

by Chad Johnson



## PRS STARLA

Ever since the endorsement of guitar monsters such as Carlos Santana in the early Eighties, PRS has led the way in top-end electric guitars. Never one to rest on their laurels, though, the company has continued to push the boundaries of convention while maintaining the highest standards of tone and playability. Their new Starla model embodies this practice to a T. With a bold look and design, it's certain to turn heads.

### FEATURES

The Starla is available in Vintage Cherry, Vintage Mahogany, Vintage Orange, and Black finishes. For this review, I received a Black model. The guitar sports a solid mahogany body with a single cutaway and an attractive, substantial pickguard. The mahogany neck is topped off with a 22-fret east Indian rosewood fretboard featuring dot inlays (bird inlays optional). Vintage-style tuners add to the classic look of this instrument, but the real allure to this guitar is the Bigsby B5 tailpiece with a Grover Tune-O-Matic bridge—a first for PRS.

The guitar comes standard with Starla Treble and Bass humbucking pickups—another PRS original design—and three-way selector switch. Single volume and tone controls result in an uncluttered feel and easy operation. Taken altogether, the Starla is a beautiful, unique-looking instrument.

### SOUND & PLAYABILITY

The Starla felt great right out of the case. String tension felt even throughout, and the action was easy on the fingers up and down the neck, with no dead spots. The guitar did, however, feel a little lopsided when playing it while balanced on my knee; it had a slight tendency to slip off the right side. Once I strapped it on in standing position, however, it felt fine.

Plugged in, the neck pickup sounded rich and complex, with a glassy tint and spongy top end. In clean settings, this translated to a mellow tone with nice, clear highs. With overdrive, a more pronounced throatiness emerged, which filled out blues lines quite nicely. The bridge pickup was equally enjoyable, with a stinging overdriven tone and ample sustain on higher gain settings. For lead work, the Starla handled AC/DC-style licks as effortlessly as it did Cream-era Clapton tones. Working in between them provided a nice balance of the two sounds that fit the bill perfectly for arpeggiated chords.

Admittedly, it didn't take long before I was taking the Bigsby for a test drive. Within minutes, I was dressing up all kinds of riffs with the bar and having a blast doing it. Much more than a gimmick, it performed equally well when adding subtle vibrato or interjecting specifically-timed dips and returns. The Bigsby felt smooth as silk and made incredibly subtle, musical effects easy to obtain.

Truly unique, yet familiar and versatile, the Starla is nothing short of stellar addition to the PRS lineup. It can rock out with the best of them, but it's got serious style and personality—both visually and sonically.

### IN A NUTSHELL

- Solid mahogany neck and body
  - Bigsby B5 tailpiece with Grover Tune-O-Matic bridge
  - Starla Treble and Bass humbucking pickups; volume and tone controls, 3-way blade selector switch
  - 24 1/2" scale, dot inlays (abalone birds optional),
  - 22 frets, east Indian rosewood fretboard
  - Vintage-style tuners, black pickguard
- \$2480 List [prsguitars.com](http://prsguitars.com)**

HEAR IT ONLINE!



[guitaredgemag.com](http://guitaredgemag.com)