



Gordon Giltrap

VE2000GG 12-string

PRICE:
£499

The 6-string version of this guitar was so amazing our reviewer actually purchased the review model! Can this 12-string live up to that standard? Paul Brett finds out.

The intonation is spot on all the way up the neck, which is not always the case with 12-strings”

With the plethora of new guitars hitting the world market every year in all shapes, sizes, numbers and price ranges, it becomes harder for reviewers to remain impartial, and many just comment on the tech specs and surround them with views that they may not actually feel comfortable with in a one-to-one situation, off the record. We reviewed the new signature 6-string model that Gordon Giltrap has just released via John Hornby Skewes. The reviewer was extremely impressed with it, and now we have its 12-string brother up for review.

Build Quality

I must be honest at this point and say that I haven't been impressed with many modern 12-strings that come on to the market, as in the main they are too brittle and buzzy – plus the fact that they do not take to a lowered tuning that well. So with this in mind, I

took out Gordon's 12-string from its box and started to explore its possibilities.

This guitar, like its brother 6-string, was designed by respected luthier Rob Armstrong. We have already reviewed the 6-string model and the same design and build quality are inherent in the 12-string. In fact, you can have these two great

guitars for under a grand! I like the shape of Rob's design, and no doubt Gordon had a positive input into how he wanted it to feel, sound and play.

The top is close-grained North American cedar, and I appreciate the fact that it is not covered in layers of lacquer. The neck is mahogany, the fingerboard rosewood with MOP inlays, the nut and compensated saddle are NuBone, and the tuners are Grover 102s. For the inquisitive among you the string spacing is perfectly adequate. I know this is a bone of contention with many players who try out 12-strings, but if I can play it, so can you. For those of you with 'shovels' for hands, you may need to string up a cricket bat!

Sound Quality

I'm always apprehensive of trying out a new 12-string, because many I try just rattle and fart

Woods Used

The top is close-grained North American cedar, and I appreciate the fact that it is not covered in layers of lacquer. The neck is mahogany, the fingerboard rosewood with MOP inlays



straight out of the box. Most 12-strings these days seem to be add-ons to a manufacturer's inventory, just to prove they have one. Very few bother to understand that the instrument is not a 6-string guitar and should not be considered as such.

In normal tuning (E), the string tension is fairly taut. The intonation is spot on all the way up the neck, which is not always the case with 12-strings. The action is between low and mid on the review model. I found this tuning perfect for strummed rock or chordal work. It is a powerful sound that would arrest attention in a live venue. I can easily see this in a band situation, where a singer can lay a solid layer of amplified acoustic 12-string to enhance his or her songs. Dropping the overall tuning a tone in pitch, then tuning to open G, I put a capo on the second fret and tested a section from one of my solo pieces from my 12-string tablature book. It handled it very well, including the low notes, and was bright and clear on the trebles. The arpeggios were easy to play too. Back up to normal tuning for a slow ballad, using a picking accompaniment, and again it was performing as I would expect. The real test was

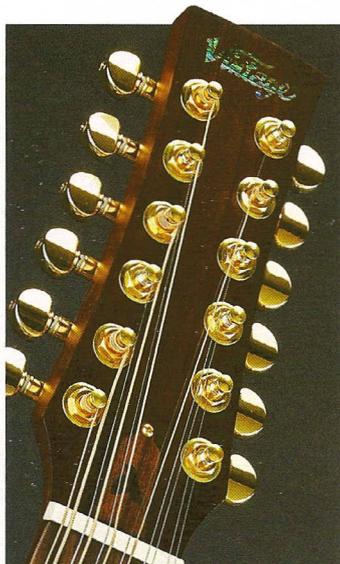


Finishing is top notch in all areas

“For a guitarist who wants a good 12-string that will do more than strum, at an affordable price, then this one is perfect”

the final one in the blues genre. Dropping pitch again with the E pairs dropped another tone, I hammered out Blind Willie McTell's famous 12-string song 'Statesboro' Blues'. This song always highlights the failure or success of a 12-string's ability to handle blues. This was extremely capable of providing both the driving backing required under the vocal and the instrumental piano-like dimensions in the picked solo passages.

I always find it difficult as a reader myself to hear sounds from the written word. Therefore I have put a video on YouTube which demonstrates four styles – three with vocal and one instrumental – for you to make your own mind up. Have a listen at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tSeWxgD_ULE.



What We Think

What did our test results reveal?

Pros: Everything.

Cons: None, for the price.

Overall: No problems as far as I'm concerned – try one yourself.

The first rock-style track is recorded DI via the on-board Fishman system. This consists of their Presys Blend preamp and a Sonicore pickup. I'm not usually a fan of on-board electronics. Plus they always make the guitar heavier. However, the Fishman kit does kick out a great and powerful noise, but you have to be careful as the controls are quite sensitive. It's especially good when recorded with an additional microphone blended in. The rest of the styles on the video clip – solo instrumental, ballad and blues – are recorded with microphones, as are my vocals.

Conclusion

For the price and versatility, it rates, in my opinion, on a much higher scale than many far higher-priced models, even handmade ones. I know there is a debate raging about Chinese-made guitars, cheap labour etc etc. We had the same debate years ago, when the Japanese started making guitars, then the Koreans and so on. For a guitarist who wants a good 12-string that will do more

than strum, at an affordable price, then this one is perfect. I would certainly recommend you test one of these 12-strings to see if it suits your requirements, as I haven't come across another in its price range, or beyond, that flits across these many styles. And, like its 6-string brother, it comes with a fitted GG case.

Excellent.

Paul Brett

Acoustic Test Results

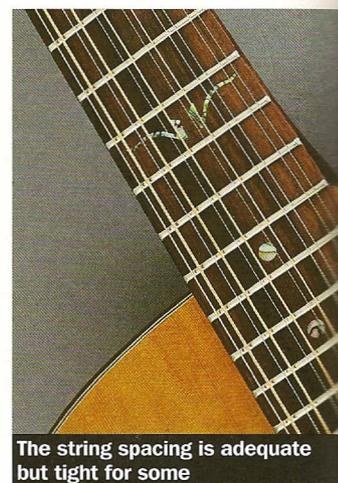
Our ratings explained

- 5 Stars:** Superb, Almost faultless.
- 4 Stars:** Excellent, Hard to beat.
- 3 Stars:** Good, covers all bases well.
- 2 or 1 Stars:** Below average, poor.

Rating out of five

How well did this guitar fare?

Build Quality	★★★★★
Sound Quality	★★★★★
Value for Money	★★★★★



The string spacing is adequate but tight for some

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Technical Specification

- Price:** £499
- Top:** Solid North American red cedar, high grade, close grained
- Back and sides:** Mahogany
- Neck:** Mahogany
- Fingerboard:** Rosewood with abalone inlays
- Side position markers:** Abalone
- Bridge:** Rosewood
- Top nut:** NuBone
- Saddle:** NuBone, compensated
- Scale:** 642 mm (25.27")
- Preamp:** Fishman Presys Blend
- Pickup:** Fishman Sonicore
- Tuners:** Grover 102
- Strings:** High quality, USA made
- Finish:** Clear satin
- Case:** Supplied with Kinsman 'Gordon Giltrap Signature' hardshell case

Contact Details

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