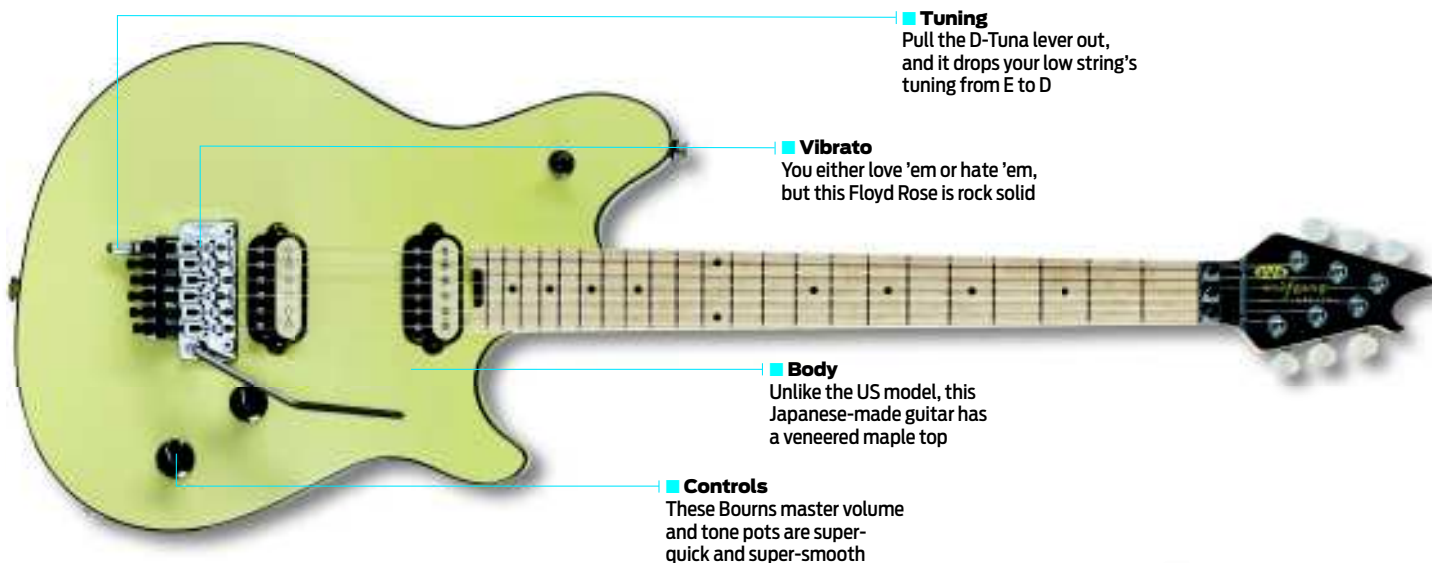


Rocked & Rated





■ **Tuning**
Pull the D-Tuna lever out, and it drops your low string's tuning from E to D

■ **Vibrato**
You either love 'em or hate 'em, but this Floyd Rose is rock solid

■ **Body**
Unlike the US model, this Japanese-made guitar has a veneered maple top

■ **Controls**
These Bourns master volume and tone pots are super-quick and super-smooth

EVH Wolfgang Special £1,029

Steady, Eddie's new guitar could cause an *Eruption* from your wallet

Eddie Van Halen's approach to signature guitar making is perhaps rivalled only by Brian May. Rather than slapping his name on any old axe, he decided to start his own company in partnership with Fender back in 2007, offering replicas of his infamous Frankenstein guitar, then later the Wolfgang model. The newest addition to EVH's line-up is the Wolfgang Special, a cut-priced model made in Japan, carrying less than half the price tag of its US-made counterpart.

While some aggressive price slashing may make you eyeball the spec sheet with suspicion, you'll be relieved to discover that the EVH-branded Floyd Rose and D-Tuna, EVH pickups and Bourns low-friction pots have survived. Even the vintage-size stainless steel fretwire is the same. In fact, the main difference is a structural one; the basswood body is topped with a flat maple veneer rather than the US model's half-inch piece of arched AA maple.

The Wolfgang Special comes in an impressively rugged EVH-branded SKB flight case. Open it up and you'll be greeted with a neatly constructed guitar. The neck features a sweat-friendly

satin finish, and while the small body and stubby headstock may give the feel of a compact scale, it's actually 25½-inches long.

Plugging in is where you'll find the first surprise: the pickup switch is wired backwards as per Eddie's guitar. As you might expect, both humbuckers react extremely well to high-gain settings, with the bridge pickup giving a drop in bass for extra clarity. Most impressive, though, is the neck humbucker. If you usually avoid this position for overdriven parts, we think you'll like it. It has plenty of chunk, but not so much that it becomes mushy, and backing off the gain really allows the woody neck tone to shine through for some bluesy lead sounds.

Those who regularly use a Floyd Rose will have learned a valuable lesson: don't mess with your tunings. However, Eddie's D-Tuna modification lets you quickly and stably drop the sixth string to D. We tried our best to de-rail this Floyd, but after rigorously divebombing through the floor, we only encountered the slightest tuning movement. The inclusion of Bourns low-friction pots makes violining with the volume control a breeze, too.

They're extremely light and very fast, even if the positioning isn't as convenient as that of a Strat.

Conclusion: At £1,029, the Wolfgang Special isn't a cheap guitar, but you don't have to shop around too hard to find it for well under a grand, which is a decent price given the amount of pro features on offer. The compound neck radius and meticulously finished fretwork give the speed and performance of a widdlestick, while the basswood/maple slab of a body handles like a meaty rock guitar. If you see this guitar hanging on the wall, we suggest you *Jump* to try it!
Stuart Williams

At a glance

EVH Wolfgang Special

BODY: Basswood with maple veneer
NECK: 5-piece maple
FINGERBOARD: Maple
FRETS: 22
SCALE: 25½"
PICKUPS: 2x EVH humbuckers
CONTROLS: Volume, Tone, 3-way pickup selector
HARDWARE: Chrome
LEFT HANDED: No
FINISH: Vintage White [pictured], Black, Tobacco Sunburst (extra)
CONTACT: Fender GBI 01342 331700
WEB: www.evhgear.com

SUMMARY

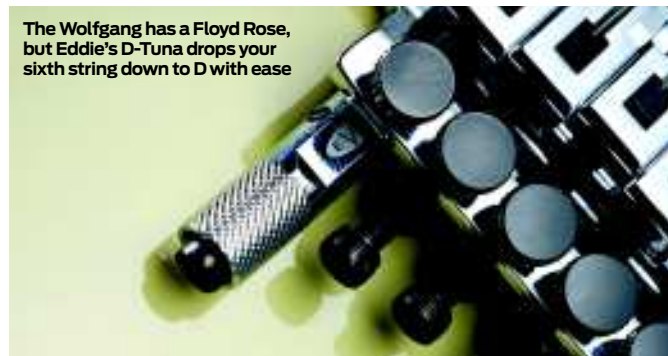
For: Pro features, sound and playability

Against: The pickup wiring has the potential to confuse you

★★★★☆

TG says... Cool and the 'gang

The Wolfgang has a Floyd Rose, but Eddie's D-Tuna drops your sixth string down to D with ease



"THE NECK AND FRETWORK GIVE THE PERFORMANCE OF A WIDDLESTICK WHILE THE BODY HANDLES LIKE A MEATY ROCK GUITAR"