

GEAR Bench Test



Reverend Pete Anderson Signature

TESTED BY MICHAEL MOLENDRA

PETE ANDERSON CAN KICK MY ASS ON GUITAR in so many different ways that actually documenting them would take longer than finding a raisin inside a bustling anthill while wearing sunglasses. We don't play the same style of music at all, and while he's often considered a tone connoisseur of the highest order, my sound is closer to the aural equivalent of a Jollibee (Mall food! Chickenjoy! Yum!). And yet, the guitar he designed with Reverend's Joe Naylor for his own personal explorations of tone

and technique also works for a basher like me—which is something you can't always say about a fine archtop or hollowbody. It's this level of versatility, playability, and toughness that Anderson and Naylor designed into the Pete Anderson Signature that makes it such an awesome guitar. Let us count the ways...

CONSTRUCTION

In a weird way, the PA feels a bit like a solid-body. Strum a chord acoustically, and it will

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Pete Anderson on Building his Namesake

"I've been around the block a few times trying to get this guitar made," says Pete Anderson about his Reverend signature model. "At the time, there was nothing in the marketplace like it. I wanted a vintage hollowbody style—like a Gibson/Gretsch hybrid—but without the playability problems that often plague actual vintage hollowbodies. I wanted something that a working guitarist could pick up and say, 'Oh, this is ready to play, and it feels great.' My original drawing was like an old Gretsch Tennessean. It was a little more oblong. My complaint about Gibson hollowbodies is that the shoulders are too broad, and that doesn't look sexy to me. Joe had some ideas, of course, and he stuck by me throughout the design process. If I wanted something done, he usually found a way to do it. No excuses.

"For example, I was very specific about the headstock angle, because I needed the string tension to feel right. Joe came up with that 13-degree tilt, which is very different from his other guitars. The best way I can describe the string tension is that it has the feel of a

Gibson ES-335. I also wanted high and narrow frets, the punched-out f-holes, and a top that resists feedback. Joe developed a bracing system that's resonant and yet solid. In fact, the tailpiece is bolted directly into the body for much more thunk, as are the pickups. I wanted the P90s to be as close to the body as possible for resonance.

"Cosmetically, I think we made a good guitar, but, you know, it's interesting how little contact we actually have with the guitar itself. Most of the action is between a string, a fret, and a finger.



ring quite nicely, but the top of the guitar doesn't shake, rattle, and roll as it does on many hollowbodies. A big part of the reason for this is Reverend's Uni-Brace structure—which is 1/2" wide and runs from neck block to bridge under the bass side of the body—that also helps reduce feedback and increase sustain. All hardware is top quality, and the frets have lovely rounded ends. The PA is so tough that when I viciously slap the strings during the climax of a live-performance gig, it shakes off the abuse as if my hand was nothing more than a gnat. Two other hollowbodies suffered having their bridge pickups accidentally punched into their body cavities. I rest my case.


PLAYABILITY

The PA comes out of its case ready to play, with a factory setup that's almost something you'd find on a guitar tricked out for shredding. The action is pretty low, but string tension is comfortably taut, and there are absolutely no fret buzzes. No position on the neck frets out, and there are no dead spots, either. (The only buzzing came after weeks of gigging when *GP* Associate Editor Matt Blackett helped me trace the noise to a loose screw that secured both the pickguard and bridge pickup.) Everything about the PA makes playing a joy, from the position of the knobs and 3-way switch to the secure and cozy feel of the neck to the weight and contour of the body. This is another one of those guitars that I just can't stop picking up and noodling on.

SOUND

From its smooth and airy acoustic sound to its versatile amplified voice—a flexibility very

much aided by Reverend's fab Bass Contour control, which lets you incisively craft the guitar's low-end emphasis—there was nothing the PA couldn't pull off, and it loved every amp I plugged it into (a lineup that included Marshalls, Mesa/Boogies, Fenders, Oranges, Voxs, and a new Blackstar 45). I got saturated, soaring lead tones. I got almost acoustic-like shimmer. I got woody, jazzy sounds.

I could pull off ballsy rock rhythms and fizzy lo-fi splatters. If I wanted to just plug in and play, the PA always delivered cool sounds, but if I felt like exploring the effects of tweaking the Tone, Volume, and Bass Contour controls, the number of available—albeit subtly different—tones almost blasted into the stratosphere. The Pete Anderson Signature distinguishes itself on all levels of vibe, playability, and tone, and it does so without costing thousands of dollars. I'd recommend this guitar to almost everyone, and that's why the PA snaps up an Editors' Pick Award. 

SPECS Reverend Guitars. (586) 775-1025; reverendguitars.com	
MODEL	Pete Anderson Signature
PRICE	\$1,439 retail/\$1,099 street
NUT WIDTH	1 ¹¹ / ₁₆ "
NECK	Korina
FRETBOARD	Rosewood, 24 ³ / ₄ " scale
FRETS	22 medium jumbo
BODY	Laminated maple back/sides; laminated spruce top
TUNERS	Reverend Pin-Lock
BRIDGE	Tune-o-matic-style with roller saddles; Bigsby B70 tremolo
PICKUPS	Reverend P90s
CONTROLS	Volume, Tone, Bass Contour, 3-way selector
WEIGHT	7.32 lbs
FACTORY STRINGS	N/A, .010-.046
KUDOS	Versatile tones. Built tough. Relatively feedback resistant. Excellent playability.
CONCERNS	Pickup-fastening screw is set through pickguard, which caused some buzzing as screw loosened. Satin finish highlights finger oils and pick scratches.