



EPIPHONE LES PAUL STANDARD 50S

£549

A gold standard from a golden era of inspiration?

It's been quite a year for Epiphone; starting strong at January's NAMM with a tour de force in the shape of the Inspired By Gibson range, we're now able to take stock of models in isolation. And if we're talking Gibson legacy, its 1950s Les Pauls don't get much more hallowed in the halls of legendary guitars. Alongside the Standard 60s, Custom, Junior, Special and higher-end 1959 model in the Original Les Paul Collection, the range allows players to hone in on the specific Les Paul experience they want. But what is a 50s LP, and does Epiphone deliver it here?

Firstly, like the era of models it takes inspiration from, there's no weight relief body chambering here (you'll need the Modern and Muse moderns for that). This

60s model is a SlimTaper 60s C. It's a significant difference. This is meaty, clubby – but that doesn't mean uncomfortable, especially with the low action out of the box here. Neck and fretboard radius is a very personal choice and we can't recommend comparing and contrasting Epiphone's '59, 60s and 50s models in person enough to find your vintage preference.

Neck profiles are subjective but the build quality here is not. We have no complaints; this is a wonderful example of Epiphone QC in 2020. But the real joy is plugging in. This is what we want from a Les Paul and it's Gibson-worthy – a huge gamut of tone to cover with two versatile ProBuckers and four controls. Touch sensitivity, midrange bite, singing highs – it's all here!

GIBSON-WORTHY MIDRANGE BITE AND SINGING HIGHS

weighs in at 9lbs. That kind of weight is an accepted part of the LP experience (we've heard of examples going up to a whopping 11lbs!) and it feels balanced in play, but we'd advise investing in a padded strap with 3" width or above for comfort.

The more specific point of distinction here is the neck, the general perception is the Les Paul necks of the 50s were fatter in profile, while the 60s examples were slimmer. Except '58 and '59 examples are feted for their goldilocks position between the two, but even the details of this is debated as the carve would vary between individual instruments.

Here though, Epiphone's neck is a 'rounded medium C', and the

1 TUNERS Tuning stability is solid (testing included playing loud through our amp in a chilly garage!) with the 18:1 ratio Epiphone Vintage Deluxe Tuners offering smooth and precise adjustment.

2 PROBUCKERS These pickups are the stars of this show and based on the fabled circa '56/'57 PAFs – the first humbuckers – and like them they're made with 18 per cent nickel silver bases and covers. The ProBuckers also feature sand-cast alnico II magnets, vacuum wax potted coils and four-conductor wire uses.

3 NECK The mahogany neck is set into the body with a long tenon joint – a welcome, vintage correct feature here.

AT A GLANCE

BODY: Mahogany with carved hard maple cap with AAA flame maple veneer

NECK: Mahogany with 50s Rounded Medium C, 12" radius

SCALE: 628.65mm (24.75")

FINGERBOARD: Indian laurel

FRETS: 22, medium jumbo

PICKUPS: Epiphone ProBucker 1 (neck), Epiphone ProBucker 2 (bridge)

CONTROLS: 2 x volume, 2 x tone with CTS pots and 50s-style wiring, 3-way pickup switch

HARDWARE: Epiphone LockTone stop bar and Tune-O-Matic bridge, Epiphone Vintage Deluxe 18:1 machine heads

LEFT-HANDED: Yes

CASE: No

FINISH: Metallica Gold (reviewed), Heritage Cherry Sunburst, Vintage Sunburst

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The taper of the controls here allows you to really clean up with the volume while retaining clarity and treble; if you're skipping this you're really missing out on the versatile vintage LP experience that legends like Clapton capitalised on. Crucially, the neck humbucker is spot on; muscular with broad singing sustain, and all this combines to give you a huge palette for far more than classic rock.

Robert Laing

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

