



CHAPMAN ML2 MODERN STANDARD

£449

Fat humbucker tone from this classic, single-cut guitar

Take one quick look at the ML2 Modern Standard and you can see exactly where Chapman found the inspiration. Behold the classic, single-cut body, two chrome-plated humbuckers and a black pennant headstock that's not a million miles away from Gibson's 'Open Book' style, as immortalised in mahogany on the late Lester William Polsfuss's most famous creation. But appearances can be deceptive. It's soon apparent that Chapman was looking to take the hallowed geometry of an LP-style profile and run with it: this instrument is a very different beast.

Modern whatsoever – except maybe its tone.

Like its LP-esque kin, the ML2 Modern feels as though it was spec'd for big and fat, classic rock and blues tone. Its mahogany body is like a Kitemark guaranteeing warmth and it seats a pair of Chapman Stentorian Zero humbuckers in the neck and bridge positions. While both pickups are essentially the same, with an Alnico V magnet at the heart of them (think tight low-end, brightness, a little less on the mids) they're wound differently. The bridge humbucker has a higher output (14.5k ohms, since you asked) for a thicker tone

IT'S SPEC'D FOR BIG AND FAT CLASSIC ROCK & BLUES TONES

Turn the ML2 Modern sidewise and it near enough disappears. Chapman peg its weight at a relatively svelte 3.5kg, so it's unlikely to see you turning over your salary to the chiropractor. Not only is its body slimmer than your common or garden LP-style single-cut, it's heavily contoured with its cutaway and heel carved for easy access to the upper frets. Its upper body features a wide bevel, a "rear tummy cut", which again cuts down on weight and ensures the ergonomics work in your favour.

It has a modern, satin-smooth C-profile neck, hewn from maple (another deviation from the LP blueprint) and glued neatly to the body. The 25" scale lends it a unique feel – and with 24 jumbo nickel frets, the ML2 Modern is hugely shreddable. There's nothing bulky about the ML2

and, naturally, with a bigger signal going to your amp, there's more distortion. The neck humbucker (9.5 k ohms) is a little cleaner and a little brighter, making it a neat choice for the neck position, where tone can tend to get muddy if you're not careful. But if the ML2 Modern's USP lies in its humbuckers, mahogany and high-calorie tone, it's got plenty of range if you know where to look.

With a coil-split, accessed by pulling up on the master tone pot, you can split the signal of these humbuckers for some single-coil snap and sizzle. The middle position selects the outer coils of the bridge and neck pickups – and that is a darn interesting combination: bright with an elastic quality, perfect for fingerpicking, jamming funk or blues, or just for adding a different texture to your rhythm playing. Dial in some ➔

1 BINDING
The 'reveal binding' is a premium touch. To help keep it pristine Chapman include a deluxe gig bag with every guitar

2 HEEL
Glued to the body and neatly sculpted for easy upper-fret access, this set neck helps give the ML2 Modern some serious sustain

3 FRETBOARD
Featuring Chapman's new bar inlays, the Macassar ebony fretboard has rolled edges, giving it a played-in feel that is super comfortable

AT A GLANCE

BODY: Mahogany
NECK: Maple, set
SCALE: 25"
FINGERBOARD: Macassar Ebony with rolled edges and pearl inlay
FRETS: 24 jumbo
PICKUPS: 2x Chapman Stentorian Zero humbuckers (neck and bridge)
CONTROLS: 2x volume, 1x master tone w/ coil-split, three-way pickup selector
HARDWARE: Chrome, Chapman Tune-o-matic w/ Stop Tail
LEFT-HANDED: No
FINISH: White Dove [as reviewed], Lunar
CONTACT: ChapmanGuitars.com 01483 456777





Thought Leaders

How Chapman changed the game by reaching out to the people

The ML2 Modern arose out of Chapman Guitars' desire to revolutionise their whole line with 29 guitars debuting this year – even though Chapman, which was formed in 2009, has always seemed to be in a permanent state of revolution. Visit its website and you'll be able to vote on body shapes. Rob Chapman encourages feedback on spec wish-lists, effectively crowdsourcing the first stage of R&D. Is it the most accessible company out there? Possibly. It's hard to think of another company whose founder will answer questions on YouTube – even picking his all-time favourite guitars without coming across as a Chapman partisan. He was even good enough to test the ML2 in comparison with his own Gibson Les Paul, so you can see and hear the difference for yourself.

gain so it starts to break up and you've got some hot, soupy goodness on draft, perfect for rambunctious surf- and alt-rock, and grunge, too. The single-coil tone in the bridge position has got bite and clarity that's nice and sharp, while the neck rounds off the treble for a chewy tone that's good for subtle chord work and blues alike. Chapman make a point of noting that downtuned riffs, presumably in the style of heavy rock and metal, are mother's milk to the ML2 Modern, and so too a "standard tune ripping out a



This bridge humbucker sure sings with gain



melody". It's a smart move. The ML2 Modern finds itself in a crowded marketplace where we are seeing the coil-split as an all-but-ubiquitous feature, creating an expectation, or rather a demand, so that the ML2 Modern and its peers compete on who can cover the most ground tonally. The ML2 Modern makes a good claim on being all things to all guitarists. With coils split or not, we love its tone. That bridge 'bucker really sings with some gain. While the neck pickup is a great 'rhythm' humbucker – articulate and

dynamic. Whether you find the modernity in its versatility, or in a feel that's more Jackson than Gibson, the ML2 Modern sure lives up to its name. The mid-price market is a real street fight but the ML2 Modern more than punches above its weight.

Jonathan Horsley

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

ALSO TRY...

EPIPHONE LES PAUL STANDARD PLUS TOP PRO

£499

Fitted with Pro-Bucker 2 and Pro-Bucker 3 pickups straight from Epiphone's top shelf, this has genuine Les Paul kudos and a AAA flame maple veneer.



ESP LTD EC-256 FM

The lush Lemon Drop flame maple, set neck and 24.75" scale of the ESP LTD EC-256 FM are very Les Paul, but the thin U neck and jumbo frets scream shred machine.

£516



HAGSTROM ULTRA SWEDE COSMIC BLACK

£569

Prepare to be in awe of the Ultra Swede's famous Hagstrom playability, courtesy of its über-thin Ultralux neck. It looks classy too.

