

Rocked & Rated



Hagstrom Super
Swede Tremar P-90

Schecter Solo
6 Vintage



Höfner Club Solid

LTD Phoenix 200



Flip the page to
find out which one
won our Group Test
head-to-head

Group Test

Vintage-vibe electric guitars

When it's time to consider buying your next electric, it could be something old, something new or, in this case, **the best of both worlds**

WORDS **ED MITCHELL**

At some point during your guitar playing career you'll get an urge for a vintage guitar. That's fine but just remember that the vintage guitar market is a minefield. It's all too possible that you'll end up with some overpriced, tough to play, beaten to hell, piece of trash.

Be honest, most of you want an old guitar because they look and sound super cool. Playability is often a secondary consideration, which is why you can end up disappointed. If that sounds like you, maybe you should consider looking at some of the new breed of guitars that splice vintage charm with a generous dollop of modern playability, build quality and an affordable price tag. That's

what this Group Test is all about. We've picked four vintage style guitars that, while technically still wet behind the ears, wouldn't look out of place in a 50s Elvis movie. While the Schecter Solo 6 Vintage (£599) in our Group Test is a modern interpretation of what makes a classic vintage guitar, the LTD Phoenix 200 (£499), Hagstrom Super Swede Tremar P90 (£640) and Höfner Club Solid (£419) models are all based on established classics. It's time to go old school. ■

**"THE NEW BREED SPLICE
VINTAGE CHARM WITH
MODERN PLAYABILITY"**



Schecter Solo 6 Vintage £599

Gene-splicing done right

Vibrato
Rockabilly nuts will love the old-school Bigsby B-50 vibrato unit



Humbucker
The HB-102 'bucker is based on the classic Seymour Duncan JB

Coil-split
The Solo 6 Vintage has a coil-split function for singlecoil tones

At a glance

Schecter Solo 6 Vintage

BODY: Mahogany
NECK: Mahogany, set-in
FINGERBOARD: Rosewood
FRETS: 22 medium
SCALE: 24 3/4"
PICKUPS: 2x Duncan Designed humbuckers
CONTROLS: 2x volume, 1x tone, coil split,
HARDWARE: Chrome
FINISH: See-thru Cherry, Gloss Black, 2-tone Sunburst
CONTACT: Westside Distribution 01412 484812
WEB: www.schecterguitars.com

Were a loved-up Gibson SG and an old Gretsch ever to get serious and take their relationship to the next level, the result would be a bouncing baby Schecter Solo 6 Vintage. The SG would contribute the slab mahogany body, while the Gretsch would provide some rockabilly approved hardware that includes an obligatory Bigsby vibrato.

That desire to appeal to both rock and rockabilly players is reflected in the (Seymour)



Duncan Designed humbuckers. The bridge position HB-102 humbucker is based on Seymour's legendary JB model, while the FG-101 neck pickup is designed to pump out classic roots and rockabilly tones of the

50s. The fact that Schecter has also fitted a coil-split makes the Solo 6 Vintage a versatile guitar that can run from blues, surf, country and rockabilly to rock and, yep, serious metal tones. All that aural gravy is backed up with excellent playability and upper fret access, and rock solid tuning stability despite that old-school vibrato unit.

Conclusion: Bagging a Schecter Solo 6 Vintage allows you to give birth to tones as diverse as AC/DC beef and Stray Cat twang at

the flick of the pickup selector switch. This guitar is a true heavyweight both tonally and physically. That's a fair old chunk of mahogany you'll be hanging from a strap so make sure your spine can handle the weight. The only thing that isn't heavy is the price tag. This baby is worth every penny, we reckon.

SUMMARY

For: Looks, tonal versatility
Against: Tis a weighty beast

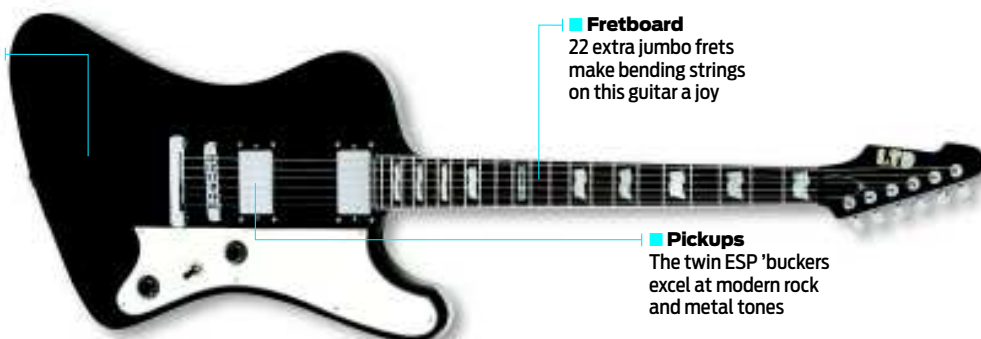
★★★★☆

TG says: AC/DC meets Brian Setzer

LTD Phoenix 200 £499

For the 'bird lovers

Body
The guitar has a thru maple neck with basswood body wings



Fretboard
22 extra jumbo frets make bending strings on this guitar a joy

Pickups
The twin ESP 'buckers excel at modern rock and metal tones

At a glance

LTD Phoenix 200

BODY: Basswood
NECK: Maple, thru-body
FINGERBOARD: Ebony
FRETS: 22 extra jumbo
SCALE: 25 1/2"
PICKUPS: 2x ESP humbuckers
CONTROLS: 1x volume, 1x tone, three-way pickup selector switch
HARDWARE: Chrome
FINISH: Black
CONTACT: Selection UK 01795 419460
WEB: www.espguitars.com

You don't get any prizes for guessing where ESP got the inspiration from for its new LTD Phoenix 200 model. For those of you still scratching your head, the Phoenix 200 pays close tribute to a 60s classic, the Gibson Firebird. Knowing ESP, however, the Phoenix will turn out to be a bit of a wolf in sheep's clothing.

Underneath the gloss black exterior lurks a thoroughly modern rock guitar. The maple neck extends through to the



base of the body and has a pair of basswood wings glued to it. Basswood is the timber of choice for anyone looking for a lightweight body that produces excellent tonal qualities and

sustain, and this Phoenix pumps out sustain by the bucketload. The sizzling clarity of the bridge humbucker makes it the pick of the litter in light of the neck unit's slight muddiness when overdriven. That said, you'll find useable tones in all three positions on the selector switch.

Conclusion: There are quite a few Firebird-inspired models available at the moment; the Epiphone and Tokai models immediately spring to mind.

While it also echoes the original, LTD's guitar isn't a straight clone. It comes over like a hot rod version of the 60s model, those pickups being happiest when they have plenty of gain to feed on. This Phoenix might ruffle the feathers of the vintage freaks but rock and metalheads will love it.

SUMMARY

For: Cool looks, modern rock tones
Against: Muddy neck 'bucker

★★★★☆

TG says: The 'bird is the word

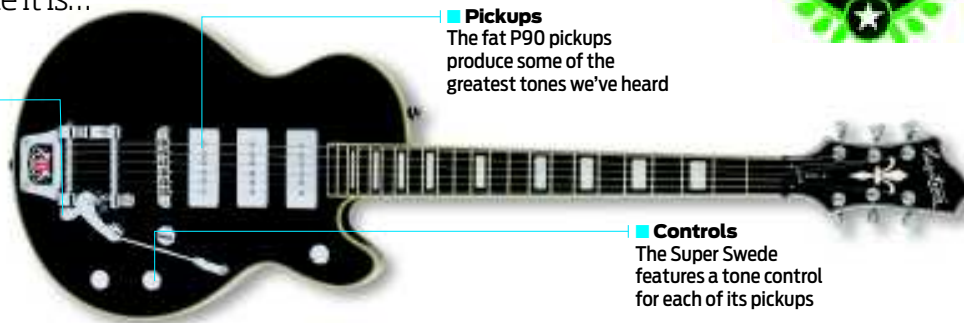
"THE SUPER SWEDE'S TRIO OF PIMPED P90 PICKUPS CAN PRODUCE ANYTHING FROM SWEET JAZZ TO SNARLING PUNK"

VINTAGE-VIBE ELECTRICS ★ **GROUP TEST**

Hagstrom Super Swede Tremar P-90 £640

How Swede it is...

Vibrato ■
The old-school vibrato adds to the Super Swede's cool vintage vibe



Pickups ■
The fat P90 pickups produce some of the greatest tones we've heard

Controls ■
The Super Swede features a tone control for each of its pickups



At a glance

Hagstrom Super Swede Tremar P-90

BODY: Mahogany with maple top
NECK: Mahogany, set-in
FINGERBOARD: Resinator
FRETS: 22 medium
SCALE: 25½"
PICKUPS: 3x Hagstrom P90S singlecoils
CONTROLS: 1x volume, 3x tone, rotary pickup selector
HARDWARE: Chrome
FINISH: Black Gloss, White Gloss
CONTACT: Rosetti Ltd 01376 550033
WEB: www.hagstrom-guitars.co.uk

Originally launched in Sweden in 1970, the Hagstrom Super Swede was a twin humbucker guitar inspired by the design of the Gibson Les Paul. 40 years on, the Super Swede is back (albeit now made in China like the entire Hagstrom range), and is now available with a trio of P90 singlecoil pickups and a vintage style vibrato aka Tremar.

The Super Swede features a six-position rotary pickup selector (bridge solo; bridge and neck; bridge and middle; middle



solo; middle and neck; neck solo), a master volume and three tone controls. That's one for each pickup! We can't claim the Swede's unusual wiring suddenly makes perfect sense when you plug it in, but we're pretty sure it

won't matter when you hear the quality of the pickups. The high output (or 'spiced' in Hagstrom marketing speak) P90 singlecoils are the business. All three pickups have power and clarity in equal measure and they blow the competition away in this Group Test. The Swede's tone is best described as fat.

Conclusion: This guitar is a smorgasbord of tonal brilliance. That trio of pimped P90 pickups can produce anything from sweet jazz to snarling rock and

punk tones. No mean feat. You may find the switching system initially confusing, but patience is rewarded with one of the greatest tonal palettes we've experienced. Add the Swede's build quality, playability and sheer good looks and it had to win this Group Test. Hey, they don't call it 'super' for nothing.

SUMMARY

For: Fantastic tones, build quality
Against: Controls can be confusing

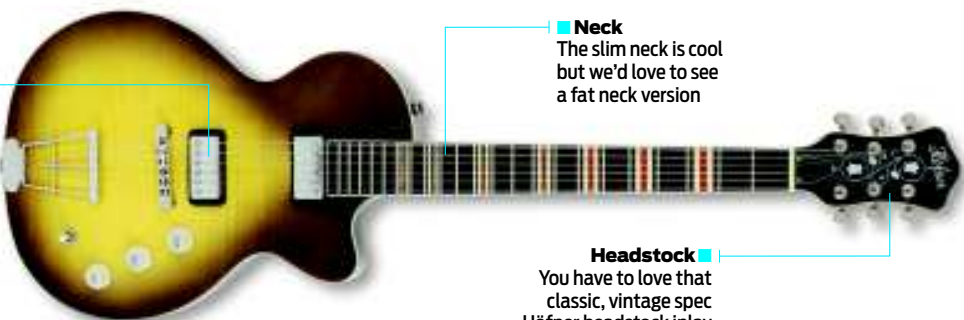
★★★★★

TG says: This Swede is no turnip

Höfner Club Solid £419

The updated Beatle backer

Pickups ■
The Club Solid's mini-humbuckers produce a stunning range of tones



Neck ■
The slim neck is cool but we'd love to see a fat neck version

Headstock ■
You have to love that classic, vintage spec Höfner headstock inlay

The new Höfner Club Solid is based on the hollowbody Club model John Lennon played in the early days of The Beatles. While Lennon's guitar would have been super-lightweight, the new Solid version utilises the classic Les Paul style construction of a mahogany body topped with maple, resulting in a much heavier guitar.

If you'll allow us to get a bit superficial, we have to say that the Höfner Club Solid is



a beautiful looking guitar. The inlaid headstock, trapeze tailpiece and those stunning vintage Höfner stripe fingerboard inlays made us gasp when we took the Club out of its box.

Plugging into an amp had the same effect. The bridge mini-humbucker sparkles on clean and shimmers with some overdrive. The neck 'bucker has a clarity that only found its match in the Super Swede's neck P90. The little Club also showcases an impressive level of sustain that makes blues noodling a joy.

Conclusion: The Höfner Club Solid is a cracking piece of eye candy, bursting with tone. If we have one complaint, it's aimed

at the generic slim neck profile. We reckon the Club would be a stone killer if it had a chubbier neck, but some of you may well disagree. Anyway, as it stands, this is one Club we'd definitely be interested in joining – especially given just how affordable the membership fee is.

SUMMARY

For: Great pickups, serious eye candy
Against: We'd like a meatier neck

★★★★☆

TG says: Join the club

At a glance

Höfner Club Solid

BODY: Mahogany with flame maple top
NECK: Maple, set-in
FINGERBOARD: Rosewood
FRETS: 22 medium
SCALE: 25½"
PICKUPS: 2x Höfner mini humbuckers
CONTROLS: 2x volume, 1x tone, 3-way pickup selector
HARDWARE: Chrome
FINISH: Honey Burst, Black Cherry, Black
CONTACT: Barnes and Mullins 01691 652449
WEB: www.hofner.com