



# PRS 2017 SE 'FLOYD' CUSTOM 24

£999

## A pretty guitar that's actually a beast!

**T**here was a time when Paul Reed Smith guitars were seen by some as elitist playthings – too expensive for the working guitarist, and too pretty to risk pranging at a gig. These were the guitars you bought when you'd bought all the golf clubs and swanky German sports cars you could need – 'Guitars for lawyers and doctors' went the rather unkind mantra.

In 2001, PRS began to change those preconceptions with the launch of the Korean-made SE models. Keenly priced for the average guitarist and styled to look like their American-built siblings, the SE range has evolved a lot over

locking whammy bar loved by everyone from Eddie Van Halen to Dimebag Darrell. Even with the Custom 24's tasteful vintage-esque vibe, the Floyd looks right at home here. It's like someone bolted a supercharger to an E-Type Jaguar. It shouldn't work, but it actually looks great...

So what makes the 2017 SEs better than the previous editions? Well, you get the same 'signature' PRS headstock logo as the USA models instead of the block logo truss-rod cover – with a much subtler 'SE' logo, too. But the big news is a pair of upgraded pickups. The 85/15 set is based on Paul Reed Smith's 1985 Standard Treble and Bass pickups, much-respected for

## THE 2017 MODELS ARE THE HIGHEST SPEC SE GUITARS YET

the past 15 years. The 2017 models are easily the best-looking and highest-spec SE guitars yet – let's see what they've got cooking.

Slipping it from its padded gigbag, no-one could deny our 2017 SE 'Floyd' Custom 24 is a looker. In typical PRS style, this guitar's pretty flame maple top is like a tractor beam to the eyeballs. Underneath the eye candy, you'll find a mahogany body cut in PRS's classic double-cutaway shape. The supremely comfortable Wide Thin profile neck is honed in maple, and comes paired with a rosewood 'board with a flock of the now-iconic bird inlays and plays host to 24 fat frets.

Of course, 'Floyd' isn't just a clever name. Our Custom 24 comes loaded with a chunky Floyd Rose vibrato, with a recess for pull-ups, the seldom-challenged but never-bettered double-

the ability to offer great humbucking *and* single-coil tones. These new humbuckers are wired through a master volume, master tone (with a built-in push/pull coil split) and a three-way pickup selector blade switch offering both pickups solo and combined. Textbook stuff.

Time to plug in. Running through our amp's clean channel, the bridge 'bucker unloads a whole sackful of sparkle. While this setting works great for choppy rhythm stuff, we prefer adding the neck pickup into the mix. This combination retains the bright clarity of the bridge pickup but adds some warmth. Switch to single-coil mode and you're almost in Hendrix *Little Wing* territory, with little wobbles on the whammy bar adding to the effect. You don't always have to divebomb on a Floyd, y'know!

**1 NECK**  
The PRS SE 'Floyd' Custom 24 comes spec'd with a Wide Thin neck profile. Add 24 fat frets and you've got a guitar with serious playability

**2 FLOYD**  
This SE pimps the classic Custom 24 format with a chunky Floyd Rose double-looking vibrato with a recess for pull-ups and the ability to dump the strings on the pickups

**3 PICKUPS**  
The new pickups are based on PRS's 1985 Standard Treble and Bass humbuckers, which also offer convincing classic single-coil tones. This is one versatile guitar

### AT A GLANCE

**BODY:** Mahogany w/ bevelled maple top and flame maple veneer  
**NECK:** Maple, glued-in  
**SCALE:** 635mm (25")  
**FINGERBOARD:** Rosewood  
**FRETS:** 24, jumbo  
**PICKUPS:** 2x PRS 85/15 humbuckers  
**CONTROLS:** 1x volume, 1x tone (w/ push/pull coil split) and 3-way pickup selector blade switch  
**HARDWARE:** Chrome Floyd Rose double-looking vibrato and top nut, sealed die-cast machineheads  
**LEFT-HANDED:** N/A  
**FINISH:** Vintage Sunburst (as reviewed), Gray Black  
**CONTACT:** PRS Europe 01223 874 301  
[www.prguitars.com](http://www.prguitars.com)

TOTAL  
Guitar  
BEST BUY  
AWARD





## Origin of the species!

A brief history of Paul Reed Smith guitars...

It seems like PRS Guitars have been around forever, but Paul Reed Smith didn't launch his brand until 1985 – even though he had been building guitars since the 70s, working on designs that would combine the best attributes of the mighty Gibson and Fender houses in a package with cool vintage looks and high-spec tonewoods. Smith built his first guitars for the likes of, er, Happy The Man's Stanley Whitaker and former Heart guitarist Howard Leese, but it was the endorsement of Latin rock legend Carlos Santana that marked PRS out as a contender, and Santana was later rewarded with a US-built signature model, as also featured in the 2017 SE range. The rest is rock history, with PRS growing over 30 years to become one of the 'big three' US guitar makers.

While many associate PRS guitars with blues-rock cats such as Carlos Santana, card-carrying members of the metal brigade including Mark Tremonti, Chris Robertson of Black Stone Cherry and Periphery's Mark Holcomb are all in PRS's signature artists, too. With that in mind, it makes sense that the new Custom 24 'Floyd' has been voiced with heavy in mind, and the 85/15 pickups have less lower-mids than regular PRS humbuckers, and that means more clarity even when you get a bit crazy with the saturation.



The 85/15 pickups are based on PRS's 1985 Treble and Bass set



The Floyd Rose is an unusual look for a PRS, but it feels right here

Interacting with varying levels of dirt, the bridge humbucker can pull off anything from vintage AC/DC to scooped-mid thrash stuff. We like the clarity and note separation across all three locations on the pickup selector switch. Blues players will love the smooth attack and sustain of the neck position, and the single-coil tones on tap. This is a seriously versatile guitar.

Great looks, superb playability, rock-solid tuning and a proper padded gigbag. What's not to love? We already respected the SE Custom 24 and its versatile tonal

palette, but the newly spec'd 85/15 pickups make this latest model a far more interesting prospect for metal players. Every note propels itself off this guitar like a firework. The fact the guitar is so damn pretty makes us powerless to resist its charms.

**Ed Mitchell**

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

## ALSO TRY...

### FRET-KING SUPER-HYBRID

If it's tonal versatility you're after, the Super-Hybrid offer humbucking, single-coil and acoustic sounds, the latter thanks to an onboard piezo pickup system



£499

### FENDER STANDARD STRATOCASTER HSS WITH FLOYD ROSE

The original pimped classic features a Floyd Rose whammy, a humbucker and two single coils in the engine room and a rosewood fingerboard



£689

### CHARVEL PRO MOD SO-CAL STYLE 1 HH FR

The So-Cal comes loaded with a Seymour Duncan TB-6 Distortion humbucker in the bridge position and a SH-6N Distortion at the neck, with push/pull knob to split both pickups' coils



£709