

Vintage

Gordon Giltrap Signature

A signature model for our very own Gordon Giltrap. Surprisingly this one won't leave you in the red, **but does its quality exceed its price tag?**

With signature acoustics often demanding a king's ransom, it's refreshing to find a luthier-designed model with a price tag aimed squarely at the Everyman. Indeed, when I first caught sight of the press release outlining the features of the VE2000GG a few months ago, I was curious, to say the least. But not only is this an intriguing instrument, it boasts a fascinating backstory too...

Build and Features

When Gordon first discussed the idea of a signature guitar with Vintage, he wanted to make it something really special. Having bought a guitar built by Rob Armstrong that he

particularly enjoyed playing 20 years previously, he decided that it should form the basis for the overall design. After some consultation with Rob, the instrument concerned was sent over to China. 'Basically they cloned it,' Gordon told me. 'And they've done a remarkable job. When Rob saw the prototype his first word was "wow" – and that was before he'd even touched it.' In any case, fresh out of the box the VE2000GG has that obvious touch of class about it. The first thing the eye falls upon is Rob Armstrong's familiar marque on the wooden truss rod cover, whereas the actual Vintage logo is very subtly spelt out in green abalone. The body shape looks a little like a hybrid of OM and



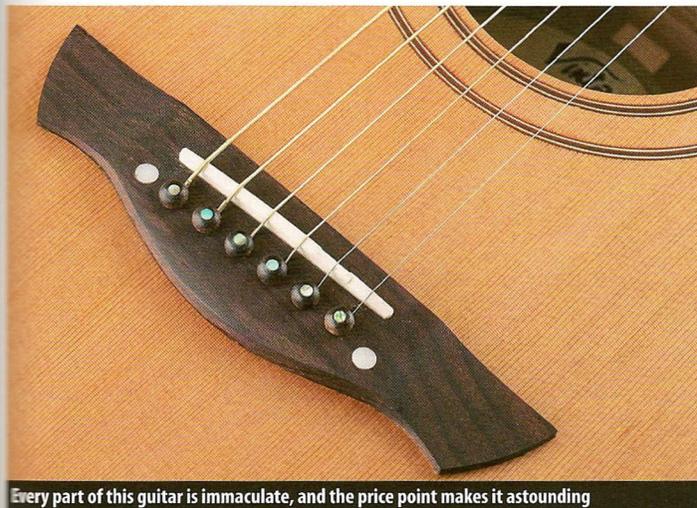
“Grover machine heads, NuBone nut and bridge saddle, rosewood bridge pins with abalone inlays... Have they got the price on this guitar right, or are we missing something?”

parlour models, but a little bit of investigation reveals that the narrow upper bout declares 000 attributes, with the larger lower bout measuring in at grand auditorium dimensions.

Picking the instrument up, the first thing you notice is its near perfect balance; it would be easy to assume that the offset nature of the body shape, combined with a narrow waist, might feel a little cumbersome, but it doesn't. I felt instantly at home with the guitar, in any case.

Further scrutiny brings out some of the features you definitely wouldn't expect on a guitar at this price point: Grover machine heads, NuBone nut and bridge saddle, rosewood bridge pins with abalone inlays... Have they got the price on this guitar right, or are we missing something?

The 46 mm width of the nut indicates that this is an instrument built with fingerstyle in mind, the additional 3 mm above standard width making all the difference for those busy left-hand digits. Neck profiling is a generous D-shape and feels very comfortable in the hand – and another surprise is that the neck is made from a single piece of mahogany. No scarf joints here! On the fingerboard side, the VE2000GG boasts 20 medium frets which have been nicely rounded, and the rosewood itself is tightly grained and finished with more green abalone. There's a very attractive double-V Vintage motif marking the 12th fret – once again, not something you would expect on an instrument in the sub-£500 bracket.

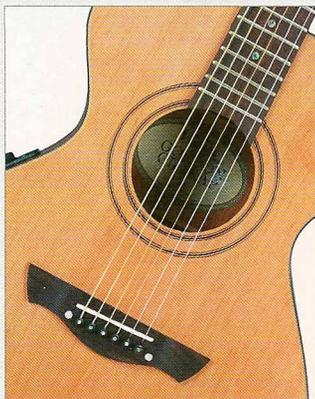


Every part of this guitar is immaculate, and the price point makes it astounding

VINTAGE VE2000GG

Gordon Giltrap Signature

www.acousticmagazine.com for reviews



Technical specification

Manufacturer: Vintage
Model: VE2000GG Gordon Giltrap
Retail Price: £479 (12-string version available, VE2000GG-12 £499)
Body Size: Grand auditorium/000 hybrid
Country of origin: China
Top: North American red cedar
Back & sides: Mahogany
Neck: Mahogany
Fingerboard: Rosewood
Frets: 20 Medium
Tuners: Gold Grover 102s
Nut Width: 46 mm (1.81")
Scale Length: 642 mm (25.27")
Weight: 2 kg (4.4 lb)
On-board electronics: Fishman Sonicore/Presys Blend
Strings fitted: "High quality USA Brand" 12-52
Left-handers?: Not as yet
Gig bag/case included: Kinsman hard-shell case

Contact details

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What we think

Pros: A budget-priced signature model with amazing attention to detail.

Cons: A more strident bass would have been nice – but that's being hypercritical.

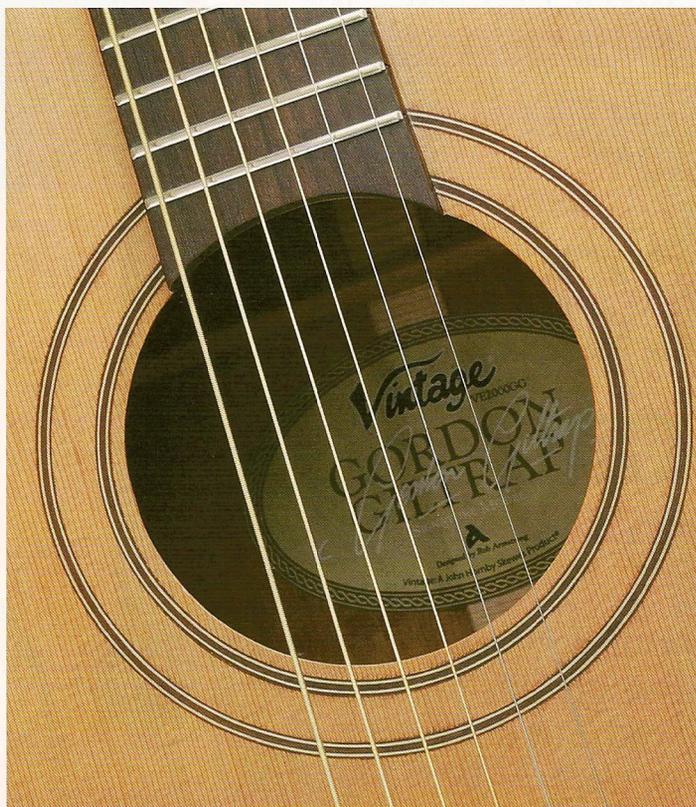
Overall: Top luthier design, superior build quality and great sound don't come along too often in this price range!

Our Ratings Explained

5 Stars: Superb, Almost faultless.
4 Stars: Excellent, Hard to beat.
3 Stars: Good, covers all bases well.
2 or 1 Stars: Below average, poor.

Rating out of five

BUILD QUALITY ★★★★★
SOUND QUALITY ★★★★★
VALUE FOR MONEY ★★★★★



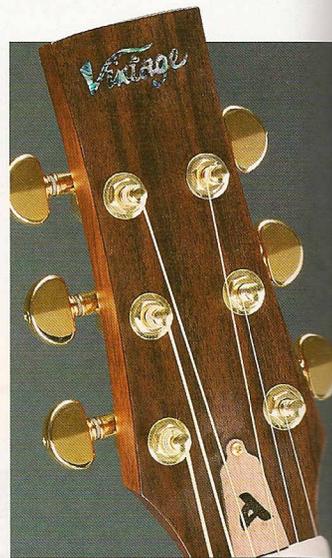
“Instantly apparent is the rich treble, with more depth and maturity than I'd dared to expect from an instrument in this price range...”

On to the body itself, and the solid-cedar top looks fine and dandy, with a close, even grain which has been brought out nicely with a subtle semi-matt finish. The back and sides are laminated mahogany, which some might think doesn't quite fit in with the otherwise upgraded spec of the Vintage. I asked Gordon about this and he told me that they had the option to make the back and sides solid wood too, but the guitar on which this is based is itself a

laminated. In fact, this is a design feature of Rob Armstrong's instruments: he's a firm believer that an instrument with laminated back and sides offers a more solid foundation for the top. Despite being an 'all-solid-woods kinda guy' by inclination, I'm certainly not going to argue; the proof is in the pudding, so let's see how the guitar sounds.

Sound Quality

Instantly apparent is the rich treble, with more depth and



The headstock is beautifully appointed

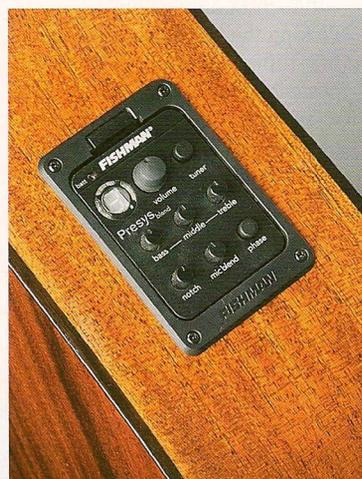
maturity than I'd dared to expect from an instrument in this price range. The mids are very strong too, with a good deal of tone to spare. It's only in the bass register where I would say there was anything lacking – and you must understand that I'm being picky here, as I've played guitars costing twice this amount that have actually had less presence in the bass department, so don't let my being Mr Severely Critical put you off.

The Fishman Sonicore and Presys Blend electronics work superbly well together when you plug in the VE2000GG. Gordon told me that he had managed to get a sound he liked by dialling in just a soupçon of internal mic and tweaking the notch filter, and I found this very satisfying to the ear myself. Any doubts I had about the bass were soon forgotten, as the pickup really does a fine job in offering the full range of nuances available here.

Conclusion

This is an instrument which simply represents astounding value for money. At £479, including a hard case, I wouldn't have dreamt it possible to pack all these features – plus some nice boutique touches like the rosewood bridge pins – into a guitar like this. Gordon, Rob and the crew at Vintage really do deserve a hearty pat on the back for producing something outstanding. A further nice touch is that every model sold will come with a free DVD, with Gordon showing you around your new instrument and performing eight of his own compositions which were specially recorded for the release.

David Mead



Fishman preamp means great plugged in tones



The finishing is spotless throughout

