

HOT FOR PREACHER

Reverend Volcano electric guitar

BY PHILIPPE HERNDON

OVER THE PAST 10 years, Joe Naylor has made a noteworthy splash into the crowded electric guitar market with his Reverend brand. Originally a manufacturer of USA-made composite-bodied instruments, Reverend today builds its guitars in Korea, a move that lets the company maintain the vintage vibe and excellent build quality for which it's known, while maintaining a competitive price point.

The Volcano is a good example of what Reverend does best. Part of the company's Set-Neck Series, the Volcano is Naylor's own vintage-flavored interpretation of the V-bodied guitar shape, complete with subtle tweaks that update it for modern players.

FEATURES

V-BODIED GUITARS have gone in and out of fashion since the Flying V's introduction in 1958, but the shape remains a bona fide classic to fans of Eighties metal and heavy rock. For that matter, the Flying V's distinctive and powerful tones made it a favorite of even blues players, including Albert King and Lonnie Mack, who popularized the model in the Sixties and helped bring about its reissue in 1967.

At first glance, Reverend's Volcano looks like a hybrid of Gibson's 1958 and 1967 designs, with some noteworthy variations. While the nickel-covered pickups, stop tailpiece and Tune-O-Matic bridge look traditional, the headstock's design is unconventional for this body shape. The classic V's headstock is a pointy three-plus-three style, while the Volcano's is a stylized rectangular shape. While I found the design a little odd looking with this body, I did appreciate that the neck's traditional 24 3/4-inch-scale length, medium-oval shape and 12-inch fretboard radius.

The solid mahogany body has a raised center section mated to thinner wings and features a slight offset from the V shape. While the pickup selector is in a traditional location, the volume, tone and proprietary bass contour controls are mounted on a smaller pickguard and distributed along the guitar's lower edge, an arrangement that is more accessible than the cluster of knobs on the Flying V. The output jack is mounted on the lower horn and mounted on a Stratocaster-style recessed ferrule; on the V, it's placed on the guitar's face, in the control assembly.

PERFORMANCE

ALL THESE TWEAKS add up to a V-bodied guitar that is surprisingly well balanced, light and stage-ready. I expected the big mahogany body to weigh like a messenger bag full of bricks and tip dramatically toward the floor, but once it was strapped on, the Volcano rested in playing position, with excellent high-fret access and a generous strike zone for picking and strumming. The recessed output jack was another nice touch, as I didn't have to hunt for a cord with a right-angle plug to avoid an unsightly protrusion from the scratch plate.

Overseas manufacturing has not compromised Reverend's ability to build an excellent-playing and -sounding instrument. While vintage in appearance, the Volcano's nickel-plated humbuckers boast a slightly beefier output and deliver excellent tones that are suitable for a wide variety of settings. Played through a reissue Bassman and a Soldano SLO, the Volcano projected lively clean tones, rich midrange crunch and excellent definition—perfect for hard rock. Detuned and played through a Mesa Rectifier, it belied its vintage aesthetics, pumping out thick low end and delivering cutting highs that, together, testify to the Volcano's heavy metal worthiness.

The Volcano's control array is a key factor in the guitar's range of tone colors. The master tone control, while still a basic high-end cut, sounded much less wooly than most and featured a capacitor value that does not compromise midrange tones. I also appreciated the bass contour control, which let me roll back some of the low-mid thump from the overwound bridge pickup and emphasize more classic sparkle.

THE BOTTOM LINE

ASKED ABOUT THE first player he ever saw with a Flying V, Joe Naylor replied: "Albert King. I remember seeing him in a magazine and thinking that old dude must be a badass." If you'd like to project some of that old-style hubris, and do so at a very reasonable price, the Volcano could be just the V you're looking for. ✨



REVEREND VOLCANO ELECTRIC GUITAR

LIST PRICE: \$700.00 (case not included)
MANUFACTURER: Reverend, reverendguitars.com
BODY: Mahogany with raised center section
NECK: Mahogany set neck with dual-action truss rod
FINGERBOARD: Rosewood with dot inlay
SCALE LENGTH: 24 3/4 inches
FRETS: 22 medium jumbo
HARDWARE: Chrome
CONTROLS: Master Volume, Tone, Bass Contour, three-way toggle



Slightly thinner wings are paired to a raised center section.

The control array is easier to reach than on traditional Vs.

PRO	CON
EXCELLENT TONES, PLAYABILITY, BALANCE AND PRICE	CASE NOT INCLUDED

