DBZ CAVALLO AB £699

Putting the V into maverick, this electric also throws V-signs to convention

LET'S just agree that the electric guitar is the most important symbol of pop-cultural rebellion. Sure, you can make an argument for the biker jacket, the motorcycle… Whatever. The electric guitar is louder, and cooler. But if the electric guitar is the avatar of rock 'n' roll rebellion, then the DBZ Cavallo is all about rebelling against electric guitars, ergonomics, and everything in between. It's an unwieldy beast, a brutal individualist.

The Cavallo has the look of hot-rodded Americana, and guitar-wise it's exactly that. Take your standard Gibson Flying V, stretch the wings out, carve a piece of wood in homage to the tail-end of a circa-'66 Lincoln Futura Batmobile, and affix Grover kidney bean tuners: *et voila*, a headstock. On its website, DBZ promises a coil-tap, but the example we have here is fitted with stock DBZB and DBZ5 humbuckers, and we're told that coil-taps will not be appearing on any Cavallo models for the foreseeable future.

If you're have a browse of the secondhand market, you may well stumble on an sample that still has this feature, but, otherwise, you'll just be getting a three-way selector, volume and tone pots, and a string-through tune-o-matic bridge. We'd have loved a good set of singlecoil tones, but as it is, the Cavallo still has plenty of talking points.

It looks savagely retro, aggressive and angularly awkward enough to preclude playing in a seated position – the wings are too close together to jam it in and get comfy. Unusually, the neck has a soft-V profile, more commonly associated with classic Fender than a hot-rod metal axe. But, really, give it a try anyway: it's brilliant in use, making for easy barre chords and flattening out nicely in the upper registers.

For all the Cavallo's ergonomic disregard, it's lightweight owing to some out-there contouring, ridiculously playable, and has one of the fastest and most forgiving necks TG has played in a long time. Any intermediate shredders looking to lose the L-plates will be impressed. And the sustain? The Cavallo can hold a note longer than Bill Withers.

For a guitar so ostentatiously appointed in white, with gold hardware and pearloid binding, it gently rebukes its own outlandish appearance when it comes to the pickups, with enough heat, depth and sparkle to silence our squawking about upgrading to a pair of Seymour Duncans. Indeed, compared to the Seymour Duncan SH-4-appointed Jackson RR5 (a clear competitor), the Cavallo has a similarly pugnacious midrange – a real toothy tone that's perfect for rock and metal, while cleaning up brilliantly for clean or crunchy blues bends.

Looks can be deceiving, but try to look past the dressage; the Cavallo is a thoroughbred workhorse in a show pony's body.

Jonathan Horsley

> **"The Cavallo can hold a note longer than Bill Withers"**

AT A GLANCE

TYPE: Mahogany
NECK: Mahogany, set
FINGERBOARD: Ebonised rosewood
FRETS: 22
SCALE: 24 3/4"
PICKUPS: 2x DBZ humbuckers
CONTROLS: 1x volume, 1x tone, 3-way pickup selector
HARDWARE: Gold
LEFT-HANDED: No
FINISH: White (shown), black, Vintage Natural, Solid Wine Red
CONTACT: Go To Guitars Ltd
01925 444696
www.dbzguitars.com

HEADSTOCK

"LOOK, Bruce – it's the Bat-Signal!" The Cavallo's headstock is aesthetically Dark Knight, and it's nice to have Grover tuners on the utility belt

NECK

LIKE the body, the Cavallo's neck is defined by V-shapes. While some may balk at a soft-V profile, we absolutely love it

BODY

HAVING to play standing up is a small price to pay to look cool, right? No? Well, at least DBZ has kept it lightweight with a slim, contoured body

SUMMARY

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

Photography: Joe Branston