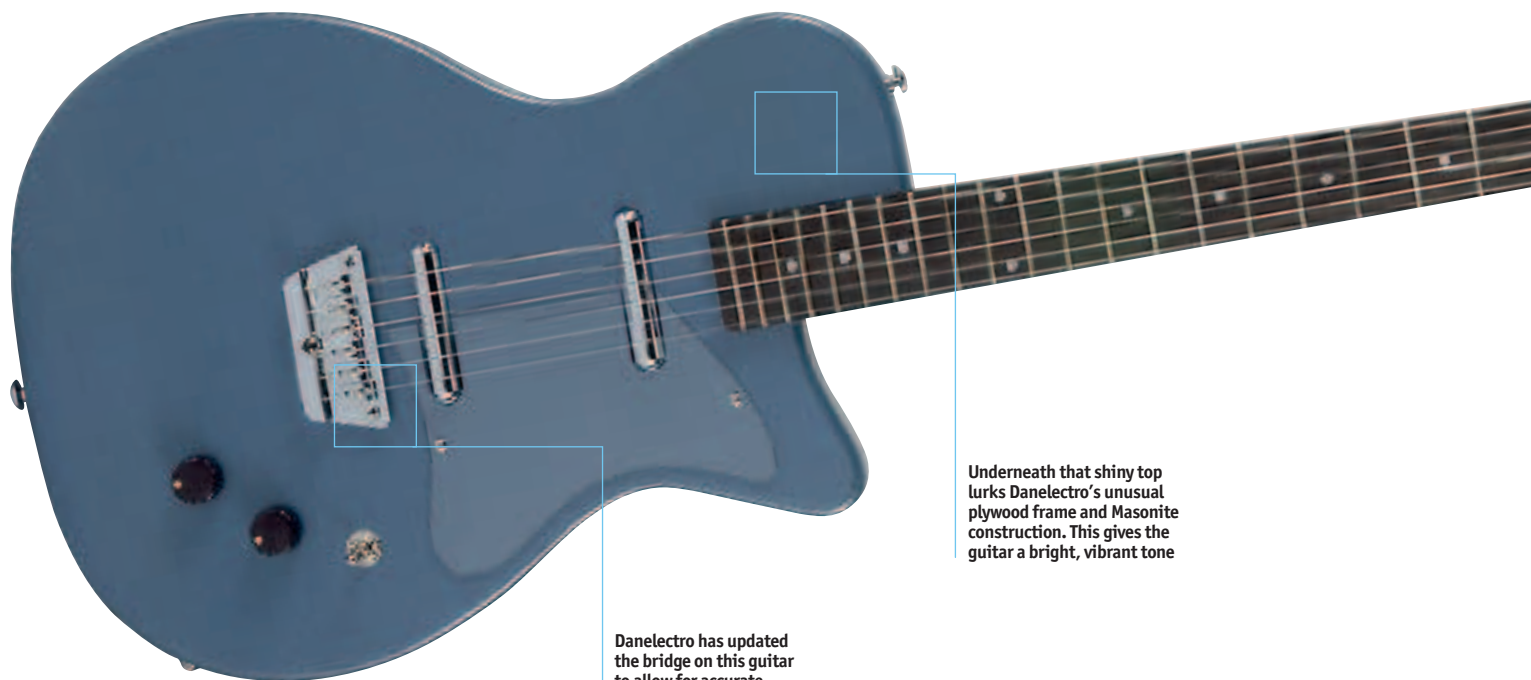


## GEAR DANELECTRO 56 PRO



Underneath that shiny top lurks Danelectro's unusual plywood frame and Masonite construction. This gives the guitar a bright, vibrant tone

Danelectro has updated the bridge on this guitar to allow for accurate intonation adjustment

£299

# DANELECTRO 56 PRO

ROCK 'EM DANO! A LEGEND OF ROCK GUITAR MAKES A WELCOME RETURN... WORDS: ED MITCHELL

**> A rock legend for a quid shy of £300? You're having a laugh!**

OK, so we're not slobbering over a vintage Les Paul or a 1963 Stratocaster. But this new Danelectro 56 Pro still has oodles of rock 'n' roll pedigree. You must have seen photos of Jimmy Page strutting around with a black Danelectro guitar onstage with Led Zeppelin in the early 1970s. Well, Pagey wasn't the only guitar hero to fall for that Dano charm.

A pre-Armani Eric Clapton occasionally sidelined his usual Gibson SG and ES-335 arsenal to spank a sweet little Danelectro – complete with psychedelic paint job, natch – with his band Cream in the late 1960s. John Fogerty of Creedence Clearwater Revival began his playing career on one, too. Even hairy-arsed TG favourite Zakk Wylde uses a vintage example to lay down those rare clean parts on his songs when he's in the recording studio. The big lug reckons no other guitar sounds quite like it.

### How come it's so cheap, then?

Danelectro guitars are a classic example of an ugly duckling that became a swan; the mouse that roared; the plucky little pooch that finally has its day. This is a guitar designed specifically for beginners and garage band rockers – using the most basic construction methods and the cheapest materials available – that somehow found its way into the hands of guitar heroes.

The good news is that, while Danelectro has updated some of the hardware and cosmetic features on their new baby, the 56

Pro retains all the pawnshop prize cool of those original rock star favourites. Pretty darn neat, huh?

### Is it a solidbody guitar?

Nope. The first time you pick up one of these guitars, you'll be shocked at how light they are. This is thanks to the unusual construction method pioneered by Danelectro founder Nathan Daniel, back in 1956. Daniel had actually begun building solidbody guitars two years earlier, but soon switched to a unique plywood frame and Masonite design to enable him to make his instruments quicker and, more importantly for us, cheaper.

These new guitars had a plywood frame that supported the neck and bridge, and formed the sides of the instrument. Daniel then glued Masonite caps on the front and back of the frame to create the completed body shape. The top and back of the guitars were painted in various groovy 1950s colours, while the unpainted sides were hidden with cream coloured vinyl tape. His timing was perfect: America was in the grip of rock 'n' roll fever, and the electric guitar was suddenly big news. As a result, Daniel's funky little guitars sold like hot cakes.

### What the hell is Masonite?

It's basically chipboard. We could bore you with the details of when it was invented, by whom, and how it's made, but you'll probably just skip this paragraph through sheer boredom! Let's just say that no

### WHO'S IT FOR?

Retro rockers, blues players and anyone looking for a budget axe with retro attitude

### INFORMATION

**ORIGIN:** Korea  
**BODY:** Masonite/plywood  
**NECK:** Maple, bolt-on  
**FINGERBOARD:** Rosewood, with dot inlays  
**FRETS:** 21 medium  
**PICKUPS:** 2 x Danelectro 'lipstick' singlecoils  
**CONTROLS:** 1 x volume, 1 x tone and three-way pickup selector switch  
**HARDWARE:** Chrome adjustable bridge, die-cast machineheads and aluminium top nut  
**CASE:** No  
**LEFT-HANDERS:** No  
**COLOUR OPTIONS:** Red, black, gold, metallic blue and cream  
**CONTACT:** John Hornby Skewes 01132 865 381  
**WEB:** www.danelectro.com

### ALTERNATIVELY

**Jerry Jones single cutaway** – \$900 (approx. £495)

**Supro Coronado** – \$699 (approx. £385)

**Squier Standard Jagmaster** – £249

Brazilian rainforest was harmed in the making of this guitar. The 56 Pro proves the theory that you don't always need exotic tone-woods to build a great sounding axe. That's got to be good news for all you tree huggers out there. Of course, using low cost materials, like Masonite and plywood, helps to keep down the price of this guitar for all us wallet huggers, too. In other words, everyone's a winner.

### What's the story with the pickups?

That's another of clever old Nathan Daniel's money saving ideas. Rather than build his pickup covers from scratch, Daniel discovered that he could stuff all the magnets, coils and wires into surplus lipstick tubes. Once again, Daniel's penny-pinching paid off big time. His new lipstick pickups – as they came to be known – not only sounded great but looked awesome, too.

The pickups on the 56 Pro maintain all the good looks of the originals, but have a bit more going on in the trouser department. The sparkle of the original guitars is still present, but there's more power to suit those players looking for a retro style guitar that will still give their overdrive pedals a good workout. The bridge unit is bright with no sign of harshness, and the neck pickup twangs just like you'd expect for a guitar designed in the 1950s.

Danos are well known for the unique power boost you get when you switch on both pickups at the same time and the 56 Pro has that, too. It's great for solos...



The 56 Pro features a stylised update of Danelectro's famous 'Coke bottle' headstock, and the machineheads are good quality die-cast units



No Danelectro would be complete without the company's legendary lipstick pickups. The 56 Pro has a pair of these beefy sounding units

## FUZZ PEDALS ON A SHOESTRING

FANCY A FUZZ BOX FOR THE PRICE OF A DECENT GUITAR STRAP? THEN READ ON...

Not even Ebenezer Scrooge could hope to bag a decent fuzz pedal for under £20, never mind a choice of three. But hold onto your britches folks, for budget effects gurus Danelectro have broken the stompbox price barrier with their new FAB range – the D-1 Distortion, D-2 Overdrive and D-3 Metal pedals – retailing at £19.99 each!

All three pedals share a compact, tough plastic body shell, oval-shaped on/off footswitch and 9volt battery operation

(an optional power supply is available for £9.99). The pedals also have a three-control layout in common: level, tone and gain.

The gain control is renamed O.D and Dist on the D-2 Overdrive and D-1 Distortion, respectively. In the end, only the amount of filth on offer really distinguishes each model.

The star of the bunch for us is the FAB Overdrive ★★★★★. This beauty offers a fairly convincing take on a juiced-up valve amp. It

has the type of fuzzy garage tone that would put a bump in Jack White's tight red pants. We loved the ratty punk tone we got with our Telecaster...

The FAB Metal ★★★★★ has a lot more gain on offer, though we did find it a bit fizzy on its higher settings. This is a good pedal for guitarists who prefer Metallica's 1980s tones to the fuller sounds of *St Anger*. Just make sure you use it with humbuckers for the best results.

Finally, the FAB Distortion ★★★★★ offers a good middle ground of overdrive and distortion tones for rockers and modern day punks – think of bands like Green Day and Rancid.

The FAB range offers a lot of bang for your buck. Even though we preferred the Overdrive, all the pedals are worth trying. You might find the sound of your dreams without battering your piggy bank.



## Are there any other differences between the new 56 Pro and the original 1950s Danelectro guitars?

Some of you may know that

Danelectro reissued its guitar line, along with a few new designs, in the 1990s. Those reissues were more faithful to the original guitars than our 56 Pro, but they did have a few 'quirks' that put some players off. The 56 Pro is based on the 1956 U2 model.

When this guitar was reissued in the 1990s, it had the same wooden bridge saddle as the original U2. While Dano-loving anoraks were pleased to see this original feature preserved, others found the lack of accurate intonation adjustment frustrating. That's why we're pleased to see a fully adjustable bridge on the 56 Pro.

We're also happy to see the U2 reissue's slightly confusing concentric volume tone controls simplified on the 56 Pro. Rather than the 'stacked' volume and tone for each pickup, you now get a master volume and tone that serves both pickups.

This is so much easier to use, especially when playing on a dark stage. In addition, Danelectro has done away with the vinyl tape that covered the original guitar's sides.

We miss it, but it did have an annoying tendency to bubble and peel off, which wasn't so cool, so we can live without it.

## Was the neck black on the original guitars, too?

The originals – and the reissues – had plain maple necks. We're not sure why Danelectro has chosen to paint the 56 Pro's comfortable C profile neck, but it sure looks great. They have also subtly altered their famous 'Coke bottle' headstock shape with a cheeky little flourish on the tip. Who knows, maybe the Coke folk complained?

Anyway, staying at the pointy end, another update we are pleased to see is a set of good quality die-cast machineheads. Danelectro has really made an effort to present this guitar as a serious option for the modern day guitarist.

## I think I'll check it out...

The 56 Pro is awesome. Danelectro has made sensible improvements to this classic guitar without sacrificing any of its much-loved vintage appeal. It won't suit extreme metal players, of course, but just about anyone else should check it out.

Incidentally, the 56 Pro is just the first step in a major reissue program for Danelectro guitars. We can't wait to see what's coming next!

**FOR:** Looks awesome; sounds great; that vintage 'cool' factor  
**AGAINST:** It's made of chipboard! Shredders will hate it...

TG RATING:

