

**GEAR**

**REVIEW**

**GRETSCH ALLIGATOR**



# GRETSCH G9241 ALLIGATOR BISCUIT ROUNDNECK RESONATOR £579

We sink our teeth into a new resonator. But will it give us the blues?

A member of the well-respected retro-tastic Gretsch Roots Series, the G9421 Alligator Biscuit Round Neck resonator offers a classic delta blues and bluegrass tone with a side order of cool retro looks and an onboard pickup.

Picking that model designation apart, beneath the weathered (aka satin-finish) Poinsettia-decorated metal cover is the Ampli-Sonic diaphragm, a resonating metal cone 'hand-spun in Eastern Europe from nearly 99 per cent pure aluminium', according to Gretsch. You'll also encounter the 'Biscuit', a hard maple disc topped with a maple/ebony bridge saddle that transfers the vibrations from the

pearloid-decorated headstock for some vintage eye candy. Playability is great, with a low action, and that V-profile neck shape, which fits snugly in the palm. The 0.012 to 0.053 gauge strings are easier to handle than you might fear. Besides, you need a chunky set of strings to get the best from the resonator's cone.

Acoustically, the Alligator is your classic resonator. Aided by the stiff body shell, the aluminium cone acts like a mechanical speaker, providing bags of volume while each note is launched like a projectile. The tone is like a banjo with a bit more sustain, and a little more depth and warmth. In other

## The cone means each note is launched like a projectile

strings to the cone. The model name also makes clear that this is a 'round neck', as opposed to the 'square neck' style, which is played laid flat on your lap with a slide.

The Alligator's lightweight hollow body is all-laminate mahogany. While it's preferable to have freely vibrating solid woods in a regular acoustic, for decent volume and tone, laminate woods provide a stronger foundation for the cone in a resonator. After all, it's the cone that does all the work here, not the guitar's top.

Our resonator's mahogany neck has a vintage-style V profile, which was popular on acoustics of the 1930s, and Fender electrics in the mid-50s. The rosewood fingerboard harbours 19 medium jumbo frets, a dozen of which are free of the body and therefore easy to reach. The spec list is completed by a well-cut bone top nut, half-a-dozen classic open-back Grover Sta-Tite tuners and a

words, it's your classic bluegrass sound. Plugging in, the Fishman Nashville pickup is faithful to the acoustic tone with a scratchy top-end that works great for delta blues slide licks. The pickup has no active preamp so you have to crank your amp a bit, but that just adds to the agreeable lo-fi output.

You can't move for affordable resonators these days, but the Gretsch Alligator is up there with the best we've tried. It scores big on tone, playability and good looks. If you're ready to dunk your head in the Biscuit market, we suggest you give the Alligator a try. And make it snappy.

Ed Mitchell

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

### AT A GLANCE

**BODY:** Laminated mahogany  
**NECK:** Mahogany, set-in  
**SCALE:** 635mm (25")  
**FINGERBOARD:** Rosewood  
**FRETS:** 19, medium jumbo  
**PICKUP:** Fishman Nashville  
**CONTROLS:** N/A  
**HARDWARE:** Gretsch Ampli-Sonic Biscuit w/ weathered Poinsettia cover, trapeze tailpiece and open-back Grover Sta-Tite tuners  
**LEFT-HANDED:** No  
**FINISH:** Chieftain Red (as reviewed), 2-Colour Sunburst  
**CONTACT:** Fender GB | 01342 331700 | www.gretschguitars.com

Total  
Guitar  
BEST BUY

### V NECK

**THIS** resonator's set mahogany neck comes spec'd with the kind of vintage V-profile that was popular on acoustic guitars of the 30s and Fender electrics of the mid-50s

### PLUG IN

**THE** Alligator comes loaded with a quality Fishman Nashville pickup that feeds off the bridge saddle and cone to faithfully reproduce the guitar's acoustic tone

### RESONATOR

**BENEATH** the Alligator's faceplate lurks a spun aluminium cone that acts as a mechanical speaker providing a classic resonator tone and bags of volume

