



CORT G290 FAT

£549



Is affordable boutique possible? Cort makes its case

We're always looking for an excuse to buy another guitar to add to the collection, right? But we also have a contradictory impulse. Many of us are looking for *the one* – the do-it-all wunderaxe, the Swiss army knife of six-strings, the workhorse weapon of tone... you get the picture. Wouldn't it be nice if we could develop as players with one well-chosen instrument that can pretty much cover everything we need. We think we might have a candidate here.

Cort has been building a rep for high quality electrics in the mid-range price bracket. This looks like a distillation of that from the South Korean firm, on spec at

stainless steel saddles, block and baseplate are here to aide sustain and those saddles look especially well matched to the brushed-look chrome pickup covers.

Some players think swamp ash is a lightweight tonewood. Cort is keen to stress this too, but the reality is different. Swamp ash can be light, but we've played heavy swamp ash doublecuts too. At 7.4lbs our test guitar weighs around the same as an average Strat. This guitar's action is slinky, so it doesn't suffer down-tuning too well without changing the strings from the gauge 9 set included here – but bluesy bends are effortless and Cort's new Ergo V-neck profile has a comforting Fendery feel. It's a joy to play

“THIS G290 IS VERSATILE AND PLAYABLE. FAT TONE INDEED”

least. Visually it's a treat; a swamp ash body with an Antique Violin Burst flame maple top (one of two available finishes). The bolt-on birdseye maple neck is a stunner that looks like it was handpicked for a more expensive guitar – especially when you factor in the upmarket features that adorn it.

Locking machine heads, and a spoke-nut truss rod adjuster (which takes a nod from models like Misha Mansoor's Jackson Juggernaut signature) are contemporary rock guitar features designed with quick, easy functionality in mind. The truss rod adjuster's proximity encourages you to precisely tailor the neck bow to suit your needs rather than be afraid to touch it. Cort's recessed CFA-III Tremolo's

before we even plug in. Cort's claim that its shape provides enhanced comfort across 22-fret neck and the playability here is undeniable. It's a fast neck for legato lovers but the 12" to 15.75" compound radius fingerboard is just a great all-rounder for us.

When Cort call this a 'session-style' guitar it alludes to the workhorse idea we spoke of earlier. It suggests significant versatility because nobody needs that more than a session guitarist. And that's where the pickups come in. Cort's VTH-77s are high output humbuckers with a twist: there's a five-way switch.

The three main 'bucker positions are impressive enough. The bridge is bright, chimey and articulate and the neck position

1 G290
The G290 is actually a longstanding Cort model but the new FAT is adding boutique-esque features to the successful doublecut formula

2 CORT CFA III TREMOLO
The advantage of a recessed tremolo is an increased range when pulling up

3 COIL-SPLITS
The five-way switch produces coil-split tones in the second and fourth positions for significant versatility

AT A GLANCE

BODY: Swamp ash / flamed maple top

NECK: Birdseye maple

SCALE: 25.5" (648mm)

FINGERBOARD: Birdseye maple

FRETS: 22

PICKUPS: 2x Cort Voiced Tone VTH-77 humbuckers with coil-splitting

CONTROLS: Five-way pickup switch, volume, tone

HARDWARE: Cort CFA III two-point tremolo with steel block and steel plate, Cort chrome locking machine heads

LEFT-HANDED: No

CASE: No

FINISH: Antique Violin Burst (reviewed), Bright Blue Burst

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Cort In The Act

A brief history of Cort guitars

The G290 FAT is the latest iteration of a model that's more established than many realise. And Cort itself has been around since 1973, beginning by manufacturing guitars for other companies. It started producing its own line in 1982, and now has factories in South Korea, China and Indonesia – the G290 FAT is made in the latter. In 2014 Cort began working with the UK's Manson to produce models like the hugely successful MBC-1 Matt Bellamy signature. Endorsed artists now include Frank Gambale, plus TG faves Bombino and Yvette Young.

avoids the dreaded darker tonality that position can suffer from in favour of glassy FAT punch. Lastly, the middle position – always an underrated place to visit – is reassuringly lively. It convincingly sells itself as a smoother and compelling alternative to the bridge for switching on the fly between lead and rhythm tones. But there's much more...

The second and fourth positions here are coil splits to get you in the single-coil game. If you demand Fender twang and jangle it's a tall order for any humbucker wiring mod like this but what it delivers is



The recessed tremolo and five-way selector help to create an instrument with versatility to match its looks



useful and distinct options to switch to. Tonally it is like having two guitars in one. Fancy some Morello-esque spank for your single note riffs? Well kindly switch to position 4 and enjoy! Texas blues bite? Position 2 will see you right. Indeed there's much fun to be had for blues here between the buckers and splits, but the same could be said of jazz, metal and everything between too.

You probably get the picture by now; this G290 is versatile and playable. FAT tone indeed, sounds that will suit many different rock-based players if the look and

feel also appeal. If you're the guitarist in a covers band then this could easily get you through a varied set. And the strong range of features that accompany this sonic capability, offered at £549, is why we think Cort has issued another strong claim to be a go-to contemporary affordable brand.

Rob Laing

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

ALSO TRY...

IBANEZ AZ224F £1,069

Launched last year, Ibanez's AZ series offers great playability, with nine different combinations of Seymour Duncan Hyperion pickups and a Dyna-MIX9 switching system.



CHARVEL PRO MOD SAN DIMAS STYLE 1 HH FR M £859

The winner of issue 318's TG Test, this 80s legend still delivers, with a recessed Floyd Rose 1000 vibrato and push-pull activated coil-splits on its Seymour Duncan



EPIPHONE LEE MALIA SIGNATURE ARTISAN £599

The Bring Me The Horizon man's Epiphone signature has a USA Gibson P-94 in the neck and bridge Gibson B4T-LM humbucker with coil-splitting for tonal breadth.

