

Sadowsky Jim Hall Signature Guitar: Ace Archtop

It should come as no surprise that Sadowsky Guitars' Jim Hall Signature model archtop guitar plays as well and feels as comfortable as it does. Renowned luthier Roger Sadowsky has worked on Hall's guitars for more than 15 years and collaborated closely with the guitarist on the instrument's specifications and design.

"Roger had me try out a couple prototypes when he was just getting it together," Hall said. "At first he fine-tuned the thing because I'm used to the D'Aquisto guitar that I've had for so long. Jimmy D'Aquisto tried to make the guitar that he made for me feel like the ES-175 that I'd had since 1956. Roger was aware of that, and he tried to not copy it, but he wanted it to look as classy as the D'Aquisto does."

With a sunburst nitrocellulose lacquer finish and ebony bridge, pickguard and knobs, the Jim Hall Signature guitar is a handsome instrument that emanates a vintage vibe at a cost (\$3,895) that is appealing for budget-conscious players who need a reliable instrument that they can use nightly without worry.

For players interested in Jim Hall's style and sound, it would be nearly impossible to find a guitar that approaches that sound more than Sadowsky's Jim Hall Signature model. Amplified, the guitar spoke beautifully, with a warm blend of acoustic tone and

electric signal (from a set-in pickup based on the pickup in Hall's D'Aquisto guitar and made to Sadowsky's specifications by DiMarzio) that makes for a resonant sound. It's wonderful for strumming chords rhythmically à la Hall, relying on the response of the guitar's acoustic sound with a touch of amplification, and is extremely responsive to pick attacks whether strums are heavy or light. The maple neck with ebony fingerboard feels exceedingly comfortable to play and is inspiring to the touch.

The guitar has such warmth and resonance that it's almost hard to believe its top is a five-ply maple laminate and not carved.

Sadowsky chose to use a laminate top because Hall's D'Aquisto and ES-175 were both made of laminated maple and he believes that, when amplified, a laminated wood guitar sounds better than a solid wood guitar. Sadowsky also reduced the thickness of the laminate top and back for a more



acoustic response and reduced the depth of the guitar's body to control feedback, an idea that Hall thought could compromise the guitar's sound.

"A friend of mine, a jazz guitar player who lives up in New England, found out that the depth of the Sadowsky guitar was about a half-inch shallower than the D'Aquisto. We were trying to figure out how to get the same sound, and he got obsessed with that idea," Hall said. "So did I for a while. I talked to Roger about it, and Roger said, 'I think it would make almost no difference.' So my friend and I did a Blindfold Test for each other. First he played each guitar, the D'Aquisto and the Sadowsky, and I liked the Sadowsky better. He did, too. We reversed, and I played almost the same phrase on both guitars and I thought, 'OK, let's go with it.'"

—Dave Zaworski
Ordering Info: www.sadowsky.com