our efforts to implement new models of social forestry that invest in local communities, the forests, and ultimately, the future.

Over the past 15 years, we've chronicled our work in Honduras, where pioneering social forestry programs have created a viable, sustainable economy by keeping the wood value within local communities in part by offering skills training to the area. In more recent years, we've brought the same transformative vision to Crelicam, our ebony mill in Cameroon, and changed how ebony is harvested,

milled and even grown. Just this past year, Crelicam undertook a new endeavor: the propagation of ebony seedlings. Crelicam is now cultivating a new generation of ebony trees with an onsite ebony nursery, making the mill the only entity in the forestry sector in all of Cameroon that has been granted approval from Ministry of Forest and Fauna (MINFOF) for the replanting of ebony. While both our work and our ebony seedlings are young, we're gaining greater insight into how ebony propagates, along with its optimum growth environment.

In addition to this work, Taylor has shared its mission on the global stage at the Congo Basin Forest Partnership (CBFP), a meeting of the countries that share the Congo Basin and seek its preservation, and established a relation-

ship with the Congo Basin Institute, a new forest research institute located in Cameroon that was launched in partnership with the University of California, Los Angeles.

Through our work in Cameroon, we've been able to make significant investments in providing a safe and healthy working environment for Crelicam employees. In addition to implementing several employee well-being programs, the company has renovated the mill to improve its wood-processing capability. Upgrades to the facility include a new factory building that features concrete floors, steady electricity, and a gravel driveway to facilitate transportation. New saws and machinery have been added to the space and will improve our capacity to continue to transform ebony and

maximize yield, thereby leaving more trees in the forest. Other improvements include the addition of a kitchen built by Crelicam employees, landscaping of the grounds, and a new water well that provides a fresh water supply for the factory and for the local community.

Our relationship with our spruce and maple supplier, Steve McMinn, and his company, Pacific Rim Tonewoods, continues to flourish with new endeavors, including the exploration of Lutz spruce as an eco-friendly tonewood of the future (see our story on the new 500 Series on page 16), and a new, collaborative venture between Taylor and PRT in Hawaii. As with our other initiatives, the joint venture's forward-thinking vision is dedicated to the pursuit of best practices in forest management, innovative models

of reforestation, and bringing ethically harvested tonewoods to market. As our efforts in Hawaii develop further, we'll share more details in future editions of *Wood&Steel*.

Back at the factory in El Cajon, Taylor's internal Green Team is reducing waste and working to green both the factory and the local community. The team has initiated several waste reduction initiatives in the areas of paper usage, water bottles, recyclable components and equipment, along with providing reusable dishes and glassware in all campus kitchens. The team is also active in the surrounding community, working with local ecological preserves to plant trees. Over 1,000 have been planted to date, which serve to beautify and restore these sensitive areas as healthy ecosystems. **W&S**



Clockwise from top left: Crelicam team members measure for new factory walls; New band saws await use in the new factory area; employees take a break during a construction project; one of the Taylor Green Team's tree-planting outings; Crelicam's ebony nursery; a water well serves both the factory and the local community. **Opposite page:** Ebony seedlings from the nursery at the mill



THE CRAFT

Guitars: How Do You Take Yours?

Don't let our diverse guitar lineup intimidate you. Our models are more alike than different.

Like many folks, my daily life begins with coffee. If you're a coffee drinker like me, it's very likely you've been asked the question, "How do you take yours?"

A generation ago, this question would have been answered in a much simpler way, involving the choice of cream, sugar, or simply black. Depending on the locale, cappuccino or espresso might have been involved. Over the past few decades, as different roasts, brewing methods, and flavors

have traveled the world with increasing ease, we now enjoy more choices than ever. How many options have you seen on the menu of your local coffee shop lately?

It reminds me of the current array of guitar choices offered these days. For some, it can seem bewildering, even intimidating, whether you're a novice or a seasoned player. Which size? What flavor? What character? What form do you want it to come in? Looking through the many options presented in this, our

annual guitar guide issue, might leave you wondering where to start. Here's a thought to ease your mind: These are all well-made guitars. Underneath the many distinctive design details, all are crafted for the same fundamental purpose: to make music. Think of your guitar options like the big menu at your local coffee shop and remember that all of these models, like coffee styles, will essentially serve the same essential role; they help you get on with life. There are no absolute right or wrong choices here.

As a guitar maker, I don't believe that one size fits all. After all, each musician is unique, as is his or her music and playing style – even if you're just beginning to learn. As a result, the instrument you choose should be well suited to your sensibilities. That said, the beauty of any well-made instrument is that it has such strong musical qualities that it will usually be able to express a wide range of musical ideas, whatever they may be.

When I describe a guitar as excellent in a particular musical style, without

exception, I simultaneously fear that I've pigeonholed it or left something out, implying that it won't do something else well. The thought that a guitar is good for only one thing shouldn't be so. These guitars aren't limited to a single purpose in their musical lives. They may simply have tendencies that relate in varying ways to different playing applications.

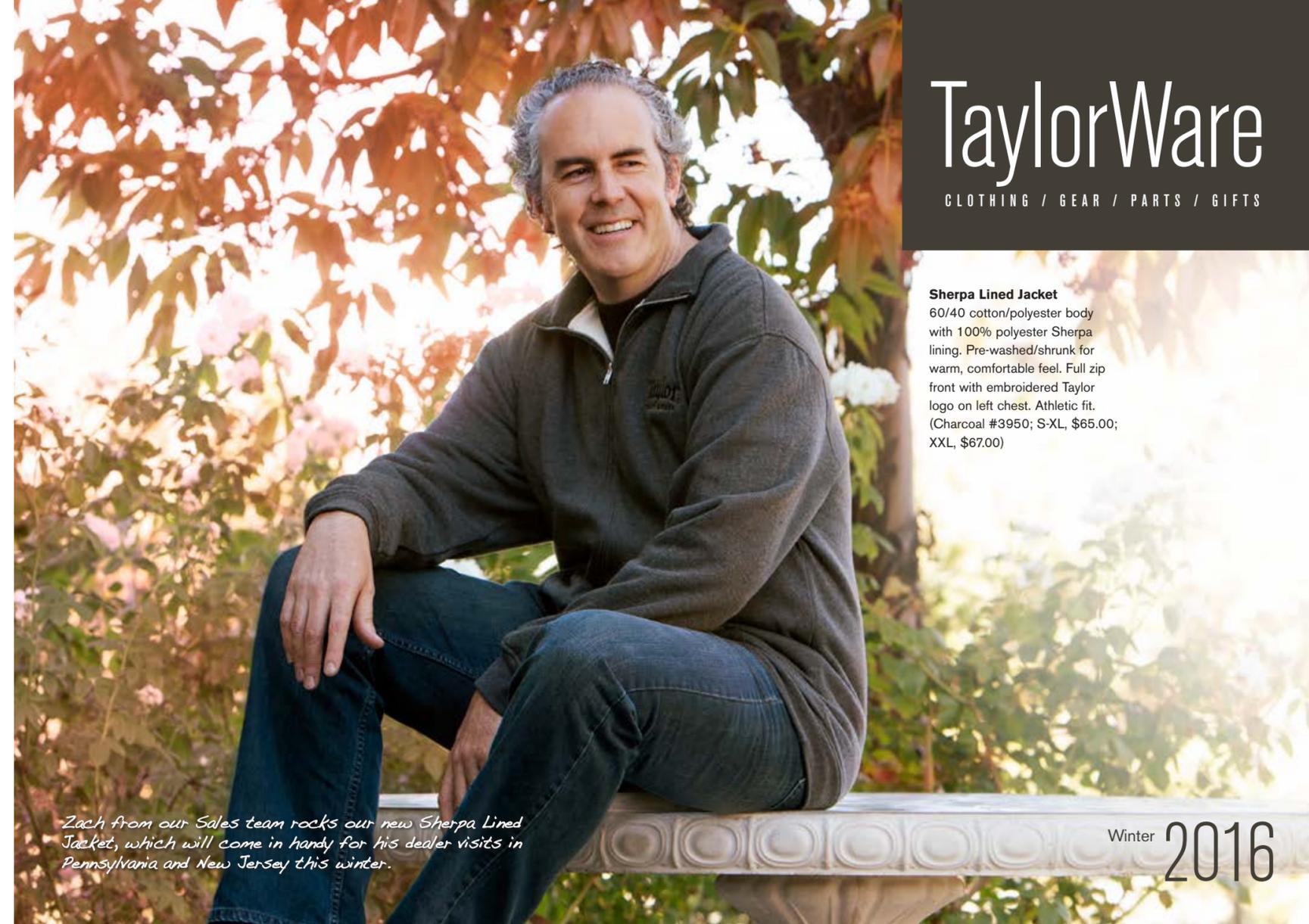
I see a similar scenario at work when I study individual pieces of wood. Each piece has a characteristic or a personality inherent to itself. From there, it is influenced by how it is dried and seasoned. There are few absolutes. For example, I can never say mahogany will always be exactly the same, with a specific density. Mahogany boards may be mostly similar, and reflect similar tendencies, but they won't be carbon copies of each other. These mahogany boards will certainly be more like each other in form and function than they would be if compared to another type of wood, but each is still unique. By altering the seasoning schedule, each piece's tendency to bend or twist or move when we work it will shift in subtle ways. The best course to take is to respect the personality of the boards, and to work with them in a way that guides their traits in the direction they should go, knowing that what we ask of them is to offer their best for the guitar's sake.

I like to encourage a similar approach when a musician selects an instrument. I see no absolutes in this choice, as there are no identical musicians and playing styles. Each guitar will typically have a bias toward a specific musical context or usage, which should complement the musician's sensibilities, but there really is a lot of musical latitude at play.

I often use a French press to make coffee, and other times drink espresso. Both are wonderful, as are drip coffees and cappuccinos. In the same way, I love Grand Concerts and Dreadnoughts. I love maple, mahogany and rosewood. All are good, and all will do a wonderful job of expressing the music I feel. Each lends its inherent uniqueness to my music, but I appreciate and celebrate this, savoring the differences.

As you peruse the guitars we are building, remember, none of them sounds like anything until they are actually played. It's you the player who finally gives them a voice. They lend their distinct flavors and personalities to your music, but ultimately, you should take your guitar, and your music, the way you like them.

— Andy Powers
Master Guitar Designer



Zach from our Sales team rocks our new Sherpa Lined Jacket, which will come in handy for his dealer visits in Pennsylvania and New Jersey this winter.

Winter 2016

TaylorWare

CLOTHING / GEAR / PARTS / GIFTS

Sherpa Lined Jacket

60/40 cotton/polyester body with 100% polyester Sherpa lining. Pre-washed/shrunk for warm, comfortable feel. Full zip front with embroidered Taylor logo on left chest. Athletic fit. (Charcoal #3950; S-XL, \$65.00; XXL, \$67.00)



Case Label Hoody

Fashion fit. 50/46/4 poly/cotton/rayon. (Black #2817; S-XL, \$42.00; XXL, \$44.00)



Taylor Long Sleeve Logo T

Fashion fit. 100% cotton. (Black #2250; S-XL, \$30.00; XXL, \$32.00)



Ladies' Birdsong Long Sleeve T

Loose fit. 100% combed cotton. (Black #4510; S-XL, \$34.00)



Men's Fleece Jacket

Standard fit. 60/40 cotton/poly. (#2896; S-XL, \$64.00; XXL, \$66.00)

Caps



Taylor Trucker Cap
Plastic snap adjustable backstrap. (Black #00388, Olive #00389; \$20.00)

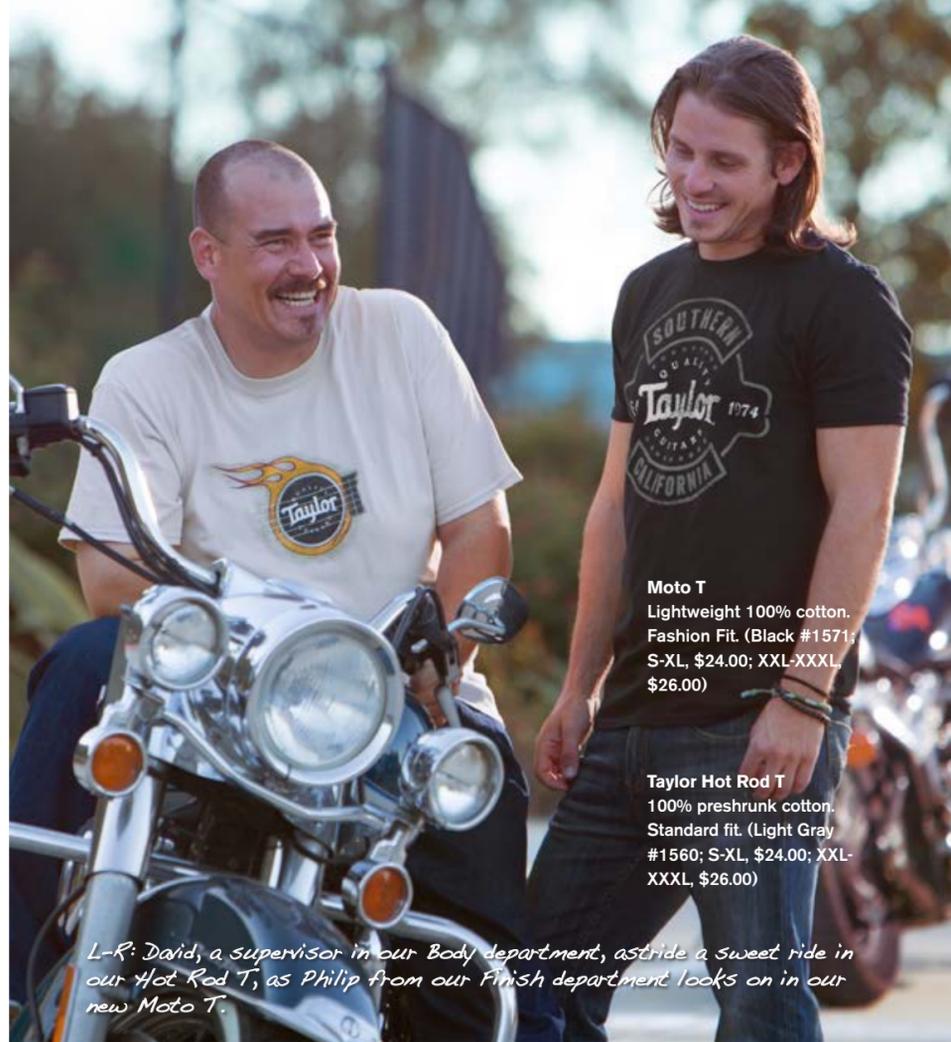


Peghead Patch Cap
Cap sizes:
S/M (#00165): 22-3/8", 57cm, size 7-1/8
L/XL (#00166): 23-1/2", 60cm, size 7-1/2
(Gray, \$25.00)



Men's Cap
One size fits all. (Black #00378; \$25.00)

Contrast Cap
Snap back, flat bill. One size fits all. (Charcoal #00381; \$25.00)



Moto T
Lightweight 100% cotton. Fashion Fit. (Black #1571; S-XL, \$24.00; XXL-XXXL, \$26.00)

Taylor Hot Rod T
100% preshrunk cotton. Standard fit. (Light Gray #1560; S-XL, \$24.00; XXL-XXXL, \$26.00)

L-R: David, a supervisor in our Body department, astride a sweet ride in our Hot Rod T, as Philip from our Finish department looks on in our new Moto T.



Men's Factory Issue T
Fashion fit. 60/40 cotton/poly. (Olive #1740; S-XL, \$28.00; XXL, \$30.00)



Taylor Two Color Logo T
Standard fit. 100% cotton. (Brown #1660; S-XL, \$20.00; XXL-XXXL, \$22.00)



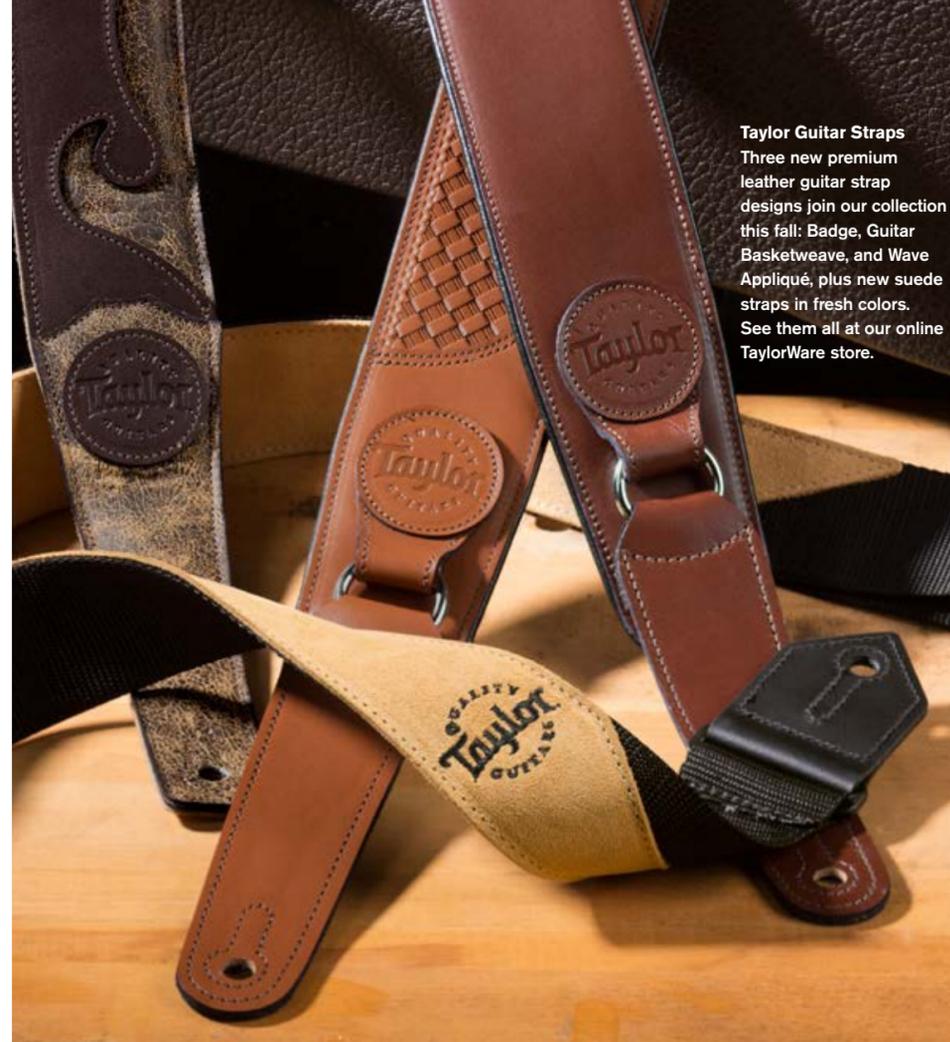
Men's La Guitarra T
Slim fit. 60/40 cotton/poly. (Navy #1485; S-XL, \$24.00; XXL, \$26.00)



Guitar Stamp Work Shirt
Standard fit. Permanent press, stain-resistant poly/cotton blend. (Black #3090; S-XL, \$44.00; XXL-XXXL, \$46.00)

To see the complete TaylorWare line with full product descriptions, visit taylorguitars.com/taylorware

Glassware



Taylor Guitar Straps
Three new premium leather guitar strap designs join our collection this fall: Badge, Guitar Basketweave, and Wave Appliqué, plus new suede straps in fresh colors. See them all at our online TaylorWare store.



1

1) Tumbler
12 oz. Porcelain/Stainless. (#70004, \$18.00)



2

2) Water Bottle
24 oz. (#70016, \$16.00)



3

3) Etched Pub Glass
20 oz. (#70010, \$10.00)



4

4) Taylor Etched Peghead Mug
15 oz. Ceramic. (Black #70005, \$15.00)



5

5) Taylor Mug
15 oz. Ceramic. (Brown with cream interior, #70006, \$10.00)

Gift Ideas



Taylor Messenger Bag
Adjustable canvas/web strap. (Brown #61168, \$69.00)



Taylor Bar Stool
30" high. (Black #70200, \$99.00)

24" high. (Brown #70202, \$99.00)



Guitar Stand
Sapele/Mahogany. Accommodates all Taylor models. (#70100, \$70.00; assembly required)



Dual Guitar Stand
Sapele. Accommodates all Taylor models. (#70199, \$79.00)



Black Composite Travel Guitar Stand
Accommodates all Taylor models. (#70180, \$39.00)



Digital Headstock Tuner
Clip-on chromatic tuner, back-lit LCD display. (#80920, \$29.00)

Ultex® Picks

Six picks per pack by gauge (#80794, .73 mm, #80795, 1.0 mm or #80796 1.14 mm; \$5.00).



Primetone Picks™

Three picks per pack by gauge. (#80797, .88 mm, #80798, 1.0 mm or #80799 1.3 mm; \$8.50).

Variety Pack (shown)

Six assorted picks per pack, featuring one of each gauge. Ultex (.73 mm, 1.0 mm, 1.14 mm) and Primetone (.88 mm, 1.0 mm, 1.3 mm). (#80790; \$10.00)

TaylorWare

CLOTHING / GEAR / PARTS / GIFTS

1-800-494-9600

Visit taylorguitars.com/taylorware to see the full line.



Wood&Steel

A Publication of Taylor Guitars

Volume 84 / Winter 2016

Taylor Guitars | 1980 Gillespie Way | El Cajon, CA 92020-1096 | taylorguitars.com

The paper we used is certified to Forest Stewardship Council® standards. The FSC® is a non-profit organization that supports environmentally friendly, socially responsible and economically viable management of the world's forests.

Double Take

Among the head-turning additions to the 2016 Taylor line is the 562ce 12-Fret, our first-ever 12-string Grand Concert. This all-mahogany beauty builds on Taylor's heritage of easy-playing 12-strings with a comfortably compact body size, which will appeal to players who find a traditional 12-string body too big in size or voice. Adding to the playing comfort is the slinky handfeel of the 12-fret neck and 24-7/8-inch scale length. Tonally, the guitar benefits from new internal bracing designed for this year's revoiced 500 Series. The rich output yields remarkable depth and volume for a smaller body, with crisp clarity and responsiveness. The sonic focus makes this a superb 12-string choice for layering with other instruments. For more on our new 12-string and 500 Series models, see our feature stories in this issue.

