

ELECTRO-ACOUSTICS: Over £500

WINNER Patrick James Eggle Saluda Cutaway

Reviewed November 18/10 Price: £2650

Patrick Eggle doesn't build electros for stock, but we requested a powered version of this cutaway small jumbo for review, so that's where the guitar earns its garland. And, boy, is it richly deserved.

Workmanship, materials and detailing are stunning, with figured koa bindings around the high-grade cedar/rosewood body, an elegant headstock with black-buttoned tuners, and abalone/pearl falling-leaf position markers beautifully set off against the fingerboard's coachlined edging.

Favoured with an easy-playing semi-wide neck, the Saluda Cutaway has a sound to match. Though a tad tight on first strums, it quickly blossomed to the kind of clout expected of a near jumbo, combining sweet-edged sparkle, smoothly mellow warmth and a richly resonant low end, and the crisply articulated Fishman active endpin system captures the instrument's intrinsic acoustic richness. This is top calibre stuff through and through.

Contact: PJE Guitars ☎ 01691 661777
Web: www.eggle.co.uk



Yamaha

APX900

Price: £679

Reviewed January 17/12

Contact: Yamaha Music UK

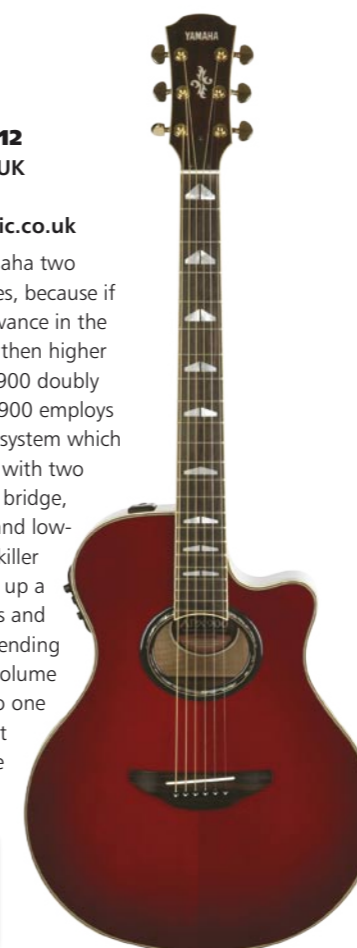
☎ 01908 366700

Web: www.yamaha-music.co.uk

No apologies for giving Yamaha two cracks at this year's accolades, because if the APX700 marks a real advance in the lower-priced electro realms, then higher up the price ladder the APX900 doubly does so. The maple-backed 900 employs the more sophisticated ART system which augments the centre sensor with two more, one either side of the bridge, tuned specifically for high- and low-frequency duties. Result? A killer palate of sounds that opens up a whole new level of dynamics and across-the-strings tone, depending on how the system's three volume controls are set in relation to one another – and that's without adding the excellent EQ. The possibilities are pretty vast.

BEST FOR...

Excellent powered-up expression, whether for tone or technique



Crafter

GLXE-3000SK

Price: £789

Reviewed September 18/8

Contact: Sutherland Trading

☎ 029 2088 7333

Web: www.crafterguitars.com

This cutaway grand auditorium takes Crafter into higher price realms than ever before. It's got a solid Engelmann top, Brazilian-looking solid sonokeling back and sides, a semi-wide neck and figured maple binding. Powered by a two-band Baggs Onboard Element system, the guitar delivers a studio-like transparency with ultra-clean articulation, and you won't miss the preamp's lack of a midrange control. Acoustically the sound is supple and resonant, with the kind of low-end richness expected of a decent rosewood-backed acoustic. There are cheaper GLXEs than this one, but for cosmetics and all-round performance quality it justifies its flagship status.

BEST FOR...

Plugged-in tonal purity and strikingly attractive timbers

