

## FIRST PLAY



**SCHECTER C-6 PRO**  
£599

**WHAT IS IT?** A modern shred machine that punches above its price in looks and performance



**SCHECTER C-1 FR S SLS ELITE**  
£1,399

**WHAT IS IT?** A tone-timber feast playing host to a groundbreaking pickup and infinite sustain

# Timber Kings

Pete Townshend and Mark Knopfler may have put them on the map, but Schecter's latest combine shred guitar performance with old-school tonewoods

**Words** Ed Mitchell **Photography** Olly Curtis

Once upon a time, there were three golden rules for builders of shred guitars. One: the whole guitar shalt not exceed the weight of a newborn Daddy Long Legs. Two: when it comes to the neck, anything thicker than a splinter shall be considered excessive. Three: thou must equip said beast with overwound humbuckers that would challenge the magnetic field of an exploded supernova. 30 years on from the original heyday of the shred machine, many of us still hold these clichés to be self-evident. In truth, though, modern rock, metal or shred guitars – however you like to pigeonhole them – are much more complex and diverse than their first-run ancestors.

Fresh from the drawing board at Schecter HQ, the Indonesian-built C-6 Pro and











1. Take a closer look and you'll see that the C-1 FR S SLS Elite's neck pickup slot is occupied with a Sustainiac unit. This offers infinite sustain – until the battery runs out

2. The C-6 Pro's USP is its arched burl top. Burl, or 'burr' as its better known 'round these parts, is a cut of deformed wood. Here, it plays host to a pair of direct mount Schecter Diamond Decimator humbuckers

3. The C-1's spec dwarfs much of its competition thanks to the groundbreaking Fishman Fluence bridge 'bucker and a 1500 Series double-locking Floyd Rose vibrato. We like the stainless steel highlights on the Floyd; it adds to the C-1's upscale looks

4. The C-1 is packing enough rich timber to make a woodworm's head spin. You get a through-body neck spliced together from maple, walnut and padauk, swamp ash body wings, a tasty looking flame maple top, and an ebony fingerboard



Korean-made C-1 FR S SLS Elite aim to knock those old prejudices on the head. For a start, the C-6 Pro and the more long-winded and upscale C-1 FR S SLS Elite tip the scales at around 3.5kg (7.7lb) each. That's about the same as your average alder body Telecaster or Strat. Got it? These guitars won't blow away if you leave a window open.

Featuring an offset double cutaway mahogany body, the C-6 Pro comes with an eye-catching sculpted 'burl' top, better known in the UK as 'burr'. This term refers to a wood that is riddled with deformities that are highlighted by our guitar's glossy Charcoal Burst finish. Oddly, Schecter doesn't tell us what the actual wood is. Anyway, depending on your point of view, the C-6 Pro's top is like a dreamy gaze toward a distant cosmos; a satellite image of a beautiful mountain range; or a biopsy of a brain or lung under a microscope. Our money is on the first two...

While you can buy the C-6 Pro with a double-locking Floyd Rose, we have the hardtail bridge with through-body stringing. That pretty top also features a pair of Schecter in-house Diamond Decimator humbuckers running into a master volume, master tone and a three-way pickup selector lever switch.







The metal-knobbed volume control also functions as a push/pull coil splitter for both pickups.

The C-6 Pro's three-piece bolt-on maple neck has a Fender-like 648mm (25.5-inch) scale length and is held fast to the body's sculpted heel with five-screws. In classic rock/metal/shred guitar style, the wenge 'board has a flat 355mm (14-inch) radius and 24 extra-jumbo frets. The neck's end of the deal is completed with small dot inlays, as-slippery-as-a-politician Black Tusq top nut, and six-on-a-side die-cast tuners.

Next up is the C-1 FR S SLS Elite. We'll shorten that to C-1 from here to save ink and our fingertips. The C-1 has a neck-through body construction. The 648mm (25.5-inch) neck is a multi-ply club sandwich of maple/walnut/maple/padauk/maple/walnut/maple. The body end of the neck is formed from a pair of swamp ash wings, an unusual choice for a guitar like this. We expected the more typical basswood.

The remainder of the C-1's physique is formed by an arched flame maple cap. It's a lovely looking lump of lumber made more spectacular by the Black Fade Burst finish. The blackness intensifies as your eyeballs drift from the cutaways towards the base of the body. The matching headstock adds to the C-1's upscale vibe.

Further clues to the high spec of this beautiful guitar are the 'FR' and solo 'S' in the model designation. 'FR' stands for the double-locking 1500 Series Floyd Rose; the 'S' tells us that we have the direct-mount Sustainiac pickup, and its circuitry, onboard. Like an EBow, this thing offers infinite sustain, at least until the nine-volt battery goes down. Of course, an EBow only works on one string at a time. The Sustainiac will set all six strings a-trembling, so it can handle chords, too.

Schecter has paired the Sustainiac with an active Fishman Fluence Modern humbucker. Also direct-mounted to the guitar's top, the Fluence is available from the manufacturer with Alnico or ceramic magnets. Fishman recommends the ceramic version for the bridge position and that's what we have in our C-1.

If you turn the C-1 body over, then you'll discover that it has two battery flaps: one

**Modern rock, metal or shred guitars are more complex and diverse than their first-run ancestors**



for the sustain circuitry, the other for the bridge pickup's lithium ion power pack. Battery life on the Fluence Modern is quoted as up to 200 hours. That's 12,000 minutes. So, you should be good for 4,000 three-minute classics, or almost two entire prog rock albums.

### Feel & Sounds

We mentioned earlier that the C-6 Pro has a 355mm (14-inch) fingerboard radius. Well, the C-1's ebony 'board is brandishing a 305 to 406mm (12- to 16-inch) compound radius. Long story short, both guitars deliver a super-low action and effortless string bending. Sculpting around the cutaways and neck heels also ensures that upper fret access is easy as pie.

So, let's start with the more cost-effective and less conventional C-6. We've become conditioned to expect mid-range Schecters to come shipped with (Seymour) Duncan Designed pickups. Instead, we're faced with the Diamond Decimators. Schecter produces some excellent high-end pickups, but these lower budget jobs are tasty, too. They remind us of the venerable SuperRock pups loaded into the popular Schecter PT model. They offer plenty of grunt yet they clean up nicely, too. Punchy and bright, the bridge unit impresses in humbucking and

coil-split modes. The neck pickup has bags of clarity and wails beautifully when you offer up some overdrive and your best blues rock licks.

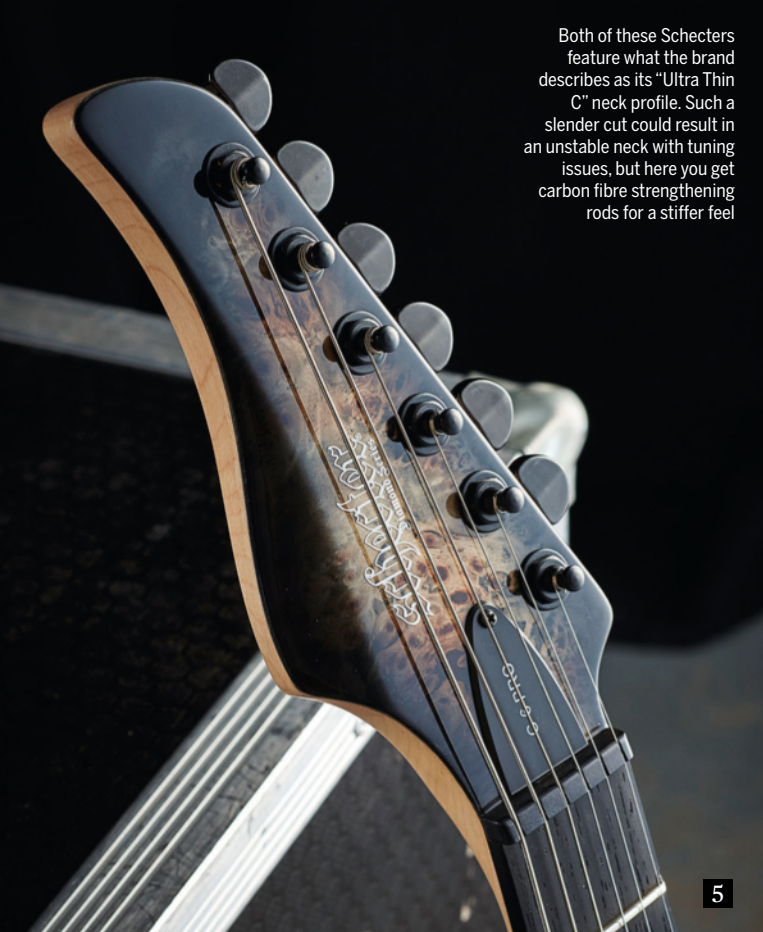
Now, the star of the C-1's line-up is the Sustainiac. There are two switches you need to know about. The first toggle simply turns the Sustainiac circuitry on and off. The second switch offers three modes: Fundamental, Mix and Harmonic. The first simply sustains the note or chord that you're playing. Harmonic generates a feedback-style high-pitch note. The aptly-named Mix is a mash-up of both. Some might view the Sustainiac as a gimmick, but you'd be wrong as it's a great technique booster. Imagine you're playing a solo. When you come to the end and want to emphasise the last note you can flick on the sustain circuitry. The note will keep on truckin'. Now, consider how cool it would be to sustain that last note then flick the mode switch to Harmonic. Suddenly, you have what sounds like sweet feedback, in the pitch of your original note. You can also sustain clean chords flavoured with delay, chorus, whatever, for synth-like pads. Reverb-drenched pedal steel licks sound awesome, too, even if a floating Floyd makes them a bit more of a challenge.

## The flame maple and burl tops add a touch of class to the wolf in sheep's clothing vibe

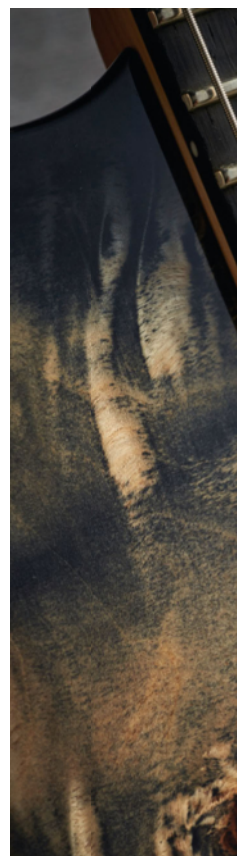
If Schecter hadn't twigged us to the fact that the bridge Fishman Fluence Modern had ceramic magnets, we'd have assumed they were Alnico jobs. The deal with these a Fishmans is that they aren't packed with conventional wiring, and they're properly noiseless. We like the crystal clear sparkle on tap here, and the fact that you don't lose that presence when you start piling on the filth. Thanks to the ceramic mags, there's plenty of output, but you can always hear the tone of the guitar under the thing.

That clarity we hear is likely down to the combination of the scale length, stiffened neck, direct-mount pups, and the Swamp ash and maple body woods. Yes, swamp ash is unconventional on this style of guitar, but file us under 'converts'. We also like the balance between the Fluence and the non-sustaining mode of the neck unit. As a tonal tag team there's nothing these things can't handle.

Both of these Schecters feature what the brand describes as its "Ultra Thin C" neck profile. Such a slender cut could result in an unstable neck with tuning issues, but here you get carbon fibre strengthening rods for a stiffer feel



5







## Verdict

There's probably more chance of POTUS Donald Trump getting his face chiselled into the side of Mount Rushmore than the C-1 and C-6 making the scene at a country gig. That's not to say that these things wouldn't cut the mustard in such a scenario, but, let's be honest, they have been typecast by their looks. Then there's the feel. If you design guitars with skinny necks, fat frets and flatter than vintage fingerboard radii, it's obvious you're not trying to entice Joe Bonamassa away from his '59 Les Pauls.

We don't doubt that these guitars will find the usual punters, but we think it'd be a shame if the rest of you judged them purely on their looks. There are no skulls or other daft graphics. The flame maple and burl tops add a touch of class to the wolf in sheep's clothing vibe. You can get either model with a hardtail or Floyd, and the pickups are versatile enough to cover most styles. Anyway, the quest for a slim-necked guitar isn't exclusive to the metal and shredder crowd.

Thanks to its Sustainiac and complex construction, the C-1 FR S SLS Elite is the pick of the litter here. That said, both guitars offer a level of performance, tone and build quality that you'll find hard to beat at their respective price points. This is one of those occasions you'd be wise to listen – and play – without prejudice. **G**

6. You might assume that the C-6 Pro has a rosewood fingerboard. Well, you'd be wrong. Schecter has spec'd a slab of wenge for this guitar's 'board. A rich-looking timber, wenge is tough, which adds to the C-6 Pro's snappy clean tone



## SCHECTER C-6 PRO

**PRICE:** £599

**ORIGIN:** Indonesia

**TYPE:** Offset double-cutaway electric

**BODY:** Mahogany w/ burl top

**NECK:** 3-piece maple, bolt-on with carbon fibre reinforcement rods

**SCALE LENGTH:** 648mm (25.5")

**NUT/WIDTH:** Graph Tech XL Black Tusq/42mm

**FINGERBOARD:** Wenge, 355mm (14") radius

**FRETS:** 24, extra-jumbo

**HARDWARE:** Black Schecter hardtail bridge with through-body stringing, and die-cast tuners

**STRING SPACING, BRIDGE:** 53mm

**ELECTRICS:** 2x Schecter Diamond Decimator humbuckers, master volume with push/pull coil-split, master tone and 3-way pickup selector blade switch

**WEIGHT (KG/LB):** 3.5/7.7

**RANGE OPTIONS:** C-6 Pro FR with black Floyd Rose Special Hot Rod double-locking vibrato and top nut in Aurora Burst, Charcoal Burst and Aqua Burst finish options (£649)

**LEFT-HANDERS:** No

**FINISHES:** Charcoal Burst (as reviewed), Aurora Burst and Aqua Burst

**Westside Distribution**

**0844 326 2000**

**www.schecterguitars.com**

8/10

**PROS** Thoughtful design offers effortless playability and upper-fret access; sounds that run from bright and spanky to full-on aggression

**CONS** The burl/burr finish is an acquired taste – that's it



## SCHECTER C-1 FR S SLS ELITE

**PRICE:** £1,399

**ORIGIN:** South Korea

**TYPE:** Offset double-cutaway electric

**BODY:** Swamp ash with flame maple top

**NECK:** Maple, walnut and padauk multi-ply, through-body with carbon fibre reinforcement rods

**SCALE LENGTH:** 648mm (25.5")

**NUT/WIDTH:** Locking Floyd Rose 1500 Series/41.3mm

**FINGERBOARD:** Ebony, compound 305-406mm (12"-16") radius

**FRETS:** 24, extra jumbo

**HARDWARE:** Black Floyd Rose 1500 Series double-locking vibrato and top nut, Grover Rotomatic 18:1 tuners

**STRING SPACING, BRIDGE:** 53mm

**ELECTRICS:** 1x Fishman Fluence Modern humbucker (bridge), 1x Sustainiac pickup (neck), master volume, master tone, 3-way pickup selector toggle switch, Sustainiac on/off and 3-way mode switch (harmonic/mix/fundamental)

**WEIGHT (KG/LB):** 3.6/7.9

**RANGE OPTIONS:** With 2x Fishman Fluence Modern humbuckers and Black Fade Burst and Antique Fade Burst finish options, there's the C-1 FR SLS Elite with Floyd Rose (£1,315) and the C-1 SLS Elite with Hipshot hardtail bridge (£1,229).

Plenty of 7-string action, too!

**LEFT-HANDERS:** Yes, but not at the time of writing in the UK

**FINISHES:** Black Fade Burst

(as reviewed), Antique Fade Burst



9/10

**PROS** Build quality, compound radius, neck stability, versatile bridge 'bucker, unconventional tone wood choices, Sustainiac...

**CONS** Seriously, where's the case? We're spending well over a grand here!