

PAUL REED SMITH

STARLA

LIST PRICE: \$1,739.97

www.prsguitars.com



Paul Reed Smith's new Starla guitar is a winner. A spin-off of the well-received Mira, the Starla differs in that it features a few more vintage stylings. It is a single cutaway rather than a double cutaway design and comes standard with a Bigsby tremolo. The pickups are also a new proprietary design, which is based on a vintage Filtron and uses Alnico magnets. The Starla sports a thin, solid mahogany body, and 24-fat-frets on an East Indian rosewood fingerboard.

When strapped on, the initial feel of the Starla is reminiscent of an old school Gibson SG. It is solid yet lightweight and easy to handle. This one came in a vintage orange. The look is far less ominous than an SG though—even in the vintage cherry color—so don't worry about scaring Grandma. Single knobs for volume and tone, and the three-position toggle switch recall an old and accessible arrangement for tonal variation. Many players appreciate this kind of simplicity, as one can dial in a couple of nice sounds and switch between them without having to over think. The tremolo setup also adds to the already pleasing vintage aesthetic here and optional bird inlays will further sweeten the deal.

Through a Fender Vibrolux amp, the Starla sounded amazing. The clean tones really surprised me. The front pickup had a fat jazzy tone and was crystal clear and warm. The bridge pickup was trebly without piercing the eardrum, and with the toggle switch in the center position, I was reminded of a Strat sound. Starla sounds much more complex and subtle than the SG-type guitar I expected. The pickups sound more like single coils to me, and although I could not find much information about them other than their Alnico magnets. When run through some distortion, the Starla got nasty in a non-threatening way, and the Bigsby tremolo gave it a cool twangy-ness. I was also happy with its playability. The neck is round like that of an old Les Paul, but like everything else about this guitar, it still has its own feel.

The Starla sells for around \$1,739.97, and the numerous features and dynamic qualities of this guitar justify the price. Paul Reed Smiths are always well built instruments. This Starla lives up to that standard. While a lot of vintage perks may fool you at first, Starla has an original sound.—NICK WORLEY