

Godin **in the press**

Velocity with High Definition Revoicer

Godin Velocity TESTED BY DAVE HUNTER

GEAR Godin



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CANADA'S GODIN GUITARS IS KNOWN FOR packing added value into instruments that otherwise might seem to take fairly standard form. The Multiac, LGX, and LGXT offered stealthy

functions such as synth access or hybrid magnetic/piezo pickup options—which helped to set a standard for Godin with players who wanted more than just one guitar out of, well, *one* guitar. In its own somewhat subtler way, the new Velocity guitar is the first to carry Godin's new High-Definition Revoicer (HDR) system—an onboard active system that offers low-impedance performance, while revoicing and augmenting the frequency range of the pickups. And, being switchable between active and passive with the push of a button, it continues Godin's "two-in-one" angle.

This electronics wizardry is packaged in an offset-double-horned body that appears aimed primarily at the modern rock, power-pop, and perhaps even shred player. The bridge is Godin's six-screw, vintage-style vibrato with milled aluminum saddles, rather than a double-locking affair of many such beasts, but everything else reflects a design that's built for speed and contemporary rock action. The silverleaf maple/poplar body has an attractive highly figured maple top (finished in natural burst flame; amber flame and natural flame is also available). Sleek and pointy, the Velocity also has some radical sculpting behind the treble-side cutaway, along

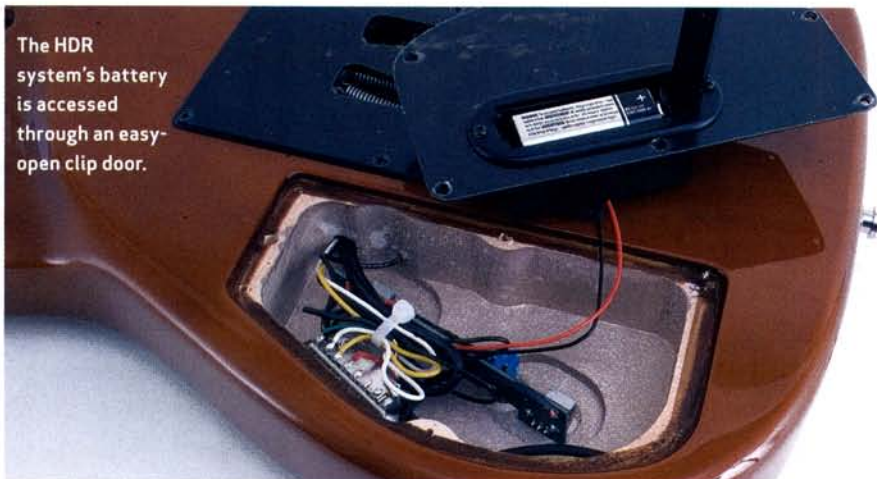
SPECS | Godin Guitars, (514) 457-7977; godinguitars.com

PRICE	\$1,095 retail/\$895 street
NUT WIDTH	1 ¹¹ / ₁₆ " Tusq by Graphtec
NECK	Bolt-on rock maple neck with "C" profile
FRETBOARD	25 ¹ / ₂ " scale unbound rosewood with 12" radius
FRETS	22 medium-jumbo
BODY	Solid silverleaf maple center section and poplar wings, figured maple top
PICKUPS	Two Godin GS1 single-coils and one Seymour Duncan SH-5 humbucker
CONTROLS	Master Volume and Tone controls, 5-way pickup selector, pushbutton switch for HDR active system
BRIDGE	Vintage-style vibrato with aluminum saddles
HARDWARE	Diecast Godin tuners
FACTORY STRINGS	Godin E-10 Nickel Regular Light, .010-.046
WEIGHT	8 lbs
KUDOS	Excellent quality. Fast and comfortably playable neck. Versatile electronics.
CONCERNS	HDR pushbutton switch feels a little plasticky.



The Velocity sports a functional vintage-style vibrato and simple switching—all made more versatile by its selectable active/passive electronics.

The HDR system's battery is accessed through an easy-open clip door.



with deep comfort contours for the forearm and ribcage.

The one-piece rock maple neck is attached using four screws in deep-set cup washers, rather than a neck plate. The heel is nicely rounded, but it doesn't provide quite the easy reach up to the top fret that some such alterations on the vintage template afford. That said, it's an extremely tight, wiggle-free neck joint with a great heel-to-pocket fit that should aid sustain and resonance. The fine-grained, chocolatey Indian rosewood fretboard (a maple board is also available) has a 12" radius and 22 medium frets, all beautifully dressed. I like the petite, offset dot position markers, and the profile provided by Godin's proprietary "ergocut" shaping technique feels great. It's a very slim neck at around 23/32" at the first fret, and 27/32" at the 12th, but doesn't come off feeling overly flat—an impression greatly aided by its smoothly rolled-over fretboard edges. A sticker on the headstock describes the Velocity as being "assembled in the USA from parts hand-crafted in Canada." Now there's a twist on outsourcing!

Setup-wise, the Velocity is a sweet and easy player. The action is low enough to facilitate speed and flare, but it's still buzz-free, with plenty of ring and resonance. This vibrato is set flat to the body, so you get down-bend only for quick dips or dive bombs. While a floating vibrato is preferable for the slight up-bend that plenty of players like to make use of, the Velocity's stock setup provides a little more bridge-to-body contact, and the unit stays steady when you bend notes, too (bending a G string up a whole step doesn't send its partners down a semitone in pitch along with it, as happens with a floating vintage Stratocaster bridge). In any case, you can adjust the springs and claw in the Velocity's back cavity for some float with this

vibrato if you so desire.

The HDR function is accessed via a small plastic push/push switch. This component feels a little vulnerable to me, but I'm sure it's robust enough. There's no coil-splitting facility for the humbucker—which I always think is a little bit of a missed opportunity—but between the HDR and the 5-way pickup selector, sonic versatility is hardly an issue. Battery access is through a convenient clip-close door on the back control plate.

Devote a little time to exploring the electronics, and the Velocity quickly reveals its virtue. The HDR is not a preamp in the sense of a gain boost (although there is a slightly perceivable gain increase with HDR engaged), but it buffers the output, removes any loading effect your cables or effects might have on the signal, and increases the overall frequency range of the pickups. "High-Definition" really is a good name for it, as the guitar sounds extremely alive and electric, but without being harsh or brittle. In this mode, every nuance and subtlety of your playing rings out, yet with good tonal depth and warmth. With all pickup positions there's a perception of clean power, while the voice of each (a characteristic single-coil neck tone, for example) is maintained entirely. It's a great boon to distorted tones, too, giving added cut and definition to any fuzz or distortion pedal or high-gain channel I jacked it through. Switched to passive mode, the Velocity still has a lot to offer—namely in smoother, rounder traditional high-impedance pickup tones that feel very tactile and pliable for certain playing requirements. All in all, the Velocity is a well-crafted instrument, with easy playability and broad appeal—even to players who may not consider themselves to be candidates for an instrument with active electronics. **E**