

Simon & Patrick
LUTHIER

in the press

Showcase Series



As Featured
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GEAR BOX

Simon and Patrick Showcase Acoustics

By Douglas Baldwin



GEAR BOX



Simon and Patrick Showcase Acoustics



FEATURES

All solid wood construction, including spruce **tops** and rosewood, mahogany, or flame maple sides and backs

Satin-finish 24.84" scale-length mahogany **neck** with Indian rosewood fretboard and 21 frets

Gold **hardware** including S&P deluxe enclosed 14:1 **tuners** with cream buttons

Graphitek Tusq nut, **saddles**, and deluxe abalone bridge pins

All models available with Audio Electric Research **electronics**

PRICES

Folk Rosewood
\$1,227
Mahogany **\$974**
CW Flame Maple
\$1,564

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ON THE CD



By Douglas Baldwin

Simon and Patrick specializes in high-grade acoustic instruments at affordable prices. The company's top-of-the-line Showcase series is built by master luthiers in a secluded workshop studio in La Patrie, Quebec, and features premium solid woods, master grade finishes, and innovative construction. We received a delightful range of instruments for review: the small-bodied Folk Rosewood; the dreadnought Mahogany; and the cutaway, electrified CW Flame Maple AER.

LOOKS

All three guitars feature gloss finishes on the body and headstock face and matte finishes on the neck. The gloss finish appears both thinner and stronger than lacquer, yet it's intended to age in a similar fashion, allowing the wood to breathe and vibrate freely. It brought out the natural colors and contrasts of the various woods beautifully, even allowing their grain textures to come through, as one would usually only expect from an aged lacquer finish.

S&P employs what it calls "Select Pressure Testing" on its tops, using custom equipment to measure the spruce's strength, rigidity, and pressure. Equal attention is obviously given to the aesthetic quality of the top wood, as our review models exhibited grain that was both even and attractively figured. A compound curve across the width at the soundhole adds greater structural stability to this narrow passage, a place where experienced repair techs often find a collapse in even the best older instruments.

The solid sides and backs proved just as attractive. The Folk Rosewood had a rich cocoa tint, the black pine-like pore fill-

er on the Mahogany was expertly applied, and the CW Flame Maple AER featured a three-piece back with flavors of honey, ginger, and butter. The natural wood binding, gold-tinted abalone in the headstock logo, and inlaid rosette wood all attest to the S&P crew's love of its materials. We also appreciated the gold enclosed tuners (with pegs described as "cream" but more reminiscent of grained ivoroid) and the Tusq nut, fully compensated saddle, and abalone-crowned bridge pins.

FEEL

The Folk Rosewood's small body size and modern, flattened "C"-contour neck are details that any delicately built guitarist will appreciate. Both the Mahogany and Flame Maple models felt perfectly adequate for any task at hand. Setup for all three guitars was excellent.

SOUND

The small-bodied Folk Rosewood has an extremely even voice with a bright, snappy sound and excellent response to plectrum and finger dynamics. It's not a loud instrument, and hard strumming pushes it into a rather thin, tight corner. Instead, consider this guitar for single-note melodies, fingerstyle work, and softer strumming. The Mahogany model responded just as a dreadnought should, with plenty of bass, recessed midrange, and chiming highs supported by a reassuring thump beneath every pick attack. Mahogany is traditionally considered an even-voiced wood

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The S&P Showcase series features beautiful wood on the backs and sides, like this flame maple.



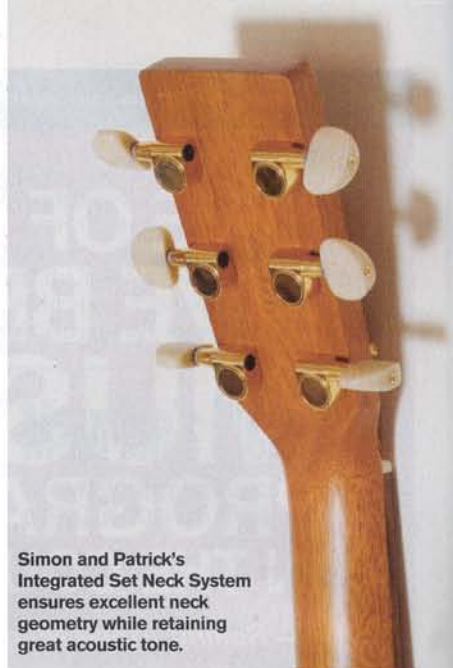
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for a guitar's sides and backs, but we heard a surprising amount of brightness, particularly with hard strumming and picking.

In contrast, the dreadnought cutaway CW Flame Maple AER sounded rounder than its mahogany kin, with more bloom and dynamic range in the bass and a shade less tightness in the high end. The highlight of this guitar is the AER pickup system (available on all models in the Showcase series). With just a saddle pickup, an internal electret microphone, and two soundhole-mounted controls, it's a blessedly simple system that sounds simply fantastic.

ARE THEY FOR YOU? Simon and Patrick obviously take care to build an instrument that looks beautiful on the showroom wall, but the construction and design innovations of the Showcase line demonstrate that the company isn't thinking only about today's sale; it's just as concerned with how the guitar you buy from S&P will perform 10 or 20 years down the line. Built entirely in North America, these are instruments that will satisfy your deepest acoustic desires without draining the deepest recesses of your wallet.



Simon and Patrick's Integrated Set Neck System ensures excellent neck geometry while retaining great acoustic tone.

A Special Case

Godin, Simon and Patrick's parent company, cares as much about how your guitars are transported as how they sound. Up until now, guitar players have had to carry their instruments in either a light but unprotective gig bag or a sturdy but heavy hardshell case. The TRIC—short for Thermally Regulated Instrument Case—combines the best of both options in one brilliant design. It's made from a plastic known as Neopolen P Expanded Polypropylene or EPP, the same lightweight material used in automobile bumpers and crash helmets. "If it's good enough to protect a human head, it's good enough for our guitars," chuckles Richard Brunze, Product Specialist for Simon and Patrick. The exterior superficially resembles gray Styrofoam and is molded with gentle curves and a large, grip-friendly handle. If you've ever banged your shin against the square corners of a traditional flight case or experienced problems with your fingerpicking after lugging a 10-pound axe in a 10-pound case with a belt-thin handle, you'll love the TRIC's curved edges and feather-light construction. Inside, a molded shell interior adds an arch over the bridge, while soft foam cushions support the guitar itself.

The plastic's cellular composition also excels at insulating the guitar from heat, cold, and extremes of humidity. Even the best hardshell cases can allow rapid changes in climate to wreak havoc on the guitars within, but the TRIC seals airtight and surrounds the instrument with a protective shell of dead air, much like a Thermos does. All S&P Showcase guitars ship with the Deluxe TRIC, which wraps the case in an outer shell of nylon twill. Well-placed straps, pockets, and cords allow you to tuck in music and accessories and carry your guitar backpack-style.