

Nik Huber Rietbergen Semi-Hollow

New Generation of Tradition

The Huber family boasts a proud history of fine woodworking that dates back more than 100 years. Sharing in his family's heritage, Nik Huber has applied his love for the tradition toward the art of guitar making. His latest creation, the Rietbergen, is a semi-hollow beauty that pays tribute to his skill as a fine craftsman and his talent as a master guitar builder.

Huber began building handcrafted instruments in 1996 in a small factory just outside of Frankfurt, Germany. He had previously worked as a PRS authorized repairman, and his flagship offering, the Dolphin, featured a solidbody design. As Huber's company expanded, he gradually added models to his product offerings, including the Les Paul-inspired Orca and the Telecaster-style Twangmeister. In 1999, the company moved to a larger factory in Rodgau, Germany, and expanded to employ five craftsmen who now produce about 120 guitars per year. Although the Huber lineup featured 10 different models, they were all based on solidbody designs until the release of the Rietbergen, the company's first semi-hollow production instrument.

With a full line of solidbody electrics under its belt, a semi-hollow was the logical next step for Huber. The Rietbergen utilizes the Dolphin model for its basic specs, sharing the same single-cutaway body shape and dimensions. Taking cues from the classic Gibson 335, the guitar features a solid-wood internal centerblock, dual pickup configuration and f-holes. However, the Rietbergen is a true handcrafted instrument constructed entirely from solid carved woods. The guitar is visually stunning, with a radically flamed solid redwood top and gold hardware featuring rosewood pickup rings and control knobs. The Rietbergen's body cavity is carved from a solid piece of mahogany, and the neck is crafted from a solid chunk of flame maple. The fingerboard is rosewood that's tastefully devoid of any inlays, showing only dot markers on the side of the neck. The instrument is stained and finished in a high-gloss lacquer that Huber calls Tigereye Burst.

Huber added several features to enhance the guitar's playability. The headstock is set at a slightly reduced angle to the fingerboard to produce a better balance and offer less string tension. The neck joint utilizes a slick cutout design in the heel to offer increased access to the upper frets, and the medium jumbo alloy fretwire makes noting the guitar a breeze. The Rietbergen has a slightly wider nut width and 25 1/2-inch scale length with a neck profile that is rather thick compared to most guitars.

After spending some quality time playing the Rietbergen, I fell in love with the sound of this guitar. With its ability to go from smooth, rich, resonant tones



to crystal-clear twang and everything in between, the Rietbergen is highly versatile. The pickups are extremely clear-sounding, highly responsive 1959 humbuckers manufactured in Germany by Harry Häussel. I particularly liked the clarity and sustain of each note on the guitar. The Rietbergen excels at playing absolutely clean tones, but it can really strut its stuff when thrown into overdrive, with in-your-face presence and "sustain for days." And when you pull on the tone knob to activate the coil tap switch, you can enjoy a whole new set of single-coil sounds.

The Rietbergen Redwood Semi-Hollow is a true handmade instrument in every sense of the word. At a retail price of \$9,037, it may not be for everyone, but for those discerning musicians seeking an exceptionally fine and highly versatile guitar, this may be for you.

—Keith Baumann

Ordering info: nikhuber-guitars.com