



TAKAMINE EG345C

TG HAS THE CHIME OF OUR LIFE WITH TAKAMINE'S NEW G-SERIES 12-STRING...

WORDS: HENRY YATES

> THE SIZZLE

Let's kick off with a few myths about 12-string guitars. Myth 1: they can only be used for strumming open chords. Myth 2: they're only played by cross-legged hippies at the Newport Folk Festival. Myths 3, 4 and 5: they look uncool, cost too much and should only be considered when everything else on your wish list has been crossed off.

Now let's give you some facts about 12-string guitars. They have been played by some of the most influential guitarists in history (from George Harrison to Johnny Marr). They've formed the cornerstone of the best tracks ever (from The Byrds' *Mr Tambourine Man* to Led Zeppelin's *Stairway To Heaven*). They can look cool, make you sound better than you are and needn't cost more than a standard six-string, especially if you go for Takamine's new EG345C.

WHAT'S IT GOT?

Even if you can't read the small print on the headstock, the EG345C's price tag should make it clear that this electro-acoustic belongs to Takamine's entry level G-Series. If this were any other company, or any other budget line, TG would be on high alert. In our experience, however, Takamine take such pride in their work that the standards of their premium Japanese thoroughbreds often spill over into their Chinese-made workhorses. For the moment, our teeth remain ungritted.

In terms of its appearance you might describe the EG345C as a fairly textbook offering. It has a classic dreadnought body (hinting at decent unamplified welly) and a cutaway that suggests we will be doing more than folkie strumming. Thanks to the natural gloss finish you get a clear view of

the ply spruce that forms the soundboard and the laminate mahogany that makes up the body. The wood side of the specification list is completed by a gorgeous mahogany neck and rosewood fretboard. The absence of solid woods is a slight disappointment and reminded TG that we're shopping in the lower reaches of the Takamine catalogue here. Still, we got over it thanks to the

"The EG345C is a well built model with a tone that epitomises why 12-strings are great"

EG345C's excellent hardware and preamp.

With individual piezo pickups beneath the bridge saddles and a TP-4T preamp complete with chromatic tuner, 3-band EQ and Gain control, we were soon starting to feel spoiled again. More importantly, we were hopeful of a characterful tone even if we had to cheat by using a bagful of FX pedals to achieve it.

BUILT TO LAST?

Due to the lack of solid tonewoods (which tend to 'sweeten' with age), the EG345C won't get any better as time passes. But it won't get any worse either. Takamine have been refining the construction of their acoustics since 1962 and the latest batch of G-Series models have reaped all the benefits of their experience. In this case we're looking at a tough build and a tidy finish with nothing serious to flag up.

HANDS ON

Pick up the EG345C and you will notice two things. First of all, it's comparatively heavy (due to the additional tuners and saddles required to accommodate all the strings). Secondly, it has a slightly wider neck profile

than most six-string acoustics. Neither of these factors is a big deal, though.

In the past, TG has been driven to the point of madness by dodgy machineheads on 12-string guitars (it's a headache trying to identify which string is out of tune). Fortunately, we didn't have this problem with the EG345C, which only required a couple of minor adjustments during the time we spent playing it.

This sense of quality continued when our fingers touched down on the EG345C's fretboard. Obviously, it won't have to cope with the same acrobatics as a six-string instrument, but we felt it still promoted more involved technique than simplistic strumming. While fingerpicking is notoriously difficult on these guitars (there isn't enough room between the strings), we found that hitting individual notes with a plectrum soon felt natural.

The main event was always going to be the tone. TG has always been a sucker for the multi-octave chime of a 12-string and the EG345C is a belter. Chords sound full and lush. Rudimentary runs sound adventurous and multi-dimensional. Tired old riffs are suddenly reinvigorated.

THE BOTTOM LINE

Whether you're a seasoned 12-stringer or just starting out, the Takamine EG345C is worthy of investigation. It's a comfortable model with a tone that epitomises why 12-strings are great. Check it out – you'll have the chime of your life.

FOR: Ace example of the 12-string shimmer...
AGAINST: Solid top would've been the icing

TG RATING:



WHO'S IT FOR?

Anyone who wants their riffs to sound like they've been beamed down from heaven...

INFORMATION

ORIGIN: China
TOP: Spruce (laminated)
BODY/SIDES: Mahogany (laminated)
NECK: Mahogany
FINGERBOARD: Rosewood, with abalone dots
FRETS: 20
HARDWARE: Gold tuners
PREAMP: TP-4T
GIGBAG: No
LEFT-HANDER: No
CONTACT: Korg UK
01908 857100
WEB: www.takamine.co.uk

ALTERNATIVELY

Vintage V400-12 – £139
Crafter CTS 150 12 – £389
Tanglewood TW15/12-NS – £469