

Vigier G.V. Wood Guitar

Axe de Triomphe

French Luthier Patrice Vigier built his first guitar in 1980 and has established himself as a true innovator with a line of high-quality guitars and basses that feature numerous technological firsts. The G.V. Wood is the company's first single-cutaway model, and this impressive axe excels in every detail, from its flawless craftsmanship and silky-smooth action to its versatile array of superb tones.

The G.V. Wood model is built using woods harvested from French forests, as Vigier firmly believes in using local sources for his materials wherever possible. The guitar is manufactured using a combination of modern CNC machining techniques and old-school hand carving for final shaping. From the first glance, it is apparent that this is a top-shelf guitar built with great care and absolutely no compromises in quality. The G.V.'s contoured body is made from naturally aged alder wood, which is capped in book-matched flame maple. The G.V. is stunning to look at, with a tastefully applied stain carefully finished in a high-gloss, slow-drying varnish. Even the case, a sturdy Hiscox Liteflite that comes standard with the G.V., is impressive.

The G.V. Wood is equipped with two hand-wound humbucker pickups (custom-manufactured by Amber Pickups of Germany) mounted in the bridge and neck positions. A five-way switch allows for a variety of configurations, including selection of an individual pickup,

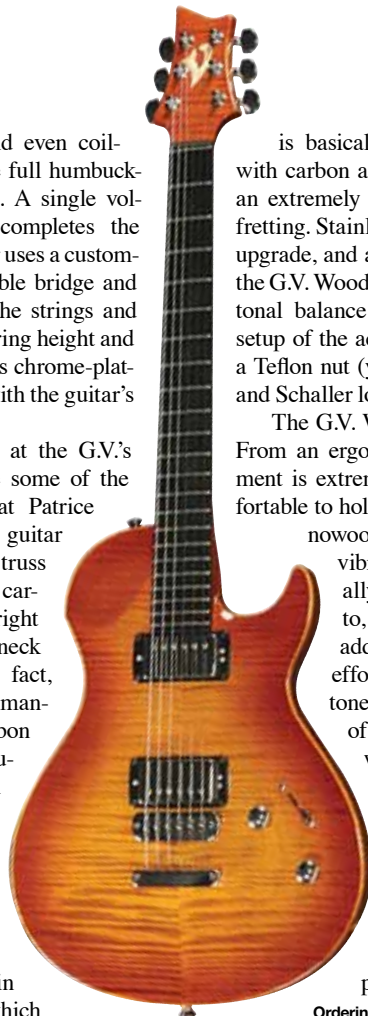
running both pickups and even coil-splitting for switching the full humbuckers into single-coil mode. A single volume and tone control completes the guitar's electronics. Vigier uses a custom-designed, six-way adjustable bridge and stop tailpiece to anchor the strings and to allow for fine-tuning string height and intonation. All hardware is chrome-plated, which contrasts well with the guitar's highly figured wood.

Taking a closer look at the G.V.'s neck, we begin to notice some of the design enhancements that Patrice Vigier is known for. The guitar does not use a traditional truss rod; instead, it has a fixed carbon-fiber strip embedded right into the bolt-on maple neck to keep it rock-solid. In fact, Vigier was one of the first manufacturers to utilize carbon fiber technology in instrument-building, a design called "the 10/90 system" because it uses 10 percent carbon fiber and 90 percent wood. Examining the fingerboard, we find yet another surprising innovation in the use of phenowood, which

is basically birch that's been injected with carbon and phenolic resins to produce an extremely durable and slick surface for fretting. Stainless steel frets are another nice upgrade, and as with all Vigier instruments, the G.V. Wood has a zero fret to help improve tonal balance and allow for more precise setup of the action. The guitar also features a Teflon nut (yet another Vigier innovation) and Schaller locking tuners.

The G.V. Wood is a great guitar to play. From an ergonomic standpoint, the instrument is extremely well balanced and comfortable to hold. The stainless frets and phenowood board make noting and vibrato so effortless that it actually takes a little getting used to, but you will quickly become addicted to its light touch and effortless action. When it comes to tone, the G.V. delivers a spectrum of amazing colors via the five-way selector switch, and this guitar has sustain for days. At \$3,999.99, it may not be cheap, but the G.V. Wood is a truly worthy instrument whose impeccable quality, versatility and attention to detail more than justify its price. —Keith Baumann

Ordering info: vigierguitars.com



Cooperstand Pro Instrument Stands

Small & Sturdy

Lugging gear has always been one of the more tedious tasks in a performing musician's life. Players are constantly on the lookout for new products that can lighten the load and ease the burden of getting to the gig. Nashville singer/songwriter Daniel Cooper, frustrated by the lack of a truly compact instrument stand that could fit into a guitar case, decided to design and build his own. He introduced the Cooperstand Pro-G guitar stand in 2009, and his company now produces several models that are impressively small yet surprisingly sturdy.

Along with his musical career, Cooper has been a sculptural artist and is also from a family of tool and die makers, so designing the Pro-G was not that far of a stretch for him. The key to the stand's strength and portability is its innovative four-footed folding design, which



allows it to collapse into a very small package. According to Cooper, "Everything we are doing is totally dictated by necessity."

Cooperstand now offers three basic mod-

els, all featuring the same overall design but varying in size and materials. The Pro-G is for acoustic and electric guitar or banjo and is constructed from African Sapele wood. The Pro-Mini, also made of Sapele, is designed to hold a ukulele, mandolin, violin or even an iPad. The Eco-G model is identical to the Pro-G, except it's constructed from 100-percent recycled first-run ABS composite material, which makes it more affordable and virtually indestructible. All models utilize special neoprene padding that will not harm your instrument's finish.

Cooperstands are extremely practical and highly attractive, so it's no surprise that they're getting a lot of attention in the industry.

—Keith Baumann

Ordering info: cooperstand.com