

EPIPHONE LTD EDITION UNION JACK SHERATON OUTFIT £669

**Two pints of champagne supernova, barkeep!
This archtop has all the mod cons**

THERE is no question that the Epiphone Union Jack Sheraton Outfit is one of the more eye-catching archtops on the market. First impressions that any serious player might take away could include: “Nice! Those gold-plated Grover machineheads and elegant Epiphone Frequensator tailpiece offer a touch of refinement – good to see in a mid-priced instrument”; “That 1960s SlimTaper neck profile is a real joy to play”; “Gibson mini-humbuckers? Well, there’s a bona-fide tone guarantor of vintage snap, spank and attitude”; and “Oh, yes, you can

classically Gibson/Epiphone 629mm (24.75-inch) scale length and lithe neck accommodating to a fault. The Sheraton is instantly associated with the toothy, gnarly spangle of nouveau Brit-rock epitomised by the Gallaghers, but it handles busy jazz playing and strong-armed blues without breaking a sweat. Thirdly, the guitar was built in China, and that’s reflected in its modest price tag and slightly untidy finish.

Its voice is naturally bright, if a little shrill, yet rolling back the tone on the neck position’s mini-humbucker will give jazz cats plenty of woody definition. The

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see there are decades of breeding, with pedigree Epiphone appointments such as the sloped dovewing headstock with leaf inlay.” But what we’re all really thinking is that the Alpine White finish has evidently been punked to outrageous effect by Geri Halliwell’s 1997 stylist.

Originally limited to 1,000 pieces, the Union Jack Sheraton Outfit is a guitar made famous by Noel Gallagher, and is definitely maybe not for shrinking violets. Oasis superfans, Britpoppers, Brit-rockers with *Live At Leeds* on repeat, and die-hard mods with RAF roundels for eyes will love everything about it. But this is a bright and refined classic with a lot more to it than its finish. Firstly, it has a great spine, with a mahogany neck glued to a laminated maple body, and a rock-solid LockTone Tune-o-matic bridge holding everything in place. Secondly, it has a great playable feel, with its

bridge ‘bucker is treble incarnate, with bite and venom when played through a hot overdriven valve amp and a US of A country twang.

The finish will divide opinion. Those turned off by it can always seek out Epiphone’s 50th Anniversary 1962 Sheraton Outfit, available in more demure Vintage Sunburst, Natural and Cherry Red. But many players will buy the Sheraton because of the finish. Those who are passionate about vintage tone are sure to find the Union Jack Sheraton Outfit the brazen archtop to fly the flag for the sounds of the mid-60s British Invasion and its Britpop retooling.

Jonathan Horsley

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

AT A GLANCE

BODY: Maple, laminated
NECK: Mahogany, set
FINGERBOARD: Rosewood
FRETS: 22
SCALE: 629mm (24.75")
PICKUPS: 2x Gibson USA mini-humbuckers
CONTROLS: 2x volume, 2x tone, 1x three-way pickup selector
HARDWARE: Gold-plated Grover machineheads, Epiphone Frequensator tailpiece, LockTone Tune-o-matic bridge
LEFT-HANDED: No
FINISH: Alpine White w/ Union Jack graphic only (pictured)
CONTACT: Gibson Brands UK
www.epiphone.com

MACHINEHEADS

IT DOESN'T matter where a guitar is made, high-quality components make all the difference, and these Grovers are immaculate and super-stable

PICKUPS

THE GIBSON USA mini-humbuckers are sharp, punchy and articulate. Introduced in 1960s Epiphones, they were adopted by Gibson in 1969

TAILPIECE

THE EPIPHONE Frequensator tailpiece was replaced with a stopbar on the Sheraton II – it makes a welcome comeback here

