

EDITIONS

NORTHEAST
SOUTHEAST
WEST COAST
BACK ISSUES

CLASSIFIEDS

GEAR
MUSICIANS
SERVICES
RESOURCES
PROMOTE YOUR MUSIC
RECORDING
DISTRIBUTION
ROYALTIES
MERCHANDISE
LEGAL
PERFORMING RIGHTS
TOURING
GEAR REVIEWS
CONTESTS

PERFORMER PRESENTS
SEND US YOUR MUSIC
CONTACT
SUBSCRIPTIONS
ADVERTISING
INTERNSHIPS



GEAR REVIEWS

Eastwood Guitars Airline 2P DLX

Price: \$699.00

Before Jack White of The White Stripes unwittingly turned it into a signature instrument, the Airline 2P DLX electric guitar (produced by Valco from 1958 to 1968) was relatively obscure. Realistically, you might have been able to find one for around \$200-\$300. Now, however, the original Res-O-Glas models fetch up to ten times that amount, roughly \$2,000-\$3,000 dollars. And the guitar's celebrity status (luminaries such as David Bowie and members of the Cure also rely on the instrument) is wholly accountable for its surge in price.

In an attempt to curb this remarkable inflation on obscure-turned-famous vintage instruments, Eastwood Guitars has obtained production licenses not only for the Airline, but also for Supro and the Japanese Tokai brand guitars, right down to the actual script logos. Eastwood also manufactures reissues of vintage Gibson, Teisco, Gretsch, and Eko Rokes models, ranging in price from \$400-\$800, in addition to the now-outrageously priced Wandre guitars, retailing at about \$50,000 for a vintage model. In effect, the Eastwood reissues are faultless reproductions of their originals. The only component they cannot recreate is age.

In terms of playability, Eastwood's Airline delivered across the board. The Gibson-style Tune-O-Matic bridge and tuning pegs keep the guitar in tune even after vigorous playing. The neck feels solid and smooth and the guitar handles well and is comfortable to hold. As for tone shaping, there are two Alnico Hot-10 Humbucker pickups, each with volume and tone controls. The guitar also features a three-way pick-up selector switch and a master volume control.

The 2P DLX was tested through an actual 1968 Valco-made Gretsch Variety-Plus 2X12" amplifier and created a superb tone. It fared well against a 1967 Teisco-made Fender Jaguar copy, actually surpassing the vintage instrument in sound quality. It did not quite make the cut when compared to a 1966 Gibson ES-330. As one would expect, the ES-330 sounded and played beautifully, but also costs roughly four times as much.

All in all, the Eastwood Airline 2P DLX boasts a vintage design, superior sound, and effortless playability. It is a well-made guitar that is both much cheaper and much easier to locate than the original. If you are in the market for a new guitar and are intrigued by the odd designs and affordable price of an Eastwood, go ahead and take the plunge. You won't be disappointed.

www.eastwoodguitars.com -Cyrus Shahmir



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