

Wood & Steel

The Future of Tonewoods

Taylor's vision of sustainable sourcing

Maple's Rich Revoicing

The redesigned 600 Series

The 2015 Guitar Guide

How to find the right model

Taylor shapes & tonewoods

New models & features





“At Taylor Guitars, we're committed to building a better future by making wonderful guitars without compromise to the guitar, the music, the player, or our forests. We want to make guitars that we and the generations that follow can be proud to own and play.”

Bob Taylor

L-R: Taylor master luthier Andy Powers with a redesigned maple/spruce 614ce and Bob Taylor with a rosewood/spruce 814ce

Wood&Steel

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KURT'S CORNER

Life After 40

The year 2014 was truly a milestone for us, in many ways. It was the 40th anniversary of Taylor Guitars, an anniversary Bob and I never could have imagined when we started in 1974. Even more remarkably, we didn't just survive; we eventually prospered over the course of the four decades, emerging as a market leader in guitars. By some accounts, in 2014 we were not only the best-selling acoustic guitar brand, but also the best-selling guitar brand overall. Thank you for being a part of it all.

What Bob and Andy achieved with the redesigned 800 Series gives you a taste of what to expect with the new 600 Series.

We couldn't have gotten to where we are today without great customers, dealers, distributors, supply partners, and, of course, employees.

Last year our new 800 Series earned raves from both guitar reviewers and customers. What Bob and Andy achieved with the redesigned series, between all the tonal, build and aesthetic improvements, gives you a taste of what you can expect from us in the years ahead, starting with the new 600 Series featured in this issue.

Another well-received new offering of 2014 was our new Expression System® 2 (ES2) pickup and preamp. This patented new application of piezo technology sounds amazing and continues to push the envelope on acoustic guitar amplification.

In March we reached an agreement to lease a brand-new production facility in Tecate, Mexico, to replace our existing buildings there. We spent the remainder of the year designing and building out the interiors for production, and have recently begun moving operations.

By the end of the year we'll have a well-crafted plan in place to address our future space needs in El Cajon.

2014 was also a year that saw several long-term employees retire: Larry Breedlove, Diane Magagna and Steve Baldwin. They follow Bob Zink, Matt Guzzetta and Pete Davies from the past few years. From my perspective, it's very rewarding to see people who are able to retire from Taylor Guitars. I'm really proud that Bob and I have created a solid company that people want to work for throughout their careers, and then retire from. I wish them good health and happy times in their retirement years.

I spent a lot of time out of the office in 2014 traveling and visiting music shops, and I plan to continue this year and beyond. My travels largely focused on Europe last year, and this year will extend to Asia. It's rewarding to meet the people who work in the industry throughout the world, and it's informative to experience the markets and the music shops firsthand.

Now that our 40th anniversary is behind us, I'm focused on our 50th and all I want to accomplish between now and then. I feel our next 10 years will be our best, most productive, most rewarding, and, hopefully, the most fun as well. I wish the same for you too.

– Kurt Listug, CEO

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BOBSPEAK

Cultivating a Better Future

I write this column having completed the most successful year we've had at Taylor Guitars. Our 800 Series, which was redesigned and introduced a year ago, has received the best, most heartfelt reviews from journalists, dealers and players of any guitar we've ever made in our 40 years. Many thanks to Andy Powers for his unique talent to help make those improvements, and to our craftspeople, who are able to execute his ideas, a feat that's not so easy to do.

Even with that success, among others, in 2014, I feel like this year begins with developments of greater significance. You'll be exposed to this as you read about our new 600 Series guitars in this issue. The story is well told, but I have to say that at this point in the history of our industry and given the condition of our forests, that as we look forward 50 or 100 years, I feel that making guitars that please the environment as much as the player is of utmost importance.

Along those lines, I have to offer a personal thanks to my colleague, supplier and dear friend of more than 25 years, Steve McMinn from Pacific Rim Tonewoods, for his willingness to invest in the future. Without any prompting from me, Steve began the process of researching and establishing ways to purposefully grow guitar-grade maple for the future, fueled by a genuine interest in doing something meaningful.

When I became aware of his dedication to this project, I immediately recognized that he would need support from our company to begin to change things so that players would have a healthy appetite for the wood he'd grow a generation into the future. Thus, the new 600s. We're proud of the effort and results as we work together to forge a new future that uses real wood in real ways to make wonderful guitars without compromise to the guitar, the music, the player or our forests. It's a wonderful example of putting wishes and ideas into practice, and can lead the way for more positive changes to come.

My friend Jim D'Addario, one of our industry's great visionaries and talents, makes saxophone reeds that are used and respected by the best musicians. What's always impressed me is that the company owns and operates 500 acres of reed farm in South America as well as 50 acres in France. Maybe one day, if Jim's not doing so already, he'll grow wood for his drumsticks. He's that kind of person. The idea of growing the raw material for the product has always fascinated and impressed me, but a guitar's timeline is so much longer that for many years doing this seemed implausible to me, until recently. Now, with the experience of buying some mahogany that was planted 75 years ago in Fiji, along with our ebony work in Cameroon, our mahogany sourcing partnerships in Honduras, and now

Steve's commitment to maple, I'm encouraged enough to believe that if we start now we can make a real difference, and that someday we'll make guitars from wood we planted.

We all need partners or examples to accomplish big goals. While I'd like to be an example to others, I need examples for myself. The unnamed British who planted mahogany in Fiji nearly a century ago; my friend and colleague Scott Landis, who set and keeps the work of Honduras in motion; Jim D'Addario, who grows his reeds; and now Steve, who is deep into planting maple, are all heroes to me and have helped encourage my next steps. My partners at Madinter Trade, who have the same mindset as me and work with great dedication toward a better Cameroon and a long, sustainable ebony supply, encourage me daily. There will be more to come as things develop, and I'll talk about it as the months and years progress.

I understand the guitar marketplace pretty well. One thing that I understand is that it's not the consumer's job to change how things are. Really, it's the manufacturer's job. We are symbiotic, the player and the maker, but I feel like the consumer should be able to expect that the manufacturer is doing the right thing and trying to make a better future. After all, the manufacturer is the one who is in business with the suppliers of the raw materials, or who uses or

doesn't use abusive techniques in their factory. The only thing the consumer can do is try to learn of the habits of the manufacturer and either buy or not buy based on their beliefs. In today's world, I think we have to deliver top-performing guitars that are rich in tone and beauty, and respectful of tradition, yet at the same time we have to honor the world we live in and work to improve it. That's our job, and I'm happy to take on that responsibility. Our commitment is to make guitars that you're proud to own and play. What you can do is lend an ear to the reasons behind the shifts we make in designs and uses of materials. I hope that as we progress down the path to deep green and deep improvement, as

Steve McMinn calls it, you can continue to find the story worthy and challenge your own preconceived notions about guitars. Working on your behalf for your musical journey are all the people I mentioned above, and I have to say that I know of no more dedicated people in the world to do what's right and not give up any quality in the process. They are all people who believe in investing in the future and not just taking from it for today's needs. I would not be very far along my path if not for their help, examples and passions, and I thank them for that. I believe the future is bright and full of promise, even amidst the challenging times in which we currently live.

– Bob Taylor, President



2015 Taylor Factory Tours & Vacation Dates

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

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

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

We look forward to seeing you!

Factory Closures

Monday, February 16
(Presidents' Day)

Monday, May 25
(Memorial Day)

Monday, June 29 - Friday, July 3
(Independence Day/Company Vacation)

Ask Bob

Bracing basics, saw cut orientation, and how layered wood guitars age

I've owned a number of guitars over the years, but I love the workmanship, playability and sound of my Taylor 314ce. I know that bracing plays a role in the sound, but I've wondered to what extent bracing gives the guitar strength versus sound quality. In other words, would a Taylor sound better without bracing, so the goal is to add just enough to give the guitar strength, or does the bracing also provide tightness to the guitar, which helps it resonate at just the right frequencies?

Kelly

Good question, Kelly. The answer is that a guitar without bracing would sound bad and also collapse. Bracing patterns are personal to good builders, who work out their own theories. Some people just cut and paste what successful companies or builders have done in the past, but most luthiers, including us, like to have our own take. We have several patterns for bracing models of guitars, all for different sound. In addition, the patterns add strength, and not just automatic strength, so we have to design for both at the same time.

Having read the article "Time to Change Strings?" [Fall 2014], I have a question regarding a string problem that I have. I have a 314ce and use Elixir 80/20 Bronze Nanoweb strings. When I change the strings I always clean the fretboard and oil it with lemon oil. I usually play it for an hour or so each day and keep it in its case. However, within a week or two the strings become discoloured, especially in the areas where they get more use. The tone doesn't seem to be affected as far as I can hear, so the problem is really cosmetic.

I contacted Elixir but they were unable to give me a reason for this. Before buying the Taylor I had owned several different guitars over 50 years using many makes of strings and never had anything like

this happen before. Can you shed any light on why this might happen, why it happens so quickly after restringing, and how I can prevent it happening in future?

Hugh Maguire

Hugh, I can't say exactly via my outpost here in El Cajon while you're out there somewhere. Seeing things helps the troubleshooting process. It could be your hands. Don't get mad at me now, but I've seen it before. I'm going to tell you one thing that I feel strongly about. Oiling with lemon oil every time you change strings is too often unless you only change strings once every couple of years. Once your ebony fretboard is oiled a couple of times it doesn't need much oil at all. I'm serious, and you should believe me over anything else you may have read. When you apply it that often the oil has nowhere to go because ebony is very tight-grained and holds the oil for ages. Your problem could very well be that there's too much oil on the surface, even if you say you wipe it dry, and then your fingers are transferring it to the strings when you play. Like I say, I can't diagnose from afar, but I like to start by removing the things that look wrong and then go from there. It is good to clean your fretboard when you change strings, and you can do it with a terry cloth towel that's dry or just slightly moist. Simply buff the surfaces, and I think you'll get all the cleaning you need. I go literally years between oiling my fretboards.

In the quest to keep acoustic guitars humidified, along with keeping a recommended humidifier with the guitar in its case, would it be okay or detrimental to bring the guitar to the bathroom, prop it on a guitar stand, fill the bathtub, close the door, and let the humidity hydrate the guitar? I ask this because my understanding is that when a guitar is sent to the manufacturer and it is diagnosed as being in need of humidity, it gets placed in a room full of sponges with plenty of moisture. Perhaps you can recommend this periodic therapy

session provided that certain very specific temperature/humidity level/time [conditions] are met.

Antonio Maggiore
Edison, NJ

Antonio, I'm pleased that you are listening and that you're eager to take good care of your guitar. Let's start by saying that a guitar only needs humidity when it needs it, and that's not all the time or in every geographical location. So I'd never recommend doing anything regularly, because you could force-feed water into your guitar and do just as much damage as not humidifying it. Now, to answer your question, putting a guitar in a bathroom as you described would definitely cause it to absorb moisture. But that is not practical, and I'm sure you'll miss your objective, so don't do that. By the way, we don't humidify guitars at Taylor in a room full of wet sponges. We do use small sponge-type humidifiers that we place inside guitars, and then we place them in a high humidity room, but this is a repair shop function, not a home function. The hardest part about humidifying your guitar is to know when to start and when to stop. This is why I will continually recommend the Planet Waves Humidipak [Ed. Note: This humidifier was recently renamed the D'Addario Planet Waves Two-Way Humidification System], because it won't over-humidify your guitar, and it only works when the guitar needs the humidity.

How is it that my daughter's GS Mini comes with medium gauge strings and all my other Taylors (GA and GC models) come with light gauge strings? My Taylor Spring Limited Mahogany GS (2011) also comes with medium gauge strings, but the size differences between these two models that share the same string gauge is enormous.

Pat
Indian Harbour Beach, FL

It's simple, Pat. The strings are shorter because it's a smaller guitar, and they're looser because of that, so they



Last week I purchased my first Taylor, a GS Mini-e RW. I'm totally pleased with the sound and flawless workmanship. Could you please advise me how to clean the guitar (body neck and top) after a gig? The guitar will be doing about four gigs a month, and I really wish to preserve the clean finish, as this is quickly becoming my go-to guitar.

N Moore
Isle of Wight

Yes, it's easy. Wipe it down with a dry soft cloth, like terry cloth or old T-shirt cloth. Especially the strings and metal parts. A wipedown is all it needs. And thanks for the comments on the GS Mini. It's a wonderful little guitar that everyone seems to like so much.

need the extra girth of the gauge to make the tension right.

When I bought my 810-WMB in 1999, I bought it on the salesman's recommendation and his familiarity with my playing style. I did not realize that it was a special edition. What features does my guitar have that sets it apart from a regular 800 Series guitar of that era?

Frank Saporito

Wow, Frank, I haven't heard talk of the 810-WMB in years. Check out the back braces on that guitar. They should be in a star pattern radiating from the center, and the ends don't touch the sides of the guitar. That makes the back move differently and accentuates the bass frequencies. So, WMB meant "With More Bass," kind of like the Gibson Super 400 model meant "Super Guitar for \$400" back when it was introduced. Gotta love where names come from.

The ES-N is a great-sounding pickup system, the first that sounded sweet enough for me to play amplified in public. Any plans for an ES2-N?

Don Hankinson
(2011 514ce-N)

We're working on it, Don, but a nylon is so much different than a steel-string that the same solution doesn't apply. We are always working on improvements, and we are for this as well.

I'm a very happy owner of five Taylors (815ce, GC8, NS74ce, K24ce and an all-mahogany custom 12-fret) and love them all for their individual characteristics and tonal differences. Since this column became a regular feature, I've paid special attention to each wood issue and your comments on pairings for tonal variety, but one combination I've never seen discussed is a mahogany top with rosewood back and sides. Is that a crazy idea for some reason?

I love what you've described as the darker, "bluesier" tone from my all-mahogany custom 12-fret (it does indeed speak the blues "mo' better" to my ears than just about any other combination), but it makes me wonder what a mahogany top on rosewood would sound like — dark and even across the tonal spectrum

or confused and muddy for some reason that I can't fathom. I'm sure somebody's gone down this trail before. Any thoughts?

Greg Clare

Greg, we haven't done this combo, but I don't see why it wouldn't sound good. The mahogany top would make it darker, for lack of a better word. I like that you have a cool collection of guitars and even a custom guitar in there. Maybe this would be a good sixth guitar, but if I were you, I'd want some verification that it would be good. I say that with qualifications because almost any combination of good wood will make a nice guitar. I guess the question is to what end? One reason would be just to have it and appreciate it. The other would be to have something rare. I hate to sound like a broken record, but if I were to recommend a new guitar to anyone out there like yourself who has good taste I'd recommend a new 810 or 814ce. No kidding. These are nearly perfect guitars. There is so much to like about them, and you're taking advantage of us making the dozens and dozens of development guitars over a period of more than a year, with all the king's horses being put to the task. Now that I've gotten what sounds like a plug out of the way, even though it's my true feeling, I'd say that there's no reason a guitar with rosewood back and sides and mahogany top wouldn't sound good. I think it would be a darker guitar that needs a strong right hand to make it speak.

I'm a 20-year-old from a town called Irwin, about 20 miles outside of Pittsburgh. I started playing guitar when I was about 8 years old. Over the years I've experimented with many guitars, but I recently bought a Taylor 110Ce and instantly fell in love. My dream has always been to work for a guitar manufacturing company such as Taylor. They say "you never have to work a day in your life if you do what you love." What advice do you have for someone who is trying to pursue a career in guitar manufacturing? I have little to no experience (other than playing), but my passion and dedication to learn are real.

Rand Kreller

Rand, it's great that you'd like a career in guitar manufacturing. I remember when it became abundantly clear to me that this is what I would do. I was 17 at the time. You have a couple of choices. The first and the simplest is to go get a job at one of the guitar companies,

like ours, or Martin, which is not too far from your home. Sign up and don't quit, and eventually you will look back like the people who retired from Taylor Guitars this past year, realizing that they indeed spent their whole careers in guitar making, and even nicer, at Taylor Guitars. The other choice is to work for yourself making or repairing guitars. For that you need to teach yourself, although you can get a head start by taking courses at schools such as Red Wing or Roberto-Venn.

As soon as I saw the 12-string 150e in your Spring/Summer 2014 edition of Wood&Steel, I had to have it. It sounds great, and so does my 414ce. Because it is layered sapele, will the tonal quality still increase with age?

Curt London
Chapin, SC

Good question, Curt. Yes it will, because the top is solid and it will age and sound better. The back and sides are layers, as you say, and have a blended tone, almost like you see with a lot of blended grapes in wine these days to make a good wine that doesn't depend on one grape that had a good or bad year. So the backs and sides even out the sound, and the top, which is largely responsible for the tone, is going to age. Now for a couple of trivia items. So far, we have never found a layered top to perform well for many reasons, but we expect to use solid tops nearly forever. I say "nearly" because I don't know what might be discovered in the future. Also, the layered sides and backs can sound fantastic, as you attest, but how they differ from solid backs and sides is that essentially a layered sapele set will sound like a layered rosewood set or a layered maple set. The sound is quite good; it just loses the character of its solid wood counterparts. Solid wood is worth the money because there's more there, but layered backs and sides with a solid top are completely legitimate, and we're proud of ours.

I'm sure I'm not the first one to ask...how about banjos, Bob? You have the expertise, the necks would involve less wood, I would think, and you could easily use wood pieces to make resonators. The only challenge would no doubt be the tone ring, and you could either make a deal somewhere with another company or, better yet, do your

own. You KNOW you could make a killer banjo.

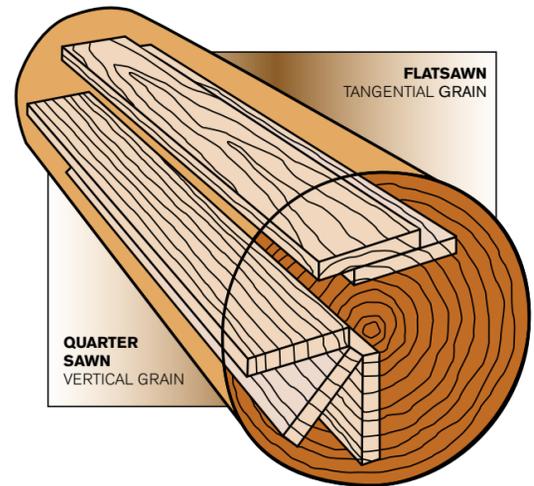
Ron Wilson

Ron, Greg Deering from Deering Banjos is one of my dearest, oldest and best friends. I'll never make and sell a banjo. Just like Jim Olsen is

one of my dearest friends, and James Taylor plays his guitars. I don't think I'd sell James Taylor a guitar if he wanted one...which he doesn't; he loves his Olsen, and he loves Jim. Some things are more important than other things, if you know what I mean.

I viewed your video on the type of figure in maple and how it is rendered. It was very interesting and stimulated this thought: Does the orientation of the saw cut have an effect on the tone of a top or back wood?

Dave
West Michigan



Yes, Dave, it has a lot to do with the quality of tone and also of strength. We want the cut to be what we call "quartersawn," meaning the grain rings are 90 degrees from the face. It's also known as vertical grain. This is most important on tops and less important on sides and backs. In some cases we will use flatsawn wood, which is the opposite of quartersawn wood. This is inherently less strong and yields a different tone, perhaps a softer tone. We use this cut in different cases. All quilted maple is by definition flatsawn. We use it for its striking grain pattern, and it still yields a good-sounding guitar. Some of the harder rosewoods are at times cut flat rather than quartered only because the logs are small, and we wouldn't be able to make a guitar from them if they were cut quartered. So the rule is that typically quartered wood is preferred in theory, but in practice there is a lot of room for other cuts. And never forget, the guitar is the guitar; it is what it is. Don't get hung up on looking at a guitar and applying a rule that you just learned and then passing on it for what you think may be something better. If you love it, just buy it. Don't let a good fish get away.

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.



the future of

tonewood forestry

Bob Taylor shares his vision of sustainable forestry and Taylor's long-term plans for tonewood cultivation

By Jim Kirlin

It's an early autumn afternoon and Bob Taylor is holding court on the topic of tonewood sourcing with about 50 attentive Taylor staffers in a guitar-filled training room on the Taylor campus in El Cajon. The group includes our in-house sales, marketing and customer service teams, along with our European sales managers, who are in town for a week of immersive training at the factory. On the week's itinerary is a presentation on Taylor's new product offerings for 2015, of which the centerpiece is the redesigned maple/spruce 600 Series. A day earlier, Taylor master builder Andy Powers unveiled the full details of the guitar redesign project, complete with a playing demo. Today, Bob is sharing his vision of maple's long-term relevance as a tonewood staple from a sustainability perspective. He frames the conversation with a guiding premise that relates to all tonewoods.

"As we design new guitars, it's incredibly important for us to stack more reasons into why a guitar should exist," he says. "It can't just be because it's a good guitar, or because a player wants it, or because it will sell well. There has to be an additional component of environmental sustainability and responsibility."

This declaration won't come as a surprise to anyone already familiar with Taylor's ebony initiatives in Cameroon

over the past four years, or the company's conservation-minded mahogany forestry partnerships in Honduras over the past 13. But now more than ever, with Andy comfortably established as the creative wellspring for the next generation of Taylor guitar design, Bob has been freed up to devote much more time to another of his passions: developing innovative wood stewardship programs and partnerships.

"I don't have words to express how lucky I am to be able to go away and concentrate on these projects and come back knowing that Andy is making our guitars sound and look better in every way," Bob says. "And they'll continue to get better, because Andy's a better guitar maker than I am."

"I'm worried about 50-75 years from now," he tells the group. "Are we just going to make mahogany and rosewood guitars until there's no more mahogany and rosewood, and then confront it, or are we going to start doing things now for the future, because the future will come whether we do something or not. So we want to jump in now."

The truth is that with ebony and mahogany, we jumped in a while ago. But Bob's current thinking represents an even deeper and more ambitious commitment to the extended future, even though he's unlikely to see the

benefits in his lifetime. But that's precisely the point. Hopefully future generations of guitar players will.

More than ever before, many of the classic tonewoods of the world face an uncertain future. Many woods that are coveted by acoustic guitar makers and players, such as rosewood, mahogany, koa, ebony and cocobolo, are sourced from exotic, tropical regions of the world. In some cases those forests have been gradually depleted due to decades or even centuries of overharvesting and, especially in many developing countries, the lack of the type of forestry management that would support a sustainable consumption of the resource.

In recent decades, provisions have been established in an effort to protect wildlife resources from commercial exploitation. One that might be familiar to guitar players or wood workers is CITES (the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora), an international agreement between governments, to which they agree to adhere voluntarily. (The agreement is complemented by the national legislation within each country.) Species that face threats to their long-term survival are categorized into one of three appendices depending on the degree of threat.

Guitar players may also be aware of the 2008 amendment to the U.S. Lacey Act, or its recently enacted EU equivalent, Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT), which bans the commerce of products made from illegally logged woods. The legislation has compelled manufacturers who source wood to ensure that it has been harvested legally and in accordance with its local governing authority, which has helped stem the flow of illegally cut wood. Nonetheless, between past consumption and the increased demand for woods in an ever-growing world, more than ever, responsible forestry is a critical component of ensuring future availability.

For Taylor, compliance with CITES and Lacey merely represents the bare minimum given the stakes. Bob feels that developing bolder, more innovative solutions is also part of Taylor's ethical responsibility to the environment.

"We're starting to see the doors slowly close in front of us, and we're trying to prop them open to build a future," he says. "There are ways to manage a forest sustainably if you follow certain rules. But in some cases we've had to make new rules. We're doing it in Africa; we've done it in Honduras."

One of the biggest investments of Bob's time and Taylor's resources over

the past several years has been our co-ownership and operation of an ebony mill in Cameroon, as we've reported in *Wood&Steel*. To recap: In the process of researching the ebony trade in Cameroon prior to purchasing the mill with partner company Madinter Trade, a longtime wood supplier to Taylor, Bob discovered that nine of 10 ebony trees cut in Cameroon were being left on the forest floor because they didn't feature the pure black color that was preferred by instrument makers. The revelation led Bob to encourage other instrument makers to broaden their grading specifications and use more wood with color variegation. Our work there is meant to transform the ebony trade in almost every way: to reduce waste by using more of the ebony; to use Taylor's expertise to reduce cutting inefficiencies; and to bring tools and training to Cameroonian employees at the mill, which will enable them to add greater value to the wood by processing it into instrument parts, and in turn enjoy a greater financial return on their natural resource. (Taylor's work in Cameroon was recognized with the Award for Corporate Excellence in January of 2014, presented by U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry.) The good news is that Cameroon has fairly good laws

Bob Taylor next to a maple tree in a forest near our maple and spruce supplier, Pacific Rim Tonewoods, located in the North Cascades region of Washington state

continued on next page

governing the harvesting of ebony, and if followed, in most opinions could yield a sustainable supply. The challenging part, Bob says, is curbing the portion that is removed illegally.

During his talk with Taylor employees, Bob fires up his laptop and, via projector, opens two photos of the mill in Cameroon – one showing the primi-

tive condition of the mill three years ago when Taylor assumed ownership, and the other from the same perspective after recent construction and landscaping. The difference is dramatic.

"Our employees there never hoped to have anything more than this," he says, referring to the first photo, "but through our dedication and our invest-

ment, it's turning into that. They're learning how to do things, and soon we're going to be exporting manufactured violin fingerboards out of there."

Bob goes on to explain how furthering these initiatives can help conserve ebony over the long term.

"The more we transform the ebony into parts, and the more we increase

yield, the more income we derive from the ebony we cut, thus lowering the amount of ebony needed to pay the fixed overhead of operations," he says. "Ultimately this will allow us to take less ebony from the forest and provide more economy for the locals, while still supplying customers."

Despite the amount of dedication required to improve the milling operation in a developing country such as Cameroon – Bob says it's the most challenging initiative he's ever taken on – he's willing to continue that investment into the future because of the greater long-term benefits.

"Sometimes, as I've said with ebony, you have to use the wood to save it, because a good operator can displace a bad operator," he says. "There's always the question, 'Why do you have to use ebony?' Well, if we left Africa, those pictures I showed you would have never happened, and the people there would probably have no hope of ever making a semi-finished part out of their wood and getting more money and more economy out of that. And to think that they're just going to stop cutting the wood...there's always going to be a customer for it. So what's happening is we're there doing good work, and it helps. And I believe that our clients and customers can understand that, too. Part of being green and sustainable is actually using that wood. The simple answer is, just don't use it anymore; don't use any of those things and then you'll be okay. Well, I would be okay, but would the forest be okay? Actually, the forest deserves somebody like us to be there, talking to the Minister of Forestry, showing people how it can be done."

Bob's first-hand experiences in Cameroon, Honduras and other remote areas in developing countries have given him a thorough understanding of the many challenges of sourcing wood from these regions. Factors such as remote location, primitive tools, and other inefficiencies, along with the sometimes glacial pace of doing business and shifting political winds, can be frustrating, to say the least. While Taylor is working to address the issues it can control through better tools, training, building ethical relationships, and other innovative solutions, Bob knows that it's nearly impossible to predict the long-term future, say 75 years from now, when operating in a developing country. As a result, he and others have been exploring additional forestry solutions within the U.S., whose laws and forest management infrastructure currently make long-term implementation more viable. Developing sustainable tonewood forestry programs domestically, he says, may prove to be an essential

ingredient of a diversified blueprint for the future of sourcing by helping to relieve some of the supply pressure on other more stressed regions of the world.

Looking Ahead: Maple and Beyond

For many years, one of Taylor's valued supplier relationships has been with Pacific Rim Tonewoods, our long-time provider of spruce, maple and cedar, and whose mill also cuts the Hawaiian koa logs that we source from Hawaii. Our wood team and theirs have developed a highly collaborative, solution-minded working relationship, and Bob considers PRT founder and owner Steve McMinn both a sharp-minded industry colleague and great friend.

"I've always looked for intelligence and passion and longevity with our suppliers," Bob says. "Steve embodies that to the fullest, and so does Vidal from Madinter Trade, our partner with the ebony mill in Cameroon."

In a story on sustainability in our Winter 2014 issue, we noted that McMinn traveled to Cameroon with Bob to better understand and help improve the milling operation there. McMinn has lent his forestry and milling expertise to many other projects over the years, and Bob has similarly offered Taylor's resources to help McMinn and PRT when they need it.

"A lot of guitars we've made over the years, from limited editions to other models, have been influenced by a desire to utilize more of the wood from the trees that Steve harvests," Bob says. "The fact that we make the Baby Taylor and the GS Mini, for example, allows us to use smaller pieces of spruce that can't be used for bigger guitars."

That symbiotic manufacturer-supplier relationship has led to unique and multifaceted collaborations between Taylor and PRT that may also prove to be key components of a framework for future tonewood forestry. One project involves innovative research that McMinn has pursued regarding the propagation of maple, which is prolific in the Pacific Northwest, where PRT is based. Maple's proximity, coupled with McMinn's extensive knowledge of the local ecosystem and good forest management, has led him to explore the possible cultivation of tonewood forests, where maple trees could be grown in ways that are optimal for musical instruments.

"Our forests in the U.S. aren't pressured and endangered in the same way," Bob says. "They've been properly cultivated and cut and regrown."

For more on Steve's work with



Bob with Steve McMinn in front of a maple tree in which a section of bark was removed to look for evidence of figure. Even if figure is discovered, there is no guarantee that it will be prevalent throughout the entire tree

maple, see our story, "Why Maple Matters," on page 12.

Another collaboration Bob and Steve recently launched was the formation of a company in Hawaii with the intent to engage in sustainable koa forestry there. While the venture is only in the early stages of development, both are excited about the long-term potential there. Because of Hawaii's diverse array of climatic zones – the state features 11 of the 13 that exist in the world – it might also be possible to cultivate other species there in the future. Some of the research findings on tree propagation from Steve's maple research may have broader implications in Hawaii down the road.

"We're looking into growing mahogany and doing a study on the possibility of growing ebony," Bob says. "Before I die, we'll have forests planted there, and those forests are going to be able to supply our company and other com-

panies with some good tonewoods."

Bob feels fortunate that he personally and Taylor as a company are in a position to pursue these kinds of forward-thinking initiatives.

"It's exciting to have an opportunity to do something really good for the future of guitar making," he says. "It's really that same feeling I got in Cameroon, where I thought, we're not going to do things that way anymore because it's my company now and I can change the rules. We're going to start taking care of forests. And with Taylor, it's a combination of first generational ownership and entrepreneurship. My partner supports me, and I don't really have to ask approval from a board of directors."

The fact that Taylor is now a large manufacturer also helps.

"Now we have the girth to accomplish something, whereas when we were smaller, we didn't," Bob explains.

"We didn't order enough of anything. When you're smaller, you really have to just take what you get. I like to think that being bigger now allows us more power to go do something right, instead of more power to do something wrong."

Another of Bob's hopes for the future is that the innovative projects that Taylor and its partners pursue will in turn inspire others.

"We're going to push the envelope, and, realistically, some things will work and some won't," he says. "But we'll learn as we go. One reason I'm going forward with projects like in Hawaii is to be an example, to encourage others. Hopefully they will do an even better job than us." **W&S**

Replanting vs. Natural Regeneration

Taylor's ebony sourcing initiatives in Cameroon have prompted a recurring question among eco-minded guitar enthusiasts: whether we plant new ebony trees after mature trees are harvested.

"Replanting is complicated and varies with different forests," Bob says. "Sometimes just cutting down a tree spreads seeds. Sometimes not. In some places like Cameroon we're not allowed to replant, but we are starting a nursery on our property to grow seedlings anyway, in an attempt to move those regulations forward. Normally a forest will regenerate itself, especially when trees are selectively removed like we do in Cameroon."

As an example of the ability of trees to self-propagate, Bob shares a photo he took during a recent trip to Hawaii. It shows a road lined with koa trees.

"These trees grew as the result of a road being plowed," he explains. "They weren't there before that. The scarification of that land, and the kind of disruption it caused, essentially planted all those koa trees. This road goes up a mountain into a koa forest, and it's lined with koa trees just from driving a bulldozer over it. So, some forests just spring to life if you just disrupt them. That's why people say that fire can be good, because it opens the seed bank and stimulates the growth of new trees."



Signs of progress in Cameroon: Above: A view of Crelicam's grounds shortly after Taylor's co-purchase of the ebony mill; Below: A similar perspective during recent construction and landscaping projects





why maple matters

One of the guitar industry's leading wood suppliers is on a path to revolutionize the way figured maple is cultivated to give it a sustainable future. Count Bob Taylor in.

By Jim Kirlin

Steve McMinn surveys a maple slab at his sawmill to estimate how many guitar sets it might yield

Few tonewood suppliers in North America are more vital to the acoustic guitar industry than Steve McMinn and his crew at Pacific Rim Tonewoods. From his mill in Concrete, Washington, near the banks of the Skagit River in the North Cascades, the PRT team cuts the lion's share of spruce used on guitars in the U.S. Like Bob Taylor, McMinn discovered a passion for his work at the intersection between woodworking and music, which inspired him to carve out what became a pioneering supply niche in the guitar world.

One might say McMinn has a bit of sap in his veins. Growing up the son of a forester in the Pacific Northwest, he worked as a logger to put himself through college, worked on trail crews for the U.S. Park Service during summers, and deepened his appreciation for environmental stewardship along the way. His interest in sourcing tonewoods for musical instruments was sparked after building a guitar from a kit he ordered and realizing the quality of the woods he received was inferior to what he could get himself. So he started salvaging storm-downed Sitka spruce from

U.S. Forest Service land in Alaska and Washington. In the beginning he'd hike into the forest, split a choice spruce log into blocks, and backpack them out. He also learned what luthiers look for in a spruce top, and refined his milling operation to provide clients with the best possible materials. McMinn first started selling spruce to Taylor in the late 1980s – when Taylor was making about eight guitars a day – and he and Bob bonded over their shared passions and similar approaches to their craft.

"Steve quietly chips away at things like I do," Bob says. "He just takes initiative and does things on his own."

In addition to being a longtime spruce supplier, PRT also sources and mills cedar and maple for Taylor and other guitar companies. While maple has an established heritage as a tonewood for instrument backs and sides, outside the musical instrument market it has little value compared to other hardwood species that grow in the Pacific Northwest. By all accounts it's considered a weed that grows in Douglas fir country, and no timber is used more for dimensional lumber in North America than Douglas fir.

"If you look at our whole valley on the zoning map, it's mostly forest," McMinn says, "and people are putting a lot of effort into growing trees on a 40- to 50-year rotation for structural lumber – two-by-fours, -sixes, -eights, -tens. In comparison, maple has a fraction of the value per acre. The mills take it because they must, but it's a bigger, heavier log, and there's not the yield, so the value is less."

While attractively figured maple does command value for instruments, luxury furniture and other decorative items (sometimes as outer veneer), the occurrence of figure in maple is considered a relatively rare genetic deviation. It's similar to the difference between people with straight hair versus curly hair, except that figure tends to manifest in a very small fraction of maple trees. To put this in context, Bob Taylor offers an example from a trip to a section of forest near McMinn's mill in September. The area they surveyed encompasses about 16 hectares, or 39 acres.

"There is developed land on either side, and the person who owns the land wants to develop this area into

something, so it's all going to be logged," Bob explains. "There are about 3,000 trees on those 16 hectares that are big enough to have commercial value. Of those 3,000 trees – and that's a lot of trees on 16 hectares – 80 are maple. Of those 80, only one exhibits any of the characteristics, including figure, that we would use for a guitar. Steve's crew went through that whole forest and looked at every tree. So here's a patch of land that Mother Nature grew 3,000 trees on, and there's a single maple tree that we can make a guitar from. So you can see how little usable maple there is if we just leave it up to Mother Nature."

McMinn can readily attest. "It's always a hunt to find good figured maple," he says.

Because of this, and because McMinn has found that figured maple trees tend to grow in pockets, he began to research maple's genetic properties to learn more about what causes figure and how it can be identified. He also wanted to know why some trees only have a little bit of figure in one portion of their anatomy, while other trees exhibit it consistently throughout

their trunks. He enlisted the help of a research assistant to learn more.

"We found out that essentially very little was known about maple propagation and about why it's figured, although there's a lot known how about to kill maple because it's a much less valuable species than the other hardwoods," he says.

Grow Figure

One important characteristic of maple propagation that McMinn did know from experience was that a maple tree that has been cut will later re-sprout multiple shoots from its stump, each of which can become a tree. (The phenomenon is called coppicing.) The sprouts are essentially a genetically identical regeneration of the tree itself, or a clone, an interesting distinction from what would grow from the seed of the tree. Because a tree grown from seed is effectively a son or daughter, there's no guarantee that a seed from a figured maple tree will also produce figure. A properly replanted sprout cutting, on the other hand, should grow

continued on next page

into a tree that displays the same type of figure (although possibly with slight variations in the patterns). McMinn's research is trying to confirm this. The implications point to a new way to propagate a greater number of figured maple trees by using the cuttings from trees with ideal figure, known as "superior starts."

McMinn invested in additional genetic studies on maple, funding a

two-year research project at Simon Fraser University in Vancouver, B.C., and working with Jim Mattsson, an associate professor of plant functional genomics, to study the cellular basis of figure in wood and to develop efficient propagation methods for figured trees based on cuttings.

"The micropropagation of maple follows the same principles as grandma's propagation of geraniums and African

violets at home," says Mattsson. "First you generate healthy shoots and leaves, then you cut them off and induce new roots. Maple is not nearly as easy and fast to propagate though, and it is important to remove bacteria and fungi and use plant hormones to promote shoot growth and rooting."

McMinn says they currently have four different lines of maple from four different parent trees under propagation.

"We're also doing some conventional propagation with a pretty refined nursery north of the border," he shares. "So we're meeting with some success. We'll have to grow things out."

One of the wonders of the scientific research being done, McMinn says, is the ability to use tissue culturing to make multiple iterations of a figured maple tree. The micro-propagation technique could potentially produce thousands of separate regenerations. The technique is already used to grow a variety of foods commercially, including fruits such as blueberries. Even if the propagation is done conventionally from stump cuttings alone, McMinn says, a single maple stump can produce upwards of 60 cuttings a year, so the dividends would be substantial.

As McMinn points out, propagating plants and trees via cuttings is nothing new. It's used extensively in viticulture with grape vines at vineyards (cloned vines are a popular way to propagate Pinot noir grapes), with bamboo because of how rarely it produces seeds, often with heirloom tomatoes, and with apples in order to preserve the integrity of the fruit.

"Apples don't grow true to the seed in an apple, so you have to take a start from the tree and propagate," McMinn says.

A lot of other plants, such as lilies and succulents, engage in self-cloning as a way to propagate.

One point that's worth making for readers is that plant and tree cloning is not the same as genetically modified organisms (GMOs). Nothing is altered genetically.

McMinn says another goal of the research is to use science to examine a small plant genetically at a young age – say six months to a year – and to be able to accurately determine if it has the traits to become figured, guitar-suit-

able wood without having to wait 30-50 years for the tree to mature. Meanwhile, he's currently looking for some farm property in the valley where he could dedicate 20-30 acres to growing trees in a properly diversified forest environment for several years to demonstrate proof of concept.

"We'll do common garden trials as well as begin a test forest," he says.

McMinn's work could lead to a robust model for future tonewood forests.

"Ultimately I'd like there to be thousands of acres of cultivation," he says. "My endpoint, what I would like 40 or 50 years hence, is for this to be the valley where people go to get figured maple."

Right now, McMinn says, the average age of a maple tree that's harvested is 40 to 60 years. With trees that are properly propagated and cultivated, the right type of pruning can both increase the yield of wood from each tree and potentially condense the growth cycle that's necessary to produce a healthy amount of wood for guitars. McMinn recently saw an example of this with a batch of Hawaiian koa wood he received from the Hawaii Agricultural Research Center, a private, non-profit organization located on Oahu. The wood was cut from a tree that was only 20 years old.

"Their focus used to be plantation crops such as sugar and pineapple, but they have a forestry component," he says. "The forester leading the project has been working on selecting superior seeds for 20 years and especially on developing disease-resistant strains of koa."

Taylor was able to procure some of the wood from the tree, and Bob Taylor was impressed.

"We got 40 sets out of a fairly short section," he shares. "It's got fiddleback



figure, it's got color, and it's a natural, beautiful koa tree. This is really encouraging, because we may find that we can grow a maple tree in 30 years that makes sides and backs. So, we're on the cusp of learning."

Making Maple a Mainstay in the Guitar World

Bob Taylor says that McMinn's pursuit of growing maple and the investments he has made in developing an eco-friendly sourcing paradigm for the future aligns perfectly with his own vision for developing more sustainable forestry practices in North America.

McMinn's envelope-pushing work, he says, is yet another example of the symbiotic relationship between Taylor and its wood suppliers.

"When Steve calls me and tells me, 'I'm doing work on maple because I think that I can propagate it,' my response is, 'If you're doing that, then we want to make a great maple guitar that appeals to more people,'" he says. "And with Andy Powers here, we're doing it with our newly redesigned 600 Series. It may take some time to help the guitar-playing public rediscover maple as an inspiring tonewood, but I believe it will happen." **W&S**



Opposite page (L-R): Microbiologist Jim Mattsson takes a maple cutting from the many shoots that have sprouted from the stump of a figured maple tree; a maple sample being cultivated before replanting; **This page (top down):** A figured maple log being sawn into guitar back and side sets at Pacific Rim Tonewoods; Micropropagated maple samples from tissue cultures taken from a figured maple tree

MAPLE'S RICH REVIVAL

Inspired by maple's legendary status in the bowed instrument world, Andy Powers has broadened its musical appeal with the revoiced 600 Series

BY JIM KIRLIN

With last year's rosewood 800 Series overhaul, Taylor delivered arguably its most ambitious package of guitar refinements since the debut of the patented NT neck back in 1999. Based on the response from dealers, guitar reviewers and customers so far, it's been a resounding success. Andy Powers' nuanced design sensibility, coupled with Taylor's manufacturing sophistication, proved to be the perfect tandem for taking the Taylor playing experience to a new level of musicality. It also served as an elegant metaphor for the next generation of Taylor guitar design: Bob Taylor passing the torch in the form of Taylor's flagship series to his hand-selected successor — during a milestone 40th anniversary year, no less.

So, why maple this year?

As we noted in our stories on Bob's vision of tomorrow's tonewood forestry and Steve

McMinn's work on maple propagation, we believe that maple plays an important role in the future health of the guitar industry. As a tonewood that's native to North America, with proper planning it can be cultivated and sourced in a responsible, eco-friendly way for generations to come.

But that's only one part of our blueprint for the future. Another key component is making maple guitars as musically compelling as their rosewood and mahogany counterparts, and a preferred choice among more players. That's why Andy Powers poured his expertise into redesigning Taylor's maple 600 Series, the details of which we'll share on the following pages. We're excited by the end result, and when you pick up one of these guitars, we have a feeling you will be too. Think of these as guitars that yield more sustain — and lead to greater sustainability.

CONTINUED



Taylor's hand-rubbed Brown Sugar stain adds a deep vintage hue reminiscent of the color tones of traditional stains used on classic maple bowed instruments. Pictured: maple back and sides of a 616ce

One might say that maple steel-string acoustic guitars have suffered a bit of an identity crisis over the years. Despite the wood's hallowed pedigree in the bowed instrument and archtop guitar worlds, maple flattops historically haven't enjoyed quite the same widespread appeal as those crafted from other classic guitar tonewoods such as rosewood and mahogany. On one hand, some of the best players on the planet swear by maple, extolling the stage- and studio-friendly attributes that help it cut through an instrument mix: crystalline brilliance, quick note decay, a rhythm-friendly percussive attack, and crisp articulation that lends itself to sizzling lead runs. Other equally sure-handed players have found maple to be

useful in certain situations, but maybe a little too bright for their tastes, or lacking some of the warmth and sustain their ears have grown accustomed to hearing from other woods. This has sometimes relegated maple guitars to a more limited role in a player's musical toolbox rather than being their primary acoustic axe. As a result, maple guitars in general have lived within a narrower niche in the acoustic guitar market.

"We probably sell more maple guitars than anybody," says Bob Taylor, "but not nearly as many as our rosewood or mahogany guitars, which are more often considered a go-to choice in people's minds."

As a player, Andy Powers understands maple's reputation for lacking the tonal versatility of other woods.

But he also understands that a maple guitar can be voiced in a more broadly appealing way, one that both captures its inherent strengths — namely a linear, transparent response that's highly reflective of the player — while also evoking other rich musical dimensions of sound that players often crave from other woods.

"As a builder I knew I could work with maple to help it compete with the best guitars around and be a really gratifying all-around experience," he says. "As a player, I want that."

A RICH MUSICAL HISTORY

Long before the advent of steel-string acoustic guitars, maple was a fantastically prolific tonewood for musi-

cal instruments. In fact, its musical legacy traces back hundreds of years to the violin family of bowed string instruments and the European instrument-making tradition.

"You'll see almost nothing but maple and spruce, because in many respects they're the perfect woods for a stringed instrument," Andy says. "'Maple doesn't really sound like any particular tonal trait. It sounds like complete transparency. That might sound like a bad thing for an instrument, but it's not. It has this completely shapable sort of response. What it translates into for a builder and a player is that it will do whatever you ask it to do. Build a bright guitar and it'll sound bright. Build a dark guitar and it'll sound dark. If a player plays warmly, it'll sound warm. It reflects the

design and whatever a player brings to it. That's why violins, cellos, basses, even mandolins and archtop guitars have all traditionally been made of maple and spruce."

By contrast, Andy points out, certain other tonewoods tend to have a more colorful sonic personality and impart their own character traits to the instrument. Rosewood, for example, tends to produce a huge overtone bloom. Mahogany has a strong fundamental presence.

"Maple is completely uniform," Andy says. "It's like a white canvas. It's predictable and compliant."

As a venerable instrument wood, maple eventually migrated from the violin family to guitars. The classical guitar luthier Antonio de Torres was

known to craft some of his guitars from maple. In the mid-1800s, Martin made gut-string guitars with maple. Orville Gibson made mandolins and archtop guitars with maple.

One notable difference between the musical output of instruments in the violin family versus guitars is the nature of the string action. The sound of a violin family instrument can be sustained for a long time with a bow, whereas a guitar is plucked and the sound is allowed to decay. This presented a unique challenge to guitar makers: to build a long-sustaining instrument.

As the desire for louder guitars (to compete with instruments like the mandolin) led to the birth of the flattop steel-string acoustic, woods like rosewood and mahogany began to be used more — a crossover influence from the cabinet and furniture trade.

"Guitars were considered a 'people's' instrument commonly built by carpenters or cabinet makers rather than trained luthiers," Andy explains. "The formally trained luthiers built bow family instruments with maple. This material was only used for the uppermost level of guitars — the instruments a guitar maker wanted to exhibit their finest work with. Everything else got cabinet and furniture wood."

In the 1930s and '40s, the aesthetic tastes of the day informed a movement toward blond, natural-finish guitars.

"You'd see a lot of maple archtop guitars," Andy says. "They were beautiful. Pretty quickly you started seeing some maple flattop guitars being made, particularly during World War II with the shortage of imported materials. Domestic wood was easier to obtain."

Where maple flattops arguably suffered, though, was in the more standardized factory-style approach to making them in the mid-20th century.

"Flattop guitars, specifically rosewood steel-strings, have always been built in factories," Andy elaborates. "And what a factory would do is apply the same construction methods used for rosewood or mahogany back and sides to maple. Well, that's not fair. You can't expect maple and rosewood to do the same thing. They have different personalities. You're not comparing apples to apples. So, in many respects, maple flattops never really got a fair shake. Building this way would reveal the difference between woods in the context of a particular design. Although this can yield interesting results, some woods, like maple, don't always excel when handled like this."

Even Bob Taylor pleads guilty to perpetuating that standardized building methodology to some extent, although

his factory production brought more precision and other benefits to the guitar-making process. As he explained in our story on the redesign of the 800 Series last year, while he did bring tonal refinements to the Taylor sound in terms of clarity and balance early on, he focused a lot of his early efforts on the structural aspects of a guitar to improve its playability and consistency of build quality. The realm of tone tended to be more subjective in terms of how different people perceived it. Besides, he says, even if he had wanted to refine the tone of a maple guitar, he wouldn't have known exactly what to do.

"But Andy does," he says.

MAPLE'S MARQUEE MOMENTS

Over the years certain maple flattops have attracted the spotlight with the help of striking visual traits. Gibson's J-200, a variation of the big SJ-200 cowboy guitar first made for Ray Whitley, became an iconic guitar with the help of its Jumbo curves (borrowed from the footprint of Gibson's L-5 archtop), stylish mustache bridge and pickguard ornamentation, making it a great-looking instrument for Hollywood's singing cowboys, Elvis Presley, and others. Tonally, the maple guitar benefitted from its big body, which added some low-end depth.

For Taylor, our maple Artist Series guitars, introduced in the mid-1980s, attracted marquee exposure with the help of now-retired Taylor guitar designer Larry Breedlove's experimental color treatments over the blond maple/spruce wood pairing. The colored makeover, as it turned out, delivered instant stage presence and crisp, performance-friendly amplified acoustic tone with the help of onboard pickups. Trends, of course, come and go, and the appeal of colored maple guitars eventually tapered off into more of a niche demand.

BLUEPRINT FOR A NEW VOICE

One of Andy Powers' strengths as a guitar builder is his diversified experience in crafting different types of musical instruments. This, together with his abilities as a multi-instrumental player and his deep historical knowledge of how musical instruments have been crafted, put him in great position to understand maple's musical heritage and merits.

"As a wood worker, a player, and a guitar maker, I've grown to love maple," he says. "I love the way it looks, its aroma, its texture; I like how it responds when I work with it. I like its transparency and the challenge that offers."

In his career as an independent

luthier before coming to Taylor, Andy built maple mandolins, maple archtop guitars, and maple flattop acoustic guitars. By crafting one at a time, he was able to finely calibrate the voicing nuances of his flattops to evoke maple's musical strengths in a player-friendly way. He fondly recalls a maple flattop he made for the grandson of renowned furniture craftsman, the late Sam Maloof, a close friend of his.

"A lot of the architecture in that guitar has much in common with what's in the new 600s," he says. "No one who heard the finished guitar could believe it was made of maple. Shortly after I finished it, a frequent shop visitor stopped in while I was playing the guitar. He couldn't see what I was playing, but after hearing it he asked if it was Brazilian rosewood. Then he saw it and realized it was maple. He had to look twice to be sure."

So, what is Andy's expectation with the redesign of Taylor's maple guitars?

"I hope players hear these instruments and recognize them as versatile musical tools and not a single-dimension sound," he says. "Players can expect a more complex, dynamic and responsive guitar."

A hint of things to come was the arrival in 2013 of Taylor's Grand Orchestra, the maple/spruce 618e in particular. Of all the GO models, the 618e was arguably the most dramatic showcase of the new body shape's voice, in part because of its tonal departure from what people expect from a maple guitar. The new bracing pattern he designed for the GO helped elicit an unprecedented level of sustain from the guitar, an impressive feat considering maple's typically fast tonal decay.

The overarching design philosophy for the 600s, Andy says, is essentially the same as it was for the 800s: to make the best-sounding and best-looking guitars we can make; to consider every aspect of the materials and design to optimize the overall performance; and to do so in an environmentally responsible way.

"Like the 800s, we saw the need to make refinements at every level — some large, sweeping changes all the way down to micro-specific details that make each model all that it's capable of being."

Anyone familiar with the package of refinements brought to the 800 Series will recognize similarities on the 600s — adapted to reflect maple's unique properties — along with other exclusive design modifications.

TONE TALK: HOW DAMPING AND BRACING IMPACT TONE

One of the physical properties that differentiates tonewoods is the degree of internal damping that occurs when the vibrational energy of the strings passes through the woods. A related term that guitar makers often cite is a tonewood's velocity of sound. Basically, it's a gauge of how fast the energy moves through the wood. Rosewood, for example, has low internal damping and a high velocity of sound. As a result, the tone is lively and produces a lot of overtones. To regulate this, the bracing scheme for a rosewood back is typically designed to keep the overtone richness from getting out of control. Maple, by contrast, tends to have a higher level of internal damping and somewhat slower sound velocity. That explains its more transparent sonic properties and lesser degree of overtones. So what happens if you use bracing designed for rosewood on a piece of maple? You add unnecessary restrictions to a wood that already has a naturally controlled response. The result will be less complexity, less sustain, and a tendency toward a brighter, treble-prominent sound. This is how most maple guitars have been built for years.



L-R: Front of a 614ce, back of a 618e

continued on next page

UNIQUE DESIGN FEATURES

WOOD THICKNESSES, BRACING AND GLUE

Like the 800s, the thickness of the top and back of each body shape in the 600 Series has been specially gauged for tonal optimization. The same is true for the bracing patterns. The soundboard bracing in particular is very similar between the two series, since both feature Sitka spruce tops, and helps the player set the top in motion easily. The back bracing, Andy says, is unique to the maple guitars.

"The back of these guitars held my attention for a long time, because we're specifically trying to alter the action of maple to make it more appealing," he explains. "The most visible result is that the braces don't extend all the way to the rim or side, with the exception of the Grand Orchestra. Even that is a

subtle detail that some people might not notice when they look inside. The result is that the back of this guitar is now working a lot like an archtop guitar. The entire back motion is controlled by these braces in a way that's warmer and stronger. These guitars have more volume, more projection, and more low-end warmth than a typical maple guitar, but the instrument retains the linearity that you'd expect from this wood."

Like the 800s, the 600s also feature side braces, which provide extra rigidity that in turn helps facilitate the movement of the top and back. Another shared feature is the use of protein glues for the bracing and bridge — parts that Andy refers to as the guitar's "powertrain" components — to reduce the damping and enhance the tonal transfer.

THE NEW 600 SERIES TONE-ENHANCING FEATURES

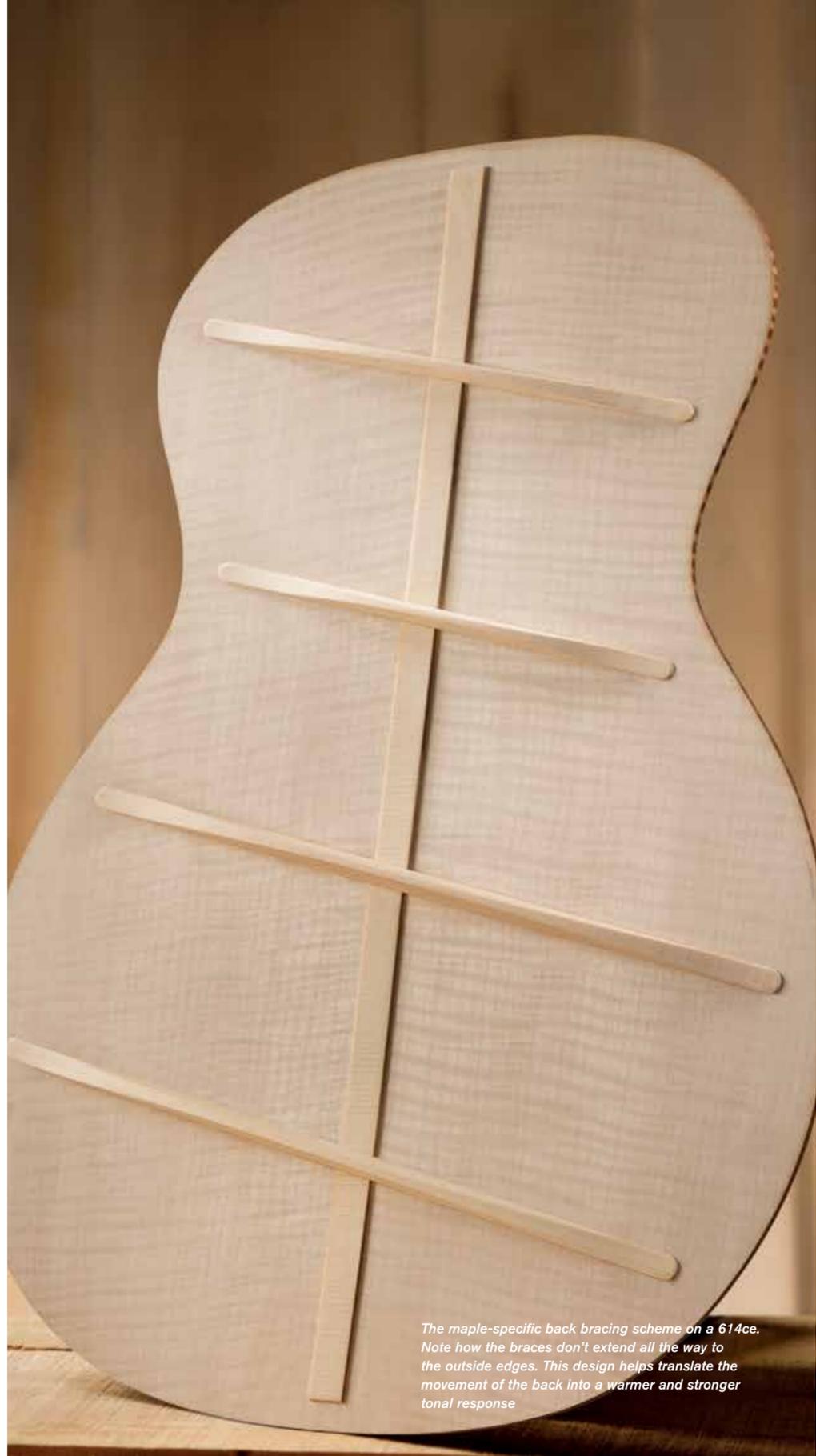
- Maple-specific back bracing
- Torrefied tops
- Wood thicknesses/bracing optimized for each shape
- Thin (3.5 mil) finish
- Protein glues (bracing/bridge)

NEW APPOINTMENTS

- Grained ivoroid Wings fretboard inlays
- Gloss-finish ebony backstrap with inlay
- Ebony/grained ivoroid binding/purfling
- Paua rosette edged with ebony/grained ivoroid
- Ebony-bound soundhole
- Striped ebony pickguard
- Brown Sugar stain

TONAL CHARACTERISTICS:

- More warmth and richness
- Greater volume, projection, sustain, dynamic range
- Clear and consistent
- Very responsive to a player's touch



The maple-specific back bracing scheme on a 614ce. Note how the braces don't extend all the way to the outside edges. This design helps translate the movement of the back into a warmer and stronger tonal response



The darker color tone of a torrefied Sitka spruce top visually resembles aged spruce or cedar; Inset: The color of a Sitka spruce top on a new 800 Series guitar

TORREFIED TOPS

One of the most intriguing characteristics of an acoustic guitar is the way its tone opens up as a result of the wood's natural aging process and from being played-in. The added resonance and responsiveness are part of what people love about older acoustic guitars. The effect is comparable to the way a fine wine's flavor profile improves with age, the way a baseball glove breaks in to become more compliant with seasoning and play, or the way a new pair of denim jeans becomes softer and more comfortable with extended wear.

Because of this phenomenon, in recent years some contemporary guitar makers have experimented with technologies that accelerate this natural aging process for more immediate tone-enhancing benefits. One such technique is torrefaction, a roasting process that causes a natural chemical reaction in the cell structure of the wood, crystallizing the sugar content in a way that normally happens over decades.

"You're basically subjecting a piece of wood to the same chemical process as a lump of dough that when baked becomes bread," Andy says.

People have been using heat to age wood for centuries, especially in Scandinavia. In the more modern era, the process of torrefaction was developed in the 1930s in the Netherlands as a way to increase the stability of woods for outdoor usage. Luthiers such as Dana Bourgeois and guitar companies such as Martin and Yamaha have experimented with torrefied soundboards to create an aged tone in select guitars. (You'll find an article on torrefaction in the November 2014 edition of *Acoustic Guitar* magazine.)

The natural process involves roasting spruce tops at a relatively high temperature (for more on the process, see "The Science of Aging Wood"). After doing research and conducting some experiments, Andy developed his own customized recipe for torrefying spruce tops.

Whether through the longer, natural aging process or torrefaction, the end

result ultimately is the same: The top vibrates more easily.

"There's less resistance in the wood," Andy says. "It allows a more efficient energy transfer from the strings. A new piece of wood has quite a bit of resistance to moving. It's not used to vibrating at a high frequency like that. An aged or played-in top is just waiting to be set in motion. To a player, it feels like the notes are just falling out of the guitar. As soon as you touch the strings, it takes hardly any effort; it doesn't feel like you have to pry the sound out."

One benefit of a less demanding guitar, Andy says, is that it gives the player more freedom of expression.

"Some guitars make you really work to get the sound you want out of them," he elaborates. "Let's say you're trying to make a warm, fluid, legato kind of sound. It can feel like it's taking extra energy and effort to produce the tone quality that you want. And you've only got so much energy to expend.

continued on next page

THE SCIENCE OF AGING WOOD

Wood is composed of three main parts: hemicellulose, cellulose, and lignin. Think of the hemicellulose as the puffy filler inside — like the insulation inside drywall. During the normal aging process, over several decades, as a piece of wood experiences different cycles of humidity and dryness, part of the hemicellulose is gradually lost and slowly crystallizes along with the cell walls. On an acoustic guitar, this molecular change will cause the wood to become more resonant, which produces the sound that we describe as broken-in.

Torrefaction greatly speeds up this natural process. In the case of a spruce top, the wood is roasted at a relatively high temperature (around 350 degrees Fahrenheit or 175 Celsius) until its sugar content has changed on a molecular level (part of the hemicellulose is lost). Typically the process happens in an oxygen-free environment in order to control the amount of oxidation that occurs. (This keeps it from burning and turning into charcoal, since the wood otherwise can catch fire at well below 350 degrees.)

"If you look at a 50-year old guitar and hold a flashlight directly inside it," Andy says, "the top would not transmit much light through it because of the physical transformation. If I do that to a freshly cut piece of spruce, it'll glow bright red-orange because at that point the wood itself is translucent. Once it's been torrefied and everything crystallizes, it's solid."



So when you have an instrument that responds instantly to your every whim, it frees you up to pursue different ideas, and your overall performance just happens so much more effortlessly. It's a more natural experience. It just flows easier. Better music is made that way."

As part of Andy's experimentation, he made a few pairs of guitars with matched spruce sets in which he torrefied one set but not the other, and made nearly identical guitars to compare their tone.

"What I found was that torrefaction on its own isn't a magic bullet," he says. "It's not going to instantly make a great guitar. But it's a head start. The sound doesn't have as much of the new guitar edge that needs a few years of playing to round off before it becomes loose and comfortable. It feels good from the moment you put strings on it. After several years, the two guitars will be identical. But initially, right out of the box, roasted wood feels like something that's been around for a few years."

One of the visible effects of torrefying tops is a darkening effect. In many cases the spruce top visually resembles cedar or a naturally aged spruce top.

Given the immediate tonal benefits of torrefaction, Bob Taylor says he already anticipates a flurry of questions from customers about whether torrefied tops will be offered with the 800 Series, other models, or Taylor's custom program. His answer: Not yet.

"We're just not ready to produce a high quantity of torrefied spruce," he says. "It's kind of that simple. Besides, we really want to spotlight how amazing this maple playing experience is. Andy has poured everything into improving these guitars beyond anything anyone has ever done on a maple acoustic. We want to help players hear on day one how the guitar will sound in a few years. And we want to give players the best opportunity to choose maple because maple is so important for a healthy future in tonewood usage as well as in making music. I aim to build a healthy and wonderful future that we can all enjoy and be proud of without giving up anything to do it."

SPECIALLY SEASONED BACKS

One of the distinctions of maple compared to other tonewoods used for a guitar's back and sides is the exclusive use of sapwood — which explains its platinum blond complexion — rather than heartwood. Sapwood is the outer, living portion of a tree's wood, where water and nutrients travel. Eventually it converts to heartwood, which is essentially dead. (Occasionally, most notably with cocobolo in Taylor's case,

a thin ribbon of sapwood might be included with the heartwood to create a striking visual contrast.) Maple's heartwood tends to have a slightly reddish hue and has traditionally been considered less appealing visually. But in the interest of increasing the yield of usable wood from a maple tree, Bob and Andy wanted to incorporate more of the heartwood with the redesigned 600 Series.

The challenge was that because the heartwood and sapwood dry at different rates, Andy had to develop a different approach to conditioning the maple rather than torrefaction. He says he needed a process that would equalize the tension.

"It's a much longer, very conservative approach," he says. "This seasoning process is the result of a couple of years of learning how to take one very old method of acclimating and seasoning a piece of wood and modernizing it in a way to utilize all the maple."

A big benefit from an environmental perspective, Andy says, is that incorporating more heartwood may as much as triple the amount of maple that can be considered for use.

Besides optimizing the back bracing for the maple, Andy also refined his specifications for the amount of figure each set should have. The goal was to find the right balance of figure for both tone and visual beauty. While the most pronounced figure offers tremendous visual appeal, it's not necessarily the best choice for tone. The more moderately figured sets, he says, tend to have the right degree of stiffness for sound.

THIN FINISH + COLOR

After last year's tone-enhancing reduction in the thickness of our gloss finish from 6 mils (.006 inch) to ultra-thin 3.5 mils on the redesigned 800 Series proved to be feasible in a production environment, Andy also wanted to incorporate it on the new 600s. But there was a new wrinkle: He also wanted to apply a dark stain to the maple back and sides, without adding to the overall material thickness. As it turned out, so did Bob Taylor, who has had strong feelings about turning maple from a blond to a brunette for a while.

"After a few decades in the business, I'd become convinced that more people would be attracted to maple guitars if the maple was a deeper, richer color," he says. "When I mentioned my dream of a violin-brown color to Andy, he said he was already working on it."

Andy had once again drawn inspiration from the color tones of the stains traditionally used on the maple violin instrument family. His desire to add

color without material thickness led him back to the hand-rubbed stains of the 1920s. The application process took months and considerable refinement to get right.

"The color was a challenge," he explains. "The way most modern colors are made is like dot matrix printing: The visible color is a combination of all these little color particles mixed together. Maple is a closed-pore wood that has a very smooth texture; the cells are very small. Not all of those pigment particles will fit and be absorbed by a piece of maple. That's why maple guitars sometimes end up orange, because the orange particles get absorbed but the other ones don't because they're too big. Or the green particles fade out because they're not colorfast, which disrupts the color balance. This color and the process of applying it took months of work and hundreds of attempts to get right. Even still, it is a very laborious method, where a person with a lot of skill is carefully rubbing this specific stain recipe that we've worked out for these guitars in an almost dry state to get the tinting right."

The stain's color, Brown Sugar, not only beautifully highlights the fiddle-back figure with a deep, vintage flair, it also evens out the subtle variations in hue between the maple sapwood and heartwood. The stain was also used on the rock maple neck. Andy opted not to stain the spruce tops because he liked the dark patina created from the torrefaction process.

NEW APPOINTMENTS

With the stain setting the tone for a visual makeover, Andy refreshed the guitar's cosmetic appointments with an eye toward a neo-traditional look. Featured materials include ebony and grained ivoroid, which are paired for the body and headstock binding/purfling tandem (with hand-mitered, on-edge purfling on the headstock) and as inlaid rings that outline a paua rosette. Additional touches on the soundboard include an ebony-bound soundhole and a beautiful striped ebony pickguard. Andy also drew a new "Wings" fretboard inlay motif that features grained ivoroid. Bob remembers when Andy showed him some neck prototypes with slight variations in the inlay details.

"I remember saying, 'You know what this guitar needs?' he shares. "And we both said 'backstrap' at the same time," he laughs. We're just on the same page about what we feel looks good."

The end result, a gloss-finish ebony backstrap, features a special complementary touch: an additional "Wing" inlay where the headstock transitions

into the neck. This marks the first time we've offered that detail on a standard model.

The choice of materials, Andy says, reflected a desire to use ebony from our mill in Cameroon, and in the case of the grained ivoroid, to honor ivoroid's rich heritage as a premium decorative detail on fine goods such as picture and mirror frames, women's hair brush handles, and billiard balls going back to the late 1800s.

"It was basically the first celluloid plastic, developed as a substitute for ivory," he adds. "Instrument makers started using it because of its premium association. The grained ivoroid we use is made by an Italian firm using the same process they've used for generations."

PLAYING REACTIONS

In some respects the darker stain applied to the 600s paid a secondary dividend: Because it doesn't look like a maple guitar, a customer who may not normally favor maple's tone will be less inclined to dismiss the revoiced models before giving them a chance. The idea is that if a player will pick one up and play it, the guitar will take care of the rest, as Andy found to be the case many times leading up to the release of the series. In October he spent time in Nashville with Taylor's Director of Artist Relations, Tim Godwin, at a Taylor-hosted open house event to kick

off the opening of Taylor's new artist showroom and office at Soundcheck, a well-known rehearsal space. Twenty-five or so Taylors were available for guests to play, including some new 600s. Among the guests was a hot young bluegrass picker named Trey Hensley, who recently released a record with Dobro maestro Rob Ickes. Andy and Hensley had a chance to jam a bit, with Hensley on a new 610e, although he didn't know it was a maple guitar because of the Brown Sugar stain.

"He played a song and said, 'Man, this sounds really good,'" Andy recounts, "and then he flipped it over and asked what wood it was. I sidestepped it, and he played another tune, liked it a lot, and asked what it was made of again. A couple songs later he says, 'It's kind of mahogany-ish, kind of warm and clear like that. Is it mahogany?' I told him it was maple. He couldn't believe it."

Andy had a similar conversation with guitarist Peter Mayer from Jimmy Buffett's band, who was playing some fingerstyle arrangements.

"He says to me, 'This sounds really good — it's got this warm, powerful thing going on; it's got some rumble. I really dig that. What is it?' Doesn't recognize it...plays some more...keeps asking. Finally I said, 'It's maple,' and he says, 'No way! I hate maple guitars!' Almost everyone I talked to had the same kind of reaction. So that was pretty interesting because it was across

different genres — a couple of pop guys played it, strummed it really hard and it sounded good. A few other fingerpickers...it was just a good sounding guitar."

Andy's assessment of what players can expect when they pick one up?

"You'll hear a lot more warmth, more volume, longer sustain, with beautiful, brilliant clarity," he says. "It's super consistent. So whether you play a low E or an E at the 12th fret on the high string, it still sounds like the same guitar. And then if you vary your pick attack, you instantly hear it. If you use a different pick, the difference is dramatic. Because these guitars are so reflective of the player, with the right body shape they can work incredibly well as the primary guitar for any type of player."

continued on next page

600 Series appointment details (clockwise from top right):

An ebony backstrap with a Wing inlay that carries over from the fretboard motif; the progressive Wing inlay featuring grained ivoroid; on-edge grained ivoroid purfling against the ebony peghead overlay; a striped ebony pickguard hugs the rosette, featuring paua trimmed with ebony and grained ivoroid, along with an ebony-bound soundhole



THE 600s BY SHAPE

Like the redesign of the rosewood 800 Series, the revoicing of the maple 600s was intended to give each different body shape a cohesive family resemblance while also articulating the unique tonal strengths of each shape. As Andy has noted, players can expect every new maple guitar to have more overall richness, responsiveness, volume, sustain and balance from the upper to lower registers. But while a shape like the Grand Auditorium has been designed with greater versatility in mind, Andy says the nuanced differences with each shape push beyond the one-size-fits-all philosophy.

"The more you refine something like an instrument, the more you're asking it to do a specific thing," he says. "You're trying to form a relationship with that design, with those materials, and asking them to work the way they naturally want to. So, for each guitar, instead of making them all alike, I went the other way and emphasized their unique personalities."

Below Andy offers a short take on each shape's tone profile.

GRAND CONCERT (612ce)

"A small guitar like the Grand Concert has this real shimmering chime; it's a delicate, articulate voice. But it's not a quiet voice or a weak-sounding guitar. It's actually really loud. It has a lot of power to it. But because the shape is a smaller outline, it will emphasize a certain clarity in its articulation and a certain high-end chime that a larger guitar won't."

GC 12-FRET (612ce 12-Fret)

"By taking a Grand Concert body shape and making a shorter neck, you shift where the strings fall in relation to the body geometry. The bridge sits in a different spot on the body, so the way the top is driven is different. There is an articulate chime resulting from the body shape, with this extra robust punch in the midrange. It makes for dramatically present notes."

GRAND AUDITORIUM (614ce)

"This is still your best bet as an all-purpose guitar. If you have one guitar, this

is the one you want, because it does everything. It's rich, it's warm, it's loud, it responds quickly to a delicate touch. You could front a rock band with it. It covers a lot of ground."

GRAND SYMPHONY (616ce, 12-string 656ce)

"Moving up to the Grand Symphony shape, in a lot of ways it's like a Grand Auditorium but with a more pronounced, husky low-end sort of component to it. It's just got a little more power, a little more torque on the low end.

"You'll also hear that low-end torque in the 12-string version of the GS. It's a girthier, thicker 12-string sound, and with the maple its response is so consistent you hear all the octave courses; everything is completely hi-fi. You hear all those super high octaves on the G course; everything's there."

DREADNOUGHT (610ce)

"A maple Dreadnought is not something you often see. In this case it makes a lot of musical sense. This dread is voiced for power and clarity with an ultra-fast response. Maple in concert with the roasted spruce top makes for a beautifully balanced guitar."

GRAND ORCHESTRA (618e)

"By the time you move up to the Grand Orchestra, that's your grand piano guitar. If you're going to play a solo show or some scenario where you want to be just completely drowned in big complex tone, this is the guitar. Again, that guitar is so rich and powerful that in some contexts it can be almost overwhelming."

Look for new 600 Series models at Authorized Taylor Dealers, starting with the initial release of the Grand Auditorium 614ce, Grand Symphony 616ce and 12-string 656ce, and Grand Orchestra 618e. The Grand Concert 612ce and Dreadnought 610ce are slated for release later this year. For complete specifications on all models, visit taylorguitars.com.





THE 2015 TAYLOR GUITAR GUIDE

Everything you need to know about body shapes, tonewoods, and choosing the Taylor guitar that fits you best

The arrival of each new year is an exciting time at Taylor, as we get to reveal the latest refinements to our guitar lineup. As we've detailed on the preceding pages, the big news for 2015 is the transformative redesign of our maple 600 Series. A year after introducing a raft of tonal enhancements to our flagship rosewood 800 Series and reinventing the piezo pickup with the Expression System® 2, the passion that has fueled each of these innovative projects reflects another strong sentiment here at Taylor: There's never been a better time to be making and playing guitars.

On the pages ahead, we hope to inform and inspire you. We'll start by sharing tips to help you key in on a Taylor model that serves your needs to the fullest. We'll highlight the unique

tonal personalities of the body shapes and tonewoods we offer. We'll also walk you through the 2015 Taylor line, noting the different wood pairings and appointment packages that distinguish each series.

Because our factory staff plays such an important role in bringing our guitars to life, we thought it would be fitting to shoot some of this year's guitar photos on the factory floor with craftspeople at our complex in El Cajon. Making great guitars is truly a collaborative effort at Taylor, and we wouldn't be able to do what we do without the craftsmanship and dedication of our production staff here, at our factory in Tecate, Mexico, and at our ebony mill in Cameroon.

Beyond the retooled maple 600s, another new offering for 2015 is the inclusion of the ES2 pickup as a

standard feature on our 400 and 300 Series acoustic/electric models. The 400s also enjoy an aesthetic upgrade to a full-gloss body and welcome a new Grand Orchestra model, the 418e. Other refinements include the expansion of our model selection within the 200 Deluxe Series to include several non-cutaway options; the addition of an all-koa GS Mini to the line; and a new feature for the Baby Series: models that include an onboard pickup with a built-in tuner.

We hope our guide deepens your appreciation for our guitars and helps you find the one that speaks to you. For the latest information on all of our models, including complete specifications, visit taylorguitars.com. Or better yet, visit your favorite Taylor dealer and play away.

614ce

find your

fit

How to choose a guitar that's right for you

Whether you're looking to invest in your first Taylor, add to your Taylor toolbox, or simply learn more about the Taylor line, we're here to help. With a broad range of body shape and tonewood combinations available, an inspiring guitar is within reach of every type of player. And finding the right model for your needs is easier than you think.

The key is to choose a guitar whose sonic attributes are most compatible with your particular playing style and musical preferences. Ahead we'll share some basic tips to support your search. The good news is that whichever Taylor you choose, you really can't go wrong. While each model projects a unique personality based on its distinctive tonal nuances – the result of the body shape, tonewood pairing, and other design nuances – there are certain fundamental qualities you can count on in any Taylor: easy-playing necks, great intonation, clear, balanced tone, and impeccable craftsmanship. Add to that our commitment to providing great customer service and to responsible stewardship of the tonewood resources we consume, and you've got a recipe for a lifelong guitar experience that delivers satisfaction to the fullest. With that in mind, here are a few thoughts to ponder the next time you consider a guitar purchase.

Choosing a guitar is a subjective process. Enjoy it.

Each person's relationship with a guitar is truly unique. The connection you make is part visual, part tactile and part sonic. Keep in mind that we each hear and respond to sound in unique ways. Playing music taps into an assortment of feelings and moods, helping us to express ourselves, relax, escape, etc. In the end, what matters is that you find a guitar that inspires you musically and emotionally. If you do, you'll be more likely to play it. You might find the right guitar systematically over a period of weeks or months of test-driving, or discover your Holy Grail in one serendipitous strum. Either way, take your time, enjoy your musical quest, and trust your feelings. If you do, the right guitar will find you.

Your choice of body shape and tonewoods should complement your playing style.

Think of it as the sonic equivalent of how a food and wine (or craft beer) pairing relates to your palate. At Taylor Road Show events each year, our guitar experts demonstrate how the combination of different body shapes and tonewoods impact a guitar's sound, and how those tonal properties match up with different playing applications. When they do, both the player and the instrument bring out the best in each other.

"If you pick up a guitar and it says, 'Take me, I'm yours,' then that's the one for you."

— Frank Zappa, from *Zen Guitar*

Will you be strumming, flatpicking, fingerpicking? A mix?

This will help you decide whether you need a versatile performer or a guitar that suits a more specialized function. If you're a novice and don't have a clearly defined playing style, leaning toward versatility will give you the most latitude to explore different techniques and musical genres. But if you already own one or more guitars or have a specific musical application in mind, you can be more focused in your search.

Where will you be playing?

If you're looking for a couch strummer or portable option, you might want something that's smaller and more physically comfortable. If you'll be playing somewhere that demands a good amount of natural volume and projection without having to plug in the guitar, you'll likely benefit from a bigger body. If you plan to play live gigs, worship services, or open mike nights, you'll want a guitar with a pickup.

Do you have a light, medium or heavy attack, and how dynamic a range do you want?

This will help you home in on the right body style to accommodate the amount of energy you'll be applying to the guitar. If you have a heavy attack and play a smaller guitar, you might be more likely to overdrive the top, which will cause the tone to become distorted.

What style(s) of music do you want to play?

A bluegrass picker might want a bigger body like a Dreadnought or even a Grand Orchestra for maximum volume and projection, while a country fingerpicker might want something smaller like a Grand Concert or Grand Auditorium. An acoustic rocker who wants to strum rich open chords might prefer a medium-size guitar like a Grand Symphony or a big Grand Orchestra.

YOUR PLAYER PROFILE

Besides presenting Road Shows, our sales managers regularly conduct one-on-one "Find Your Fit" consultations with customers. In person, our staff will often ask them about their musical preferences and sometimes have them play to get a sense of their technique. If you're a beginner and don't have a defined playing style, don't worry. We can guide you in the right direction by finding out what your musical interests and goals might be. Here are some questions to consider as you think about the best guitar options for you.

Will you be playing more often by yourself or with other players/instruments?

If you'll be playing by yourself, you might want a guitar that provides a more expansive sonic palette to give yourself a wider range of tonal colors to explore. If you'll be playing with others, you might want a guitar that has enough focus to be heard in the instrument mix.

Will you be singing with your guitar?

If so, you'll want your guitar's tonal personality to complement your voice. A rosewood guitar tends to have a scooped midrange, which creates space for vocals to fit. But it's all about your voice and the guitar together. It might be a matter of visiting a music store at a time when you feel comfortable singing with the guitar or having access to an isolated room where you can pair your voice with each instrument. If you're more of an instrumental player, does the guitar offer the right tonal palette for you to express yourself?

Do you plan to do any live performing or recording?

If you want to plug in, you should buy a guitar with an onboard pickup. If you plan to record, think about the instrument mix that might be involved. If there will be multiple tracks, you might lean toward a smaller body guitar, since it will have a smaller sonic footprint. If you plan to play solo acoustic guitar, maybe you want a bigger, more luxurious voice to explore.

Are there certain tonal properties you have in mind, such as volume, richness, low-end response, warmth, etc.?

If so, this will help steer you toward an appropriate shape/tonewood pairing. Rosewood has a deep low end and high end with a rich overtone complement. Mahogany yields a focused midrange presence. Our new maple guitars are rich and responsive. A cedar top produces warmth that really shines with fingerstyle playing. If you don't really know what you want, that's okay. Just sample some different wood options and pay attention to what connects with you.

Do you plan to play chords or solos higher up the neck (toward the body)?

If so, you might opt for a cutaway model.

TIPS FOR TEST-DRIVING GUITARS

By Shawn Persinger

For some people, going to a music store can be intimidating. Whether it's a vast selection of instruments, the cacophony of guitars being played in a crowded store, or just a touch of I'm Not Worthy Syndrome as you peruse high-end acoustics, if you feel that way you're not alone. But a good music store knows how to create a welcoming environment, and if you're thinking about buying a guitar, you're the one in the driver's seat. With a little planning, "test-driving" guitars can be a joyful experience, which is exactly what it should be. Here are a few tips for getting the most out of your visit to a music store.

4

Try to isolate the particular features you want to compare.

Limiting the variables between two guitars makes it easier to decide which you prefer. For example, if you want to compare different tonewoods, play models with the same body style to lend consistency to that part of the equation. Or if you want to compare different body shapes, play models that have the same wood pairings. That way, you'll get a better idea of what is responsible for those tonal differences.

5

Take notes.

It might sound academic, but writing down what you hear and what you like about a guitar can really help when trying out instruments, especially the more of them you sample. After playing three guitars you might find yourself asking, "Wait, which one was warmer? Which one had the wider neck? Which one felt good against my body? Why didn't I write this stuff down?" Take notes and refer back to them. This will especially come in handy if you visit a store on different occasions and want to refer back to your previous playing sessions.

6

Use your phone to record yourself.

This can be a useful tool for comparing the tonal nuances of different instruments. It's like having a second set of ears, and it captures the sound of each instrument from a different listening perspective. Just be sure to position the phone in the same spot to have a consistent source point for your evaluation.

7

Make friends with the sales staff.

A good store's staff is interested in building a lasting relationship with customers. Even if you buy a guitar the first time you walk into a store, they know that you'll be more likely to come back to their store again if you have a good experience. Most Taylor dealers are very knowledgeable about the Taylor line and can help guide you toward the right guitar.

8

Take your time.

Your 30-minute lunch break isn't the best time to shop for a guitar. Instead plan a day where you can spend at least an hour, if not more, in a music store. Revel in this experience, and don't rush it. And don't feel like you need to buy the first time you walk in. Of course, if you find your perfect fit, and the guitar is within your budget, take it home. Otherwise you should feel free to take multiple trips. Even if you aren't actively looking to make a purchase, doing so will get you into the habit of being comfortable in the store and getting a feel for different instruments. The more test-driving experience you have, the more discerning you'll become.

1

Have an idea of what you plan to play.

You'd be surprised how often someone walks into a music shop, picks up a guitar, and draws a blank. If you think about it ahead of time, you'll also get an idea of what chords or songs will help you properly audition each guitar you play. And if you have a certain type of pick you like, don't forget to bring it with you.

2

Most music stores have a dedicated acoustic room. Use it.

If you can, go during an off-peak time when the store is less busy. Privacy and time alone with an instrument will allow you to feel uninhibited and relaxed, which in turn will permit your ears and hands to hear and feel a guitar's nuances more naturally.

3

Play the same thing on every instrument.

Some guitars feel perfect for fingerpicking. Others make barre chords almost effortless. Some are so smooth you can solo for hours. Ultimately, let the guitar lead you to where it wants to. But in the meantime, demo each guitar the same way. If you know how to play, strum some chords (using the same pick each time), play a single-note melody, fingerpick. These three different approaches will help you assess the guitar's versatility.

Talking Tone: Acoustic Guitar Descriptors

Like lovers of food, wine, craft beer, spirits, coffee and other flavor-rich consumables, guitar players wield colorful descriptors to identify tonal qualities. The good news: Guitar talk actually translates into definable attributes. The bad news: Our ears, like our taste buds or senses of smell, are wired in a multitude of different ways, so we don't always hear tone in the same way. In the end, using words to describe sounds is, at best, an approximation, since sounds don't always neatly translate into words. (For more on that, see "The Craft" on page 68.) Or the terms used end up being more mystifying than clarifying (e.g., "chewy" tone). Don't get hung up on the lingo. But understanding some basic terms will serve you well.

Below is an earful of commonly used expressions. A few are technical, while others are more descriptive. Even if you're not a great player, with these in your guitar vocabulary you'll be able to talk tone with the best of them.

Balance: Even volume and frequency distribution from the low notes to high notes. A balanced sound will allow everything to be heard with nothing overpowering anything else.

Bright: Treble emphasized, or with a lower degree of bass.

Buttery: Warm, rich notes that smoothly melt away rather than decaying quickly. More commonly used regarding chords.

Ceiling: A defined boundary, often used in reference to volume. A guitar or wood's ceiling is the point at which it stops delivering volume or tone.

Crisp: More treble emphasis, without lingering overtones.

Dark: Bass tones emphasized or tone with a lower degree of treble.

Decay: The way a sustained, ringing note diminishes over time.

Dry: A tone with a strong fundamental and little to no overtones, with under-pronounced or very subtle frequency peaks. Mahogany's focused midrange is often described as dry.

Fundamental: The true frequency, or pitch, of a note. A low E, for example vibrates at a frequency of 82.407 hertz (Hz). (1 Hz = 1 vibration per second.)

Growl: A certain rasp or overdriven sound that a bigger-bodied guitar puts off, often as the result of aggressive playing. The "alpha dog," if you will.

Meaty: Lots of midrange, with a full low end. Also referred to as fat, full or thick.

Midrange: On car stereo or home audio systems, the frequency response often ranges between 20 Hz to 20 kilohertz (kHz). Midrange covers from 110 Hz, which is a low A string, up as high as 3 kHz. High frequency (treble) tones tend to reside beyond that. If one considers where an acoustic guitar's pitch range falls, predominantly all the notes on the fretboard occupy the midrange of the frequency spectrum that can be heard. It's where the human voice is; it's the middle part of a piano.

Overtones: Multiples of a fundamental frequency, also referred to as harmonics, which occur as a string vibrates, creates wave patterns, and the harmonics stack up. The term "bloom" is used to describe the sonic effect of the overtones as they stack up over the decay of the note. Although overtones tend to be more subtle than the fundamental, they add richness and complexity to a sound.

Piano-like: A bell-like, high-fidelity quality to all the notes. This tends to be heard most easily on the lower part of the register. Rosewood family woods typically are strong in this distinct and articulate clarity.

Presence: Generally, the treble frequencies that provide articulation and definition. If you put your hand over your mouth and talk, your voice has less presence. One can still hear and understand the words, but they will have less presence because they lack the articulation of a clearly defined high frequency.

Scooped: Attenuated, or slightly diminished. Picture the visual connotation, like on a graphic equalizer. If you scoop the midrange, you dip those middle sliders down a bit, which would look like a smiley-face curve. The result would be a level low end and high end, but a little less of the midrange.

Sparkle: In a general sense, the opposite of warm; some excited high frequencies. Koa or maple tends to have a high-end sparkle. Same idea as "zing." Sparkling treble frequencies might also be described as "zesty." If they appear to linger, you might say they "shimmer."

Throaty: An extremely beefy midrange. The origin might be based partly on the fact that the human voice tends to occupy midrange frequencies.

Warm: Softer high frequencies, like if you took a little of the very top off the treble. A rosewood Grand Auditorium has a warm treble sound; the treble is there but it's not overly bright.

Woody: A seasoned, well broken-in dry tone. A vintage mahogany guitar will have an especially woody sound.

Understanding Acoustic Model Numbers

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.

814ce

■ 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 a hardwood top (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 a hardwood top, 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)

■ Indicates a model with a cutaway

■ Indicates a model with onboard electronics

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.

Cutaway or non-cutaway?

Some acoustic guitar bodies feature a cutaway on the treble side of the guitar. This gives players greater access to the frets near the soundhole and broadens the playing range of the instrument. People often ask whether a cutaway diminishes the tonal output of the guitar. The truth is not by much. Even though a cutaway does reduce the soundboard surface area and the overall air cavity inside a guitar, in reality, the part of the upper bout where a cutaway is located doesn't vibrate as much as other areas of the guitar. The tonal output is affected more by the taper of the waist. Our opinion is that the benefit of a cutaway's greater access to the upper register far exceeds the minimal tone loss. If you want to be able to reach those high notes or simply like the look of a cutaway, go for it. If you don't plan to play that far up the neck, or simply prefer the aesthetic symmetry of a non-cutaway, opt for that.

Does a slotted headstock affect tone?

The reduced mass can slightly affect the guitar's sustain. But the most significant difference in tone is caused by the increased angle that the string bends over the nut. This creates more downward pressure on the nut, which can translate into a slightly more robust attack with a bit more pop to the individual notes. Of course, this effect needs to be weighed in the balance of the rest of the instrument. Other factors, like the woods, body size, or neck length (12-fret or 14-fret) will have more impact on the guitar's tonal response.

Taylor Body Shapes

Each body's unique dimensions help define its fundamental voice

Choosing a body shape is often a good way to narrow your guitar search and find a guitar that feels right for your needs. Taylor's five standard body shapes range from small and intimate to big and powerful. Here is a general breakdown based on size:

Small:
Grand Concert

Medium:
Grand Auditorium, Grand Symphony, Dreadnought

Large:
Grand Orchestra

We also build scaled-down versions of two of our body shapes: the three-quarter-size Dreadnought Baby Taylor and 15/16-size Big Baby; and the GS Mini, a smaller version of our Grand Symphony.

All of Taylor's body styles share a cohesive design aesthetic that gives them a family resemblance in the refined lines that define their shape. The dimensions of each body style, including its curves, depth, and internal bracing, play an important role in producing its fundamental sound. In general, a smaller-size guitar will yield a more controlled voice, often with a bit more upper-end chime, while a bigger size translates into a louder voice, often with more low-end depth. But try not to rule out a Taylor body style out before playing it – you might find yourself pleasantly surprised by the volume of the smaller Grand Concert or the responsiveness of the big-bodied Grand Orchestra.

With some of Taylor's newest guitar designs, namely last year's revoiced 800 Series and this year's 600s, each body style features enhanced design nuances, such as customized wood thicknesses and bracing patterns for each shape. These details optimize the unique tonal qualities of each shape to help emphasize its musical strengths.

As you sample different body styles, consider how each guitar's physical dimensions feel against your body when you hold it. If you play sitting down, how does the guitar feel with your picking arm draped over the lower bout? How do the curves, the waist, and the body depth fit you when you play? Chances are, the more comfortable you feel, the more naturally you'll play.

Small

Grand Concert (GC)
"The Comfortable Friend"

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

Playing Profile:

- Small size & short-scale design for playing comfort
- Clear voice with controlled overtones & top-end chime
- Fits well in a mix with other instruments

The Grand Concert's compact dimensions make for a physically comfortable, lap-friendly playing experience. Its tapered waist and shallower body depth help produce a balanced, articulate voice with the kind of note definition and detail that fingerstyle guitarists and session and stage players tend to appreciate. The smaller body also helps keep the overtones in check, which means the guitar's voice won't take up too much sonic space in a mix with other instruments. All GC models feature a shorter scale length (24-7/8 inches versus 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 Grand Concert 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. You can expect a bit more midrange punch.

Medium

Grand Auditorium (GA)
"The Jack of All Trades"

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

Playing Profile

- Tonal balance & versatility
- Pleasing blend of warmth, clarity & sustain
- Responds well to fingerstyle and light/medium strumming & picking

In the context of Taylor's modern design heritage, the Grand Auditorium is Taylor's flagship body style and by far 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 – originally 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, 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.

Grand Symphony (GS)
"The Big Bold Strummer"

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

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 & pickers

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 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 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 appreciate the way the GS keeps up. Gigging singer-songwriters who perform on their own can tap into a full spectrum of sound to support their music.

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.

Dreadnought (DN)
"The Throwback Performer"

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

Playing Profile

- A strong "modern vintage" voice
- Low-end power balanced by snappy mids & clear trebles
- Responsive to driving flatpicking/strumming

This classic 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. Due to its wider waist, the Dreadnought tends to sit slightly higher in a player's lap, making it feel more like a large body. (After all, its name comes from an early 20th century battleship). The extra width 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. Its ability to handle a driving attack has given it something of a workhorse personality in the guitar world.

Over the years, Taylor softened the Dreadnought's boxy curves 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.

Large

Grand Orchestra (GO)
"The Gentle Giant"

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

Playing Profile

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

What began as a redesign of the big-bodied Taylor Jumbo quickly evolved into our Grand Orchestra, introduced in 2013. The new body style's proprietary bracing helped make it a more versatile instrument. One of the challenges of making a big-body guitar is creating a balanced voice because the bigger size tends to make it bass dominant. Another shortcoming is that it typically demands a stronger attack from the player to get a good tonal output. The Grand Orchestra overcomes both of these issues. It's wonderfully balanced from bottom to top – even the treble notes exude richness and power – and it responds to a light touch, rewarding players who have a dynamic playing style. It's Taylor's biggest, boldest, most complex-sounding body style.

For some players, the Grand Orchestra's overall size – including a five-inch body depth – might seem big, but the refined contours and responsiveness make it a surprisingly playable "big" guitar. If you crave a guitar sound that's brimming with power and rich detail, the Grand Orchestra is your guitar. 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, long-sustaining chords or pluck lush fingerstyle arrangements, the Grand Orchestra gives you a versatile and expressive tool.



A Taste of Tonewoods

A guitar's woods — plus the design techniques of the builder — help season its overall sound

Tonewoods supply the core ingredients for a guitar's sound. But they need some help. Just as a master chef's recipe and cooking methods play an important role in creating a delicious meal with balanced flavors, the nuanced design techniques of a guitar maker help coax a pleasing blend of musical flavors from woods based on their tonal tendencies.

That's one reason why trying to describe the tonal properties of woods on their own, in any sort of definitive way, can be limiting. Case in point: our newly revoiced maple 600 Series. Andy Powers' voicing refinements have transformed the tone profile of maple into something different from what many people are used to hearing from a maple guitar. Another set of variables comes from you the player. Your playing style, the way you fret and attack the guitar, the type of pick you use, and the brand and gauge of strings you choose are among the other factors that contribute to the sound of a guitar.

So how do we at Taylor talk about the tone of woods in a useful way? Well, we paint in somewhat broad strokes to call out basic attributes and provide some comparative points of reference. We factor in how the physical composition of different woods — attributes like weight, stiffness and internal damping, for example — tend to translate into sound qualities like frequency range and the strength of overtones produced. The fun part is that as a player, or even just as an attentive listener, the more you pay attention, the more discerning your musical palate will become, and the more you'll tune in to tonal nuances. That's one reason why people enjoy attending Taylor Road Shows. It's also why people often end up owning multiple guitars with different wood pairings (or body styles).

Maybe for you a mahogany guitar brings out a certain mood or feeling, while rosewood expresses another. In the end, regardless of the model or woods used, remember that all Taylors share certain fundamental sound qualities that any good guitar should have: tonal balance, clarity, sustain, and consistency, plus our signature playability. In this respect, our models really are more similar than different. With those shared attributes as the foundation of a great playing experience, feel free to explore different tonewood pairings and choose whichever one inspires you the most, whether you can explain why or you just feel it. And if the visual aesthetic of the wood is part of what inspires you, by all means, embrace it. It's all a part of our interaction with a guitar.

The Role of Soundboards vs. Back and Sides

There's a reason why a guitar's top is called the soundboard. It's the first filter and generator of the amplified string sound, and as such, it has a huge impact on the sound of the guitar. Think of the top as the equivalent of a speaker driver. It's also one reason why the soundboard bracing pattern is important — it helps orchestrate the movement of the top. The back and sides help flavor the overall sound.



Back and Side Woods

THE CLASSICS

These claim a rich heritage in the guitar world

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, high-fidelity 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

Mahogany differs from rosewood in that its tonal character comes through its meaty midrange, featuring a strong fundamental focus often described as "punchy," "woody," or "dry," because it doesn't produce 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.



Maple

Models: 600 Series

Traditionally known for having a bright, focused tone with a fast note decay that cuts through a mix, our maple guitars were revoiced for 2015 to elicit greater warmth, complexity, volume, sustain and responsiveness, while retaining maple's naturally clear, linear qualities. The result is a more multi-dimensional sound that gives players the kind of musical versatility of other classic tonewoods.



THE EXOTICS

These are admired for their striking looks as well as their musical properties

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.



THE MODERN ALTERNATIVES

These are lesser known than their classic tonewood counterparts but have similar tone profiles

Sapele

Models: 300 Series

Sapele was introduced to the Taylor line in the late 1990s as an alternative to mahogany. It sometimes is 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.



Ovangkol

Models: 400 Series

An African relative of rosewood, ovangkol shares many of rosewood's tonal properties, including a wide spectrum from lows and highs. Differences include a slightly fuller midrange and a bright treble response resembling that of koa. While it lacks the classic cachet of more traditional tonewoods, its tonal versatility has made it a 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 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. All layered wood guitars feature a solid-wood soundboard, which means the sound of the guitar will improve as it ages. We've moved away from using the term "laminated" to avoid confusion with the growing number of laminate products in the marketplace made from synthetic, non-wood materials.

Soundboard Woods



Sitka Spruce

Used On: Most Taylor models

Spruce is the undisputed king of stringed instrument soundboards because it's relatively light yet stiff and strong in the right ways, with a high degree of elasticity that helps translate the player's picking or strumming into clear acoustic tone. In addition to Sitka, we occasionally use other types of spruce as well, although Sitka is the most available. Sitka generates a broad dynamic range and accommodates numerous playing styles, from aggressive strumming to light fingerpicking. Spruce is also the wood used for our top and back bracing.



Western Red Cedar

Used On: 512/514 steel- & nylon-string models, JMSM

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

Hardwood tops, such as koa or mahogany, produce a natural compression, so they 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.

COCOBOLO

AVAILABLE IN THE PRESENTATION SERIES

The entrancing appeal of Taylor's Presentation Series begins with premium sets of richly variegated Mexican cocobolo, paired with top-shelf Sitka spruce that boasts consistently even grain structure. Each guitar demands the highest levels of craftsmanship, and it shows in the harmony of

intricate appointments that adorn them. Ebony binding flares smoothly into a contoured armrest that heightens playing comfort, while paua inlay artistry adds elegant sparkle to the fretboard, bridge and body. Each model we make renews our commitment to a detail-rich design aesthetic.



Presentation Series Specifications

Back/Sides: Cocobolo
Top: Sitka Spruce
Finish (Body): Gloss 6.0
Rosette: Single Ring Paua
Fretboard Inlay: Paua Nouveau
Binding: Ebony
 (Body, Fretboard, Peghead, Soundhole)
Bracing: CV with Relief Rout
Electronics: None or Expression System 2
 (Option: Expression System 1)

Tuning Machines: Gotoh Gold
Case: Taylor Deluxe Hardshell
Premium Appointments: Ebony Armrest,
 Paua Trim (Top, Back, Sides, Fretboard Extension,
 Fretboard, Peghead), Cocobolo Backstrap,
 Peghead/Bridge Inlays, Bone Nut/Saddle, Abalone
 Dot Bridge Pins

Available Models: PS10ce, PS12ce, PS14ce,
 PS16ce, PS56ce, PS18e

HAWAIIAN KOA

AVAILABLE IN THE
KOA SERIES

The figured Hawaiian koa used for our Koa Series channels the natural beauty of its Island homeland, awakening our senses in a special way. We honor that beauty with wood-rich appointments. The maple/blackwood Island Vine fretboard (and headstock) inlay scheme incorporates Hawaiian plumeria flowers that double as fret markers –

think of them as a lei for your guitar neck – while rosewood and maple are paired for the rosette and binding/top trim tandem. A shaded edgeburst adds the perfect vintage touch. Whether you slip into some classic slack key tunings or follow your muse in another direction, a koa guitar has a way of sweetly drawing out the music in you.



Koa Series Specifications

Back/Sides: Hawaiian Koa

Top: 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: K22ce, K24ce, K26ce, K66ce, K28e



INDIAN ROSEWOOD

AVAILABLE IN THE
900, 800 & 700 SERIES

Last year we had the audacity to take our flagship 800 Series and radically retool it, rethinking virtually every material ingredient to make it even more appealing. It worked.

Tone-enhancing refinements include custom-calibrated bracing and wood thicknesses for each shape; protein glues that enhance the tonal transfer; thinner finish to reduce tonal damping; and custom-created string sets for the Grand Concert

and Grand Auditorium. We pushed the envelope in every way, and the result was an incredibly musical, responsive sound that gives each body shape its own well-defined voice. A new design aesthetic showcases beautifully smoky ebony from our mill in Cameroon; maple binding with rosewood purfling; a rosewood pickguard; and a new inlay scheme. Our 814ce won several awards, but more importantly, it won the hearts of many players.



800 Series Specifications

Back/Sides: Indian Rosewood

Top: Sitka Spruce

Finish (Body): Gloss 3.5

Rosette: Single Ring Abalone

Fretboard Inlay: Element Mother-of-Pearl

Binding: Pale Non-figured Maple
(Body, Fretboard, Standard Steel-string
Peghead, Soundhole)

Bracing: Rosewood Advanced Performance
Bracing or Nylon Pattern

Electronics: None or Expression System 2
(Option: Expression System 1); ES-N on Nylon

Tuning Machines: Taylor Nickel or Nylon Nickel
with Pearloid Buttons (Taylor Slot Head with Ivoroid
Buttons on 12-Fret)

Case: Taylor Deluxe Hardshell

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

Available Models: 810, 810e, 810ce, 812, 812e,
812ce, 812e 12-Fret, 812ce 12-Fret, 814, 814e,
814ce, 816, 816e, 816ce, 818e, 856ce, 812ce-N,
814ce-N



INDIAN ROSEWOOD

AVAILABLE IN THE
900, 800 AND 700 SERIES

Rosewood has enjoyed such a rich acoustic guitar heritage and cast such a broad net among players that it deserves several different aesthetic treatments, and we've obliged. If the 800s will forever represent Taylor's classic flagship series, striking a balance between performance readiness and aesthetic refinement, the 900s lean toward

high-end sophistication while the 700s invoke the past for a darker, more refined neo-vintage feel. The 900s embrace elegant, abalone-rich details; the 700s sport a Vintage Sunburst top and lot of ivoroid. The truth is that everyone should own a rosewood guitar. The only question is which one.

900 Series Specifications

Back/Sides: Indian Rosewood

Top: 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, 914ce-N

700 Series Specifications

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 Slot Head with Ivoroid Buttons on 12-Fret)

Case: Taylor Deluxe Hardshell

Available Models: 710e, 710ce, 712ce,

712e 12-Fret, 712ce 12-Fret, 714e, 714ce,

716e, 716ce, 756ce, 714ce-N



MAPLE

AVAILABLE IN THE
600 SERIES

We're thrilled to unveil a sweeping makeover to our maple 600s, broadening their musical range and refining their visual aesthetic. As with our rosewood 800 Series, we've retooled nearly every aspect of these guitars. The result is maple like you've never heard it before: rich and warm, with a multi-dimensional musical voice that responds wonderfully to every playing style. Tone-enhancing design details include custom-voiced bracing and wood thicknesses; torrefied (specially roasted) tops

that produce a played-in sound from day 1; and ultra-thin finish that improves the sustain. Our hand-rubbed Brown Sugar stain gives the figured maple a deep, luxurious look without adding any material thickness. Fresh appointments include grained ivoroid Wing fretboard inlays; a gloss-finish ebony backstrap with a matching inlay; ebony binding with grained ivoroid purfling; and a striped ebony pickguard. In every way, our new 600s reveal the finest a maple guitar can offer.



600 Series Specifications

Back/Sides: Maple

Top: Torrefied Sitka Spruce

Finish (Body): Gloss 3.5 with Hand-rubbed Brown Sugar Stain (Back, Sides and Neck)

Rosette: Paua Edged with Ebony/Grained Ivoroid

Fretboard Inlay: Grained Ivoroid Wings

Binding: Ebony (Body, Fretboard, Standard Steel-string Peghead, Soundhole)

Bracing: Maple Advanced Performance 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 Slot Head with Ivoroid Buttons on 12-Fret)

Case: Taylor Deluxe Hardshell

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

Available Models: 614e, 614ce, 616e, 616ce, 618e, 656ce; **Available Later in 2015:** 610e, 610ce, 612e, 612ce, 612e 12-Fret, 612ce 12-Fret, 612ce-N, 614ce-N

Somnang from our Body department with a 614ce



TROPICAL MAHOGANY

AVAILABLE IN THE
500 SERIES

Our mahogany guitars pack a meaty midrange punch without adding a lot of ringing overtones. That fundamental focus, especially on our all-mahogany models, responds well to players with a strong attack, including pickers and strummers who like a dry, earthy, low-fi sound. Mahogany's clear and direct tonal character makes it a great option for playing with other instruments. The smaller

Grand Concert (standard or 12-Fret) is a good match for blues fingerpicking, while bigger-body models will appeal to bold strummers and flatpickers. The wood's earthy personality is enhanced visually by the deep, richly grained mahogany top and understated vintage appointments like contrasting ivoroid binding and a black pickguard. Alternative soundboard options include spruce or cedar.



500 Series Specifications

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



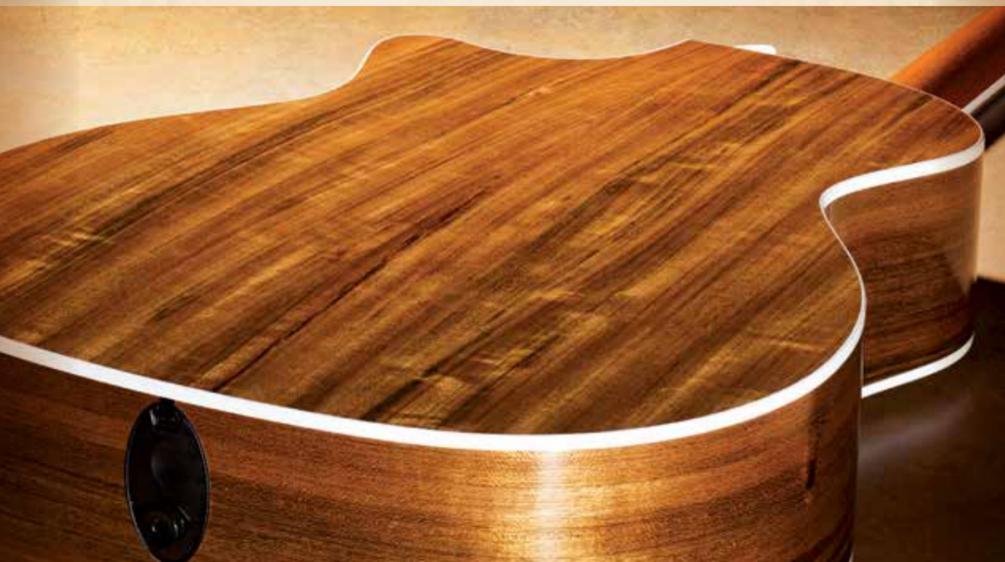
L-R: Mahogany-top 524e, cedar-top 512e 12-Fret

OVANGKOL

AVAILABLE IN THE
400 SERIES

For years, our popular 400 Series guitars have given players a lively, versatile musical voice that delivers a broad range of tones comparable to rosewood. This year our 400s have earned a well-deserved aesthetic and performance upgrade to an all-gloss body and our Expression System® 2 pickup. The gloss finish beautifully

highlights ovangkol's golden brown colors and rich variegation, while the ES2 projects an amplified tone that's both dynamic and detailed. Another addition for 2015 is the deep-voiced new Grand Orchestra 418e. White binding and Italian acrylic dots supply clean, crisp counterpoints that complete the contemporary look.



400 Series Specifications

Back/Sides: Ovangkol

Top: Sitka Spruce

Finish (Body): Gloss 6.0

Rosette: 3-Ring

Fretboard Inlay: 4mm Italian Acrylic Dots

Binding: White (Body, Fretboard)

Bracing: Standard II with Relief Rout or

Nylon Pattern

Electronics: Expression System 2

(Optional: Expression System 1); ES-N on Nylon

Tuning Machines: Taylor Nickel or Nylon Nickel with Pearloid Buttons

Case: Taylor Deluxe Hardshell Case

Available Models: 410e, 410ce, 412e, 412ce, 414e, 414ce, 416e, 416ce, 456ce, 418e, 412ce-N, 414ce-N



SAPELE

AVAILABLE IN THE
300 SERIES

Our 300 Series marks the gateway to the tonal complexity of an all-solid-wood guitar experience. Sapele back and sides are topped with soundboard choices of either Sitka spruce or, for several body styles, mahogany, the latter of which produces a slightly warmer, darker sound compared to spruce's more brilliant response. New for 2015, the 300s sport our Expression System® 2 acoustic

electronics for an amplified tone that's articulate, balanced and responsive to a player's touch. Another addition to the series this year is the mahogany-top Grand Symphony 326, offered with an optional cutaway and pickup. Appointments include a black pickguard, Italian acrylic dot inlays, and black binding with white purfling.



300 Series Specifications

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 Italian Acrylic Dots

Binding: Black (Body, Fretboard)

Bracing: Standard II with Relief Rout or Nylon Pattern

Electronics: Expression System 2

(Optional: Expression System 1); ES-N on Nylon

Tuning Machines: Taylor Nickel or Nylon Nickel with Pearloid Buttons

Case: Taylor Deluxe Hardshell Case

Available Models: 310, 310e, 310ce, 312, 312e, 312ce, 314, 314e, 314ce, 316, 316e, 316ce, 320, 320e, 320ce, 322, 322e, 322ce, 324, 324e, 324ce, 326, 326e, 326ce, 356, 356e, 356ce, 312ce-N, 314ce-N



LAYERED WOODS

AVAILABLE IN THE
200 DELUXE, 200 & 100 SERIES

Our 200 Deluxe Series continues to grow in popularity. This year we've grown the family, bringing more non-cutaway models into the fold. And we continue to offer a unique level of variety within the series in terms of looks. All feature solid spruce soundboards, with several layered wood and color options, and all incorporate a full-gloss body plus a Taylor hardshell case. Choose from a

Grand Auditorium or Dreadnought body with a back and sides of layered Hawaiian koa, layered Indian rosewood, or layered sapele. Select color treatments include a sunburst top with layered rosewood or an all-black Grand Auditorium. These guitars are loaded with everything you need to look and sound like a pro. Of course, the playing part is up to you. But these will inspire you to raise your game.



200 Deluxe Series Specifications

Back/Sides:

Rosewood & SB Models: Layered Rosewood (Rosewood/Poplar/Rosewood)

Koa Models: Layered Koa (Koa/Poplar/Koa)

BLK Model: Layered Sapele (Sapele/Poplar/Sapele)

Top: Sitka Spruce

Finish (Body): Gloss 6.0 (Top, Back and Sides)

Rosette:

Rosewood & Koa Models: 3-Ring

BLK & SB Models: Single Ring

Fretboard Inlay: Italian Acrylic Small Diamonds

Binding: White (Koa Models: Cream)

Bracing: Standard II

Electronics: Taylor Expression System 1

Tuning Machines: Chrome

Case: Taylor Deluxe Hardshell

Available Models: 210 DLX, 210e DLX, 210ce DLX, 214 DLX, 214e DLX, 214ce DLX, 214ce-BLK DLX, 214ce-SB DLX, 210ce-K DLX, 214ce-K DLX



LAYERED WOODS

AVAILABLE IN THE
200 DELUXE, 200 & 100 SERIES

Both our 200 and 100 Series pack the essentials of a great Taylor experience – smooth playability, clear and balanced tone, and high-end craftsmanship – into appealing model options designed to lift your playing 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 (compared to the 1-3/4-inch necks of our steel-string models in the 300 Series and up). Featured body styles include our Grand Auditorium and Dreadnought. With the expansion of our 200 Deluxe Series, we've distilled our standard 200

Series to three core models – two steel-strings and one nylon-string, each featuring a cutaway and performance-ready electronics. The 200s incorporate white binding, satin-finish back and sides with a gloss top, and ship in a Taylor hardshell gig bag. Our 100 Series features both cutaway and non-cutaway options, along with the 12-string Dreadnought 150e, which made a big splash in its debut last year and may just be the best-playing 12-string you'll find for the money. All 100 Series models feature black binding, an all-matte finish, and come with a Taylor gig bag.

200 Series Specifications

Back/Sides: Layered Rosewood
(Rosewood/Poplar/Sapele)

Top: Sitka Spruce

Finish (Body): Gloss 6.0 Top; Satin 5.0

Back/Sides

Rosette: 3-Ring

Fretboard Inlay: 6mm Dots

Binding: White

Bracing: Standard II or Nylon Pattern

Electronics: Taylor ES-T® or ES-N (Nylon)

Tuning Machines: Chrome or Nylon Chrome with
Pearloid Buttons

Case: Hardshell Gig Bag

Available Models: 210ce, 214ce, 214ce-N

100 Series Specifications

Back/Sides: Layered Sapele
(Sapele/Poplar/Sapele)

Top: Sitka Spruce

Finish (Body): Matte 2.0

Rosette: 3-Ring

Fretboard Inlay: 6mm Dots

Binding: Black

Bracing: Standard II

Electronics: Taylor ES-T

Tuning Machines: Chrome

Case: Gig Bag

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

114ce, 150e



GS MINI

AVAILABLE IN THE GS MINI SERIES

Arguably no other Taylor guitar has enjoyed the universal groundswell of popularity as the lovable GS Mini. Our next-generation travel-size guitar locates the sweet spot where compact design and full-voiced acoustic sound converge, giving players of all stripes a pleasantly accessible guitar that fits everyday life, whether you're on the go or on the couch. The smaller Grand Symphony footprint and shorter 23-1/2-inch scale length deliver plenty of playing comfort, while the full-size soundhole helps the Mini sing out to its fullest, wrapping players in a blanket of great tone.

Choose from two pairs of model options. Our original Mini models feature layered sapele

back and sides with a choice of a solid spruce or mahogany top, and come pre-fitted for our easy-to-install ES-Go® pickup. Two premium Mini models bring extra aesthetic and performance appeal to the family: the GS Mini-e RW, featuring layered rosewood back and sides with a solid spruce top; and new to the 2015 line after a making a splash with last year's Fall Limited Editions, the GS Mini-e Koa, which boasts layered Hawaiian koa back and sides with a solid koa top. Both models come equipped with our ES-T® pickup for clear amplified tone. Whichever one you choose, you can count on a fun-to-play musical friend.

GS Mini Series Specifications

Back/Sides: Layered Sapele
(Sapele/Poplar/Sapele)

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

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

Top: Sitka Spruce, Tropical Mahogany or Koa

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®

GS Mini-e Koa: Taylor ES-T®

Tuning Machines: Chrome

Case: GS Mini Hard Bag

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



L-R: David from our Bracing department with a GS Mini-e Koa; Shipping department staffers Andrew with a GS Mini-e and Karla with a mahogany-top GS Mini

BABY & BIG BABY

AVAILABLE IN THE
BABY SERIES

Over the years, our perky travel-size mini-Dreadnought has proved to be a versatile musical tool. While its design was inspired by a desire to provide a smaller, starter-size guitar for kids and a legitimate musical companion for travelers, players have adapted it for their needs in all sorts of creative ways, from high-stringing it to setting it up to play lap slide, to embracing alternate tunings that add unique acoustic flavors to recordings. The Baby Taylor family later evolved to incorporate a 15/16-scale Big Baby, giving players an affordable guitar option in a nearly full-size form. New for

2015, each standard model is now available with an optional acoustic electronics package, featuring the Expression System Baby™ (ES-B) pickup, which incorporates piezo design elements from the Taylor ES2. The pickup is powered by an onboard preamp that boasts a handy new feature: a built-in digital chromatic tuner. The preamp/tuner unit features an LED display for tuning and low battery indication, along with Tone and Volume controls. The extra utility makes it easier than ever to sound your best, both unplugged and amplified.

Baby Series Specifications

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: ES-Baby™ with Onboard Tuner

Tuning Machines: Chrome

Case: Gig Bag

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



ACOUSTIC ELECTRONICS

TAYLOR'S INNOVATIVE PICKUP
DESIGNS PRODUCE NATURAL,
DYNAMIC AMPLIFIED TONE

Years ago, our passion for crafting exceptional-sounding acoustic guitars led us into the realm of proprietary pickup design. With more players wanting the option to plug in, quality amplified acoustic tone became an increasingly important extension of a guitar's voice, so we pushed the envelope to develop an onboard pickup system that came as close as possible to capturing the natural tonal nuances of both the guitar and the player. For working musicians especially, a good, reliable pickup is part of their livelihood, and we wanted to offer something that was worthy of the highest caliber working pros around.

Our pickup designs have continued to evolve over time, and last year we introduced our latest breakthrough, the patented Expression System® 2 (ES2), which brought a major advancement in piezo pickup technology by capturing more of a guitar's dynamic properties, thanks to an innovative behind-the-saddle design. We chose to debut the pickup with our revoiced 800 Series in order to showcase its many tonal refinements in an amplified setting. Soon we added the ES2 as a standard feature on acoustic/electric guitars in our 500 Series and up, and this year we're pleased to offer it with our 400 and 300 Series acoustic/electric models.

Besides being a high-performance pickup and preamp, the ES2's design is elegantly integrated into the Taylor aesthetic. It also gives players and live sound mixers a plug-and-play option that responds well in a variety of different live and recording settings. And the studio-grade preamp and tone controls make it easy to shape your sound for each playing scenario.

Other pickup options across the Taylor guitar line include our original magnetic Expression System, offered on select models; the ES-T®, currently available on our 100 and 200 Series and select GS Mini models; the ES-N® for nylon-string models; and new for 2015, the Expression System Baby™ (ES-B), which features a preamp that sports a built-in tuner.

Whenever you're ready to plug in, you can count on your Taylor pickup to help you sound your best. To read more on our pickups, visit taylorguitars.com.



NYLON STRING

AVAILABLE IN THE
200-900 SERIES

Picking up a nylon-string guitar is a wonderful way to expand your musical palette. Taylor's nylon-string models are designed not as pure classical guitars, but with the familiar feel of the steel-string playing experience in mind. Our sleek, playable necks are accompanied by modern guitar amenities like a cut-away and onboard acoustic electronics to give players easy access to the nylon sound. All Taylor nylons feature a radiused fretboard (20-inch) and comfortable 1-7/8-inch neck (the string spacing is slightly wider than our 1-3/4-inch steel-string counterparts due to the wider diameter of the nylon strings). Of our two available body shapes, the Grand Concert and Grand Auditorium, the Grand Concert models sport a 12-fret design to optimize the tone for the body shape, while the Grand Auditorium necks are joined at the 14th fret. Models are offered in every series from 200 through 900, in an array of wood pairings and aesthetic details. If you're looking for fresh inspiration, a Taylor nylon-string will open the door to different moods and rhythmic textures, leading you in expressive new directions.

Nylon Series Specifications

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, JMSM (Jason Mraz Signature Model)

Note: For additional specifications, refer to each series

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



CUSTOM GUITARS

YOUR TAYLOR. YOUR WAY.

What's your dream Taylor? While our standard line has been cultivated to offers players a diverse array of inspiring choices, our custom program makes it easy to take things to the next level. The end result: a truly unique Taylor guitar that reflects your musical and aesthetic aspirations to the fullest. Whether you own a couple of standard Taylor models and are ready to add something extra special to your guitar collection or you were captivated by one of the many custom models we bring to Taylor Road Shows, a custom guitar is within reach, and our staff and our dealers are here to help.

Choose from a rich palette of options, from special tonewood pairings like cocobolo and sinker redwood (see the back cover of this issue) to inlays, purflings and other design details. Your favorite Taylor dealer is a great resource. Many have been to the Taylor factory to select woods and design custom guitars for their stores with our guitar experts. Our sales and production teams also bring extensive expertise to the table, having designed thousands of custom Taylors together over the years. Tonally and aesthetically, we know

what works and what doesn't, and we love helping customers hone their ideas into a guitar that exceeds their expectations. And because we allocate build slots in our production schedule every day for custom guitars, the turnaround time is a matter of weeks instead of months.

Custom categories cover all of our standard acoustic shapes along with baritone, 12-fret, nylon-string, T5 and T3 options. Wood choices include species not offered through our standard line, like walnut and Adirondack spruce. Of course, our commitment to responsible sourcing means that wood availability is subject to change.

For a current list of custom categories, refer to our pricelist at taylorguitars.com. To see a comprehensive inlay guide, visit your local Taylor dealer or taylorguitars.com.

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: Custom mahogany guitar with Florentine cutaway, cocobolo binding and shaded edgeburst; Right (L-R): Custom cutaway Grand Symphony with figured ovangkol back and sides; Custom Dreadnought with flamed walnut back and sides



CUSTOMIZATION

STANDARD MODEL OPTIONS

Taylor's menu of standard model options gives you extra flexibility to fit your guitar for your personal playing or aesthetic preferences. Maybe you want to optimize the feel or sound of your guitar with an alternate nut width, a short-scale version of a model, a cedar (or spruce) top, or a bone nut and saddle. Aesthetic upgrades include a shaded edgeburst or sunburst top, a more figured koa top on Koa Series models, alternative pickguard options, abalone dot bridge pins, and more.

On models in our 500 Series and up, we've bundled several preferred upgrades into a special High Performance (HP) option package. The package features Gotoh 510 tuning machines, which feature a 1:21 gear ratio for superior tuning precision, along with a bone nut/saddle and Adirondack bracing for tonal enhancement. The upgrade package is also offered through our custom program.

A complete list of standard model options is included in our 2015 price list and specifications, which you can find at 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.



Above: 526ce with a shaded edgeburst top; Right: K24ce with an AA-grade koa top



SEMI-HOLLOWBODY ELECTRIC

T3 AVAILABLE WITH BIGSBY BRIDGE

Semi-hollowbody electrics have enjoyed a resurgence in recent years, and players of all ages and styles are discovering their tonal character and versatility for musical styles like rock, blues, country, jazz and everything in between. With the Taylor T3, we've taken everything we love about the semi-hollowbody sound and applied innovative design strokes to make it more player-friendly than ever. It starts with our proprietary pickup design. Our standard setup features our high-definition humbuckers, with optional mini humbuckers for a mix of power and clarity, or vintage alnicos that respond with extra warmth. A three-way switch covers full neck, neck/bridge and full bridge configurations, while a coil-splitting application (pulling up the volume knob) transforms the humbuckers into single coil pickups. Roll the tone knob to boost the mids and pull it up to activate another level of control that dials in mellow warmth without giving up clarity. Other Taylor-engineered refinements include our rock-solid T-Lock® neck joint, a roller bridge that solves tuning stability 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 responds with smooth pitch control that makes vibrato bends an expressive addition to your music. Together with a figured maple top, nickel hardware and several color options, the T3 will stand out as one of the best-sounding and best-looking guitars in your music room.

T3 Series Specifications

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

L-R: Tanner with a black T3/B, T3 with a tobacco sunburst top



T5

AVAILABLE IN

CUSTOM, PRO,
STANDARD & CLASSIC

This year marks the 10th birthday of our groundbreaking hollowbody hybrid electric/acoustic T5, and more gigging players than ever are embracing it as a dynamic, full-range guitar. Many modern players crave the ability to mix acoustic and electric guitar sounds in a fluid way without having to haul a lot of guitar gear, and the T5's sweeping tonal range, from clean acoustic to snarling electric, unleashes different guitar personalities with the flick of its five-way switch. On the acoustic side, an active soundboard and a magnetic acoustic body sensor harness a natural-sounding acoustic voice, while a pair of electric pickups – a concealed neck humbucker and a visible bridge humbucker – dial up a mix of electric sounds. Between the five-way switching and the onboard tone controls, players can shift from warm jazz to vintage blues to heavy distortion in an instant. The T5's hybrid nature is also reflected in its dual compatibility with electric and acoustic amps. Choose from four models, each distinguished by different soundboard, color and hardware details.

T5 Series Specifications

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

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

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

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

L-R: Borrego Red T5 Pro, koa-top T5 Custom, mahogany-top T5 Classic



T5z

AVAILABLE IN

CUSTOM, PRO,
STANDARD & CLASSIC

The success of Taylor's original T5 spawned an exciting offshoot last year in the form of the more compact T5z. If the T5 has given Taylor acoustic players a bridge to the electric world, one might say the T5z appeals to the familiar playing preferences of electric players. In addition to a body size that feels more like a solidbody, other unique features include a 12-inch fretboard radius (compared to 15-inch on the T5), plus jumbo frets that make bending strings easier. If you like to crank out a lot of high-gain distortion from an electric, the smaller-body T5z tends to be more feedback-resistant. Otherwise, the T5z shares the same dynamic design features of the original T5, 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. The four models also mirror their T5 siblings, featuring soundboard options of koa, maple, spruce or mahogany, with other corresponding appointment packages. If you like to plug in, you'll love exploring the tonal versatility of the T5z.

T5z Series Specifications

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

Keith from Human Resources with a koa-top T5z Custom





A Loss for Words Describing musical sounds in a relatable way is tricky business

As a guitar maker, I'm often asked what a particular instrument sounds like. This is a very straightforward question. And yet, it makes me hesitate. As a musician, I'm asked what a piece of music sounds like. Again, I pause. Of course, the person asking is always well intentioned and by no means is trying to force me to stumble. They are simply looking for a description, or more specifically, a comparison. Some means of relating

to a sound in order to have a frame of reference for understanding it.

Why, then, is a concrete description so difficult to offer? Most people know thousands of words, tens of thousands even, possibly more. I would think there should be some words in a dictionary that could be used to speak clearly about sounds. For me, the challenge is that musical sounds conjure such a wild and varied sense of feelings, associations, preferences, experiences

and values that it becomes nearly impossible and certainly inadequate to completely convey all of the sensory experience a sound can communicate. Sure, there is specific language a scientist or audio engineer can use to describe the technical characteristic of a sound. Basic waveform shapes can be used as primary building blocks, further shaped by the presence and strengths of various overtones or partials, which are summed together

with the basic wave, the fundamental. These elements net a unique solitary sound wave, which arrives at the eardrum and is decoded by that marvel of devices we know as our ears. The strength or amplitude of the wave we know as volume; the length or frequency we know as pitch; the duration the waveform continues repeating before it stops we call sustain. The exact shape of the wave and the evolution of its shape as it lives and dies off are what give it an identity as a guitar sound or the sounds of one particular guitar verses any other type of sound.

My wife laughed with joy as the solo resolved, describing the part as "really crusty."

So, sound could be described in this language as favored by engineers. Yet, the sterility of its precision still leaves something out. Unless every listener could instantly identify and translate a two-decibel increase in strength at 240 hertz or vibrations per second into the "warmth" of a sound, we will rely on describing sounds with feelings and associations. This isn't a bad thing. A few years ago, my wife and I were driving somewhere and were listening to a song performed by Dave Rawlings and Gillian Welsh, which had an adventurous guitar solo in the middle. My wife laughed with joy as the solo resolved, describing the part as "really crusty." After laughing so much at her choice of words that I nearly drove us off the road, she explained: "It's the perfect sound for that song. The tone and the notes sound like I could break a piece off, like it was the crust of a pie, or some bread or something. It's brittle, and if I broke a piece off, it would be jagged and lopsided, but it's not. It's a perfectly shaped part for the song."

Well, she had a good point there. It was crusty. And expertly, deliciously shaped for the song, like a delicately shaped, flaky pie crust.

It turns out I'm not alone in feeling it is difficult to adequately describe a sound with words. There is a landmark book on the life and work of Stradivari that was carefully researched and published in 1902 by the Hill brothers, a British instrument firm that possessed more experience with Stradivari's work

than any before or after. They wrote of their struggle in describing the tone of those instruments before courageously making an attempt. "Listeners of Dr. Joachim's performances...must often have marveled at the multitudinous shades of tone which he could produce from [his Stradivari-built violins]. The massive fullness, the mellow and entrancing woodiness, the intense and thrilling passionateness, the brilliant vivacity – all these varieties of tone, and many others too indefinite and subtle for our powers of description, would he draw forth from these unique instruments, as the spirit of the music he was interpreting prompted."

Writers and luthiers of the high level of the Hills could no doubt have fallen back on the technical response to the sound they heard. There existed the mechanisms to calculate and measure a sound's composition thanks to the work of Herman Helmholtz. Yet, they didn't hesitate to describe the sound of an instrument in terms of what feelings and experience a musician could coax from the instrument. Often, they would describe an instrument in terms of its purity of response, noting that the merit of an instrument was how easily and accurately it could reproduce and deliver the desires of the player to the ears of the listeners in order to best convey the emotion and story the music offered.

So, I'll make my best effort to describe the sound of an instrument using the words I know. You will see our attempts throughout this issue of *Wood&Steel* as we compare the subtle and dramatic differences between the instruments we make. We are privileged to introduce the newly designed 600 Series guitars. These instruments are built from maple and spruce harvested not terribly far away from our shop in Southern California, much like the maple and spruce Stradivari and other marvelous Cremonese instrument makers harvested from the nearby regions to use in creating their precious instruments. These guitars have been built with the guiding philosophy that a great instrument is one whose personality reflects the musical desire of the player and their music. So, what does that sound like? Warm? Woody? Pure? It depends on what sounds you hear when you play one. It should sound like *you*.

TaylorWare

CLOTHING / GEAR / PARTS / GIFTS

Molly from our Marketing team, shown wearing our stylish new Ladies' Long Sleeve Peghead T, keeps our Visitor Center running smoothly. Ryan from the Finish department sports our stylish Chambray Shirt and handy new messenger bag.

(far right)

Men's Long Sleeve Chambray Shirt
80/20 cotton/poly blend. Two chest pockets with embroidered Taylor logo above left pocket. Western back yoke. Slim fit. (Gray #3500; M-XL, \$49.00; XXL, \$51.00)

(above)

Ladies' Long Sleeve Peghead T
Tri-blend scoop neck. Preshrunk cotton/poly/rayon jersey. Slim fit. (Gray #4130; S-XXL, \$30.00)

(above)

Taylor Messenger Bag
Coated cotton canvas with contrast stitching. Front flap features woven canvas Taylor label and magnetic front closure. Pockets include card slot, flap pocket, and large interior zipper pocket, plus three pen slots. Customized Taylor interior lining with padded laptop pocket and Velcro tab, plus additional interior pocket. Adjustable canvas/web strap. (Brown #61168, \$69.00)

Men's Long Sleeve Pick T
100% ring-spun cotton. Fashion fit. (Gray #2050; M-XL, \$30.00; XXL, \$32.00)

Rosette T

100% preshrunk cotton. Rosette design. Short sleeve. Standard fit. (Cardinal Red #1730; S-XL, \$25.00; XXL-XXXL, \$27.00)

SoCal T

50/50 poly/cotton blend. Ultra soft, worn-in feel. California peghead /74 design. Short sleeve. Slim fit. (Olive #1471; S-XL, \$30.00; XXL, \$32.00)





Fleece Jacket

Wrap yourself in cozy warmth with our Sherpa-lined hooded fleece jacket. Boasting a hefty 14-ounce 80/20 cotton/polyester body with 100% polyester Sherpa lining, the jacket is stone-washed for a well-worn look and soft feel. Features a Taylor appliqué with an embroidered guitar across the chest, cuffs with thumbholes, front pockets, plus a secure media pocket with an interior hole for headphones. (Charcoal # 2891; S-XL, \$65; XXL, \$67.00)

Hoodie Sweatshirt

50/50 cotton/poly blend with double-needle stitching. Doubled lined hood with drawstring. Orange Taylor logo and pouch pocket. Standard fit. (Sport Gray #2814; S-XL, \$39; XXL, \$41.00)



Men's Cap

Pro style chino twill cap with structured front and red/white round Taylor logo. Adjustable fabric strap with custom embossed metal peghead buckle closure. One size fits all. (Black #00378; \$25.00)



Military Embroidery Cap

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



Reversible Beanie

Feel free to flip your lid anytime and look good inside and out. Embroidered Taylor round logo on one side, Taylor peghead on the other. 100% acrylic. One size fits all. (Black #00118, Brown #00119, \$20.00)



Richard from Finish rocks our new California Original T.

California Original T

100% combed cotton, featuring California flag/guitar design. Short sleeve. Fashion Fit. (Brown #1562; S-XL, \$24.00; XXL-XXXL, \$26.00)

Taylor Bar Stool

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



Logo T

100% preshrunk cotton. Standard Fit. (Olive #1670; S-XL, \$20.00; XXL-XXXL, \$22.00)



Baseball T

Vintage heather fine jersey. 60/40 combed cotton/poly blend. Gray body with navy 3/4 sleeve. Fashion fit. (Gray/Navy #2296; S-XL, \$34.00; XXL, \$36.00)



Aged Logo T

60/40 preshrunk poly/cotton. Short sleeve. Fashion fit. (Heather Dark Gray #1590; S-XL, \$24.00; XXL, \$26.00)



Abel (left) and Jon both work the night shift in our Finish department. Each debuts a separate black layer from our new collection.

Men's Fashion Fleece Jacket

60/40 cotton/poly slub jersey full zip hooded jacket. Two flap pockets with embroidered Taylor peghead on left chest. Standard fit. (Black #2896; S-XL, \$64.00; XXL, \$66.00)

Men's Guitar Stamp T

100% ringspun cotton. Short sleeve. Fashion fit. (Black #1444; S-XL, \$25.00; XXL-XXXL, \$27.00)



1) Digital Headstock Tuner

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



2) Taylor Polish Cloth 3-Pack

Microfiber with serrated edge. Features embossed Taylor logo. 11-1/2" x 9-1/2". 3-pack (Chestnut, Tan, Brown #80908, \$18.00); 3-pack (Black, Taupe, Charcoal #80909 [shown], \$18.00)

3) Taylor Guitar Polish

Spray-on cleaning polish that is easily and safely wiped away. 4 fl. oz. (#80901, \$12.00)



4) Guitar Stand

Features laser-etched Taylor logo, rich satin finish, and rubber pads to protect your guitar's finish. (Sapele/Mahogany #70100, \$70.00; assembly required)

5) Black Composite Travel Guitar Stand

Made from durable recycled ABS composite material to securely hold your Taylor guitar. Travel-friendly design. Folds up to store in gig bags and most guitar cases. Accommodates all Taylor models. (#70180, \$39.00)

6) Travel Guitar Stand

Sapele, lightweight (less than 16 ounces) and ultra-portable. (#70198, \$59.00)

7) Elixir® HD Light Strings

The new custom-gauge set (.013, .017, .025, .032, .042, .053) was specially designed to bring bolder highs, fuller lows, and a balanced overall voice to our Grand Concert and Grand Auditorium models. Phosphor Bronze with NANOWEB® coating. (#89902, \$15.00)



Glassware

Etched Glass

20 oz., featuring hand-etched round Taylor logo. (#70010, \$10.00)

Taylor Etched Peghead Mug

Ceramic, holds 15 oz. (Black #70005, \$15.00)

Taylor Mug

Glossy ceramic bistro mug featuring the round Taylor logo. Holds 15 oz. (Brown with cream interior, #70006, \$10.00)

Accessories



4



5



6



7



8



9



10

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1-800-494-9600

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



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socially responsible and economically viable management of the world's forests.*

Fingerstyle Fiesta

This sumptuous custom 12-fret Grand Concert pairs striking Mexican cocobolo back and sides with a gorgeous sinker redwood top. Rosewood binding rounds out the wood-rich aesthetic, tastefully balancing the straight-grained variegation of the redwood with cocobolo's swirling beauty. Tonally, this promises to be an exceptional guitar for fingerstyle and more. Cocobolo's fast, crystalline response, together with redwood's warmth and volume, yield an articulate and full-bodied sound. Unique tone-enhancing touches include Adirondack spruce bracing, which boosts the overall output, and the 12-fret neck and bridge orientation, which helps produce a played-in voice with extra tonal depth. A short-scale neck adds to the fretting and string-bending comfort. For a complete menu of custom guitar options, visit taylorguitars.com or talk to your preferred Taylor dealer.

