

Pimp My Strat

Always loved the Dan Armstrong Plexiglass guitar apart from I thought the interchangeable pickups was an unnecessary gimmick – you want to be able to change sounds with a switch. Also thought the wood effect scratchplate was a little tacky and not high enough quality for a guitar of that price. This is my take on it.



List of details:

- Headstock laminated with several layers of walnut burr veneer (0.6mm), oiled & waxed
- Headstock inlaid with cream abalone shell (initials)
- Scratchplate laminated with walnut burr veneer, oiled and waxed
- Rear cover plate laminated both sides with walnut burr veneer (0.6mm), oiled and waxed
- Stock pickups replaced with Tonerider 'Pure Vintage' single coils
- Tone control moved to bridge position from middle
- Grover locking tuners fitter (cam lock)
- Earvana compensated nut fitted
- Lacquer removed from neck and oiled
- Bridge 'blocked' with a wedge of walnut for tuning stability and tone
- String trees replaced with roller string trees
- Neck plate custom engraved using photo impact engraving

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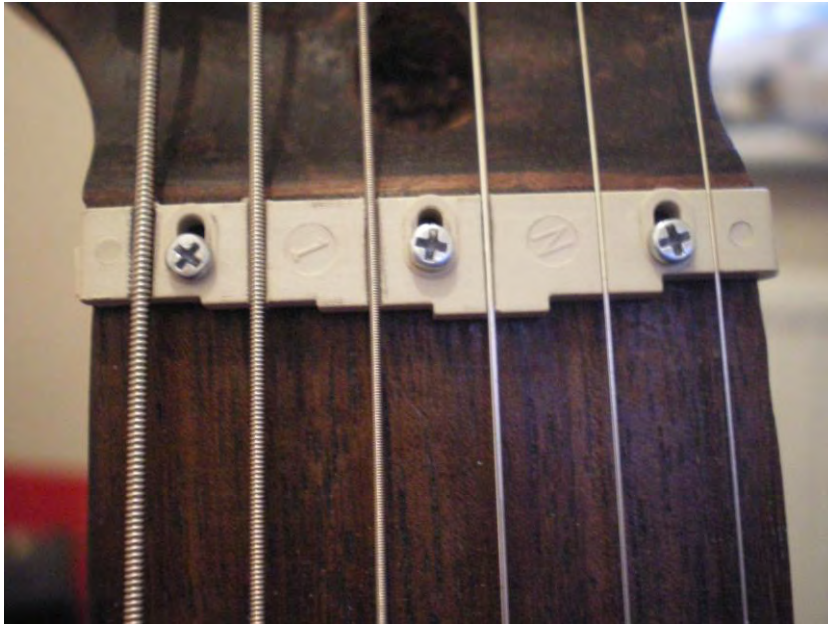
Headstock laminated with several layers of 0.6mm walnut burr veneer – a difficult veneer to work with.

Inlay is cream abalone shell, as this seems to have more iridescence than the Mother of Pearl shell we tend to get in this country!

Bottled out of binding the headstock, due to the curve. Rounded the edges instead.

It is finished with several coats of boiled linseed oil to bring out the colour of the wood, and then waxed to give it a slightly harder coating. No lacquer here. Too smelly.

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Earvana compensated nut fitted as an experiment to see if it would make any difference. Surprisingly, it does. There is a noticeable difference in the sound of open chords. The intonation is as perfect as it can be all over the neck, without going to the extent of stupid shaped frets! I was skeptical, but am now a convert. Now, all my other guitars don't sound right! Doh!

Also very simple to install – if I can do it anyone can! Even setting the intonation at the first fret was a piece of cake.

Roller string trees fitted to reduce the likelihood of any string snagging that can lead to tuning instability. They seem to work quite well and there have been no problems so far.

The heads were replaced with 18:1 Grover locking tuners – the cam-lock type so no thumb screws – they are the business. String changes in 3 minutes instead of half an hour!



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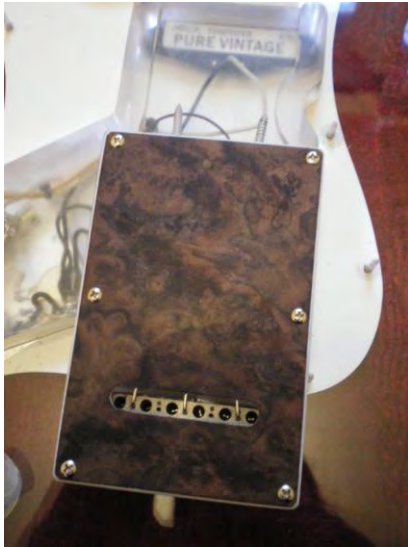


First attempt at laminating a scratch plate. Had to use 2 hour epoxy and make some mdf clamping cauls to hold everything flat while the glue went off. Walnut burl is awful to work with and it seems impossible to get it as flat as straight grain veneers before gluing, so this was the only way. The contrast between the walnut burl and the white of the scratchplate/hardware looks great.

Tonerider's 'Pure Vintage' pickups fitted. Bottom tone control moved to the bridge.

Planning to replace the Bridge with a Seymour Duncan Hotrails for more grunt and to make it more useable and less 'Hank Marvin'.

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Rear plate laminated and finished the same as other wood. Attention to detail. Both sides means you don't see white through the guitar body. Slot cut in plate to make restringing easier. The trem block was also fixed using some walnut to make it a hard tail and further improve tuning stability.

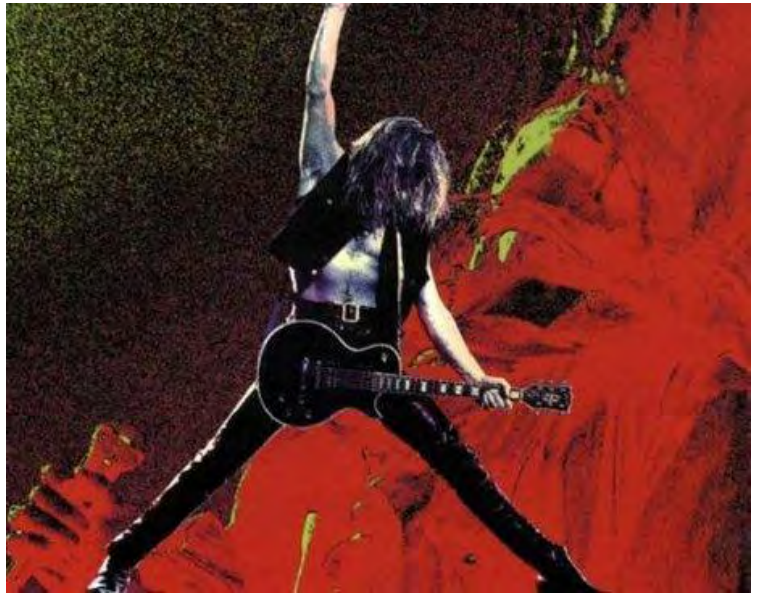


Neck plate custom engraved using impact engraving from a photo. This photo taken using the flash on the camera, but the actual effect on the real thing is very holographic – amazing.

This is my favorite part of the whole guitar. It is a picture of my 3 year old son, with my Epiphone Les Paul round his neck. Bless him, I think the Les Paul weighs more than him! You can almost see the 'Epiphone' logo detailed on the engraving!

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This was the brief: To take this photo, theme it around the Sonic Temple album cover:



And this is how it turned out:



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The original guitar was 'structurally sound', neck straight and adjustable, so a good basis for major mods. And this is how it looked originally:

