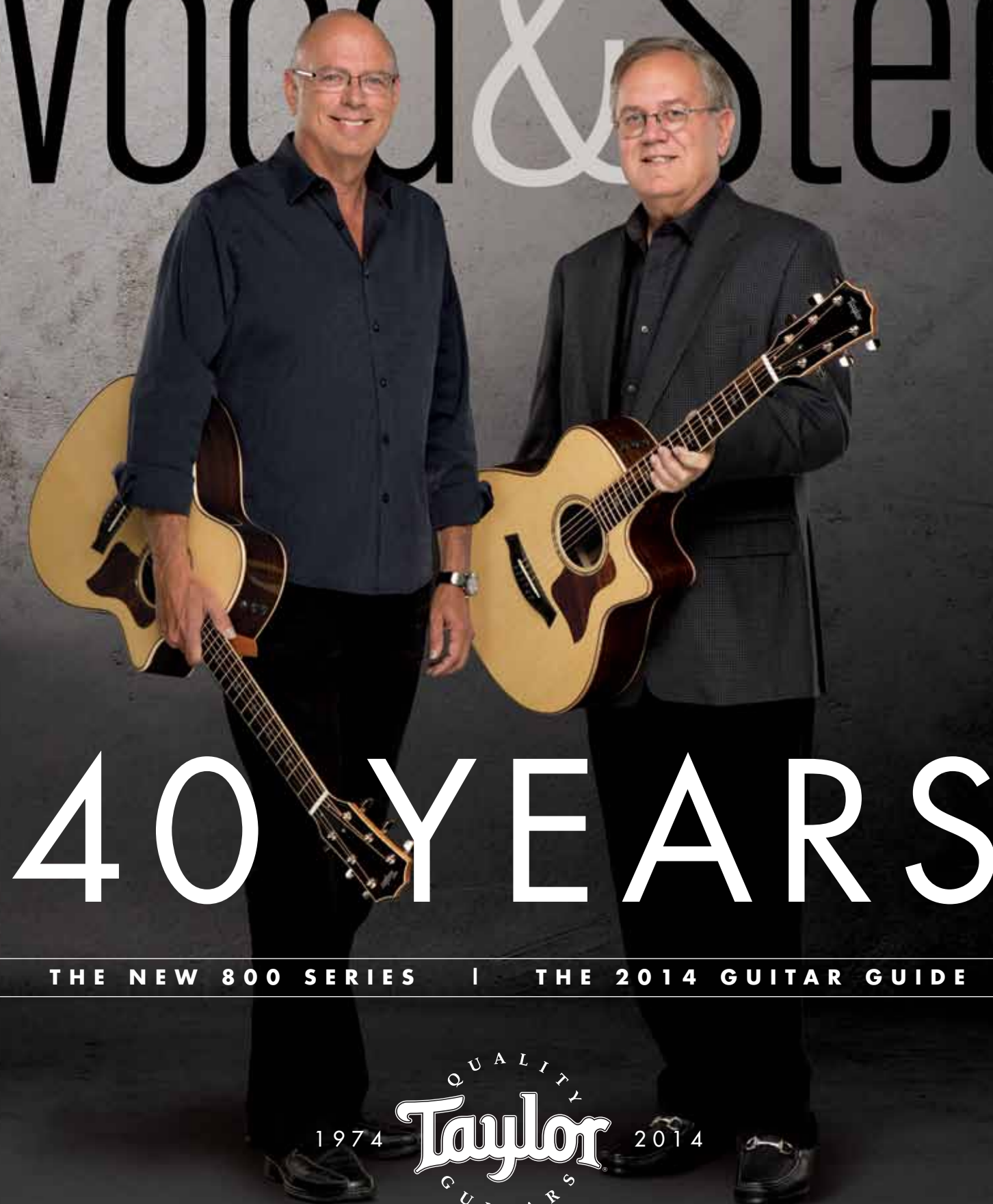


INSIDE THE WORLD OF TAYLOR GUITARS / VOLUME 78 WINTER 2014

# Wood & Steel



# 40 YEARS

THE NEW 800 SERIES | THE 2014 GUITAR GUIDE



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Cover photo (L-R): Taylor co-founders Bob Taylor and Kurt Listug with new 800 Series guitars

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# KURT'S CORNER

## Keep on Dreaming On

"The American Dream" is an expression familiar to many people around the world. It means having the freedom to pursue one's dream, and the opportunity to achieve success and prosperity along whatever path one chooses to take, provided one works hard enough, long enough, and persists at the task. What might be less familiar to you is that the guitar shop Bob and I bought and opened on October 15, 1974, was aptly named The American Dream. Though we quickly renamed it Taylor Guitars, it truly *has* been the American Dream for us. That dream has evolved considerably over the past 39 years, and will continue to evolve into the future.


## We hoped to make a living, but that was more a hope than a plan.

When Bob and I first bought the "Dream Shop" and started our own business, our dream was pretty simple: to be able to build guitars, have our own business, do something we really wanted to do, and have a chance at success. We hoped to make a living, but that was more a hope than a plan. We didn't know how business worked, and we had everything to learn. I was only 21, and Bob was only 19. A few years into it our dream was to learn how to make guitars that would turn out right: wood that wouldn't crack, finishes that would

cure properly, and necks that wouldn't bend backwards. We hoped to find sales for the few guitars we made, and we hoped to someday be able to turn the corner and pay our bills, and hopefully ourselves. More than 10 years into it, our dream was to have enough sales to sell all the guitars we could make and pay ourselves each week. Our guitars were turning out more consistently, and Bob had fulfilled one of his dreams of bringing onboard many of the craftsmen he wanted to work with. I finally cracked the nut of generating enough sales so that business and cash flow smoothed out, and we were able to leave our shop in Lemon Grove,

developing better employment and management practices. We then outgrew Santee and built the first of what would be many new buildings in El Cajon. I learned how to create industry-leading marketing and advertising, which helped propel faster sales growth. Bob continued his quest to redesign the acoustic guitar to make it a better, more consistent, and easily serviceable instrument. I honed my skills of making the company profitable and able to self-fund our growth. Bob started our second factory across the border in Tecate, Mexico. In more recent years, we've established our own distribution center and sales organization in Europe, bought an ebony milling operation in Africa, and built a solid executive team to run the daily operations of the company. Our dream has continued evolving, broadening to encompass more and more activities in more parts of the world, and has grown to include the success and well-being of thousands of people who contribute to Taylor Guitars. We've now entered our 40th year of business. I'm turning 61 and Bob will soon turn 59. It's still the American Dream for both of us, and that dream keeps growing and becoming ever more pervasive. Though we've accomplished a lot and met many challenges head-on, I firmly believe that our very best opportunities, and hopefully successes, still lie ahead of us.

– Kurt Listug, CEO

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# Editor's Note

## The Next Forty

Most of the pages of this special issue are consumed by three interwoven storylines: Taylor's 40th anniversary year, the redesign of the 800 Series, and the presentation of our 2014 guitar lineup. While each explores our guitar-making approach in a different way, all three are connected by a quintessential Taylor theme: the drive to continually improve the guitar experience for players. As Bob and Kurt reflect on 40 years and counting as first-generation Taylor owners this issue, both reveal themselves to be as passionate as ever about nurturing Taylor's forward-thinking design culture for many years to come. Our expansive 800 Series story covers a lot of ground because the redesign project boasts the most comprehensive package of tonal refinements we've ever introduced together at one time. It also offers a glimpse into the creative collaboration between luthier Andy Powers and Bob Taylor, as Andy's brilliant guitar-making skills were paired with Bob's manufacturing knowledge to bring an unprecedented level of sonic enhancement to a production-level guitar. Lastly, our 2014 Guitar Guide showcases this year's Taylor guitar lineup, featuring the new T5z, along with a roundup of our shapes and tonewoods, tips to help you find the right guitar, and the latest on our sustainability initiatives and customer service outreach. After 40 years, Bob and Kurt have a lot to be proud of. But they might even be prouder about setting the stage for what's yet to come.

– Jim Kirlin

## 2014 Taylor Factory Tours & Vacation Dates

A free, guided tour of the Taylor Guitars factory is given every Monday through Friday at 1 p.m. (excluding holidays). No advance reservations are necessary. Simply check-in at the reception desk in our Visitor Center, located in the lobby of our main building, before 1 p.m. We ask that large groups (more than 10) call us in advance at (619) 258-1207. While not physically demanding, the tour does include a fair amount of walking. Due to the technical nature, the tour may not be suitable for small children. The tour lasts approximately one hour and 15 minutes and departs from the main building at 1980 Gillespie Way in El Cajon, California. Please take note of the weekday exceptions below. For more information, including directions to the factory, please visit [taylorguitars.com/contact](http://taylorguitars.com/contact).

We look forward to seeing you!

## Factory Closures

**Monday, February 17**  
(Presidents' Day)

**Monday, May 26**  
(Memorial Day)

**Monday, June 30 - Friday, July 4**  
(Independence Day/Company Vacation)



# BOBSPEAK

## Long-term Relationships

I remember saying to Kurt when we started our company, "I wonder what it'll feel like to be able to say we've been in business for 10 years." Well, nearly four of those 10-year spans have come and gone now. You know what it feels like? A never-ending pursuit of an idea that keeps evolving, and a gathering of things learned and experienced that I couldn't have imagined in those early years. I think it might be nice to honor some of our relationships in this column. First, I'd like to talk about my colleagues here at Taylor Guitars, not only in El Cajon but also in Tecate, Amsterdam and Yaoundé. We have a wonderful group of dedicated people who work together across four countries now in order to bring all the pieces together to make this company work. Somehow they've caught our vision and propel it forward even when I'm not looking. I just looked on Wikipedia and saw that Taylor is the fourth largest employer in El Cajon. I'd never seen that before; I should pin that on my refrigerator! Our employees are the best. Let me say this: The single most common comment we get after people tour our factory is not how amazed they are about our guitars, but rather, how amazed they are about our people. We have suppliers who are all-in for us. We've treated each other very well, some of them for nearly the entire duration of Taylor Guitars. I think of the family business that cuts our rosewood

in India. Once it was a man, working alone, with his young family. The son tells me that all he's ever known is that they cut wood for Taylor Guitars. Now he runs the company, and they are 80 families strong. I have suppliers who will stay up all night to help us when we have an idea and need their help for a quick answer. Some of them tell me that they feel more connected to us than anyone else they supply. I'm so grateful for that. They really are a part of our company. We have dealers who invest their expertise to show our guitars to players all over the world. We try to make it win/win between us. We have so many dealers who love and support us and have accepted the changes I've made in guitars all along the way. This is a very traditional industry, but I am always changing the way we make guitars, and the people who often stand the most to gain or lose are the dealers. For instance, if I improve a guitar, they still have the previous model in stock. With guitars, maybe more than other products, this can hurt sometimes. But our dealers find the right people to pair up with each guitar, and they make it all work. People walk out of the store happy. Our dealers believe in what we do, and they support us, for which I'm grateful. I've got a great partner. How many people can say that? After 40 years, we both continue to move together toward our future plans. Kurt does things for me that nobody else can

do, and I think I provide a meaningful return to him. I'm proud that we have been able to work side-by-side, and then divide and conquer to make our business successful. Then there are the guitar players who buy our guitars, many of whom buy lots of our guitars. What I love about this relationship is that we both seem to appreciate each other. Who could ask for anything more from customers? I love living in this spot, which we've made for each other to be satisfied. Thank you for your support of Taylor Guitars over the years. And that brings me to the future. It looks bright to me. We have our hands in many wonderful endeavors to improve the guitars, which I hope will in turn improve your musical experience. Guitars are something that people are passionate about. We have aligned our efforts here at Taylor Guitars to not only do good work this year, but to continue forward into the long-term future. We have gathered dedicated talent, and we promise to keep it interesting and to serve you on many levels. It's not just about the guitar, not anymore. It's about how we treat the environment, our employees, our customers, vendors and so on. I hope to serve you all well over the years to come. Thank you for being a part of our first 40 years.

– Bob Taylor, President



# Ask Bob

## Blackwood, bridge profiles and pick thicknesses

I picked up a used [Grand Symphony] 426 with Tasmanian blackwood back, sides and top. After playing it a few weeks, it seemed to meld with my playing style (I got used to how to fingerpick it), and I'm one of those people who believes that good guitars will adjust themselves to a player's sound. It sounds absolutely stunning with the kinds of blues I play. I think it sounds better than any all-koa, mahogany or walnut guitar I've heard. I'd bet you could find a pretty good market for this model with acoustic blues players looking for that really old-fashioned sound that can be elusive. Have you considered making this a regular model?

Jim Sabatke

Actually, Jim, in some ways we prefer the sound quality of Tasmanian blackwood to koa. Both are acacia trees and are nearly identical, or as close as cousins can be to one another, but blackwood has a very nice sound. We have been considering using blackwood on a regular basis for many years, but the challenge is getting a regular supply of guitar-grade wood. We have spent considerable time and energy in the country, working and developing relationships. We want to obtain wood in the most ethical and environmentally sound manner, so we've backed away from the traditional logging supply in favor of more sustainable methods that benefit local people. Tasmania has so much going for it with the species available there, and the added plus is that it's a well-developed country rather than a poverty-stricken country. This condition puts many wonderful rules in place, and we are now working on some wonderful possibilities for obtaining blackwood. Currently we have a great relationship with a man who gets blackwood in the most ideal way. You can expect to see at least limited runs of guitars with this wood for years to come. Someday it may also become a standard model, but it's too soon to tell at this point.

What are the reasons for having a standard headstock versus a slotted headstock? Are there advantages of one over the other, or is it purely aesthetic?

Bob

Bob, it's almost purely aesthetic. Having said that, the slotted headstock is lighter in weight because of the slots and because the tuning machines are lighter, and these things do affect the sound and feel. Also, the break angle of the strings is different than a standard peghead, and all those differences play out as a different sound, but I lack the confidence to tell you exactly how a guitar's sound would change if you swapped one peghead for another. Currently we only use slotted headstocks on 12-fret and nylon-string necks, so it's part of an entire package.

The tops on all my Taylors, when viewed from the back, have that normal, slight convexity to them that they should (product of design and normal hydration). I wondered, though, whether you add a slight concavity to the bottom of the bridge to form a perfect union to the top? If not, there would seem to be an uneasy truce between the two, primarily at the bridge ends.

John Hlasney  
Flemington, NJ

Yes, John, we do add a matching surface to the bottoms of our bridges for the very reason you suggest. It's a detail that most factories don't do, but each Taylor bridge, as a final step, is turned upside down on a CNC mill, and a perfect concave surface that matches the arch of the top is milled into the bottom of the bridge. As a side note, this is a good time to mention that we call our neck the NT neck, but we really should call the entire guitar an NT guitar. That's because the body is just as much NT as the neck. And this precision that we are talking about here is one of the many things we build into each guitar to make them all turn out as predicted.

I have a 1996 Taylor mahogany/spruce non-cutaway 410. I love the sweet voice and note clarity. I find myself wishing for more volume to pick lead lines and bend — more of a blues machine, I guess. I hear that an Adirondack [spruce] top gives more volume and clarity. I don't want to lose the big bottom end of my

Dreadnought, though. How would rosewood change the tone from mahogany?

Sean Hull

Sean, I'm going to push the "Easy" button here and suggest you play our new Andy Powers-designed 810. Andy knows how to build a guitar that gives you what you're asking for. And it's way more than just swapping woods. Find one and play it, and then watch your friends take a step backwards when you play the lead notes. I can hold my own as a guitar builder, but Andy is much better at this than me. I think you'll like it.

I've been studying jazz and play an archtop. I love the warm and mellow sound of it, but my first love is acoustic, and I'd like to start combining my two loves. Can you tell me which models in the Taylor line would best suit a jazz sound?

Trevor

I'm going to let Andy answer you, Trevor, because he's an excellent jazz player. Take it away, Andy.

Well, it depends on what sounds you want to hear. The jazz idiom is one of the most expressive and individualistic forms of music I can think of, so the best sound to use is the one that expresses your taste. I like to use a smaller-body Grand Concert or Grand Auditorium guitar. Maple is a great choice for the back and sides. Often, you'll be using very complex harmonies and melodic lines, and a smaller-body guitar will help keep your playing clear and focused throughout the whole register. A 612ce or 614ce will fit really well musically with other instruments in a live setting. Our new rosewood-body 812ce and 814ce also would be good options to try, as they have a very responsive presence to them. Finally, if you haven't already, try listening to Bill Frisell, as well as Eddie Duran's playing with the Vince Guaraldi Trio. These are both favorite players of mine who use flat-top guitars in their music to beautiful effect.

I got my 110e around 2005, my 414ce-ltd in 2007, and I was about



I've noticed that all my guitars have heavy fret wear on just the first couple of strings and very little wear on the frets under the larger strings. Is that common, or do I fret in some strange manner to cause that kind of wear?

Dennis Wasnich

Dennis, everyone is different in how they play and wear their frets. I re-fretted a guitar for a player once who wore the entire bead off all the frets on his Les Paul, and scalloped the ebony in between. No kidding. And it only took him two years to do that! Your high strings are small and dig in more, whereas the wraps of the wound strings kind of create a cushion against the frets. You probably play the high strings more, and you might squeeze harder. So it's common, but not everyone experiences that.

to start the process to order an Engelmann [spruce]/koa Grand Orchestra through your [custom] program when I noticed that Grand Orchestras ship with medium gauge strings. I'm mostly a fingerstyle player and I really prefer lights, but when I checked your FAQ on string types and gauges it advises, "While it's perfectly OK to experiment with different types/brands of strings, to maintain factory performance

Terry Amaro

Well, Terry, we have rules because they set guidelines for people. For instance,

what if a person put heavies on a little GC? The increased tension could be a problem. So we end up with some recommendations. But to put lights on any of your guitars is perfectly acceptable. If you like it and it sounds better for your music, you have our full support.

I really enjoy listening to you and your Road Show team talk about the different tonewoods you use to build these beautiful instruments and demonstrate their sonic characteristics. When people are out at the Road Shows, what plectrums are used? Since picks of different thicknesses and materials can affect tone, mainly in terms of brightness or warmth, are the picks used kept to some medium thickness so the true tonal character of the guitar can be heard?

Simon Rodriguez, UK

Good question, Simon, because a person can change the sound of his or her guitar almost more from the pick than from anything else. It's amazing. Everyone reading this should stop and play with a light, medium and heavy pick just to see what I mean. Better players always use heavier picks. They nearly all migrate that way. I use a medium, so I'm exposing my playing ability right here. Each player at a Road Show uses what they use; some use fingers, some use medium picks, and some use heavy. I doubt anyone uses light picks. But you're comparing tonewoods, and if a person is using the same pick from guitar to guitar, you'll hear the difference. Once a player goes to a heavy pick and learns how to control it, I seldom see them turning back. I can say the same about raw fingers. Many people make that transition along their journey and just use flesh. And then there are the artificial fingernail players. I know one woman who plays flamenco and makes her own fingernails out of ping-pong balls and super glue! And then she guards them with her life. *Ed. Note: We asked our Road Show product specialists what types of picks they prefer. For their responses, see our sidebar on page 29.*

I noticed that the Leo Kottke Signature Model 12-string guitar has been discontinued. I have owned one for the past dozen years, and it is now in the certified Taylor repair shop here on Long Island, New York, as a result of my adjusting the truss rod too far. I am considering upgrading to another Taylor 12-string. However,

any guitar I select would have to be able to use those heavy-gauge strings the Leo Kottke model used (0.056 – 0.013) so I could tune the guitar down three steps (6th string = C#) and have it sound good.

Can any or all of the Taylor 12-strings deploy heavy-gauge strings and sound good with the strings tuned down three steps as in the original LKSM? Can you recommend a preferred Taylor 12-string model for this string set and tuning selection?

Steve Sussman-Fort  
Coram, NY

Yes, Steve, you can buy a stock Taylor and tune down to C# using those fat strings. I'd suggest a 556ce, and that's because it's mahogany like your LKSM. Leo once said that the most important thing about a guitar is that it is made from mahogany. That gives you a sense of where he's coming from.

With all your different wood and other options, why don't you offer different string spacings at the bridge?

Ronald Stefani

Ronald, I think one of the hardest questions to answer is "why don't you...?" because it often seems like it implies that we should but don't. But I'll take a stab at answering. It's partly because we just don't. It doesn't appear to us that we would make much difference to most people, that it would be worth the tooling effort, which is substantial, and the organizational effort, to get the right bridges on the guitars. There is a beauty to having some things being standardized and used over and over. People might think that that's not true, but it is, believe me. This might sound self-serving, but I assure it's not. What is efficient for us passes on to you, and what is inefficient for us also passes on to you. So, after way more than a million guitars and people being 99.99 percent happy with one bridge spacing but with different neck widths and nut spacings, we think it's an option that is not necessary and would only complicate matters. We have become very good at starting with a template of some things that don't change, and then having many things within that template that do change. That gives us efficient variety.

I have a 1995 Taylor 810 Brazilian rosewood guitar, which I love and plan to keep, but I am looking for

something different. I play lots of old-time, bluegrass and praise music. I want a 12-fret slot head with a small body but lots of punch so I can be heard along with the other instruments playing around me. Also, I am 62, so I wonder if a shorter scale length might be good. My playing style is a combination of flatpicking to fingerpicking. I like the 810 for the medium strings and how I can really hit it hard or play it gently, but I want something smaller that I can play hard or gentle. I prefer no electronics and no cutaway, although I would consider the Expression System if it comes with a guitar I like. And I don't have to have a slot head; I just like the look of them. I feel like I want to have my cake and eat it, too. Any advice would be helpful.

Phil Montgomery

Phil, just because this answer is going to be short doesn't mean I don't take it seriously. The answer: our redesigned 812 12-Fret.

I just bought my second Taylor, a 914ce, and all I can say is "wow." It has a beautiful range. The lows are strong, clear and sing all the way to the open E. The highs are bright, dynamic and crisp, as high as I can reach on the neck. Before I bought the guitar, I had to ask the sales rep three times to verify that the wood was actually Sitka spruce. I was so thrown off by the deep color of the top of this 914 that I thought it might be cedar. I know that sounds stupid, but I own a [cedar-top] GC5, and side-by-side they look very close in color, even though they sound different. As I look at the variety of spruce tops, I wonder: Are the color range and grain variations really that different from tree to tree, or is it the aging and drying process that creates a deeper color?

Paul Veber  
Virginia Beach, VA

Paul, the color of cedar can be dark red, yellow or brown. The color of Sitka spruce can be almost white, orange or brown. Both with 10 shades between them. You have two guitars that are nearly the same color. All spruce tops darken with time, and they turn more golden brown as they do. So, yes, the variations from tree to tree are astounding, and then they change after being made into a guitar. The drying process doesn't affect it much. If you were to take a one-year-old guitar with a pickguard and remove the pickguard, you might be amazed at the light spot

under there compared to the darker top around it. It looks just like tan lines at the edge of your swimsuit.

I have an 814ce, which I love, but I'm considering a redwood-top guitar for my next purchase. I want something different than spruce and really enjoy the sound of redwood, but I've heard that it is not as durable (i.e., it cracks and splits more easily) and that some high-end makers choose not to use it for that reason. Is there any truth to this in your experience? I've also heard that Adirondack spruce bracing is very beneficial for this top. Is that also true? Why?

Jon Gimbel

Jon, yes, Adirondack braces sound great. They're springy and work very well. Redwood is softer than spruce, and not as strong. But in my opinion, it's strong enough for the task. We don't have trouble with it, and remember, we make guitars for a large market of players. If it were a problem, which we have to stand behind, we would not use it. I think you're safe in ordering a redwood-top guitar from us.

I have a question about my 1998 314ce. I have searched for the answer extensively online and get conflicting results. To my knowledge you have always used sapele on the 300 Series, but I have talked with some folks who claim that the older 300s (such as my 1998 314) were built with [Tropical] American mahogany. Can you settle it for us once and for all? Secondly, is there a big tonal difference between sapele and mahogany, or is sapele used more for its supply and cost?

Matt

If I saw your guitar, Matt, I could tell you what it is made of. We've used African mahogany (khaya) on 300s before, and maybe even some American mahogany. Mostly sapele. I can't tell you what your guitar is made from here in this column. I don't think the info exists in our database without an exhaustive search. Your guitar is most likely sapele, second most likely khaya, and least likely mahogany. There is a big tonal difference between sapele and mahogany. Sapele is much harder and probably brighter. We would never be able to, at any cost, procure enough mahogany to make the 300s from mahogany. It's easy to think of sapele as a mahogany substitute, especially when I say we've used three similar species on the same

series. But now, after all these years, we think of sapele as sapele and mahogany as mahogany, and neither one being a substitute for the other. In a way, what I just said could be challenged because we use it for necks too, because again, there's no way we could get enough mahogany for all our necks, so in that sense, it's a substitute. Embrace your sapele. Show your guitar to a real wood expert sometime. Come visit us or send us a photo, and we can decipher what the wood on your particular guitar is.

I am a proud owner of your 8-string baritone. It's a wonderful guitar, but I find that when using a capo, the high strings of the octave pairs tend to bunch up with their wound mates, effectively choking the sound. Any suggested remedies are welcome.

Chris

Chris, I don't have a specific suggestion, as in brand of capo, but if you experiment with different capos you might find one with soft enough rubber to mold over the strings better than your capo does. That's the solution, to have rubber than can form over the very large baritone string and still capture the small octave string. I can see that as a little bit of a problem. I think I'll have our Service department work on an answer and make recommendations to players about that. Thanks for sharing that with me. *Ed. Note: We bounced this question off Taylor Customer Service Manager Glen Wolff. His reply: "This has been a longstanding issue with many 12-string players, too. I recommend getting a Shubb capo (shubb.com) and a few replacement sleeves, which you can use to experiment with notching for the smaller octave strings."*

Got a question for Bob Taylor?

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

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





# FOR TAYLOR FORWARD

## TAYLOR CO-FOUNDERS BOB TAYLOR AND KURT LISTUG CELEBRATE A MILESTONE ANNIVERSARY YEAR IN PROPER TAYLOR FASHION — BY LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

By Jim Kirlin

Bob Taylor and Kurt Listug have settled into office chairs at a long table that dominates the conference room in Taylor's product design building. It's the best kind of conference room if you're a Taylor guitar lover — its walls are lined with guitar hooks that cradle an array of freshly built prototype guitars, although the public will never see most of these, at least in their current form. Among the six-string delicacies on display are the latest versions of Taylor's new 800 Series models, each featuring a different variation on the appointment package. These will be carefully considered in order to determine the final specifications.

This room is where Taylor's weekly product development meetings take place, which means a lot of serious guitar talk happens around this table. The size of the table — it can comfortably seat 20 — comes in handy, as the conversations often draw from a healthy cross-section of departments.

Bob and Kurt are discussing, among other things, the arrival of their 40th year in business together. Bob has already prefaced the conversation with a reminder that company milestone markers like this one don't normally prompt an outpouring of nostalgic fanfare.

"It's not like I'd want to sit around on my birthday and look at pictures of myself as a boy," he laughs.

That disclaimer duly noted, both he and Kurt gratefully recognize that the occasion offers a unique vantage point from which to share some perspective on the company's path to growth and success.

"There's a lot to be proud of," Kurt reflects. "We have a great company with a lot of great people. It's a business we really enjoy. It provides us with a creative outlet. We're a market leader in sales, and the work we do influences other guitar makers. We conduct business with high ethical standards. We care about and safeguard the environment and natural resources."

The two have come a lot further than they ever expected when they set up shop back in 1974 with little more than a passion for guitars and a dream to create a company. Today the Taylor employee count is almost 800 strong, encompassing factory complexes in El Cajon, California, and Tecate, Mexico, a European distribution, sales and service center in Amsterdam, and co-ownership of an ebony mill in Yaoundé, Cameroon. In 2013, Taylor notched another record year in terms of guitar production, and the company is widely recognized as a successful guitar brand with an enthusiastic and growing community of owners, a strong dealer base, and a global network of suppliers.

What makes the company's success more impressive is that Bob and

Kurt have orchestrated the improbable transformation from grungy shop to world-class manufacturer without relinquishing ownership control. Along the way, they've invested a lot into cultivating a vibrant company culture that maintains a heavy emphasis on innovative guitar design and building strong relationships with customers, dealers and suppliers. As co-founders and first-generation owners, they remain active stewards of the guitar-making and business operations as they evolve and expand. Kurt continues to guide the company's sales and marketing efforts, including brand development and international market growth. Bob oversees the company's guitar manufacturing efforts and in recent years has been focusing considerable attention on sustainable wood sourcing initiatives, including the ebony mill in Cameroon.

With four decades of hard work and well-deserved success under their belts, both might feel tempted to take a victory lap and scale back their involvement. Instead, they insist that they feel as passionate as ever about shaping the company's future.

"I am happiest right here," Bob says. "I already see the world, and I get to come home to here. After 40 years it has become so rewarding. Why would I leave? My colleagues here amaze me with their talent, and I have something to offer them because of my experience

and my nature to push forward. As an active owner, I can make their ideas for Taylor Guitars possible simply by giving them the help and encouragement to develop them."

In recent years, both Bob and Kurt have talked extensively about the idea of succession and what it means for Taylor. (Kurt wrote about it in his column last issue.) It's one reason that Bob has been excited to bring Andy Powers into the fold as a next-generation guitar design partner. As he points out, Taylor is unique as a modern guitar company in that it has actively sought a successor for building — an actual person that people can name.

"A lot of times with larger companies the designers of things don't get a seat at the table after the founder is gone," he explains. "It's just the marketers, the sales people, and the finance people who get a seat, at least in our industry. If it's super technology-driven I'm sure the engineers have a seat, but we don't ever want Taylor to lose its

don't see a lot of innovation or creation of new products."

"If we allow that to happen," Bob adds, "we haven't done our job, which is to push really hard, to go the hard way around the block to try and make the guitar better."

That sentiment helps explain why Bob and Kurt choose to use key anniversary years as extra motivation to introduce something new and inspiring, rather than going back to the well in the name of commemorating the past. That's also why, when the conversation about celebrating the 40th anniversary is placed in the context of this year's comprehensive redesign of the 800 Series, both Bob and Kurt get excited. Bob shares a lot of his thoughts in the extended feature on the 800 Series that follows. Kurt echoes Bob's enthusiasm.

"What we're doing is different, because for other companies, if the demand and the sales are there for an existing product, they know they

"Kurt and I are involved with so many wonderful things here. Being able to help others achieve their goals, whether it's an employee, a wood cutter, a dealer or a musician, is incredibly rewarding." — Bob Taylor

creative drive. As Kurt and I started to think about succession, we realized that we didn't want to leave behind a corporation that makes a lot of guitars but doesn't have a person that you could name who is the wellspring of the guitar development. Without that person who has a real vision for what the guitar needs to be, you run the risk of getting a guitar made by committee. We want to make sure the people who are designing our guitars continue to have a strong voice as the company evolves."

Kurt fully agrees. "Most companies end up getting sold to finance people or sales and marketing people who can get financing, and they become the ones who call the shots," he says. "We don't want Taylor to eventually become a company that makes the same thing at every price point and every color, where you

can keep selling it just the way it is," he says. "We're not doing that. We're pushing into the future because, for us, the future means a better-sounding guitar and better stewardship of materials, and we want to have a leadership role."

Kurt says he's as excited about the future now as he was when he and Bob started the company.

"We believe we can have a greater impact on guitar music and the musical instrument industry in the next 40 years than we have in our first 40," he says. "We think we can continue to set a good example and raise the bar even higher when it comes to doing quality, ethical business, safeguarding the environment, and preserving natural resources. We think the best is yet to come, and we can hardly wait."



# BREAKING *THE* SOUND BARRIER: *THE NEXT GENERATION OF TAYLOR TONE*

FORTY YEARS IN, BOB TAYLOR IS MORE EXCITED  
THAN EVER TO EXPLORE NEW FRONTIERS IN TONE  
WITH ANDY POWERS AND THE NEW 800 SERIES

By Jim Kirlin

For all of Bob Taylor's accomplishments as a guitar builder over the years, his perspective on tone has been surprisingly dispassionate. This isn't to say that tone wasn't an important area of focus, or that he's not proud of the clarity and balance that have become signature traits of the Taylor sound. It's just that once he was able to achieve a high standard of quality, he shifted his sights to other important aspects of guitar refinement.

"I'd say there are two things that I have championed in my career," Bob suggests on an early autumn afternoon, poised to enter his 40th year in business. "First, guitars that play well on a continuing basis, and second, to have a high level of consistency in terms of build quality."

*continued on page 12*





For him, the more structural, functional aspects of how a guitar works – qualities like playability, intonation and serviceability – were all connected to precise, measurable traits, whereas tone seemed to float in a more subjective realm of personal preference. As Bob has often pointed out, it's not hard to get a broad consensus that Taylor makes the most consistently playable and adjustable guitars in the industry, but the topic of tone is more debatable – not everyone would agree that Taylor makes the best-sounding guitars.

"I've always said that I stopped chasing tone at a certain point because I thought it was unwinnable," Bob says.

And then along came Andy Powers. If Bob had built a sturdy reputation as a pioneer of modern, precision manufacturing techniques for a production environment, Andy was arguably more of a traditional luthier, having worked on his own for most of his career. Compared to Bob, he had a deeper, more diversified historical knowledge of guitar-making designs and an acutely intuitive feel for the minute manual details that shape tonal nuances. He also happened to be a pro-level player with both a feel and an ear for the finer shadings of the playing experience, which had helped calibrate his work as a builder.

Bob readily professes that Andy is a better guitar builder than he is, and that Andy's package of talents is essential for the future success of Taylor Guitars.

"Andy's got an incredible knack for knowing exactly what to change to bring out a certain tonal nuance," Bob says. "As a guitar maker, that's where he trumps me every single time. He's like the guitar-making equivalent of a brilliant mathematician."

In fact, Bob occasionally ribs Andy when he tries to explain his thinking behind a design or provide an analogy to others because his detailed explanations often drift out of rarefied guitar nerd air – an observation that Andy concedes is 100 percent true. But beneath Bob's good-natured teasing is a deep level of respect and admiration.

"Andy reminds me of an incredible watchmaker I went to visit once," Bob says. "Someone asked him, 'How did you design that watch?' And he said, 'I just see it in my mind.' That was the best answer he could have given any of us – the most complicated thing you could ever imagine, bringing gears and levers together, and he sees it in his mind. I believe Andy is the same way. He really just sees it in his mind."

The beauty of the Bob-Andy brain trust is the way their talents complement each other. The collaborative pairing of a manufacturing-minded guitar maker with an intuitive master luthier makes for a potent creative tandem.

Best of all, both Andy and Bob are philosophically entwined by virtue of their mutual passion for improving the acoustic guitar-playing experience.

"With Andy here, I think to myself, maybe tone *is* winnable," Bob says. "I just didn't know how. It's okay for me to learn something in my 40th year in business," he adds with a grin, but without a trace of irony.



## BUILDING A FOUNDATION FOR BETTER TONE

From Andy's perspective as a guitar builder who came to Taylor after working on his own for many years, Taylor's precision manufacturing methods provide a dream scenario, setting the stage for bringing unprecedented tonal advancements to a production level. At the center of it all is Taylor's patented NT neck design, arguably Bob's most impactful innovation as a guitar maker, which solved the age-old challenge of maintaining a straight, stable neck. Bob has likened it to building a good foundation and a roof that doesn't leak.

"That analogy is spot on," says Andy. "No guitar will sound good if it doesn't play well, because you won't be able to play it. It's not until you have a good-playing neck that you can start to refine the way you want it to sound. It is a practical necessity."

The combination of precision and consistency, Andy says, allows Taylor

to work up to the very edge of what the materials will allow to bring out the best in a guitar's sound.

Bob makes the point that even though the NT design nominally refers to the neck, it actually encompasses the body as well.

"That's a really big deal," he elaborates. "It gives us incredible control over the geometry of the entire guitar. It

zine *The Music & Sound Retailer*.) Yet Andy's GO design was just a preview of things to come. He had developed an even more ambitious "wish list" of design refinements that he hoped to apply more broadly across the Taylor line in the near future.

As Andy and Bob explored some of Andy's ideas and began to prototype them, they realized that Taylor's

needed to make a new guitar, and his list included all those different things. I don't think I would have put things like new glues, wood thicknesses and strings on my list."

Bob felt that a fitting place to introduce these tonal refinements in celebration of the 40th anniversary would be Taylor's 800 Series, a perennial bestseller and a longtime standard-bearer of the Taylor line. While bringing extensive change to such a popular Taylor series might seem to be a risky gambit, both Bob and Andy see it as the perfect articulation of Taylor's forward-thinking design philosophy. (For more on the thought process behind revamping the 800s, see the Q&A with Bob and Andy on the next page.)

Over the next several pages, we'll explore several of the refinements and how they work together to help optimize the unique properties of each body shape. Andy feels fortunate to have had the resources he did to bring these guitars to life.

"These are refinements that a luthier normally would only be able to bring to the highest quality concert guitar – a guitar built by one person with skilled hands from start to finish, because that one person would need utmost control over every aspect of the instrument," Andy says. "But the consistency of our manufacturing allows us to do this on a broader scale."

Andy believes that the new 800 Series guitars will appeal to an expanded range of players.

"People who like maple guitars or mahogany guitars and don't normally care for rosewood might really like these guitars," he says. "In fact, people who don't normally have a strong affinity for Taylors may really like these guitars."

The new guitars also speak to the broader variety of music being played on acoustic guitar in the modern era.

"These days you have everything from someone fronting a pop band with a highly processed electric signal to a jazz player to a fingerstyle player to a folk player playing in front of a microphone or just unamplified in a big room," Andy elaborates. "It's everything. Over the last 100 years the guitar has become the people's instrument. So, we're considering all those musical demands that players place on a modern guitar, we're reaching back and borrowing the great ideas and elements from old instruments, we're mixing in our fresh new ideas, and we're rolling all of this into these guitars. These are a snapshot of the very best that we're able to do."

Over time the 800 Series would help Taylor carve out an identity in the guitar world and establish itself as the backbone of the Taylor line as it expanded and evolved. Between the popular tonewood pairing of rosewood and spruce and Bob's thin-profile, easy-playing necks, the 800s made the acoustic guitar an ever more accessible instrument to players, especially as playing styles were evolving out of their folkly roots. Eventually the 800 Series would expand with the introduction of signature Taylor shapes

approaching 40th anniversary year offered the perfect stage for unveiling a next-generation Taylor acoustic guitar. Taylor already had a history of using key anniversary years to introduce bold, forward-thinking designs. Meanwhile, Taylor electronics developer David Hosler had separately been working on a new generation of Expression System® acoustic electronics that was also poised to make its debut in 2014.

The resulting design blueprint has produced the most comprehensive package of tone-enhancing refinements Taylor has ever introduced together, one that has carefully considered virtually every material ingredient of the guitar: bracing, top and back thicknesses, glue, finish, strings, and acoustic electronics, topped off with a refreshed design aesthetic.

"One of the compelling things about Andy as a guitar maker," Bob says, "is that, given the opportunity to design a new guitar, he didn't want to be limited by existing material constraints. It's like he made a shopping list of the items he



## BOB TAYLOR AND ANDY POWERS REFLECT ON WHAT THE TAYLOR 800 SERIES REPRESENTS AND EXPLAIN HOW THEIR DESIGN PHILOSOPHY LITERALLY SETS THE TONE FOR THE COMPANY'S NEXT 40 YEARS

No Taylor guitar series can claim a bigger share of Taylor's heritage than the rosewood/spruce 800 Series, because that's where Bob Taylor began. Specifically with the Dreadnought 810, using a body shape that Bob had inherited from Sam Radding, a luthier and owner of the American Dream, a guitar-making shop and the site of Bob's first guitar-making job.

Over time the 800 Series would help Taylor carve out an identity in the guitar world and establish itself as the backbone of the Taylor line as it expanded and evolved. Between the popular tonewood pairing of rosewood and spruce and Bob's thin-profile, easy-playing necks, the 800s made the acoustic guitar an ever more accessible instrument to players, especially as playing styles were evolving out of their folkly roots. Eventually the 800 Series would expand with the introduction of signature Taylor shapes

like the Grand Concert and Grand Auditorium.

The series not only came to represent the quintessential Taylor guitar, but, more broadly, it established a new standard for the modern steel-string guitar in the acoustic guitar industry, delivering superb playability up the neck, clear, balanced tone that fit cleanly in a mix with other instruments, a cutaway to give players access to more fretboard real estate, and an onboard pickup for performance. Taylor's Grand Auditorium 814ce in particular has long been one of the top-selling high-end guitars on the market. And the series as a whole will always be a sentimental favorite of both Bob and Kurt.

We separately asked Bob and Andy Powers the same questions about applying Taylor's latest design enhancements to the 800 Series for 2014. As you'll see from their responses, the two are clearly on the same page.

## HISTORICALLY, WHAT DOES THE 800 SERIES MEAN TO TAYLOR?

**Bob:** The 800 Series was the first guitar that I designed to be a real model after starting Taylor and taking what I'd learned from Sam Radding at the American Dream and the 15 or 20 guitars I'd made there. I was still green. I made the first 810 for myself. I loved that guitar. It's in our museum storage room. I continued to develop the models in that series, and they became synonymous with the Taylor brand for some time. In the end, I think our Grand Auditorium shape became even more of an icon than the 800 Series. But the 814ce combined both and has been a top seller and pleaser for a long time. It's changed and grown over the years. But it's really the core of our line.

**Andy:** I remember reading Taylor catalogs back in the early '90s and it being very clear that this was Bob's favorite series. This was one of the first real series developed as "the" Taylor guitar, specifically starting with the 810. As the perennial favorite, it has remained a popular benchmark representing who Taylor is as a brand, as well as representing the desire of players. Since then, the Grand Auditorium shape has not only further defined what a Taylor guitar is, but also served as the capstone of what defines the modern steel-string guitar.

## WHAT'S THE MAIN INTENT BEHIND THE REDESIGN OF THE 800 SERIES?

**Bob:** I'll start with this thought: It's like I'm having a grandchild. And you know how grandpas are! Andy has taken this 800 Series and given it new life. And I'm in love with it like I can't express, like a grandpa.

That said, the intent is to bring the highest quality sound to the forefront, and make everything in the guitar's design work to serve that goal. We want to employ "form follows function" with this guitar. We want to design it realizing that its primary function is to be a quality musical instrument, which means that its sound is the most important aspect. To that end, we are changing its characteristics and form. Some things players will see, and some are invisible, but all are there to enhance, literally supercharge, the function of sounding good. We do not have to undo the great things that I have championed in my career, which if you ask me are two-fold: first, guitars that play well on a continuing basis, and second,

a high level of consistency in terms of build quality. Now, because of Andy's ability, which trumps mine in the area of taking sound to the nth degree, we are going to enhance the sound.

**Andy:** To oversimplify, the idea is to build a better guitar. My entire goal has been to take the designs Bob has made, the components he pioneered and cultivated, and grow those into an even more musical instrument. There are lots of factors that comprise a finer instrument: the aesthetics, which make an instrument compelling to a player or casual looker; the feel and playability; and, of course, the actual functioning. Bob has really accomplished two huge things: a controllable and consistently playable neck design, and a manufacturing facility that can build things. With these two foundational supports in place, we are in a position to design a more dynamic, better-playing, better-sounding guitar.

## WHAT DOES THE REDESIGN MEAN FOR THE FUTURE OF GUITARS MADE BY TAYLOR?

**Bob:** It means that all of our guitars will get better. It means that with the company Kurt and I have built and the infrastructure we have to produce the design that we settle on, as Andy improves the designs we will consistently make better guitars. So, rather than asking what it means for the future of guitars being improved, I might ask what it means for the future of guitar players, or the future of the musical experience. To me it means more beautiful-sounding guitar music. It is not subtle; it's a big step.

**Andy:** It means two things to me: One, that our guitars will get better from here on in, and two, that we're far from done. Our golden era is still ahead. Many folks forget that the golden era of many instrument makers and companies starts decades into their lifespan. We are poised to innovate and refine our instruments to give musicians finer tools for expressing their music.

## WHY START WITH THE 800S? WHY NOT START ON A LESS VISIBLE SERIES? WHY PUT YOUR MOST SUCCESSFUL MODEL AT RISK?

**Bob:** It's my grandchild. Nothing but the best, right? We believe in this, and we don't believe that it puts it at risk. We've already made guitars like this, so to apply these refinements to a less visible series says that we're afraid. But we're confident and excited. The changes we are making cost money, too. So we need to start with a series that already carries a price point to allow us the freedom to spend money. We're all in. We showed a prototype to [guitarist and Taylor product specialist] Wayne Johnson today and let him play. What an experience. It's undeniable that these guitars sound so good. The music from it is just so much sweeter.

**Andy:** I don't see genuine improvement as a risk. We really believe that these are better and more compelling instruments on every level, and we want to tell that to players. Our 800 Series is the benchmark, and we should be putting our best efforts into the guitar we believe in and are proud of. To put these new refinements into another less visible series is saying, "Yes, we'll try this, but with a safety net under us, because we're not sure people will agree with us, and we're not sure we agree with us."

## WHAT'S THE CONNECTION TO TAYLOR'S 40TH ANNIVERSARY?

**Bob:** Well, I've been doing this for 40 years now. And while I'm not nearly ready to check out, I do have to consider succession, right? So that's been solved with Andy coming on board. And what better time than our 40th anniversary for me to pass the baton, so to speak, to the younger, better guitar maker? And he gets my pet guitar series to change. That's bold and confident if you ask me, on my part and his. Our 40th anniversary is a great year to do this. Long enough to have a succession, yet early enough for me to help with it and enjoy the process myself, because by our 50th, I'll have enjoyed the results of this one for 10 years.

**Andy:** What better time than an anniversary to take an opportunity to look forward instead of back. Often, people and companies look backward and say, "Yep, those were the good old days." When we look back, we see an unbroken line of growth, innovation and development. That is Taylor's history. So, an anniversary is the perfect time to make a huge forward advancement and raise the bar on our own benchmark of the modern guitar.



# NEW DESIGN FEATURES

NEARLY EVERY MATERIAL  
COMPONENT OF TAYLOR'S  
ROSEWOOD/SPRUCE 800 SERIES  
WAS RECONCEIVED IN OUR QUEST  
TO ENHANCE THE TONE



Before you read this story, take a few minutes to play your guitar. Strum a few of your favorite chords and let them ring out. Pick a sweet melody. Bust out a couple of tangy licks. Do whatever you like to do. As the notes resonate, consider the guitar's different parts, the delicate nuances of its construction, and the synergy of materials that transforms your raw energy into music.

A well-crafted acoustic guitar is a carefully calibrated web of vibration, coaxed into song through a controlled balance of energy and tension. The secret of great acoustic tone, aside from great playing, is the way the individual material components work together as your playing is transferred into the guitar through the strings. A skilled guitar designer understands how to optimize the relationship between the chosen materials, artfully orchestrating their movement to create a desired tone.

Geometry and material mass are important elements. A guitar needs to be built strong enough to withstand the forces of the string tension without being too strong. An overbuilt guitar will be too rigid to produce a good sound. A guitar that's built too light might sound good for a while but may eventually begin to fold up on itself under the constant forces of tension.

Taylor guitars have long been constructed to live in the sweet spot of balanced tension and efficient movement. One of the fundamental factors is the body design.

"Our guitars have an elegant geometry," says Bob Taylor. "They're made to hold their own forces."

As Andy Powers discussed the tonal enhancements he wanted to bring to the 800 Series models with Bob, the two established what wouldn't change, such as the classic rosewood/Sitka spruce wood combination and the overall dimensions of each body shape.

"One of the things people like about Taylors is the ergonomics of our body shapes," Bob says. "Other than the Grand Orchestra, our guitars tend to be slightly thinner than other guitars."

While there are certain core qualities that Andy says he strives to bring to any guitar — volume, sustain, clarity, uniformity of character — one of his driving goals in redesigning the 800s was to accentuate the unique characteristics of each different shape.

"I want these models to have a family resemblance, but I don't want them to sound the same," he says. "I wanted to consider the 812ce, for example, not as it relates to the 810ce, but as it relates to itself."

The resulting tonal distinctions between each shape, Bob says, are far from subtle.

"I think players will really enjoy experiencing these new guitars and comparing different models," he says. "In a way, there's a rebirth of every one of them."

In the pages that follow, we'll share some of the design modifications that contribute to the tone of the new 800 Series guitars, with some expert color commentary from Bob and Andy. In the end, all their tinkering was meant to create a more inspiring, more musical playing experience. We hope you have a chance to play our new 800 Series models at your local Taylor dealer and discover something new.

## BRACING

**New advanced performance designs yield greater warmth, midrange, balance and sustain**

A guitar's bracing patterns help orchestrate the movement of the top and back, working with the overall body shape and tonewood pairing to create a unique voicing profile. Typically the top gets all the attention — after all, it's a prime piece of real estate on the guitar (it's called the soundboard for a reason), it has a direct relationship to the strings, and its bracing scheme is more complex than the back by far. The back literally brings up the rear and features a much simpler bracing pattern (albeit by design). Yet the back plays a vital role in the overall tonal equation. The way the top and back move in relation to each other can greatly impact the overall sound.

For the redesign of the 800 Series, Andy drew from the same ideas that informed his bracing scheme for Taylor's Grand Orchestra body shape. In the case of the GO, the payoff was a more linear and responsive sound across the tonal spectrum — not an easy feat for a big, deep-bodied guitar.

"The nuances of that design help produce a consistent motion in the top and back," Andy says.

With the 800s, the specifics of the bracing profiles and placement were customized for each body shape to emphasize their inherent strengths and complement the playing styles that might suit the shape.

"I wanted to change the relationship between the way each back moves when it is set in motion and how that plays off the top that's also been set in motion," Andy elaborates. "The way they're moving independently and how they work together has

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— Andy Powers

changed for every one of the guitar shapes to get what I want out of each."

The bracing designs played an especially important role since the body depth was left unchanged, in contrast to the design of the Grand Orchestra, which was expanded to a depth of five inches to help achieve the desired tone.

"The GO could support the expansion in depth because the large proportions of the profile made it appropriate," Andy explains. "I didn't want to change the depths of the other shapes because they felt well aligned with the character of those shapes."

In addition to new top and back bracing, the 800s also feature side braces, which help add rigidity to the sides.

"It reduces their tendency to flutter," Andy explains. "This added support helps maximize the top and back movement."

Another interesting bracing adjustment was applied to the backs of the Grand Concert and Grand Auditorium models. Our standard horizontal, ladder-style pattern was modified to a slanted scheme.

"Since I wasn't going to alter the body depth on those models, I wanted to find a way to maintain that same relationship I'd worked out between the top and the back of the GO," Andy explains. "After experimenting with some different ideas, I realized that I could change the internal tension of the back by changing the position of the braces a little."

"I never would have thought of that," Bob confesses. "I would have felt like I had to make the guitar deeper."

With the reconfigured relationship between the top and back bracing, Andy says, each shape generates a

well-balanced tone whose differences are most noticeable in the midrange — an interesting characteristic on the 800s given rosewood's reputation for having a more scooped midrange response.

"The midrange is the friendly and flattering part of the guitar," he says, "depending on who's playing it. This sounds warmer across the board. Those frequencies are always there; it's just how you encourage or inhibit them. In this case, you have this nice, cushy swell and a really thick, long sustain, even with a delicate touch."

## WOOD THICKNESSES

**Optimized dimensions help bring out the best of each body shape**

Another subtle recalibration that relates closely to the bracing is in the top and back thickness specification for each body shape. It's just one of many refinements designed to bring more efficiency of movement to the overall guitar.

Generally speaking, Andy says, the smaller the guitar, the thinner the wood, using the Grand Concert as an example.

"Because of its smaller outline, the GC is inherently a stiffer body," he explains. "By making the parts a little thinner and more flexible, we can maximize what a player can get out of that guitar, like more volume."

"Andy's got a great sense for how thin and light you can go to make it sound great and still be equally strong," Bob says. "You can actually flatpick that GC and it's pretty loud."

## PROTEIN GLUE

**The strategic use of animal glues helps enhance the transfer of tone between important guitar components**

Another guitar ingredient that can influence tone is the glue used between parts where the tone is transferred, such as the bracing and bridge. Some synthetic glues can partially impede tone (think of the glue working like a gasket, sealing off some of the sound), while others, like animal protein glues, transfer it well. Animal-derived glues were used to make musical instruments for centuries before the development of man-made woodworking glues in the 20th century. Factories moved away from traditional hide glues because they were labor-intensive to work with in a production environment, since they needed to be constantly tended.

"It's like making risotto," Bob says. "You have to stir it to a certain thickness, and you can't walk away from it."

These days there are modern versions of protein glues on the market, and they're much easier to work with. One that Andy chose for the top and back bracing was fish protein glue.

"It's great stuff," Bob says. "It can be used at room temperatures, you can squeeze it out of a bottle, and it has all the same wonderful characteristics of traditional protein-based glue."

With the braces providing an energy transmission network for the top and back of the guitar, the fish glue optimizes the tonal transfer. Its strong adhesion properties also allow the guitar to be built more lightly without sacrificing strength.

"We can reduce the weight of the parts a little bit because we know that between this glue and the structure it's strong in the ways you want it to be strong," Andy explains. "You don't need more weight."

Traditional heated hide glue was chosen to mate the bridge with the soundboard. Andy says it's something that can be managed in the Taylor factory, and that its properties make it more suitable for the ebony/spruce joint.

"It's a little more appropriate for the role the bridge plays in the sound transfer chain," he adds. "Plus, its natural characteristics make it easier to clean any residue off a thin-finished top."

Elsewhere on the guitar, we'll continue to use synthetic glues (we use four different types) strategically based on how their respective strengths match up with the function of the joint.



# FINISH THICKNESS

OUR THINNER FINISH PROVES  
THAT, IN THE END, LESS IS MORE



It's no revelation that people love the way a high-gloss finish looks on a guitar. On our daily factory tours, guests routinely fall prey to the gloss-induced spell of our guitars as they pass through the Finish and Final Assembly departments, where many of our guitars take on a luxurious, reflecting-pool sheen.

For any guitar company, creating that appealing glossy luster is demanding work involving many steps: sanding and leveling the guitar body, applying and leveling base coats, doing the same with a middle coat, and then a top coat, which is then sanded and polished. To make all that work easier to do, some guitar factories apply a thicker coating of finish, which gives them a comfortable material cushion. The downside is that the thicker the finish, the more it dampens the tonal response. Guitar companies like Taylor have developed sophisticated techniques to make a gloss finish as thin as possible for maximum tonal benefits. For years, we've been pushing the envelope in the pursuit of thin, environmentally-friendly guitar finishes that can be applied, cured and buffed with great efficiency and consistency. Currently our gloss finish is sprayed using high-tech methods that incorporate a robotic unit, high-efficiency electrostatic attraction technology, and an ultraviolet curing oven.

For some time now, Taylor's standard gloss finish for the 500 Series and up has had a maximum thickness of 6 mils (1 mil = .001 inch), which is the industry standard for a high-quality gloss-finish guitar.

But because of the tonal benefits of thinner finishes, Andy hatched the ambitious goal of trying to reduce the finish on the 800 Series guitars by half, to 3 mils.

"I was even willing to sacrifice the high-gloss look for the sake of tone," he says.

He considered the finishes and applications historically used on other stringed instruments such as violins and classical guitars, including hand-rubbed "French-polished" shellac, which was widely used on instruments from the 17th to 19th centuries. While the super-thin coating contributes to superb tone, the manual, skill-intensive application process makes it extremely difficult to bring to a production level.

While Bob supported Andy's thin-finish pursuits, he wasn't ready to give up on gloss, especially with his extensive manufacturing experience. He and Andy enlisted Taylor finish experts Steve Baldwin and Chris Carter, and after some intensive R&D, were able to reduce the thickness more than 40 percent to below 3.5 mils, in a way that can be consistently produced in our manufacturing environment. Bob says

## FINISH BY NUMBERS

Our pursuit of thinner finishes for the new 800 Series has led us to incorporate the thickness value into the way we refer to the finish in order to clearly differentiate between the several finish sheens and thicknesses we use. For example, the 800s feature Gloss 3.5, which means that the finish must be 3.5 mils or less on average. Other standard gloss-finish guitars would be Gloss 6.0. A satin-finish back on a 400 Series guitar is Satin 5.0. The numbering also makes it easy to designate changes over time as we continue to pursue thinner finishes.

## A GUIDE TO FINISH THICKNESSES

In North America, finish thicknesses are typically measured in mils (1 mil = .001 inch). In other countries, the unit of measurement is microns (1 micron = .001 millimeter). One mil = 25.4 microns.

The values below represent the maximum finish thicknesses applied to guitars throughout the Taylor line as well as other instrument finishes for comparative reference. In terms of their impact on tone, regardless of the finish composition, thinner is better. It's one reason why our 100 Series (2 mils) and GS Mini guitars (2 mils) sound so good. The addition of color (e.g., 600 Series, sunburst-top 700 Series) can add .5 to 3 mils depending on the color and the wood.

- **Taylor standard gloss models:** 6 mils
- **The new 800 Series:** 3.5 mils
- **Taylor satin finish (300-400 Series backs):** 5 mils
- **100 Series back:** 2 mils
- **GS Mini / Baby (matte):** 2 mils
- **Typical nitrocellulose lacquer when new:** 6-8 mils
- **Violin oil varnishes:** 1-5 mils depending on age, maker, formulation, etc.
- **French-polished shellac:** 1-2 mils

that even though they weren't able to reach Andy's original goal of 3 mils, he's proud of the work the team did, especially the fact that they were able to preserve a beautiful glossy complexion.

"We did it by calling upon all the resources that we've ever had in 40 years of guitar building," Bob reflects. "It was one of the hardest things we've ever done. It took all of our skill, all of our knowledge, and we walked a tight-rope to get there."

Finish department manager Chris Carter can attest.

"There's not as much finish to work with, so we have to be more precise," he says. "It takes a little more expertise."

Based on some isolated A/B testing at the factory, the thickness reduction contributes noticeably to making the guitars louder and more responsive. Andy says he was absolutely thrilled with the results.

"Honestly, it blew me away that Bob and our finish guys were able to get there," he says. "It's a testament to the power of precise manufacturing tolerances. When I came to Taylor, I hadn't worked with ultraviolet-cured polyester finish before. That finish allowed us to get down to 3.5. I don't know if this could be done with lacquer."

Andy knows that the conversation on finish often leads to comparisons of different materials and speculation on which is more favorable for tone. In this case, he says, it's a moot point.

"What I know as a guitar builder is that the thickness is ultimately more important than the actual material," he says. "Especially when you can get down to 3.5 mils."

"REDUCING OUR FINISH BY ALMOST HALF AND PRESERVING GLOSS WAS ONE OF THE HARDEST THINGS WE'VE EVER DONE. WE CALLED UPON ALL THE RESOURCES THAT WE'VE EVER HAD IN 40 YEARS OF GUITAR BUILDING." — Bob Taylor

## INSPECTING FINISH THICKNESSES

One of the indispensable instruments of quality control used by our Finish department is an ultrasonic coating thickness gauge, which can measure the depth of the finish on a guitar. It employs the same technology used to perform prenatal ultrasound readings with pregnant women, incorporating a conductive gel. We've used it as a standard finish inspection tool on our guitars for years. Readings are taken at multiple locations on the top and back of the guitar to ensure that the finish thickness is consistently to our specification. In the case of our new 800 Series models, the readings must show that we are achieving 3.5 mils or less on average. Bob explains why the thickness value is an average rather than a specific threshold.

"If the finish had a precisely even thickness everywhere it wouldn't look flat and level because the wood isn't flat and level underneath," he shares. "So the finish thickness absolutely varies in order to fill in the low spots of the wood. But remember, we are measuring to one-tenth of one-thousandth of an inch. Imagine splitting hairs and then splitting them again! We will see readings of 3.2 and 3.8 on the same guitar, but we know we are achieving our goals only if most readings are the smaller numbers. So we call it 3.5 because that is the average."

Bob notes that the finish is so thin that there might occasionally be a small spot that lacks gloss because it has been rubbed ultra thin. It will happen rarely, he says, but if it does, we won't re-apply finish to those spots.

"They are like a little badge of courage to us, and I think players will appreciate them if they ever see one," he adds. "This finish is thin and we are very proud of it."

## FEELING THIN

LOOKING FOR A TANGIBLE SENSE OF THE DIFFERENCE

IN FINISH THICKNESS BETWEEN OUR STANDARD GLOSS

MODELS (6.0 MILS) AND THE

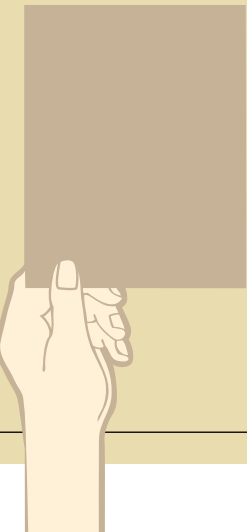
NEW 800 SERIES (3.5)? FEEL

THE THICKNESS OF THIS

ISSUE'S COVER. IT'S 6.1 MILS.

NOW FEEL THE THICKNESS

OF THIS PAGE. IT'S 3.5.





# STRINGS

WE WORKED WITH *ELIXIR*® STRINGS TO CREATE A CUSTOM STRING SET THAT BRINGS BOLDER HIGHS AND FULLER LOWS TO THE GRAND CONCERT AND GRAND AUDITORIUM

One sign of a great guitar is its ability to sound like the same instrument from the lowest note to the highest note. In Bob's view, Andy has a natural instinct for how to create that in a guitar (see sidebar), as demonstrated by the uniformity of character in the notes of the Grand Orchestra. A guitar's type and gauge of strings can play an important role in helping to express this.

For the 800s, Andy began by switching from *Elixir* Acoustic 80/20 Bronze with NANOWEB® coating, which we've been using for years, to *Elixir*'s Acoustic Phosphor Bronze NANOWEB® set.

"The phosphor bronze strings have a nice, rich shimmer on the high end, with a richer, broader warmth overall," he says.

Andy and the rest of the product development team liked them so much that they made the decision to install the phosphor bronze sets on all of Taylor's steel-string models for 2014 (except 12-string, Baritone and T5 models).

More specifically, as Andy looked to optimize the tone for each body shape within the 800 Series, he explored alternative string gauge options, particularly for the Grand Concert and Grand Auditorium. Andy felt the overall articulation could be enhanced by creating the right tension profile at the bridge. Or, as Bob put it: "He wanted more guts out of the high end."

"One of my favorite tricks in the past was to make this custom, hybrid set," Andy explains. "I'd use medium-gauge for the top two strings, blended into a regular light set on the low end. It gave

me the bold quality that I wanted on the treble notes without overloading the soundboard with a lot of extra tension. I ended up with a little louder guitar that was also warmer on the low end."

While Andy was able to get close to what he wanted with his hybrid set, he wanted to fine-tune the calibration even more. A phone call to our friends at *Elixir* Strings led to some productive collaboration, and ultimately, an ideal solution. The result is a unique set, named HD Light, that blends *Elixir* light- and medium-gauge strings with a custom .025 gauge third string (a standard light-gauge G string is a .024; the medium is a .026). The specific gauging is: .013, .017, .025, .032, .042, .053.

The custom gauging serves to complement the construction of the Grand Concert and Grand Auditorium and creates an ideal tone profile across the bridge, as *Elixir* Strings engineer Justin Fogleman explains.

"The increased tension of the treble strings improves their articulation, balancing their voice within the mix," he says. "The interaction of the tension profile with the soundboard also adds to the harmonic content of the bass strings, creating a warmer, fuller sound."

Andy says the new sets are perfect for these shapes.

"The hand feel is incredibly balanced," he shares. "And knowing that I was going to get to use this string set influenced the way I braced and voiced the guitars."

To read more about how the HD Lights help flavor the tone of the 800 Series Grand Concert and Grand Auditorium models, see "The 800 Series by Shape" on page 24.

## ONE GUITAR, ONE VOICE

One of the qualities that Bob Taylor admires in Andy's guitar-making approach is his ability to create a consistency of tone within the voice of the guitar.

"The highest notes that you can play on the 12th fret, on the high strings, are as loud and meaty as the lowest notes," Bob explains. "It sounds like one guitar from one end to another. That can be hard to achieve, because often it can sound like one guitar for the first five frets, another guitar for the next four frets, and yet another guitar for the next four frets. But Andy's guitars sound like the same musical instrument, like a piano."

APPLYING PIEZO TECHNOLOGY IN A DIFFERENT WAY HAS TRANSFORMED ITS SONIC CHARACTER. NOW IT CAN TRULY CAPTURE WHAT THE WHOLE TOP IS DOING WITH THE STRINGS.

# ELECTRONICS

THE NEW EXPRESSION SYSTEM® 2 CAPTURES MORE OF A GUITAR'S DYNAMIC PROPERTIES USING A BREAKTHROUGH BEHIND-THE-SADDLE DESIGN

Another tone-enhancing design stroke applied to the new 800 Series is a new version of the Expression System pickup, the Expression System 2. Back in 2003, we introduced the original Taylor Expression System (ES), which incorporated strategically placed magnetic sensors to capture the natural vibration of the guitar. Paired with a studio-grade preamp, it conveyed the nuances of the guitar and the player without the artificial coloring of other types of pickups.

Over time the ES, like our guitars, has evolved to bring greater refinement to the amplified playing experience. As Andy Powers was working to improve the tone of the 800 Series, Taylor pickup developer David Hosler was on a parallel path to push our pickup designs forward. His research led him back to the same starting point that fueled the development of the original ES: understanding how a guitar's components interact to create tone.

As Hosler revisited the way the guitar's energy was transferred from the strings through the guitar, he made an interesting discovery about the saddle's movement. The industry's prevailing understanding had been that the top and string vibration cause the saddle to "bounce" up and down. It has long been the basis for the placement of a piezo-electric transducer under the saddle. But in reality, Hosler says, that vertical movement is heavily restricted.

"The string tension produces 60

pounds of downward pressure," he explains. "As a result, the saddle essentially gets locked down."

That's why a traditional under-saddle pickup with piezo-electric crystals often responds with a sound characterized as thin, brittle, brash or synthetic, especially with more aggressive playing.

"Crystals don't like to be crushed," he says. "They're actually physically like a sponge in a way. As they get squeezed and relax, the crystals emit voltage."

It turned out that the saddle's natural range of movement as the guitar was being played was back and forth like a pendulum. That revelation led Hosler to relocate the crystals from under the saddle to *behind* it, just barely making contact with it. The new positioning enabled the crystals to respond more naturally to the guitar's energy as it was transferred through the saddle.

The final design, named the Expression System 2 (ES2), incorporates three piezo sensors that are installed behind the saddle, through the bridge, with three tiny Allen screws that calibrate the pressure of the sensors against the saddle.

The patent-pending design represents a true game-changer in the pickup world. Forget what you think a piezo pickup sounds like in this context, Hosler says. Applying the technology in a different way has transformed its sonic character.

"Instead of 60 pounds of force on

the crystals, it ends up being about three," he says. "And it's completely dynamic – it's truly capturing what the whole top is doing with the strings. This is more than a saddle pickup."

Bob Taylor loved the outside-the-box thinking that fueled the pickup's development.

"Ever since Glen Campbell in the '60s, piezo pickups have been placed under the saddles of acoustic guitars, and no one has thought about moving them out from under there until David did," he says. "And it sounds great. The vast majority of people who have played and listened to the ES2 think it

sounds better than the original ES."

Like the original ES, the ES2 features the same volume and tone control knobs. The preamp is similar but with a slightly different gain structure. As a result it will be about 25 percent hotter, which is more in line with other pickups.

One practical benefit, Andy Powers points out, is that the ES2 will be a bit more plug-and-play friendly both for artists and live sound mixers.

"If I'm playing a small club, I may or may not get a soundcheck – I might have only a line check," he says. "Or I might be playing in a loud bar band or a duo gig, in which case I might have better luck sounding good with the ES2. It's easier for sound guys."

We've done extensive field-testing with the ES2 for more than a year with gigging employees, dealers who visit the factory for training seminars, Nashville sidemen, and big touring acts including Muse, Jason Mraz and Taylor Swift, who has the ES2 installed on all her touring guitars. Hosler says that the response to the tone across the board has been overwhelmingly positive.

We feel so strongly about the tonal quality of the ES2 that it will be installed not only in our 800 Series guitars this year, but in all steel-string models in our 500 Series and up. Look for more on the development of the ES2, including our robotic assembly process and artist reactions, next issue.



# DESIGN

## AESTHETIC

AN ELEGANT NEW APPOINTMENT  
PACKAGE BUILDS ON THE CLASSIC  
AESTHETIC TRADITIONS OF THE 800S

When it came to the visual aesthetics for the new 800 Series, Andy wanted to both honor its classic Taylor heritage and extend it forward in a meaningful way. Beyond its central rosewood/Sitka spruce wood pairing, one enduring aesthetic identity trait had been the use of light-colored binding, which had evolved over the years from white plastic on Bob's early models to figured maple. A few of Andy's early prototypes explored a new look, featuring ebony binding. Though it was well received, Taylor co-founder and CEO Kurt Listug felt it was important to preserve the light-bound aesthetic.

"I loved the look of the ebony, but to me the 800 Series, especially the 814ce, has become in essence the iconic Taylor guitar," he says. "The contrasting white binding on the body, neck and peghead makes these guitars instantly recognizable as Taylors. It's such a strong and recognizable design element that it's part of the instrument's DNA, in my opinion."

Kurt's input guided Andy's focus back to maple, with a renewed eye for creating the type of crisp contrast that Taylor's early models featured. He called on Taylor's longtime spruce and maple supplier, Steve McMinn from Pacific Rim Tonewoods, in search of the whitest maple available.

"We didn't want any curl," Andy says. "We wanted it to look sharp and clean and light. We talked about what part of the tree the maple came from and what kind of climate that tree grew in, just to have the right thing."

"I'm super happy with how the binding turned out," says Kurt.

Andy also put a lot of effort into the purfling layers that complement the binding on the top of the guitar, incorporating a thin ribbon of rosewood between the maple and the spruce top.

"It really draws your eye to the body shape, acting like a bold picture frame

*continued on next page*

**Left:** The grain orientation of the new rosewood pickguard is arranged at an angle that will minimize visible pick wear

**Right:** Extra pale, non-figured maple was selected to create a crisp visual contrast against the rosewood sides and the top purfling, which features an outline of rosewood trim



for it," Andy says. "Whether the guitar is on a wall or a player is performing with it, you really notice the outline of this guitar in a strong way. I knew I wanted a certain amount of weight to it and thought rosewood would be just perfect."

Bob Taylor was impressed by how many different variations and refinements Andy created in order to arrive at the final one.

"At one point he laid out 10 different versions and asked which one looked best to me," Bob says. "After I picked one, he says, 'Yep, that's the one I chose.' A really good guitar maker has a great sense of the aesthetic of the guitar. Andy's a good cook in the kitchen of aesthetics."

Because the 800 Series has traditionally featured a shell material for the rosette, Andy chose green abalone, framing both edges with rosewood to complement the top trim.

"The weight of the abalone has changed," he points out. "It's a little lighter, but I really like the sparkle effect you get."

A new fretboard inlay motif, featuring pearl and named "Element," took a little longer to develop.

"The 800s Series inlay to some degree has always been a diamond-like shape," Andy points out. "At least from a distance. But other than Bob's early 800s Series guitars, it hasn't been an actual diamond; it was more the impression of a diamond. Even the most recent leafy design has sort of a diamond shape from a distance. So I knew I wanted to do something that projected a diamond-like silhouette, that didn't have straight lines, and that had points somewhere. And to me it needed to have a certain marriage of organic and elegant qualities. I wanted graceful curves that matched each other well and said a lot to a lot of different people. Depending on who's looking at it, the perception of what that inlay is varies widely."

The appearance of the ebony fretboards was also carefully considered. Given Taylor's position as a co-owner of an ebony mill in Cameroon and Bob's advocacy for the use of "smoky"

wood to support a more sustainable model of consumption, both Bob and Andy agreed that the 800s were an appropriate place to use fretboards with mild, light brown streaks and swirls.

"If you could stand in an ebony sawmill like ours and look at all the non-black ebony that was being tossed aside like trash it would break your heart," Bob says. "Not only is it a waste of material, but it's a waste of some of the most beautiful pieces of wood I've ever seen. I'm proud to be able to share this wood with our Taylor family."

As a result, each 800 Series guitar will have its own unique character.

"I love the look," says Andy. "To me, seeing smoky ebony always looks like a cloudy sky at night."

Andy and Bob also decided to change the wood used for the peghead overlay this year from rosewood to ebony, which in some cases will also incorporate smokiness.

One of the most dramatic visual distinctions of the new appointment

"A REALLY GOOD GUITAR MAKER HAS A GREAT AESTHETIC SENSE. ANDY'S A GOOD COOK IN THE KITCHEN OF AESTHETICS." — Bob Taylor

package is a switch from our traditional faux tortoise shell pickguard to one made of Indian rosewood.

"I suppose it's a bit of a riff off my former archtop-building days, because those guitars typically had an elevated pickguard and I've always liked making them out of wood," Andy says. The decision also provided another opportunity to showcase the rosewood-rich heritage of the 800s. The rosewood selected for each pickguard will be matched with the back and sides.

Considering the underlying focus on bringing tonal enhancement to the 800s, incorporating a pickguard begs the question of whether it will impact the tone-producing ability of the guitars.

To sample the new 800 Series firsthand, visit your local Taylor Guitars dealer.



**Clockwise from above:** A thin maple back strip; Andy's Element inlay; Taylor nickel tuning machines  
**Opposite page:** Special attention was given to calibrating the width of the purfling lines for aesthetic balance





# THE NEW 800 SERIES BY SHAPE

WHILE THE REFINEMENTS TO THE 800 SERIES GIVE ALL THE BODY SHAPES A COHESIVE FAMILY RESEMBLANCE, ONE OF ANDY'S DESIGN GOALS WAS TO EMPHASIZE THE UNIQUE STRENGTHS OF EACH SHAPE. BELOW HE EXPLAINS THE DISTINCTIVE TONAL PERSONALITY TRAITS OF EACH, AND THE PLAYING APPLICATIONS THAT COMPLEMENT THEM.

## GRAND CONCERT

**Models:** 812(ce)

**Tonal Enhancement:** Extra mid-range warmth, extra boldness on the top notes, more overall volume

I like the intimacy of the Grand Concert. It's the perfect lap guitar. It's really comfortable to hold, and with the short scale, it has a soft, gentle feel on your hand, plus a really articulate character because of the smaller body cavity. The small body chamber essentially pushes the frequencies it wants to emphasize up in pitch a little bit. That's where you get the articulation and intimate sound. From a musical perspective, it makes me want to play it with my raw fingertips as a fingerstyle instrument; it has beautiful balance that way. I might play it with a pick, but I will feel compelled to pick it in a way that draws on that delicate beauty. Inversely, I might choose it for a band setting solely for the balance it would give me. It's so punchy, clear and focused when played strongly that it works really well amplified in a mix. Its

inherent balance and focused articulation also make it a perfect recording guitar, as it fits well with other instruments.

In most cases I don't want this instrument to be an overly bright or harsh-sounding guitar. The smaller air chamber will want to emphasize the upper register, but if I'm going to play with my raw fingertips or fingernails, I want it to be warm and balanced with good sustain. If I'm playing a solo fingerstyle arrangement, it means I'll have a lot of notes going all at once, and I want them to ring out for a long time to accompany the interwoven melody lines. So when I considered what I wanted from the Grand Concert musically, I chose to emphasize midrange warmth. I wanted it to sound like a mature guitar, like something that had been played a long time, as that fits the more delicate way that I would approach it.

With the custom mix *Elixir*® HD Light string set, I have a little heavier [medium] gauge on the top two strings blended into the low end of a regular

light set, which helps produce a bold, robust quality that I want on the top notes, without overloading the top with string tension. Because of the unique tension profile across the bridge, it enables the top to work more efficiently. That's really noticeable on the Grand Concert with its short scale. There is a very lyrical, singing quality everywhere, whether it's the high notes, the middle register, or the low notes. Every note has this luxuriously mature yet easygoing quality that ends up complementing both the low end and high end with surprising dynamic range and a lot more volume than a player would expect out of a smaller guitar. Even in a drop tuning, which I would hardly ever use on a Grand Concert, it's a fingerstyle instrument you can lay into.

## GRAND CONCERT 12-FRET

**Models:** 812(ce)-12-Fret

**Tonal Enhancement:** Similar to the standard Grand Concert, plus darker and punchier

The 12-fret version of the Grand Concert will sound similar to the 14-fret in terms of balance, but it will have a different tonal character because of the shifted bridge position and because I changed the actual shape of the braces to emphasize the bold attack. The bridge relocation is almost an inch closer to the center of the lower bout. If you imagine the top acting like a drum head, as you move the striking spot to the center, the whole sound becomes meatier and more robust. Between the bridge position and bracing refinements, the 12-Fret articulates a different portion of the top when it's first set in motion, so it's a touch darker, and more forceful. It's a Grand Concert that is sweet at heart, but walks around with a swagger. For a player who likes a slightly darker, punchier quality in a small guitar, the 12-Fret is a great way to go.

## GRAND AUDITORIUM

**Models:** 814(ce)

**Tonal Enhancement:** More warmth and a looser, more luxurious low end

The Grand Auditorium is really special to me because the 814ce is the quintessential modern acoustic guitar. It's about the same width as the Dreadnought, but it has a much curvier shape, so its response is completely different. To me it's the ultimate general-purpose guitar – you can play fingerstyle on it, play jazz on it, you might play some bluegrass on it, you can strum it in front of a band, you can support a singer, you can write songs on it, you can use it anywhere you use an acoustic guitar. With these things in mind, I wanted something that had a huge range of possible expression; if I were to take one guitar to a gig to cover a variety of different styles, it would be this GA. It's got the balance, warmth and articulation that I want for a fingerstyle guitar. It has the punch I need to front a band if I'm strumming chords. It has enough top-end power that I could even play lead in a bluegrass band, yet there is enough overall warmth and sweetness that I could play a ballad that my young son could fall

asleep to, as the notes don't have any sharp edges or any shrill, nasally spots.

What players will probably notice first in this new version is a little more maturity in the midrange. It sounds warmer and older, like an 814 that's been played a long time. I use the word "older" quite a bit to describe the sound because I'm comparing it to many older vintage guitars I've listened to. It's got a loose but powerful low register that doesn't feel constricted. Since the Grand Auditorium shares many of the same concepts and effects that I've described with the Grand Concert, including the hybrid *Elixir*® HD Light string set, with the larger voice chamber this guitar has got it all – it's warm and rich, and yet it can be played to sound powerful with dramatic presence. It's all within range of your pick or your fingertips. Literally, you can play this guitar to sound bright and punchy in front of a loud rock band, and it'll give you a ton of volume and headroom in that environment. Or you can sit in front of a high-end studio

microphone and play a lyrical cantata or a classical piece on it, and it will sound entirely appropriate.

## GRAND SYMPHONY

**Models:** 816(ce), 12-string 856(ce)

**Tonal Enhancement:** Richer, sweeter sound with more low-end rumble

I set out to make the GS a more powerful guitar. It's a big-body guitar, and I want a really rich sound out of it without sacrificing bell-like articulation. As a player, that is what I'm looking for from a larger-body guitar: a big, rich response. It's the sonic equivalent of pouring half and half over Frosted Flakes – thick and sweet. You could simply strum pretty chords all day long; you could play fingerstyle and get this thick, swirly, powerful response. It's almost overwhelming.

Typically as you go up in body size, you'll hear a more pronounced low end because there is a larger air mass which supports it – essentially a bigger set of lungs supporting the top and the

back of the guitar. The unique shape of the new bracing design helps produce a synergy of motion in the top and back and, together with the GS body geometry, yields more fullness in the low end. If you like a GA but want a little more rumble, the GS has it.

## DREADNOUGHT

**Model:** 810(ce)

**Tonal Enhancement:** Powerful top-end response

The Dreadnought is the quintessential bluegrass guitar, and I wanted to bring a big, robust top-end response out of our 810. As a Dreadnought, it easily provides the low-end power I want, but where I've found some Dreadnoughts lacking over the years is that the low-end power comes at the expense of a weak upper register. If I'm playing in a bluegrass band and standing next to a mandolin player and a banjo player, I don't want my turn for a solo to come and have everybody in the band go, "*Shhh*...it's the guitar

solo." It makes you feel like a disappointment. So we worked to create a more vibrant kind of Dreadnought.

The challenge is that the body's wider waist typically doesn't give quite the tonal separation needed to generate a powerful upper register. To me, our Dreadnought design is a really beautiful modern interpretation of a traditional steel-string guitar. [Taylor designer] Larry Breedlove drew the most recent version of it a couple of years ago and did a great job. It has a refined look to it; it's not a big, boxy, heavy-looking thing. This guitar looks like wearing a tuxedo with cowboy boots. It's dressed up, but is ready to hop on a horse and ride away from the ball.

Between the new bracing and other tonal enhancements, we were able to articulate that treble punch. This Dreadnought will yield plenty of low end and midrange, but the distinctive twist for this instrument is turbo-charged power.

## GRAND ORCHESTRA

**Model:** 818(e) (no cutaway available)

**Tonal Enhancement:** More power and dynamic range

When I designed the Grand Orchestra, I had many of the elements we're incorporating into the 800 Series in the back of my mind as designs I was hoping to get to do someday, but I hadn't yet worked out how to make them a reality. Now, after a year out in the world, the Grand Orchestra has been embraced by far more players than I had anticipated. It's a really versatile guitar. I can play all kinds of music with it, and musicians have really gravitated toward it. Now, with the inclusion of these other refinements, this guitar just became bigger-sounding, more powerful, and more dynamic. Everything I liked about it became intensified. It sounds like marketing hyperbole, but the "new & improved" label is appropriate here; even more of the GO's character is able to come out.





# The 2014 Guitar Guide

**Led by the retooled 800 Series, the breakthrough Expression System® 2, and the irresistible new T5z, this year's guitar lineup makes picking up a Taylor more rewarding than ever**

**W**ith each turn of the calendar year we renew our commitment to enhancing the Taylor experience. On the pages ahead we present Taylor's 2014 guitar line, representing the very best of our guitar-making capabilities, along with some recommendations to help you home in on the right model for your playing preferences. As in past years, this year's guide features a profile of each of our body styles and the tonewoods used to craft them. From there we invite you to tour the Taylor line by series and survey the different packages of woods and appointments that infuse each series with a unique identity. If you crave more customization, you can choose from a menu of standard model options, or you can design the Taylor of your dreams through our custom guitar program, which features an extensive array of choices. Ultimately, we believe there's a Taylor guitar for every type of player, and we're happy to help you find yours.

Among Taylor's new developments for 2014, the comprehensive redesign of the 800 Series is the clear centerpiece. As it turns out, several of those tonal refinements proved to be too good to limit to one series. As a result, we've switched from *Elixir*® 80/20 Bronze strings to Phosphor Bronze on most steel-string models, and our Grand Concert and Grand Auditorium models in the 300 Series and up will now be strung with *Elixir* HD Lights, a newly calibrated string set that was custom-designed to optimize the tension profile and tonal response of those shapes. The new Expression System® 2 pickup will be installed on steel-string models in the 500 Series and up. And in the electric guitar realm, we're proud to diversify the T5 family with the compact new T5z. On a related note, you may notice the absence of our SolidBody from this year's line. That's because we wanted to take this year to explore some new design ideas. We'll be sure to share new developments as they unfold.

We hope you have a chance to experience our latest designs at your local Taylor dealer. For complete specifications and more information on the 2014 Taylor line, visit us at [taylorguitars.com](http://taylorguitars.com). Otherwise, we hope to see you at a Taylor Road Show or Find Your Fit event near you this year.



## Understanding Acoustic Model Numbers

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

- **Cutaway body with onboard electronics (e.g., 814ce)**
- **Non-cutaway body with onboard electronics (e.g., 814e)**
- **Non-cutaway body with no onboard electronics (e.g., 814)**

Most models are organized by series, featuring the 100 through 900 Series, along with our Presentation (PS) and Koa (K) Series.

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

The second digit typically indicates whether the guitar is a 6-string (1) or a 12-string (5). For example, a 12-string Grand Symphony in the 800 Series would be a 856ce. The second digit can also identify a model that features the same top as the back and sides (2). For example, within the Taylor Koa (K) Series, the K22ce is a six-string Grand Concert with a koa top. If it's a 12-string with the same top as the back and sides, 6 is used instead of 5. (A 12-string koa/spruce GS would be a K56ce; with a koa top it becomes a K66ce.)

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

0 = Dreadnought (e.g., 810ce)  
2 = Grand Concert (e.g., 812ce)  
4 = Grand Auditorium (e.g., 814ce)  
6 = Grand Symphony (e.g., 816ce)  
8 = Grand Orchestra (e.g., 818e)

Taylor nylon-string models are integrated into the 200-900 Series and are designated by the letter "N" at the end of the model name. For example, a nylon-string Grand Auditorium with a cutaway and electronics within the 800 Series is an 814ce-N.

814ce

Indicates a model with a cutaway

Indicates a model with onboard electronics



# Finding Your Fit

THE RIGHT GUITAR WILL INSPIRE YOU TO ENJOY YOUR PLAYING EXPERIENCE TO THE FULLEST



If you've ever attended a Taylor Road Show or Find Your Fit event, you know we love playing musical match-maker and helping people find the right guitar for their needs. While we like to think we know a few things about guitars, we're also keenly aware that every-one is unique. It's not hard to connect the dots between a particular playing context and a suitable type of guitar. But the X factor is you. We each play, hear and interpret guitars in subjective ways that can be wildly different from others, yet no less legitimate. Finding the right guitar is a musical courtship that blends elements of infatuation, discovery, and in many cases, deep emotional fulfillment. Proud Taylor owners sometimes tell us that their guitar found *them*. However that connection is made, if a guitar inspires you to play, it's probably a good fit.

**Balancing the Tone Equation**  
We've been sharing our basic "tone equation" in *Wood&Steel* and at Road Shows for several years now. It's been a useful way to simplify anyone's search for a guitar into a fundamental framework of tone. Essentially, the idea is that the sonic character of your guitar tone is the sum of three key ingredients: a guitar's body shape, wood combination, and your unique playing style. Think of it in terms of finding a complementary relationship between your playing nuances and those of a guitar. The pages that follow will explain the unique tonal properties of the shapes and woods used for our guitars. In the meantime, let's focus on your playing needs.

**What's your player profile?**  
That might sound like a fancy term, but really it just comes down to understanding your playing style since your hands are a big part of your tone. For example, do you tend to have a heavy or light attack? This will help lead you to an appropriate body style. Do you plan to strum, flatpick, fingerpick or all of the above? This may help you decide whether you want a more versatile guitar or one that suits a more specific function. Will you be playing mostly on your own or with others? If you play with others, you might want to consider how the guitar you choose will blend with other instruments. Will you be singing with your guitar? You'll want your guitar to complement your voice. Is your tone bright or dark? This may be a reflection of your attack, the way you fret, and what materials you pick with. If you have bright tone, you might want to consider a warmer, darker- sounding wood pairing. If you have dark tone, you might consider a brighter-sounding

wood. What style of music do you plan to play? If you plan to play a lot of lead guitar, you might lean toward a body size and wood pairing that responds with crisp, articulate treble notes.

**Try to define the scope of what you want the guitar to do for you.**  
This relates to the previous point but shifts the focus of the playing profile to the actual guitar. Are you looking for an all-purpose guitar or trying to fit a particular musical style or desire? Most guitar players own multiple guitars because they have multiple needs and play different styles. For instance, a small-bodied guitar might be perfect for fingerstyle, but you might want a larger guitar for strumming. That isn't to say there aren't some great options if you want a versatile guitar, but this is where people sometimes get confused. It's easier if you try not to make each guitar cover all your musical needs, especially if you already know that you need more than one guitar.

**Cutaway or non-cutaway?**  
People often ask whether a cutaway diminishes the tonal output of the guitar. Very little. Even though a cutaway reduces the soundboard surface area and the overall air cavity inside a guitar, in reality, the part of the upper bout where a cutaway would be located doesn't move as much as other areas of the guitar. The tonal output is affected more by the taper of the waist. Our feeling is that the access to the upper register offered by a cutaway far exceeds whatever minute tone loss might be experienced. If you want to be able to reach those high notes or simply like the aesthetic of a cutaway, go for it. If you don't plan to venture that far up the neck, or simply prefer the aesthetic symmetry of a non-cutaway, great.

**Sometimes we hear with our eyes.**  
The visual beauty of a guitar, from the allure of exotic woods to its package of detailed appointments, often factors into our attraction to a guitar. If you're simply trying to find the best-performing guitar for your preferences, you might pay less attention these things, but if a guitar's visual aesthetic enhances your appreciation of it, embrace it – perhaps to the fullest with a custom Taylor.

**Trust your instincts.**  
Especially if you're new to guitars, you might do your research and consult other players for recommendations. But you don't have to rely on an expert to know how a guitar feels – or how *you* feel – when you pick it up and play,

even if you only know a few chords. Take your time, but try not to second-guess a feeling when you know you've found the right guitar. All too often a person laments "the guitar that got away," so when one inspires you in a way that you *know* is right, act on it.

**Buy the best guitar you can afford.**  
You've probably heard that old sales adage: "Buy nice or buy twice." A Taylor guitar can be a significant investment, but if you own a quality guitar, you'll be more likely to play it, more likely to improve, and more likely to enjoy

it for many years. Entry-level players sometimes suffer from "I'm not worthy" syndrome as they consider buying their first Taylor, but trust us, you'll be glad you did.

**A new guitar's sound will only improve with time.**  
A solid-wood guitar needs a little time to be "played in" in order to properly open up. Initially the woods want to resist the tension and other construction constraints that have been placed upon them, but eventually everything relaxes in a way that creates a smoother, mel-lower, more "mature" sound. Expect

more clarity, depth and volume. As Bob Taylor has pointed out, things like com-puters, TVs and furniture wear *out* with age and use, but a well-made guitar wears *in* with age. Sure, it may get worn cosmetically, but the tone just improves. That's why comparing an older guitar with a newer guitar isn't quite fair.

**Inspiration can't always be explained.**  
Sometimes we bond with a guitar in a way we can't quite understand, and that's okay.

## TAKE YOUR PICK

Our Road Show product specialists reveal why your choice of pick matters

Another contributor to your tone is what you use to pluck or strum the strings. Paired with the dynamics of your attack, your picking tool of choice can influence the degrees of darkness or brightness in your tone, perhaps adding warmth or percussive punch, depending on what your music calls for. Fingerstylists may choose between the pads of the fingers, finger picks, or natural or acrylic nails.

We asked our Road Show product specialists to share their insights on picks.

"I talk about picks all the time when I do Road Shows," says Kenny Echizen. "It makes a huge difference in tone. I bring a bag full of different material/ thickness/size of picks to my Road Shows and to recording sessions for this particular reason. Thinner picks have a more 'paper-y' tone, where you can't hear as much note definition but you can hear the pick scrape, which adds more percussive effect – a very cool studio trick. Thicker picks tends to entice more note clarity than percussive attack. In terms of material, I find that the more [visually] transparent picks (Dunlop Ultex/ V-picks) are fuller sounding than the less transparent ones. I use a Planet Waves 1.25 mm Cortex at Road Shows because the guitar is the only one in the mix and needs to be heard clearly."

Corey Witt says he keeps multiple picks on hand for Road Shows and typically addresses the ways different picks affect tone.

"A fun experiment in the Great Pick Quest is to select a diverse sampling and drop each of them on the counter of the music store," he shares. "Some land like plastic, some land like felt, and some land like glass. Those harmonic differences often play into how the pick attacks the strings. The more glass-like the material, the more 'chirp' it gives at the moment of contact. That's been my experience."

Jason "Spanky" Salzman says his choice of pick depends on the playing scenario.

"I tend to use the same pick for my live gigs – Fender Heavy in the size of a Dunlop Jazz III – because of consistency and comfort in terms of size, grip and familiarity, both sonically and feel," he explains. "When recording, I use anything and everything. Before I reach for an EQ knob I will change picks, squeeze them tighter, or loosen up on my touch."

Marc Seal says that when he gives private guitar

lessons, he starts by offering a variety of picks to his students.

"We discuss size, shapes and materials, and try some out," he says. "We also explore elements of the picking attack (how deep into the string we hit and the angle at which we attack the strings, among other things). For me, ultimately I use the same pick(s) 85 percent of the time – Dunlop Tortex® Jazz 3, 1.14 mm – but I scour every store I enter to find my next new favorite pick. I believe you have to experience the sound and feel of picks to really determine what suits you."

Wayne Johnson agrees that the angle of picking attack can greatly influence a player's tone.

"I find that you can affect the tone by plucking the string in a way that increases the pick-string surface area – basically using more of an angle to pick," he explains. "The more the surface area, the warmer the sound. The less the surface area, the thinner the sound!"

He suggests trying the following experiment to compare.

"Take a standard triangular pick; it can be thin, medium or thick. Holding it traditionally on top of a string – let's take the G string – pluck down with the tip of the pick. Now turn the pick around and use one of the back corners of the pick to pluck, not flat on top of the string, but at an angle so that the corner of the pick glides over the string. The difference in tone is astounding. The greater surface area of contact creates a fatter sound."

Wayne says he likes to use picks that are thin but very stiff.

"They give you the best of both worlds: fast and fat," he adds. "The Dunlop Delrin is such a pick. It's an ultra-hard plastic that can be thin yet have the characteristics of a heavier gauge. I've used a .71 mm (pink) Dunlop Delrin for some 20 years or longer now... holding it reversed. I've tried many others and always keep coming back."

Jazz players, he notes, traditionally use a thicker pick because it provides a fatter sound.

"Granted, if you have heavy-gauge strings you already have a pretty fat sound," he says, "but surface area of pick and string still apply. Thin (flexible) picks are great for strummers who want to hear mostly top end. They're great for adding that final 'glue' in the studio without interfering with troublesome lows and low mids. That said, you can take a thin, flexible pick, turn it around, use a back corner at an angle, and get a much fatter sound. Pat Metheny uses this technique. He also sort of folds or bends it so it's scooped a bit, which basically adds stiffness along with the warmth."



# Body Shapes

EACH TAYLOR BODY STYLE  
ENABLES A UNIQUE RANGE  
OF ACOUSTIC EXPRESSION

Taylor’s five body styles are all bound by an overarching design aesthetic that serves to create a visual and tonal harmony across the Taylor guitar line. The elegant curves that define each shape, from small to large, share a clear family resemblance, while tonally, signature Taylor qualities such as clarity and balance provide the foundation of a great acoustic sound. At the same time, each body’s unique dimensions have been carefully refined and optimized to produce a distinctive voice that fits a particular type of playing experience. As one might expect, a smaller body like the Grand Concert will tend to produce a more intimate sound that occupies less sonic space, while a big, deep body like the Grand Orchestra will unleash a bold, complex voice.

Among the other design variables that we use to calibrate a body shape’s fundamental voice are the bracing patterns used for the top and back. They can bring out surprising qualities that one might not normally expect in a shape, such as more volume from the Grand Concert or more balance and responsiveness from the Grand Orchestra. Our revoiced 800 Series models take this concept to an even higher level this year.

Understanding the tonal personality of each Taylor body shape will help you choose the right one for your preferences. As you play and compare different body shapes, pay attention to how they feel in relation to your body and whether they enable you to express yourself in a comfortable way.

For more commentary on the tonal qualities of each of Taylor’s body shapes, be sure to read Andy Powers’ descriptions of the 800 Series by shape on page 24.

## GRAND CONCERT (GC)

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



Our smallest full-size shape has compact dimensions all around, which make for a physically comfortable, lap-friendly playing experience. The Grand Concert’s slight waist and shallower body depth help produce an articulate voice with the kind of note definition and detail that fingerstyle guitarists and session and stage players will appreciate. The smaller body also helps keep the overtones in check, so a GC won’t step on other instruments in a mix. All Grand Concert models feature a shorter scale length (24-7/8 inches compared to 25-1/2 inches on other models), which makes fretting chords easier, and the reduced string tension also helps with string bends. The short-scale design makes the GC a good match for people with smaller hands, older players, people with hand ailments, and really anyone looking to reduce the stress on their fretting hand.

Players who like the comfort of the GC and crave a splash of extra tonal depth might try one of our 12-fret Grand Concert models, in which the neck meets the body at the 12th fret instead of the 14th and the bridge position is moved closer to the center of the lower bout.

### Playing Profile

- Compact size & short-scale design for playing comfort
- Articulate voice with controlled overtones
- Records & mixes well with other instruments

## GRAND AUDITORIUM (GA)

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



In the context of Taylor’s modern design heritage, the Grand Auditorium is Taylor’s flagship body style and our most popular shape. The next size up from the Grand Concert, it actually shares the same basic body dimensions as a Dreadnought, but with modified contours that include a more tapered waist, enabling the guitar to fit more comfortably in your lap. Tonally, it lives in the sweet spot between a Dreadnought – known for robust flatpicking and rhythmic strumming – and a Grand Concert – designed with fingerstylists in mind – to give players the best of both worlds and then some. The GA’s well-defined midrange helps maintain the balance and clarity of the GC, yet with enough power on the top and bottom for strummers and flatpickers to let loose. It’s our most versatile performer and a smart choice for the gigging musician looking for one guitar to cover a diverse mix of music. If you’re a novice or generalist and want a guitar that can cover a lot of ground, you can’t go wrong with a Grand Auditorium.

### Playing Profile

- Tonal balance & versatility
- Good for fingerstyle and light/medium strumming and picking
- Records & mixes well with other instruments

## GRAND SYMPHONY (GS)

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



The Grand Symphony’s dimensions are slightly up-sized from the Grand Auditorium – expansions include a higher and wider waist, and a bigger, more rounded lower bout. The result is a more potent all-around sound with a deeper, more piano-like bass, thicker trebles, and increased volume and low-end sustain, all without disrupting the tonal balance and clarity of the guitar. Consequently, the GS can really be driven dynamically. The lower mids have an extra roundness and girth that add richness and complexity to the voice.

Aggressive players will love the throaty growl of the GS when they dig in. Those who find the Grand Auditorium to be a little bright for their ears will enjoy the greater depth and resonance of the GS. It’s acutely responsive to all the nuances of a player’s picking and strumming hand, yielding a robust tone when called upon, while also responding easily to a lighter touch. Bluegrassers and other pickers who favor fast runs will love the way the GS keeps up. Performing singer-songwriters who perform on their own have a full spectrum of sound to support their tunes.

The GS has also become an ideal acoustic platform for Taylor’s 12-string models and is the body style used for our baritone guitars.

### Playing Profile

- Rich, powerful voice that also responds to a light touch
- Piano-like bass, meaty midrange, strong treble shimmer
- Good fit for dynamic strummers and pickers

## DREADNOUGHT (DN)

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



The Taylor Dreadnought infuses an iconic guitar shape with signature Taylor refinements to give players an inspiring neo-traditional guitar. The body style boasts a rich heritage in the acoustic guitar world, and over the years has established a familiar look and sound among players and listeners. The big body’s wide waist helps produce a loud, robust voice, especially on the low end, along with a snappy quality in the midrange that will appeal to traditional strummers and flatpickers.

Over the years the Taylor Dreadnought’s curves were subtly softened from its boxy origins into a smoother contour that aligns well with the design aesthetic of other Taylor shapes. Tonally, the guitar was revoiced to increase the volume and bass response while also boosting the midrange, preserving the tonal balance from bottom to top. The clarity and overall articulation will give flatpickers more tonal definition on fast runs. Together with Taylor’s sleek necks and renowned playability, a potent Dreadnought sound is more accessible than ever. Dreadnought lovers who want the ultimate bluegrass cannon are bound to love the new 810e, which was revoiced to bring out extra treble punch.

### Playing Profile

- A strong “modern vintage” voice
- Low-end power balanced by snappy mids and clear trebles
- Well-suited for driving flatpicking/strumming

## GRAND ORCHESTRA (GO)

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



The Andy Powers-designed Grand Orchestra made its debut in 2013 and proved that a big-bodied guitar could blend a deep, bold voice with balance and responsiveness. The five-inch body depth helps the top and back pump out a powerful low-end response, while a new bracing scheme optimizes the efficiency of the soundboard to produce incredible sustain. Among the GO’s unique attributes is the tonal uniformity from top to bottom, especially given its burly bass. With the help of the new bracing, even the treble notes exude richness and power. And unlike other big-body guitars that demand an aggressive attack to get the top moving, the GO is remarkably responsive to a light touch, rewarding players who have a dynamic playing style. Think of the GO as a gentle giant, or the strong-but-sensitive type.

If you crave a guitar sound that’s brimming with power and rich detail, the Grand Orchestra won’t disappoint. Driving flatpickers will love the deep growl and strong, clear highs. Solo performers will be inspired by the expansive palette of sonic colors and textures. Whether you plan to strum big, open cowboy chords or pluck lush fingerstyle arrangements, the Grand Orchestra gives you a versatile and expressive tool.

### Playing Profile

- Taylor’s biggest, most complex voice
- Incredibly balanced for a big-bodied guitar
- Specially braced to respond to a light touch



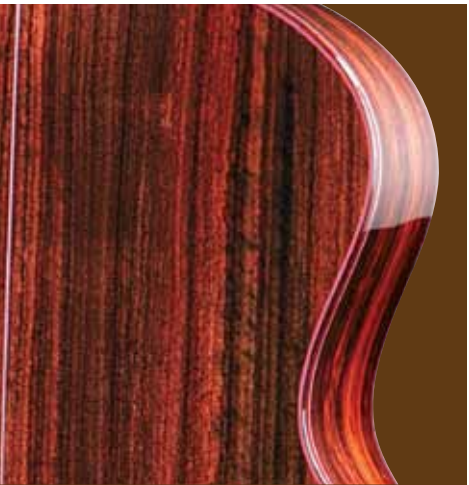
# Tonewoods

THE UNIQUE TONAL PROPERTIES OF WOODS  
HELP DEFINE A GUITAR'S MUSICAL PERSONALITY

What is a “tonewood”? It's really just a catchall term to describe woods used by stringed instrument makers because their physical properties translate into appealing musical tones. Tonewoods are often separated into hardwood and softwood categories. Hardwoods generally have a slower growth rate and higher density, while softer woods tend to have a faster growth rate and lower density. The backs and sides of all Taylor guitars feature hardwoods: rosewood, cocobolo, mahogany, koa, maple, ovangkol and sapele. Softwoods such as spruce, cedar and redwood are fairly lightweight but have a high tensile strength. That balance of lightness, strength and elasticity makes them popular choices for guitar soundboards. Hardwoods like mahogany and koa also can be used for guitar tops, like we do on select models in our 300, 500 and Koa Series.

Below are brief descriptions of the basic tonal qualities of the woods we use in the Taylor Guitars line. Keep in mind that there are many variables that contribute to the overall tone profile of a guitar – the climate conditions that shaped a particular tree's growth patterns, the interaction of top and back woods, the guitar's body dimensions, bracing and other construction features, and perhaps most importantly, your playing style. For all the consistency we're able to bring to the Taylor playing experience, each guitar is crafted from a different set of tonewoods, which means that each will present its visual and sonic character in a unique way.

## BACK AND SIDE WOODS



### INDIAN ROSEWOOD

**Models:** 700, 800, 900 Series, JMSM

Indian rosewood's sweeping frequency range at both ends of the tonal spectrum has made it one of the most popular and musically rich tonewoods. Its deep lows can assert a throaty growl, while bright, sparkling treble notes ring out with bell-like clarity. If you crave a full-range acoustic voice with complex overtones and plenty of sustain, a rosewood guitar won't disappoint.



### TROPICAL MAHOGANY

**Models:** 500 Series

Like rosewood, mahogany can also claim a rich guitar heritage. It differs from rosewood in that its tonal character comes through its meaty mid-range, featuring a strong fundamental focus often described as “punchy,” “woody” or “dry,” without a lot of ringing overtones. Mahogany's earthy voice has been featured on many roots music recordings over the years, from country blues to folk to rock.



### OVANGKOL

**Models:** 400 Series

An African species that's related to rosewood, ovangkol shares many of rosewood's tonal properties, including a wide spectrum of lows and highs. Differences include a slightly fuller midrange and a bright treble response resembling that of maple or koa. While it lacks the classic cachet of more traditional tonewoods, its tonal versatility has made it an increasingly popular choice among players at every level.



### LAYERED WOODS

**Models:** 100/200 Series, GS Mini, Baby Taylor

Crafting guitars with backs and sides of layered, or laminated, woods allows us to conserve tonewood resources (a veneer log will produce eight times the yield of a log that's sawn for solid-wood guitar sets) and offer players a resilient, affordable and great-sounding instrument. Our laminated construction features three layers of wood, incorporating a middle core of poplar with a veneer on each side. The process allows us to bend an arch into the

back of the guitar for added strength, and together with the layered approach produces a durable guitar that travels well and holds up better to fluctuating humidity conditions. Between the all-wood layers, solid-wood soundboard, and signature Taylor construction techniques, players can expect a full spectrum of acoustic sound, as anyone who owns a GS Mini, 100 or 200 Series guitar can attest. Our 200 Series Deluxe models feature matching inner and outer layers of koa, sapele (finished

in black) or rosewood to create a beautiful appearance. One additional note: Although our all-wood layered backs and sides feature the same laminate construction we've been using for years, we've moved away from using the term “lamine” to avoid confusion with the growing number of laminate products in the marketplace made from synthetic, non-wood materials.



### BIG LEAF MAPLE

**Models:** 600 Series

Maple's physical density produces a focused tone that is dominant on the fundamental. Its sound is often described as clean and bright because of its relative lack of overtones and its treble sparkle. The quicker note decay gives the notes clearer definition, allowing the sound to cut through a live band setting well. This makes maple guitars a favorite choice among stage and studio players, as well as lead and jazz guitarists who play a lot of notes.



### HAWAIIAN KOA

**Models:** Koa Series

A fairly dense tropical hardwood, koa shares some of the same properties as mahogany, namely a strong midrange focus, typically with a bit of extra top-end brightness and chime. The more a koa guitar is played and has a chance to open up – especially an all-koa guitar – the more its midrange overtones add a sense of warmth and sweetness to its voice. Koa's initial brightness can be softened by fingerstylists who play with the pads of their fingers.



### COCOBOLO

**Models:** Presentation Series

A Mexican rosewood, cocobolo is a dense, stiff tropical hardwood that produces a fairly bright overall tone emphasized by sparkling treble notes. Sonically it resembles koa but resonates a little deeper on the low end, although not quite as deep as Indian rosewood. Fast and responsive, cocobolo's note distinction gives it an articulate voice that responds well to a variety of playing styles, depending on the body shape.



### SAPELE

**Models:** 300 Series

Sapele is sometimes mistakenly referred to as African mahogany because it resembles West African khaya, which is commercially known as African mahogany. Its output is consistent and balanced across the tonal spectrum, making it compatible with a diverse range of playing styles. Compared to mahogany, sapele tends to be harder, which results in a slightly brighter sound with more top-end shimmer.

## TOP WOODS

A guitar's top, or soundboard, is a vital part of its tonal equation. The top resonates together with the strings, saddle, bridge and the rest of the body to produce a complex range of tones. Spruce is the king of guitar tops because it's relatively light yet strong, with a high degree of elasticity that helps translate the player's picking or strumming into clear acoustic tone. We use different types of spruce, although Sitka is the most available.



### SITKA SPRUCE

**Models:** Most acoustic models

Sitka generates a broad dynamic range and accommodates numerous playing styles, from aggressive strumming to light fingerpicking.



### ADIRONDACK SPRUCE

**Models:** Custom guitars

Once commonly used for guitar tops but currently limited in availability, Adirondack spruce has an extra “springy” quality. Acoustically, it produces a robust output and more dynamic range than Sitka, which allows it to be driven aggressively for greater volume without distortion. The midrange tones also tend to have a richer, sweeter quality. Even using it for the bracing on a Sitka top will enhance the overall tone.



### WESTERN RED CEDAR

**Models:** 512/514 steel/nylon-string models, JMSM, standard model option

Cedar is less dense than spruce, and its relative softness adds warmth to a guitar's tone, especially for players with a softer touch, like fingerstylists or light to moderate strummers and pickers. With a lighter touch, cedar is actually louder than spruce, but players with a strong attack are often better paired with spruce, as they would be more likely to overdrive cedar, creating a more distorted sound at higher volumes. Cedar pairs well with nylon-string models because of its responsiveness to the strings, which produce less overall energy than a steel-string guitar.



### HARDWOOD TOPS

**Models:** Koa Series, 500 Series, Mahogany-top 300 Series

Any sort of hardwood-top guitar, such as an all-koa or mahogany-top model, produces a natural compression, so it won't yield as quick a response as a spruce-top guitar will. There tends to be more of a controlled, sustaining “roll-in” effect to a note. A mahogany-top guitar will produce strong fundamentals, with clear and direct focus. An all-koa guitar will sound similar but with a touch more shimmer and chime in the upper register because of its slightly denser nature.





# Presentation

## SERIES

### DETAILS

<b>Back/Sides:</b>	Cocobolo
<b>Top:</b>	Sitka Spruce
<b>Finish (Body):</b>	Gloss 6.0
<b>Rosette:</b>	Single Ring Paua
<b>Fretboard Inlay:</b>	Paua Nouveau
<b>Binding:</b>	Ebony (Body, Fretboard, Peghead, Soundhole)
<b>Bracing:</b>	CV with Relief Rout
<b>Electronics:</b>	None or Expression System 2 (Option: Expression System 1)
<b>Tuning Machines:</b>	Gotoh Gold
<b>Case:</b>	Taylor Deluxe Hardshell
<b>Premium Appointments:</b>	Ebony Armrest, Paua Trim (Top, Back, Sides, Fretboard Extension, Fretboard, Peghead), Cocobolo Backstrap, Peghead/Bridge Inlays, Bone Nut/Saddle, Abalone Dot Bridge Pins
<b>Available Models:</b>	PS10e, PS10ce, PS12ce, PS14ce, PS16ce, PS56ce

Each set of cocobolo deemed worthy of our Presentation Series is a unique work of art, as showcased by the hardwood's fiery hues and dramatic stripes and swirls of variegation. Exquisite craftsmanship follows every line of the guitar, as thin ribbons of sparkling paua trace the top, back, sides and fretboard. The most striking design feature is a sleek ebony armrest, which supplies a harmonious marriage of form and function, offering players a beautiful and ergonomic contour that paves the way to effortless picking and prevents unintended dampening of the soundboard. In every way, masterful attention to detail sets these guitars apart from all others in the Taylor line.



# KOA

SERIES

### DETAILS

- Back/Sides:

Top:
- Hawaiian Koa
- Hawaiian Koa
- (Options: Spruce or Cedar)
- Finish (Body):
- Gloss 6.0 with Shaded Edgeburst
- (Entire Guitar)
- Rosette:
- Single Ring Maple/Rosewood
- (Koa Top) or Blackwood/Rosewood
- (Spruce Top)
- Fretboard Inlay:
- Blackwood/Maple Island Vine
- Binding:
- Rosewood
- (Body, Fretboard, Peghead)
- Bracing:
- CV with Relief Rout
- Electronics:
- None or Expression System 2
- (Option: Expression System 1)
- Tuning Machines:
- Taylor Gold
- Case:
- Taylor Deluxe Hardshell
- Premium
- Appointments:
- Maple Top Trim (Koa Top) or
- Blackwood Top Trim (Spruce Top),
- Peghead Inlay, Bone Nut/Saddle

Available Models: K22e, K22ce, K24e, K24ce, K26e, K26ce, K28e, K66e, K66ce

Hawaiian koa’s evocative natural beauty is unparalleled, especially the figured sets we select for our Koa Series. Our models showcase koa’s rich character up front with a koa top (Sitka spruce and cedar are available as options), and the overall aesthetic is enhanced with a shaded edgeburst finish on the top, back, sides and even neck. An all-wood appointment package features our fluid Island Vine fretboard/headstock inlay in maple and blackwood, with Hawaiian plumeria flowers doubling as fret markers, along with rosewood binding, maple top trim, and a rosewood/maple rosette. One of the most rewarding traits of an all-koa guitar is the way its tone sweetens over time and with extended play.

John Pyjar, an architect and the owner of two Taylors, understands the relationship between aesthetic beauty and functional use. In his world a design that creates a connection between the client and the space around them has the power to transcend the ordinary. It’s no different with guitars. He’s shown at work with a K24ce.



# 900

SERIES

### DETAILS

- Back/Sides:

Top:
- Indian Rosewood
- Sitka Spruce
- Finish (Body):
- Gloss 6.0
- Rosette:
- Single Ring Abalone
- Fretboard Inlay:
- Abalone/Mother-of-Pearl Cindy
- Binding:
- Rosewood (Body, Fretboard,
- Standard Steel-string Peghead,
- Soundhole)
- Bracing:
- CV with Relief Rout
- or Nylon Pattern
- Electronics:
- None or Expression System 2
- (Option: Expression System 1);
- ES-N on Nylon
- Tuning Machines:
- Gotoh Gold or Nylon Gold
- Case:
- Taylor Deluxe Hardshell
- Premium
- Appointments:
- Abalone Top Trim
- (Including Fretboard Extension),
- Red Purfling, Peghead/Bridge
- Inlays, Bone Nut/Saddle,
- Abalone Dot Bridge Pins
- Color/Burst
- Options:
- Tobacco or Honey Sunburst Top

Available Models: 910e, 910ce, 912e, 912ce, 914e, 914ce, 916e, 916ce, 918e, 956ce, 912ce-N, 914ce-N

Among the three rosewood guitar series in the Taylor line, our 900 Series models project an aura of elegant sophistication. It begins with Indian rosewood that’s been graded for consistently straight and tight grain, often boasting a rich range of color variegation. Graceful aesthetic details include our classic abalone/mother-of-pearl fretboard inlay scheme, designed in honor of Bob Taylor’s wife Cindy and complemented by companion headstock and bridge inlays. The body’s rosewood binding is framed by pinstriped red and white purfling lines, while bands of abalone outline the top, including the fretboard extension. Other premium touches include a bound soundhole, Gotoh tuners, and a bone nut and saddle. From top to bottom, the 900s radiate tasteful refinement.

L-R: 918e, 914ce





# 800

SERIES

## DETAILS

<b>Back/Sides:</b>	Indian Rosewood
<b>Top:</b>	Sitka Spruce
<b>Finish (Body):</b>	Gloss 3.5
<b>Rosette:</b>	Single Ring Abalone
<b>Fretboard Inlay:</b>	Element Mother-of-Pearl
<b>Binding:</b>	Pale Non-figured Maple (Body, Fretboard, Standard Steel-string Peghead, Soundhole)
<b>Bracing:</b>	Advanced Performance Bracing or Nylon Pattern
<b>Electronics:</b>	None or Expression System 2 (Option: Expression System 1); ES-N on Nylon
<b>Tuning Machines:</b>	Taylor Nickel or Nylon Nickel with Pearloid Buttons (Taylor Gold with Ivroid Buttons on 12-Fret)
<b>Case:</b>	Taylor Deluxe Hardshell
<b>Premium Features/ Appointments:</b>	Custom-calibrated Wood Thicknesses and Bracing for Each Shape, Protein Glues (Bracing/Bridge), Custom-gauge Elixir HD Light Strings (GA/GC), Rosewood Pickguard, Rosewood Top Trim
<b>Available Models:</b>	810, 810e, 810ce, 812, 812e, 812ce, 812e 12-Fret, 812ce 12-Fret, 814, 814e, 814ce, 816, 816ce, 818e, 856ce, 812ce-N, 814ce-N

Taylor's flagship rosewood/spruce series has been completely reconceived for 2014 in celebration of Taylor's 40th anniversary year, and showcases a comprehensive array of tonal enhancements that uniquely optimize the tone profile of each body shape. Voicing refinements include custom-calibrated bracing and wood thicknesses for each shape; protein glues that enhance the tonal transfer; thinner finish to reduce the tonal dampening on the wood; and customized string sets for the Grand Concert and Grand Auditorium. Among the fresh aesthetic strokes are rosewood purfling, which outlines the top and frames the abalone rosette; a rosewood pickguard; our new Element fretboard inlay; and a smoky ebony fretboard. Inside and out, the new 800 Series reaffirms Taylor's ongoing commitment to improving the acoustic experience with better-playing, better-sounding guitars.

L-R: 814ce, 816ce



# 700

SERIES

### DETAILS

- Back/Sides:** Indian Rosewood
- Top:** Sitka Spruce
- Finish (Body):** Gloss 6.0 with Vintage Sunburst Top/Neck
- Rosette:** 3-Ring Ivoroid
- Fretboard Inlay:** Ivoroid Heritage Diamonds
- Binding:** Ivoroid (Body, Fretboard, Standard Steel-string Peghead)
- Bracing:** Standard II with Relief Rout or Nylon Pattern
- Electronics:** None or Expression System 2 (Option: Expression System 1); ES-N on Nylon
- Tuning Machines:** Taylor Nickel or Nylon Gold with Ivoroid Buttons (Taylor Gold with Ivoroid Buttons on 12-Fret)
- Case:** Taylor Deluxe Hardshell

**Available Models:** 710e, 710ce, 712e, 712ce, 712e 12-Fret, 712ce 12-Fret, 714e, 714ce, 716e, 716ce, 718e, 756ce, 714ce-N

Rosewood fans who crave a vintage acoustic vibe will be naturally drawn to our 700 Series. The rosewood we select for these models leans toward rich chocolate hues that feature a slightly wider grain structure. Our aptly named Vintage Sunburst finish saturates the top in a warm, gradual fade that blends well with the rosewood sides and faux tortoise shell pickguard. Creamy ivoroid outlines the body, fretboard and headstock, and also is used for the neo-traditional Heritage Diamonds fretboard inlay. Think of a guitar that's an old soul at heart, but with all the modern Taylor touches – effortless playability, clear, balanced tone – that make our guitars so rewarding to play.

Clockwise from top left: 716ce natural, 714ce, 712e 12-Fret



# 600

SERIES

### DETAILS

- Back/Sides:** Big Leaf Maple
- Top:** Sitka Spruce
- Finish (Body):** Gloss 6.0
- Rosette:** Single Ring Abalone
- Fretboard Inlay:** Pearlloid Twisted Ovals
- Binding:** White (Body, Fretboard, Standard Steel-string Peghead)
- Bracing:** Standard II with Relief Rout or Nylon Pattern
- Electronics:** None or Expression System 2 (Option: Expression System 1); ES-N on Nylon
- Tuning Machines:** Taylor Gold or Nylon Gold with Ivoroid Buttons
- Case:** Taylor Deluxe Hardshell
- Color/Burst Options:** Natural (Standard), Amber, Black, Koi Blue, Pacific Blue, Borrego Red, Trans Black, Tobacco Sunburst, Honey Sunburst, Cherry Sunburst, Cherry Black Sunburst

*Note: Natural and Amber come with faux tortoise shell pickguard; other colors/bursts come standard without pickguards*

**Available Models:** 610e, 610ce, 612e, 612ce, 614e, 614ce, 616e, 616ce, 618e, 656ce, 612ce-N, 614ce-N

Maple guitars are perennial favorites of stage and studio players for their clear, crisp articulation, controlled overtones, and ability to slice through an instrument mix. Our 600 Series models deliver that and more, depending on which body size you choose. Although maple is normally depicted as a bright-sounding wood with a quick note decay, our Grand Orchestra 618e responds with impressive low end and sustain due to the GO's unique bracing and deep body. Visually, the Big Leaf maple we select is graded for figure, so whether you prefer your maple naturally blonde or with one of our several color and burst finishes, our 600s always deliver great stage presence – especially with the addition of our new Expression System® 2 pickup.

*Prolific singer-songwriter Jack Tempchin has penned some pop classics over the years. He's best known for writing "Peaceful Easy Feeling" and co-writing "Already Gone," both of which the Eagles made famous. Other hits include the '70s ballad "Slow Dancin' (Swayin' to the Music)" and "You Belong to the City," the latter of which he co-wrote with Glenn Frey. For years his Taylor of choice was a maple Jumbo 615ce, but when his friend Andy Powers put a Grand Orchestra 618e in his hands, the guitar's responsiveness proved to be a great complement to his light touch. He's pictured here in his home studio with a desert sunburst 618e.*



# 500

SERIES

## DETAILS

- Back/Sides:** Tropical Mahogany  
**Top:** Tropical Mahogany  
(Option: Sitka or Cedar)
- Finish (Body):** Gloss 6.0 with Medium Brown Stain (Entire Guitar)
- Rosette:** Single Ring Ivoroid
- Fretboard Inlay:** Ivoroid Century  
**Binding:** Ivoroid (Body, Fretboard, Peghead)  
**Bracing:** Standard II with Relief Rout or Nylon Pattern
- Electronics:** None or Expression System 2 (Optional: Expression System 1); ES-N on Nylon
- Tuning Machines:** Taylor Nickel or Nylon Gold with Ivoroid Buttons (Taylor Gold with Ivoroid Buttons on 12-Fret)
- Case:** Taylor Deluxe Hardshell

*Note: Black pickguard on standard mahogany-top models; faux tortoise shell on spruce/cedar tops*

**Available Models:** 510, 510e, 510ce, 512, 512e, 512ce, 512 12-Fret, 512e 12-Fret, 512ce 12-Fret, 514, 514e, 514ce, 516, 516e, 516ce, 518, 518e, 520, 520e, 520ce, 522, 522e, 522ce, 522 12-Fret, 522e 12-Fret, 522ce 12-fret, 524, 524e, 524ce, 526, 526e, 526ce, 528, 528e, 556ce, 514ce-N

Midway through last year we introduced mahogany-top models to our 500 Series, and their focused midrange punch made an immediate impression on players. The natural compression of the mahogany top can handle the liveliest of pickers and strummers, responds well to players with a strong rhythmic attack, and because of its strong fundamental tonal character, behaves well with other instruments in a stage or recording context. Smaller-body models like the Grand Concert (standard or 12-Fret) make a great choice for snappy blues fingerpicking, while an all-mahogany Dreadnought will hold up to rootsy flatpickers. Throwback appointments include a black pickguard, ivoroid binding, and our Heritage Diamonds fretboard inlay in ivoroid. Alternative soundboard options include spruce or cedar.

*Taylor Customer Service Manager Glen Wolff has played in a country band for years and also plays a lot of blues. The mahogany-top 528e in his hands will respond with a deep, brawny voice, making it a dynamic tool for a variety of roots music genres.*



# 400

SERIES

## DETAILS

- Back/Sides:** Ovangkol  
**Top:** Sitka Spruce
- Finish (Body):** Satin 5.0 Back/Sides; Gloss 6.0 Top
- Rosette:** 3-Ring
- Fretboard Inlay:** Pearlloid Progressive Dots  
**Binding:** White (Body, Fretboard)  
**Bracing:** Standard II with Relief Rout or Nylon Pattern
- Electronics:** Expression System 1 or ES-N (Nylon)
- Tuning Machines:** Taylor Nickel or Nylon Nickel with Pearlloid Buttons
- Case:** Taylor Deluxe Hard Shell Case

**Available Models:** 410e, 410ce, 412e, 412ce, 414e, 414ce, 416e, 416ce, 456ce, 412ce-N, 414ce-N

Year after year, proud 400 Series owners testify to the tonal properties of their ovangkol-bodied guitars, even if they confess to be less sure about the correct pronunciation of the African hardwood (**oh**-ven-call). We relate its tone to that of rosewood in terms of its frequency range, with perhaps a bit less ringing complexity but a slightly fuller midrange presence. Its blend of clarity, balance and sustain give it an expressive versatility that resonates with many different types of players. Visually, its appearance can exhibit golden brown hues with a wide range of variegation and, occasionally, wispy tendrils of figure. Understated appointments, including white binding and progressive pearloid dots, dial down the flash in favor of a clean, modern look that fits any musical setting. If you've been looking for a new tonewood discovery and haven't tried ovangkol, you know what to do.

L-R: 416ce, 410ce



# Nylon MODELS

## DETAILS

- Series:** 200-900
- Shapes:** Grand Auditorium or Grand Concert (12-Fret)
- Neck Width:** 1-7/8 inches
- Strings:** D'Addario Classical Extra Hard Tension
- Electronics:** ES-N
- Available Models:** 912ce-N, 914ce-N, 812ce-N, 814ce-N, 714ce-N, 612ce-N, 614ce-N, 514ce-N, 412ce-N, 414ce-N, 312ce-N, 314ce-N, 214ce-N

*Note: For additional specifications, refer to each series*

With its evocative character, a nylon-string guitar is capable of conjuring a myriad of different moods and musical textures. On our nylon-string models, we've married everything we love about the classical sound with everything we know about playability to create an inspiring and accessible nylon experience for modern steel-string players. Our nylon-string models feature a radiused fretboard (20-inch) and hand-friendly 1-7/8-inch neck (the string spacing is slightly wider than our 1-3/4-inch steel-string counterparts to due to the wider diameter of the nylon strings). We've also borrowed steel-string amenities like onboard electronics, featuring our ES-N® pickup, for easy amplified tone, plus a cutaway (some models are also available without a cutaway or electronics). Each of two body shapes, the Grand Concert and Grand Auditorium, features different neck and bridge orientations to optimize the tone. The Grand Concert models are designed as 12-frets, while the Grand Auditorium necks are joined at the 14th fret. Nylon-string models are offered in every series from through 200 through 900, which means players have a rich range of wood pairings and appointment packages. With a nylon in your acoustic arsenal, even those go-to progressions will sound fresh – and hopefully catalyze new musical discoveries.

L-R: 312ce-N, 714ce-N, 214e-N



# 300 SERIES

## DETAILS

- Back/Sides:** Sapele
- Top:** Sitka Spruce or Tropical Mahogany
- Finish (Body):** Satin 5.0 Back/Sides; Gloss 6.0 (Spruce) or Satin 5.0 (Mahogany) Top
- Rosette:** 3-Ring
- Fretboard Inlay:** 4mm Mother-of-Pearl Dots
- Binding:** Black (Body, Fretboard)
- Bracing:** Standard II with Relief Rout or Nylon Pattern
- Electronics:** Expression System 1 or ES-N (Nylon)
- Tuning Machines:** Taylor Nickel or Nylon Nickel with Pearloid Buttons
- Case:** Taylor Deluxe Hard Shell Case

- Available Models:** 310, 310e, 310ce, 312, 312e, 312ce, 314, 314e, 314ce, 316, 316e, 316ce, 320, 320e, 322, 322e, 324, 324e, 356, 356e, 356ce, 312ce-N, 314ce-N

The premium-sounding solid wood Taylor experience starts with our sapele 300 Series. While the African hardwood shares some of mahogany's tonal characteristics, its higher density yields a more pronounced treble, which contributes to a brighter overall sound. Like our mahogany 500 Series, we recently expanded the series with mahogany-top models, in this case for three body shapes: Grand Concert (322), Grand Auditorium (324), and Dreadnought (320). The amber hues and rich grain of both woods match well, and the compression of hardwood tops produces a warmer, throatier sound – less crystalline than a spruce top – which balances well with sapele's zesty highs. High-contrast appointments on the mahogany-top models include black binding with white top edge trim, a white 3-ring rosette, and a black pickguard.

*Cody Lovaas, a 15-year-old surfer and aspiring singer-songwriter from San Diego's coastal North County area, was playing his Taylor at a local coffeehouse when he caught the ear of another accomplished local artist – Jason Mraz. The two are now buddies, and Jason has been mentoring Cody with his songwriting. Here he kicks back with a mahogany-top 320 at Haggo's, one of his favorite local taco shops.*





# Custom PROGRAM

Maybe you were inspired by a stunning one-off at a Taylor Road Show. Or you own a couple of standard models and you're ready to create something truly unique. Or you're crazy for cocobolo. Whatever your Taylor yearnings might be, we're here to help, and we're ready whenever you are.

Our custom guitar program gives you everything you need to bring your dream Taylor to life. It starts with a rich palette of options, from tonewoods to inlays to purfling details and much more. We'll also lend a guiding hand along the way. Your preferred Taylor dealer is a great place to start. Many have been to the Taylor factory and selected woods and designed their own custom guitars for their store with our guitar experts. Our staff is also happy to help if you have questions. Our sales and production team has designed and built thousands of custom Taylors together over the years. We know what works, both tonally and aesthetically, and love helping customers refine their ideas into a guitar that exceeds their expectations. Once you've placed your order, the turnaround time is a matter of weeks instead of months because we reserve build slots in our production schedule every day for custom guitars.

Our custom guitar categories include our standard acoustic shapes (including a deep-body Dreadnought) along with baritones, 12-frets, nylon-strings, T5 and T3 options. Wood choices outside those used for our standard line include back and sides of walnut, cocobolo and Macassar ebony, with expanded top options that include Adirondack spruce, Sinker redwood and cedar. Keep in mind that our commitment to responsible sourcing means that our wood availability is subject to change.

For an up-to-date list of custom categories, refer to our pricelist at [taylorguitars.com](https://www.taylorguitars.com). To see a comprehensive inlay guide, visit your local Taylor dealer.

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

*Above (top down): A shaded edgeburst body; Abalone parrot inlay*

*Opposite page: This stunning cutaway Grand Symphony features cocobolo back and sides, a sinker redwood top, bloodwood binding around the body, fretboard and soundhole, an abalone rosette, abalone top/fretboard trim, a Tree fretboard inlay featuring a koa tree trunk, mother-of-pearl bridge inlay, abalone dot bridge pins, and Expression System 2 electronics.*





# 200 Deluxe SERIES

## DETAILS

	<b>Back/Sides:</b> <b>Rosewood &amp; SB Models:</b> Layered Rosewood (Rosewood/Poplar/Rosewood) <b>Koa Models:</b> Layered Koa (Koa/Poplar/Koa) <b>BLK Model:</b> Layered Sapele (Sapele/Poplar/Sapele)
	<b>Top:</b> Sitka Spruce
	<b>Finish (Body):</b> Gloss 6.0 (Top, Back and Sides)
	<b>Rosette:</b> <b>Rosewood &amp; Koa Models:</b> 3-Ring <b>BLK &amp; SB Models:</b> Single Ring
	<b>Fretboard Inlay:</b> Acrylic Small Diamonds
	<b>Binding:</b> White (Koa Models: Cream)
	<b>Bracing:</b> Standard II
	<b>Electronics:</b> Taylor Expression System 1
	<b>Tuning Machines:</b> Chrome
	<b>Case:</b> Taylor Standard Hardshell
<b>Available Models:</b>	210ce DLX,214ce DLX, 214ce-BLK DLX, 214ce-SB DLX, 210ce-K DLX, 214ce-K DLX

Taylor's 200 Series has continually evolved in exciting ways to elevate its performance and aesthetic appeal among players. For 2014, our distinctive Deluxe category is loaded with high-end looks and features. Choose from a layered rosewood body with a solid Sitka spruce top and optional sunburst; layered koa and solid spruce; or layered sapele and solid spruce with an all-black finish. All feature a full-gloss body, Small Diamond fretboard inlays, original Expression System® acoustic electronics, and a Taylor standard hardshell case. Two body styles are offered – a Grand Auditorium and Dreadnought – and all models come equipped with a Venetian cutaway. Whether you're a beginner looking to invest in your first quality guitar or a seasoned pro looking for a reliable stage partner, these guitars won't let you down.

*For more on our use of layered woods, see our Woods feature on page 33.*

*Opposite page (L-R): Sunburst-top 214ce-SB DLX, 210ce-Koa DLX, 214ce-BLK DLX*



# 200/100 SERIES

## DETAILS

<b>Back/Sides:</b>	<b>200 Series:</b> Layered Rosewood (Rosewood/Poplar/Sapele) <b>100 Series:</b> Layered Sapele (Sapele/Poplar/Sapele)
<b>Top:</b>	Sitka Spruce
<b>Finish (Body):</b>	<b>200 Series:</b> Gloss 6.0 Top; Satin 5.0 Back/Sides <b>100 Series:</b> Matte 2.0
<b>Rosette:</b>	3-Ring
<b>Fretboard Inlay:</b>	6mm Dots
<b>Binding:</b>	<b>200 Series:</b> White <b>100 Series:</b> Black
<b>Bracing:</b>	<b>200 Series:</b> Standard II or Nylon Pattern <b>100 Series:</b> Standard II
<b>Electronics:</b>	<b>200 Series:</b> Taylor ES-T® or ES-N (Nylon) <b>100 Series:</b> Taylor ES-T
<b>Tuning Machines:</b>	<b>200 Series:</b> Chrome or Nylon Chrome with Pearlloid Buttons <b>100 Series:</b> Chrome
<b>Case:</b>	<b>200 Series:</b> Hardshell Gig Bag <b>100 Series:</b> Gig Bag

**Available Models:** 210, 210e, 210ce, 214, 214e, 214ce, 110e, 110ce, 114e, 114ce

Our 200 and 100 Series guitars are kindred spirits, linked by our desire to make the Taylor experience broadly accessible to all types of players without compromising on the essentials of a great guitar: playability, tonal clarity and workmanship. These qualities can make all the difference to a player who is near the front end of the guitar journey, or anyone trying to progress to the next level. Choose from resilient layered rosewood back and sides (200 Series) or layered sapele (100 Series), with a solid Sitka spruce top and a slightly narrower 1-11/16 inch neck. Body styles include our Grand Auditorium and Dreadnought, with an optional cutaway and ES-T® electronics. (100 Series models are offered exclusively with electronics for 2014.)

*Brett Cajka had been dreaming about his first Taylor for a while when he bought his 214ce. The playability and tone made an immediate impact on his playing. "The tuning is really reliable, so I can get right into playing," he says. "And because it already has such a great sound, it's especially rewarding when I start getting riffs and fingerpicking down. I love being able to come up with songs on my own, as well as plugging in and jamming with a full garage band." A 110e is pictured in the background.*



# Standard Model Options

The Taylor acoustic line is configured to give customers and dealers ample ordering flexibility. In addition to offering most models with or without a cutaway and electronics, we also provide a menu of standard model options, enabling you to modify the specifications of a guitar to get the look or feel you want. Choose from easy-to-order aesthetic enhancements like a sunburst top, color or burst options for 600 Series, wood upgrades for koa and maple guitars, or a Florentine (sharp) cutaway. You can also optimize your tone or playing experience with options like a top swap to cedar or mahogany, an alternative nut width, a short-scale or 12-fret model, a bone nut and saddle, and more.

For 2014, we've bundled several preferred upgrades into a special High Performance (HP) option package. The package features Gotoh 510 tuning machines (antique gold, antique gold with black buttons, or chrome), which boast a 1:21 gear ratio for superior tuning precision, along with a bone nut/saddle and Adirondack bracing for tonal enhancement. The package will also be offered through our custom program.

A complete list of standard model options is included in our 2014 price list and specifications, which you can find at [taylorguitars.com](http://taylorguitars.com). Some options vary by series. For more information, talk to your local Taylor dealer or give us a call and we'll be happy to help.

*Left: All-mahogany 526ce featuring an optional shaded edgeburst top*



# GS Mini

## DETAILS

- Back/Sides:

Layered Sapele  
(Sapele/Poplar/Sapele)
- GS Mini-e RW:

Layered Rosewood  
(Rosewood/Poplar/Sapele)
- Top:

Sitka Spruce or Tropical Mahogany
- Finish (Body):

Matte 2.0
- Rosette:

3-Ring
- Fretboard Inlay:

5mm Dots
- Binding:

None
- Bracing:

X Bracing with Relief Rout
- Electronics:

GS Mini & GS Mini Mahogany:  
Pre-fitted for ES-Go™ (optional)  
GS Mini-e RW:  
Taylor ES-T®
- Tuning Machines:

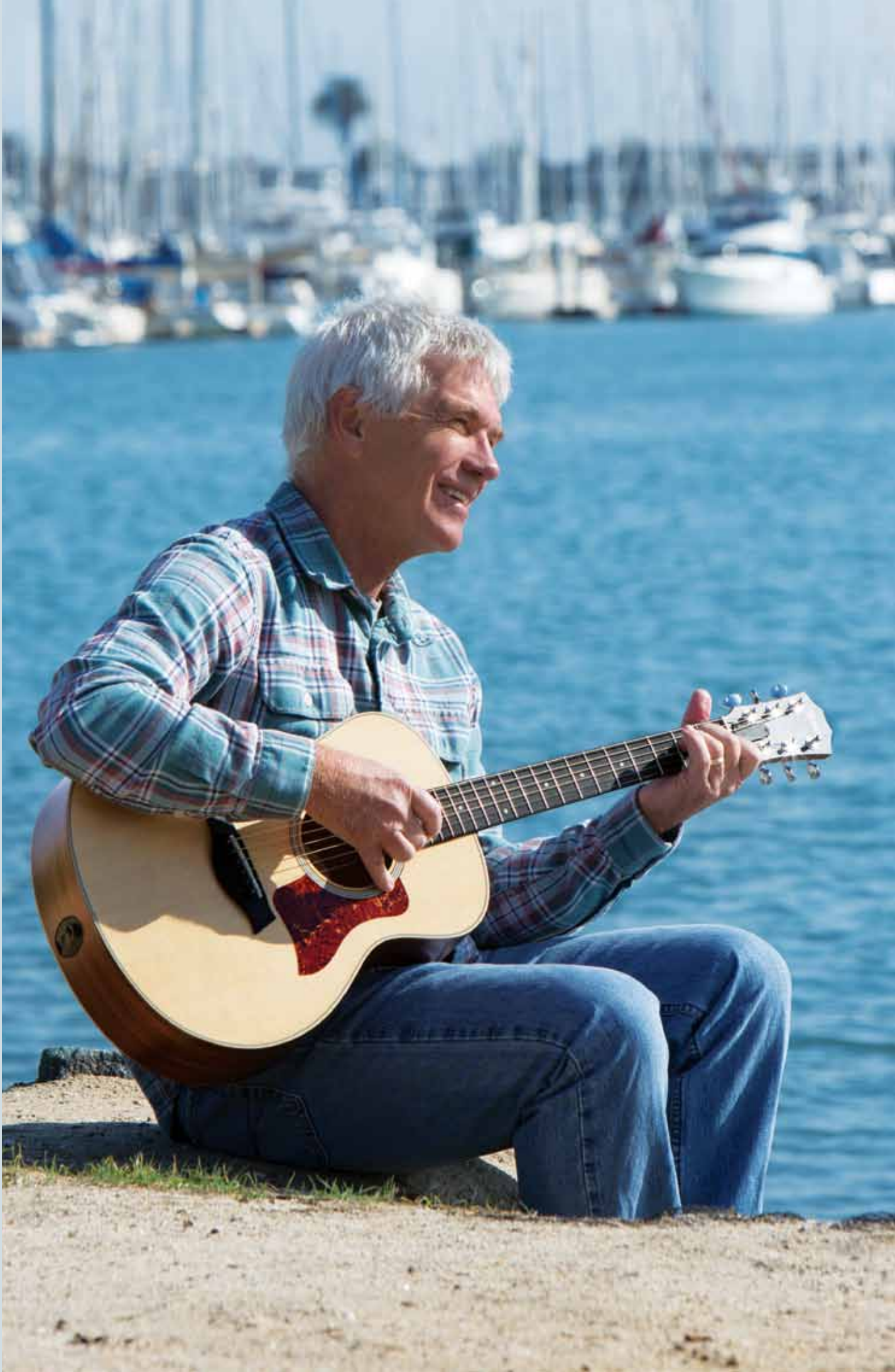
Chrome
- Case:

GS Mini Hard Bag

**Available Models:** GS Mini, GS Mini Mahogany, GS Mini-e RW

We think the world would be a better place if everyone had a GS Mini. For nearly four years now, our modern-day parlor guitar has wowed the world with its fun-size appeal, packing a grown-up guitar voice into a scaled-down form that fits perfectly into everyday life. As active or relaxed as you want to be, having a Mini on hand is like having your songwriting muse on instant demand. A 23-1/2-inch scale length puts more notes within easy reach, while the full-size soundhole helps surround you with great tone. Choose from the original spruce-top or the mahogany-top model, which both come pre-fitted for our easy-to-install ES-Go® pickup. And due to the popularity of some special edition Mini models offered last fall, we're excited to add another model to the standard line for 2014: the GS Mini-e RW, featuring layered rosewood back and sides, a solid spruce top, and our ES-T® pickup for instant plug-and-play fun.

*Taylor's Larry Breedlove has made a huge impact on Taylor's design aesthetic over the years as Bob Taylor's longtime guitar-building partner. He'll be retiring soon, which means he'll have more time to enjoy the outdoors — hopefully with a GS Mini within reach when inspiration strikes.*



# Baby

SERIES

## DETAILS

- Back/Sides:

Layered Sapele  
(Sapele/Poplar/Sapele)
- Top:

Sitka Spruce  
or Tropical Mahogany
- Finish (Body):

Matte 2.0
- Rosette:

Single-Ring
- Fretboard Inlay:

6mm Dots
- Binding:

None
- Bracing:

X Bracing
- Electronics:

None
- Tuning Machines:

Chrome
- Case:

Gig Bag

**Available Models:** Baby Taylor, Baby Mahogany, Taylor Swift Baby Taylor, Big Baby

From the moment of its birth, our original portable picking partner, the three-quarter-size Baby Taylor, declared that it was more than just a starter guitar for kids. It was immediately embraced by adult musicians and travelers as a legitimate instrument, not just a stand-in for one, and seemed to inspire endless creative uses because of its portability and irresistible playfulness. From acoustic lap slide to Nashville high-strung guitar to godsend for people with hand ailments who yearned to play again, it gave many folks the creative spark they were craving. Eighteen years later, our little Dreadnought has given tens of thousands of kids a wonderful outlet for learning to express themselves through music, and with the help of its up-sized sibling, the Big Baby, is still going strong.

*Monica Toombs, a graphic designer, recently bought a Baby Mahogany. "As someone who set out to learn to play the guitar with no background in music, I love the Baby because it feels manageable," she says. "It was affordable enough to get me going, yet feels like a quality investment I will have for years to come. After learning my first chords from a couple clips on YouTube, I hit the ground running."*





# T5z

## DETAILS

**T5z Custom:** Flamed Koa Top, Hollow Sapele Body, Gloss Finish with Shaded Edgeburst, Spires Fretboard Inlay, White Binding (Body, Fretboard, Peghead), Gold Hardware, T5z Deluxe Hardshell Case

**T5z Pro:** Curly Maple Top, Hollow Sapele Body, Gloss Finish, Spires Fretboard Inlay, White Binding (Body, Fretboard, Peghead), Nickel Hardware, T5z Deluxe Hardshell Case

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

**T5z Standard:** Sitka Spruce Top, Hollow Sapele Body, Gloss Finish, Mother-of-Pearl Small Diamonds Fretboard Inlay, White Binding (Body, Fretboard, Peghead), Nickel Hardware, T5z Deluxe Hardshell Case

**Colors/Bursts:** Black, Honey Sunburst, Tobacco Sunburst

**T5z Classic:** Tropical Mahogany Top, Hollow Sapele Body, Satin Finish with Classic Mahogany Stain (Entire Guitar), Mother-of-Pearl Small Diamonds Fretboard Inlay, Nickel Hardware, T5z Gig Bag

We're thrilled to unveil a spunky new addition to the electric/acoustic T5 family. Meet the T5z, a more compact, dare we say sexier, take on our popular hollowbody hybrid. The original T5's groundbreaking versatility as a full-range performance guitar has cast such a broad net of appeal that players from both the acoustic and electric worlds have embraced it. If the original version grew out of the familiar terrain of Taylor's acoustic heritage, this time our design team re-envisioned the guitar with electric players in mind, giving them a familiar feel for a smooth crossover playing experience. Electric-friendly features include a 12-inch fretboard radius and jumbo frets that make bending strings easier. Taylor product specialist Marc Seal, a longtime T5 and electric player who plays a lot of melodic hard-rock instrumental music, has found the T5z's smaller body to have a higher tolerance to feedback in a hard rock setting with a lot of distortion. "I've been able to get a little more gain out of it," he says. "I used to say that the T5 could do pretty much any gig except a metal cover band. The T5z actually can get those super high-gain sounds really well."

In all other respects, the T5z retains all the great design features of the original T5 (see next page), including a three-pickup configuration of an acoustic body sensor, a concealed neck humbucker, and a visible bridge humbucker, plus five-way switching and onboard tone controls. For both the T5 and T5z, we've streamlined the naming structure of the models to reflect the top woods used (all maple-top models are now the T5/T5z Pro), and the Classic now features a mahogany top instead of ovangkol.

*Left: Mahogany-top T5z Classic*

*Opposite page, top down: Tobacco sunburst T5z Standard, Borrego Red T5z Pro, T5z Custom*



# T5

## DETAILS

**T5 Custom:** Flamed Koa Top, Hollow Sapele Body, Gloss Finish with Shaded Edgeburst, Spires Fretboard Inlay, White Binding (Body, Fretboard, Peghead), Gold Hardware, T5 Deluxe Hardshell Case (Brown)

**T5 Pro:** Curly Maple Top, Hollow Sapele Body, Gloss Finish, Spires Fretboard Inlay, White Binding (Body, Fretboard, Peghead), Nickel Hardware, T5 Deluxe Hardshell Case (Brown)

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

**T5 Standard:** Sitka Spruce Top, Hollow Sapele Body, Gloss Finish, Mother-of-Pearl Small Diamonds Fretboard Inlay, White Binding (Body, Fretboard, Peghead), Nickel Hardware, T5 Deluxe Hardshell Case (Brown)  
**Colors/Bursts:** Black, Honey Sunburst, Tobacco Sunburst

**T5 Classic:** Tropical Mahogany Top, Hollow Sapele Body, Satin Finish with Classic Mahogany Stain (Entire Guitar), Mother-of-Pearl Small Diamonds Fretboard Inlay, Nickel Hardware, T5 Gig Bag

Since its debut in 2005, Taylor’s crafty chameleon, the T5, has been blurring the line between an amplified acoustic and electric guitar by packing a sweeping range of tones into the same instrument, from shimmering acoustic chords to wailing rock solos, with a heap of tonal flavors in between. Such fluid versatility gives gigging and recording players an inspiring tool that can switch musical gears with the flick of a switch. Performers can travel light and still have access to a colorful mix of guitar textures. The thinline hollowbody design features an active soundboard to produce a natural acoustic voice and sports an acoustic body sensor, a concealed neck humbucker, and a visible bridge humbucker. Five-way switching and onboard tone controls will take you from warm, woody jazz to vintage blues to distortion-drenched hard rock in an instant, and without the use of modeling technology. Adding to the crossover appeal is the T5’s dual compatibility with electric and acoustic amps. Choose from four models, in an assortment of top wood, color and burst options. Usually experiencing multiple personalities isn't a good thing, but the Taylor T5 has made it a musical virtue.

Top row (L-R): Black T5 Standard, T5 Classic;  
Middle (L-R): Borrego Red T5 Pro, Tobacco sunburst T5 Standard, Pacific Blue T5 Pro; Bottom: T5 Custom



# T3

## DETAILS

**Body:** Semi-hollow Sapele  
**Top:** Quilted or Flamed Maple  
**Neck:** Sapele  
**Finish:** All Gloss

**Fretboard Inlay:** 4mm Mother-of-Pearl Dots

**Binding:** White (Body, Fretboard, Peghead)

**Bridge:** Chrome Roller-Style with Stoptail (T3) or Bigsby Vibrato (T3/B)

**Color/Burst Options:** Natural (Standard), Ruby Red Burst, Black,Orange, Tobacco Sunburst, Honey Sunburst

**Electronics:** Taylor HD Humbuckers (Standard); Optional HD Mini Humbuckers or Vintage Alnicos

**Tuning Machines:** Taylor Nickel

**Case:** T3 Hardshell Case

**Available models:** T3, T3/B

The seduction begins with the very first glimpse of our semi-hollowbody T3. The sleek interplay of color, chrome and crisply bound figured maple strikes a spellbinding balance of modern lines and vintage vibe. The real fun, though, starts when you plug it in. It's amazing how much great tone is packed into the guitar through a blend of Taylor pickup designs and other innovative tone-shaping features. Pickups include our proprietary HD humbuckers (standard), with optional mini humbuckers (serving up power and clarity) or vintage alnicos (extra warmth). A three-way switch toggles between full neck, neck/bridge and full bridge configurations, while a coil-splitting application (pulling up the volume knob) turns the humbuckers into single coil pickups. Roll the tone knob to boost the mids, and pull it up to activate another level of control that dials in mellow warmth without giving up clarity. The tonal versatility suits a range of styles, including jazz, rock, blues and country, without ever feeling like a stretch. And thanks to the T3's rock-solid T-Lock® neck joint, the playing experience is smooth and efficient. Other refined features include a roller bridge that solves the issues that can plague fixed bridges, and tailpiece options that include a stoptail (T3) or Bigsby vibrato tailpiece (T3/B). Paired with the roller bridge, the Bigsby enables the kind of easy control that will make you want to crank up some surf rock and make some waves.

L-R: Black T3, Orange T3/B





# Sustainability

**FROM SOURCING  
TO SUPPLIER  
RELATIONSHIPS,  
TAYLOR IS  
COMMITTED  
TO BUILDING  
A BETTER FUTURE**

**M**any of our stories about sustainability in *Wood&Steel* have explored Taylor's forward-thinking wood sourcing initiatives. We are deeply committed to applying innovative thinking to the stewardship of forest resources in order to preserve the future of woods both for generations of guitar players and for the communities who rely on forestry for their livelihood. In recent years we've chronicled the evolution of pioneering programs with forest communities in Honduras, where mahogany is harvested. We share regular reports on the latest progress with our ebony milling operation in Cameroon. The reality is that, behind the noble vision, it can be extremely difficult work, fraught with daily challenges and setbacks. Making progress often requires an abundance of fortitude, patience and perseverance. But we embrace such formidable challenges because it's the best course of action if we truly believe in the long-term benefits of sustainable practices.

The theme of sustainability resonates even more broadly this year in the context of Taylor's 40th anniversary, as Bob and Kurt reflect on their business journey and look ahead to the future of the company, our industry, and the communities with whom we interact. Taylor might be a much different company today if Bob and Kurt hadn't placed a premium on cultivating long-term relationships with our suppliers and other industry partners early on. As a result, many of those relationships have grown through mutual support, enabling both parties to flourish. As Bob notes in his column this issue, our relationship with our rosewood supplier began decades ago with one cutter in India, and with Taylor as his sole customer. That supplier has steadily grown as Taylor has, and the business now has 80 employees. Our relationship with spruce and maple supplier Steve McMinn and his company, Pacific Rim Tonewoods, began with Steve selling

us spruce out of the trunk of his car. These days PRT supplies Taylor and nearly every other American guitar manufacturer, and our relationship has grown well beyond the typical client/vendor exchange. Steve recently traveled with Bob to Cameroon to learn more about our ebony sourcing and has since lent his expertise to help us address some of the obstacles we've faced (see "Collaborating in Cameroon").

At Taylor, sustainability is a mindset that influences everything we do. It means the pursuit of environmentally friendly finishes. It means building inspiring guitars that will outlive their owners and be passed on to their sons and daughters. It means investing in employees from California to Cameroon and giving them an opportunity to build a future for themselves and their families. It means doing our part to leave the world in a better state for making music.



**Clockwise from left:** Crelicam's Jean Paul Ndzie Mvondo shows ebony suppliers how a GPS unit works; Crelicam employees Fabrice Siake Tchokote and Frank Destin Oyi Owona at one of Crelicam's monthly birthday parties; Martial Djoko Mouafo in the mill  
**Opposite page:** Crelicam's prospector, Amadou Mboure Mboungam, leads teams in gathering data on raw material

## Forecasting the Future of Guitar-making

*Ed. Note: We asked Bob Taylor to offer a glimpse of Taylor's future wood sourcing and guitar-making efforts based on his current assessment of forest resource management around the world.*

We all want to know the latest updates on the sustainability of the forest, what Taylor is up to, and the outlook for the future. With each month and year we jump in with greater commitment. Currently we are involved in pushing toward supplies of plantation-grown wood, wood from more well-managed forests, wood from wealthy countries rather than poor countries, planting trees where we can, and many other projects like this.

People would love to hear that soon it will all be done, but truthfully, it will take our lifetime and beyond to set up and work out the systems. Meanwhile, there are many systems currently in place that are friendly to the forests and those who live in them, and while it can't be explained in a single update, we are certainly giving these all of our attention and commitment. I'm seeing signs that we will be able to make guitars well into the future with fairly traditional woods that are not harming the earth or people. We promise to share more in-depth articles as we move forward, for the rest of your life!



## Collaborating in Cameroon

Bob Taylor's relationship with Steve McMinn from Pacific Rim Tonewoods is a prime example of the collaborative, solution-minded spirit between Taylor Guitars and our supply partners that can lead to greater progress with sourcing wood in developing countries. Bob reflects on the value of such relationships as he recounts one of his trips to Cameroon earlier this year, accompanied by Steve.

"Steve went to Cameroon with me out of interest and friendship, and to see what I see firsthand, which allows us to talk about it and brainstorm solutions," Bob says. "We are friends and colleagues, and we help each other a lot. When he wanted to make purflings and bindings, we set him up with a Fadal CNC machine and actually built his tooling, wrote the programs, trained his guys, and installed the machines at no charge. If I have a special log that needs cutting, he cuts it for fun, often at no charge. When I had ideas about how we might get a portable sawmill into the forest in Cameroon, Steve researched and bought those mills, set them up at his place, and bought logs for us to practice on. Who does that? Well, we do, and we do these things for each other. We have a common interest in making things work, and Steve was highly interested in seeing our mill and being able to talk about it with me, adding his ideas with a deeper understanding of the challenges we face. Since that visit he continues to help us with saw blade designs, research, support, a listening ear, and all those things you'd hope to find in a friend."





# Service and Support

*Taylor Service Network Manager Rob Magargal*

**ONGOING TRAINING WITH DEALERS AND REPAIR TECHNICIANS, ALONG WITH SOPHISTICATED REPAIR TOOLS, HAS HELPED US STRENGTHEN OUR SERVICE NETWORK WORLDWIDE**

www.taylorguitars.com

While crafting great guitars is a core part of Taylor's mission as a manufacturer, so is offering great customer service. Whether it's a matter of helping you find your first (or next) Taylor, or providing support afterward, we're committed to giving you the kind of friendly, personalized service any customer would want.

One of our ongoing initiatives has been to expand our support network to make it easier for you to get the assistance you need in your local area. It starts with our dealers. Each year we bring sales staff and repair technicians out to the Taylor factory for training and to spend time with our production, sales, service and marketing staff, along with Bob Taylor. In 2013, we hosted more than 300 employees from authorized Taylor dealers worldwide. The goal is for them to return to their stores armed with a wealth of Taylor knowledge to share with their fellow store staff and customers.

We've also ramped up our online training of repair technicians affiliated with our dealers to handle basic Taylor repairs that cover three main service areas: guitar setups, electronics and humidification. Successful completion of the training earns them Silver level Taylor certification. Taylor Customer Service Manager Glen Wolff says that a Silver level technician can address about 90 percent of the service needs for our guitars. As a result, we've been able to expand our network of repair contacts.

"We want customers to feel confident in going back to their dealer should the need for service arise," Glen says. "Many players like to have custom setup work done to fit their playing preferences, and the Silver level techs are a great resource for getting that done."

We also recently granted Gold level status to a short list of highly skilled repairmen with whom we have been working for many years. In addition to handling basic service, Gold level technicians can help if you need more serious repair work done, such as crack repairs, bridge reglues, full refrets, and restoration work.

You'll find a complete list of our certified Silver and Gold level technicians at [taylorguitars.com](http://taylorguitars.com), or call Customer Service for a referral in your area.

## Refinements in Amsterdam

Throughout 2013, Taylor Service Network Manager Rob Magargal logged tens of thousands of miles to conduct training seminars with Taylor-authorized service technicians around the world. He also spent a lot of time at our European headquarters in Amsterdam, the Netherlands, helping to

expand the range of our repair capabilities at our Factory Service Center. A lot of progress was made, he's happy to report.

"We've made great strides in our ability to provide a consistently exceptional level of service and repair in Europe," Rob says. "We recently purchased and installed an eco-friendly instrument finishing booth made by the company Wiltec. The unit consumes very little electricity, and the air inside the booth is heated by hot water that comes from deep underground. Many of the vents are operated by compressed air and vacuum. No gas or oil is burned to heat the air, which means that no pollutants are released into the air."

Because Taylor's UV finish produces virtually no volatile organic compounds, Rob says, the booth setup is one of the finest, safest and most eco-friendly places to spray our finishes.

"Paired with the new finishing booth, we also have a new custom-made EU-compliant UV-curing oven," he notes. "It was made for us by UV-III systems. We have been using their products for a while now, and we have many of their spot-curing units on the factory floor, as well as in our repair departments in both Amsterdam and El Cajon."

## Customer Service Contact Information

For general questions about service and repair from the U.S. and Canada, call our Factory Service Center in El Cajon, California (1-800-943-6782). Our hours are 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Pacific Time, Monday through Friday. If you have questions about buying a guitar, we encourage you to speak with a Taylor dealer, or you're welcome to call our service team. We'll be happy to guide you in the right direction.

In Europe, Taylor's European Factory Service Center is located in Amsterdam, the Netherlands, and is open Monday through Friday from 09:00 to 17:00. To schedule an appointment for service, Taylor owners in Europe can contact our service team using the toll-free number for their country, as listed on our website at [taylorguitars.com/dealers/international](http://taylorguitars.com/dealers/international)

Outside the U.S., Canada and Europe, sales and service questions are best answered by our international distribution partners. For a complete listing of Taylor distributors worldwide, along with contact information, visit [taylorguitars.com/dealers/international](http://taylorguitars.com/dealers/international)



## Elements of Greatness

What makes a great guitar? That depends on who you ask.

While back, I was asked what the key to a great guitar is. The person was looking for a clear and concrete answer along the lines of "a straight neck" or a "resonant sound box." Both, of course, are important elements of a great instrument, but to me, those are secondary factors that are addressed as a guitar is built. An answer like "when all the components come together in harmony" would be closer to what I believe. Yet somehow that still falls short. For me, the key to a great guitar is a perfect fit between the instrument and the sensibilities of a player.

The things any of us make, whether music, food, artwork or anything else, are products of our many influences. Take food, for example. What you cook for dinner will reflect a mix of influencing factors, whether you are conscious-

ly aware of it or not. Some are obvious, such as the ingredients that are readily available. Other more underlying influences might include the culture or family you grew up in, as those no doubt shaped your tastes. Another would be a recipe you recently saw, or some other inspiration of the moment.

Playing music or making guitars is no different. A musician or guitar maker has a background that exerts an array of influences on their output. Both are informed by what they have available to them, the musical environment that shaped their preferences, and of course, fresh inspiration. In the context of guitars, all the impressions, experiences and preferences of a player will influence the way they get acquainted with an instrument.

Just like when cooking, some of these preferences are very tangible,

like an affinity for a neck of a certain width, or another particular ingredient. Others are more conceptual, stemming from a player's history or previous associations. Because each musician is unique in what makes up their sensibility, the musical priorities and the degree of importance ascribed to different elements will vary. For one player, the qualities of the finish – say the appeal of a sunburst – might call up strong associations and filter the way the whole guitar is perceived. Another player might value the woods a guitar is made of above all other factors, like Leo Kottke, who once said that a guitar's most important feature is that it is built with mahogany. Still another player might be drawn strongly to a particular shape, or even the maker's name.

As a guitar maker and musician, I enjoy hearing this sort of input from

musicians. The input I find especially interesting, however, is where preferences overlap, despite widely differing backgrounds and musical approaches. I look at it like this: Most of us tend to agree what red or blue looks like. We might see slightly different shades depending on our perception of hue, but mostly we will agree on a similar range. Instruments are like that too. Most players will hear an instrument and agree on its general characteristics. Some qualities are universally regarded as desirable. For example, a neck that plays easily. It isn't hard to imagine why a comfortable-playing neck is valued by the vast majority of guitarists. Sonic characteristics are more slippery, but qualities such as sustain, volume, responsiveness, balance and clarity all seem to be unanimously sought-after musical traits. Where these sonic preferences diverge is when we enter the realm that musicians call timbre or sonority. This is the specific attribute that differentiates one sound from another. It distinguishes one guitar from another, or from an oboe, piano, violin or any other type of instrument. Another example would be two singers who each have similarly accurate pitch yet project unique identities through the distinctive sound of their voices. The unique identities come from differing sonorities.

Depending on the musical sensibility of a guitar player, this unique fingerprint of sound can be interpreted in as many ways as there are listeners. One player's impression of "clear and brilliant" might be another's "shrill."

Are any of these judgments on sound wrong or inferior to another because the hierarchy of importance is determined by each player's experiences? Certainly not. The perception of artwork doesn't follow a clear, finite path. How could there be a clear right when the appreciation is based on the uniqueness of each musician? And yet, there exist those universally agreed-upon elements that combine to make a piece transcendently beautiful.

As a guitar maker, I set out to build instruments that make great music when put in the hands of musicians, of which no two are alike. With that uniqueness in mind, I strive to build guitars with the musical qualities that seem to be universally good. Beyond those elements, we cross over to the other side of that equation, where the ears of musicians and listeners determine what is best for their music. This is the reason for making guitars of many shapes and designs. One musician will find their ideal sound with a small and delicately voiced guitar; another with the huge sonic presence

of a large instrument. Still another will be drawn to something in between.

The relationship between the subjective and universal traits of a guitar shows itself in two musical scenarios. The first is that there is one particular musical setting in which a guitar is at its best. The combination of a certain musician's playing, the song, the environment, and all the elements that go into making music align, and the guitar and the music seem perfect. I see this frequently. A musician will use one guitar for one song because its qualities make it most suitable for what the song needs, then switch to another guitar for their next song. The second scenario I've witnessed is when a single guitar can be so expressive in the hands of a musician that the instrument always seems to be ideal for whatever music that player makes. I see this less often, but when I do, the music is undeniably great. The late, great Andrés Segovia comes to mind. I recently saw a video in which he demonstrated the sounds of an entire symphony orchestra on a single guitar.

We approached the 800 Series with the relationship between a musician and their instrument strongly in mind. This series is a particularly dear collection of instruments to us as a company of builders and players, as they have always represented our benchmark as the quintessential modern acoustic guitars. The new 800 Series is more than a group of guitars with the same appointments; each shape has been given what is most appropriate to optimize its musical character. Together they share a certain aesthetic harmony, yet each shape asserts itself in a unique way, like the individual members of a family. While acknowledging and encouraging differences in sonic personalities, we've also carefully considered every aspect of these guitars to maximize the universal musical qualities they possess. This enables them to transcend their stereotypical limitations, offering a deep ocean of sound to explore.

Reconceiving these guitars for the next era in their history has demanded every measure of our capability. We've poured into them everything we have learned from past generations of instruments, incorporated the best materials available to us, and added our latest inspiration. They provide a snapshot of our current state of mind as instrument makers and players, and we are thrilled to offer them to our fellow musicians.



# TaylorWare®

CLOTHING / GEAR / PARTS / GIFTS

## NEW

### Men's 40th Anniversary Work Shirt (right)

Wrinkle-resistant, permanent press polyester/cotton blend, featuring Taylor shield on front, 40th anniversary design on back. Short sleeve with two button pockets. (Black #3080; S-XL, \$44.00; 2XL-3XL, \$46.00)

### NEW Men's 40th Anniversary T (far right)

Preshrunk 100% combed cotton. Short sleeve. Fashion fit. (Black #1570; S-XL, \$25.00; 2XL-3XL, \$27.00)

### NEW Ladies' 40th Anniversary T (not shown)

Preshrunk 60/40 combed cotton/poly blend. Short sleeve. Slim fit. (Black #4570; S-XXL, \$25.00)



### Two Color Embroidery T

Standard fit. (Olive Green #1206; M-XL, \$24.00; XXL, \$26.00)



### Antique Logo T

Fashion fit. (Deep Burgundy #1458; S-XL, \$24.00; XXL, \$26.00)



### Ladies' Two-Tone Guitar T

Slim fit. (Warm gray #4560; S-XXL, \$25.00)



### Long Sleeve Case Label T

Standard fit. (Brown #2081; S-XL, \$30.00; XXL, \$32.00)



### Logo T

Standard fit. (Tan #1750; S-XL, \$20.00; XXL-XXXL, \$22.00)



### Taylor Men's Fleece Jacket

(#2891; S-XL, \$65.00; XXL, \$67.00)

## HeadWare



### Military Embroidery Cap

Adjustable with Velcro closure – one size fits most. (Black #00402, \$22.00)

### Tattered Patch Cap

Flex fit, two sizes. (Brown, S/M #00150, L/XL #00151, \$25.00).

### Men's Cap

Adjustable fabric strap – one size fits most. (Charcoal #00375, \$25.00)

## NEW

### Taylor Reversible Beanie

Embroidered Taylor round logo on one side, Taylor peghead on the other. 100% acrylic. One size fits all. (Black #00118, Brown #00119, \$20.00)



### Taylor Bar Stool

Padded swivel seat in black matte vinyl. 30" height. Assembly required. (#70200, \$99.00)

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Visit [taylorguitars.com/taylorware](http://taylorguitars.com/taylorware) to see the full line.