

# GYPSY II

**The Gordon Smith range of guitars bears an uncanny resemblance to the classic American instruments of the fifties and sixties. The instrument we received to review is the epitome of this era, being a double cutaway, twin pickup job.**

**T**he Gypsy II is a refinement on the Gordon Smith GS range of guitars, with a high gloss tobacco sunburst finish. The construction and standard of workmanship are excellent throughout. The headstock is unbound, with the Gordon Smith logo in gold lettering against a black background. The machine heads are the Schaller copies of the old Kluson deluxe, which work much better than the original heads made by Kluson. The fingerboard nut is unique in that it is a brass unit which screws onto the end of the fingerboard. This is an extremely logical method of fitting as it anchors the nut more securely than the usual method of glueing and I can't think why nobody has done it before.

Twenty two frets are fitted to the unbound Rosewood fingerboard, which is inlaid with mother of pearl dots and white position markers along the edge. The fret wire is the low profile, wide oval style, which is well fitted with no sharp edges. A slight rounding off of the fingerboard edge is noticeable as you run your hand down the neck. The frets and board have been highly polished, which gives the fingerboard the appearance of having been lacquered.

The neck itself is made of Mahogany and has a narrow profile front to back. This gives the neck an extremely thin comfortable feel, similar to the old Gibson Melody Makers. The truss rod has been fitted so that there isn't the usual cavity for the adjusting nut on the headstock. This eliminates the weak spot that plagues this style of instrument - I for one have repaired so many guitars over the years with necks that have broken in this area. The truss rod is, in fact, adjusted from the body end by removing a small plastic plate, secured by two screws, between the front pickup and the end of the fingerboard. The heel of the neck has been smoothed down slightly to blend it into the body shape. This makes for comfortable access to the upper frets. The neck is set into the body at an angle of approximately seven degrees, which makes for a more comfortable playing feel. Visually, it appears to join the body at the 22nd fret, but actually joins it at the 19th fret.

The body is a one piece slab of Mahogany, quite close grained and extremely dense, which accounts for the weight as well as the sustain. The quality of the finish is superb, with the exception of the fingerboard edge where the neck meets the body, which is bubbling slightly. A nice touch is the sunburst, which is peardrop shaped and is extremely well applied. Aluminium strap buttons are fitted behind the heel and to the base of the rim.

The pickups are hand made by Gordon Smith and are fitted with black plastic covers. They are humbucking style with a single row of adjustable pole pieces. Overall height adjustment is made either side by the use of two Philips type screws. Each pickup has its own volume and tone control, the volume

controls are push pull type pots which coil tap their respective pickups. The pots are fitted with black speed knobs, which compliments the black laminate scratch plate and the pickup covers. A three position toggle switch controls the selection of the pickups. Wiring and soldering are good, with no dry joints or loose connections to play you up later. The bridge is made by Schaller (who else?) as is the chrome plated combination bridge/tailpiece unit which is adjustable for intonation and overall height. The individual saddles are made of brass and are adjusted by means of slot headed screws at the front of the bridge.

## Playability

As I keep saying, I really like the feel and the sound of Mahogany guitars. There seems to be more of a rich, mellow (the cigar advert again!!) tone than any Maple guitar can give - and this guitar is no exception. After ten minutes' playing the Jeff Beck licks came pouring out, without any help from me! Cranked up through the hearing aid, I got the harmonic overtones and squeals that take you back to the days when guitar heroes reigned supreme!

The coil position gives an excellent sound, with more highs, but retaining the rich tone inherent in humbuckers. The neck feel is slim and fast, with excellent sustain and easy string bending.

## Conclusion

If you're in a band where the singer lets you take the occasional solo, then this guitar definitely worth looking at - what's more, it's British!

### Specifications

Overall length;	99cm/39"
Overall width;	32.7cm/12 7/8"
Weight;	22.75kg/8 1/4lb
Scale length;	62.9cm/24 3/4"
Frets:	
no;	22
type;	Wide Oval
Construction materials:-	
body;	Mahogany
neck;	Mahogany
fingerboard;	Rosewood
RRP;	£383.24
(case extra, at £36.54)	
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**Robbie Gladwell**

