

Godin

in the press

Exclusive Godin Round-up!

Godin SD, Summit CT, Passion RG-3 Natural & Velocity HDR

Four innovative guitars from a great manufacturer
by Steve Henderson

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In a market saturated by products that seem more and more homogenised, Godin continues to be fresh and innovative. In contrast to other more established manufacturers, Godin isn't sitting on its laurels but is developing ideas that meet the needs of the today's music scene and not of a time long past.

While most of these ideas involve their luthiers, Godin's High Definition Revoicer circuit is a seriously good addition to each guitar's tone palette – it's great dry but put a little chorus and reverb on it and just listen to the chime. With artists like John McLaughlin using their guitars,

it's worth taking a look at what all the fuss is about.

GODIN SD

The Godin SD is a bit of a hybrid. It has a single cut body, slightly off-set waist, flame maple top with a pickguard, six-a-side headstock, 24.75" scale neck and a SSH pickup configuration. It's kind of in between a couple of things, without being exactly like either of them, and actually works well because of this middle ground position.

Acoustically, the SD is really loud. Not only that, but much of this sound comes from the neck. There's nothing passive about the

luthiery here – someone intended to make a really nice instrument and the whole guitar rings vibrantly before it's plugged in.

Like most Godins, it's a very light guitar so there's no dense material soaking up any of the good vibrations, and the flow of information from neck to body and back again is enhanced by the rock solid neck joint. The figured maple face has a three dimensional image that is subtle and classy, and almost sparkles under stage lights.

The maple neck is that shallow D shape that Godin seems to love, a touch wider than usual, and very positive in the hand. It has a very smooth curve, creating the D

shape, and never flattens out at any point – so the left hand isn't distracted by changing topography. Anywhere on the profile feels pretty much the same. As usual there are 22 nicely dressed frets with easy access to the upper frets due to the bevelling at the rear of the neck pocket.

This guitar sounds great. Godin's own pickups are impressive, with good harmonic content and plenty of output. The single coils have a really nice throaty bite and the humbucker really growls when you need it to. The front pickup sounded fantastic through the Green Screamer and the Ulbrick 12AXE gave the back pickup some solid grunt. The lightweight body really affects the clean sound in a positive way and, no matter which amp we used, the SD maintained its signature voice.

The tremolo unit is an update on Leo Fender's design and works as it should and, after a quick adjustment, returned to pitch every time. It has a positive feel and can be set up as light or heavy as required.

The SD is another example of a working class guitar that doesn't look "down market" – it has what you need to do the business, and nothing extraneous. It's well presented, plays great and has some solid tones that don't thin out as you climb the neck.



The SD's bridge is a modern revision of Leo Fender's synchronised tremolo

The bottom line

We like: Wonderfully light, big tones, attention to detail.

We dislike: Not being able to find any major problems!

Guitarist says: Great sounds, great looks, well-made guitars for real people.





GODIN SUMMIT CT

The Summit CT is single cutaway, dual humbucker, three-a-side headstock that fits firmly into that familiar category. The mahogany body is lighter than expected but this just serves to enhance the natural (unplugged) acoustic sound, which is quite loud and toneful.

Godin really knows how to make a friendly neck, and this one has a solid feel with hardly any flex. It is ebony on mahogany and the frets have been perfectly finished along the edge of the fingerboard. Even acoustically, the neck clearly resonates with the body. The neck is bolted to a beautiful, contoured mahogany body, capped with carved flame maple, and there's no movement at all in this neck joint. Solid, man!

Loaded with Duncans and Godin's proprietary High Definition Revoicer, the Summit is loaded with sounds both subtle and not-so-subtle. The Duncans are perfect for this guitar and the 5-way selector switch offers plenty of sounds. Add to this the Revoicer circuit and, as Godin says, "it's like having two sets of pickups in one guitar."

Push the HDR button and the tone immediately broadens, with more brilliance, depth and complexity. Clean sounds have more presence and dynamics, with a sparkle that that seems completely natural. Without the volume changing, the tone is more apparent, more forward in the mix. Overdrive and distortion sounds are richer and more focussed, even

smoother in some cases. Whether it was through an Ulbrick 12AXE, a Zendrive, a Green Screamer, a Tonebone Trimode, or the various amp distortions, the HDR function brought a sense of hi-fidelity class to the sound – as though we had just gone from mono to stereo.

The feel of the neck, the excellent upper fret access, the sense of precision when fretting the strings, the resonance of the body, the touch sensitivity of the output, the rear contour – this guitar is a real gem. Not only that, it's beautiful to look at too. The carved maple top has a striking flame to it and, although the sunbursting is a touch dramatic, it is still gorgeous to look at. I mean, do we have to return this straight away? Can't we work something out?

The only negative was a loose strap button, which was just a twist of the screwdriver away from being sorted. But if this is our only real criticism, then Godin clearly has another winner on its hands. This is a superb guitar, beautifully crafted and presented, that delivers a variety of high class tones with substance and style.

The bottom line

We like: Fast feeling ebony fretboard; versatile range of sounds

We dislike: Black hardware
Guitarist says: We've seen better looking guitars, but close your eyes and just play

Push the High Definition Revoicer button and the tone immediately broadens, with more brilliance, depth and complexity..



The shape of the Summit CT's body allows for excellent upper fret access



PASSION RG-3

The RG-3 is a great example of putting a new spin on an old idea. The familiar double cutaway body matched to a maple neck with a six-a-side headstock – but the Godin's body has acoustic chambers, a squared and bound front edge, and a magnificent, three dimensional flame maple top that even rolls over the arm contour – very slick. It's all presented in a light amber, high-gloss finish that looks fantastic under stage lights.

The C-shaped neck profile has a definite vintage vibe to it and the satin finish gives it a familiar, lived-in feel. The strings feel very positive under the fingers and the neck shape and 12" radius have a bluesy flavour (don't ask me to explain that, it just is what it is!).

Having said that, the Passion RG-3 rocks – big time. The

chambered body combines with the maple neck to produce a loud and complex acoustic sound before it's plugged in to anything. Into a Boogie Mark IV or a Traynor YCV-40, the RG-3 has a rich and punchy sound – whether through the clean channel or the gain channel. The GS-3 pickups never sound thin or nasty, and positions 2 and 4 have that classic quack that is now a timeless and classic tone. Through the Zendrive, the RG-3 had a terrific honk that cut through the mix with ease. Through the Ulbrick 12AXE, the guitar's harmonic content was accentuated and the broad thickness of that pedal was enhanced even more.

Remembering the bluesy flavour the Passion invoked, we plugged into a '66 Deluxe Reverb and it was like they were made for each other. Having

done that, we may as well try the old brown Vibrolux and – Holy Vacuum Tube, Batman! – the tone had a rich roundness that we didn't know this amp could deliver. If guitars had chambered bodies back in '63, this combination would have been the benchmark. All this is before we pushed the High Definition Revoicer button.

With the HDR engaged, everything became a hi-fi version of before – more brilliance (but not edginess), more complex mids, and more fullness in the bass (without any wooliness at all). The HDR circuit seems to enhance the selected pickup combination but it doesn't just boost the output, it changes the harmonic focus so that the HDR sound is actually a completely new sound. On the chambered body of the Passion, this means the harmonics become

a significant part of the sound making this guitar is the perfect showcase for Godin's HDR system.

As usual, this Godin is finished magnificently – bound top, beautifully dressed frets, high gloss body, real chrome. Even the two back plates are flame maple. And talk about protected – even the gig bag has a case! The Passion RG-3 is simple to operate (volume, tone, 5-way, HDR switch), the tremolo is super smooth, and there's plenty of upper fret access with that recessed heel. Best of all, it's a finely crafted guitar that's built to last. Yes, this has a bluesy side to it, but mostly the RG-3 wants to rock.



The Passion RG-3's body has acoustic chambers which result in rich, rounded tones



The bottom line

We like: Excellent build quality, super smooth tremelo

We dislike: Not much, but we'd like to see a version with a locking vibrato

Guitarist says: Gorgeous looking, beautiful playing





The test gear

Mesa/Boogie Mk.IV through a variety of cabinets: 112 EV open-back, 212 Celestion closed-back, Mesa Quad (2 x Mesa/Celestion 90s and 2 x Mesa Vintage 50s); Traynor YCV-40WR (Celestion V30); reissue Fender Tweed Bassman; '63 Fender Vibrolux; '66 Fender Deluxe Reverb; Hermida Zendrive; Ulbrick 12AXE; Creation Audio Labs Mark 4.23 Boost; Tonebone Trimode; BBE Green Screamer.

VELOCITY HDR

The Velocity is very much a workhorse guitar. Not that it is simplistic or hurriedly built – it is neither. It's just that it has everything you need and nothing you don't. It's a familiar double cutaway shape, six-a-side head stock, solid body (no chambers), rosewood board on a maple neck, two single coils and a humbucker, volume and tone. What more do you need?

This guitar is very light. Silver Leaf and poplar are both light timbers, and the tiger maple cap is dense but there's not enough of it to affect the weight.

Consequently, there's a


reasonable acoustic twang to be heard before it is amplified. Finding a solid body that has tone acoustically is always a plus and, while this isn't as pronounced as the RG-3, it is present enough. The maple cap has a classy flame and gloss finish, the body has been contoured in the rear for comfort and, around the neck, the bevelling allows easy upper fret access.

The neck is a very comfortable shallow D shape, with a lovely piece of rosewood for the fretboard and 22 perfectly dressed frets. The satin finish begins to shine up almost immediately, making the neck feel quite friendly. The neck joint is, as usual, impeccable. If there's a criticism to be made, it has to do with the nut – which is seated in an overly wide slot. On the other hand, there's no movement at all so maybe this is normal for this model.

The balance of the single coils and the humbucker was pretty good but we did a little tweak to our personal tastes and then happily tore into some rock, blues and jazz tunes. The Godin single coils actually sound fine – very responsive, plenty of

character and with that in-between quack that we've come to expect. They are a nice contrast to the Duncan Custom, which has loads of drive and upper mid bite. Engaging the HDR circuit, we were treated to an even livelier set of sounds, all of them extremely useful.

While not as rich as the chambered Passion, the Velocity has a more focussed sound – especially through the Boogie or the overdrive pedals. Clean sounds, too, were more defined and spoke with a confident voice.

This is simply a great value, well made, big sounding North American guitar. When you do your sums, there's nothing of this value made anywhere else over there. It even comes with a gig bag. 

The bottom line

We like: Variety of sounds; slimline, sculpted body

We dislike: A locking vibrato would have been a bonus

Guitarist says: This is a sleek, souped-up electric, able to handle a lot of styles



The High Definition Revoicer circuitry results in livelier sounds





Godin SD

PRICE: \$1,169
ORIGIN: Canada
TYPE: Electric
BODY: Silver Leaf Maple, contoured flame maple top
NECK: Hard Rock Maple, bolt on
SCALE LENGTH: 630mm / 24.75"
TUNERS: Gotoh Schaller-style
NUT: Synthetic bone
WIDTH of neck at the nut: 42.4mm/1.66"
WIDTH of neck at the 15th fret: 54.5mm/2.14"
FINGERBOARD: Rock Maple, 12" radius
FRETS: 22, medium
HARDWARE: Chrome and brushed aluminium
BRIDGE/SPACING: Six screw trem; 52.7mm/2.07"
ELECTRICS: Godin GHBI humbucker, 2 x Godin GS-3 large pole single coils
FINISH: Satin finished neck; high gloss body
ACCESSORIES: Gig bag included

Dynamic Music 02 9939 1299
www.dynamicmusic.com.au

Test results

Build quality	★★★★★
Playability	★★★★★
Sound	★★★★★
Value for money	★★★★★

GUITARIST RATING ★★★★★



Godin Summit CT

PRICE: \$1,999
ORIGIN: Canada
TYPE: Electric
BODY: Solid mahogany, carved flame maple top
NECK: Mahogany, bolt on
SCALE LENGTH: 630mm / 24.75"
TUNERS: Godin, Schaller-style
NUT: Synthetic bone
WIDTH of neck at the nut: 44mm/1.73"
WIDTH of neck at the 15th fret: 54mm/2.12"
FINGERBOARD: Ebony, with off-centre dots, 12th fret pearl block, 16" radius
FRETS: 22, medium
HARDWARE: Black Chrome
BRIDGE/SPACING: Tunomatic-style, string-through-body; 51.8mm/2.04"
ELECTRICS: Seymour Duncan 59 and Alnico II, High Definition Revoicer
FINISH: Satin finished neck; high gloss body
ACCESSORIES: Gig bag included

Dynamic Music 02 9939 1299
www.dynamicmusic.com.au

Test results

Build quality	★★★★★
Playability	★★★★★
Sound	★★★★★
Value for money	★★★★★

GUITARIST RATING ★★★★★



Godin Passion RG-3

PRICE: \$5,999
ORIGIN: Canada
TYPE: Electric
BODY: Chambered solid Ash, contoured flame maple top
NECK: Hard Rock Maple, bolt on
SCALE LENGTH: 647.7mm / 25.5"
TUNERS: Gotoh, 18:1
NUT: Synthetic bone
WIDTH of neck at the nut: 42.8mm/1.68"
WIDTH of neck at the 15th fret: 54.5mm/2.14"
FINGERBOARD: Maple, 12" radius
FRETS: 22, medium
HARDWARE: Chrome
BRIDGE/SPACING: Two bolt trem; 52.9mm/2.08"
ELECTRICS: Godin GS-3 large pole single coils, High Definition Revoicer
FINISH: Satin finished neck; high gloss body
ACCESSORIES: Gig bag and touring case included

Dynamic Music 02 9939 1299
www.dynamicmusic.com.au

Test results

Build quality	★★★★★
Playability	★★★★★
Sound	★★★★★
Value for money	★★★★★

GUITARIST RATING ★★★★★



Godin Velocity HDR

PRICE: \$1,799
ORIGIN: Canada
TYPE: Electric
BODY: Silver Leaf Maple/Poplar, contoured flame maple top
NECK: Hard Rock Maple, bolt on
SCALE LENGTH: 647.7mm / 25.5"
TUNERS: Gotoh Schaller-style
NUT: Synthetic bone
WIDTH of neck at the nut: 41.9mm/1.65"
WIDTH of neck at the 15th fret: 53.3mm/2.09"
FINGERBOARD: Rosewood, 12" radius
FRETS: 22, medium/large
HARDWARE: Chrome and brushed aluminium
BRIDGE/SPACING: Two bolt trem; 52.9mm/2.08"
ELECTRICS: Seymour Duncan Custom, 2 x Godin GS-3 large pole single coils, High Definition Revoicer
FINISH: Satin finished neck; high gloss body
ACCESSORIES: Gig bag included

Dynamic Music 02 9939 1299
www.dynamicmusic.com.au

Test results

Build quality	★★★★★
Playability	★★★★★
Sound	★★★★★
Value for money	★★★★★

GUITARIST RATING ★★★★★