

Archer AF50CE

BY DAVID ALESSANDRI

Like many guitarists I know, I stopped carrying an acoustic to gigs a long time ago. Most times I only used it on a few songs and getting one that sounded good on a gig that didn't spend half the song screaming feedback meant spending more dough than I really wanted to. In fact, I was less than enthusiastic about taking one out for review. With all that in mind I was surprised at how much fun I had playing the Archer AF50CE.

To a musician, a reasonably priced, quality instrument is like the proverbial having your cake and eating it too. With Archer Guitars, price and quality is a piece of cake. And with features generally only found on higher priced guitars, the AF50CE is still within the means of the budget-bound player. Not only does the AF50CE play and sound good but it's also a nice looking instrument.

There are three finishes to choose from (Honey, Brown Burst and Black Burst) on a flame maple top. Along with an abalone bound top and rosette this makes for a beautiful looking guitar. The gold plated die-cast tuning keys and custom inlay on the rosewood fingerboard enhance the classy look of this guitar. The

mahogany back and sides finish off the looks with elegance and style.

The Archer is equipped with a fairly standard piezo bridge-saddle pickup system. While a purist will insist that these kinds of pickups do not give a "true" acoustic tone (and the purists are right...) for most giggers—especially in a band context—they work just fine and are less prone to feedback than some of the blended systems available that bring an onboard condenser mic to the party. Though those systems are obviously the first choice of giggers for whom acoustic is their main thing. You also get a 4-band EQ to fine-tune your tone and to help EQ-out any unwanted feedback and a very convenient battery check button that let's you check the state of your battery without even having to plug in.

SOUND CHECK

The Gear:
Archer-AF50CE
Mini-Jumbo Acoustic/Electric Guitar

The Gigs:
Casual at the Queen Mary, Long Beach, California with T.M. Luna

Who It's For:
Guitar players who need that occasional acoustic sound.

How Much:
\$599.98

Pros:
■ Priced reasonably
■ Great electronics, excellent tone
■ Nice looking

Cons:
The low action and electric feel of the neck might not go over with some acoustic guitar traditionalists.

Archer Guitars
Milwaukee, Wisconsin, U.S.A.

Abalone Bound Top and Rosette

Gold-Plated Die-Cast Tuning Keys

Flame Maple Finish

The body-style is known as a mini-jumbo. The medium-thin body (not as thin as some we've seen but not quite full depth either) is comfortable to hold, and helps minimize feedback at stage volume levels. The easy access battery compartment makes battery change-outs literally a snap—just snap it out, change the battery, and snap it back in. The low action and easiness of playing gives this guitar the feel of an electric; you can even bend notes with a fair amount of ease. The cutaway makes it possible to play in the higher register all the way to the last of the 21, frets allowing you more creative freedom while playing.

On the gig the AF50CE worked like a charm. Even though I was playing with a full rhythm section (keys, bass and drums), I encountered absolutely no feedback problems. I got a clean, warm, full tone with plenty of volume. The electric guitar feel of the neck made it simple to switch back and forth between electric and acoustic tunes with very little mental adjustment for neck types. We even did a song that required a guitar solo and because we were in a live situation I couldn't switch over

to my Strat, so I had to play it on the AF50CE. Even though I had to crank it a bit to ride over the band I got plenty of volume yet still didn't encounter any feedback problems.

The AF50CE is a nice instrument, especially for those gigs where you need an acoustic for a few tunes. The feel of the neck along with its tonal capabilities opens up a world of possibilities where you could branch out on some light soloing or even some smooth jazz material.

GIG

4-Band EQ



Easy Access to Battery