

Wood & Steel

***New
Taylor
Shape***

***New
Taylor
Sound***

THE GRAND PACIFIC

**{ How V-Class bracing inspired
a stunning new dreadnought }**

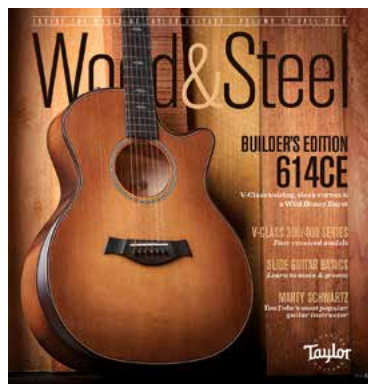
**The 2019
Guitar
Guide**

QUALITY
Taylor
GUITARS

**V-Class
Grand
Concerts**

Letters

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method I use for the students of any age. Electric, acoustic or resonator, he nailed it. Great job, Shawn!

Jerry Zubal
Lake Orion, MI

Taylor Runs in the Family

Thanksgiving always makes me reflect on what I am thankful for. I wanted to share a couple of those things with you – specifically, my Taylor 214, GS Mini, and the Taylor Road Show on October 26 at Parkway Music.

I have always wanted to learn to play guitar but had never made the time to do so. There had always been something “more important” to do, and I was not raised in a musical family. As I grew up, military life, then professional life, always got in the way. Now, as an alleged adult at 49 years old with five kids, I am finally learning. It is a struggle for sure, but I enjoy it. More importantly, our kids are taking an interest. Our second oldest grabs my 214 all the time. He has a gift! We got the GS Mini for our 11-year-olds (we have three of them) because they’ve showed an interest in learning to play, but the 214 was too big for them. It’s really neat to see them get the opportunities I never had, and amazing to see their talent grow far faster than mine ever could.

The Road Show turned out to be even better than I imagined. I was really impressed with the presenter, the artist, and the whole structure of the presentation. I learned a ton and really enjoyed the time! I fell in love with the T5z and the K24ce they played. I won’t ever be able to afford them, but maybe one of the five kids will. Your people put on a really enjoyable presentation and made me even more of a Taylor fan. I told several people about it. So, thank you! Your company is influencing the lives of several in our family, and I appreciate it.

Brian Ferdinand
Mechanicville, NY

Endeavors in Ebony

It has been truly inspiring to follow the Ebony Project on the Taylor website. What would seem an insurmountable mountain to climb has been achieved by Bob Taylor and the team

of experts he has gathered together to move the project from an embryonic thought to reality. I truly admire all those who have had the perseverance to see this project through so far.

Looking at my 15-year-old Taylor 414ce, though it predates the Ebony Project, I’m sure the seeds of this project, and indeed the whole concept of ethical trading and sustainability, were present in Bob’s thinking even then. The fingerboard on the 414ce looks as good as new, making it a joy to play – and it looks no older than my 456ce, which is only three years old. Synthetics have yet to be proven viable replacements in guitars (reference “Ask Bob,” Winter 2016). It just makes sense to use natural resources that are both renewable and sustainable above using synthetics, which eventually contribute to pollution.

The Ebony Project raised the living standards of the workforce and their families in a developing country (which must be applauded), and I hope the effects ripple out and challenge other companies to be inspired by what Taylor has achieved. Thank you, Bob, and your team, for having the original vision and tenacity to see the project through so far – not to forget the team in Cameroon for sticking with it, embracing new challenges and developing new skills. And thanks to all at Taylor for crafting such wonderful guitars and always working to improve them. With V-Class now established, one wonders, what’s next?

Frederick Weymouth, UK

Sonic Evolution

This is the first time I’ve written in the 23 years I’ve been a Taylor owner. I probably enjoy the “Ask Bob” feature as much, if not more, than anything in each issue of *W&S*. I always read it first. I read the latest with interest, and while I won’t profess any expertise in understanding the technology involved in bracing, your response regarding X-bracing versus V-Class was very clear to me. I think your comments regarding concerns about X-braced guitars becoming “worth less or worthless” were spot-on. Case in point: I bought my first Taylor, a 412, in 1995. I loved it then as much as I do now. Taylor has certainly made changes to the 412 over the years; for example, mine has the old bridge style. I don’t play this guitar as much now (I haven’t

been performing these past four-plus years), but every time I take it out of its hardshell case, it is almost dead-on in tune and its tone sounds superb. That’s with maybe three to four months (or more) between playing sessions. So that speaks well to two things you discussed in the latest *W&S*: the quality of the X-bracing in older guitars and the natural aging and seasoning of the wood while it’s biding its time in its case. It’s a gem of a guitar. It’s actually Taylor’s fault that I don’t play it as often anymore. In 2014 at a Road Show event, I played a mahogany-top 2013 GS Mini – and bought it. After 40 years of only owning and playing spruce-top acoustics, this mahogany-top opened up a new world of tone for me. It, too, is a gem of a guitar.

Paul Graham
Worthington, OH

A Lucky Find

Back in 2012, I was eagerly looking for a quality acoustic guitar. The one I had been playing for years was OK, but I had reached a professional level and needed a professional-level guitar. I had played a few Taylors at the NAMM booth in Anaheim and was impressed not only with their sound and feel, but with the fact that all the models were available left-handed. I went to a few different dealers and decided to look on Ebay. Luckily, there was a brand-new left-handed cedar-top 714ce available for a really good price! I made a connection with the seller and found out why he was selling it so cheaply. About a month after he bought the guitar, Hurricane Sandy had ravaged the New York and New Jersey shores, and this poor guy had lost everything. As much as he hated to get rid of it, he really needed the money to get his life back in order. I assured him that his guitar was going to a good home. As the guitarist in Queen Nation, a musical tribute to Queen, I play over a hundred shows a year across the U.S., Canada, and Mexico. I told him, “Your guitar is going to make a lot of people happy.” In the six years I’ve owned “Sandy,” we’ve made people smile, cheer, and even shed a tear or two during “Love of My Life” and “Is This the World That We Created.”

Somewhere around the globe tonight, Sandy and I are onstage together and will continue making people happy for many years to come.

Mike McManus

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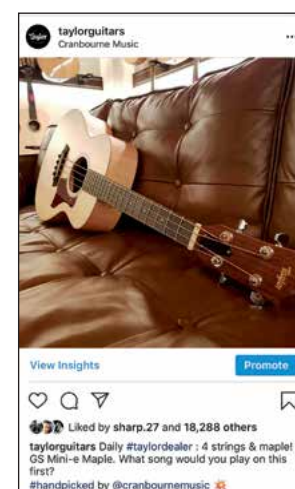
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The Grand Pacific

Think you know the Taylor sound? Think again. Powered by V-Class bracing, our versatile round-shoulder dreadnought brings an inspiring new sonic personality to the dreadnought category and the Taylor line.

COVER PHOTO: BUILDER'S EDITION GRAND PACIFIC 517E, FEATURING A WILD HONEY BURST TOP

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“

I've never felt as connected to a Taylor as when I played the 517 for the first time.

”

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Kurt's Corner

New Year, New Frontier

As I write this on December 1, we're ending a year of unprecedented growth and success. The acceptance of Andy's remarkable V-Class design has been off the charts. We've exceeded every production and sales goal we had set for 2018, and achieved our highest-ever annual sales by November, with a month still left in the year.

This amazing year was due, first and foremost, to Andy's V-Class design, which has resulted in a more inspirational musical instrument. However, in a sense, the design is just the beginning. We had to patent the design and name it. We had to design and fabricate the tooling in order to make the guitars. We had to design the models, price them, and develop a release plan. We had to learn how to make the new guitars and teach our craftspeople. We had to craft our marketing message, and share it broadly with media and influencers. And that's just the start.

We had to monitor actual sales to consumers from retailers, and continuously throughout the year adjust our forecast for consumer demand, and adjust production. This meant more hiring and training, and the procurement of a lot more materials and supplies than we'd conservatively estimated (wood, tuners, you name it). Everyone pulled together and made it happen. Company-wide, we all rolled up our sleeves, and made and sold

thousands more guitars than we'd originally planned for. Still, in the end, we left a lot of demand unfilled.

It's nice to have a year like this now and then, because your results don't always exceed your expectations. A huge thank-you goes out to everyone at Taylor for going above and beyond, and achieving a year of amazing market acceptance of a groundbreaking new guitar design! Of course, another big thank-you goes out to the extended Taylor community, including our dealers, guitar owners, and vendors, for your enthusiastic support.

Now we turn our focus to 2019.

We're about to release our newest guitar, the Grand Pacific dreadnought, which was actually Andy's original application of the V-Class concept. The Grand Pacific is a completely different style of guitar from anything we've made before. Taylors have always been a modern acoustic guitar, and not an acoustic guitar that would necessarily appeal to traditionalists. The Grand Pacific is not a guitar that Bob himself would have designed. Bob has always designed guitars that pleased his ear, and our company was built on the popularity of his designs. But the Grand Pacific really puts a foot in a different world for us – it's a style of guitar and a sound we haven't participated in, until now. Most importantly, it's our own unique design, our own sound; it's not a copy of or an improved version of any other guitar.

Our goal with the Grand Pacific is to reach new players who may not have considered a Taylor before because we hadn't made the right guitar for them yet. It also offers a new sound and feel to those who already play Taylor. We hope to broaden the market and inspire new music with it. I hope you have the opportunity to play one.

The last few years have been a lot of fun for me, and educational, as I've traveled around the world meeting and visiting with our retail and distribution partners. It's been interesting to observe firsthand the similarities and differences in the cultures and guitar markets from one country to another. It's always fun to meet people shopping for a Taylor, who've just bought a Taylor, or who are playing a Taylor, whether in Europe, Asia or some other part of the world. I look forward to continuing my travels, and if I'm lucky, maybe our paths will cross somewhere.

– Kurt Listug, CEO

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Bob Speak

Making Things Better

I'm writing today from Cameroon, where we're working on our sawmill, fixing things, training staff, solving problems. Plus, we're working on our house, and today we're putting the last touches on our new kitchen, which we shipped from the U.S. after designing and buying it at Home Depot. There's nothing like that here, and boy, do we appreciate having all the choices we have at home. We've lived in this rented house for seven years, amounting to more than 30 trips for me and many of my team, and this year we decided it was time to improve our home life while here. There are also three other teams who come often, apart from me and the mechanic team, so the house gets a lot of use. Accompanying me for the first time on this trip are Ed Granero, VP of Product Development, and Chris Wellons, VP of Manufacturing. They've each worked at Taylor for about 25 years, having started at the age of about 20, and it's great that they've joined our regular team this time to see firsthand our ebony efforts. Today, though, they're painting walls and installing cabinets. They know how to make things. Good times at the house on this trip.

I had my first grandchild this year, a boy, and man, I love that kid! The feeling of grandkids is so different than the feeling of your own children. If you've experienced that or observed it, you may be able to understand me using it as an analogy for how I

feel about Andy's guitars. To me, his designs and innovations to my Taylor guitars are almost like grandkids to me. I love them in a way that's quite different than the way I loved my designs.

This year we introduce the new Grand Pacific guitar. I've been seeing, hearing and playing the prototype versions for about four years. I've also seen how much Andy loves them. This guitar is like his child, with lots of genetics from the guitars I made but clearly reflecting what Andy loves in a guitar. What's really fun is to watch the reaction of players as they try it for the first time, or their comments after having one in their hands for months on stage, on the bus, or in the studio. It elicits comments that use the entire spectrum of words, some which would cause my mom to wash my mouth out with soap if I said them, even though they're being used as a compliment. The point is that it has really impressed them and continues to impress. Even dyed-in-the-wool Taylor critics have perked up and said, "Now that's a guitar I want to play!"

I just sit back and smile. Like a proud grandpa.

But I'm hardly retired. There is so much to do in the area of our work with ebony and koa, as well as all the other sourcing of wood. You hear me talk about ebony frequently. That's because I invest so much of my time in it. Koa? It's going great, and thanks to my partner in that project, Steve McMinn

of Pacific Rim Tonewoods, I really don't have to do much. He's brilliant and is guiding that business and the replanting and reforestation with incredible results. We acquired a parcel of land in Hawaii in March of 2018, about 600 acres, and Steve, along with our forestry and planning teammates Nick Koch and Bob Rose, have produced a reforestation plan that will allow us to start planting in mid-2019 and complete the entire property in eight years, with about 150,000 trees planted, some for timber production and some for restoration. But the entire site will eventually establish a pretty authentic native habitat and hopefully inspire others to do likewise.

Another project I've been working on with Scott Paul, our Director of Natural Resource Sustainability, is to tap into what we call Urban Forests. There seems to be potential there, and I hope you hear me talking more and more about it. Right now it's in the discovery phase. You'll hear as we go along if it works or doesn't work, but there are so many trees of mature size being removed each year from urban areas because the trees have either reached their end of life, or have become a danger, or have been killed by a disease or pest, that I can't believe that we cannot put some of them to use. It's an enormous, breathtaking volume of timber, in fact. Andy is particularly interested in this idea because he knows that in the early

2019 Taylor Factory Tours & Vacation Dates

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

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

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

We look forward to seeing you!



Factory Closures

Monday, February 18 (Presidents' Day)

Monday, May 27 (Memorial Day)

Monday, July 1- Friday, July 5
(Independence Day/Company Vacation)

days guitars were always made with local woods, something growing in the backyard so to speak. It's only more recently that we've gone out of our way to obtain the rarest and most exotic species. But as those species become impossible to procure for a long list of reasons, we feel really good about the idea of using species that are closer at hand. This could get interesting!

I hope you all get a chance to play a new Grand Pacific before long.

We're working hard to get them produced in quantities that allow that to happen. Meanwhile, I'll work on resources for more sustainable supplies of quality wood for guitars with the goal to transition into helping the environment rather than hurt it. I think we're off to a good start.

— Bob Taylor, President

Ask Bob

Mexican-made guitars, GS Mini string gauges, and ebony coloration

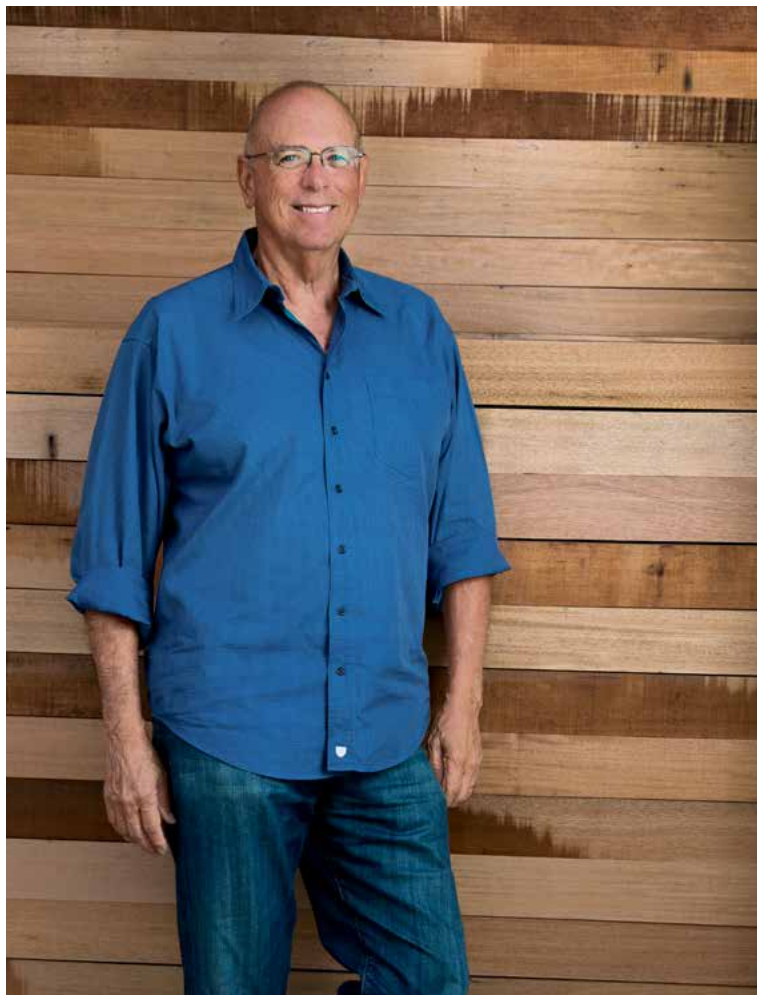
When I retired a couple of years ago, I decided to catch up on a lifetime ambition and learn to play the guitar. I took advice and bought a beautiful Taylor 114ce. As I've slowly improved, this guitar sounds better and better. I also enjoy reading *Wood&Steel*, but perhaps understandably, you never focus on this model, although there must be many improving guitarists like me who enjoy playing them. I also own a fine Takamine mahogany-bodied guitar, which has a deeper tone.

As the Taylor is made in Mexico and the Takamine in China, are there any fewer quality controls in their manufacture than in your California factory? I appreciate that you can't speak on behalf of Takamine, but I would be interested in your comments regarding Taylor guitars built in Mexico.

I hope to upgrade to a better Taylor shortly and would welcome any advice on what would be a good next step.

Mike McKortel
England

Thanks, Mike, I appreciate your question. In a word, no, there are no fewer quality controls in our Mexican factory compared to our U.S. factory. In fact, our fundamental viewpoint on this topic is that our least expensive guitars must be our best guitars because there's no financial margin there for problems to occur. It may sound backwards to people, but let's take an example. If a less expensive Taylor has a bridge come off, or the frets buzz because of a bad neck, that will likely be covered under the warranty. Then we have a situation where the cost of the repair could approach the cost of the guitar. But a guitar that has a high price tag can afford a warranty claim. So we put the same quality into our Mexican-made guitars as we do in the U.S. Beyond some bracing distinctions, the main differences between them are the materials, the solid wood construction (U.S.), the complexity of the finish, and the bindings and inlays. The U.S. guitars take much longer to make and have more detail. But the drying of the wood and the method of neck building and body building are either identical or perhaps even more advanced in Mexico. I've told people that our factory in Tecate, Mexico, is in my opinion the



nicest guitar factory in the world. You should see it! Our people are engaged, and our U.S./Tecate managers and other staff travel back and forth across our border daily and weekly, making the operation of both factories truly one unified effort.

I am a longtime Taylor fan and currently own four. My question/suggestion pertains to the strings that come on the GS Mini from the factory. I give guitar lessons as a way of giving back to my community (all proceeds go to local animal shelters). Several students/parents asked about a good all-around guitar. I recommend the GS Mini for just about everyone. It

is especially appropriate for some of my smaller students, and it's easy to carry place to place. I recently bought one for myself. My question: Why don't these guitars come with lighter-gauge strings? My students complained of difficulty pressing the strings down. I re-strung both of these guitars with extra-light Elixir strings, and we really didn't notice that much of a volume difference, but the playability of the guitars increased substantially. I had to adjust the neck for them. The playability vs. the minimal volume loss made it a no-brainer for me when I bought my own GS Mini. I'll keep my heavier strings on both of my full-size acoustics, but the lighter strings make more sense on a guitar that is suited for beginner play-

I recently bought a Taylor 214ce, which has some striking bear claw [spruce] features. I was wondering if this will have any effect on sound quality and soundboard durability. Is it more prone to cracking or warping?

Dave

No, Dave, this doesn't negatively affect the sound or durability of the top. You can relax and enjoy playing the guitar. This is merely a wiggly feature in the wood itself, and many find it to be very beautiful. Some people say it makes it sound better, although I don't agree. But it certainly does not make it sound worse. We've made many hundreds, or thousands, of guitars using this wood.

ers. Having a guitar that is playable is very important! Just my humble opinion.

Dave Southall

Dave, we, too, believe in easy-playing guitars, and our design allows the strings to be changed and the neck adjusted, not only by use of the truss rod for straightness but also with our patented neck angle system. So each guitar can be made to fit any player, whether they are a beginner or advanced. We have to choose something that we feel hits the average player when the guitar leaves the factory, and with the Mini, we chose medium-gauge strings in part because we felt they intonated best with the guitar's shorter scale length. Some owners then put on lights,

some put on extra lights, and some never change. This year we will produce over 45,000 GS Mini guitars, or about 200 each day, and they go to all kinds of players all over the world. I hope you continue to recommend this guitar to your students, and it's a huge service to us that you are willing to help beginners set up their guitar for just what they need. Thank you for getting students off to a good start!

I've owned two Taylor guitars (414ce and 814ce) and love them both. Now I'm taking a hard look at purchasing a new V-Class model and plan to try a few. The one I'm focused on is the Builder's Edition K14ce. It's a beauty,

but I noticed it does not have a pickguard. Every guitar I've owned since I was a kid has had a pickguard, so the lack of one causes me a little concern as I tend to have a more aggressive attack when I play (about a dozen gigs per month). Are my concerns overblown, or can a pickguard be added locally from the dealer I purchase from? I don't want to cause any cosmetic damage.

Tim Anderson
Prescott, AZ

Tim, if you buy that Builder's Edition K14ce you'll be getting a very fine guitar. First, I'll say that you can easily install a pickguard, either at your dealer or even yourself. They're just peel-and-stick. If you find that you scratch the guitar you can add it. Having made so many guitars, we know that very few people actually play in a way that gouges the top, so when we feel the look or the tone of a model is enhanced by omitting the pickguard, we make that choice. I might add that players have a vast array of feelings concerning how perfect their guitar looks. Some players want their guitar to look like the day they bought it, and others prefer natural wear to show. With the K14ce, you definitely have room to change that to your own liking.

After 40 years of not being able to play because of psoriasis on my fingertips, I finally was able to take up the guitar again after chemotherapy nuked my immune system and did away with the psoriasis. I celebrated by purchasing a Taylor 114 and, through the magic of online videos, finally learned to play many of the Travis-picked folk-pop songs I grew up listening to.

I love the 114, but I find myself longing to play a 12-string again. The 362ce, in particular, has caught my eye. I was about ready to pull the trigger on one when I learned that Taylor had come out with V-Class bracing. I put the purchase on hold, hoping against hope that V-Class bracing would make it into Taylor's 12-string lineup. Is this a vain hope? I understand that the tension of 12 strings puts a terrible strain on a guitar's top, and I don't know if the V-Class bracing would stand up to it. Will the magic of V-Class resonance and intonation ever make its way to the 12-string world?

John McCoy

Yes, John, V-Class bracing will find its way to 12-string guitars, but I can't say the actual date as I'm not sure at this

time. V-Class is very strong, stronger than X-bracing. If you remember, or if you've seen any of the articles on V-Class, you'll know that this bracing makes the top more stiff and more flexible at the same time. The extra stiffness helps enhance sustain, and that stiffness is in the direction of the neck and strings, so it's great for a 12-string and the added pull on the top. The extra flexibility comes in the side-to-side rocking motion, which increases volume. And together they improve intonation and equal sonority as you play on different areas of the neck. And it all works very well on a 12-string.

I read your interesting comparison of two 20-year-old guitars, one cased, one uncased, in the Fall 2018 issue of *Wood&Steel*. Have I made a mistake by keeping my 1996 412 in its case these 22 years? Every new guitar I've ever owned came with instructions to keep it in the case when not in use, and I always have.

Andy Buschmann
Batesville, AR

I'm glad you asked, Andy. I do still recommend that you keep the guitar in the case when you're not playing it. I also recommend that you play it as much as possible. I was just trying to state that a guitar that experiences the changes in climate, even while not being played much, sounded better than a guitar that was cased and not played much. It was a way to isolate one of the many factors that makes a guitar sound better with age. I meant it as a data point, not a recommendation. Play your guitar. Store it in the case. If you hang it on the wall instead, along with that better sound might also come a crack, or swelling that hurts it. So it's a trade-off. I have the advantage of being able to know from the weather when I need to protect a displayed guitar in my house or office. It's ingrained in me, so maybe I should have said, "Don't try this at home." I might add that the cased guitar doesn't sound bad. I haven't made it worse; it's just that the guitar that was toughened and tanned by climate has a little extra something.

While reading last issue's "Ask Bob" my heart stopped! The last question in volume 92 was about a sinker redwood top for a custom 12-string. The response explained that it can be hard to glue a bridge to redwood. I was terribly frightened. Three years ago I purchased a sinker redwood

custom 12-string. I absolutely love this music machine. It is my only Taylor and has taken me on a wonderful musical journey. My brother, who owns two Taylors, and I have played together for years, culminating in a small band. I am the rhythm guy since my early years were spent being a drummer. At times I dive hard into the strings to highlight the percussive beat of our songs. But after this article I am spooked as to what could happen to my guitar. I have visions of the bridge flying off my beautiful redwood-topped guitar, reducing my one-of-a-kind 12-string to scrap! Tell me it ain't so, Bob.

Dave Lambert
Olympia, WA

Dave, let me talk you off the ledge. I didn't say that bridges come off, I just said they're more difficult to glue. It takes extra time and attention, and so we cannot make them in quantities, even if we did have the wood in quantities. You don't have to wear protective clothing or worry about the bridge flying off. Incidentally, I've just heard of a redwood log that might be for sale that would make a lot of guitars, even if we have to meter the production. Fingers crossed.

My name is Paolo, I write from Italy, and I am a happy and satisfied owner of a Taylor 710ce.

You probably have heard from the media about the wave of bad weather that hit Italy recently, causing serious damage. If you are not aware of it, among the areas most affected are the regions of Trentino and more specifically the Val di Fiemme and Friuli Venezia Giulia – more precisely, the Val Saisera. In both of these valleys grows the famous red spruce, used by Stradivari and Guarneri for the construction of their violins and still today by the best violin makers of Cremona.

The beautiful conifers that formed the "forests of the violins" have been torn down by strong storms, and it seems it will take at least a century before the landscape returns as before. Although tons of precious timber are being recovered before the deterioration begins, I fear that the number of trees knocked down is much higher than what could normally be used in the market, and it would be a pity to see the waste of the trees. For this reason, I wondered if this event, although sad, could be an opportunity for Taylor Guitars.

I am not a lute maker, nor an expert to guarantee that the wood of the Italian valleys is suitable for

your production, but this wood is notoriously used for stringed musical instruments. Perhaps the loss of those trees could still make sense, because they would live again as musical instruments.

Paolo Barbera
Seveso (MB), Italy

Yes, Paolo, we've not only heard of the event but also have investigated it. Much of that wood will make its way into musical instruments by way of the efforts of some timber companies in Austria and Italy. They are much closer than we are, and are better able to harvest it. Of the 1 million cubic meters of wood on the ground (300,000 trees), 70 percent is on public land and 30 percent on private land. Half the wood will be sold as timber and the other half donated for firewood. The timber will likely need to be airlifted out. This forest was planted after a great harvest during World War I to supply the military effort. It was planted as nearly a monoculture of Norway spruce (Val di Fiemme), which is a shallow-rooted tree. That means that when one tree falls it knocks over the next tree, and they all come down like dominos. While Taylor won't be involved in the harvesting, there are others who will naturally extract the valuable trees for instruments. This will happen quickly because the Italian authorities do not want them lying there and creating a fire hazard.

I have a couple of questions regarding wood choices. First, reading Andy's comments from his column in the last issue of *Wood&Steel* ("Rethinking a Flaw"), reminded me of you discussing making better use of ebony a couple years ago. In your piece, due to the scarcity of black ebony, you mentioned that you would be using more ebony that wasn't a consistent black, but showed some grain, for fingerboards. I thought it was a great idea, as I love some character in my fingerboard (I own a beautiful K24 with wood vine inlay), so I've been keeping my eye out for a Taylor with some beautiful grain in the finger-

board. But I haven't seen any yet. Did you give up on that idea?

Secondly, we were shopping for a nice ukulele for my daughter-in-law and playing various instruments when we were in Hawaii last year. We eventually decided on a beautiful Kanile'a koa model, but one of the ukes we were impressed with was made of mango wood (from another manufacturer). I found that wood very warm yet complex, with an excellent tone. It made me wonder if anyone has tried to use mango for building a guitar.

Bill Peterson
Sandy, UT

Thanks for asking, Bill. No, we haven't backed off that goal at all. In fact, we use more ebony with color than ever before, making up nearly 70 percent of the ebony we buy. That said, I'll try to solve your curiosity of why you aren't able to find a vast array of colors when you shop. At Taylor Guitars, our first coat of oil that is applied to a guitar fingerboard and bridge is linseed oil. We use it because it sets in the wood, whereas mineral oils evaporate. This first coat provides a long-lasting base that enables a player to then use fretboard oils that are available on the market without building up a finish, because they, too, evaporate. We don't recommend that customers use linseed oil because only one coat is needed, and we do that at Taylor. Linseed oil wets the wood, and since it sets and doesn't evaporate, it darkens the wood, not as a stain, but in the way that water darkens wood while it remains wet. So the colors just blacken. It requires almost severe amounts of color in the raw state to equal any color in the linseed-oiled state. This is something I wish other manufacturers would believe and adopt, because when our Crelicam partner, Madinter, sells ebony wood from Crelicam, they are constantly asked for the blackest of wood, of which there is little. But at Taylor we know that the less-black wood can be used, oiled and also satisfy customers.

I'm happy you bought a Kanile'a ukulele. Joe and Kristen make great ukes and are planting thousands of koa trees on property they purchased. That's the right idea!

Got a question for Bob Taylor?

Shoot him 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.

BRANCHING OUT



L-R: 512ce 12-Fret, 322e 12-Fret, 812ce 12-Fret

Our V-Class bracing expands to the Grand Concert and redefines the musical range of a small-body guitar

By Jim Kirlin

Andy Powers is parked on a stool in Taylor's design studio, arms wrapped around a mahogany/cedar 512ce 12-Fret, filling the room with a slow, sweetly plucked melody.

"This is a super cool little guitar," he says after a pause, the sustain from the notes still wafting across the room with an astonishing low-end presence that belies the body that produced it. "It's a little guitar with a big voice. You hear all this gorgeous charisma. The V-Class architecture allows every single note to be there, every note is in tune, and you get this warm, sweet character."

Over the next few minutes, Andy demonstrates the guitar's remarkable versatility, drawing a surprising breadth of musical flavors simply from subtle adjustments in his picking attack.

"You could play classical music with this and it would sound great," he says at one point. "But if you were to play anything kind of bluesy [he fingerpicks some funky folk-blues] it gives you a little nastiness, a little growl; there's so much responsiveness to how you play that string. If I wanted to strum a smaller guitar, I'd choose a 12-fret like this."

The last few months have been busy for Andy. He's been working closely with our product development team to get the new Grand Pacific design ready for production. Meanwhile, he's also been tailoring our V-Class bracing architecture for our Grand Concert guitars, including the one in his hands, making three Taylor body styles that will now sport our award-winning bracing to start 2019.

Adapting the bracing for the Grand Concert brought its own unique design challenges. For one thing, the smaller body meant less soundboard real estate on which to position the braces. Andy also had to create two distinctive arrangements – one for our 14-fret version, the other for the 12-fret, which features a different bridge location.

"The 12-fret is the most heavily altered so far," he says. "The angles, the placements, and profiles are different. And it's further tailored based on the woods used, because backs and tops are always working together as a system. When a material is changed, the whole design reflects that."

An Intimate Feel

Compared to Taylor's other body styles, arguably the most immediate impression of the Grand Concert – the smallest of our full-size shapes – is the player's physical relationship to the guitar (especially the 12-fret, with its shorter neck and more compact neck-to-body relationship.) The body's smaller footprint, including a slender waist and shallower depth (a quarter-inch slimmer than the Grand Auditorium), creates a natural feeling of intimacy.

“With those compact dimensions, it seems like you have a more direct connection with the guitar because it physically feels close to you,” Andy says. “Its voice will match that feeling. When you play a note, you feel like you have more control over it. You have a more articulate character to work with, and it’s super touch-sensitive. You can dramatically change the sound by playing with the pads of your fingers, choosing a different type of pick, or changing where along the string length you play. Those player-reflective qualities that people bring to a guitar are all heightened. It feels like a more personal guitar.”

Two Unique Voices: 12-Fret and 14-Fret

One of the notable effects of bringing the V-Class design to the Grand Concert has been a more dramatic differentiation between the tonal personalities of the 12-fret and 14-fret editions. Andy likens it to the voicing distinctions between our Grand Auditorium and the new Grand Pacific, which he talks about at length in our Grand Pacific story in this issue.

“Those are both workhorse guitars,” he says. “Both are broadly appealing, but in a way you could characterize them as ‘town and country’ in their different sonic personalities. You have your ultra-modern Grand Auditorium, and you’ve got your more venerable-sounding Grand Pacific.”

In a similar way, he says, the two versions of the Grand Concert diverge into two camps, in this case based on differences in neck length and bridge location,” he says.

“The GC 14-fret is a modern sound; call it the fingerstyle guitar,” Andy says. “It is so articulate in every note you play; it shimmers and chimes. That’s why fingerstyle players love them – every single note is vibrant, brilliant and precise. The 12-fret version is fascinating because moving the bridge position changes the way the guitar responds, and that’s true with the V-Class idea as well. You end up with this warm and friendly kind of sound.”

The V-Class framework has been a strong catalyst for Andy to build on the voicing refinements he’s brought to the Grand Concert over the past several years, starting with his overhaul of the 800 Series back in 2014. Those enhancements broadened its dynamic range, giving it a reputation as a guitar that, sonically, punches above its weight, especially the 12-fret. That’s truer than ever with the V-Class design. Strummers will find that both the 12-fret and 14-fret editions deliver a surprisingly powerful response.

“With the V-Class architecture, there’s more there – a longer sustain,

more volume, more carrying power out of that little guitar,” Andy elaborates. “The 12-fret versions have additional warmth and sweetness. If I wanted to strum chords, that’s probably what I’d choose first. It’ll make those chords pour out of the guitar in a big harmony. If I wanted to play some fingerstyle music or jazz or something where I want a vibrant, precise sound, I’d go with the 14-fret version. Its chime and articulation can’t be beat, in addition to having two extra frets clear of the body.”

body style make it harder than ever to sharply define the identities of certain guitars based on their traditional personalities. For example, the smaller resonant cavity of the Grand Concert body tends to emphasize higher frequencies a bit more, so it will often sit a little higher in an instrument mix. But with Andy’s V-Class design, these guitars produce a beautiful low end as well. Andy shares another example of their genre-bending characteristics.

“We had some guests come in from Hawaii, one of whom is a slack

sounded awesome. The sweetness and low-end warmth were just gorgeous.”

Certain fundamental tonal traits still hold true, like the natural effect of a hardwood top like mahogany on the sound compared to a softer wood like spruce or cedar.

“A mahogany top will take the initial attack and smooth it down, giving you this nicely compressed response,” he says. He uses the cedar-top 512ce 12-Fret as an example, strumming it with a hard attack.

“With this cedar top, there’s a raspy edge on the attack when I strum hard,” he says. “If I’m planning to play like this on a regular basis, I’ll want the hardwood top because I’d have the same body, the same warmth, the same sustain, but with that jagged edge smoothed out. I use the word ‘compression’ hesitantly to describe the effect because you might think you don’t want the sound to be squashed. If I want to play it with a lighter attack, no, I don’t want it compressed; I want the whole beautiful envelope of that note. But if I’m going to really wail on a smaller body, I want to trim that edge off to help keep it musical.”

That effect makes a hardwood-top Grand Concert a fun blues guitar.

“It shines the rust off the front edge of those popped and snappy notes,” Andy says.

As for the choice of cutaway vs. non-cutaway, ultimately it comes down to the preferences of the player. Andy does point out that because the 14-fret Grand Concerts lean toward a more modern sound with precise articulation, a fingerstyle player might gravitate toward a 14-fret with a cutaway, both for the tone and the full expressive range they get from the access to the upper frets. Among those who favor the 12-fret models, we’ve seen a slightly

higher preference for non-cutaway versions. It could simply be a reflection of the more traditional non-cutaway heritage of the 12-fret (especially with the throwback aesthetic of our satin-finish mahogany-top editions).

“I will say that with the warm, sweet character of these 12-frets, you get a little extra body without the cutaway,” he adds. “Musicians might not outwardly express that, but I think they somehow internalize it when they play them.”

As a final comparison of different Grand Concert variables within the line, Andy plays models featuring two classic tonewoods: a rosewood edition followed by a mahogany edition.

“Rosewood will always want to emphasize the harmonic structure that comes over the top of the note,” he says. “Where the mahogany guitar will sound warm and dry, this rosewood guitar is sweet and saturated. I can hear the sympathetic resonance and those strongly present harmonics in the notes I’m playing. In the past, I might object and damp them, but in this case, with V-Class, everything is so in tune, I like it. If I want to play ballads or I’m just playing by myself, I would probably choose rosewood because it just feels so gratifying to have that luxurious, rich harmonic content. [He fingerpicks the Beatles tune “In My Life.”] Even for a fairly sparse arrangement, the space is all filled. The mahogany is a little more fundamental-strong. So if I want a more sparse quality, or if I’m strumming chords where I don’t want too much harmonic content because it’ll start to obscure what I’m playing, I’d go for that.”

You’ll find our new V-Class Grand Concert guitars in stores starting in March. For full details, including photos, complete specifications and more, visit taylorguitars.com. **W&S**

“
With the Grand Concert, you can dramatically change the sound by playing with the pads of your fingers, the type of pick you use, or where along the string length you play. It feels like a more personal guitar.”

Many Flavors to Savor

From a design and tooling perspective, implementing the V-Class design for the Grand Concert has meant addressing the different variables across the line: 12-fret vs. 14-fret, cutaway and non-cutaway versions, and different wood pairings, including some hardwood-top models. The good news for players is the breadth of distinctive tonal nuances to choose from.

Our rollout plan is two-tiered. We’re leading with four series: the 800 and 800 Deluxe, 500, and 300 Series, which, together, encompass 17 different models. The 800 and 800 Deluxe Series feature a rosewood/spruce wood pairing; the 500 Series offers a choice of mahogany with cedar or all mahogany (12-string Grand Concert models from the series will get their own V-Class makeover later this year); and the 300 Series presents sapele/spruce and blackwood/mahogany options. Those models will be in stores starting March 1. V-Class Grand Concerts should be available in our other series by mid-year.

In some ways the tonal enhancements V-Class has brought to each

key player,” he says. “He was playing this 512ce 12-Fret, which is not what you typically would use. He had it down-tuned super low – a C Wahine tuning [CGDGBE] – way down there, almost baritone register. This little guitar

V-Class Grand Concert Models

800/800 DLX Series Rosewood/Sitka Spruce

812ce DLX
812ce 12-Fret DLX
812e
812e 12-Fret
812ce 12-Fret

500 Series Mahogany/Cedar (512) or All-Mahogany (522)

512ce
512ce 12-Fret
522ce
522e 12-Fret
522ce 12-Fret

300 Series Sapele/Spruce (312) or Blackwood/Mahogany (322)

312ce
312e 12-Fret
312ce 12-Fret
322e
322ce
322e 12-Fret
322ce 12-Fret



S H A P I N G A N E W S O U N D

**Powered by V-Class bracing, our
new Grand Pacific reveals an
inspiring new Taylor voice
that's unlike anything
we've ever offered**

By Jim Kirlin

Happy birthday, V-Class.

One year ago we proudly introduced our V-Class bracing architecture to the guitar world. Even with Taylor's track record of innovation, this breakthrough felt special. For one thing, our design guru, Andy Powers, had managed to crack the code on a nagging intonation problem that had plagued steel-string acoustic guitars since the advent of X-bracing. At long last the guitar top and the strings were able to play nice,

and the result of their more harmonious relationship was greater in-tuneness along the entire fretboard. Notes were stronger, clearer and more consistent from top to bottom. Guitars produced greater volume, projection and sustain, with enhanced all-around musicality. It was a sonic revelation that seemed to unveil a truer sense of what an acoustic guitar was intended to sound like.

That said, what *really* excited Andy about the V-Class design was its big-

ger-picture promise as a flexible new platform that freed him to shape an acoustic guitar's tonal character in unprecedented ways. If V-Class marked the beginning of a new chapter of Taylor tone, its rollout with our Grand Auditorium models this past year was merely page one. Welcome to page two, featuring a dramatic turn: a new Taylor body shape that reveals a whole new Taylor sound.

continued

There were good reasons for debuting V-Class bracing with our Grand Auditorium body style. As our most popular shape, it was the most familiar representation of the signature Taylor sound, which made it the ideal vehicle to demonstrate the sonic improvements of V-Class – providing a context that would be recognizable to most of the musicians we serve. Starting with our flagship shape also underscored our confidence in the virtues of the design, along with our desire to make it broadly accessible to players. Though we began the rollout at the top of the Taylor line, by mid-year V-Class was under the hood of every solid-wood steel-string Grand Auditorium we make in our El Cajon, California, factory (300 Series and up).

But we'll let you in on a little secret: Andy's earliest V-Class guitars weren't Grand Auditoriums. They were dreadnoughts.

Expanding the Frontier of Taylor Tone

To get a sense of the new tonal terrain Andy was eager to explore using V-Class, it helps to know that in the broader musical landscape of the acoustic guitar world, our guitars – most notably our Grand Auditorium – are generally known for having a distinctive tonal personality. Andy describes it as a modern sound.

"Think of a quintessential Taylor model like our 814ce," Andy says. "It's clear, vibrant, brilliant, articulate. Sonically, it feels like the equivalent of sunshine at midday – a bright white, pure light. These guitars are welcomed in studios all over the world; a lot of great music has been created with this sound. Together with other modern traits, many borrowed from the electric guitar like slim necks with low action, accurate intonation, cutaways and pickups, the Taylor sound works really well for a lot of music people want to make. I love it for that reason. But that's not the only sound that I love. I like different flavors."

Inspiration for a New Taylor Sound

One of the hallmarks of Taylor design, tracing back to Bob Taylor's earliest guitars, is that we've always been driven by our musical passions. It has been our North Star in terms of preserving our authenticity as a guitar company.

"We've never made guitars based on what we think people want to buy," Bob says. "We build things we're excited about and put them out there for people to discover and enjoy. No one asked for a better neck or for V-Class bracing. All the cool, innovative companies in the world make what they think is good."



Andy Powers with a Builder's Edition Grand Pacific in his home workshop

That's why Andy's arrival was important for Taylor. It was essential that as Bob and Kurt consider the future of the company, innovative guitar design remains a driving force in our evolution. Andy, of course, shares Bob's passion-driven approach to guitar making and since joining Taylor has continued to push our designs forward as our chief architect. But following his thorough tone-enhancing overhaul of our 800 Series in 2014, Andy began to wonder how much room was left for tonal improvement using the X-bracing framework.

You might recall that for the redesign of that series, Andy pulled out all the stops in terms of refining the guitar's material components to improve the acoustic sound. While the guitars were critically and commercially embraced, all the work that went into implementing the nuanced design improvements felt like

a heroic attempt to wring the last bits of tonal goodness out of an X-braced guitar. As Andy has shared in other V-Class stories, it felt like he'd reached a design cul-de-sac.

Fresh inspiration came a short time later, as Andy was making major renovations to his house. He was working nights and weekends, and listening to a lot of acoustic music. He found himself returning to the bluegrass records he'd first been exposed to while growing up and working alongside his dad, a carpenter.

"My dad grew up in Southern California as a long-haired hippie-surfer guy," Andy shares. "He got into the country-rock music happening in the Los Angeles area back in the late '60s and early '70s. My parents listened to the Eagles and a lot of the songwriters coming out of Laurel Canyon. They heard the Byrds turn into the Flying

Burrito Brothers with Chris Hillman. Before too long it led to old-time bluegrass. Those acts were bringing in musicians from a different era, different generation, often from Nashville. You'd see guys like Sneaky Pete Kleinow playing pedal steel in a modern country-rock outfit, and think, wow, that guy is really good; where did he get those melodies? So the acts we listened to soon turned into the Louvin Brothers, Flatt & Scruggs, Doc Watson, and *Will the Circle Be Unbroken* recordings."

In fact, Doc Watson plays into one of Andy's seminal musical memories: his dad took him to see Watson perform at a local venue when Andy was 6. Not only was Andy mesmerized by the sounds of Watson's virtuosic flatpicking, but he had a chance to meet Watson after the show.

"I remember asking him to sign my program, not realizing he was blind,"

Andy recalls. "He told me he was sorry but that he'd never learned to read or write, and then he rubbed the top of my head and said, 'Maybe some of this guitar picking will wear off on you.'"

Years later, as Andy returned to those familiar bluegrass records while working on his house, he was especially drawn to the character of the guitars.

"Those sounds are not modern," he says. "They don't have the modern personality of an 814ce. I thought, I'd really love to make a guitar with that maturity. It's different than the instruments we make."

Many of the flattop guitars played on those records were some version of a dreadnought, a workhorse guitar distinguished by its relatively wide waist. That extra girth in the midsection creates enough air capacity inside the body to produce strong volume and a pleasing low-end response. Those properties

came in handy back in an era before acoustic guitars were amplified.

"Historically, steel-string guitars sounded pretty twangy before that, so I imagine when musicians heard that low-end response and warmer sound out of a bigger guitar body, they found the response appealing," Andy says. "As a result, lots of guitars were made that way. And people have used them for all sorts of things – strumming chords, accompanying themselves while singing, fingerpicking, playing bluegrass. They became popular as all-purpose guitars."

A Sound Discrepancy

For someone with Andy's talents as a luthier, it would be fair to think he could simply build a guitar, perhaps a dreadnought, that could make those sounds he loves. But back in his pre-Taylor days of repairing and building instruments, he'd made an interesting discovery about the guitars used on those records. He restored older guitars for clients for many years, going back to his teenage years, and from his restoration research, he'd become deeply knowledgeable about the different brands, building techniques, and materials that distinguished the guitars of different eras. He had worked on and played some of the actual guitars used on those recordings he grew up listening to. And the sounds didn't match up.

"When I'd listen to the record and listen to the guitar that made the record, I'd think, this isn't the same sound. What gives here?" he recalls. "I'm playing *that* song, with the guitar that made it, or one just like it. It slowly dawned on me I was listening to those musicians after they had recorded in a studio. I'd been hearing more of a composite acoustic sound – the sound of the guitar with its issues dealt with. It was the sound of a guitar through a signal chain: a microphone, through EQ, onto tape, onto a record."

He began to ponder a design approach that would fix those sonic issues that normally had to be corrected in the studio. As it turned out, his thinking would intersect with the ideas that were already percolating around his V-Class design concept.

The "Puff of Air" Problem

One problem area with the sound of a dreadnought guitar is in its low-end frequencies. Andy describes the issue as the "puff of air" a guitar produces alongside the low-frequency notes.

"It's that *whoosh* sound that happens with a lot of large guitars," he elaborates. "It's the same air effect that happens when you say the letter P. We've probably all seen a picture or video of a vocalist in a studio with a wind screen or a pop filter in front of a

microphone. When you say the letter P or B, an explosion of air rushes out. [To experience this effect firsthand, see our sidebar, "Feel the Puff."] Guitars do the same thing, especially a bigger-body X-braced guitar with a broad waist like a dreadnought. When you play a big E major chord, you might think, that push of air feels cool – people describe it as the low end you feel but don't hear. While it can be a gratifying experience in some respects for the player, it ends up creating problems sonically – you can't mike it, you can't amplify it, you can't tune it, and when you play with other musicians, it gets in the way."

Typically in a recording environment an engineer will roll off those problem frequencies in the low end in an effort to tame the effect.

"They might set up a mike and discover the problem right around 100, 110 hertz, and they'll make that part disappear," Andy says. "That part is interfering with all the notes you're playing; it's throwing off your intonation or stepping on the vocal part, causing feedback when you amplify it, or causing interference with the rest of the guitar's response."

A typical X-braced dreadnought also has a tendency to build its low-end resonance at the expense of the middle and high-register notes.

"To create the puff of air, the dreadnought's body has to focus its effort at a fairly narrow frequency range," Andy says. "As a result, this narrow resonant spot effectively swallows up all the other notes, preventing the body from responding to them equally."

The effect is what people are usually referring to when they describe a dreadnought's low-end response with words like mushy, woofy, muddy, cloudy, fuzzy or squishy.

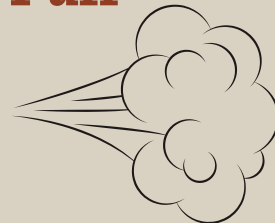
V-Class Unlocks New Possibilities

The intent behind what would become Andy's V-Class bracing design was to exert more control over the top movement – specifically independent control over two opposing ingredients that are both necessary to create a pleasing acoustic sound: movement and stillness. The top needed ample flexibility to produce good volume, while also providing enough stiffness to produce long-sustaining notes. If Andy could create a more orderly movement from the top, it was more likely that he could fix the puff-of-air issue by changing the sonic structure of the low end.

So the first guitar he made with his V-Class bracing prototype was one of Taylor's standard dreadnought models.

"I figured this is the closest appropriate Taylor shape I have to start with," Andy says. "So I built that first guitar and

Feel the Puff



Here's a way to palpably experience the "puff of air" effect that can create sonic problems with an acoustic guitar. Hold your hand, fingers together, vertically in front of your face with your palm toward you. With the tip of your middle finger lightly touching the end of your nose and the palm of your hand in front of your mouth, say the words "pop," and then "top," "shop" and "mop." In descending order, you will feel a decreasing amount of explosive air on the first letter. Now try this: With your hand in place, in rapid succession, say "pa-pa-pa-pa-pa." Then, with your hand in place, try humming "ma-ma-ma-ma." Which one sounds more musical?

"This is exactly what happens with a guitar," Andy explains. "The consonant and vowel sounds a singer makes are directly the result of harmonic content shaping a given amount of air. As listeners, sound as we know it can be reduced to pressure variation, usually in air. It's a physical phenomenon. That is true whether originating from a guitar, a loudspeaker, a horn or a human voice."

thought, wow, this is really interesting. Then I built another guitar with similar results, which really kick-started some serious thought."

Another sonic payoff of the more orderly top movement was greatly improved intonation. The more harmonious relationship between the notes also suggested a greater ability to shape the notes to define their character in different ways. But Andy realized that to achieve the acoustic sound he wanted, he needed to create a new version of the dreadnought shape.

"Our conventional dreadnought shape was good, but curves always have some limitations in the type of sound they'll make," he says. "The guitar I had in mind would produce a response with a broader reach. I knew I wanted to make something with the general width of a conventional dreadnought, but with the more versatile response I could get from subtle, more cohesive curves."

Those curves really matter, Andy says, because they determine the air volume inside the body (together with the body depth). Think of it as giving the guitar its lung capacity. And with their traditionally wider waist areas, dreadnought-style guitars tend to have a large capacity.

The Grand Pacific Body Style Is Born

The new body shape Andy created is probably best described as a round-shoulder dreadnought. The "dreadnought" classification gives people a familiar reference point, acknowledging the broader waist, while the "round-shoulder" designation helps distinguish it from the squared-shoulder style of dreadnoughts. Nonetheless, Andy feels reluctant to pin the dreadnought label on the guitar due to its differences in both shape and musical identity.

"I started with dreadnought-like dimensions and gave the shape new curves to help produce the sound I wanted," he says. "It has a little of a slope-shoulder look, sort of what Gibson used to call a jumbo. But these curves are not firm interpretations of any exact shape; it's its own thing."

Within the Taylor line, we're calling the new body style the Grand Pacific. "Grand" brings the body style into the shared naming convention with our other "Grand" body styles, while "Pacific" both suggests a big body and ties in with Taylor's California heritage.

The Shape of a New Sound

The combination of the Grand Pacific's body dimensions and the V-Class bracing structure gave Andy more independent control over different attributes of the guitar notes to shape

their tonal character in nuanced ways. The result is a noticeably different tonal personality from the familiar Taylor sound.

Andy demonstrates the sonic distinctions with an A/B demo that compares a V-Class rosewood/spruce Grand Auditorium 814ce – representing the classic, "modern" Taylor sound – with a rosewood/spruce Grand Pacific. He starts with the Grand Auditorium.

"There's a clear, articulate precision in every one of the notes," he says after arpeggiating a few chords. "If I were to draw a shape to represent the note – think of an EQ curve – each note on that guitar would have a triangular shape. When I strum chords, the notes are all in tune with each other, with beautiful harmony, and you can hear each note distinctly. It has a piano-like sound, where every note is well-defined and lives in its place. That's good. It works for a lot of modern music. It works amazingly well for a fingerstyle player or anybody taking cues from a pianist, playing contrapuntal stuff, or for someone fronting a band, doing a lot of rhythmic strumming. It's brilliant and vibrant."

He switches to the Grand Pacific and plays a combination of arpeggios and strummed chords.

"On this guitar, every note sounds and feels round and wide," he says. "The note's shape would look more like a bell curve. If I play a single note [he does], it's broad; it takes up a lot of space. The note is accurately pitched, but the shape of these notes will overlap and blend together with a comforting sort of harmony, creating a warm and seasoned sound. It's something our guitars have never had."

If the Grand Auditorium sound is the equivalent of sunlight at midday, Andy suggests, the Grand Pacific is like the light late in the day, closer to the "golden hour" that photographers love, when there's a warm glow to it.

A more musical analogy would be the difference in sound between a piano and an organ.

"The Grand Auditorium could be described as having a piano-like sound," Andy says. "You hear a distinct collection of individual notes harmonizing, even when you strum a chord. The Grand Pacific is more like the sound of an organ. When you play a chord, the notes blend into each other to create a unified harmony."

Grand Auditorium

Grand Pacific

Clear and vibrant	← THE OVERALL SOUND →	Warm and seasoned
Precise and focused (like a triangle)	← THE NOTE SHAPE →	Broad and round (like a bell curve)
Well-defined, with clear separation	← THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE NOTES →	Overlapping, smoothly blended

Clear Low-End Power

Beyond the different shape and relationship between the notes, arguably the boldest distinction of the Grand Pacific to many players will be its clear low-end power. Between the wide-waisted body shape and the role that V-Class architecture plays in controlling the harmonic structure, there's no woofiness. Consequently, that problematic puff-of-air effect is gone, which means the bass frequencies are more musical and more usable.

And that low-end power doesn't take anything away from the rest of the musical register.

"You get smooth, warmly powerful notes, with consistency across the entire frequency spectrum," Andy says. "This guitar has the parts I love about an old guitar, without the uneven areas that need to be fixed in a studio."

Andy is excited to get this guitar into the hands of players for a number of reasons. For one thing, it offers a new flavor of Taylor tone that he feels will appeal to a broad spectrum of players –

including those who typically don't care for the modern Taylor sound. And by capturing some of the qualities people love in a dreadnought-style guitar while also eliminating some of the problems, it offers players something uniquely compelling.

"I wasn't interested in building another version of an existing dreadnought," he says. "There are plenty of those guitars already. This guitar makes sounds that are deeply familiar yet unattainable with other guitars. It's the sound of a venerable acoustic guitar, revised to remove some sonic typos with the help of the V-Class framework"

A More Versatile Guitar

Another player-friendly aspect of Andy's design approach with the Grand Pacific is its sweeping versatility. By using V-Class bracing with the new body dimensions, he created an amalgamation of tonal characteristics that enable this guitar to feel equally at home in a bluegrass setting or a singer-songwriter's hands.

"This has the strength and power to be a great guitar for bluegrass, but it also has the clarity and playing comfort you'd find on a shorter-scale guitar, even though it's a 25-1/2-inch scale," Andy says. (For more on how different scale lengths impact the musical personality of dreadnought-style guitars, see our sidebar.) "This body's shape, size and air capacity land it right in the middle of the size range of acoustic guitars. I bet a lot of fingerstyle players would enjoy this guitar, as well as players strumming chords as a singer-songwriter, or people fronting rock and country bands or their worship teams. Because of its versatility, I think of it as a general purpose guitar."

Andy sees the Grand Pacific as a forward evolution of a dreadnought as a workhorse guitar. Over time, he feels it could prove to have as much all-purpose utility as our Grand Auditorium – possibly even more.

"If you think of the Grand Auditorium as the Swiss Army knife of the modern acoustic guitar world, the Grand Pacific is like the Swiss Army knife of a broader

acoustic guitar world," he suggests. "If you're a modern player, you'll probably like it. If you're a traditional player, you'll probably like it. If you're a fingerstyle player, you'll probably still enjoy it. If you're a rock player, or want to play some jazz on it, you'll probably dig it too. I'm curious to see what will happen because this guitar doesn't seem to be confined the way a dreadnought guitar can be."

His perspective is backed by the feedback he's received from the different types of players he has sent prototypes to beta-test over the past few years.

"The response was fascinating," he says. "Initially, I thought the traditional players will dig this. Well, they did, and they wanted to claim it for themselves – 'Finally you built one for me,' they'd say. But at the other end of the stylistic spectrum, the super modern players like Edge from U2 were saying, 'Yeah, I

flavor profiles – as different as chocolate and vanilla – and I wanted the sound to be the deciding factor for players."

As with the launch of V-Class bracing last year, Andy decided to celebrate the release of the Grand Pacific with a special Builder's Edition version, incorporating exclusive playing features that elevate the playing comfort to match the guitar's sonic virtues. The mahogany and rosewood models were obvious choices, so he designed them as Builder's Edition siblings. While enhanced playing features such as chamfered body edges are borrowed from last year's Builder's Edition offerings, the Grand Pacific editions boast other unique details, including a compound carve neck profile with rolled fretboard edges, a sleek new bridge shape, and more. (For the full rundown, see our Builder's Edition spotlight on page 16.)

“

This is the closest thing to a universally appealing acoustic guitar I think we've ever built.

”

like this one.' [The Edge played a Grand Pacific prototype on U2's most recent tour.] And all the modern fingerstyle folks were saying, 'Wow, I don't like dreadnoughts, but I love this guitar. This is great!'"

Grand Pacific Models

One of Andy's design specifications for the Grand Pacific was that it be a full-body guitar, without a cutaway. As a new Taylor shape, the Grand Pacific is identified with a different numerical distinction in its model numbering: All models will end in the number 7 (our traditional dreadnought models end in a 0).

With model offerings, we've kept things streamlined. Andy knew he wanted to make mahogany/spruce and rosewood/spruce editions – a nod to two of the most traditional guitar tonewood pairings – so he chose the 500 Series (mahogany 517) and 700 Series (rosewood 717). He also chose to make the two models with a shared appointment scheme.

"I didn't want to create any big distinctions beyond the woods," he says. "These are two wonderful but different

Andy also wanted to make the Grand Pacific immediately accessible to a broad segment of players, so he designed a standard model within our 300 Series (the entry point to our U.S.-made, all-solid-wood acoustic guitars and the beginning of our V-Class-braced guitars), made with sapele and spruce (317e).

The Grand Pacific shape will entirely replace our traditional Dreadnought shape in our U.S.-made line. That shape will continue within our 100 Series (110e, 110ce, 150e), Academy Series (Academy 10 and 10e), and Baby Taylor Series.

A New Guitar Case

To celebrate the new shape, sound and aesthetic of the Grand Pacific, we've also paired it with a new deluxe hardshell case design. Manufactured at our factory complex in nearby Tecate, Mexico, the exterior features a beautifully textured Western floral print in the vein of finely tooled leather. The case will come with every Grand Pacific model.

A Tale of Two Dreadnoughts: The Scale Length Difference

Historically, the dreadnought is without question an iconic body style in the steel-string acoustic world. In fact, for many people its shape is what they think of when they picture an acoustic guitar. Although its form has evolved and been re-interpreted by different guitar makers over the years (think square-shoulder vs. round-shoulder, for example), the design also can be divided into two separate camps based on differences in scale length. This distinction translates into two different musical personalities, as Andy explains.

"One is what we might call the longer-scale dreadnought," he says. "Think of a classic Martin. Depending on when they were built, they tend to be in the 25.35-inch to 25.4-inch range before string compensation, which is fairly long. For any given set of strings you put on there, there's a high amount of string tension, and it really drives the guitar. There's a lot of inertia in that string. When you get it moving, because it's under such strain, it pushes back, and you can get a powerful response out of it."

By contrast, other dreadnoughts, such as a slope-shoulder Gibson jumbo-style, usually have a shorter string length.

"Most are built with a scale length of what we call 24.75 inches, but in reality, it's more like 24.6, depending on when the guitar was made," Andy says. "That's a good three-quarters of an inch shorter. In the guitar-making world, this difference is enormous. As a result, with the same set of strings on one of those guitars, you have a lot less tension. It has a different preload on the top, and the inertia that the string has when a player articulates it is a lot different. It's not edgy, wound up, or shouting in your face. It has a more laid-back, loose, relaxed kind of sound."



A Guitar Guru Weighs In

If you're a vintage guitar enthusiast in the U.S., you know who George Gruhn is. If you've been to Nashville, you've probably made a pilgrimage to his store, Gruhn Guitars, one of the largest dealers of vintage instruments in the world. Widely respected as one of the foremost authorities on the history of acoustic guitar design, Gruhn has written several impeccably researched books and countless magazine articles about stringed instruments. Much of Gruhn's writing was soaked up by a young Andy Powers. In fact, by the time Andy was a teenager, he had already developed a reputation as something of a wunderkind in the local music community for his ability to repair vintage instruments, thanks in part to Gruhn's trove of published guitar information.

In recent years, as Andy's new designs for Taylor have made their way into the world and into Gruhn's hands (his store is an authorized Taylor dealer), Gruhn has gotten to know Andy better and expressed his respect for Andy as a builder. As a guitar historian, Gruhn offers a unique appreciation for how Andy's own voracious appetite for guitar history has informed his problem-solving innovations in guitar design, including V-Class.

"Andy understands design," Gruhn says. "He also understands tradition – the pathology of instruments: what doesn't work. When he designs a new guitar, he can look at the evolutionary systems that preceded it."

When Andy shared some of his Grand Pacific prototypes with Gruhn a couple of years ago, Gruhn was deeply impressed.

"They're some of the finest new guitars I've ever played," Gruhn says. "They're right up there with some custom luthier-built instruments that cost \$20,000 or more. These are more musical sounding than most luthier-built instruments. They're very special. With V-Class, all those discordant chords sound better."

Gruhn also called the Grand Pacific the most versatile Taylor he's ever played or listened to.

"Not just one personality, but a collection of characteristics.... You can play jazz on them; you can play blues on them; you can play simple, first-position Carter family or Woody Guthrie stuff. These guitars will do many, many things."

Gruhn liked the guitars so much that he offered to introduce them to some of Nashville's best players. Some weren't typically Taylor players. Then again, these weren't your typical Taylors. And many of the players were pleasantly surprised.

"Virtually every professional musician to whom I have shown the Grand Pacific guitars has said that they are the finest new Taylor guitars they have ever heard and that they are without question very fine quality instruments," Gruhn shares.

One artist was progressive banjo player and multi-instrumentalist Alison Brown, a Grammy Award-winning musician/composer/producer/entrepreneur and co-founder of Compass Records. Brown says she never really cared for the sound of Taylor guitars – until she played a mahogany/spruce Grand Pacific.

"The guitar felt so alive I thought it was going to jump out of my hands," she says. "You could play this at a bluegrass contest."



George Gruhn plays a Grand Pacific prototype in his store



L-R: Andy Powers and Alison Brown play a song together during a Taylor event at Gruhn's store

[New Model Spotlight]



L-R: Rosewood Builder's Edition 717 (natural top) and mahogany 517e (Wild Honey Burst top)

BUILDER'S EDITION 517 AND 717

The Grand Pacific's inspiring new sound is matched by a new level of playing comfort, thanks to a refined neck shape, bridge design and more

For the Builder's Edition Grand Pacific models, a deluxe-edition 517 and 717, Andy wanted to preserve the full-body design approach, meaning the guitars would not have a cutaway or armrest. But he did incorporate the chamfered body edges featured on Builder's Edition Grand Auditorium models, which adds comfort when the guitar is sitting in the player's lap. A new aspect of playing comfort he wanted to refine with these guitars was the neck profile as it progresses from the nut to the heel. This led to a new compound carve neck profile.

"I've long wondered why we make a neck with a single profile from one end to the other," he explains. "My hand position as a player certainly isn't the same as I move from the nut to the heel; why should the neck be the same? Down by the nut, a player's thumb will wrap around the neck more;

that's the way our hands naturally move. To make this comfortable, near the nut you'll notice the most subtle hint of a V you could ever feel. It's just barely there. But it's enough to feel right. As you move toward the higher positions of the fingerboard, your thumb position is closer to the middle of the neck; it's not wrapped as far around. For that reason, a V-shaped neck up toward the body seems uncomfortable. Players like it to be round up there. We call this a compound carve neck because the profile changes in shape as you go up the fingerboard to match the hand's natural playing position."

As part of that transition from a subtle V, players will feel more of a rounded C, which is visually noticeable in the round, ridgeless curve of the heel.

"When my thumb bumps into the heel I don't want to feel a point," Andy says.

Another subtle comfort feature that players will feel on both sides of the neck is a rolled fretboard edge.

"It feels like the guitar has already been played for a while; maybe refretted once or twice," Andy says. "That hard edge is simply gone."

New Curve Wing Bridge

Continuing the theme of player comfort, Andy refined the distinctive design of the Taylor bridge. In the same way that the edges of the body are chamfered off for comfort, he wanted to enhance the feel of the bridge against the player's picking hand.

"When my hand rubs up against the bridge, I want the sharp edges to be gone," he says. "This bridge is reminiscent of the original design, but it addresses your hand in a different way."

We're calling it the Curve Wing bridge. For now it will be offered exclusively on



these two Builder's Edition Grand Pacific models.

Silent Satin Finish & Wild Honey Burst

Like our other Builder's Edition models, these guitar bodies feature our Silent Satin finish treatment, inspired by the violin world, which blends a muted sheen with a pleasing feel that reduces the sound of player movement against the body (a benefit when recording into a microphone). Our Wild Honey Burst made its debut with our recent Builder's Edition 614ce. A careful color application process (also inspired by the look of violins) allows the color to penetrate the wood in a unique way that heightens the aesthetic appeal, artfully showcasing both the torrefied spruce wood grain and the depth in the color and giving the guitar a distinctively older look. The guitars are also

available with a natural top. On those versions, the torrefied spruce displays a pleasing look of an aged patina – the result of the special roasting process. Together with the Silent Satin finish, it lends an attractive sepia-hued warmth to the guitar top.

As for onboard electronics, both Builder's Edition models are available with or without a pickup (our Expression System 2). For Andy, it was important to offer a pure acoustic version of these guitars knowing that some traditionally minded players don't want a pickup. (In fact, one Nashville recording engineer told us if he sees a pickup in an acoustic guitar, he's less inclined to record with it because he views it as a stage guitar.) Players who purchase a Grand Pacific without electronics can always have a pickup installed at a later date. Our Customer Service department will be happy to do the installation

or recommend a Taylor-authorized service technician in their area.

Appointments

Andy chose to honor the traditional heritage of dreadnought-style guitars with elegantly understated appointment details. Rich-grained sapele binding beautifully accentuates the rounded edgeline, with alternating purfling lines of maple and black around the top. A related pattern of sapele, maple and black forms the rosette. One subtle difference between the mahogany and rosewood models is the material selected for the fretboard/peghead inlay; the 517 incorporates grained ivory, while the rosewood 717 features mother-of-pearl. Andy designed an Arrowhead motif inspired in part by inlay shapes that are ingrained in the traditional guitar world and by a friend's collection of found American artifacts.

Mahogany or Rosewood?

When comparing the mahogany and rosewood Builder's Edition models, the good news is that if you don't already have a particular tonewood preference, the distinctive sound profile of each makes it easier to decide. As Andy has pointed out, V-Class bracing helps create an even clearer delineation between the tonal character of each wood. As a basic rule of thumb, rosewood sounds "wet"; mahogany sounds "dry."

"Rosewood produces a unique harmonic complexity because it doesn't damp or mute any of the string's own harmonic content, and even adds some of its own," Andy explains. "As a result, every note you play has a thick, rich, luxurious character. It feels like it has a reverb effect blended into it."

Mahogany lives near the other end of the spectrum. The "dry" attribute

can be characterized as clear, woody and fundamental-strong.

"The note you play is the note you get," Andy says. This warm clarity is a wonderful thing for many musical applications. The two guitars have the same characteristics in some ways – they've both got the volume, projection, a fist full of power. But the actual sonority, the personality, is different."

Clockwise from top left: Chamfered body edges; a rolled fretboard edge; rounded, ridgeless heel contouring; the new Curve Wing bridge

Grand Pacific Models

- **Builder's Edition 517 / 517e**
(Mahogany/torrefied Sitka spruce)
- **Builder's Edition 717 / 717e**
(Rosewood/torrefied Sitka spruce)
- **317 / 317e**
(Sapele/Sitka spruce)

Builder's Edition Design Features at a Glance

- **Compound carve neck profile:** Designed to complement the way a player's hand position shifts as it moves up the neck, the profile subtly transitions from a slight V at the nut to a rounded C, with a rounded, ridgeless heel.
- **Rolled fretboard edge:** This is a subtle comfort feature that players will feel on both sides of the neck.
- **Chamfered body edges:** The rounded body edges enhance the playing comfort and feature traditional binding.
- **Curve Wing bridge shape:** Rounded edges and other refined contouring update our signature aesthetic and make the bridge feel more comfortable against the pick hand.
- **Silent Satin finish & Wild Honey Burst top:** A careful color application process allows the color to penetrate the wood in a unique way that heightens the aesthetic appeal. (A natural top is also available.)
- **New guitar case:** The Taylor-manufactured case features an aesthetic upgrade to a luxurious exterior that resembles tooled leather.

317e

Back/Sides: Sapele

Top: Sitka Spruce

Our 300 Series offered the most approachable entry point in the Taylor line to introduce the Grand Pacific, and Andy was eager to make it happen. As a tonewood, sapele's sonic characteristics live comfortably between the dry, clear, woody sound of mahogany and the complex, overtone-rich character of rosewood. Together with a Sitka spruce top, the Grand Pacific body, and V-Class bracing, the 317e makes an incredibly dynamic and versatile guitar. Players can expect all the fundamental virtues of V-Class – power, projection, sustain, consistent tonal output across the

tonal spectrum, pleasing in-tuneness – along with a blend of seasoned warmth that comes from Andy's voicing of the bracing with the body dimensions.

"You can do so much with this guitar," Andy says. "You can take it to your open mike night, to club dates and bar gigs, busk on a street corner, and play with friends."

Because of the clarity of the low-end frequencies, the guitar also will be less inclined to feed back in amplified settings. The clear sonic focus of the sound will benefit singer-songwriters playing solo and ensemble scenarios in other ways as well.

"This guitar will support vocals well," Andy says. "With the clearer, more balanced lower register, and without a dominant woof, you can immediately hear the benefit when playing with others – the guitar works really well in a broader musical context with other musicians. Play one of these guitars in a jam with friends and these will come through loud and clear."

The 317e shares the same appointment package with its sapele/spruce 300 Series siblings, including black binding, Italian acrylic Gemstone inlays – featuring a peghead inlay as an emblem of V-Class bracing – satin-finish back and sides with a gloss-finish top, and Taylor Expression System® 2 electronics.

Model Availability

Our rollout plan features an official in-store date of March 1. Initially our Builder's Edition Grand Pacific models (517, 717) will be sold through a limited number of authorized Taylor dealers worldwide, with broader availability coming later in the year. You can find a complete list of stocking dealers at taylorguitars.com on our Dealer Locator page starting March 1. Participating retailers will be flagged as a Grand Pacific Featured Dealer. We also plan to present Taylor "New Model Showcase" events at many of these stores to introduce our new models during the first half of the year. You'll find all the latest listings on the Events page of our website.

The 317e will be available through our entire dealer network starting March 1.

For more details on the new Grand Pacific models, including photos, videos, specifications and more, visit taylorguitars.com.



L-R: 317e, Builder's Edition 717e (natural top), Builder's Edition 517e (Wild Honey Burst top)

Gruhn on Tone

5 Types of Balance

In September, Taylor hosted a media preview event for the Grand Pacific in Nashville, and one of the stops during the day was Gruhn Guitars. The visit was designed as part panel discussion, part guitar demonstration, as George Gruhn, Andy, and banjo/guitar player Alison Brown talked about how the Grand Pacific fits into the musical landscape, with both Gruhn and Brown sharing their perspectives and Andy and Brown playing a few songs together. Along the way, Gruhn shared his litmus test for evaluating the quality of an acoustic guitar, and how the Grand Pacific measures up. As he explains below, he listens for five different types of balance.

1 Balance of Volume:

"This is what a lot of people think of, that each note and each string should be equal in volume."

2 Balance of Sustain:

"You hit a chord. Do some strings ring longer than others? If so, then they're not really balanced. They should be equal in sustain, and the notes up and down the board should be fairly equal in sustain so it's controllable."

3 Balance of Dynamic Range:

"I want to be able to hit the note soft, medium or loud. I want to have an instrument that I can drive really hard but that also sings beautifully medium or softly because the tone is different; not all music is monotone. When people speak or sing, it would be boring if they did everything at exactly the same volume in a complete monotone. So the instrument should have dynamic range."

4 Balance of Complexity of Tone:

"Every note has a fundamental note, and it has harmonics above and below that fundamental. It's important that you don't have rich, beautiful basses with tinny trebles, or beautiful singing trebles and lackluster basses. So there's a real challenge to have a guitar that's balanced throughout."

5 Balance of Clear Articulation:

"Some instruments may have crisp, clear trebles and thuddy, thumpy, fuzzy basses, or vice-versa. You can still have different voices – the fact is, an archtop doesn't sound the same as a flattop, and a rosewood guitar doesn't sound the same as a mahogany guitar."

The Verdict on the Grand Pacific:

"If a guitar is lacking any one of those five [types of balance], it's not as good as it could be. These Grand Pacific guitars are among the very few new guitars that truly can perform in all five tests."

Early Artist Reactions

Last summer in Nashville, award-winning country and rock producer/guitarist/songwriter Dann Huff (Keith Urban, Thomas Rhett) and his brother David (drummer/songwriter/producer) had a chance to test-drive Andy's V-Class guitars for the first time, including a Grand Pacific. They started with a rosewood Grand Auditorium 714ce.

"The intonation is just beautiful," Dann says after strumming a few chords. "You can hear the difference."

Then he picks up the Grand Pacific and strums one chord. The stunned expression on his face is priceless.

"This is incredible," he says.

David agrees.

"The intonation speaks for itself," he says. "This [Grand Pacific] isn't quite as hi-fi as these [V-Class Grand Auditoriums]. It still has that Taylor signature to the sound, but it's a totally different space. It's a little bit more traditional. You came to the right town to show this thing. Wow. My prediction: That's gonna blow the doors open. That's a game changer."

"Yeah, that's a game changer right there," Dann adds.

Singer, songwriter and multi-instrumentalist Sean Watkins, perhaps best known for his tenure with the Grammy Award-winning progressive bluegrass act Nickel Creek, has been playing a rosewood Grand Pacific and loves the sound.

"It's really, really fun to play," he says. "And it records insanely well."

Watkins, who has been friends with Andy since they were kids, first had a chance to play the guitar at a songwriters-in-the-round event at Nashville's legendary Bluebird Café back in September (as part of a media event sponsored by Taylor), and was smitten. Since then he's played it at other live shows.

"You've probably been hearing this a lot from people, but it is really quite a breakthrough guitar," he says. "I've showed it to a bunch of people and everyone has kind of freaked out about it. Jackson Browne really liked it, and Glen Phillips really loved it. He said he's been hearing a lot about them and was so excited to get to try mine at a show we did together the other night up in Santa Barbara."

Phillips, of Toad the Wet Sprocket fame, confirmed his appreciation with Taylor artist relations director Tim Godwin. It's worth noting that in the past the Taylor sound hasn't been Phillips' cup of tea.

"I have played two of the new guitars now," he shared. "They are amazing. Sean had one at the show we played last night. They're beautiful!"

In October we sent producer Marshall Altman (Kenny Wayne Shepherd, Frankie Ballard, Will Hoge) a 517 and 717 to use on a recording project with the Josh Abbott Band. They tracked at Sonic Ranch, an in-demand multi-studio/residential complex located near El Paso, Texas, that's loaded with an amazing collection of music gear.

"In a studio full of amazing vintage acoustics, the guitars we couldn't beat and kept going back to were the new Taylor 717 and 517," he says. "Absolutely amazing. Full of life and magic from the moment we pulled them out of their cases."

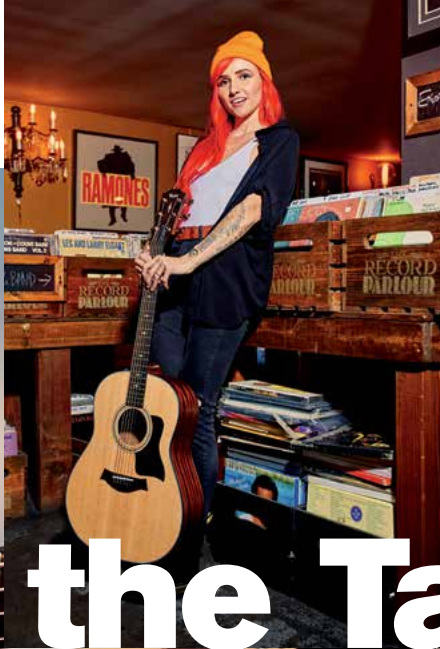
Songwriter/producer/guitarist David Saw (Natasha Bedingfield), a Taylor player who's been working with producer Linda Perry on a recording project with Dolly Parton, has enjoyed getting acquainted with a Wild Honey Burst 517.

"First of all, it looks stunning and has lovely smoothed edges," he says. "I've fallen in love with how easy it is to play. The sound is balanced and vintage sounding, and the intonation is perfect – it holds its tuning like no other acoustic guitar I've played. When I take this guitar out of its beautiful case around other guitar players I've been asked many times, 'What is that guitar?' When I say it's a Taylor, most people's reaction is, 'Really? That looks nothing like a Taylor guitar.' This is a guitar that attracts players who wouldn't normally lean towards Taylors. I absolutely love this guitar."

The 517 also made a great first impression on Michael League, a Grammy Award-winning composer, producer, arranger, vocalist and multi-instrumentalist, bandleader of the New York based instrumental band Snarky Puppy and the international music ensemble Bokante, and owner and founder of the record label GroundUP Music. League was out on tour with David Crosby when he got his first taste of the Builder's Edition during a tour stop in San Diego.

"I've never felt as connected to a Taylor as when I played the 517 for the first time," he said afterward. "The sound has all the brilliance of the brand's history but with a rich, dark color that inspires you to play in way that most guitars don't."

He also loved the feel of the neck. "I was struck by how the guitar felt in my left hand, as if someone had carved the neck according to my own physiology. It's a remarkable instrument." **W&S**



A Guide to the Taylor





EXPLORE OUR LATEST ASSORTMENT OF GUITAR PERSONALITIES



Guitar Line



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

From Bob Taylor's earliest guitars to Andy Powers' latest designs, our goal at Taylor has always been the same: to make the playing experience more inviting, and more inspiring, to anyone who might be inclined to pick up a guitar.

We think guitars should be comfortable to play. They should create pleasing musical sounds. They should allow your musical expressions, whatever they may be, to come through as naturally as possible. From easy-playing necks to V-Class bracing, every Taylor innovation has been fueled by our desire to remove the obstacles to an enjoyable playing experience.

In the pages ahead we present our latest guitar lineup, although the truth is that the Taylor line will continue to evolve throughout the year – and we wouldn't have it any other way. For those of you who are longtime Taylor owners, thank you for including us in your musical journey. We hope our guitars continue to stoke your musical passions. If you're a newcomer, welcome! We hope to help you understand more about guitars and choosing a model that will inspire you for years to come. Guitars, like guitar players, come in many different styles, and we think our robust model selection offers something for every type of player.

If you're already familiar with the Taylor line, you may notice a few updates for 2019. The biggest additions, covered in feature stories elsewhere in this issue, are the debut of our Grand Pacific body style and the inclusion of V-Class bracing in Grand Concert models. You'll also see a new tonewood pairing within our Presentation Series (figured blackwood and Adirondack spruce), along with a change from our beveled armrest to the radius armrest in both the Presentation and 900 Series. We're also pleased to introduce a maple edition of our GS Mini Bass.

As always, you'll find complete specifications, photos, descriptions and pricing* for all of our models at taylorguitars.com. Also, we'll be introducing our Grand Pacific at a series of in-store New Model Showcase events starting in March, with our fun and informative Road Show events continuing later in the year. Be sure to check the Events page on our website for a date and location near you. And as always, if you have guitar questions, feel free to contact our Customer Service team; they'll be happy to help you.

Taylor Body Shapes

How to choose the body style that fits you best

The Feel

Comfort is key. The more relaxed you feel in relation to the guitar, the better you'll play and sound. If you'll be sitting when you play, consider how the guitar feels in relation to your body. The width of the body's waist (the tapered middle section) will determine how high the guitar sits in your lap. The width of the lower bout might impact the playing comfort for your pick arm. Some Taylor models include a sculpted armrest feature, which removes the hard edge where your arm typically rests to enhance the comfort. (The chamfered body edges of our Builder's Edition guitars round out the entire shape.)

Body depth is another attribute that can impact your playing comfort. In general, think about the kind of physical relationship that allows your most natural musical expression. For some players, a smaller, more intimate feel works best. For others, the robust feel of a big body creates a commanding presence.

The Sound

The dimensions of an acoustic guitar are also important because they define the boundaries of the vibrating top and back, along with the size and shape of the air chamber. (Think of the air mass inside a guitar as its lung capacity.) The curves that form the shape play a big role in creating its musical personality. Generally, the smaller the air mass, the more focused the voice. Sometimes taking up less sonic space can be a good thing, especially in a recording environment. The bigger the air mass, the deeper the low-end response and overall voice.

Playing Applications

Another important consideration is what musical role you want the guitar to serve. What style of music do you plan to play? For example, do you play fingerstyle and want a responsive, articulate voice? Are you a generalist who wants a versatile all-around guitar? Will the guitar be featured alone or with other instruments? Maybe you're looking to add a different shape – and sonic personality – to your acoustic toolbox. Or maybe you want a guitar that's comfortable to curl up with on the couch. The more you know about what you need the guitar to do, the more likely you are to find the best shape.

When you're searching for the right acoustic guitar, one of the fundamental considerations is body shape. The body's curves and depth help define our physical relationship with the guitar and literally shape the sound it produces.

In addition to our family of full-size guitar bodies, we offer two scaled-down versions of existing shapes – the Baby Taylor (traditional dreadnought shape) and GS Mini (Grand Symphony). Here are a few guiding thoughts as you consider your options.

USE THIS GRAPHIC AS A VISUAL GUIDE TO THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TAYLOR'S BODY SHAPES

- GRAND CONCERT
- GRAND AUDITORIUM
- GRAND PACIFIC
- GRAND SYMPHONY
- GRAND ORCHESTRA

Other Factors

Cutaway vs. Non-Cutaway

A cutaway has a negligible impact on a guitar's sound (that part of the guitar doesn't generate a lot of resonance). What you gain is access to additional upper-register notes, so if that's important to you, a cutaway makes sense. Otherwise it's largely an aesthetic choice.

Bracing

In addition to a guitar's body contours, its internal architecture, or bracing, plays a major role in voicing the guitar. The bracing design helps orchestrate the movement of the top and back in response to the string vibration and shape the sound. That's why our V-Class bracing was an important design breakthrough for Taylor: It changes the way the guitar body responds to the strings, improving the tonal response in significant ways. It also provides a flexible platform for shaping tone in new ways.

The Neck

Like the shape of the body, the feel of the neck is one of the most important considerations.

All Taylor necks feature slender profiles with low string height off the fretboard. This makes for a comfortable all-around playing experience. Other variables in our neck dimensions (based on different model distinctions) can further influence your playing comfort. These include the nut width (which impacts the string spacing across the fretboard) and scale length (the maximum vibrating string length, measured from the nut to the saddle, which impacts the fret spacing).

Another difference is the length of the neck and its relationship to the body, such as a 12-fret neck versus a 14-fret neck. A 12-fret neck is two frets shorter and meets the body at the 12th fret instead of the 14th. This creates a more compact relationship. It also changes the bridge location, which articulates the top in a different way. To learn more about the difference between 12-fret and 14-fret necks, see our story about our new V-Class Grand Concerts on page 8.

Grand Concert

(Models end in a 2; e.g., 712)

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

Our smallest full-size body features a slightly shallower body depth and shorter scale length than other body styles. It creates a natural feeling of intimacy with the player, although V-Class bracing makes this a guitar that sonically punches above its weight. The Grand Concert is also the featured body style for our 12-fret guitars. The 14-fret models lean toward a modern, articulate voice, while the 12-fret editions produce more warmth and sweetness.

**Grand Auditorium**

(Models end in a 4; e.g., 714)

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

Our flagship shape helped define the modern acoustic guitar sound – vibrant, articulate and balanced – and remains our most popular body style. If you want a great all-purpose guitar, the Grand Auditorium delivers exceptional versatility. With the addition of V-Class bracing, players will enjoy even greater dynamic range and enhanced all-around musicality thanks to impeccable intonation along the entire fretboard.

**Grand Pacific**

(Models end in a 7; e.g., 717)

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

Our new body style, a round-shoulder dreadnought, boasts a whole new flavor of Taylor tone: a warm, seasoned sound in which notes overlap and blend smoothly together. The Grand Pacific makes a compelling counterpart to the Grand Auditorium, delivering comparable versatility as an all-purpose workhorse. But with V-Class bracing tailored for its body design, it responds with a dramatically different sonic personality that will appeal to players who lean toward a more traditional acoustic sound.

**Grand Symphony**

(Models end in a 6; e.g., 716)

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

The Grand Symphony features a slightly bigger footprint and deeper body than the Grand Auditorium. This produces deeper lows and thicker trebles, making it a lively picker and strummer. If you write heavier, riff-driven music, or if you'll be playing solo and want a guitar that gives you a good low-end response, it's a good body style to try. Its body dimensions make it well-suited for many of our 12-string models.

**Grand Orchestra**

(Models end in an 8; e.g., 718)

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

Our biggest, deepest body style unleashes a bold and lush acoustic voice. If you're a fan of jumbo-style acoustics and crave a colorful, wall-of-sound acoustic personality, this guitar is worth a test-drive. Yet for all its power and richness, the Grand Orchestra is also balanced and responsive to a light touch, making it a surprisingly well-rounded option for players. If you're a solo player looking to fill a room, this is a worthy contender.

**Sound Profile**

- Small size creates a more intimate playing experience
- Articulate voice with a touch-sensitive response and controlled overtones
- 24-7/8-inch scale length reduces string tension and condenses fret spacing
- Fits well in a mix with other instruments

Sound Profile

- Clear voice with articulate, balanced notes
- Appealing midrange presence
- V-Class bracing delivers strong projection and sustain
- Accommodates a broad range of playing styles

Sound Profile

- Warm, seasoned voice
- Notes are broad and round, blending smoothly together
- Clear, full-range power across the entire musical spectrum
- More versatile than other dreadnought-style guitars

Sound Profile

- Robust low end, strong volume when strumming or flatpicking
- Dynamic response: rich, powerful voice that also responds to a light touch
- Piano-like bass, meaty midrange, strong treble shimmer

Sound Profile

- Our biggest, deepest body shape
- Big, complex voice with impressive sustain
- Incredibly balanced for a big-bodied acoustic guitar
- Responsiveness to a light touch gives it broad dynamic range

Good Fit For:

- Players who find small bodies more comfortable
- Fingerstyle players and light strummers
- Recording applications
- Anyone looking to reduce stress on their fretting hand

Good Fit For:

- Novices and generalists who want a multipurpose guitar
- Recording and live performance
- Singer-songwriters and musicians fronting a band
- Players who appreciate a vibrant, well-defined acoustic sound

Good Fit For:

- Players who crave a warmer, more traditional acoustic sound
- A broad range of playing styles due to its versatile musical range
- Players looking for a dreadnought-style guitar that records well
- Singer-songwriters and musicians fronting a band

Good Fit For:

- Lively strummers and pickers
- People who like the feel/sound of extra tonal horsepower
- Gigging singer-songwriters looking for a deep and rich tonal palette

Good Fit For:

- Players who want a rich, powerful acoustic voice
- Players who favor a jumbo-size guitar
- Solo performers looking for an expansive palette of sonic colors

Taylor Tonewoods

Choose from a rich palette of sonic flavors

Back and Side Woods



Indian Rosewood

Models: 900, 800, 700, 400 Series

Tone Profile

- Full-spectrum acoustic voice with complex overtones and long sustain
- Deep lows, sparkling highs that ring out with bell-like clarity
- Slightly scooped mids



Maple

Models: 600 Series

Tone Profile

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



Ovankol

Models: 400 Series

Tone Profile

- An African relative of rosewood that shares many of its tonal properties, including a broad tonal spectrum
- Full, punchy midrange and bright top end
- Bass response adds pleasing depth to the overall tone
- Fits a versatile mix of music styles



Sapele

Models: 300 Series
(paired with spruce tops)

Tone Profile

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



Tropical Mahogany

Models: 500 Series

Tone Profile

- Strong fundamental focus without adding a lot of ringing overtones
- Responds well to players with a strong attack who like dry, woody sounds
- Natural compression creates a volume ceiling that smoothes out loose strumming technique
- Clear and direct tonal character makes it a great option for playing with other instruments



Hawaiian Koa

Models: Koa Series

Tone Profile

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



Blackwood

Models: Presentation Series, 300 Series
(paired with mahogany tops)

Tone Profile

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

Our tonewood choices invite you to explore many nuanced flavors of acoustic sound. But keep in mind that the woods that make up a guitar are only one part of a guitar designer's musical recipe. While the unique physical characteristics of each wood species translate into distinctive sound properties (for example, luthiers talk about a wood's velocity of sound as a factor in determining what kind of harmonic content, or overtones, it will produce), other factors like the guitar's body style and internal bracing architecture are also key contributors to a guitar's sonic personality. So are your hands, the pick you use, and even the amount

of caffeine you might have had before playing!

One design element worth mentioning is our V-Class bracing. We've talked a lot about the fundamental improvements the bracing has brought to a guitar's sound – stronger projection, longer sustaining notes, improved intonation and all-around musicality. This purer platform of sound also gives us the ability to magnify the natural tonal characteristics of each wood. Hopefully this will make it a little easier for you to hear their distinctions.

Ultimately, our descriptions of these different tone profiles are just meant to provide a general reference. Your ears

get to be the ultimate judge of what sound inspires you most.

Solid vs. Layered Woods

A guitar made with a top, back and sides of solid wood will produce the most complex sound and continue to improve with age. Our all-solid-wood guitars start with the 300 Series. We also make guitars crafted with layered wood back and sides, featuring three layers of wood – a middle core with a thinner layer on each side – paired with a solid wood top. Because of the solid top, the sound of our layered wood guitars will also improve with age.

Crafting guitars with backs and sides of layered woods allows us to conserve tonewood resources. Essentially a veneer log is peeled into thin layers, which we laminate with the middle core like plywood, using alternating grain directions to make the backs and sides very stable. The process allows us to bend an arch into the back for added strength and produces a durable guitar that travels well.

While layered woods will still add some unique sonic flavoring to a guitar's tone, as a composite construction it won't be as dramatic as a solid-wood guitar; it becomes more of a reflection of the guitar maker's design nuances.

Back and Side Woods

Hardwoods (deciduous trees) are used exclusively for a guitar's back and sides. As the supportive shell of the guitar's acoustic "box," the back and sides enhance the rigidity and sustain of the instrument. Each wood species also provides the acoustic seasoning in the form of different resonant frequencies. Think of the woods as natural tone controls for the guitar, contributing different degrees of bass, midrange and treble notes, with varying overtones.

Soundboard Woods

A guitar's soundboard plays a key role in generating a guitar's sound. Soft woods such as spruce or cedar (coniferous trees) are used most often. They offer the benefit of being lightweight yet strong, especially when quartersawn, with an elasticity that allows them to be set in motion easily, whether the guitar is lightly fingerpicked or strummed. Typically they can produce a broad dynamic range, along with pleasing overtones that enrich the sound.

Hardwood tops like koa or mahogany are slightly denser and heavier, giving them a lower velocity of sound. In other words, sound doesn't propagate as quickly through them – it's dispersed a little more gradually. This comes across as a natural compression effect that smoothes out the attack, producing a more focused voice with fewer overtones. A hardwood-top guitar often behaves well in amplified performance settings.



Western Red Cedar

- Less dense than spruce, producing a warm, played-in sound
- Midrange bloom adds complexity to the tone
- V-Class bracing has expanded its dynamic range for strumming



Sinker Redwood

- Bold attack with an overtone-rich response
- Blends the punch of spruce with the warmth of cedar
- A saturated, almost "wet" sound



Hardwood Tops (Koa, Mahogany)

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



Sitka Spruce

- Its blend of stiffness and elasticity translates into broad dynamic range, with crisp articulation
- Accommodates a wide range of playing styles

Lutz Spruce

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

Adirondack Spruce

- Highest volume ceiling of any spruce species
- It can be driven hard without losing clarity; hard to outplay it

The Taylor Line at a Glance

A snapshot of our series framework and tonewood pairings

All-Solid-Wood Guitars

A guitar made with a top, back and sides of solid wood will produce the most complex sound and continue to improve with age



Presentation Series { **Back/Sides:** Figured Blackwood
Top: Adirondack Spruce or Sinker Redwood

Koa Series { **Back/Sides:** Hawaiian Koa
Top: Hawaiian Koa or Torrefied Sitka Spruce (Builder's Edition)

900 Series { **Back/Sides:** Indian Rosewood
Top: Sitka Spruce

800 DLX Series { **Back/Sides:** Indian Rosewood
Top: Sitka Spruce

800 Series { **Back/Sides:** Indian Rosewood
Top: Sitka Spruce

700 Series { **Back/Sides:** Indian Rosewood
Top: Lutz Spruce or Torrefied Sitka Spruce (Builder's Edition)

600 Series { **Back/Sides:** Figured Big Leaf Maple
Top: Torrefied Sitka Spruce

500 Series { **Back/Sides:** Tropical Mahogany
Top: Mahogany, Lutz Spruce (GS), or Cedar (GC, GA)
or Torrefied Sitka Spruce (Builder's Edition)

400 Series { **Back/Sides:** Ovangkol or Indian Rosewood
Top: Sitka Spruce

300 Series { **Back/Sides:** Sapele (Spruce Top) or Blackwood (Mahogany Top)
Top: Sitka Spruce or Mahogany

Layered Wood Guitars

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



200 DLX Series { **Back/Sides:** Layered Koa, Rosewood, or Maple (214ce-DLX BLK)
Top: Sitka Spruce or Koa

200 Series { **Back/Sides:** Layered Koa
Top: Sitka Spruce

100 Series { **Back/Sides:** Layered Walnut
Top: Sitka Spruce

Academy Series { **Back/Sides:** Layered Sapele
Top: Sitka Spruce or Lutz Spruce (Nylon)

GS Mini { **Back/Sides:** Layered Sapele, Koa, Walnut or Maple
Top: Sitka Spruce, Mahogany or Koa

Baby Series { **Back/Sides:** Layered Sapele
Top: Sitka Spruce or Mahogany

Electric Guitars

Hollowbody or Semi-Hollowbody

T5z Series { **Top:** Flamed Koa, Curly Maple, Sitka Spruce or Mahogany

T3 Series { **Top:** Layered Curly Maple

Custom Guitars

Create a guitar that stands out as a personal expression of your musical tastes. Choose from a robust menu of custom specifications, including premium-grade tonewoods, appointments and more.

A Guide to Taylor Acoustic Model Numbers

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

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

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

516ce

516ce **The first digit** (or letter) identifies the Series. Most guitar models within each series share the same back and side woods and appointment package.

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

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

516ce **The third digit** identifies the body shape according to this numbering system:

- 0 = Dreadnought (e.g., 110ce)
- 2 = Grand Concert (e.g., 512ce)
- 4 = Grand Auditorium (e.g., 514ce)
- 6 = Grand Symphony (e.g., 516ce)
- 7 = Grand Pacific (e.g., 517e)
- 8 = Grand Orchestra (e.g., 518ce)

516ce **"c"** Indicates a model with a cutaway

516ce **"e"** Indicates a model with onboard electronics

N Taylor nylon-string models are integrated into the Academy-800 Series and are designated by the letter "N" at the end of the model name. For example, a nylon-string Grand Concert with a cutaway and electronics within the 500 Series is a 512ce-N.



TaylorWare

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PS PRESENTATION SERIES

Our Presentation Series celebrates the finest in materials and craftsmanship detail. This year we're thrilled to introduce the wood pairing of figured Tasmanian blackwood and Adirondack spruce to the collection. Tonally, we love blackwood – it's loud, responsive and warm, yet with a clear focus. The sets we've selected boast a beautiful blend of variegation, figure and grain structure reminiscent of Hawaiian koa, featuring golden-brown and dark amber ribbons of color. Together with a top of creamy Adirondack spruce, this guitar is no mere showpiece; its dynamic voice is ripe for the picking (or strumming). Or, if you prefer the rich, dark variegation of a sinker redwood top, the option is yours. We've also shifted from a beveled armrest to our radius contouring, which ensures comfort for players of all sizes. Our elegant suite of aesthetic appointments saves the understatement for other models, tracing the lines of the guitar with sparkling paua and other eye-catching ornamentation, including our intricate Nouveau fretboard/peghead inlay. From every angle, these guitars deliver stunning aesthetic appeal.



PS14ce



PS14ce

SPECIFICATIONS

Back/Sides: Figured Blackwood
Top: Adirondack Spruce or Sinker Redwood
Finish: Gloss 6.0
Rosette: Single Ring Paua
Fretboard Inlay: Paua/Pearl Nouveau
Binding: Ebony
Electronics: Expression System 2
Premium Features: Ebony Radius Armrest, Paua Trim (Top, Fretboard Extension, Armrest), Striped West African Ebony Backstrap, Peghead/Bridge Inlays, Abalone Dot Bridge Pins, Gold Gotoh 510 Tuners

AVAILABLE MODELS

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

KOA

KOA SERIES

Our beloved Koa Series is inspired by our reverence for the beauty of koa's Hawaiian homeland, and the figured sets we select honor that beauty along with the rich musical heritage of the Islands. Aesthetically, the series is a vintage all its own, adorned with maple inlays and purfling trim, a shaded edgeburst, and new this year, an upgrade to gold Gotoh 510 tuners. Sonically, koa asserts its voice with distinctive flavors, emphasizing a strong midrange presence topped with sparkling treble notes. A koa soundboard brings a leveling consistency across the tonal spectrum, responding with balanced articulation and smooth sustain. Even better, koa rewards players with a tone that grows sweeter as it opens up over time. V-Class models include the K24ce, with Grand Concert editions on the way. And after its sublime debut last year, the Builder's Edition K14ce continues to seduce guitar lovers with ultra-premium playing features like a beveled armrest and cutaway, chamfered body edges, Silent Satin finish, and other organic aesthetic touches. A torrefied spruce top with V-Class bracing adds greater responsiveness and dynamic range to the sound. Whichever model speaks to you, these are heirloom-quality instruments that are crafted to inspire.

Builder's Edition K14ce

SPECIFICATIONS

Back/Sides: Hawaiian Koa
Top: Hawaiian Koa
Finish (Body): Gloss 6.0 with Shaded Edgeburst (Entire Guitar)
Rosette: Single Ring Maple with Koa/Black Purfling
Fretboard Inlay: Maple Spring Vine
Binding: Pale Non-Figured Maple
Electronics: Expression System 2
Premium Features: Gold Gotoh 510 Tuners (12-Fret models: Nickel Slot-head Tuners with Ebony Buttons), Black/Koa/Maple Top Purfling, Maple Peghead/Fretboard Purfling

BUILDER'S EDITION K14CE

Back/Sides: Hawaiian Koa
Top: Torrefied Sitka Spruce
Finish (Body): Silent Satin with Kona Burst (Back/Sides)
Rosette: Paua with Koa Trim
Fretboard Inlay: Paua Spring Vine
Binding: West African Ebony (Fretboard/Peghead/Heel Cap)
Electronics: Expression System 2
Premium Features: V-Class Bracing, Beveled Armrest/Cutaway/Body Edges, Kona Burst Neck, Koa/Paua Inset Purfling (Top/Back), Koa Fretboard/Peghead Purfling, Black Graphite Nut, Builder's Edition Guitar Label

AVAILABLE MODELS

K22ce, K22ce 12-Fret, Builder's Edition K14ce, K24ce, K26ce, K66ce, K28e



900 SERIES

Designed with an appreciation for sleek lines and refined details, our 900 Series honors the rich sonic palette of Indian rosewood and Sitka spruce with exquisite materials and attentive Taylor craftsmanship. Lushly appointed with ebony binding and abalone set in koa edge trim, these guitars showcase arresting aesthetics coupled with supreme playability. As with our Presentation Series, this year we've updated our beveled armrest to a radius-style rendition, featuring comfortably rounded contouring. Choose from three body styles: the V-Class Grand Auditorium 914ce, a pair of Grand Concert models (14-fret and 12-fret), and 6- and 12-string Grand Symphony options featuring our Florentine cutaway. Premium appointments include Gotoh 510 tuners (21:1 gear ratio), progressive Ascension fretboard inlays, an ebony backstrap, and ultra-thin gloss finish for extra acoustic resonance. In every way, the 900 Series embodies elegant sophistication.



914ce



916ce

914ce-SB

SPECIFICATIONS

Back/Sides: Indian Rosewood

Top: Sitka Spruce

Finish (Body): Gloss 3.5

Rosette: Single Ring Paua with Koa/Ebony Purfling

Fretboard Inlay: Abalone/Pearl Ascension

Binding: Ebony

Electronics: Expression System 2

Premium Features: Custom-Calibrated Wood Thicknesses/Bracing for Each Shape, Ebony Radius Armrest, Paua/Koa Trim (Top, Back, Sides, Fretboard Extension, Fretboard, Peghead, Armrest), Ebony Backstrap, Gotoh 510 Tuners (12-Fret Models: Nickel Slot-head Tuners with Ebony Buttons)

AVAILABLE MODELS

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



800 DLX SERIES

The 800 Deluxe Series presents an even more refined, luxurious take on the ever-popular rosewood/spruce pairing from our flagship 800 Series lineup. A radius armrest, featuring rosewood that's artfully embellished with contrasting maple binding, provides an elegantly rounded edge to add comfort for your strumming arm. Premium-grade Gotoh 510 tuners boast a 21:1 gear ratio for smooth and precise tuning control. Our V-Class bracing powers both Grand Auditorium and Grand Concert models to new levels of tonal complexity that you'll savor thanks to longer-sustaining notes and chords that bloom in ways you've never heard before. Whether you crave the versatility of the 814ce DLX, the expressive control of the compact 812ce 12-Fret DLX, or one of the other body styles offered within the series, these instruments will harmonize beautifully with all your musical pursuits.

AVAILABLE MODELS

812ce 12-Fret DLX, 812ce DLX,
814ce DLX, 816ce DLX

SPECIFICATIONS

Back/Sides: Indian Rosewood

Top: Sitka Spruce

Finish (Body): Gloss 3.5

Rosette: Single Ring Abalone Edged with Rosewood

Fretboard Inlay: Pearl Element

Binding: Pale Non-Figured Maple

Electronics: Expression System 2

Premium Features: Custom-Calibrated Wood Thicknesses/Bracing for Each Shape, Rosewood/Maple Radius Armrest, Rosewood Pickguard, Rosewood Top Trim, Chrome Gotoh 510 Tuners (12-Fret Models: Nickel Slot-head Tuners with Ebony Buttons)

You might be surprised to see acclaimed Aussie rock shredder Orianthi away from her electric axe, but as a singer and songwriter, she's got an affinity for the feel and sound of Taylor acoustics as well. Shown here with a Grand Symphony 816ce DLX, Orianthi has been writing and recording tracks for her next record.



800 SERIES

Andy Powers has honored Bob Taylor's flagship series with ongoing refinements that continually raise the bar on the playing experience. The classic pairing of Indian rosewood with Sitka spruce delivers a rich blend of low-end warmth and top-end brilliance, creating a truly dynamic musical personality with each and every body style. The 800 Series has showcased some of our most striking innovations, and the presence of V-Class bracing in Grand Auditorium and Grand Concert models advances that tradition not only with greater volume and sustain, but with an enhanced clarity that brings even greater fidelity to rosewood's overtone complexity. As always, these guitars underscore Taylor's pursuit of the most musically inspiring tools.

AVAILABLE MODELS

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



SPECIFICATIONS

Back/Sides: Indian Rosewood

Top: Sitka Spruce

Finish (Body): Gloss 3.5 (V-Class Models: Gloss 4.5)

Rosette: Single Ring Abalone Edged with Rosewood

Fretboard Inlay: Pearl Element

Binding: Pale Non-Figured Maple

Electronics: Expression System 2 (Nylon models: ES-N)

Premium Features: Custom-Calibrated Wood Thicknesses/Bracing for Each Shape, Rosewood Pickguard, Rosewood Top Trim

Bambaata Marley carries on the musical heritage of his family name, embracing a range of musical influences that have helped him establish his own musical identity as a singer, songwriter and producer. He says he loves the organic accessibility and natural resonance of an acoustic guitar. Musically he identifies with the creative spirit of the '60s and '70s. He's seen here with a V-Class 814ce.



700 SERIES

Indian rosewood appears in various forms across the Taylor line, but the Lutz spruce-topped versions of the 700 Series offer a unique musical perspective on the popular tonewood. Lutz, a favorite of Andy Powers, brings room-filling power and headroom, with extra warmth and a splash of woody flavor to the sound. That warmth and flavor are matched by organic touches like koa binding and an optional Western sunburst top finish. Last year's V-Class 714ce is followed this year by our new Builder's Edition 717, featuring a torrefied Sitka spruce top, V-Class bracing, ergonomic contouring on the edges of the fretboard, body and bridge, and other traditionally inspired aesthetic touches. Whichever way you lean within the series, you can count on a rosewood guitar with remarkable musical character.

AVAILABLE MODELS

712ce, 712ce-N, 712e 12-Fret, 712ce 12-Fret, 714ce, 714ce-N, 716ce, 756ce, Builder's Edition 717, Builder's Edition 717e



San Diego singer-songwriter Kyle Hildebrand, shown with the Builder's Edition 717, is the lead singer of The Whisper Mill, whose music blends blues, folk, Southern gospel and rock. Kyle, who also serves as a worship and creative pastor, has been working on a solo music project in the vein of raw, soulful country rock.



Builder's Edition
717e Natural

714ce

SPECIFICATIONS

Back/Sides: Indian Rosewood
Top: Lutz Spruce
Finish (Body): Gloss 6.0/Optional Western Sunburst Top
Rosette: 3-Ring Herringbone with Douglas Fir/Maple/Black
Fretboard Inlay: Green Abalone Reflections
Binding: Non-Figured Koa
Electronics: Expression System 2 (Nylon Models: ES-N)
Premium Features: Performance Bracing with Protein Glue (steel-string GA and GC models: V-Class bracing), Douglas Fir/Maple/Black Top Edge Trim, Weathered Brown Pickguard

BUILDER'S EDITION 717/717E

Back/Sides: Indian Rosewood
Top: Torrefied Sitka Spruce
Finish (Body): Silent Satin (Natural or Wild Honey Burst Top)
Rosette: Single Ring Sapele/Maple
Fretboard Inlay: Mother-of-Pearl Arrowhead
Binding: Sapele
Electronics (optional): Expression System 2
Premium Features: V-Class Bracing, Compound Carve Neck Profile, Chamfered Body Edges, Rolled Fretboard Edges, Curve Wing Bridge, Black Graphite Nut, Builder's Edition Guitar Label, Grand Pacific Case

600 SERIES

One of the virtues of maple is its transparent tone profile, which makes it wonderfully player-reflective. Since Andy Powers' revoicing of our 600 Series back in 2015, our maple-built guitars have taken on new life, incorporating torrefied spruce tops and blending genre-bending versatility with other appealing traits like enhanced touch sensitivity and greater dynamic range. Last year brought the release of our V-Class 614ce, followed by a Builder's Edition offering, which draws aesthetic inspiration from both the violin and electric guitar worlds. Choose from our Brown Sugar stain on standard models and the Wild Honey Burst on the Builder's Edition, which also features refined player-friendly features like a beveled armrest and a beveled, contoured cutaway. Our maple is responsibly sourced from well-managed forests in North America, and with continued stewardship is a tonewood we believe will inspire players for generations to come.

AVAILABLE MODELS

612ce, 612ce 12-Fret, 614ce, Builder's Edition 614ce, Builder's Edition 614ce Wild Honey Burst, 616ce, 618e, 656ce



Rising country music singer-songwriter Brennley Brown, who played the Taylor showcase room at last year's Winter NAMM Show, has been making waves in country and pop circles since her appearance on The Voice (season 12) at age 15. Already a seasoned performer, Brennley counts classic country artists Merle Haggard, Waylon Jennings, Dolly Parton and Willie Nelson among her influences. She's shown here with a Builder's Edition 614ce.

SPECIFICATIONS

Back/Sides: Figured Big Leaf Maple
Top: Torrefied Sitka Spruce
Finish (Body): Gloss 3.5 with Hand-Rubbed Brown Sugar Stain (V-Class Models: Gloss 4.5)
Rosette: Paua Edged with Ebony/Grained Ivoroid
Fretboard Inlay: Grained Ivoroid Wings
Binding: Ebony
Electronics: Expression System 2
Premium Features/Appointments: Custom-Calibrated Wood Thicknesses/Bracing by Shape, Torrefied Top, Ebony Backstrap with Grained Ivoroid Wings Inlay, Grained Ivoroid Purfling (Body/Peghead), Striped Ebony Pickguard

BUILDER'S EDITION 614CE/614CE WHB

Back/Sides: Figured Big Leaf Maple
Top: Torrefied Sitka Spruce
Finish: Silent Satin with Wild Honey Burst (Back/Sides), Optional Wild Honey Burst Top
Rosette: Single Ring Maple/Black
Fretboard/Peghead Inlay: Mother-of-Pearl Scepter
Binding: West African Ebony (Fretboard Only)
Electronics: Expression System 2
Premium Features/Appointments: V-Class Bracing, Beveled Armrest/Cutaway/Body Edges, Black Graphite Nut, Builder's Edition Guitar Label



Singer-songwriter Jake Smith, a.k.a. The White Buffalo, loves to defy musical categorization and explore the grey area between genres, forging a sound described as “rooted in dark folk, countrified soul, cinematic storytelling and roadhouse-worthy rock.” For him, an acoustic guitar is the true test of a song’s character. “The goal is to create something timeless,” he says. “If things don’t stand up with just an acoustic guitar and vocals, I don’t think they’re worthy of recording.” He’s pictured here with a Builder’s Edition 517.

500 SERIES

Mahogany, a time-honored tonewood, takes center stage in our 500 Series, accented by a quartet of top wood options that create a diverse mix of sonic flavors for these guitars. The new Builder’s Edition 517 leads the way, celebrating the debut of our Grand Pacific body style with a sound, feel and look all its own. A torrefied Sitka spruce top, V-Class bracing, and proprietary body contours add up to a warm, powerful and versatile voice. You’ll find the V-Class treatment with a mix of other models within the series, including both cedar- and mahogany-top Grand Auditorium and Grand Concert guitars. Cedar’s sonic warmth, midrange overtones and touch sensitivity complement mahogany’s dry, woody response, while a mahogany top levels out the player’s attack with a touch of natural compression that smoothes off the rough edges. Elsewhere, the solid Lutz spruce top paired with the Grand Symphony shape will entice players with a powerful dynamic output. And for the ultimate in 12-string playing comfort, try the Grand Concert 552ce or 562ce, which deliver lovely octave-rich tone in a compact 12-fret configuration that makes these guitars a joy to play.

SPECIFICATIONS

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

BUILDER’S EDITION 517/517E

Back/Sides: Tropical Mahogany
Top: Torrefied Sitka Spruce
Finish (Body): Silent Satin (Wild Honey Burst Top Available)
Rosette: Single Ring Sapele/Maple
Fretboard Inlay: Grained Ivoroid Arrowhead
Binding: Sapele
Electronics: Expression System 2
Premium Features: V-Class Bracing, Compound Carve Neck Profile, Chamfered Body Edges, Rolled Fretboard Edges, Curve Wing Bridge, Black Graphite Nut, Builder’s Edition Guitar Label, Grand Pacific Case

AVAILABLE MODELS

512ce, 512ce 12-Fret, 522ce, 522e 12-Fret, 522ce 12-Fret, 552ce, 562ce, 514ce, 524ce, 526ce, Builder’s Edition 517, Builder’s Edition 517e



400 SERIES

The perfect blend of functionality and expression, our 400 Series delivers reliable utility and stunning musicality in a package that isn't too precious for the demands of working musicians. What's more, you get to choose between two tonewood pairings: African ovangkol or Indian rosewood, each paired with a Sitka spruce top. Whichever flavor appeals to you, you'll be rewarded with a full-range tone profile to explore. Rosewood's rich harmonic complexity at both ends of the musical spectrum translates into a lively voice with plenty of expressive nuances. Ovangkol is valued for its midrange presence and top-end sparkle. With V-Class bracing now powering the Grand Auditorium and soon the Grand Concert, the 400 Series now offers greater tonal clarity and sonic power than ever before, with the unique personality traits of each tonewood more vividly defined.



414ce-R

SPECIFICATIONS**Back/Sides:** Ovangkol or Indian Rosewood**Top:** Sitka Spruce**Finish (Body):** Gloss 6.0**Rosette:** 3-Ring White**Fretboard Inlay:** Italian Acrylic Small Diamonds (Ovangkol) or Renaissance (Rosewood)**Binding:** White**Electronics:** Expression System 2**AVAILABLE MODELS**

412e-R, 412ce, 412ce-R, 414ce, 414ce-R, 416ce, 416ce-R, 456ce-R, 418e-R, 458e-R



300 SERIES

With V-Class bracing now voicing our Grand Auditorium and Grand Concert models, plus the brand-new Grand Pacific 317e, there's never been a better time to explore the inspiring richness of all-solid-wood tone. Our 300 Series presents a healthy mix of body shapes and acoustic voicings. It starts with two robust tonewood combinations: sapele back and sides paired with a Sitka spruce top, or blackwood back and sides with a mahogany top. The sapele/spruce combo pumps out vibrant, well-defined tone supported by sapele's blend of warmth and sparkle, while the blackwood/mahogany option yields a woody, dry voice with an exceptionally balanced response (thanks to the leveling effect of the mahogany top). Our versatile 317e, a round-shoulder dreadnought, blends clear low-end power with impressive warmth, projection, sustain and dynamic range, making it a must-play guitar. With its abundance of sonic riches, our 300 Series has never sounded better.



Alt-pop singer-songwriter and boundary-pushing storyteller Lights has quickly become a household name (and JUNO Award winner) in her native Canada and beyond. She's shown here with our new Grand Pacific 317e, featuring V-Class bracing. "It's amazing how, when a guitar gives you the right vibrations, it's so much easier to lose yourself in it," she says.



322e 12-Fret

314ce

SPECIFICATIONS

Back/Sides: Sapele (Spruce Top) or Blackwood (Mahogany Top)

Top: Sitka Spruce or Mahogany

Finish (Back/Sides): Satin 5.0

Finish (Top): Mahogany: Satin 5.0/Shaded Edgeburst; Spruce: Gloss 6.0

Rosette: 3-Ring Black

Fretboard Inlay: Italian Acrylic Gemstone

Binding: Black

Electronics: Expression System 2 (Nylon models: ES-N)

AVAILABLE MODELS

312ce, 312ce-N, 312ce 12-Fret, 322e, 322ce, 322e 12-Fret, 322ce 12-Fret, 352ce, 362ce, 314, 314ce, 324e, 324ce, 316ce, 326ce, 356ce, 317, 317e

200 DLX SERIES 200 SERIES

Between inspiring tonewood combinations and a range of luxury features, the 200 and 200 Deluxe Series boast an attractive mix of musical personalities that will charm players of all styles. Each model is crafted with a solid top of either Sitka spruce or Hawaiian koa, along with layered back and sides, serving up a winning combination of rich tone and travel-ready toughness. Choose a model that suits your style – maybe the workhorse 214ce, or perhaps the handsome all-koa 224ce-K DLX, featuring an alluring edgeburst top, full-gloss body, and gold tuners. Whichever model speaks to you, you can count on trademark Taylor playability and tonal balance, making these guitars a reliable option for writing, recording or performing. All Deluxe models include a Taylor hardshell case.



224ce-K DLX



214ce SB DLX

214ce

SPECIFICATIONS

Back/Sides: Layered Koa, Rosewood, or Maple (BLK Model)
Top: Sitka Spruce or Koa
Finish (Body): Gloss 6.0 (Shaded Edgeburst on All-Koa Body; Tobacco Sunburst Top on SB models); 214ce: Satin 5.0 Back/Sides; Gloss 6.0 Top
Rosette: Single Ring Italian Acrylic (DLX) or 3-Ring White (214ce)
Fretboard Inlay: Italian Acrylic Small Diamonds (DLX) or 4mm Dots (214ce)
Binding: White, Black (224ce-K DLX), or Cream (214ce-K DLX)
Electronics: Expression System 2

AVAILABLE MODELS

214ce, 214ce DLX, 214ce-BLK DLX, 214ce-SB DLX, 214ce-K DLX, 224ce-K DLX

100 SERIES

Sporting layered walnut back and sides, a solid Sitka spruce top, and an easy-playing Taylor neck, each guitar from our 100 Series delivers a pleasing blend of tone, comfort and versatility, all at an appealing price. Choose from Grand Auditorium and Dreadnought body styles with an optional cutaway. Players can count on a clear, balanced sound that's responsive to both picking and strumming, with an inviting feel thanks to a slightly narrower nut width of 1-11/16," which makes barre chords and other fretting forms a breeze. A thin matte finish allows for maximum resonance and sustain, while our proprietary ES2 pickup and preamp yield natural amplified sound. If you're looking to add a 12-string to your acoustic arsenal without breaking the bank, try the 150e, an industry top seller in the 12-string category.



150e

SPECIFICATIONS

Back/Sides: Layered Walnut
Top: Sitka Spruce
Finish (Body): Matte 2.0
Rosette: 3-Ring White
Fretboard Inlay: Italian Acrylic 4mm Dots
Binding: Black
Electronics: Expression System 2 (Nylon model: ES-N)

AVAILABLE MODELS

110ce, 110e, 114ce, 114ce-N, 114e, 150e



Academy

ACADEMY SERIES

We hate to hear stories of budding guitar players who gave up the instrument because it was too uncomfortable to play. The Academy Series embodies the simple idea that guitars should be inviting in both feel and sound, whether you're a beginner or a seasoned pro. Designed with developing players in mind, these guitars feature a slender Taylor neck that's set up for easy fretting. A solid spruce top delivers impressive volume and a clear, balanced voice, while a carved armrest takes the edge off the upper bout, making each guitar easier to play while seated, a must for rewarding practice sessions. Model options include the steel-string Grand Concert Academy 12, the nylon-string Academy 12-N, and the bigger-bodied Dreadnought Academy 10, all with an optional onboard pickup and built-in tuner for each model. Players of any level will look forward to picking up one of these guitars.



Academy 12-N



Academy 10e

Academy 12e

SPECIFICATIONS

Back/Sides: Layered Sapele
Top: Sitka Spruce or Lutz Spruce (Nylon-String)
Finish (Body): Matte 2.0
Rosette: 3-Ring Baltic Birch
Fretboard Inlay: Italian Acrylic 4mm Dots
Binding: None (Beveled Armrest)
Electronics: ES-B

AVAILABLE MODELS

Academy 10, Academy 10e,
 Academy 12, Academy 12e,
 Academy 12-N, Academy 12e-N



GS MINI SERIES

Our wildly popular GS Mini is without question one of the the most successful guitars in Taylor history. The body style borrows from the healthy curves of our Grand Symphony shape, but we've scaled that form into a comfortably compact body with an equally accessible 23.5-inch scale length, making it a breeze to hold and play, whether you're on the couch or on the go. We've also infused the Mini with a full-voiced personality that continues to surprise even the most seasoned players. In every way it makes the guitar-playing experience inviting and fun. Choose from layered walnut, mahogany or koa bodies, with a solid top of koa, spruce or mahogany, and with our optional ES-B electronics, featuring a built-in tuner.

Our Mini family offers another enticing acoustic flavor in the form of our short-scale bass. A marvel of acoustic innovation, the travel-sized bass incorporates specially formulated strings that blend warm, responsive tone with a slinky feel. Whether you're a four-stringer craving a lap-friendly practice partner or a bass newbie looking to add a fun new tool for jam sessions or songwriting, you're guaranteed to make fresh musical discoveries with one of these in your hands. This year we bring a new model to the mix, featuring richly figured layered maple back and sides.

AVAILABLE MODELS

GS Mini, GS Mini-e Mahogany, GS Mini-e Koa, GS Mini-e Walnut, GS Mini-e Bass, GS Mini-e Maple Bass

SPECIFICATIONS

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

Top: Spruce, Mahogany or Koa

Finish (Body): Matte 2.0

Rosette: 3-Ring White

Fretboard Inlay: Italian Acrylic 4mm Dots

Binding: None (Inset Top Purfling)

Electronics: ES-B

Born and raised in San Diego's laid-back Ocean Beach community, Kyle McDonald and Miles Doughty, founding members of the band Slightly Stoopid, have spent their careers mixing up a musical stew of reggae, rock, funk, folk, punk and hip-hop. Both grew up soaking up Southern California's outdoor lifestyle, which means plenty of backyard jam sessions. Kyle (GS Mini Koa) and Miles (GS Mini-e Maple Bass) find a groove in the backyard of Taylor's Chris Sharp, another Ocean Beach lifer, from our marketing team.

GS Mini-e Mahogany



BABY SERIES

One of the world's first travel guitars and a useful tool for new and experienced guitarists alike, the Baby Taylor has inspired people for years with its easy-playing feel and take-anywhere frame. A small footprint means it's a perfect choice for younger players getting started, but it's a great first guitar for anyone looking to learn, especially those of smaller stature. Offered with both spruce and mahogany tops over layered sapele back and sides, its light, chiming tone also adds a unique sonic texture to a mix that might need a splash of top-end flourish. The Taylor Swift signature model, featuring custom rosette artwork, celebrates both the artist and the guitar that spurred her songwriting as a teenage tunesmith on the go. For those looking for a larger version, the Big Baby's 15/16-scale and slender body depth provide similar portability with a bigger dreadnought voice. With a Baby in tow, a song is always within reach.

BT1

SPECIFICATIONS

Back/Sides: Layered Sapele
Top: Spruce or Mahogany
Finish (Body): Matte 2.0
Rosette: Single-Ring Black (Screen-Printed Custom for TSBT)
Fretboard Inlay: Italian Acrylic 4mm Dots
Binding: None
Electronics: ES-B

AVAILABLE MODELS

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



BT2

BBT

T5Z, T3

T5z

This dynamic electric-acoustic hybrid – always a crowd pleaser favorite when demonstrated at Taylor Road Show events – is loaded with sonic flavors. The hollowbody is powered by three proprietary pickups – a bridge humbucker, a hidden neck humbucker, and an acoustic body sensor. Controlled by five-way switching, you'll have a chameleon-like range of tones at your fingertips, making it a versatile gigging guitar (and fun for home recording too) that can shift seamlessly from acoustic strumming to searing electric solos. With a sleek Taylor neck, jumbo frets, and 12-inch fretboard radius, players will love the inviting feel. Choose from Custom, Pro, Standard, Classic and Classic Deluxe models, featuring a variety of top woods and finish options, as well as a pair of killer 12-strings. With a T5z in your hands, you'll be able to tap into your favorite sounds and chart new musical territory as well.

T3

Another original Taylor design, our T3 melds the classic musical mojo of the semi-hollowbody electric world with modern updates that give you a new level of expressive control across a broad range of musical terrain. A pair of high-fidelity humbuckers blends rich electric tone with the acoustic resonance unique to semi-hollowbody electrics, while three-way switching and coil-splitting controls make it easy to shape the T3's sound. A smooth chrome roller bridge preserves tuning stability, while your tailpiece choices include a stoptail or a Bigsby vibrato (T3/B) for pitch-shifting musical color. The guitar features a beautifully figured maple top and comes in a mix of color and burst options.

**SPECIFICATIONS**

To see our full range of top options, color finishes, and other appointments for each series, visit taylorguitars.com

AVAILABLE MODELS

T5z Classic
 T5z Classic 12-String
 T5z Classic Deluxe
 T5z Custom
 T5z Custom 12-String
 T5z Pro
 T5z Standard
 T3
 T3/B

CUSTOM

We guitarists can be very particular, especially as we become more discerning in our musical tastes. But that's the beauty of music and inspiration: It's so personal that we often dream about our ultimate expression of feel, sound and looks. That's why we created the Taylor Custom program. Whether you crave a specific tone profile, aesthetic character, or handfeel, we can craft an instrument that fits you perfectly.

Choose from our family of body shapes, plus a healthy menu of tonewoods – including premium-grade top and body woods not offered within our standard guitar line. You also have access to a wide selection of appointment options, allowing you to choose your inlays, binding, tuning machines, finish and more.

This year we're excited to bring our revolutionary V-Class bracing to the Custom program, which means you can add our exclusive design to standard Grand Auditorium custom builds (excluding 12-string, 12-fret, specialty, and alternate scale length models).

Most authorized Taylor dealers can walk you through our custom options menu and help you complete your order. Once you've submitted your design specs, you can expect to receive your Taylor in about 10 weeks. If you need inspiration, head to our website to peruse our custom guitar gallery.

Standard Model Options

If you're just looking for a slight variation on an existing Taylor model, you can order a modified version from our menu of standard model options. You can get any standard Taylor in a left-handed configuration, opt for a different scale length or nut width, upgrade to Gotoh tuners, choose from several pickguard options, or maybe add a sunburst top.

You'll find the latest menu of options for both our Custom program and standard models together with our price/specifications list, available at taylorguitars.com. If you have questions, feel free to contact our customer service department and we'll be happy to help.





The Craft

Lending a Voice

We don't get to choose the voice we are born with, but we do get to choose the guitar we play.

“I Hear America Singing”

By Walt Whitman

I hear America singing, the varied carols I hear,

Those of mechanics, each one singing his as it should be blithe and strong,

The carpenter singing his as he measures his plank or beam,

The mason singing his as he makes ready for work, or leaves off work,

The boatman singing what belongs to him in his boat, the deckhand singing
on the steamboat deck,

The shoemaker singing as he sits on his bench, the hatter singing as he stands,

The wood-cutter's song, the ploughboy's on his way in the morning, or at noon
intermission or at sundown,

The delicious singing of the mother, or of the young wife at work, or of the girl
sewing or washing,

Each singing what belongs to him or her and to none else,

The day what belongs to the day – at night the party of young fellows,
robust, friendly,

Singing with open mouths their strong melodious songs.

Well more than a century has passed since these words flowed from Mr. Whitman's pen. In doing so, he painted a portrait of an elemental human expression. Each of us has a song to sing, and a story to tell. We know music has many purposes: to amuse, to delight, to entertain. It is a way to find and share joy in the task at hand, or to share a sorrowful tragedy as a warning. Perhaps the most significant purpose is to make sense of what words alone cannot. Our collective history is told through these songs.

As a guitar player, I'm often asked if I sing. The question is only natural; guitars have likely been the most widely used accompaniment instrument of the last century, and a powerful but approachable vehicle to share stories with. The guitar and human voice are inextricably connected. Of this pairing, the voice is the most profoundly personal and elementary instrument. After all, we are each born with one voice. While we can learn to train and shape this instrument to a degree, we are given the voice allotted to us and don't have much choice in the matter. For some, the instrument they were given is glorious to behold, and in many ways is the benchmark of what a stringed instrument aspires to be like. The range of expression, the lyricism, and the vibrant beauty of each note emanating from such a voice are the qualities we wish to imbue in every instrument.

While we don't get to choose the voice we are born with, we do get to choose the guitar we play. Each guitar has qualities that make it musical in its own unique way. The characteristics can be broken down in somewhat sterile terms like length of note or volume, evenness or carrying power, harmonic content or responsiveness. Describing an instrument this way can feel like a chemist describing a favorite meal in terms of the chemical compounds it's comprised of. This description may be scientifically accurate, but using this language doesn't do much to convey the experience eating this meal would bring. It would be like viewing a painting from too close a vantage point. With your nose pressed up against the canvas, you could see the texture of each brushstroke, but never see the image the artist wanted to present. Only when we step back to behold the entire picture can we recognize and appreciate the narrative of such a piece.

Great songs require a similar vantage point. It seems the best of these songs don't present us with an entirely new collection of components, but reveal an image or a memory we carried with us all along, even though it was previously unseen. The great songwriters don't necessarily invent new words or notes; they arrange the lines and melodies to draw an image each listener colors in once they recognize the picture. While those songs may

tell the stories of the author, their gift to others allows the listener to identify with the narrative and fill in their own specifics, sharing the experience and memory.

Some of these songs are best shared with melodies and harmony alone. Others demand lyrics as well. In response, we sing. The voice I was given isn't going to draw much admiration, but the joy of shared music is unconcerned with some particulars. We sing as we go about our work; we sing as our kids fall asleep each night; we sing in the company of our friends. We sing the songs of our youth, the songs of those who came before us, the songs of our future. The songs and sounds of our collective history are there for the writing and sharing.

Within these pages you'll be introduced to the new instruments we've been working on. These guitars are built with our best efforts to serve the musician and the song. They offer a sound we know, in a way we have not known before. They lend us a voice, an image we've carried with us, although it was unseen. I hope these instruments will help tell your stories and sing your songs. Those songs matter more now than they did a decade ago, a century ago, or millennia in the distant past. Take a deep breath and exhale your music, a hopeful gift in the dawn of a new day.

– Andy Powers
Master Guitar Designer

“
**These guitars offer a sound we know,
in a way we have not known before.**

”

[Sustainability]



Tracking Progress

Scott Paul highlights the latest developments with several sustainability-based initiatives, including the Ebony Project in Cameroon, koa reforestation in Hawaii, and rosewood's protected status under CITES

Above photo: A camera trained on an ebony flower to document the pollination process; **Opposite page:** The camera being installed in an ebony tree. (Photos: Dr. Vincent Deblauwe)

We've written a few times about the Ebony Project in *Wood&Steel*, but recently the project team finished its 2018 Progress Report, so while it's all fresh in my mind, I wanted to share a quick update. And, while I'm at it, I'll take the opportunity to briefly update everyone on the work being done with koa in Hawaii and the situation with rosewood and CITES, too.

The Ebony Project

If you're new to the story, all you need to know is that in 2011 Taylor Guitars and Madinter International purchased the Crelicam ebony mill in Yaoundé, Cameroon. Our goal was to create a legal and socially responsible value chain for ebony musical instrument components. In 2016, we partnered with the Congo Basin Institute (CBI) in Yaoundé to better understand the basic ecology of West African ebony (*Diospyros crassiflora* Hiern) and launched a community-based livelihood program focused on restoration of the species. In addition to ebony, the

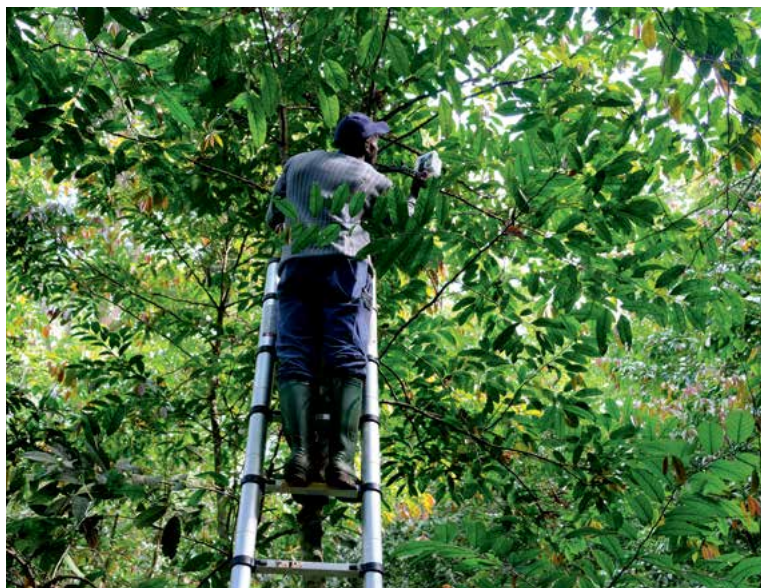
program also includes the planting of a number of locally used fruit and medicinal trees.

In our first three years we've had both successes and setbacks, but the highlights are that we are on track to reach our preliminary goal of planting 15,000 ebony trees by the end of 2020. As a step in that direction, this spring when the first rains come, we're preparing to plant an additional 1,500 ebony plants and some 1,500 fruit trees, including avocado (*Persea americana*), African cherry (*Prunus africana*), wild mango (*Irvingia wombolu*), ngoyo (*Trichocypha acuminata*), and papaya (*Carica papaya*). And by the close of 2019 we should also have five new communities participating in the project, raising that total number from two to seven.

The Ebony Project also continues to produce groundbreaking original research. For example, prior to this project, very little was known about what organisms pollinated ebony flowers or how seeds were distributed throughout the forest. In order to gain insight,

special cameras were developed to see what we could discover. For the first time in history, ebony flowers were filmed from opening to wilting, documenting their full life cycle and capturing a variety of pollinators visiting the flowers, including insects such as nocturnal bees, moths and flies.

Camera traps were also deployed when the trees bore fruit, and in anticipation, Dr. Vincent Deblauwe conducted a literature review and consulted wildlife specialists. Dr. Deblauwe expects to confirm that mammals such as elephants, chimpanzees, gorillas and rodents served as seed dispersers. While no elephants or gorillas were filmed (gorillas are extremely rare in the current project region), cameras did document an interesting array of mammals eating or carrying off ebony seeds. Unfortunately, I can't say more until the Congo Basin Institute releases a series of scientific papers. But I can tell you that Dr. Deblauwe did find elephant dung with ebony seeds germinating inside, confirming that elephants do indeed disperse the seeds. (Yes,



Vincent likes to dig through elephant dung.)

Further, ongoing project research supports the hypothesis that over-hunting forest animals may be adversely affecting ebony's natural seed dispersal. Dr. Deblauwe and his team believe that the loss of mammals that traditionally disperse ebony seeds may turn out to be one of the greatest long-term threats to ebony's survival. If this is confirmed, without human-induced planting, natural regeneration of the species may be limited to areas in Central Africa where hunting and the bushmeat trade have not significantly reduced dispersal agent populations. Thus, any future plans to reintroduce elephants back into parts of their historic range may be impacted in part by the planting of a tree that produces one of their seasonally available traditional food sources, i.e., West African ebony.

Elsewhere, the Congo Basin Institute has created six study areas that represent a range of environments, from a small state-owned ebony plantation, to largely cut-over and hunted-out secondary forests, to intact pristine forest. The project has also produced the most comprehensive estimate of the total population size of the species, estimated at approximately 30 million individuals greater than 10 centimeters in diameter, and has reaffirmed that ebony is slow growing, taking approximately 35 years to reach reproductive maturity.

Finally, as previously reported, in addition to studying the ecology of ebony, we are also working to produce new ebony trees via seed collection, cuttings and tissue culture. In 2017, the second year of the project, Cameroonian ebony trees produced very few fruits, which limited the number of seeds that could be collected, but fortunately 2018 proved to be a

phenomenal fruiting season, and over 20,000 seeds were secured. Before being transported to community nurseries, these seeds will be germinated at a newly constructed nursery at the IBAY SUP campus in Yaoundé, run by Dr. Zac Tchoundjeu, who is part of CBI and also a leading expert on agroforestry. Doctor Zac kindly named the new facility "The Bob Taylor Nursery."

The project is also producing plants from cuttings, which, unlike seedlings, can be produced all year in Cameroon, although mortality rates at the rooting stage are still high. With further training we expect this to improve. Finally, regarding plant production, the project is pioneering tissue culture methods, and in the coming year Ms. Alvine Ornella Tchouga and tissue culture specialist Giovanni Forgione of the Congo Basin Institute will focus on refining protocols and begin to assess the success rate of plants transitioned from a sterile laboratory environment into organic soil in a sheltered outdoor setting.

At the most macro-level, the Ebony Project continues to garner interest from governments and inter-governmental institutions, raising questions about expanding the project beyond what Taylor is capable of supporting, across geographies and into different land usages. In the Winter 2018 edition of *Wood&Steel*, we mentioned that Taylor Guitars signed a Public-Private-Partnership agreement with the Cameroonian Minister of Environment, the Honorable Pierre Hélé, at the U.N. Climate Change Conference in Bonn, Germany, on November 14, 2017. The agreement has three basic steps. First, Taylor would continue funding the Ebony Project; second, the government of Cameroon would commission a feasibility study to better understand the opportunities and challenges to

expanding the project; and third, if said feasibility study concluded that our little project could be expanded, then the government would seek to expand it. Taylor continues to fund the project, and we're pleased to report that the feasibility study is now underway. The analysis might ultimately prove useful beyond Cameroon, too. For example, the government of Benin is in discussions with the Congo Basin Institute about implementing our project model there, although likely substituting ebony for another commercially valuable tropical hardwood species, as ebony does not grow in Benin.

Finally, our friends at Buck Knives (who formerly ran their factory just down the street from Taylor Guitars here in San Diego but have since moved to Post Falls, Idaho), are now selling their iconic Buck 110 Folding Hunter knife and other classic models made with Crelicam ebony. Many years ago Buck used ebony, later switching to an alternative material, but have now switched back to offer a more authentic, natural product. We are grateful that Buck Knives will be using Crelicam ebony, thus indirectly support-

ing Crelicam and the Ebony Project. In fact, in a further show of support, Buck Knives made a donation to the Conservation Action Network (CARN), a 501c3 established to help the Congo Basin Institute's evidence-based conservation efforts.

Reforestation in Hawaii

As last reported in the Summer 2018 issue of *Wood&Steel*, Bob Taylor purchased a 565-acre tract of pastureland on the flank of Mauna Kea on the Big Island of Hawaii with the dream to reforest it. To expedite the process, the property is being leased to Paniolo Tonewoods, a partnership set up between Taylor Guitars and Pacific Rim Tonewoods in 2015. This land was once a dense forest of koa and 'ōhi'a trees, but over the years it was slowly converted to what is now largely open, rolling pasture. Today, it is primarily covered in non-native kikuyu

grass (*Pennisetum clandestinum*), other introduced pasture grasses with a few remnant 'ōhi'a trees on the edges of steep knolls. Simply put, the plan is to return this land to forest, with continuous small removals and replanting to produce koa logs in perpetuity for musical instruments, woodworking and traditional cultural purposes.

In October of 2018, this dream got a head start with the approval of the Paniolo Forest Management Plan by the State of Hawaii Forest Stewardship Committee, a group of forestry, land management and environmental professionals. We are especially grateful to Paniolo team members Nick Koch and Bob Rose, who pulled the detailed plan together. If everything goes accordingly, this spring the first 60 acres will be planted, representing roughly 10 times the number of dead, dying or malformed trees Paniolo has harvested since inception in 2015.

Finally, we hope that by the end of 2019 a small mill will be built on the property, allowing for increased value-added processing to occur in state. In the meantime, Paniolo continues to source wood from other private land-

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We are on track to reach our preliminary goal of planting 15,000 ebony trees by the end of 2020.

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owners in Hawaii who have previously existing reforestation projects underway. This work provides additional funding for fencing and other conservation activities.

CITES and Rosewood

As reported in our Winter 2018 issue ("A Closer Look at CITES Rosewood Regulations"), in October of 2016 in Johannesburg, South Africa, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) voted to make a change in the protected status of rosewood. The decision was largely in reaction to the rapid loss of several rosewood tree species as the result of escalating Asian demand for hongmu furniture. The word "hongmu" means "red wood" in Chinese, and the term refers to a range of red-colored tropical hardwoods, including several rosewood species, used to produce a certain

style of furniture. To protect these species, CITES responded by listing the entire *Dalbergia* genus (except for Brazilian rosewood, which was already listed in Appendix I), as Appendix II and created a new governing annotation.

Despite good intent, it soon became apparent that the new listing had several unintended consequences, and created a significant administrative burden for CITES management authorities. For example, consider that prior to the listing the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service processed on average roughly 20,000 CITES permits per year for items made with any number of plant or animal parts or extracts covered by the Convention. One year later the number jumped to approximately 40,000, and by the time of the CITES Standing Committee in Sochi, Russia, in October 2018, it had reached 60,000. The increase in permits was virtually all attributed to musical instruments, mostly guitars. Why so many permit requests? Well, you need a CITES permit when you take a CITES-controlled species across an international border, and I'm hard-pressed to think of an item as more commonly owned, more traveled with, more portable, and more bought and sold internationally than a musical instrument.

To be clear, Taylor Guitars is very supportive of CITES, and we do endorse the Convention taking action on *Dalbergia* issues. This said, it's fair to say that no other sector was more adversely impacted than the music industry, even though neither musical instruments nor the specific species of rosewood that our industry most commonly uses were issues of concern leading up to the listing itself.

Anyway, it's been a mess, but since the gathering in South Africa, CITES has met regularly in various intersessional settings to discuss various aspects of the convention's implementation, and a small but dedicated group of instrument manufacturers and representatives from performing ensembles has been there. Taylor has been there, too, and in part due to our collective presence, concern surrounding the rosewood listing has been front and center. We're optimistic that relief for our sector may be on the horizon when CITES meets next in Sri Lanka in May of 2019. Everyone at CITES understands that it's a problem, and it seems that everyone wants to fix it.

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