

Wood & Steel

The Urban
Wood Issue

QUALITY
Taylor
GUITARS

The All-New Urban
Ironbark 500 Series
Urban Ash LTDs
West Coast Arborists

Letters

Email us

taylorguitars.com/contact

Support System

Editor's Note: This message was originally directed to co-founder Kurt Listug. It references this last part of his column from Vol. 102 / Issue 1 of this year:

"I also want to thank all the Taylor guitar owners around the world for being such an important part of our growth over the years. We know that a lot of people have taken up the guitar for the first time recently, and we hope that all the new Taylor owners out there are enjoying their guitar experience. One of the goals of Taylor employee ownership is to remain focused on making the best possible guitars well into the future and continue to inspire people to express themselves through music."

Just finished reading your magazine. I always read what you two guys are doing and where Taylor is going. It just amazes me how far the company has grown. I own nine Taylors now. They are hands down my favorite to play out of the 50 guitars I've owned since 1977.

You are most welcome for the support from us, your customers. I sure appreciate your comments, and I wish you two guys only the best in retirement. Job well done by both of you.

David

GT Love

I received my new GTe Mahogany from Chicago Music Exchange (they are very prompt and courteous). The tone is extremely well balanced – clear, bright and articulate across the spectrum from low to high frequencies, with much more volume than I anticipated from an instrument this size.

After 79 years, playability is now crucial to me, and this GTe has exceeded my expectations in all regards. It just makes playing easier regardless of fretboard position or complexity of the chord sequences.

I play an eclectic mix of finger-picking, flatpicking and rhythm, a style acquired listening to Chet Atkins, Merle Travis and Scotty Moore during my formative years; any one or any mixture of these styles sounds great on the GTe Mahogany.

I started in the 1950s playing Kay, Harmony and Stella guitars, migrating to Guild, Gretsch and Gibson as finances permitted. Currently, based upon the quality, sound, playability, appearance, value at the price point, and Taylor's efforts at sustainability and good corporate citizenship, I play primarily Taylor guitars, and any future purchases will be Taylors.

Thanks for another great musical instrument. I hope you will consider adding the GTe to the 300 or 500 Series in the near future.

**John Clower
Monroe, Georgia**



GTe Mahogany

800 Series Siblings

Just thought I'd let you know how much I love Taylor and share my Taylor story.

Back in 2014, my parents could no longer manage their steel narrow boat (UK canals) and sold it, with some of the proceeds coming to me and my brother.

Flush with the cash, I went on the search for a high-end acoustic with a Takamine or Martin mostly in mind. My first port of call was Sounds Great near Manchester (sadly now gone), where I tried a few guitars and was immediately struck by the rich tone and volume of a Taylor 814ce (2014) they had. I tried a few more makes and then left it for a week until I could do the same at PMT Salford. They had a much bigger range of all makes, but none grabbed me like the 814ce did.

So, back to Sounds Great I went, and fortunately the guitar was still there to be secured and was still as rich and loud as I remembered it. It's a stunning guitar that I love and will keep for my lifetime, not only because it is so good but also because it will remind me of my father, who is now unfortunately very ill.

So began my love affair with my Taylor, loving every minute my 814ce is in my hands and looking forward to devouring *Wood&Steel* when it drops through the post. So, when I saw another 800 Series Taylor come up secondhand, I just had to give it a try.

Driving to meet the guy selling it, an 810 LTD from 1997, I was initially pretty lukewarm on the idea, wondering why I was bothering, but seconds after playing it, my mind was made up. Again, a stunningly beautiful looking and sounding guitar that I am told was made for and sold at a show in the U.S., then brought over to the U.K. with the original owner.

So, now I have another beautiful old guitar in addition to my youngster, and I'm never going to sell either. I'll be 60 next year and hope to enjoy them both for a few more years to come.

I love Taylor as a company, and you make amazing guitars. People may say high-end guitars are not worth the money, but the joy and pleasure

my Taylors give me and the richness and ease of the playing is worth every penny.

Keep up the good work.

**Paul Stubbs
Cheshire, U.K.**

Taylor Firsts

The very first Taylor I ever played was a friend's 1985 815 [jumbo] with a mustache bridge. The first Taylor I ever fell in love with was 1996 514. The first Taylor that I ever bought was as a 2002 314 LTD with brown maple back and sides. And, now that I am 64 years young, I have a 522e. It's the first guitar that meets my personal needs in that it's a small body with the short scale along with the mahogany top, which is great for flatpicking and fingerstyle.

Steve

social circles

Join the Taylor community

Facebook: @taylorguitars

Instagram: @taylorguitars
@taylorespanol

Twitter: @taylorguitars

YouTube: TaylorQualityGuitars

Explore our Digital Edition

Beyond the print edition of *Wood&Steel*, you'll find related video content in our digital edition, accessible for free at taylorguitars.com (look under Owners in the menu bar) or here: woodandsteel.taylorguitars.com

In this issue's digital edition, look for artist performances, guitar demos and lessons, guitar care tips, an "Ask Bob" video, a new Spotify playlist, and much more.

Some of this video content is accessible from these pages if you have a smartphone. Simply scan the QR codes for instant access.

Contents

WOOD&STEEL | VOLUME 104 | 2022 ISSUE 3



The Urban Ironbark 500 Series

The newest urban tonewood to join the Taylor line is a sonic powerhouse. Paired with a torrefied spruce top, our rebooted 500 Series guitars boast a voice that's rich, bold and sweet.

Features

- 7 Meet the New Boss: Andy Powers**
In case you hadn't heard, Andy was recently named President and CEO. Here's why that's great news for guitar players.
- 16 Urban Tree Trackers**
We paid a visit to our urban wood sourcing partner, West Coast Arborists, to learn how they help cities across California manage their tree inventories.
- 19 New Model Spotlight: Academy 20/22**
We've expanded our ergonomic Academy Series to include two new walnut-top models.



- 20 Urban Ash Limited Editions**
It's urban ash like you never seen or heard it before: Introducing the all-ash 424ce LTD and sunburst 224ce-UA DLX LTD.
- 22 Custom Guitar Showcase**
To celebrate the launch of our expanded custom guitar gallery on the Taylor website, we showcase a sampling of uniquely appointed acoustics.
- 28 Guitar Lessons**
R&B guitar ace Kerry "2 Smooth" Marshall covers upstroke technique, minor 11th chords and triad movements.
- 29 Review Roundup: Koa 724ce**
See why guitar pundits are raving about our new 700 Series models, featuring select-grade koa.

Columns

- 4 The Craft**
As Taylor's new President and CEO, Andy acknowledges the value of mentors throughout his career – including Bob and Kurt.
- 5 Kurt's Corner**
Kurt reflects on the time he's spent with Andy and why he's the right person to oversee the business side of Taylor Guitars.
- 6 BobSpeak**
Bob shares his thoughts on proudly passing the guitar-making torch to Andy.

Departments

- 8 Ask Bob**
Urban wood sourcing costs, Bob versus Andy, how frets and pickguards impact sound, how acoustic guitar woods ripen with age and more.
- 26 Soundings**
Sara Niemietz and Linda Taylor's *Superman*, The Latin Alternative Music Conference, *Taylor Soundcheck* with Liv Slingerland, *Vinyl Confessions* with Maggie Baugh.
- 30 Sustainability**
As we launch our Urban Ironbark 500 Series, Scott Paul recaps our partnership with West Coast Arborists and explains how eucalyptus trees came to California.
- 32 The Taylor Line by Series**
Our guitar line at a glance, including our tonewoods and model offerings.
- 34 TaylorWare**
All the latest Taylor accessories, including straps, stands, picks, wall hangers, guitar care products, apparel and more.





The Craft

Wheel of Fortune

In Andy’s experience, fortune favors the problem-solvers — with some help from the likeminded people who guide them along the way.

I’m very fortunate. In fact, I’d say I’ve always been fortunate. Now, I should clarify that I don’t consider good fortune to be defined by convenient circumstances, sudden windfalls or lucky breaks. As I see it, good fortune has more to do with being able to do the work that overcomes each day’s challenges. Doing the work allows you to continue forward in the direction you want to go. The part that makes this hard is that each day seems to present a new, unknown problem to solve.

As a balance to this, I’ve noticed that the things you need to overcome those challenges usually come around at just the right time. Most often, they come in the form of people who have something to teach you. That’s precisely where I find myself fortunate. As far back as I can recall, people have arrived on the scene with lessons to teach me. Some teach by providing an opportunity for observation, and some

by directly investing in your effort. The lessons are as endless as the thoughts we think, but we’re richer by far when we include the input of others and allow

ourselves to be shaped in a positive way by their influence.

One such person is my wife Maaren. She’s about the most wonderful person in the entire world (I confess I’m biased) and full of insight, even when she’s not paying attention to it. I

often hear her reiterate to our kids the phrase, “Just do the work that’s in front of you, and it’ll get done.” I can’t think of a better way to express the type of

thinking that is needed to creatively overcome the tasks that we face.

In fact, this seems to be the attitude shared by the all the entrepreneurial folks I’ve been privileged to learn from. They simply get on with the work that is needed. They’re not going to

“
It’s been a joy to work alongside Kurt and Bob and see how their efforts complement each other.
”

wait for some imagined permission from an outside authority to get to work; they simply go about the business of doing what needs to be done. It reminds me of a distinction I read somewhere that a professional knows what they need to get a job done, but an entrepreneur uses what they have at hand to get the job completed.

Bob and Kurt are two people I’ve been deeply privileged to spend time with and learn from. They’ve spent, and continue to spend, hours, days, years attending to the tasks in front of them, overcoming each challenge in order to stay moving in the direction they want to go, which is building a great guitar company. For decades, they’ve worked side by side, focusing on the diverse jobs in front of each of them in pursuit of one central purpose: to design, build and sell instruments that are fundamentally aligned with the way musicians use instruments, and to do this in a way that provides the most good to our forest resources, suppliers, employees, dealers and musicians. It’s a tall order, broken down into innumerable individual jobs over a lifetime of work. But what great work it is to do!

As far back as I can remember, I’ve loved doing the work of making guitars, whether the mundane chores or working through the novel challenges of each day. For nearly a dozen years now, it’s been a joy to do this work alongside Kurt and Bob and see how their efforts complement each other. It’s as if each task accomplished fills in one more pane in a larger paint-by-numbers picture. They’ve generously included me in their work, and I’m grateful for their effort and teaching. I’ve been thrilled to share in this work and contribute my efforts toward our common goal of making great instruments for musicians to use, while also using those efforts as a means to share with those around us. These are great days at Taylor Guitars, and we’re happy to share them with you all.

— Andy Powers
Chief Guitar Designer / President / CEO



Wood&Steel
Volume 104 | 2022 Issue 3

Produced by the Taylor Guitars
Marketing Department

Publisher Taylor-Listug, Inc.
Vice President Tim O'Brien
Director of Marketing Craig Evans
Editorial Director Jim Kirlin
Art Director Cory Sheehan
Graphic Designer Ryan Hanser
Photographer Patrick Fore

Contributors
Colin Griffith / Kurt Listug
Gabriel O'Brien / Scott Paul
Shawn Persinger / Andy Powers
Chris Sorenson / Bob Taylor
Glen Wolff

Technical Advisors
Ed Granero / Gerry Kowalski
Crystal Lawrence / Andy Lund
Rob Magargal / Monte Montefusco
Dave Pelletier / Andy Powers
Bob Taylor / Chris Wellons
Glen Wolff

Printing / Distribution
PrintWoods (Phoenix, AZ)

Translation
The Language Company
(Bristol, England, UK)



Kurt's Corner

Hail to the Chief

Kurt has complete confidence in Andy's ability to lead the company forward as President and CEO

In late May, we took the next step in implementing the company's succession plan when Bob and I stepped down from our positions and the Taylor Guitars board (established as part of our transition to 100-percent employee ownership) appointed Andy Powers President and CEO in addition to his role as Chief Guitar Designer. Bob and I continue serving the company as Senior Advisors and joint chairs of the board. Andy now heads the company along with its guitar design.

When Bob and I started the company as a couple of young guys, there was so much to learn and figure out. I don't think there's any way one person could have done it, as it was so overwhelming. But we were very excited, and we each focused on learning the parts of the business we were most interested in. While Bob learned how to make guitars, I learned how to sell them and turn a profit.

In recent years, as Bob and I thought about our succession and looked into the future, we projected it would be more of the same. Bob wanted a guitar maker to run the company, whom he

ees (via an ESOP), I realized that Andy was very capable of assuming my management duties.

For starters, he wouldn't have to establish sales, marketing, distribution,

“Andy cares about Taylor Guitars being an honest and well-run company, and staying focused on its mission of building instruments that inspire.”

found in Andy. I presumed I'd find someone with my skills, either from within or outside the company, to eventually replace me. I wasn't actively searching, but in 2020, as we worked on our plan for selling the company to our employ-

finance or human resources departments as I had — these were now well established and operated by highly skilled professionals. His role would be to oversee and direct them, as my role had evolved into. Andy and I had spent

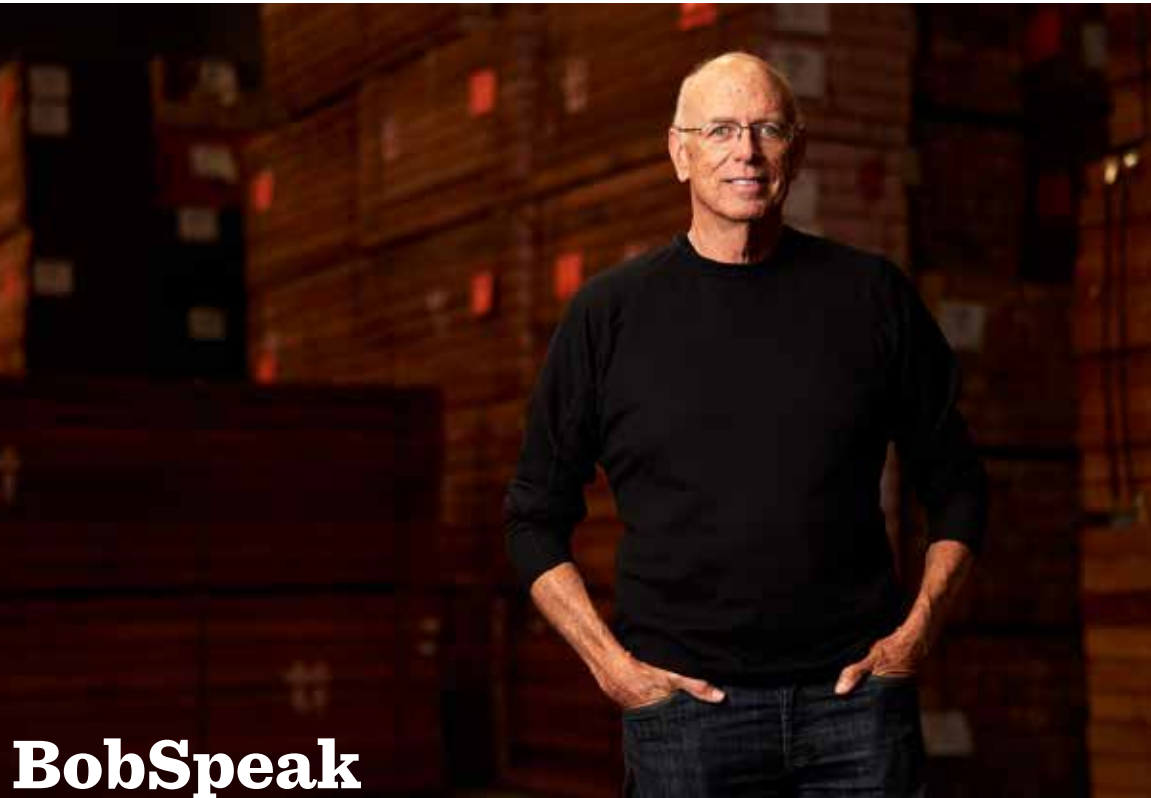
the past several years working together on budgets and reviewing financial statements together, and he's worked closely with sales and marketing since he joined the company more than a decade ago. He's well qualified.

I've spent a lot of time with Andy since he came to Taylor in 2011. He's a uniquely talented person, both an accomplished musician and a world-class instrument designer and builder. If you ask him what he cares about, he'll talk about his family and friends, music and the people who make it, as well as designing and building musical instruments. He cares about Taylor Guitars being an honest and well-run company and staying focused on its mission of building instruments that inspire people to make music. He also wants to be a good steward of the resources we use.

Bob's approach to making guitars is arguably more of an engineer's

approach than Andy's. My approach to the guitar business leans more into sales and marketing in addition to finance. Andy takes both of our talents and strengths and elevates them to a new level. I'm excited to see him lead the company into the future he envisions for it!

— Kurt Listug
Co-Founder and Senior Advisor



BobSpeak

Andy in the Passing Lane

Bob reflects on shifting into a supporting role as Andy Powers leads the company forward.

Well, here I am, a little farther from the front of the *Wood&Steel* cover than before. As my dear friend Jesus Jurado, who lives in Tijuana and drives his Land Cruiser exploring and camping with me in Baja, and who retired a couple years ago from Taylor Guitars, says, “We gotta pull over and let the young ones pass.” And I’m happy to do it. Andy Powers is in the passing lane, and I’m pulling over to let him go around. You’ll be hearing what he thinks not only as our Chief Guitar Designer, but as President and CEO.

I’m increasingly hearing about quality sleep, how we have to know that we’re getting the right sleep in the right quantity. Everyone wants me to see a sleep doctor, so I did. I don’t sleep a lot of hours and haven’t for decades; I’m a five- or six-hour-a-night sleeper. I think I sleep enough, but they have me all worried about it now! Well, the doctor came in and asked why I’m here. I told him what I just told you. Then I said, “I just want to know if I’m asleep when I’m sleeping!” He laughed and said that’s a good way to put it, and he has ways to find out the answer.

That little expression gave me an idea to say something I thought you’d like to know about Andy. That is, Andy is thoughtful when he thinks. Lots of people think, but are they thoughtful, do they consider all the angles, can they form

both CEO and President, which were Kurt and my positions respectively. I don’t know anyone at Taylor who isn’t happy and confident about this change, and so I thought you might want to hear from me so you could join us in

“
I can’t name another major guitar manufacturer whose President and CEO is also their Chief Guitar Designer.
”

an opinion that seems correct? After they’re done thinking, do they present a way forward? The evidence clearly points out that many people don’t exercise quality thinking. But Andy does and does it very well.
Everyone here at Taylor Guitars knows that, which is why we’re all thrilled to see Andy take the position of

welcoming Andy to the position. I can’t name another major guitar manufacturer whose President and CEO is also their Chief Guitar Designer. What this means to Taylor Guitars and our customers is that the business of guitars and the making of guitars will remain holistically intertwined, as they have been here for 48 years. This is good. Andy won’t sac-

rifice one for the other. We know this, and I wanted to share that with you.
As for me, I’m still here nearly every single day. Yes, I get to take a little more time away now at the age of 67. I have lots to offer, but the best thing I can offer is to pull over to let some others pass. And I get the privilege of being an advisor or sounding board, and sometimes even heading up a project. There’s still a lot of meaningful work and fun left for me – things I can do to help Andy along his path and help our employee-owners build the company. And for the most part, Andy seems confident that I can work independently without doing too much harm! I do love to help. I also know my way around the campus and even know a few shortcuts.
Seriously, though, when I hired Andy 11 years ago, I told people that I’m living to watch him soar. I’m still doing that today and can’t think of a better thing to do for years to come.
Congratulations on your new responsibilities, Andy. You can count on my help and support!
– Bob Taylor
Co-Founder and Senior Advisor

Wood&Steel Online

Read our digital edition and other back issues of *Wood&Steel* at woodandsteel.taylorguitars.com

©2022 Taylor-Listug, Inc. All Rights reserved.
TAYLOR, TAYLOR (Stylized); TAYLOR GUITARS, TAYLOR QUALITY GUITARS and Design; BABY TAYLOR; BIG BABY; certain aspects of distinctive detailing (Peghead Design; Bridge Design; Pickguard Design); ACADEMY SERIES; 100 SERIES; 200 SERIES; 300 SERIES; 400 SERIES; 500 SERIES; 600 SERIES; 700 SERIES; 800 SERIES; 900 SERIES; PRESENTATION SERIES; QUALITY TAYLOR GUITARS; WOOD&STEEL; ROBERT TAYLOR (Stylized); TAYLOR EXPRESSION SYSTEM; EXPRESSION SYSTEM; TAYLORWARE; DYNAMIC BODY SENSOR; T5; T5 (Stylized); R. TAYLOR; R TAYLOR (Stylized); AMERICAN DREAM; T3; GRAND SYMPHONY; WAVE COMPENSATED; GS; GS MINI; ES-GO; FIND YOUR FIT; V-CLASS; GRAND PACIFIC; TAYLOR QUALITY GUITARS AND CASES; T5Z; TAYLORSENSE; NT NECK; BUILDER’S EDITION; A. POWERS SIGNATURE; THERMEX; DARKTONE; AEROCASE; TAYLOR GT; and GA are registered trademarks of Taylor-Listug, Inc. in the United States and other jurisdictions.

C-CLASS is a trademark of Taylor-Listug, Inc in the United States and other jurisdictions.

ELIXIR and NANOWEB are registered trademarks of W.L. Gore & Associates, Inc. D’ADDARIO PRO-ARTE is a registered trademark of J. D’Addario & Co., Inc. NUBONE is a registered trademark of David Dunwoodie.

Prices, specifications and availability are subject to change without notice.



Andy performing on stage at Taylor's all-hands ESOP event in June

As Chief Guitar Designer, President and CEO, Andy Powers is poised to lead the next generation of Taylor innovation

By Jim Kirlin

We had to order Andy Powers some new business cards. On May 31, we announced that Andy had been named Taylor's President and CEO. If you know Andy, you know he's not fussy about titles – only that he'd list his guitar designer role first to underscore Taylor's continued focus on making instruments that delight and inspire players.

Co-founders Bob Taylor and Kurt Listug – now *former* President and CEO respectively – proudly delivered the news to Taylor's employee-owners in a pre-recorded video with Andy that was released a day before the public announcement. Bob and Kurt also shared that they are continuing their involvement with the company as senior advisors and co-chairmen of the Taylor Guitars board, which was established as part of the company's transition to 100-percent employee ownership.

The announcement came just days before the NAMM Show in Anaheim, California – a newsworthy event of its own after finally returning after a COVID-induced hiatus.

The following week, back on the Taylor campus in El Cajon, we held

our mid-year all-hands ESOP event, where Andy had the opportunity to talk to employee-owners in person about his new role and our path forward as a guitar company. But not before kicking things off with a few songs.

And with that, Jason Mraz, a long-time friend of Andy's, took the stage to play a few songs, with Andy joining him on guitar.

It was a full-circle moment, considering that Mraz's performance on the Taylor stage at NAMM back in 2010, with Andy as his sideman, had brought Andy and Bob Taylor together. Conversations ensued. Bob made his pitch. Andy joined the company in January of 2011, and the rest is history – history that continues to unfold with Andy now formally at the helm.

A Smooth Transition

Given the progression of events at Taylor over the last several years, Andy's elevated role didn't come as a huge surprise to many of us here at the company. Rather, it seemed a logical continuation of the succession plan that Bob and Kurt had set in motion. In 2019, Andy became an ownership part-

ner, a testament to Bob and Kurt's confidence in him along with their desire to keep guitar design as a central focus at Taylor for the long-term future.

That commitment was reinforced when the company announced its transition to 100-percent employee ownership in 2021, a move that Bob, Kurt and Andy all felt was the best arrangement to preserve the culture of creativity and guitar innovation that has fueled Taylor's growth and success. Andy's creative vision, player-centric guitar designs and thoughtful leadership at Taylor, together with his career commitment to the company, were important factors in that decision, giving Bob and Kurt the reassurance to choose that path.

"Andy has the vision and the talent to continue to take guitar-making forward at Taylor," Bob says. "He's vital to the company's future."

Learning From Kurt

While the passing of the torch from Bob to Andy was evident from the start, filling Kurt's role wasn't part of the original plan for Andy. But Kurt says that right away, Andy showed both the interest and aptitude for the business side of Taylor's operation, and understood how all the pieces need to fit together holistically to maintain a healthy company.

"Andy has worked closely with sales, marketing, finance, human resources – all the departments under

my leadership – since he joined us in 2011, and he understands their functions deeply," Kurt said during the announcement to Taylor's employee-owners.

Over the past several years, Kurt has spent a lot of time mentoring Andy, discussing financial budgeting, reviewing financial statements and talking about the business management philosophy that has guided the decisions he has made over the years. He says he realized that Andy was the right person to also wear the CEO hat during a period in 2020 when they were laying the groundwork to prepare for the transition to an ESOP structure.

Kurt also points out that it's more feasible for one person to oversee both the guitar-making and business sides of the company now because Taylor is well established and has a strong and experienced executive team with many decades of Taylor experience to support him.

"It would have been impossible for either Bob or me alone to create and establish the company," he reflects. "Bob was 19 and I was 21 when we started. We didn't have any experience. It took us each focusing on the things we were interested in and becoming good at them the more we worked on them. The company is much different now."

And Andy has been the beneficiary of what each of them has learned.

"It's been fun to work with Kurt and look at things from one direction, and

good for the company and its stakeholders moving forward. One question Jay posed to Andy was how he envisions his role changing.

"Honestly, my role doesn't change much," he says. "In a lot of ways, it's business as usual.... Frankly, it's because we have such an amazing team of people working here that allows me to spend most of my time working on guitars. The groundwork that Bob laid with our production and product development teams, our building and machine maintenance teams, and with wood sourcing, and the work Kurt's done building our sales, marketing, finance and human resources teams – I'm so fortunate because we have amazing people that I get to work with all the time. We have industry veterans, we have people who are at the top of their game in their field, and that makes what you might call the more typical parts of operating a business really easy. Don't get me wrong – it's a huge amount of work every day. But the folks we get to work with are such professionals, and they're so good at what they do, it makes it a joy."

While Andy's role may not change in dramatic ways, Bob, Kurt and Andy agree that in true Taylor fashion, our guitars will, and must, continue to evolve. Bob shares with Andy a nugget of wisdom he learned over the years.

"Anytime I've done anything to a guitar, people go, 'Is that going to change it?' And what they're really trying to say is, 'Will that make it worse?' This has

“Andy has the vision and the talent to continue to take guitar making forward at Taylor. He's vital to the company's future.

— Bob Taylor

work on it from the other direction with Bob," he says. "I'm hugely fortunate to get to work with both of them and appreciate their perspectives."

Staying the Same: Embracing Change

As part of the public reveal of Andy's new role, we recorded a special edition of our streaming video show *Taylor Primetime*, hosted by Taylor content producer Jay Parkin. Bob, Kurt and Andy were the special guests and shared their thoughts on why this is

happened to me a million times.... So feel free to change things, Andy. Make them better."

Andy understands that it's now part of his broader responsibility to lead the company in ways that make the overall business better as well. The bigger question, he says, is better for whom?

"In our case, we can make it better for the musicians we serve, the suppliers we buy material from, the people who sell our guitars, and our employees. So when we make a change for the better, that's who benefits." **W&S**

Ask Bob

Bob versus Andy, how frets and pickguards impact sound, and how acoustic guitar woods ripen with age

Editor's Note: With Andy Powers leading new product development as Taylor's chief guitar designer for more than a decade now, you'll see Andy responding to more of your questions, especially when they relate to his guitar designs. We encourage you to ask whatever questions you have for either Bob or Andy. Both are happy to share their thoughts.

Bob, what would you say is the biggest difference between the way you've approached guitar making and the way Andy has?

**Shane M.
Austin, Texas**

This is a good question, Shane. We could talk for hours, and maybe it could be a podcast with both Andy and me on. But in this limited space, I'll try to describe some differences that I see.

Our approach was as different as it was similar. We both had a lot of original concepts for guitars, yet Andy studied in order to learn deeply what made the good historical guitars so good. Then he applied original thought to his guitars. I never studied or, frankly, cared too much about what had come before me, except that acoustic guitars were hard to play, and I wanted to change that.

We both worked hard and with passion, throwing ourselves at it, but Andy was more studious than I was. He was careful and learned how to be an expert with hand tools at a bench. I wanted to use machines. He put his 10,000 hours into how to sharpen a chisel. I put my 10,000 hours into how to eliminate a chisel.

Andy is an incredible player, and I can strum along to songs and know when you change chords, which doesn't mean I know which chord to change to! Andy does, even the esoteric chords. But that made our guitars different because we both made guitars to please ourselves.

Andy was happy to work alone, and I wanted to build a factory. So, in essence, I tried to design a factory that could execute the complex tasks that my guitar designs required. Andy did those complex tasks with his great hand skills.

We're very similar in that we can both draw a nice curve. And we both have the same ideas of what a nice curve is and is not. You can't even imagine how important that is. We both sweat over it.

These are just some basics. Our partnership has brought his depth of knowledge in guitar design together with my ability to see ways to make the pieces or execute the operations. Andy has become quite adept at that over his nearly 12 years here. He innately thinks about how we can execute his ideas in a factory setting.

Here's what I told Andy when I suggested he come work with us: "Kurt and I have built a foundation that doesn't crumble and a roof that doesn't leak. You can use your working life to design and build out the interior in a way that you envision."

He's doing just that, and I'm proud of him and our association. Our guitars are much better for it. I have to say that it's wonderful to be able to continue our legacy of improving guitars.

I just got a new 324ce Builder's Edition a few days before my 62nd birthday, and it is a joy to play. I've had a 912ce BE for a couple of years now, and it is also an amazing instrument. I have neck and shoulder issues. I am faithful to my stretching and strengthening routines to keep these issues at bay. Both guitars are so comfortable and easy to play. When these guitars were designed, did you have people like me in mind, or was that just a wonderful break for players like me? Also, can you give me any insight on how the ash wood will age sonically over the years? Many thanks for making such stellar guitars!

Dave Gallagher

Andy Powers responds: I'm happy to hear you're having fun with these two guitars, Dave! While I didn't specifically sit down and tell myself to design a guitar that fits a person with shoulder or neck strains, the player's physical comfort was certainly near the top of my list in terms of design criteria for these

instruments. From my own experience, when I'm comfortable and relaxed with an instrument, I tend to enjoy playing it more, and (I think) my playing sounds a little better. Many aspects of those Builder's Edition guitars – the dimen-

and greater sensitivity to the player's touch. There are some subtleties of particular woods needing a longer ripening time than others, but largely, they'll simply continue to ripen and get sweeter like a peach. The Shamel ash and mahogany of your Builder's Edition 324ce will fall right in line.

I always wondered what role fret wire plays in contributing to an acoustic guitar's sound and overall feel and performance. What material and fret size does Taylor use for its frets and why? I imagine resilience is an important consideration. I've heard people mention stainless steel frets from time to time – have you ever used those?

**Steve K.
Seattle, Washington**

Andy Powers responds: Great questions, Steve. Frets are one of the most critical components of a guitar's playability and yet possibly the most commonly overlooked. More specifically, the accuracy and installation of the frets need to be of the highest precision possible in order to offer great playability with consistent feel and sound. Beyond the installation and fretboard preparation itself, the size of the playing portion of the fret that protrudes above the fretboard, referred to as the bead, influences the feel and resulting sound of the guitar. A tall fret allows a player's fingertip to easily press the string to the fret cleanly and offers great expression, as the player's finger can easily bend the note sideways while holding the string to the fret or create vibrato effects by varying their fingertip pressure or position.

While these expressive effects are made easy by large frets, it becomes easy to press with too much or with uneven fingertip pressure and corrupt the pitch accuracy of the notes – effectively playing the guitar out of tune. Frets with a smaller bead will allow some of the player's fingertip pressure to be distributed against the wood of the fretboard itself, inducing more accurately pitched notes. Typically, a fret size is chosen

based on a good balance of expressiveness and accuracy.

Parallel to this is a desire to balance the hardness of the strings and the frets. When the frets are made from extremely hard material, they will have an exceptionally long lifespan before wearing to the point of needing maintenance. However, hard fret material can also have the effect of producing a somewhat brash, metallic sound as a string touches each fret, as well as wear the windings of strings so quickly the strings begin to buzz and rattle. Frets made from a softer metal alloy will tend to offer a warmer sound but wear more quickly.

For our guitars, we chose a fret material that gives a good balance between longevity and tone, expressiveness and pitch accuracy. For our electric T5z guitars, we do size up the fret bead, as those guitars are intended to bridge the gap between acoustic and expressive electric playing styles. I hope this helps.



Builder's
Edition
324ce

sions, cutaway, armrest, etc. – were created to make the guitar more comfortable to hold and play, sore shoulders or not. As for Shamel ash aging, one factor I've noticed, having observed the aging process of a lot of different guitars, is that the tonal development of different woods tends to take a similar path. Despite the varieties of woods guitars are made from, with time, the guitar as a whole will tend to become richer, with improved dynamic range



In our video Q&A

with Bob Taylor, Bob talks about our new urban wood initiative and the surprising costs and other challenges associated with developing the sourcing infrastructure.

To watch the video, scan the

QR code with
your phone or
visit our digital
edition at



woodandsteel.taylorguitars.com.

Bob, at this point in your career and life, what other things are you interested in learning?

**Steve
Madison, Wisconsin**

Steve, I love each new Spanish word or phrase I learn. I wish my comprehension when listening to Spanish was better. I enjoy learning more about growing trees. I own 250 acres in the mountains and hope to get more proficient operating my Bobcat and other equipment I have up there. It's surrounded by U.S. Forest Service land, and I'll put cattle on part of it, so that's something to learn. Plus, learning how to attract more wildlife for the areas in between paddocks. All you need to do for that is plant edibles and provide water. They like to eat, and they tell their friends. And of course, I love learning more about guitars and guitar building. I'm not checking out of guitar building. I mean, I can stay here at Taylor as long as I like — I have a ringside seat, and even one at the table, to watch, learn and continue to contribute.



occasionally worse, depending on who is listening and their preferences. This is one reason the Builder's Edition guitars were designed with no pickguard. It's not that the guitars sound bad with a pickguard on them; it's simply that we like the way they sounded without one in their minimally dampened state.

Bob, how involved were you in laying out the factory flow at Taylor's plant in Tecate? Do you have any plans for new developments there, and if so, will you be directly involved?

**John Watson
Shreveport, Louisiana**

John, I laid out the first three factories we had alone and did a lot of the work myself to build them. The fourth building was a team of a few others working alongside me. There were more buildings after that, each with more help. By the time we designed our current factory in Tecate, Ed Granero, VP of Product Development here at Taylor, designed it with his team of people. We have an approach that we follow, and until that approach doesn't serve us, we'll continue to stick to it. I had very little to do with the Tecate factory design other than looking at it and saying, "Yep, that's what I'd do too!" And yes, we have expansion plans. I'll sit back and enjoy watching. I'm pretty sure that's how it will go. I'm happy to toss in new ideas that might change the course, but the team is usually ahead of me now.



I've read that the top/soundboard of the guitar provides the majority of the sound and quality of sound from an acoustic guitar due to the vibration it makes. What has always puzzled me is if that is true, wouldn't a pickguard and even the bridge subdue the vibration and distort the sound? Yet some of the historically great guitars have huge pickguards and even oversized "mustache" [bridges]. I have even seen some guitars with double pickguards. Was this a consideration to produce the Builder's Editions without pickguards?

**Larry Snider
Harrisonville, Missouri**

Andy Powers responds: Larry, you make some good observations. The top of an acoustic guitar is indeed an important aspect of making a guitar sound great. It's also a very nuanced, complex component and hard to build generalizations around. Adding material to it in the form of pickguards, the hard wood of a bridge, even an inlaid

rosette or the type of finish used all impart influence of some degree in the form of damping. In this case, damping doesn't necessarily mean a total or linear reduction of vibration like turning down a volume control, but a selective reduction where different frequencies are affected more than others, changing the sonic stew more like a tone control. When a change is made to an acoustic guitar such as removing a large pickguard, the guitar may or may not become appreciably louder, but it will typically respond with some change in tone, sometimes for the better, and

Got a question for Bob Taylor or Andy Powers?

Shoot them an email: 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.



URBAN RENEWAL

We're thrilled to unveil another inspiring urban tonewood, red ironbark, as the rich new voice of our retooled 500 Series

By Jim Kirlin

L-R: Front and back of a 514ce

Over nearly five decades of Taylor history, being unencumbered by tradition has repeatedly proved to be one of our greatest strengths. It's given us the creative freedom to continually explore new ideas and push the parameters of guitar-making in exciting new directions.

One ongoing area of exploration has been our use of tonewoods. Some of this has been fueled by our desire to discover new sonic flavors. And some of it has been guided by the modern-day realities of sourcing wood and the need to respect what the world's forests can provide.

Over the last decade in particular, the environmental stewardship projects we've launched have strongly guided the wood sourcing choices we've made. You probably know of our work with ebony in Cameroon starting in 2011, including our adoption of long-overlooked variegated ebony for our fingerboards. In 2020, we introduced our first models featuring Shamel ash from end-of-life trees in need of removal from communities in California. And a few months ago, we debuted our koa 700 Series, featuring a new grade of Hawaiian koa that we discovered in the course of our forest restoration efforts in Hawaii.

The truth is that our guitar line is a carefully curated and always evolving musical ecosystem. Despite our growth into a larger guitar company, we've managed to balance the need to create a stable, ethical supply chain with the ability to be nimble in response to the ever-changing world around us.

What Makes Good Guitar Wood?

There are many considerations that go into deciding which woods we choose to showcase within our guitar line, especially when we consider a new species that isn't already associated with musical instruments. First and foremost, does it have physical characteristics that translate well into musical sounds? Equally important, is the wood workable – in other words, can it be cut, dried, sanded, bent, glued and transformed into a guitar without warping, cracking or causing other problems during production or after completion? Can it be ethically and economically sourced? Can we find a consistent level of quality? Is there a sufficient quantity to meet our supply needs for a foreseeable period of time? How long will it take to get it from a supplier? Does it bring something unique to our guitar menu? And if it's a wood that's

essentially a newcomer to the acoustic guitar world, what will it take to captivate players? You get the picture.

Fortunately, as an established company with a strong guitar-making reputation, exacting production standards, a good track record of ethical business, and an enthusiastic customer base (thank you!), we carry a high level of credibility when we champion a new wood.

Also, we have a guitar designer named Andy Powers, who knows how to harness a tonewood's musical virtues to the fullest.

Diversifying the Line

In this year's first edition of *Wood&Steel* (Vol. 102), we talked with Andy about the ongoing evolution of guitar design at Taylor, and about his desire to bring greater musical diversity to our line. One way in which he's moved the needle is in the nuanced voicing recipes he's developed to differentiate models, especially after creating our patented V-Class and C-Class bracing platforms, which can be adapted in subtle ways based on the body shape, tonewood pairing and the tone profile he's trying to elicit from the guitar. Those efforts, together with Andy's body-style innovations over the last decade – introducing the Grand Orchestra, the Grand Pacific and Grand Theater; reinventing the Grand Symphony; and bringing 12-fret and 12-string configurations to the Grand Concert – have enormously expanded the palette of unique musical personalities in our line.

Part of the process of refining our guitar offerings is to look at our guitar line holistically and evaluate the relationship of one guitar series to the next. For example, with the recent reboot of our 700 Series, we were fortunate to gain access to a healthy supply of beautifully colored and striped Hawaiian koa that Andy felt deserved its own unique voicing and aesthetic treatment in the line, separate from our existing Koa Series. So where would be the right place for it to live? Somewhere, he thought, that would make an all-solid koa guitar a bit more accessible to customers.

In the end, the 700 Series felt like the best position. That would still give us three different aesthetic presentations of our rosewood guitars – the 400, 800 and 900 Series.

Mahogany Migration

Another traditional tonewood, mahogany, has similarly spread to different parts of our line. Within our 300

Series, we added to the sapele and spruce combination we've featured for years with mahogany-top models. For a time, we paired Tasmanian blackwood back and sides with mahogany tops. More recently, we decided to replace blackwood with mahogany and give players several all-mahogany model options within the series. That made Andy think more about our use of mahogany and the evolution of our 500 Series, which has featured mahogany for decades. With all-mahogany guitars available in the 300 Series, what might the 500 Series become?

Meanwhile, there was another urban wood – red ironbark – that Andy had been working with for several years and planning to introduce within the line when the time was right. This seemed like a golden opportunity.

Urban Wood Revisited

Before we get into red ironbark, we should recap our urban wood initiative. In early 2020, we released four new models under the banner of our Builder's Edition collection. One of them, the Builder's Edition 324ce, featured back and sides of Shamel, or evergreen, ash, which we chose to call Urban Ash to draw attention to the unique origin story of the wood.

This California-grown ash was exciting to Andy not only for its intrinsic characteristics, but because it marked the beginning of a promising new urban sourcing initiative in collaboration with West Coast Arborists, Inc. (WCA), a sophisticated tree management operation.

As we detailed in that issue of *Wood&Steel*, WCA provides an array of tree services to hundreds of municipalities and public agencies across California and parts of Arizona. These planned and managed tree programs create the important green canopies for cities and suburbs, including landscaping in parks and other public spaces, and along neighborhood streets and highways. As part of a contract agreement with individual municipalities, WCA plants, cares for and eventually removes these trees, and more than 10 million tree sites are inventoried in WCA's proprietary database.

Our interest in exploring the viability of urban wood was first spurred by Bob Taylor's practical curiosity about what happens to the wood from these end-of-life trees, and whether these trees could be utilized to create additional value for communities. As we've shared in other stories, we reached out to our local arborist, who happened to be WCA.

Our Director of Natural Resource Sustainability, Scott Paul, led the charge, coordinating a field trip with a Taylor group including Bob and Andy to WCA's headquarters in Anaheim to meet with their team. It turned out that WCA also had been looking for ways to create greater value from these the end-of-life trees they had removed – especially in the wake of rising disposal costs – and had launched an urban

beyond those simplistic criteria, the wood has to yield a great sound. It's a tough test for a tree to pass."

Being able to properly dry wood, Andy says, is a critical consideration.

"The reason we spend so much attention on whether we can dry the wood is that this directly translates into whether that guitar will be stable over its lifetime," he explains. "Essentially, if you can't dry a piece of wood with-

“
Many tree species simply don't have the practical characteristics that allow them to be used for woodworking.

” — Andy Powers

wood recycling program turned supply business called Street Tree Revival, which cuts lumber and produces live-edge slab tables and other wood products. They also had set up a sort yard in nearby Ontario with logs arranged and color-coded by species.

Because many of these species either weren't commercially used or weren't established musical instrument woods, Andy went "taste testing with a chain saw," cutting samples from certain species that seemed worthy of investigating further.

"It was like being a chef walking down the aisle of a farmer's market and seeing vegetables or fruits they haven't encountered before," Andy says. "You start thinking, how can I work with this to bring out its best flavors?"

Andy brought a healthy variety of wood samples back to the factory for some testing. He also narrowed the list of species based on practical considerations, focusing on what he considered the top 10 contenders.

"From a supply standpoint, we wanted to know which trees were most abundant," he says. "Then I looked for ones with the right kind of structure, height, diameter to supply boards, and working characteristics. A few of these species checked those boxes, Shamel ash being one of them. You could dry it, saw it, glue it, sand it, finish it. It might sound odd to say, but many tree species simply don't have those practical characteristics that allow them to be used for woodworking. And then

out it cracking, warping, breaking or distorting itself, you'll have a difficult time making something consistent and reliable from it. Somewhere down the road, poorly behaved wood will cause problems."



With Shamel ash, Andy had a strong feeling it would make a good tonewood due to familiarity with other ash species for guitars.

"I've worked with a lot of ashes – from northern hard ash to lightweight swamp ash," he says. "In this case, looking at the type of grain structure of this ash, I had a reasonable expectation that it was going to work well, and it ended up working even better than we expected. That wood had such great characteristics and was so similar to woods we knew well, we felt it made sense to launch our first urban wood guitar with that."

[Ed. note: Elsewhere in this issue, we unveil two all-Urban Ash limited-edition models, the 424ce LTD and 224ce-UA DLX LTD.]

A New Tonewood Star Is Born

A surprising discovery, which would prove to be a serendipitous find, was a wood known as red ironbark (*Eucalyptus sideroxylon*).

“Red ironbark was an unusual one,” Andy says. “Technically it’s from the eucalyptus family, but it doesn’t behave like most eucalyptus, many of which tend to twist and move in unpredictable ways. Even more surprising, this red ironbark is ultra-hard and dense, as if it were some type of tropical rosewood-family wood. In fact, it’s one of the few woods that will actually sink in water. It’s like ebony.”

As Andy explored its mechanical characteristics in more detail, he was pleasantly surprised by its workability – it could be dried consistently without complications.

“Usually, denser woods are hard to dry and prone to distortion, which needs to be carefully controlled to yield a stable guitar part – like ebony,” he explains. “With red ironbark, we were surprised to find we could dry it consistently well the way we might dry East Indian rosewood. This ironbark has similar characteristics in that regard. It’s very stable.

Another stereotype of woods this hard – and there are only a few such woods, Andy notes – is they have oily content that makes gluing difficult. Once again, the red ironbark proved to be an exception.

“On top of all of this, it has one of the smoothest and most uniform textures of any dense wood I’ve ever seen,” he says.

With its hardness, density and smoothness, Andy initially considered it for fretboards and bridges, but with its rosy and golden-brown hues, he opted against it for the time being. But he suspected it would work really well as a back and side wood. It turned out he was right.

Shaping the Sound

Now familiar with ironbark’s structural properties, Andy developed a voicing recipe for a Grand Auditorium guitar and built some prototype models. As the top wood, he opted for torrefied (roasted) Sitka spruce. The two woods together, and voiced with a version of his V-Class bracing, amount to what he describes as a fresh variation on the classic spruce/rosewood sound – a cross between rosewood and ebony, he says – with the help of some modern acoustic engineering under the hood.

“The red ironbark has a tone-shaping quality where it produces the deep,



Getting to Know Red Ironbark

Red ironbark, or its more complete name, red ironbark eucalyptus (*Eucalyptus sideroxylon*), is one of more than 700 eucalyptus species found around the world. The history of eucalyptus species in California traces back to the 1850s, when several species (including red ironbark) were imported from Australia and planted as a potential source of timber and fiber.

The most prolific species in California (and in the world) is the fast-growing blue gum eucalyptus (*Eucalyptus globulus*), recognizable by its peeling bark layers and fragrant, oily blue-green leaves. Ironically, its wood turned out not to be an ideal timber for construction.

Red ironbark, by contrast, exhibits different properties. Its bark is thick, tough and highly furrowed, while beneath it, the red wood is strong, hard and dense. As timber, the durable wood has been used for beams, railroad ties and other construction projects. The tree is also drought- and frost-tolerant, which has allowed it to survive in non-native habitats.

clear sound of rosewood but with just enough of the damping effect of ebony or mahogany that helps smooth out the sharp edges of the sound,” he says. “The voice is bold, rich and sweet. It has that bell-like amplifying response of a dense wood – it’s vibrant and dynamic. Imagine if you could take the traditional sound of a rosewood guitar, while filling and warming the midrange. It has a very piano-like character.”

In a demo session on the Taylor campus in June, Andy played the final version of his Grand Auditorium, and the first impression for those of us in the room is how much volume and projection the guitar produces, even with a lighter playing touch.

“It’s a high-fidelity sound that’s balanced by this sonic sweetness that makes a really appealing sound,” he elaborates. “When I strike that low note, it’s clear as a bell, and there’s nothing harsh about it. It’s not muddy; it’s not a spongy- or squishy-sounding wood at all. With the ironbark’s density, the guitar sound is what I would describe as muscular and strong. The sensation I get when I play it is like the guitar is amplifying everything I do. It’s giving me back more than I put into it – like the notes want to jump out of the guitar. These are guitars I’m really excited to get into people’s hands.”

Designing the New 500 Series

Having had ironbark prototype guitars around his studio for several years now, Andy has had a lot of time to think about how it might fit into our guitar lineup. And with more mahogany models being offered in the 300 Series, the 500 Series felt like an appropriate position to introduce these guitars. As the second urban wood featured in our line, it also marks another phase of our commitment to urban wood by showcasing it in a Taylor legacy series – one that has been around nearly as long as our iconic 800 Series.

To honor the classic heritage of the 500 Series, Andy embraced a traditional aesthetic but with distinctive decorative touches to complement the new wood pairing. The ironbark back and sides feature a subtle edge stain that deepens the wood’s natural reddish and golden-brown hues, resembling the colors of the mahogany it replaces. The body and neck also feature a lightly shaded edgeburst – the top’s subtle dusting of color adds an understated vintage look over the lightly darkened roasted spruce top. The body features gloss finish and satin finish for the neck. Other appointment details include an elegant new “Aerial” inlay scheme in

Italian acrylic, with a faux tortoise shell pickguard and binding, a single-ring abalone rosette with maple and black purfling, and Taylor nickel tuners.

In terms of model offerings, we're launching the revamped series initially with just two body styles – the Grand Auditorium 514ce and Grand Concert

played it in his demo session, and the tonal output was remarkable.

"It's clear, clean and pretty, but with surprising volume and that piano-like richness," he says. "Even though it's a Grand Concert, I could start strumming chords [he does], and it really delivers. I'm thrilled with how it's working."

“

The guitar gives back more than I put into it – like the notes want to jump out of the guitar.

”

– Andy Powers

512ce – with other models likely in 2023. (One side note: The existing Builder's Edition 517 will remain the same, retaining its mahogany/torrefied spruce wood pairing and other appointments.)

If anything, the volume and richness of the sound may be even more impressive coming from the Grand Concert edition, given the smaller body. Andy

For more reactions to our new 500 Series guitars, see our roundup of artist feedback on the next page. For more details on these guitars, including video content, visit the Taylor website and explore our digital edition of this story.

To test-drive the guitars, visit your local authorized Taylor dealer. **W&S**



Guitar Tasting with the Pros

In July, members of our artist relations team spent the day with an array of talented Los Angeles-based musicians, setting up shop at Republic Studios (a division of Universal Music Group) in a series of individual sessions to get each artist's discerning first impressions of the new ironbark guitars.

We wanted each person's honest reactions without "leading the witness," so we didn't reveal anything about the guitars beforehand other than their body styles. All of the artists are Taylor players we currently work with, so, to be fair, we should note that that they do already have an affinity for our guitars. That said, we asked what stood out to them about these particular models – good, bad or otherwise. We had both the 512ce and 514ce on hand, and encouraged them to play both, starting with whichever model they wanted.

Aesthetically, nearly everyone loved the look of the subtle edgeburst treatment, especially in tandem with the slightly darker color of the roasted spruce top, and several artists called out the faux tortoise shell binding. Musically, the group was fairly evenly split on their model preference.

Here are some highlights of their reactions. To hear them test-drive the guitars and see more of their reactions on camera, check out our video in our digital edition or scan the QR code.



Jaco Caroco
Session/stage
guitarist, member
of the house band
on *The Kelly Clarkson Show*

[Plays the 512ce first.] Sounds beautiful. Wow. Initial reaction is that the sustain is still going. I don't think I've ever heard that before. Feels amazing, sounds great. It's nice and woody, which I love in an acoustic guitar. Perfectly in tune. Wow, I love it.

The midrange is really nice to me. It's not harsh. It sounds awesome fingerpicked, and then if you're just strumming something, it sounds amazing.

[Plays the 514ce.] Obviously this is a bigger body, so it has more bass to it, almost more like a J-200. So for me, now that I've heard them both and can feel them, this would be more the strummer for me probably. It gets that nice jangle. Really impressive.

This is an incredible guitar. It's really well balanced. And the bass resonates through your body, which feels really cool.

For me, the classic guitar I would record with would be an old Gibson. And I would happily record this one, and I bet that nobody would be able to tell the difference – except for the sustain and the intonation.



Matt Beckley
Guitarist, songwriter, producer, engineer

[Plays the 512ce first.] That's awesome. [Then the 514ce.] This one wants you to hit it harder. So what's going on here? Why's this so good? They're really articulate but balanced.... This has a really good bass response and good resonance. It feels like it's not a new guitar in the best way. It doesn't feel like it needs to be broken in. It's got that playability of an old mahogany, where it feels, again, old in a good way.

I do a lot of recording, and sometimes, especially when you get an acoustic guitar, you have to do a lot to it, and it sounds like it had been pre-EQ'd, like in a really good way, and this kind of reminds me of that. It's really balanced right out of the jump. It's not scooped.

This feels like this could be your one guitar, because it feels like it would record good, but it also feels inspiring to write on. Like sometimes when you get an old slope-shoulder or something like that, they sound good in the living room, but they take a lot of work in the studio, or they don't have the right thing on stage. This is inspiring to play, so it's also good to write on... In the room, it feels like a good recording guitar too. So I would say, there's not a lot I wouldn't use it for. The other thing is that you can hit it, but it's still satisfying to fingerpick. This one's so fun.

With the 512ce, it's so loud for a small-bodied guitar. And I'm really heavy-handed. It's got compression without crapping out, because a lot of the smaller-body guitars I have I can't hit that hard, which is not a bad thing; it adjusts how I play.... There's so much low end coming out, in a really controlled way, not in a muddy way.

Taylors manage to have a good low end and good projection, but it doesn't muddy up the mix; as a producer and someone who plays live primarily, what I'm looking for is a guitar that will support that....

[After learning about the woods on the guitars] This [guitar] is fantastic. I can't believe it's not mahogany. It sounds like a mahogany guitar. That's really special, and as somebody who likes the planet, I'm glad you guys are finding a way to keep that around.... You guys really nailed it.



Dory Lobel
Musician, songwriter, composer, producer, member of the house
band on *The Voice* for 10 years

[Checking out the 514ce.] Feels beautiful, great neck. [Strums a chord.] Wow. OK, first of all, it's really, really good; it's very surprising. Super sweet and balanced. Almost no harshness that almost every acoustic has. A lot of time with acoustic guitars, they're built for volume and projection, so sometimes the individual notes are lacking character; they don't speak. Every note has a lot of tone, but it's very round.

The word that keeps coming to mind is balanced. It's super, super balanced. And I have a love/hate relationship with acoustic guitars. Not a lot of people talk about it, but I think they're really designed first of all for volume, and I always compare to things like mandolins and banjos, which have a lot more personality and midrange there. But that's what I'm looking for in an acoustic, to have a sound that's interesting enough that you can play a little note and it's enough, and you can let it hang. The intonation [on this] is crazy too.

It's interesting because it has the hi-fi, full-frequency range, but not at the cost of a lot of sweetness. A lot of things I like, like Elliott Smith, very beautiful, emotional acoustic music, but with a kind of Tony Rice, hi-fi, bluegrass thing. The way it rings, and the intonation makes it, everything really blooms great. I knew it would be great – I've been playing 500 Series guitars for 20 years – but it's really amazing.

On *The Voice*, I use this [Grand Auditorium] shape a ton; it's one of my favorites. This one, I think everyone would agree, is the workhorse. I know some people say some shapes are more for picking or for strumming. This, I know for a fact, can do anything. I've played these with Alison Krauss and Vince Gill, Ryan Adams... there's nothing you can't do with this, and you can record with it as well. Some guitars you use more for live because they're reliable, and you would use something else in the studio. This would definitely do both. It's gorgeous... the best indication is that I don't want to stop playing it.



Horace Bray
Session/touring guitarist,
singer, producer

[Playing the 512ce] First reaction: It sounds great. The first thing that stuck out is it's really even across the neck, which, as much as I love guitars, I really love it when guitars kind of feel like pianos, where it's balanced all over the instrument. And that's the first thing that really sticks out. It definitely has a different thing going on in the midrange than what I've played with my spruce

top, mahogany back and sides. It almost feels like it has a natural compression to it, which is probably attributing to the evenness all over the guitar. It's not squishy. The quiet still really speak, and that's the thing I'm kind of lingering on.... The attack's more immediate with this one.

[Playing the 514ce] Wow. This one feels a little bit more percussive. I feel like it reacts to the pick attacks a bit more. It makes me want to do more strummy stuff...I think I like how the pick attacks more, but the more natural compression I get with the other one kind of makes me gravitate more toward single-line stuff. Probably a little more bluegrass with that one, a bit more strummy stuff and letting the notes ring out on this one.

I think the pairing of these two would complement each other really well in a studio environment... I think the difference in how the attacks feel would make them layer really well together.



Taylor Gamble (Ari Lennox)
Session/touring guitarist
(Gospel-rock, R&B, acoustic/classical)

[Playing the 512ce] This feels really good string-tension-wise. I can really get the vibrato in there.... The action is perfect. It definitely has the warmth of rosewood; I like rosewood because of how well-rounded it is, going from playing genre to genre.

[The sound is] very lush... I would love to hear this plugged in and miked at the same time because it's very robust. When I play soft, I can really hear the overall tone... It sustains very well. The notes hold their value; I don't feel like I'm losing anything as they [ring out]. Strumming-wise, the attack, it snaps like I need it to....

I could do an entire acoustic set on this guitar alone, from strumming to fingerpicking. I've paired certain pedals with my acoustic guitars because I feel like it's beautiful when you marry the electric and the acoustic perfectly, even if you're just strumming chords. That extra layer you get coming from an acoustic instrument can actually be the icing on the cake in a lot of situations. I would definitely use this in an acoustic setting; I would definitely use this during a live show, like if I'm performing with an artist, I would definitely whip this bad boy out and I'd be like, just mike it; you don't even have to plug it in, it's gonna sound good. I would also record with this. And honestly, this is the kind of guitar that I would actually record this and my vocal at the same time.

This guitar does a good job of letting me hear everything I need to hear when I play acoustic. I hear the lows real well, and still hear the highs, and the midrange, this one gives me more midrange, but the way I play, I play a lot of chords with a lot of feel, so I need that bottom. The chords have to be lush, they have to ring out, they have to sustain. I'm that kind of player. I'm very into tone.



Janet Robin
Singer-songwriter,
guitarist, member of
The String Revolution

[Plays the 514ce] The neck feels great as usual. Action's great. I'm more of a percussive player... pretty good response, especially since it's not a dreadnought. This takes my beating. I think it has a nice, even tone. It's very balanced. [Softer strumming.] Beautiful sustain. My other Taylor is a spruce and rosewood [dreadnought Dan

Crary Signature Model]. I'm not really getting that tone. It's very velvety; very even between bass and treble and mids. I'd say it leans more towards the mids a bit more – of course, that also depends on the kinds of strings you use.

I think it's the kind of guitar that could be used in all ways – percussive use, like I'm doing, maybe fingerstyle [fingerpicks], beautiful. Again, that sort of velvety, nice sustain. Definitely great for fingerstyle, strumming stuff, a great singer-songwriter guitar. Even if you're a solo guitarist...I really think it lends itself to a solo performer, or because it has that bit leaning toward midrange, I think it would cut through a band...[more playing] Beautiful dynamics.



Keepers of the Trees



A crew from West Coast Arborists trims a tree

Ever wonder how a city's tree population is managed? We talked to West Coast Arborists to find out.

By Jim Kirlin

A few of us from Taylor are camped out in the office of Mike Palat from West Coast Arborists, who's giving us a virtual tour of the proprietary information technology platform WCA uses to operate its business. All eyes are on a wall-mounted video monitor as Mike navigates WCA's ArborAccess tree management software system, a robust database that integrates the detailed tree inventories and work histories they've compiled for the cities they work with – to the tune of nearly 400 municipalities across California and parts of Arizona. The system is used to document the life progressions of more than

6 million trees – with GPS mapping integration that tracks the location and work of their arborist technicians in real time.

Palat, a VP at WCA with 20 years of service there, is a board-certified master arborist with utility and municipal specialties, and he oversees WCA's operations in the Southern California, southwest region, including San Diego County. He's a walking Wikipedia of tree knowledge, and he's happy to educate us non-arborists on some of the many considerations that go into urban forest planning and management.

The conversation ranges from the basics of what a municipal tree mainte-

nance contractor does for cities to why WCA's expertise has been so crucial to the collaborative urban wood initiative Taylor and WCA are forging together.

Our group includes Scott Paul, our in-house sustainability expert, who knows Palat well and talks with him frequently. (Palat is Scott's primary contact at WCA, and both sit on the Board of Directors for Tree San Diego, a non-profit committed to enhancing the quality of San Diego's urban forest.) Throughout the demo, Scott peppers Palat with questions to help guide the conversation.

How Cities Manage Their Tree Populations

Palat starts by explaining how cities create and maintain their urban tree inventories. Within a city, he says, various agencies or departments may manage different classifications of trees that make up their public tree

population. For example, in San Diego, the city's Street Division oversees the maintenance of street trees. The Park & Recreation Department oversees trees in public parks. Trees near utilities (power lines) might be overseen by San Diego Gas & Electric. Together, all these trees comprise the urban canopy of city and suburban areas – trees that, for many of us, are hiding in plain sight, blending into the landscape alongside streets and buildings, but that actually are purposefully planted, documented and maintained.

"A lot of city asset management programs manage potholes, street lights, irrigation valve boxes – and also, trees," Palat says. "Our software is very much their dedicated outlet for trees, and it's specifically for cities. Cities have GIS – Geographic Information Systems – departments. For cities under contract with WCA, it doesn't cost them any money to have their tree

inventory housed in this program, and it's dedicated toward the management of their tree population."

A city that contracts with WCA might receive a range of management and maintenance services depending on their own departmental resources.

"Part of what we do is go out and collect the tree inventory for a city," Palat says. "The cities own that data, and they can house it in a variety of ways. Our software, ArborAccess, is a web-based program that comes with a mobile app, so in essence what we do charge for is the data collection – sending out an arborist to go collect this information – but we don't charge when it comes to the permissions of this program when an agency is under contract with WCA."

If a city has a maintenance contract with WCA, ArborAccess enables all the work history to be documented. As he talks, Palat pulls up a map of San Diego

with GPS integration showing all the WCA crews that are currently working.

"You can see all the dots," he says. "Those are GPS on the crew, these are all GPS vehicles, real time, where they're working, where they're parked,

inventory search of both tree species in Taylor's home-base city of El Cajon (a client of WCA's) to demonstrate the usefulness of their system.

"There are 54 Shamel ash in the city of El Cajon, and if I want know where

**“
The average life span of an
urban tree is eight years.
”**

what time they got there, how their speed is – all that stuff is part of the program."

Whether a city or WCA handles the documentation of the city's tree inventory, a pre-qualified list is created and housed in the database, including maintenance recommendations on every single tree.

"Subsequent to that, if our crews are out performing tree-trimming work,

they are, I'll map them, and here you go. I can turn on aerial imagery, and as you can see, when I click on a tree, it tells you what it is, gives you the details, the last time it was trimmed... you can see information about it – routine prune recommendation, no maintenance issues, and there is an overhead utility, so we can note that, which is not a good thing for a Shamel ash to be under."



if they see something, they update the data to inform cities that these trees have changed," Palat says. "Trees are biological, so they're always changing. So, that is one means of communicating the potentially risky trees to a city."

While WCA is responsible for documenting the condition of trees and providing that information to the city, it's ultimately up to the city to issue the service instructions. And when it comes to removing trees due to age, decay, safety risk, etc., that's entirely the city's decision. Scott underscores this point to make it clear that WCA – or Taylor – isn't out scouting for trees to cut down.

"No, not at all," Palat says. "We'll give them recommendations based on our observations, but it's ultimately their decision as to what trees come down."

The conversation turns to the two urban wood species Taylor is currently sourcing from WCA – Shamel ash and now red ironbark – so Palat does an

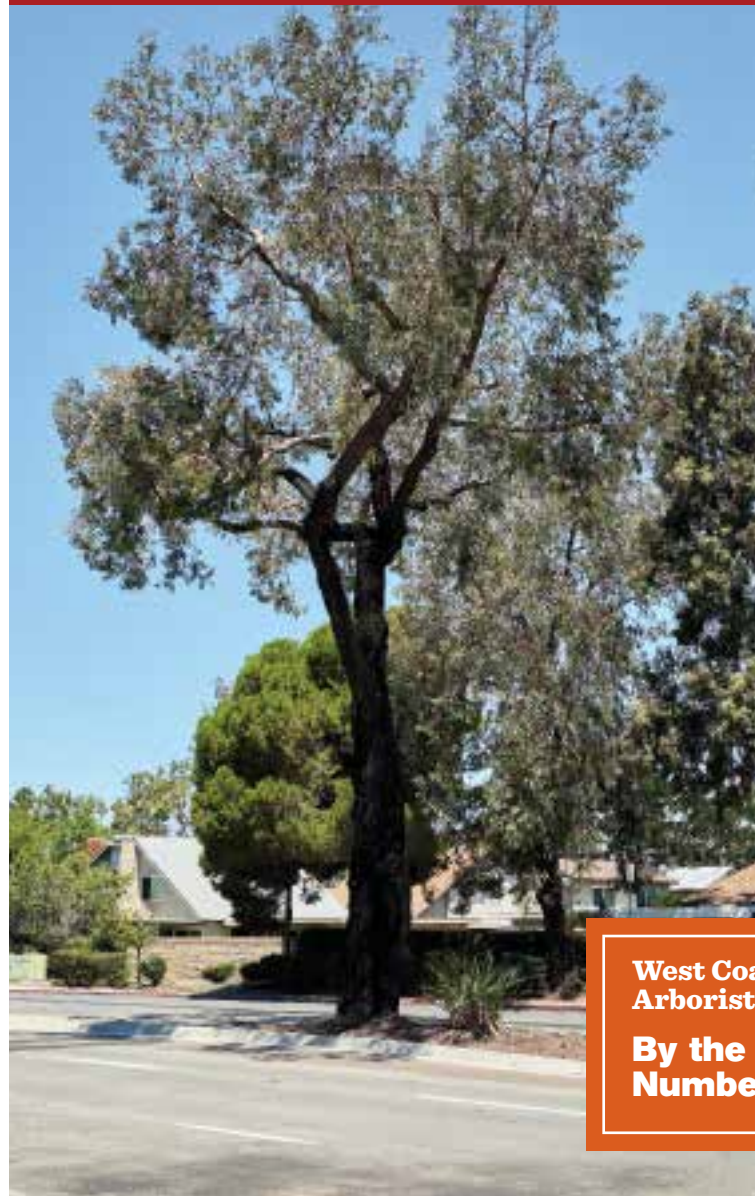
Right Tree, Right Place

This last point speaks to what has become a mantra for arborists everywhere: "right tree, right place." In other words, from a planning and planting perspective, it's important to plant species of trees with properties that are compatible with their specific location, and that serve their intended purpose, whether providing shade, sound breaks, wind breaks or other benefits, without being prone to causing problems. As in being too close to a sidewalk or street, where the root systems of certain species are likely to rip up the pavement or sewer lines. Or eventually growing to a size that will interfere with power lines. It often amounts to a geometry exercise, projecting what the tree may look like at maturity and how it ultimately will fill in the space where it will be planted.

"Wrong" trees planted in the wrong space eventually "become candidates for removal," Palat says. "In fact, San



Above (L-R): Taylor's Jim Kirlin and Scott Paul with WCA's Mike Palat as he demonstrates their ArborAccess software; Left: Palat in front of a Shamel ash tree; Below: a red ironbark tree along a median



Diego Gas & Electric has a whole program trying to rid these problematic trees, what they call cycle busters. They're spending a lot of money doing vegetation clearance away from power lines, and a lot of times they'll hit up agencies and basically say, we'll give you free trees if you let us remove these."

As cities look to plant more trees to bolster their urban canopies, they also have vacant locations mapped and designated as suitable planting sites. Palat zooms out on the map, showing an array of gray dots that depict those sites.

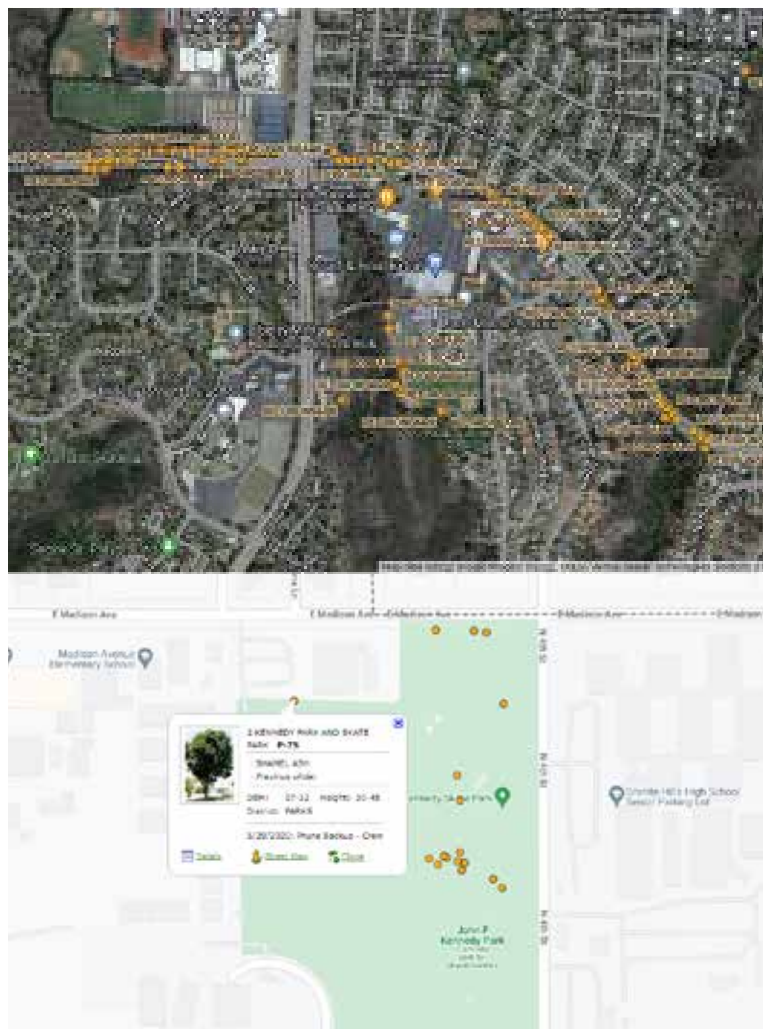
"If we're doing vacant site analysis, part of that might be to measure a parkway width," he says. "If there are overhead utility lines, all that plays into that decision-making too."

Depending on the location, one of the challenges of cultivating a tree, Palat says, is determining who will water it. "Right now [in Southern California], that is the biggest struggle," he adds. "Even if cities are willing to give trees away, nobody's taking them. There's contract watering, but that costs money. Or you might get a renter who says they'll take it on, but then they move, and the new person doesn't care. That's a big reason why the average life span of an urban tree is eight years."

**West Coast
Arborists –**

**By the
Numbers**

+1100 employees
+12 locations in CA and AZ
+ 675K trees trimmed annually
+ 46K trees removed annually
+ 18.5K trees planted annually
+ 300K trees inventoried annually



Top left: GPS-located red ironbark trees in WCA's tree inventory database; Above: Information about a Shamel ash tree in a public park; Top Right: A tree specialist from WCA plants trees in a public park

There is also a large misconception about the cost of watering a tree, Palat says.

"Some people believe it costs thousands of dollars per year to establish a young tree," he elaborates. "The reality is that it costs about 10 dollars per year to establish it. The gallons of water needed can be used in a strategic manner to maximize what is needed for establishment."

A lot of a city's tree planting decisions obviously need to consider long-term impact of the environments in which they live and grow. One increasingly vital forecasting consideration is how the effects of climate change are forcing cities to rethink the viability of their tree populations for the decades ahead.

To that end, WCA has worked with other tree experts in California to combine data and create an even more detailed statewide database with tree profiles and planting recommendations. One partner is Matt Ritter, a professor in the Biology Department at Cal Poly,

San Luis Obispo, a horticulture expert, author and one of the world's foremost authorities on eucalyptus. Matt's online database, SelecTree (<https://selec-tree.calpoly.edu/>), is a great resource for selecting appropriate species in California.

tree data for the city of El Cajon (where Taylor is headquartered) to give us a tree inventory overview. We can see, statistically, the top 10 most planted species by percentage of the tree population — crape myrtle leads the pack at 12.7%, followed by the queen palm at 12.2%. This data helps guide healthy diversification of the species planted.

"You really never want to have one species dominate more than 10% of your tree population, especially here in California," Palat says. "Species diversity is important. The reason is new pests are introduced to California every 40 days, which makes your tree population vulnerable if it's more than that."

Age diversity is another important statistical consideration for evaluating the health of a city's tree population, Palat says as he looks at the tree sizes to approximate the age of El Cajon's trees.

"The fact that they have only .55% trees over 31 inches in diameter, it would be nice to have the age diversity be better spread," he explains. "Typically when trees get into this large range, they become targets for removals — there are a variety of things that happen as the trees mature, everything from disease and pests to decay and not being an appropriate species for where the tree was planted."

In talking about California's tree inventory, one factor that has made the state such a hub of tree diversity is its Mediterranean climate (and micro-climates from coastal areas to inland valleys to the mountains), which can accommodate a wide range of species. And Palat points out that a lot of California, especially central and southern portions of the state, originally were essentially "blank canvasses" without a lot of tree cover, which is why many of the species are not native. (As an example, see Scott Paul's Sustainability column this issue, where he talks about California's history with eucalyptus.)

“Without WCA's data analysis, Taylor wouldn't be able to commit to using these urban woods on dedicated models.”

"The program we did with Matt brought in trees that nobody has heard of in an effort to gain some momentum on species that should be brought in for future success," Palat says.

To show some of the other capabilities of their software, Palat pulls up the

The conversation turns back to the urban tree species Taylor is working with, and Palat pulls up the location of some red ironbark trees in the area. We were hoping to shoot some photos of mature ironbark and Shamel ash trees somewhere nearby, and he's scouted a



couple of locations — one is a median strip along a road featuring several large ironbark trees; the other is a park that has both ironbark and Shamel ash.

Scott makes the point that WCA's tree software made it possible for Taylor to commit to using ash and ironbark on dedicated models in our line.

"The big question for Taylor, beyond if the wood had suitable properties for guitar making, was whether or not there would be a supply over time, into the future," he says. "The WCA database was able to show us that there are large numbers of the trees that we were interested in across the state, that they're still being planted today, and based on the average lifespan of these species, WCA can give us a pretty good estimate of annual removal rates. It will ebb and flow each year, of course, but it gave us the confidence to move forward. If not for WCA's ability to do that, we would never have been able to commit to using those woods as a regular part of our lineup."

Since entering into this sourcing partnership in 2020, Taylor and WCA have continued to invest in processes and infrastructure that improve WCA's operational capabilities with wood from removed trees.

"Now, we have a mechanism so when an agency issues a request to

remove a Shamel ash tree, my phone buzzes, so we can make sure we communicate with the removal crew," Palat says. "That reminds us to be extra careful in the way we take it down, and it ensures that it gets taken to our sort yard in Ontario [California]."

Taylor has also worked closely with WCA to properly preserve and cut logs in a way that's appropriate for guitars.

"We've definitely learned a lot from you guys," Palat says. "We've built more shade structures, we're now keeping wood wet — that was not a big requirement of us until we started working with you. And we're now cutting in the manner that you've helped us establish."

This infrastructure will ideally create the foundation for a circular economy around this wood, and hopefully serve as a model for making other high-value products.

Along with the other criteria that help determine what trees to plant in urban environments in the future, with any luck, maybe end-of-life value will become another consideration. **W&S**

For more on our urban wood collaboration, watch a conversation with Scott Paul, Mike Palat and Andy Powers in our digital edition.

Hands-On Learning

Two new walnut-top Academy Series models expand the look and sound of our beginner-friendly guitars

By Colin Griffith

When we introduced our Academy Series back in 2017, the guitars felt like a natural extension of Taylor’s player-focused design sensibility. Comfortable body shapes, slender, easy-playing necks, and clear, responsive tone have always been central to our philosophy. The Academy Series simply brought those essential qualities within reach of a broader group of players, providing an authentically “Taylor” playing experience at a more accessible price.

The Academy Series delivered a guitar that’s not too precious for travel and everyday play, and that could nonetheless perform well in a wide range of musical scenarios. And though they were designed with an eye toward helping beginner players get over the initial “hump” of learning the instrument, they’re also broadly appealing to more experienced players.

Five years later, we’re thrilled to grow the family with two new guitars: A Dreadnought Academy 20e and a Grand Concert Academy 22e, both topped with solid walnut instead of spruce.

About the Guitars

With these two new models, players now have an alternative to the classic spruce-top tone, swapping out the soundboard for one made of solid walnut. As a tonewood, walnut’s density and hardness put it in good company with mahogany, Hawaiian koa and other hardwoods – you’ll hear a distinct compression effect inherent to denser woods, which smooths out the guitar’s attack for a more balanced initial punch. Walnut yields an airy, open midrange character with a strong fundamental focus, meaning you’ll hear more of the note you play and less of the ringing overtone response you’d hear from other woods.

The result is a clear, balanced sound suited to a wide range of musical appli-

cations. These guitars are equally at home in standard lesson and practice scenarios as well as recording or playing live through the included ES-B pickup, which we recently updated with new EQ controls and simpler battery replacement. The Dreadnought Academy 20e will serve up all the big, bold tone players love from the classic body shape, making it a great choice for strummers. Expect clear lows, crisp highs and plenty of midrange power, with projection that can fill a room with sound, especially with a more aggressive attack.

Meanwhile, the more compact Grand Concert Academy 22e features accommodating contours for a more intimate feel. You’ll hear strong definition between notes, making it a great choice for fingerstyle players or those who employ flatpicked lead lines. Despite its smaller size, the Academy 22e serves up plenty of volume, and its wide dynamic range makes it a great choice for players learning how to pick or strum with a lighter touch.

With a built-in armrest – a feature typically reserved for high-end guitars – these models are ideal for beginners getting used to the feel of an acoustic guitar, and their slender necks, along with a 24-7/8-inch scale length, make it easy for players of all ability levels to navigate the ebony fretboard. Like our other Academy Series guitars, these models are built without cutaways for optimal resonance, and they feature a slightly shallower body depth than our standard Dreadnought and Grand Concert models, making them easier to hold and play. It’s all topped off with a thin matte finish that showcases walnut’s natural grain for an earthy aesthetic.

You’ll find both the Academy 20e and the Academy 22e at authorized Taylor dealers everywhere.



New Academy Series Models at a Glance:

- Body Shapes:** Dreadnought and Grand Concert
- Body Wood:** Layered Walnut
- Top Wood:** Solid Walnut
- Armrest:** Beveled Walnut
- Fretboard:** West African Crelicam Ebony
- Nut Width:** 1-11/16"
- Scale Length:** 24-7/8"
- Electronics:** ES-B
- Protection:** Gig Bag





**Guitar
Spotlight**

Ashes, Two Ashes

A pair of handsome limited-edition Urban Ash models spotlight the wood's virtues in a whole new way

By Colin Griffith

L-R: Back of a 424ce LTD; front of a 224ce-UA DLX LTD

After making its debut with our Builder's Edition 324ce back in early 2020, Urban Ash has delivered resounding proof that quality tonewoods not only exist half a world away — they grow right here in Taylor's own backyard. Though we'll always love building guitars with classic, time-tested woods like Indian rosewood and mahogany, there's something extra special about being able to offer players an exceptional playing experience using homegrown materials. For Taylor, Urban Ash is more than just a great tonewood — it's a major step forward in our mission to develop more sustainable ways of building guitars.

What is Urban Ash?

Urban Ash is our name for wood from Shamel ash trees, which are also known as evergreen ash. It's a species that was widely planted in areas of Southern California after World War II as a fast-growing shade tree in conjunction with new housing developments. As is the case with other tree species in urban and residential areas, ash trees eventually need to be removed, whether because they've reached the end of their natural life cycle or they're posing a public safety risk.

Previously, these ash trees would be sold for firewood or otherwise disposed of. That's where Taylor comes in. Through our collaboration with the experienced tree care professionals at West Coast Arborists (detailed elsewhere in this issue), Taylor sources guitar-grade wood from those ash trees.

Urban Ash, it turns out, is ideally suited for guitar-making: Its properties are similar to high-grade mahogany, and it's easily workable into the shapes and cuts needed for building acoustic instruments. Urban Ash's musical attributes include a bold midrange response and a strong focus on the fundamental note.

To date, we've used Urban Ash as a back-and-side wood in the aforementioned Builder's Edition 324ce and our compact GT/GTe Urban Ash twins. Now, we get to expand the role of Urban Ash in the acoustic world with our first two guitars featuring solid ash tops, serving up new visual presentations and musical possibilities for players.

424ce LTD

Our 400 Series embodies cross-genre musical utility, so it felt like the perfect place to introduce this Urban Ash Grand Auditorium with similarly broad musical applications.

In addition to an all-ash body, we chose to showcase ash's natural blonde complexion, revealing the rich character of the wood grain and a subtle range of creamy hues.

Inside the guitar, our tone-enhancing V-Class bracing coaxes more of the natural sonic properties of the ash, which, in this case, means more of the dry, mahogany-esque midrange response players might have heard from the Builder's Edition 324ce. Like its more common hardwood-top counterparts, Urban Ash yields a clear focus on the note you play, offering exceptional balance across the frequency spectrum.

Models at a Glance

424ce LTD

Back/Sides: Urban Ash
Top: Urban Ash
Body Shape: Grand Auditorium
Fretboard: West African Crelicam Ebony
Bracing: V-Class
Nut Width: 1-3/4"
Scale Length: 25-1/2"
Electronics: ES2
Protection: Deluxe Brown Hardshell Case

224ce-UA DLX LTD

Back/Sides: Layered Urban Ash
Top: Urban Ash
Body Shape: Grand Auditorium
Fretboard: West African Crelicam Ebony
Bracing: Forward Shifted X
Nut Width: 1-11/16"
Scale Length: 25-1/2"
Electronics: ES2
Protection: Deluxe Brown Hardshell Case

Sonically, the real difference in this model comes with the ash top. Players can expect some of the natural compression that usually comes with hardwood tops, an effect that takes the edge off the initial attack for a smoother, more refined punch. But as chief guitar designer Andy Powers discovered in the wood-selection process for this model, Urban Ash is not merely a replacement for mahogany. Though its tone profile is similar, the ash's somewhat lighter average weight gives it a breezier character when used as a top wood.

"There's a pretty fair range of density when it comes to mahogany," he says. "Generally speaking, Urban Ash is comparable to the middle and lighter weight range of mahogany, which lends it an open, airy quality."

Visually, a gloss finish adds an elegant luster to the ash body. Our Renaissance fretboard and peghead inlays in Italian acrylic reflect the guitar's affiliation with our 400 Series, while other distinctive touches — black binding, satin black tuners, a black pickguard and a black 3-ring rosette — add striking counterpoints against the blonde ash body.

224ce-UA DLX LTD

Our other all-ash limited-edition Grand Auditorium pairs a solid Urban Ash top with layered ash back and sides. Layered woods allow us to combine durable construction with the ability to use premium wood veneers. In this case, the layered ash back and sides boast beautiful figure, and both the body and neck sport a rich tobacco sunburst.

Tonally, you can expect the signature musical versatility of the Grand Auditorium body style, an easily adaptable sound that performs equally well when strummed, flatpicked or fingerpicked. Again, it's the Urban Ash soundboard that really sets this model apart, generating a woody, dry response with a touch of compression to balance out a dynamic attack.

"The top has a unique flavor reminiscent of a traditional mahogany top with a light and vibrant twist," Andy says.

Visually, the tobacco sunburst together with the gloss-finish body serve up eye-catching stage presence. Supporting appointments include gold Taylor tuning machines, a faux tortoiseshell pickguard, white binding, a single-ring Italian acrylic rosette and Small Diamond fretboard inlays in Italian acrylic. In terms of feel, players might appreciate the slightly narrower fretboard on this model (1-11/16 inches), which will make fretting a bit easier for developing guitarists or players with smaller hands.

Look for both of these limited-edition Urban Ash guitars at authorized Taylor dealers this fall. **W&S**



424ce LTD

Custom Guitar Showcase

Round 2

Explore more stunning guitars from our custom program, featuring premium tonewoods and eye-catching aesthetic details

Last issue, we showcased a handful of gorgeous custom-built Taylor guitars that were designed for an exclusive dealer event held in conjunction with the return of the NAMM Show in Anaheim, California, in June of this year. These guitars, crafted in very limited numbers, reflect the very best of Taylor workmanship and aesthetic creativity. Loaded with striking appointments, many of these custom offerings boast premium-grade tonewoods that make these instruments as musically rich as they are visually enticing.

To properly spotlight the details of these guitars, we've also created an enhanced gallery experience on the Taylor website. You can also explore the always-growing collection of Taylor custom guitars, complete with beautiful photos, full specifications and the dealers that have ordered them at <https://customs.taylorguitars.com>.

And if you find that any of these guitars speak to you, just reach out to our customer service team, and we'll help you locate one.



Custom Grand Auditorium (#36)

Back/Sides: Big Leaf Maple
Top: Sitka Spruce

Appointments: Flamed maple armrest, binding and backstrap, single-ring maple/koa rosette, Art Deco fretboard inlays in maple/koa, glossy Koi Blue finish with natural back wedge



**Custom 12-Fret
Grand Concert (#7)**

Back/Sides: Walnut
Top: Walnut

Appointments: Bloodwood
body binding, single-ring maple/
bloodwood Roman Leaf rosette,
early 900 Series fretboard inlays in
maple/bloodwood, glossy choco-
late shaded edgeburst finish



**Custom
Grand Symphony (#18)**

Back/Sides: Big Leaf Maple
Top: Sitka Spruce

Appointments: Cocobolo body binding, single-ring paua rosette, Spring Vine fretboard/peghead inlays in paua, stained bone bridge pins with green Australian opal dots, Gotoh 510 antique gold tuners, glossy Amber finish with aged toner top treatment



**Custom 12-Fret
Grand Concert (#11967)**

Back/Sides: Figured Blackwood
Top: European Spruce

Appointments: Bloodwood binding and armrest, single-ring bloodwood rosette, Running Horses fretboard inlays in maple/koa, Gotoh 510 tuners



Soundings



Sara Niemietz. Photo: Jeff Xander

Super Women

We still remember the soulful acoustic set **Sara Niemietz (Builder's Edition 517e WHB)** served up (with guitar ace **Snuffy Walden**) on the Taylor NAMM stage back in 2019. So when the Los Angeles-based singer-songwriter and actress dropped us a line to share a preview of her new record, *Superman*, we were all ears.

A multifaceted performer who has worked in theater, TV and film (and is an active live-streamer), Niemietz is equally diversified in her musical tastes and stylistic repertoire. Her expressive vocal range allows her to explore an array of genres, including rock, jazz-pop, blues, R&B and neo-soul. And she runs the gamut with her boldly vulnerable 14-song collection on *Superman*.

The record evolved out of a COVID-period collaboration between Niemietz and guitarist/composer/producer **Linda Taylor**, whose credits include extensive session and stage work (Art Garfunkel, Edwin McCain, Don Was) and more than 20 years of TV house band experience on shows like *Whose Line Is It Anyway?*

The two met at what would turn out to be Niemietz's last live show of 2020 due to the COVID shutdown, but their instant musical chemistry sparked an

exchange of ideas that became a torrent of back-and-forth demo file-sharing. Ideas were shaped into songs, with Niemietz handling vocal production and Taylor laying down guitar and other instrument parts and mixing the recordings.

Before long, the two had a half-dozen fully baked songs they felt good about, so they kept going, completing an



album's worth of demos. They eventually recorded and co-produced the record with session artists Daniel Pearson (bass), Ed Roth (keyboards) and Léo Costa (drums) at former Doors guitarist Robby Kreiger's Horse Latitude Studios in Burbank, California.

Among the musical touchstones for their songs, Niemietz says, were Sister Rosetta Tharpe, Janis Joplin, Brittany Howard, early Kings of Leon and D'Angelo. The trick was to give themselves the freedom to follow their eclectic tastes, yet shape their songs into a listening experience that would hold together as an album.

"It occurred to me as long as we're telling the same story, the songs can be the chapters in the book," Niemietz says. The themes that permeate the album, she adds, are the ideas of "speaking your piece, shaking off the past, and finding the superhero inside."

The buoyant blues-pop opener, "Locks," sets a tone of resilient rebirth, of emerging from adversity a little wiser and eager to embrace the path ahead. Niemietz takes a deep, cleansing breath leading into her vocal over a head-bobbing groove, later singing: *So long since I / Since I felt this way / So long to the shadows of yesterday...*

The rest of the record unfolds with soulful continuity, even as they stir together different musical flavors. The album's tasteful arrangements leave room for Niemietz's emotive vocal nuances and Taylor's guitar work to play off each other in dynamic ways.

"I Want You" is a smoldering rocker powered by Niemietz's raw, impassioned vocals (and a great scream at the end). The plaintive ballad "Lovely Lies" offers a vulnerable relationship reckoning as Niemietz's sultry vocals float above Taylor's delicately picked Spanish rhythm on nylon-string guitar. The smooth R&B vibe of "Come to Me" calls to mind Allen Stone, colored with Taylor's wah-wah and blues licks, followed by more wah-wah flavoring on the late-night funk-rock of "Names." The more experimental "Words" ventures from acoustic fingerpicking into atmospheric indie-rock terrain as Niemietz's powerful wail over distorted power chords evokes a blend of vintage Grace Slick and Florence + the Machine. The

sweet closing track, "The Dimming," delivers a smooth neo-soul landing that segues into a jammy coda.

As a listener, you can hear the undeniable musical chemistry between Niemietz and Taylor. Their phrasing is beautifully complementary and gives each song a vivid personality. Niemietz's lyrical honesty channels a range of emotions that help bond the songs together as related "chapters" in her songbook, while Taylor's (and the band's) versatile musicianship navigates through different genres with ease.

Whether this music would ever have been made if not for the pandemic pause, we'll never know. But based on the results, let's hope they work together again.

Artist News

Our artist relations team has been busy developing exclusive video content showcasing Taylor artists from across the genre spectrum. Be sure to browse Soundings in the digital edition of *Wood&Steel* to watch performances and interviews. Here are a few of the latest and greatest hits.

Taylor Soundcheck

Session guitarist and indie artist **Liv Slingerland** (Olivia Rodrigo, Halsey) joined us in June to film an episode of **Taylor Soundcheck**, appearing with her performance partner, Caroline Kingsbury. Liv played her original songs "It Might Be Time" and "Temporary Letdown" and talked about her influences and inspiration for her music. Liv plays a **514ce** and a **GT 811e** in the performances.



Scan the code
with your
smartphone

One Man Orchestra

Manchester Orchestra singer/guitarist **Andy Hull** took a break from his solo acoustic tour to play an exclusive set on Austin City Limits Radio with his newest Taylor, the **GT 811e**. Hull has been loving his new guitar, telling us that it's "probably the most comfortable I've ever felt playing the guitar for 90 minutes in a room of silence." His intimate set includes the tunes "Angel Of Death," "Telepath," "The Gold" and "Bed Head."



Liv Slingerland



Maggie Baugh

Introducing Vinyl Confessions

We recently launched a new video series in partnership with Denon called *Vinyl Confessions*, in which Taylor artists talk about a song that inspired their pursuit of music and then perform that song. Our first segment features Nashville-based country singer-songwriter **Maggie Baugh**, who remembers the impact of the Sara Evans song “Suds in a Bucket.”



Scan the code
with your
smartphone

creative input. The ivoroid pickguard wraps around both the bass and treble sides of the soundhole and incorporates a lightning bolt design in relief. She loves how it turned out and played it on tour dates over the summer. You can see it in the official music video for her new song “Private Eyes” from her forthcoming album *Nut*.

Taylor Artists in Nashville...

We love supporting the music community in Music City. Taylor recently co-hosted a special event at the new offices of *American Songwriter* magazine, where Taylor artist **Ian Flanigan** performed for guests.... Emerging folk/Americana artist **Autumn Nicholas** met us in Nashville to test-drive new guitars for her upcoming tour, where she'll be opening for Amanda Shires. She fell in love with the Grand Concert **322ce**.... **Amanda Sudano** from the duo **Johnnyswim** has recently

Back in Black

Scottish singer-songwriter **KT Tunstall** has been enjoying her newest custom Taylor, an all-black rosewood/spruce Grand Pacific (a variation on our **Builder's Edition 717e**) with a custom pickguard design based on her



Latin Alternative Music Conference

From July 6-9, Taylor attended the Latin Alternative Music Conference in New York City. Colloquially known as the “SXSW Conference for Latin Americans,” the LAMC plays host to key musicians, fans, content platforms and MI brands such as Billboard, Warner Music, Amazon Music and Meta. Content created from the event reaches more than 25 million people worldwide.

For our part, we created a video lounge where musicians could try guitars, record performances and shoot photos. Our lounge was adjacent to Meta, whose team was shooting social reels for artists. We supplied them with a variety of our guitars, which were then seen across Meta's Facebook and Instagram platforms. We also participated in key LAMC Showcases, master classes and off-site events.

In our digital edition, you can watch performances from artists **Zoe Gotusso**, **Pehuenche** and **Gale**.



Top: The band Air Bag performs;
Middle (L-R): Taylor artist
relations rep Juan Lopera
with LAMC award-winning
“Discovery Artist” Zoe Gotusso;
Left: An artist with an AD17e
Blacktop in the Meta booth.
(Photos: Karlo X. Ramos)

been playing a **314ce-N**, which she uses in a video of her song “Beautiful Dream” that she shared to Instagram.... Singer-songwriter **John Oates** has always loved the sound and feel of the GS Mini, so it’s no surprise that he’s currently playing the **GT 811e**.... **Ryan Straw**, guitarist for country artist Kelsea Ballerini, has been playing a **562ce** for the promotion of Ballerini’s new single, “Heart First.”

... and Around the Globe

In Japan, Taylor artist **Suzune** recently released a music video for his song “Life”.... In Colombia, **Santiago Cruz** released a video for his song “Porque Yo Te Quise,” which has already racked up nearly a million views.... In Mexico, **Carla Morrison** launched another leg of her El Renacimiento tour, where she’s playing her favorite guitar: the **GT 611e LTD**.... Puerto Rican artist **Yett** signed a three-year contract with Warner Music and will soon be touring the U.S. with his **GS Mini-e Koa Plus**.

In the United Kingdom, Taylor artist **Tom Gledhill** has been playing his **AD17e Blacktop** alongside artists Zak Abel, Paloma Faith and Rag’n’Bone Man.... Solo singer-songwriter **Cat Burns** will be supporting Ed Sheeran on an upcoming tour as well as headlining her own tour this year. She recently appeared on *Later...with Jools Holland* to play her song “Go” on her **T5z**.... Session guitarist **Aaron Forbes**, fast becoming an in-demand player in the U.K., is heading out on tour with Calum Scott after wrapping up a stint with Ellie Goulding.... **Matt Thomson’s** indie rock band, The Amazons, is touring Europe, with Matt playing a **Builder’s Edition 517e** and guitarist Chris Alderton playing a **GT Urban Ash**.

In Sweden, **Smith & Thell** are touring with their **Builder’s Edition 517e** and **322ce 12-Fret**.... Italian guitarist **Daniele Mamarella** is currently touring with his **GT 811e** after having been ranked as one of the top three acoustic guitarists by *Music Radar* and *UK Guitarist* magazine.

[Guitar Lessons]

Upstroke Technique, Minor 11th Chords and Triad Movements

R&B guitar ace Kerry “2 Smooth” Marshall is back with more tips for playing R&B on an acoustic guitar

It’s time for another trio of guitar lessons with session player, music educator and R&B virtuoso Kerry “2 Smooth” Marshall.

Kerry brings over 20 years of experience in the music world to his popular online video guitar lessons, as well as his digital guitar school, Kerry’s Kamp. With nearly 135,000 subscribers on YouTube and new lesson videos released every week, Kerry is a constant source of musical inspiration for players hoping to explore guitar techniques from the worlds of R&B, gospel and neo-soul. As a session player, Kerry has also played and recorded alongside major artists like Tori Kelly, Jason Derulo, Chrisette Michele and Ledisi.



Upstroke Technique

Kicking things off with a beginner lesson, Kerry demonstrates a simple upstroke picking technique that adds a subtle rhythmic accent to your playing. Watch as Kerry illustrates this easy way to add R&B flair to your sound.

The Minor 11th Chord

Next, Kerry explores an important sound in R&B guitar-playing that can be translated to other styles as well: the minor 11th chord. Watch as Kerry shows how to use the minor 11th as a subtle variation on the more common minor 7th chord.

Triad Movements

Finally, Kerry goes deep with an advanced lesson focused on triad movements, another subtle technique that you can use to flavor your playing to create a sweet R&B vibe.

Scan the code
with your
smartphone



[Guitar Care]

On the Bench: Guitar Care Basics with Rob Magargal



Acoustic guitars are complex systems of interrelated parts, and the more we play them, the more they stand to benefit from routine maintenance. As a product made of wood, they’re also subject to the environmental conditions in which they’re kept. That’s why understanding the basics of guitar care will go a long way toward helping you keep your instrument healthy and in peak performing condition. And once you have a handle on techniques like changing strings and managing humidity, maintaining your guitar will be easy.

Taylor service network manager Rob Magargal has spent many years at workbenches in the Taylor factory and out in the field, fine-tuning guitars of every shape and size to perfect playability and rich sound. To help Taylor owners care for their guitars, we worked with Rob to create our “On the Bench” video series, in which he shares basic maintenance tips. In our latest installment, Rob identifies the essential items for your guitar care tool kit, explains the basics of humidity management, and demonstrates proper string-changing techniques for virtually every type of acoustic guitar, including 6-string, 12-string, nylon-string and guitars with a slotted headstock.

To watch the videos, scan the QR code or go to our digital edition.



Scan the code
with your
smartphone

Browse the 2022 Taylor Holiday Gift Guide

With the winter holidays on the horizon, it’s time for those of us with musically inclined friends and family to start thinking about the perfect gift. Taylor’s online holiday gift guide is the perfect tool for making sure this year’s holiday is a memorable one for the musicians in your life. You’ll find a range of guitars from across the Taylor line segmented by price level, making it easy to home in on a new guitar for that friend or loved one in need of fresh acoustic inspiration. We’ve also curated some key accessories, such as comfortable guitar straps, pick tins, digital tuners, guitar care tools, stylish Taylor apparel and more.

Scan the code to browse the
holiday gift guide or visit
taylorguitars.com/holiday-gift-guide

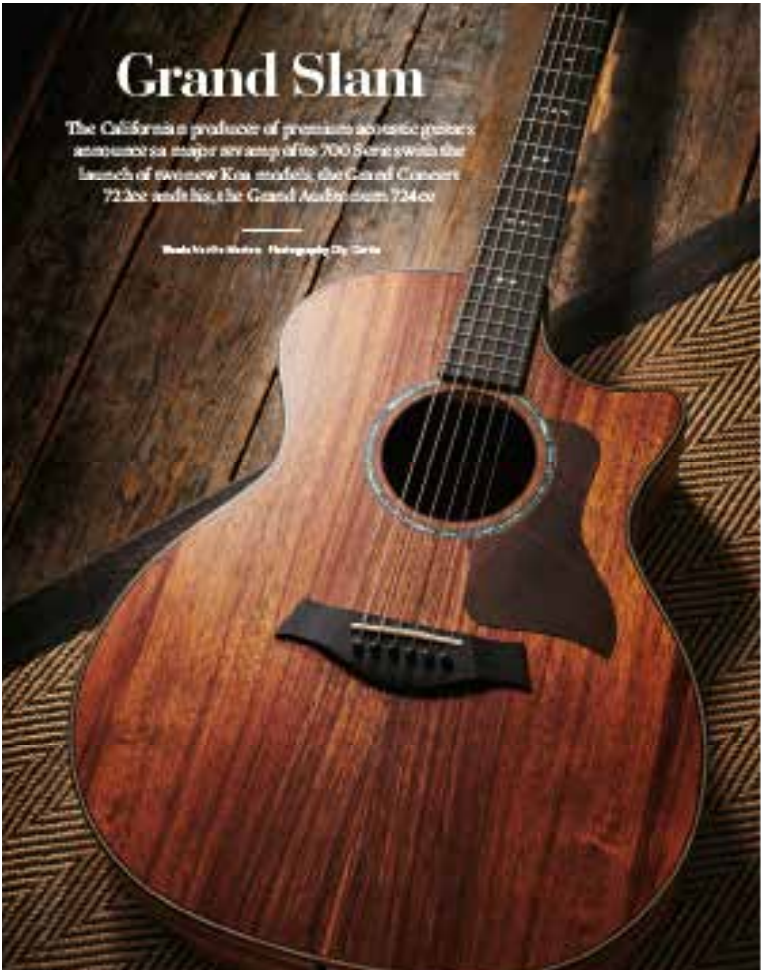


**Holiday
Gift 2022
Guide**

Review Roundup: 724ce

The verdict is unanimous – critics love the look, feel and sound of our new all-koa Grand Auditorium.

Following the launch of our redesigned koa 700 Series in May, guitar reviews have been rolling in from many of the MI world's media outlets. We sent reviewers the Grand Auditorium 724ce model. Across the board, the reactions were overwhelmingly positive. Here's a sampling of what the critics are saying.



Guitarist magazine (U.K.) published a 6-page review in its summer edition, including rich detail photos that captured the natural beauty of the guitar's select-grade koa and appointment details. Writer Neville Marten gave the guitar a 9/10 score and a Guitarist Choice Award, citing the guitar's "virtually unmatched build, fit and finish," "fantastic playability," and "organic and rewarding tones." Among the highlights from his writeup:

On build/materials: "Examine our 724ce with a magnifying glass and we'd challenge you to find a flaw.... The move towards this beautiful and sustainable timber, too, must be applauded."

On the playing comfort: "The action is low and slinky, and its strings feel tactile and unresisting under the fingertips. The neck's nut width is great for easy open chording and all those 'twiddly bits' we pickers love to throw in."

On the sound: Marten called out the guitar's "warm and welcoming" voice: "There's no thunderous bass evident, but more of a balanced lower-mid hum that ties in very musically with the musical upper-mids and sweet trebles that the guitar exhibits.... Fingerpicked tones are crisp and direct, while strumming with a medium pick elicits a wash of finely tuned chords that makes the perfect bed to any vocal performance, but wouldn't be obtrusive in the context of other acoustic instruments."

Wrapping up, Neville had this to say: "If [Andy] Powers and his team continue to create instruments that look, play and sound as good as this one, then there'll be no stopping this company."



In **Premier Guitar**'s September edition, Jason Shadrick immediately picked up on the tactile sensation of the guitar's ultra-thin finish: "It's so thin that you can feel the pores in the wood, and [it] arguably adds to the instrument's liveliness."

Sonically, he said the tone profile reminded him of "a modern, midrange dreadnought with more focus."

"The koa tones are complex and nuanced," he writes, "with a little touch of mahogany midrange and maple sparkle.... It's balanced in a way that would fit in with a broad range of styles. When I played a bit harder with a pick, I could sense how the koa top and, most likely, the bracing tweaks widened the dynamic range, and enhanced the guitar's responsiveness."

Vintage Guitar's Pete Prown loved the guitar's look ("Visually, the 724ce is a dazzler") and uber-playability: "In fine Taylor tradition, the guitar has fast setup with low action, ready for your quickest licks up the neck." On its sound: "Acoustically, the V-bracing exudes a warmer, traditional sound, unlike the trebly 'Taylor sound' of the 1990s and 2000s.... With strumming or fingerpicking, the bottom end is nuanced perfectly with the upper strings for a sweet, sophisticated tone, especially for a cutaway."

Prown also loved the amplified tone. "Plugged in, its ES-2 is one of the stars of the show....After decades of plastic-y sound from plugged-in acoustics, the ES-2 is a revelation and hopefully a harbinger of more organic acoustic-electric flavors to come."

Over at **Acoustic Guitar** magazine (November/December edition), Adam Perlmutter called the 724ce the most balanced-sounding koa guitar he's ever played, with these additional reactions to the sound: "With an impressive mid-range and a tight low end that's never mushy or boomy, it has the characteristic warmth and sweetness that comes with a hardwood-topped instrument."

"The guitar's overall tone is crisp and dry, with a rich midrange that seems to connect the bass and treble notes into a single sound. There is exceptional low-end clarity, which is especially good for flatpicked bass note runs in standard tuning or fingerpicked parts in open tunings."

"The treble range is where the 724ce seems particularly special.... Where many koa guitars can sound a little brittle and zingy on the high end, the guitar's upper strings ring with a lacy high-end sweetness and a snappy, quick response that is also smooth and

refined. To make a visual analogy, the 724ce's treble response is bright and warm like an Edison bulb, compared to the harshness of a corner store's LED lights that some other koa guitars project."

Finally, **Guitar Player**'s Jimmy Leslie echoed others' admiration of the guitar's visual virtues. ("Take the 724ce out of its case and the only thought that crosses the mind is, 'Gorgeous!'") He also picked up on the impact of the thin finish on the guitar's sound.

"It's lighter and far less dampened than the established Koa Series. It takes very little pick energy to set the 724's top in motion, and its sensitivity facilitates extreme nuance. It's very player reflective, capable of a wide variety of tones from mellow to bright depending on the attack.... If you like your instrument lively and sensitive to subtlety, the 724ce delivers."

In his July review for **Peghead Nation**, Teja Gerken says this: "The 724ce has a great, open-sounding low end that works particularly well for big chords or lowered tunings, and I quickly found myself exploring some fingerstyle playing in open-D tuning. The guitar's overall tonal quality is a bit 'looser' than most Taylor grand auditoriums, and I really liked its response and warmth. Naturally, it has Taylor's typical precision setup, and the guitar played beautifully all the way into the cutaway.... Whether you think of it as a revamped 700 or a stripped-down Koa Series, the result is a very cool guitar that has its own look, feel and sound!"





[Sustainability]

Branching Out

As Taylor’s urban wood initiative expands to include red ironbark, Scott Paul explains the value of our work with West Coast Arborists and how eucalyptus trees became so prolific in California.

By Scott Paul

Taylor Guitars first introduced urban wood into its product line at NAMM 2020 with the release of the Builder’s Edition 324ce, featuring Urban Ash (better known as Shamel ash, *Fraxinus uhdei*) back and sides. This particular species of ash, as far as we know, had never been used as a tonewood before, at least not on a dedicated model. The tree, native to Mexico and parts of Central America, had been planted prolifically across Southern California’s expanding urban infrastructure following World War II. Considered a great shade tree, it is still commonly planted today.

We source our Urban Ash from West Coast Arborists, Inc. (WCA), who, in addition to planting and caring for trees across the state, removes trees when requested to do so by the municipalities it services. WCA happens to be our local arborist here in El Cajon, where the Taylor factory is, but they also serve communities across the Golden State and even in parts of Arizona.

When we released the Builder’s Edition 324ce, the “former street tree” backstory struck a chord with many players, but, irrespective of where the wood came from, Urban Ash was critically acclaimed as a tonewood. In fact, Bob Taylor has called Urban Ash “the mahogany of Southern California,” and Andy Powers referred to it as the golden retriever of tonewoods because “whether you’re cutting it, sanding it, bending it, gluing it or staining it, it just wants to please you.” Andy likes it so

much that we have since incorporated Urban Ash onto several different dedicated models. It’s a great wood and comes from a responsible source.

To coincide with our original release of the BE 324ce, I wrote a column, “Seeing the Urban Forest for the Trees” (W&S Vol. 96), in an attempt to describe Taylor’s interest in urban wood, the broader need to create an economy for urban wood, and ultimately the importance of maintaining and expanding urban tree cover in cities around the world. In that article, I referenced the day I took Bob, Andy and a small team from Taylor to visit a WCA wood sort yard where the arborist takes trees it has removed from greater San Bernardino and Riverside Counties.

Pat Mahoney had founded WCA back in 1972, and some 45 years later, his son, “Big John” Mahoney, a larger-than-life figure who happens to be a competitive beard grower and chainsaw sculptor, convinced his dad to have the company buy a portable sawmill. Big John and another WCA employee, Jason Rose (John’s friend since first grade), pitched the company to elevate their existing wood recycling program, which had included milling reusable logs to make wood benches from recycled street trees in addition to its firewood program. The expanded efforts would further reduce disposal costs by turning former street trees, whenever possible, into usable raw lumber or live-edge slabs for sale to the public. They rebranded their endeavor Street Tree Revival and started sorting

incoming wood into various categories – for firewood, as had long been done, but now for lumber and slab tables. Occasionally, as the spirit moved him, Big John set aside a particular tree to satisfy his chainsaw art passion.

By the time Bob and Andy were standing in one of WCA's log sort yards for the first time, Street Tree Revival was separating large logs with promising wood by species and sealing their ends to prevent cracking. They had a portable Wood-Mizer and a collection of chainsaws. Bob and Andy immediately gravitated toward certain log piles and quickly identified several theoretically promising species for guitar parts.

A few days later, samples were cut and brought to Andy's shop for further evaluation. Shamel ash, the "golden retriever," was the first species that found its way onto a dedicated line of Taylor guitars, but now we're pleased to introduce another. After much analysis, Andy has selected red ironbark (*Eucalyptus sideroxylon*), a species of eucalyptus we're calling Urban Ironbark, as the back and side tonewood for Taylor's newly redesigned 500 Series.

Elsewhere in this edition, Jim Kirlin talks with Andy about the sonic virtues

dried, crushed and distilled, produce an oil used in fuels, fragrances and insect repellent.

Being the most widely planted tree species worldwide, however, has not come without some controversy. The 1990s, for example, saw a major escalation in the establishment of large plantations of improved varieties of eucalyptus, principally in the tropics. The controversy stemmed from large plantations needing large amounts of land, and thus large swaths of native forest and grasslands were converted, disrupting ecosystems and raising concerns about biodiversity loss. Complicating matters further, there is a long history of such projects being used as a vehicle to gain wealth and territorial influence by separating local and indigenous peoples from their traditional lands.

Taylor Guitars is sourcing its red ironbark eucalyptus from Southern California through our partners at West Coast Arborists. The tree is native to the dry desert interior of eastern Australia, and even by eucalyptus standards, it is considered particularly well adapted to stressful conditions. At maturity, the tree can range in height from 30 to 80 feet. Its distinctive bark

Today, there are roughly 250 different species of eucalyptus found in California, no longer planted for commercial reasons but instead as wind-breaks along highways and farmland, and as shade and ornamental trees in cities and gardens. Between the naturalized remnants of earlier plantings and ongoing urban planting efforts, eucalyptus is now so prolific that it has become as iconic to the California landscape as the palm tree, another largely non-native tree.

Urban Trees and Urban Wood

Stepping back from eucalyptus specifically, looking at the urban tree canopy more broadly, its importance cannot be understated. And there's a growing body of evidence that proves it, ranging from the amount of carbon dioxide trees absorb to their role in cooling air temperature through both shade and evaporation, thus quantifiably lowering energy use. The urban forest canopy also significantly improves water quality by mitigating rainfall runoff and flooding, and it blocks strong winds and lowers noise impact. Trees filter air pollution and provide important habitat for songbirds and other wildlife. In addition to these environmental and economic benefits, there is also mounting evidence that city trees provide a plethora of social benefits, including improved mental health and community cohesion.

We all know that we need to expand and diversify the urban canopy, but, of course, trees are living things, and all living things die. And for countless reasons, city trees are removed – damage from disease, invasive pests or storms, public safety, and construction and development, to name a few. So, while expanding the urban tree canopy is imperative, more trees ultimately mean greater throughput and more trees that will reach end of life in the future. It's simple math. As a result, increasingly, people all around the world are looking for ways to turn end-of-life urban trees into high-value products that can support the regreening of our urban infrastructure and ease the pressure on forests elsewhere.

To see another great example of a nationally branded company mainstreaming urban wood, check out Room & Board's Urban Wood Project, which makes beautiful furniture from urban wood sourced from Baltimore, Minneapolis, Detroit and Sacramento. The company is currently exploring additional opportunities across the United States with the intent to expand its urban wood collection in the future.

Our partnership with West Coast Arborists has opened a new and promising supply of quality tonewood to

“

Eucalyptus is now so prolific in California that it has become as iconic to the landscape as the palm tree, another largely non-native tree.

”

build guitars into the future. And while the urban wood backstory is interesting and I would argue environmentally and socially responsible, we wouldn't be investing in it if it didn't make long-term sense for our business. We're not interested in producing a one-off novelty series of "eco" guitars to greenwash our company. Wood is wood, regardless of where it comes from, and we need quality, quantity and predictability to make it work. Trust me, knowing what he knows now, Andy would want to be building guitars out of Urban Ash

and Urban Ironbark regardless of its origin, as long as it's responsibly sourced.

One final thought: It's still more expensive to purchase urban wood from California than wood from existing, well-established supply chains, even from across the world, but WCA is building a bridge from their side, and Taylor is building from ours. And as Bob Taylor likes to say: "In 10 years we'll be glad we did it." **W&S**

Scott Paul is Taylor's Director of Natural Resource Sustainability.

“

Eucalyptus is the most widely planted tree species in the world.

”

of Urban Ironbark and the multiple reasons, from a builder's perspective, why Andy loves this wood. I, on the other hand, want to take the opportunity to update you on Taylor's expanding use of urban wood, to again underscore the importance of maintaining and expanding our urban tree canopy, but primarily to talk about eucalyptus.

All About Eucalyptus

There are over 700 species of eucalyptus in the world, most native to Australia, but a few native to the neighboring islands of New Guinea and Indonesia. Today, Eucalyptus is the most widely planted tree in the world, with some 30 to 40 species being grown in a commercial forestry setting in over 100 countries. The trees are fast-growing and produce quality timber and pulp. Certain species are also used for colored dyes that chemically bond well to materials such as silk and wool. Further, the distinctive oval-shaped leaves of some species, after being

is tough and thick and can either be gray, brown or black, one of a scant few eucalyptus species that does not shed its bark. The tree also produces flowers that can be creamy yellow, pink or red. Cumulatively, these traits have made red ironbark a favorite for developers and city planners alike.

Eucalyptus was first introduced to California as a cash crop during the gold rush of the 1850s when the American West was projecting a timber deficiency. Farmers were encouraged to plant eucalyptus with the promise of significant profit in as little as 30 years. By the dawn of the 1900s, however, the dream of a California eucalyptus market had faded as Americans, accustomed to old-growth Douglas fir and redwood, were unimpressed with the wood derived from the relatively young Australian imports. As a result, thousands of acres went unharvested. Left abandoned, the trees thrived in coastal California with its Mediterranean climate of winter rainfall and summer drought similar to Australia.



"Big John" Mahoney with an urban wood slab from WCA's Street Tree Revival program; Opposite page: a red ironbark tree

The Taylor Line by Series

A snapshot of our series framework, tonewood pairings, and current models. For complete details, including photos and specifications, visit taylorguitars.com.



Presentation Series
Back/Sides: Honduran Rosewood
Top: Sinker Redwood or Adirondack Spruce
Available Models: PS12ce, PS12ce 12-Fret, PS14ce



Koa Series
Back/Sides: Hawaiian Koa
Top: Hawaiian Koa or Torrefied Sitka Spruce (Builder's Edition)
Available Models: GT K21e, K22ce, K22ce 12-Fret, Builder's Edition K14ce, Builder's Edition K24ce, K24ce, K26ce



900 Series
Back/Sides: Indian Rosewood
Top: Sitka Spruce or Lutz Spruce (Builder's Edition)
Available Models: 912ce, 912ce 12-Fret, Builder's Edition 912ce, Builder's Edition 912ce WHB, 914ce



800 Series
Back/Sides: Indian Rosewood
Top: Sitka Spruce or Lutz Spruce (Builder's Edition)
Available Models: GT 811e, 812ce, 812ce 12-Fret, 812ce-N, 814ce, 814ce-N, Builder's Edition 816ce, 818e



700 Series
Back/Sides: Hawaiian Koa or Indian Rosewood (Builder's Edition)
Top: Hawaiian Koa or Torrefied Sitka Spruce (Builder's Edition)
Available Models: 722ce, 724ce, Builder's Edition 717e, Builder's Edition 717e WHB



600 Series
Back/Sides: Figured Big Leaf Maple
Top: Torrefied Sitka Spruce or Sitka Spruce (618e)
Available Models: 612ce, 612ce 12-Fret, Builder's Edition 652ce, Builder's Edition 652ce WHB, 614ce, Builder's Edition 614ce, Builder's Edition 614ce WHB, 618e



500 Series
Back/Sides: Urban Ironbark or Neo-Tropical Mahogany (Builder's Edition)
Top: Torrefied Sitka Spruce
Available Models: 512ce, 514ce, Builder's Edition 517e, Builder's Edition 517e WHB



400 Series
Back/Sides: Indian Rosewood
Top: Sitka Spruce
Available Models: 412ce-R, 414ce-R



300 Series

Back/Sides: Sapele (Spruce Top), Neo-Tropical Mahogany or Urban Ash (Builder's Edition)

Top: Sitka Spruce or Neo-Tropical Mahogany

Available Models: 312ce, 312ce 12-Fret, 312ce-N, 322ce, 322e 12-Fret, 322ce 12-Fret, 352ce, 362ce, 314ce, Builder's Edition 324ce, 324ce, 326ce, 317e, 327e



GT

Back/Sides: Urban Ash, Neo-Tropical Mahogany or Walnut

Top: Spruce or Neo-Tropical Mahogany

Available Models: GTe Urban Ash, GTe Mahogany, GTe Blacktop



American Dream Series

Back/Sides: Ovangkol, Big Leaf Maple, Sapele or Walnut

Top: Spruce, Neo-Tropical Mahogany or Big Leaf Maple

Available Models: AD22e, AD17, AD17 Blacktop, AD17e, AD17e Blacktop, AD27e, AD27e Flametop

Layered-Wood Guitars

Guitars crafted with layered-wood back and sides, featuring three layers of wood, paired with a solid-wood top



200 Series (Standard, Plus, Deluxe)

Back/Sides: Layered Rosewood, Koa or Maple

Top: Hawaiian Koa or Spruce

Available Models: 210ce, 214ce, 214ce-N, 214ce-K, 214ce-K SB, 254ce, 210ce Plus, 214ce Plus, 250ce-BLK DLX, 214ce DLX, 214ce-K DLX, 214ce-BLK DLX, 214ce-SB DLX, 224ce-K DLX



100 Series

Back/Sides: Layered Walnut

Top: Sitka Spruce

Available Models: 110e, 150e, 114e, 114ce

Academy Series

Back/Sides: Layered Sapele or Walnut

Top: Sitka Spruce, Lutz Spruce or Walnut

Available Models: Academy 12, Academy 12e, Academy 12-N, Academy 12e-N, Academy 22e, Academy 10, Academy 10e, Academy 20e

GS Mini Series

Back/Sides: Layered Sapele, Koa, Rosewood or Maple

Top: Sitka Spruce, Mahogany or Koa

Available Models: GS Mini Mahogany, GS Mini-e Mahogany, GS Mini-e Koa, GS Mini-e Koa Plus, GS Mini Rosewood, GS Mini-e Rosewood, GS Mini-e Maple Bass, GS Mini-e Koa Bass



Baby Series

Back/Sides: Layered Walnut, Sapele or Koa

Top: Sitka Spruce, Mahogany, Koa or Walnut

Available Models: BT1, BT1e, BT2, BT2e, BTe-Koa, BBT, BBT e, BBT Walnut top, BBT e Walnut top, TS-BT, TS-BTe

Electric Guitars

Hollowbody or Semi-Hollowbody

T5z Series

Top: Figured Koa, Figured Maple, Sassafras, Sitka Spruce or Mahogany

Available Models: T5z Custom K, T5z-12 Custom K, T5z Pro, T5z Standard, T5z Classic, T5z Classic Sassafras, T5z Classic Koa, T5z-12 Classic, T5z Classic DLX, T5z-12 Classic DLX

T3 Series

Top: Layered Figured Maple

Available Models: T3, T3B



TaylorWare

CLOTHING / GEAR / PARTS / GIFTS

Straps

Comfortable, stylish and durable, these genuine leather guitar straps are designed to visually complement our American Dream and 700 Series guitars.



Fountain Strap

2.5" Weathered Brown Leather
#4125-25



American Dream Strap

2.5" White/Black Leather
#4127-25



American Dream Strap

2.5" Brown/Black Leather with white stitching
#4128-25



Taylor Hoodie

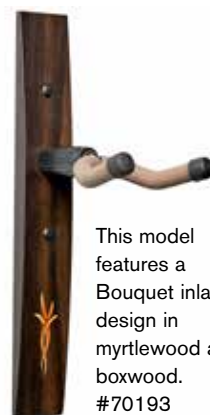
Layer up in this men's full-zip hoodie.
Features Taylor logo. Available in sizes S-XXL.
#3000-36

Ebony Guitar Hangers

These finely crafted guitar wall hangers are made from genuine Crelicam ebony, the same ebony that we use in the fretboards and bridges of our acoustic guitars. A cushioned yoke provides a secure hanging spot for your guitar without damaging the finish or neck, while ebony's gorgeous visual character reflects the craftsmanship and natural beauty of our responsibly sourced tonewoods. Each purchase supports our tree-planting projects and other sustainability initiatives.



This model features a Taylor logo inlay design in Italian acrylic.
#70207



This model features a Bouquet inlay design in myrtlewood and boxwood.
#70193



Celluloid Pick Tin

Celluloid picks are the guitarist's standby for good reason—they're versatile, durable and easy to spot. This pick tin includes a sampling of celluloid guitar picks in various shapes, gauges and colors.

#2608



DarkTone Series Pick Tin

2.75" x 1.625"

This pick tin makes the perfect carrying case for the sample pack of nine Taylor DarkTone Series guitar picks included. The tin features picks from each DarkTone family (Ivoroid, Thermex Ultra, Thermex Pro and Taylex), with varying sizes and materials so you can hear the sonic nuances of each pick.

#2600



Taylor Hygrometer

Our digital hygrometer provides a clear readout of climate information for virtually any space, from the inside of a guitar case to a studio or just a player's home. Designed with large readouts for both relative humidity and temperature for easy reading at a glance, the hygrometer also features a kickstand for flat surfaces as well as screw holes for easy wall mounting. Accurate to within 5 percent, the digital hygrometer comes with 2 AAA batteries and can switch between Fahrenheit and Celsius. #1319



Featured Product

taylor**sense**

SMART BATTERY BOX + MOBILE APP

Protect Your Taylor with the TaylorSense Smart Battery Box and Mobile App

Our breakthrough health monitoring system puts the vital signs of your guitar into the palm of your hand.

We love helping customers maintain their guitars, so we're excited to offer a new guitar care tool called TaylorSense, which makes it easier than ever to track the condition of a Taylor guitar. TaylorSense features an easy-to-install smart battery box that replaces the battery box on Taylor guitars equipped with a pickup powered by a 9V battery. The smart battery box houses sensors that monitor your guitar's:

- **Humidity**
- **Battery Life**
- **Temperature**
- **Physical Impact**

The TaylorSense battery box pushes guitar health data to your phone via low-energy Bluetooth, pairing with the TaylorSense app to provide real-time data. The app is available to download for both iOS and Android devices. Shaped by our extensive service expertise, TaylorSense is also calibrated to send you timely alerts when your guitar needs care, along with simple "how-to-fix" videos from our service team.



You can find TaylorSense at taylorguitars.com/taylorware and at authorized Taylor retailers in the US, Canada, UK, and EU.



Home and Gifts



Taylor Leather Wallet

Keep your cards, IDs and cash organized with this stylish genuine leather wallet, featuring a single pick holder and an embossed Taylor logo. #1514



Apparel

Check out our line of Taylor apparel, featuring T-shirts, hats and more.



Taylor 24" Brown Stool

Make sure you always have a comfortable spot to practice and play at home with our premium Taylor bar stool. 24" in matte brown. Includes a padded seat with a soft vinyl covering along with a ring to rest your feet and enhance your guitar-playing experience. #1510



Ebony Guitar Slide

The Taylor ebony guitar slide, made from genuine Crelicam West African ebony, offers guitar players a unique alternative to traditional glass or metal slides. Available in four sizes, the ebony slide produces a warm, soft slide tone on both electric and acoustic guitars. By building slides with ebony that we're not able to use for guitars, we're able to generate more value for this precious resource and continue to work toward more sustainable practices and healthier ecosystems. Proceeds from the ebony slide support our replanting projects and other environmental endeavors. Available in sizes Small (11/16"), Medium (3/4"), Large (13/16"), and X-Large (7/8").



Taylor Digital Tuner

Every guitarist needs a good tuner. The Taylor digital guitar tuner for acoustic and electric guitars conveniently clips to your guitar's headstock, while the easy-to-read display makes quick, precise tuning a breeze for any player. #1200



Visit taylorguitars.com/taylorware to browse our complete line of Taylor apparel, guitar care products, parts and accessories, gift cards, and more.

1-800-494-9600 (U.S.)

Not all items available in all markets.



Meet the All-New Urban Ironbark 500 Series

When Taylor design maestro Andy Powers gets excited about a new tonewood, so do we. And we think you will too. Say hello to Urban Ironbark, better known as red ironbark, grown in California and sourced from the urban forest as part of our innovative urban wood collaboration with West Coast Arborists. This wood is hard and dense, and sonically, serves up a bold sound that combines the rich, piano-like character of Indian rosewood, an ear-pleasing splash of midrange sweetness, and just enough damping to spread a smooth balance across the tonal spectrum. We love it so much we've chosen to showcase it on our redesigned 500 Series, paired with a torrefied spruce top and all-new appointments. Learn more in our feature story inside.