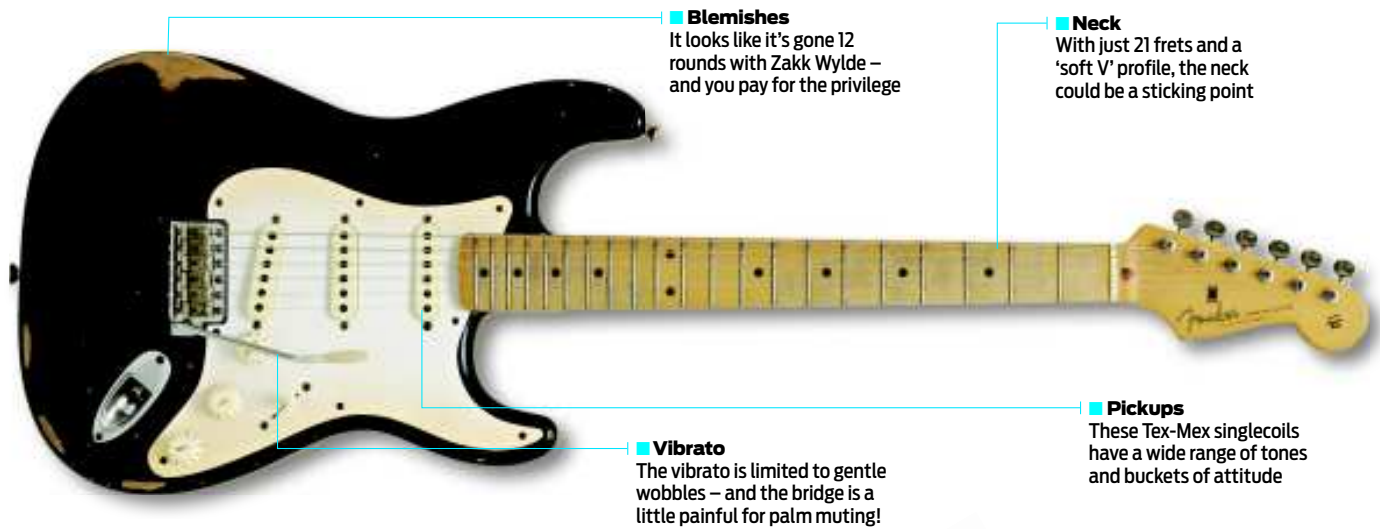


# Rocked & Rated





**■ Blemishes**  
It looks like it's gone 12 rounds with Zakk Wylde – and you pay for the privilege

**■ Neck**  
With just 21 frets and a 'soft V' profile, the neck could be a sticking point

**■ Vibrato**  
The vibrato is limited to gentle wobbles – and the bridge is a little painful for palm muting!

**■ Pickups**  
These Tex-Mex singlecoils have a wide range of tones and buckets of attitude

# Fender Road Worn 50s Stratocaster

£859

This new Strat is a chip off the old block, but the price may leave you 'distressed'

**F**ender's Road Worn 50s Stratocaster is not all it seems. Run a hand across its battle-scarred body and you might conclude this model left the factory in 1954, survived 17 world tours, fought off Hells Angels at the Altamont Festival, and once had a Mexican hooker stub *cigarillos* on the scratchplate.

The more prosaic truth is that this battered, bruised, blemished journeyman actually rolled off a Mexican production line a few months ago, where it was gently 'distressed' and marked up to £859. It's been beautifully executed, but are the benefits more than skin-deep?

Aged guitars are old news, but the Road Worn Strat sparked TG's interest because its beat-up finish is backed by a largely faithful 50s spec. It certainly makes this model interesting, but not all modern guitarists will dig the historical hat-tipping. Old-school Strats strictly had 21 frets, for instance, and a very spikey bridge, and both features are retained here. They also had a 'soft V' neck profile, and while this reviewer loves its supportive

central ridge and slim fit, some big-handed mates feel it lacks a little meat. Thankfully, the one duff feature of the 50s Strat (you couldn't combine pickups) has been canned for the five-way switch we all know and love.

Physically, a Strat is a Strat, and aside from the neck, you should know what to expect from the world's most familiar design (comfort, fret access and good resilience to damage). The pickups throw more of a curveball; if you like the standard alnico singlecoil then you'll welcome these Tex-Mex units, which are wound more times, have a higher output and shimmer, sting and quack more convincingly. With five settings, there's not much you can't do.

We like the Road Worn Strat. Still, we can't help crunching the numbers. It's obvious this represents a bargain compared to the demands of Fender's Relic models, but with a Classic Player 50s Strat costing £589, a standard Mexican Strat weighing in at £469, and the all-important Tex-Mex units priced £89 as an aftermarket option, there's a compelling argument that you

should just buy one of them and pick up your own battle scars.

**Conclusion:** When it's on your lap and you're lost in the punchy singlecoil tone and supreme handling, you'll be in no doubt that this is a five-star guitar. But put it down, allow your passion to cool and match the price tag against the rest of the Fender product line, and you might agree that it feels like you're paying an inflated premium for the services of a man holding some sandpaper. It's up to you. But don't knock it 'til you've tried it.

Henry Yates

## At a glance

### Fender Road Worn 50s Stratocaster

**BODY:** Solid alder  
**NECK:** Maple, bolt-on  
**FINGERBOARD:** Maple  
**FRETS:** 21  
**SCALE:** 25.5"  
**PICKUPS:** 3x Tex-Mex singlecoils  
**CONTROLS:** 1x volume, 2x tone, 5-way pickup selector  
**HARDWARE:** Aged chrome  
**FINISH:** Aged Black [pictured], Sunburst  
**LEFT-HANDED:** No  
**CONTACT:** Fender GB1 01342 331700

## SUMMARY

**For:** Gorgeous tone, great finish, nice feel

**Against:** Archaic 50s features, neck not for everyone

★★★★☆

**TG says...** Damaged goods, but very good



**"THE ROAD WORN REPRESENTS A BARGAIN COMPARED WITH RELIC MODELS BUT WE CAN'T HELP CRUNCHING THE NUMBERS"**