

IF YOU GODIN TO THE WOODS...

Godin L.R. Baggs Electro-Acoustic



Photography: James Cumpsty

You're sure of a big surprise! Before your eyes glaze over at the sight of yet another electro-acoustic dressed up as a Fender, rest assured that the Godin is a wee bit different. Review by Rick Batey...

ROBERT GODIN, A FRENCH Canadian based in Vermont, has previous experience in guitar-making but it's been limited to steel-string acoustics. Before setting out as a guitar-maker, he made his living as a supplier of Canadian woods to various companies. This guitar has been designed in cahoots with a

certain L.R. Baggs, who seems to be gaining quite a name in the piezo-pickup field.

Construction

I've spent a long time with this guitar, unscrewing everything that can be unscrewed, holding it under lamps and inserting fingers into every conceivable orifice to try to discover exactly how it's been made. I'm not sure I've succeeded. The first thing is that the Godin isn't a solid, or even a semi-solid, but virtually a full acoustic guitar, albeit considerably scaled down. The top is made of spruce, glued to a body that's been routed out to provide thin sides while leaving more wood at the delicate

spots – around the heel, the control panel, the bottom block and the jack-socket. I can't determine whether the back is separate or integral, neither can I decide on what wood it is; the distributors reckon it's maple, but it feels more porous than maple should.

Another claim made for the Godin is that it contains a system of tuned struts that vibrate in sympathy with the strings, with a corresponding benefit in sound quality. Well, I poked, I pried, I damn near ended up in the out-patients' with a chunk of Canada dangling from my pinkie. The headlines were flashing through my mind, but I couldn't see anything apart from normal bracing on the back and what appeared to be a simplified X-brace on the front. Maybe they project forward of the bridge, so we'll just have to take it as read.

There's no waist-cut, but the heel has been given a subtle chamfer. The single white edge-binding adds a great deal to the appearance, but it could have been executed with a little more care. Oh, and if a black finish isn't to your taste, they also come in natural, white, cherry sunburst or turquoise.

The body also features an ebony bridge with a straight saddle. It's not adjustable, so if you're buying one make sure the intonation is okay. The bridgepins are too far from the saddle and the strings have a slight tendency to jump their slots, but the bridgepins pull out under finger pressure, as they should, so that's a good point. Bad point; the bridge has started to pull away from the belly. There's over a centimetre hanging free at each end – a potentially disastrous feature on an instrument which lacks a soundhole through which you can insert a couple of clamps to glue it back down. I hope they don't sell this one without sorting it out.

The neck is bolted to the body Fender-style; it's made of one piece of maple, with a rosewood fingerboard and a truss rod accessible under the last fret. The twenty-two frets are low, oval and excellently finished. The machines are Schallers, which are fine, but the string retainers need a bit of re-designing; you can't just pop the string underneath, you've got to force or thread them because the spacers are too big. ▶