

# GUILD NEWARK ST COLLECTION ROUND-UP

With its Newark St Collection, Guild reanimates a carefully curated range of 50s and 60s electrics, offering today's player a vintage taste of yesteryear's class

Words: Jonathan Horsley  
Photography: Joby Sessions

**THE** Newark St Collection offers a real flavour of Guild's storied history. Its name references the address of the legendary Hoboken factory in New Jersey, where up until the company's sale to Avnet in 1966, Guild had seen the good times roll.

These Newark St guitars have been drawn from Guild's most successful models of the 50s and 60s, and spec'd to offer a vintage-authentic performance, but a Korean build keeps them affordable. Given the inflationary market for vintage guitars – especially for USA-built ones – the Newark St Collection offers most of us our only chance of being able to own, and acquaint ourselves with, guitars such as the A-150 Savoy, CE-100D Capri and the X-175 Manhattan; or, indeed, this month's round-up trio of the M-75 Aristocrat, S-100 Polara and Starfire IV.

Yes, these guitars are Korean-built, but their heart and soul lies in the USA, and those retro-accoutrements are not just a meticulous tribute to Guild's golden era but a bold statement that Guild is back on the scene with a series of pro-quality guitars for jobbing and serious players who know the classics never go out of style.







>>>





## GUILD NEWARK ST STARFIRE IV **£1,029**

**Brighter than a thousand suns**

**USED** by the likes of Buddy Guy, the Starfire was one of Guild's most popular models in the 60s. At first blush, its aesthetic puts it in competition with Gibson's ES-335. But make no mistake: the Starfire has a voice all of its own. Looking past the double-cut, semi-hollow body, it has a quite different construction, too: the Starfire has a pressed laminate mahogany build, with a three-piece mahogany-maple-mahogany sandwich neck, and a maple centre-block for ballast.

Acoustically, the Starfire IV is bright and bold, and the pair of Guild Anti-Hum Dual-Coil pickups that grace the neck and bridge positions are a natural fit. Consider them reluctant humbuckers:

a low-output option that's happier teasing every bit of brightness out of the Starfire IV. In the bridge position, it has a gentle snap and snarl, coruscating but never shrill, and while the neck pickup rounds off some of that sharpness, it never gets lost in the clay.

The Starfire articulates that middle ground between rootsy blues and roughhouse rock 'n' roll jangle, rewards note-heavy jazz and blissed-out fingerpicking and, thanks to that unpinned rosewood bridge piece, it is a little punishing when really choking the bejeezus out of your bends, knocking the tuning a little off-base. But, when you consider the Starfire's soft U-profile neck, jumbo frets and ultra-comfortable ride, that's a minor foible.

## GUILD NEWARK ST M-75 ARISTOCRAT **£929**

**Urbane legend**

**THE** M-75 Aristocrat is so refined, you'll want to put on a suit before playing it. You might even consider strapping it on a little higher. But no matter how you wear this vintage single-cut, it's designed to complement the human condition – spiritually and physically. It's more than sympathetic to your sciatic nerve, as its chambered mahogany body with laminated spruce top lends itself to a guitar that feels compact and as light as balsa.

The spiritual fillip comes from plugging it into an amplifier; wrapping your hands round its vintage soft U-profile neck and wondering how such a comfortable guitar could sound so beautiful and, moreover, so substantial. The Aristocrat has a pair of Guild's Frequency-Tested

single coils in neck and bridge that confound expectations.

With a clean tone, the neck pickup is all warm and woody cream, but where a solidbody would be layering it on thick, there's a lightness, an aerated quality that might be weight-relieved but never sacrifices depth. In the bridge position, the clean tones could convince you that your suit should be brightly coloured with a wide trouser; the Aristocrat specialises in the sort of clearly enunciated bright-pop and bell-chime tone that would be right at home on *Soul Train*: 100 per cent jazz, funk and soul. Turning up the gain finds a howling, chewy rock voice hidden beneath the finery, too – a reminder that a guitar's looks can be deceiving, and its tone is whatever you make of it.





# GUILD NEWARK ST S-100 POLARA **£779**

**Kim's slim**

**THE** S-100 Polara debuted in the late 60s, a time when the hippy movement was dying out. Free love gave way to cynicism, and the S-100 Polara reflected that. A stripped-down, double-cut slab of mahogany, with two Anti-Hum Dual Coils in neck and bridge, the Polara feels like a utilitarian riposte to ostentatiously spec'd guitars.

That the nickel-plated stop tailpiece sits at an angle underscores the Polara's position as an iconoclastic take on the Gibson SG, a position in sync with the body's symmetric cutaways. It comes fitted with no frills but super-steady Grover Sta-Tite tuners. It shares the history, build quality and immaculate finish of its siblings, but it has the density of

tone you'd expect from the series' only solidbody.

And it feels timeless: modern then, and still so now. That it is Kim Thayil from Soundgarden's guitar of choice tells us a lot about its capabilities. Slightly uncomfortable played seated, it comes into its own when strapped on, with a playing experience and sound that makes it an ideal – not to mention £300-odd cheaper – alternative to, say, an American SG. That those 'buckers are not red-hot never put Thayil off. There's a bright clarity and punch to the Polara's tone, like a post-pubescent Tele Deluxe, which can handle overdriven rock riffs, with just enough mahogany to thicken up your sound when opening your amp up full.

## Starfire IV

### AT A GLANCE

- BODY:** Mahogany
- NECK:** Three-piece mahogany & maple, set
- SCALE:** 628mm (24.75")
- FINGERBOARD:** Indian rosewood
- FRETS:** 22, narrow jumbo
- PICKUPS:** 2x Guild Anti-Hum Dual-Coil
- CONTROLS:** 2x volume, 2x tone, 1x 3-way pickup selector
- HARDWARE:** Nickel-plated Guild Adjusto-Matic bridge w/ rosewood base, nickel-plated 'harp' trapeze tailpiece, Grover Sta-Tite tuners
- LEFT-HANDED:** No
- FINISH:** Cherry Red only
- CONTACT:** Selection UK 01795 419460 [www.guildguitars.com](http://www.guildguitars.com)



<b>SUMMARY</b>	FEATURES	■	■	■	■	■
	SOUND QUALITY	■	■	■	■	■
	VALUE FOR MONEY	■	■	■	■	■
	BUILD QUALITY	■	■	■	■	■
	PLAYABILITY	■	■	■	■	■
<b>OVERALL RATING</b>	★★★★★★					

## M-75 Aristocrat

### AT A GLANCE

- BODY:** Chambered mahogany w/ laminated arched spruce top
- NECK:** Three-piece mahogany and maple, set
- SCALE:** 24.75"
- FINGERBOARD:** Rosewood
- FRETS:** 22, jumbo
- PICKUPS:** 2x Guild Frequency Tested Single-Coils
- CONTROLS:** 2x volume, 2x tone, 3-way pickup selector
- HARDWARE:** Gold-plated Guild Floating Adjusto-Matic bridge, gold-plated 'harp' trapeze tailpiece, Grover Sta-Tite tuners
- LEFT-HANDED:** No
- FINISH:** Black, Sunburst (shown)



<b>SUMMARY</b>	FEATURES	■	■	■	■	■
	SOUND QUALITY	■	■	■	■	■
	VALUE FOR MONEY	■	■	■	■	■
	BUILD QUALITY	■	■	■	■	■
	PLAYABILITY	■	■	■	■	■
<b>OVERALL RATING</b>	★★★★★★					

## S-100 Polara

### AT A GLANCE

- BODY:** Mahogany
- NECK:** Mahogany
- SCALE:** 628mm (24.75")
- FINGERBOARD:** Rosewood
- FRETS:** 22, narrow jumbo
- PICKUPS:** 2x Guild Anti-Hum Dual-Coil
- CONTROLS:** 2x volume, 2x tone, 3-way pickup selector
- HARDWARE:** Nickel-plated Guild Adjusto-Matic w/ stop tailpiece, Grover Sta-Tite tuners
- LEFT-HANDED:** No
- FINISH:** Cherry Red only



<b>SUMMARY</b>	FEATURES	■	■	■	■	■
	SOUND QUALITY	■	■	■	■	■
	VALUE FOR MONEY	■	■	■	■	■
	BUILD QUALITY	■	■	■	■	■
	PLAYABILITY	■	■	■	■	■
<b>OVERALL RATING</b>	★★★★★★					