



A mahogany body and carved maple top give the GP a luxurious LP vibe, and bring welcome warmth to the tone

The GP's twin cutaways give it a tangible advantage over the Les Paul, with easy access to the top frets

Restringing the adjustable wrap-around bridge is easier than GCSE woodwork. Just lock the ball end in place and tighten to pitch



£349

EASTWOOD ULTRA-GP

DO YOU FEEL LUCKY, PUNK? TG GIVES THE NEW EASTWOOD A SHOT WORDS: HENRY YATES

> Eastwood isn't exactly a household name, is it?

Unless you're talking about the grizzled Hollywood actor who made that film with the orangutan, then we'd have to agree. If we imagine the guitar industry as a glitzy showbiz party – stick with us on this one – then Fender, Gibson and PRS would undoubtedly be sipping champagne behind a velvet rope in the VIP area. Rickenbacker and Gretsch would be scoffing caviar and telling anyone who'd listen about what they did back in the 1960s. And outside in the pissing rain, having been turned away by the bouncers, you'd find Eastwood guitars.

This Canadian company doesn't play by the rules. It doesn't believe in the concept that vintage guitars should be the reserve of merchant bankers who'll take them out of the display case once a year to run a duster

over them. Ever since it was founded in 2001, Eastwood's aim has not only been to replicate the most desirable vintage guitars on the planet, but also to put them within reach of the unwashed strummer. As a result, the new Ultra-GP might look like Lot 302 at a Sotheby's auction house, but its price actually means you won't think twice about thrashing it down at the Spit and Sawdust.

What guitar is this meant to replicate?

Back in 1984, Ovation introduced a solid-bodied electric that it hoped would compete with the Gibson Les Paul. The Ultra GP was a fantastic guitar that played like a dream, but its success was scuppered by the fact that a) Ovation were primarily known for their bowlback acoustics, b) it cost roughly the same as the Les Paul and c) Jimmy Page didn't play one. The axe fell on the GP after

WHO'S IT FOR?

Anyone who's ever dreamt of owning a vintage guitar, then woken up to find they work a paper round

INFORMATION

ORIGIN: Korea
BODY: Mahogany, with carved maple top and five-ply binding
NECK: Mahogany, set
FINGERBOARD: Rosewood, with block inlays
PICKUPS: Dual humbuckers modelled on vintage DiMarzio Super 2s
FRETS: 22
SCALE: 24 3/4
CONTROLS: 2x tone, 2x volume, three-way pickup selector switch
HARDWARE: 3-way adjustable wrap-around bridge, 3-a-side headstock
LEFT-HANDER: Available August 2005
COLOURS: Black [pictured] or Flamed Cherryburst [Heritage Cherry available August 2005]
CASE: Available at extra cost
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only 500 were made, but when the fickle guitar market decided these models were pretty damn good after all, their rarity caused prices to rocket. For anyone who's ever been outbid for a genuine GP by an Arabian prince (these guitars now change hands for as much as \$2,000), Eastwood's 'tribute' edition is your revenge.

It's a sexy looking beast!

When you consider that Josh Homme occasionally stops spanking Brody Dalle in favour of his favourite GP, you know this guitar is worth your drool. The Eastwood model sticks close to the glorious contours of the original (we mean the Ovation, not the raven-haired sex bomb) with a carved maple top secured to a mahogany body via five-ply binding. A set mahogany neck offers 22 frets to widdle over, and twin cutaways mean you won't need fingers like Cumberland sausages to reach the upper echelons. Despite its rivalry with the Les Paul, the Ultra-GP has a great sense of its own identity. Its appearance feels (and looks) both fresh and retro, and TG can totally see why Eastwood have resurrected it.

But is it built to last?

The words 'Built In Korea' can strike the same fear into some players as a 'Beware Of The Dog' sign might to a weary postman. The fact is that the Koreans really know what they're doing and, after a rigorous inspection of the GP-Ultra, we are pleased to report that we didn't find any tell-tale signs of production line muppetry. Granted there's a bit of note bend when you yank on the neck, and it wouldn't have hurt to make the nut smoother along the way, but neither of these niggles are serious enough to spoil your day. Like any guitar with a tilted-back headstock, dropping the GP might prove terminal. But that's the price you pay if you want the attack of a Les Paul.

GREAT VINTAGES

LIKE THE ULTRA-GP? THERE'S PLENTY MORE WHERE THAT CAME FROM...

Ever since Mike Robinson set up shop in 2001, the Eastwood bandsaw has been working overtime. In an apparent bid to send the world's auction houses spiralling into liquidation, the company has now knocked up replicas of over 24 classic guitars, all of which combine their retro authenticity with a relatively light blow to the wallet. TG has been cruising Mike's website for days now – hey, it's a tough job but we can handle it – and we've already got our favourites. So if your boss has buggered off for the afternoon, why not head over to www.myrareguitars.com and spend the rest of the day drooling over your keyboard.

If you're a regular to the TG Gear section, then you will have seen the Eastwood Airline 2P Deluxe. It's a fantastic reading of Jack White's original Airline and brings a ragged White Stripes vibe to your setup without the need for co-ordinated costumes or a 'sister' with no discernible sense of rhythm. Yours for \$699 (approx £385).

The Airline is cool, but TG soon had our head turned by the Eastwood Hi-Flyer, a faithful reproduction of the Univox Hi-Flyer

that was played by the Ramones in the 1970s. Yep, this is the same guitar that Johnny Ramone used to thrash out his simplistic, play-in-a-day chord progressions. It features P90 pickups – the neck item is kinked for maximum authenticity – and NOS valco knobs, and Eastwood assure us that its carved basswood body is designed to take all the damn abuse you can throw at it. Gabba, Gabba, Hey!

But when it comes to sheer star quality, you can't beat Eastwood's take on the Brian May Red Special. Alongside a solid mahogany body and ebony fretboard, these reproductions of the springy-haired one's fireplace-derived guitar also feature three Tri-sonic-style pickups, complete with the famous 21 combination switching system. The price? A trifling \$399 (approx £220). It's a kind of magic...

