

ACOUSTIC

Vintage Guitar
APPROVED
GEAR



Waterloo WL-12
Price: \$2,200 (list)
Info: www.waterlooguitars.com

Santa Cruz Vintage Southerner
Price: \$5,700 (list)
Info: www.santacruzguitar.com

Waterloo WL-12

The Waterloo line from Collings Guitars seeks to evoke the small-bodied soul of pre-war acoustics. These are not overly ornate flat-tops, but simpler workhorses that put a premium on sounding good.

The WL-12 is a 12-fret acoustic fitted with an X-braced spruce top and flamed-maple back and sides, topped with an Iced Tea finish, tortoise pickguard, and white top binding. The body has a width of 14.75" on the lower bout and a neck scale of 24.875", while its rosewood fingerboard has dot inlays, vintage-styled tuners, and a drop-in saddle. Also impressive is its light weight – under 3.5 pounds. The neck is a larger D-shape that's quite comfortable and set up with low action.

One selling point is that, with the 12-fret design, the bridge sits closer to the middle of the lower bout, which endeavors to create more bass and projection. In practice, the WL-12 sounded like a fine parlor guitar, with medium bass, pleasing high-end, and a midrange akin to a resonator guitar – just right for miked-up recording, gigging, or playing on the porch.

Overall, the Waterloo WL-12 is more about craftsmanship and tone than fancy finishes, and it more than delivers in that regard. Compared to a heavier dreadnought or jumbo, the light weight and playability of the guitar also makes the WL-12 a go-to instrument that sounds great for fingerpicking, blues, ragtime, bottleneck, country, or any kind of acoustic music you can think of. The Waterloo WL-12 is simply vintage done right. – *Pete Prown*

Santa Cruz Vintage Southerner

Santa Cruz Guitar Company's Vintage Southerner model is a beauty to look at – and a beauty to hear.

The VS is founder Richard Hoover's ode to Gibson's vaunted Advanced Jumbo and stalwart J-45. You might think it would be tough to improve on those classic, but the VS would prove you wrong.

The first thing you notice is how light the guitar is. Give it a strum, and the sound is clear, strong, and muscular while still being woody and rich.

The second thing you'll admire is the build quality. It's simply stunning, from the mahogany back and sides to the Sitka spruce top with double-tapered bracing and that drop-dead gorgeous sunburst with tobacco

THE FINE ART OF THE ACOUSTIC

There's just no match for the simple pleasure of strumming an acoustic. We recently played 11 models in a range of prices to fit any budget, and here offer our findings. Enjoy.