

DANELECTRO '56 SINGLE CUTAWAY

£369

It's close encounters for the third time with an affordable 50s icon

HERE'S Danelectro in a nutshell for you fact fans. In the late 40s, Nathan Daniels launches an affordable single cutaway electric guitar called the U2, built from the kind of materials a carpenter uses to knock up a kitchen. A decade later, Jimmy Page of Led Zeppelin rocks a double cutaway version of the guitar and the humble Dano becomes an icon. The brand was later resurrected in the late 90s.

The new '56 series guitar is the third reissue of that original U2 model. The first reissue appeared in 1998, bursting with original

option of red, black or aqua finishes. All cost £369 a throw.

Our '56 review model comes loaded with twin lipstick singlecoil pickups, wired to a pair of stacked volume and tone controls. The big disc on the bottom is the volume control, the white knob on the top is the tone, and there's a seriously chunky pickup selector toggle switch onboard.

Danelectro's guitars have always been a poke in the eye to tonewood geeks. Run the '56 through the clean channel of your amp and see how vibrant a guitar made of inexpensive materials can

sound. The bridge lipstick pickup sounds a bit like a fat Strat singlecoil. The neck unit sounds warmer, natch, but it still has some edge. Of course, the big story with Dano guitars is the middle position on the toggle switch. The pickups

are wired in series, so switching both units on significantly boosts the guitar's output and produces a beefy tone that takes everyone by surprise. Clean or overdriven, these pickups deliver the goods.

The '56 is obviously no shred beast, but it can handle pretty much any other music genre: blues, country, rockabilly, classic rock, indie and punk. It's just about as versatile as a Fender Telecaster. The comfortable U profile neck, 21 beautifully finished medium frets and 14-inch radius fingerboard make this the most playable U2 reissue yet. We say 'yet' but it's hard to imagine how Dano could improve on the '56 Single Cutaway's playability and fat singlecoil tone. Remember, this isn't a budget version of something. This affordable classic is a testament to the enduring genius of a 55-year-old design. Nathan Daniels would be proud.

Ed Mitchell

"It's testament to the genius of a 55-year-old design"

Dano features: wood frame body with Masonite top and back, lipstick tube singlecoil pickups, fixed bridge with a single rosewood saddle, vinyl body-edge tape and the classic 'Coke bottle' headstock. Next up was the 2006 56 Pro. It retained the (albeit reshaped) Coke bottle headstock, but the bridge now had individual saddles for improved intonation and the body tape was dropped.

This latest '56 sees the return of the full fat Coke bottle headstock, the rosewood bridge saddle and vintage spec 'Ostrich pattern' body tape. The '56 series is completed by a twin singlecoil, black and red crackle finish 'acquired taste' model with black hardware and Coke bottle headstock; a beautiful white, twin-singlecoil '56 with gold hardware and a vintage spec 'full bell' headstock; and a '56 with a bridge humbucker, neck singlecoil, 50s spec Silvertone 'Dolphin nose' headstock and the

AT A GLANCE

BODY: Laminated wood frame with Masonite top and back

NECK: Maple, bolt-on

FINGERBOARD: Rosewood, with dot inlays

FRETS: 21 medium

SCALE: 25"

PICKUPS: 2x lipstick singlecoils

CONTROLS: 2x 2 concentric volume and tone controls; 3-way pickup selector switch

HARDWARE: Satin nickel hard-tail bridge, vintage-style enclosed machineheads

LEFT-HANDED: No

FINISH: Black (pictured), Copper, Black Crackle

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1 NECK

THE '56's U profile neck, 14-inch fingerboard radius neck and 21 well finished frets make this the most playable U2 reissue yet

2 LIPSTICK PICKUPS

NO Dano would be seen dead without its lipstick pickups. Running both together, in series, produces a seriously beefy tone

3 CONTROLS

THESE concentric controls feature a big disc on the bottom for volume and a small white knob on the top for tone adjustment



SUMMARY	FEATURES	
	SOUND QUALITY	
	VALUE FOR MONEY	
	BUILD QUALITY	
	PLAYABILITY	
	OVERALL RATING	★★★★★