



EPIPHONE PROPHECY FLYING V

£799

With top-dollar spec and classy finish, is this 2020's best metal guitar?

The distance between Gibson's entry-level US build and a top-of-the-range, Chinese-built Epiphone is closing all the time. Take the Epiphone 1959 Les Paul Standard, a quite stunning collaboration with the Gibson Custom Shop that is arguable better dressed than a Les Paul Tribute. Or take this Prophecy Flying V, which takes the high-road when it comes to spec.

Here we've got a mahogany body with a AAA flame maple veneer – like the '59 LP – though it is also available in Aged Satin Black. The Prophecy V has a set, mahogany neck, carved into Gibson's Asymmetrical Slim Taper profile. Originally the

Now, if you're thinking that this spec is pretty darn pro, then the two Fluence Custom Voiced humbuckers should confirm your suspicions. Very much the 21st-century pickup, the active Fluence 'buckers are multi-voiced and powered by 9V battery that's hidden in a compartment on the rear of the instrument. Engage the push-pull on the volume control to toggle between a high-output modern humbucker and a classic Burstbucker/PAF-style voicing, while a push-pull on the tone control activates a single-coil mode.

If you've tuned in for the high-gain humbucker, you'll be pleased to know that it lends itself to some ripping metal tones. Indeed, the Fluence skews modern.

“MORE WAR ENSEMBLE THAN WATERLOO SUNSET...”

asymmetrical carve was an accident, with variances on hand-carved necks meaning some had an ever-so-slightly fatter profile on the bottom-strings' side and a thinner profile down under the top strings. But then it became a feature, offering the best of both worlds, speed and comfort

The multi-play cream and black binding, MOP block with abalone triangle inlay, and the diamond inlay on the headstock lend the Prophecy V a Custom Shop vibe, its satin finish making it one tactile instrument. The hardware is quality, too. There's a LockTone tune-o-matic and stop-bar tailpiece, locking Grover tuners; both finished in brushed nickel, matching the volume and tone controls. The Graph Tech NuBone nut is perfectly cut.

Those weaned on Sabbath and Priest might prefer the more open PAF tones, which go very nicely with some JCM800 crunch or fuzz box and clean up nicely, while the single-coil mode is a good option. What more could you need?

Remember, however, that the Flying V design is exceptionally balanced on the strap but is awkward when played seated. Just don't jam your elbow into it like Dave Davies would have – this one's more War Ensemble than Waterloo Sunset...

Jonathan Horsley

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

1 ASYMMETRIC NECK PROFILE

The Slim Taper neck is one of the fastest we have played on an Epiphone... Or indeed a Gibson.

2 LOCKING TUNERS

The Prophecy Flying V's Grover Locking Rotomatic tuners are a welcome sight, keeping things stable for players with aggressive styles.

3 FLUENCE CUSTOM VOICED HUMBUCKERS

Push-pull functions on volume and tone controls offer you three voices: modern high-gain humbucker, vintage humbucker and single-coil.



AT A GLANCE

BODY: Mahogany with AAA flame maple veneer
NECK: Mahogany with Asymmetrical Slim Taper profile, 12" radius
SCALE: 628mm (24.72")
FINGERBOARD: Ebony
FRETS: 22
PICKUPS: 2x Fluence Custom Voiced Humbuckers
CONTROLS: 1x volume with push/pull, 1x tone with push/pull, 3-way pickup switch
HARDWARE: LockTone Tune-O-Matic with LockTone stop-bar, Grover Locking Rotomatic tuners, brushed nickel
LEFT-HANDED: No
FINISH: Yellow Tiger Aged Gloss (reviewed), Black Aged Gloss
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