NEWS at NAMM

EKO Introduces the new revolutionary FastLOK System for guitar setup adjustment. The new Ranger Custom, Conero, Laredo, Ranger FL and MIA guitars, equipped with this innovative and unique feature, will be showcased for the first time worldwide.

Read more also on our FastLOK Tremolo.

700 Anniversary | M24 Anniversary | K24 Custom – three beauties from EKO, Made in Europe.

EKO by Lorenz | Made in Italy brand for passionate musicians. Brand new analogue effect pedals and the new Sugarbabe combos.

NEWS about EKO

EKO returns to the U.S. with new distributor | Published on “Music Trades” January 2011

EKO Ghost VI - Reissue | Published on “Premier Guitar” December 2010

Jimi Hendrix plays EKO | from the Book “Jimi Hendrix Gear”

For more information please refer to our website www.ekoguitars.it.

Come to visit our booth at Namm, Hall C – Nr. 4897, you are welcome to try all our products.
EKO FastLOK System

Changing the setup of a guitar and adjusting the action without removing the strings has always represented a dream for guitar players and technicians all over the world.

50 years ago, EKO decided to apply the Bolt-on technology within its acoustic guitars; that is, body and neck held together by 4 fixing screws, an approach which later influenced several major guitar manufacturers worldwide. Today EKO presents a new revolutionary FastLOK System (Patent Pending) specifically for guitar setup adjustment, which will surely influence the music market within the next 50 years.

The FastLok System enables string height adjustment with respect to the fingerboard (Action) in a simple, effective, and quick manner without removing the strings, and without the need of a luthier. The FastLOK System may change the inclination of the angle between neck and body and thus cause a variation on the distance between the strings and fingerboard. This optimizes the relationship between movement of the strings and fingerboard, and enables to reach the action desired by the guitar player. Furthermore, another unique aspect of the FastLOK System is that the guitar’s neck can easily and quickly be changed. First, unlock the device which assembles neck and body through clockwise rotations (a) of the locking screw. The second step allows neck inclination adjustments through the set up screw. A clockwise rotation (b) will allow the neck to move nearer to the strings; on the other hand, an anticlockwise rotation (c) will make the distance from neck to strings greater. When this is done, the locking screw must be rotated clockwise (d), locking the neck again, and the procedure has come to the end.

For more information please refer to our website www.ekoguitars.it.

Come to visit our booth at Namm, Hall C – Nr. 4897, you are free to try all our products.
**Sistema EKO FastLOK**

La parte posteriore di tutti i modelli EKO FastLOK, a differenza di quello presente nelle altre marche, è un sistema di microregolazione a vite set-up screw. Con il meccanismo che unisce il manico al corpo tramite una vite di bloccaggio (locking screw), è possibile regolare l'altezza delle corde rispetto al ponte attraverso la vite di bloccaggio (locking screw)

**Anno 1968**

La gran parte dei modelli EKO FastLOK offrono ulteriori pannelli di regolazione:

- **Disegno A**: sistema FastLOK
- **Disegno B**: sistema EKO FastLOK

La variazione dell'altezza delle corde al ponte attraverso il sistema FastLOK provoca una variazione dell'inclinazione (angolo di incidenza del manico rispetto alla cassa), quindi una variazione della distanza delle corde dalla tastiera. Questo ottimizza il rapporto tra il movimento della corda e la tastiera. Inoltre, un'altra particolarità del sistema EKO FastLOK è quella di poter sostituire il manico della chitarra in modo facile e veloce.

**Disegno A** mostrato il sistema di microregolazione separato, come si usa. Il sistema di microregolazione deve essere fatto con la massima attenzione, con movimenti di rotazione inferiori a 45°.

**Disegno B** a sinistra, e mostra la vite di bloccaggio (locking screw) nella regolazione.

**Specifications**

**EKO FastLOK**

- **Body Type**: Dreadnought
- **Neck Shape**: Eko Medium
- **Scale**: 650 mm.
- **Frets**: Number 20
- **Fingerboard**: Rosewood
- **Nut**: Plastic
- **Machine Head**: Diecast
- **Bridge**: Rosewood
- **Top Bracing**: X bracing
- **Sides**: Mahogany
- **Back**: Mahogany
- **Top**: Solid sitka spruce
- **Neck Material**: Mahogany
- **Neck Joint**: FastLOK system by EKO
- **Binding Body**: Wood
- **Binding Neck**: Plastic
- **Nut**: Plastic
- **Saddle**: Bone
- **Equalizer**: None
- **Rosette**: EKO standard
- **Truss Rod**: Double action
- **Scale 650 mm.**
- **Bridge Rosewood**
- **Machine head**: Diecast
- **Frets number 20**
- **Fingerboard inlay**: Dots
- **Fingerboard Rosewood**
- **Truss rod Double action**
**SPECIFICATIONS**

**CONERO-RANGER CUSTOM SERIES**

**Fishman Presys Blend (PSY301)**

- Nut: Zero fret system
- Scale: 650 mm.
- Adjustable saddle
- Bridge: Rosewood with fingerboard inlay Real mother of pearl
- Truss rod: Double action

**Neck Material:**
- Ranger XII Custom: Birch
- Ranger VI Custom: Linden

**Back Material:**
- Ranger XII Custom: Linden
- Ranger VI Custom: Linden

**Rosette:**
- Ranger XII Custom: EKO standard
- Ranger VI Custom: EKO standard

**Top Bracing:**
- X bracing
- Spruce

**Body Type:**
- Dreadnought

**Conero - Conero Eq.**

**Ranger VI-XII Custom**

**LAREDO - LAREDO Eq.**

**SPECIFICATIONS**

**Laredo Natural EQ**

- Neck Material: Mahogany
- Neck joint: FastLOK system by EKO
- Sides: Mahogany
- Back: Mahogany
- Rosette Wood
- Top Bracing: X bracing
- Top: Solid sitka spruce

**Body Type:**
- Dreadnought

**Conero Eq.**

- Neck Material: Linden
- Neck joint: FastLOK system by EKO
- Sides: Linden
- Back: Linden
- Rosette: EKO standard
- Top Bracing: X bracing
- Top: Linden

**Body Type:**
- Dreadnought

**Conero Eq.**

- Neck Material: Birch
- Neck joint: FastLOK system by EKO
- Sides: Linden
- Back: Linden
- Rosette: EKO standard
- Top Bracing: X bracing
- Top: Spruce

**Body Type:**
- Dreadnought

**Ranger VI FL**

**Ranger XII FL**

**Laredo Natural EQ**

- Nut: Zero fret system
- Scale: 650 mm.
- Adjustable saddle
- Bridge: Rosewood with fingerboard inlay Real mother of pearl
- Truss rod: Double action

**Fingerboard:**
- Ranger XII Custom: Eko C profile 12 string
- Ranger VI Custom: Eko C profile

**Machine head:**
- Diecast

**Frets number:**
- 20

**Fingerboard inlay:**
- Dots

**Saddle:**
- Plastic

**Nut:**
- Plastic

**Bridge:**
- Rosewood

**Machine head:**
- Diecast

**Fingerboard Rosewood:**
- Ranger XII Custom
- Ranger VI Custom

**Truss rod:**
- Double action

**Neck Shape (RangerVI)**
- Eko C profile

**Scale:**
- 650 mm.

**Machine head Diecast with black button:**
- Ranger VI Custom
- Ranger XII Custom

**Frets number:**
- 20

**Fingerboard Rosewood:**
- Ranger XII Custom
- Ranger VI Custom

**Truss rod:**
- Double action

**Neck Shape (RangerVI)**
- Eko C profile

**Scale:**
- 650 mm.
**EKO MiA Series**

- **Body Type**: Dreadnought cutway, MIA D CW
- **Neck Material**: Mahogany
- **Neck joint**: FastLOK system by EKO
- **Sides**: Mahogany
- **Back**: Mahogany
- **Rosette**: Mahogany, black, white, black
- **Top Bracing**: X bracing scalloped
- **Top**: Solid cedar
- **Body Design**: EKO design
- **Neck Shape**: EKO V profile
- **Neck Material**: Mahogany
- **Scale**: 650 mm.
- **Adjustable saddle**: Bridge
- **Frets number**: 20
- **Fingerboard**: Rosewood
- **Inlay**: Lateral dots and Massimo Varini logo
- **Truss rod**: Double action

**SPECIFICATIONS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feature</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Body</strong>:</td>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Neck joint</strong>:</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sides</strong>:</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Rosette</strong>:</td>
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<td>X bracing scalloped</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Top</strong>:</td>
<td>Solid cedar</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Body Design</strong>:</td>
<td>EKO design</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Neck Shape</strong>:</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Truss rod</strong>:</td>
<td>Double action</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Color/Finish and Code**

- **MIA D CW Natural Satin**: 06130021
- **MIA D CW 3T Sunburst Satin**: 06130020

**Equalizer**

- Fishman Presys Blend (Psy 301)

**Binding**

- Body: Maple
- Neck: Maple

**Saddle and Nut**

- Plastic

**Un'Action perfetta, in qualsiasi condizione climatica, con qualsiasi tipo di corda!**

*Massimo Varini*
EKO FastLOK Tremolo

The lever design offers a comfortable use; bad function or blocking of the vibrato is absolutely excluded due to the selected components, like the self lubricating nylon bearings which are much better than other systems in use, like the ball bearings or roller bearings. EKO FastLOK Tremolo offers innovative performances and renders this vibrato substantially different from all the other vibratos on the market and very close to perfection. If the player decides to switch type of strings with different gauge or tension, the EKO FastLOK Tremolo offers what no other vibrato can do, an ideal set up easy to achieve within minutes, or even seconds. No matter how well a vibrato is designed, maintaining the perfect tune is almost impossible. But EKO’s R&D Department has solved the problem. The rather simple solution adopted allows to set one point of return of the vibrato, once the lever is released, allowing the instrument to remain in tune.

On top of everything, should one string break, go out of tune - by accident or intentionally - all the other strings will remain in tune and allow to complete the performance. Through a screw located on the end of the lever, once the instrument has been set for the first time, the EKO FastLOK Tremolo will know where to stop. This new vibrato can easily fit any kind of guitar, without the need of complicated modification to the guitar.

For more information please refer to our website www.ekoguitars.it.

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EKO 700 Anniversary

The most beautiful 'triple cutaway' of all time – with diamond shaped position dots as featured on the USA export model of the 60s - is revisited in an exclusive limited edition production run of 120. As on the original model, the 4-way on/off position switch controls two Seymour Duncan humbuckers, also offering the option of 4 single coil configurations. The new Eko Tremolo, the ebony fingerboard and the sparkling two-tone finish give this guitar incomparable style. The 700 Anniversary is hand assembled, and is individually certified and numbered by the EKO Custom Shop. It is supplied with an exclusive vintage style hard case and cable. The 700 Anniversary is produced in Europe like the M24 Anniversary and K 24 Custom.

For more information please refer to our website www.ekoguitars.it.

Come to visit our booth at Namm, Hall C – Nr. 4897, you are welcome to try all our products.
**M24 Anniversary**

A gem of 70's EKO design in an exclusive limited edition of 120. The M24 was the first 'through-neck' sold in the old continent. With stunning tone and high-class elegance, this really is a 'guitar in evening dress'. Monoblock construction for extraordinary sustain, mahogany for that lush sound with acoustic depth, 24 frets and 2 Seymour Duncan humbuckers, capable of being split into 8 tonal configurations. For this special edition M24, we have introduced for the very first time our innovative EkoLogic Switch, which allows direct selection of two separate amplifiers, or one effect line, from the guitar itself, for total freedom when performing onstage. The M24 Anniversary is further enhanced by the new, reliable Eko Tremolo, with its special ergonomically designed lever for modulating pitch in a gentle and precise manner, whilst maintaining accurate tuning. It is supplied with a hard case and a cable as standard. The M24 Anniversary is produced in Europe like the 700 Anniversary and K 24 Custom.

For more information please refer to our website [www.ekoguitars.it](http://www.ekoguitars.it).

*Come to visit our booth at Namm, Hall C – Nr. 4897, you are welcome to try all our products.*
K 24 Custom

An esoteric project planned and designed in collaboration with a great friend of EKO, Marcelo Barrera (Rescate) to complement and match his virtuosity and musical tastes. Based on the K GG3, the EKO Research and Development team has created a custom model with a modified body and headstock design, 24 frets, oval position dots, ebony fretboard, wide frets, and a stylish pickguard that envelops the pick-ups and linear positioned volume and tone controls. Special hardware with Gotoh Floyd Rose® bridge and Seymour Duncan® pickups which can be split to single coil to ease tonal transitions from Heavy Metal to Fusion. The K 24 custom is produced in Europe like the M24 Anniversary and 700 Anniversary.

For more information please refer to our website www.ekoguitars.it.

Come to visit our booth at Namm, Hall C – Nr. 4897, you are welcome to try all our products.
EKO – Made In Europe

Along with Made in Italy EKO by Lorenz amplifier and pedal lines, a small production of guitars is located in Europe. M24 Anniversary, 700 Anniversary, K 24 Custom and D-Tone are all handcrafted in limited quantities by passionate and skilled hands.

Care for the detail and raw material selection, combined with exclusive design and high rated hardware and pickups make this guitars not only professional instruments but also highly valuable objects.

For more information please refer to our website www.ekoguitars.it.
EKO by Lorenz

EKO By Lorenz, the Made in Italy brand for passionate musicians. Born from the partnership between EKO and Mr. Luigi Lorenzon, founder of the brand Synthesis. New at Namm: Sugarbabe Combo, all exclusively Made in Italy.

Sugarbabe 50

An all-Italian manufactured product, here is a very capable amp for studio and practice session work, offering powerful, clear bass and superb gain on medium/high frequencies. Two selectable channels, clean and overdrive, capable of delivering 50 Watts AB class on 4 and 8 ohms, accessed by a EL34 push-pull. Fitted with a Jensen 12” cone speaker. Features More Drive and Muting.

Sugarbabe 25

Little brother of the Sugarbabe 50, a 25 Watt class AB amp with similar look and sounds, but with less power and facilities (does not feature More Drive and Muting).

For more information please refer to our website [www.ekoguitars.it](http://www.ekoguitars.it).

**Come to visit our booth at Namm, Hall C – Nr. 4897, you are welcome to try all our products.**

EKO by Lorenz

EKO By Lorenz, the Made in Italy brand for passionate musicians. Born from the partnership between EKO and Mr. Luigi Lorenzon, founder of the brand Synthesis. New at Namm: Effect pedals, all exclusively Made in Italy.

The BIGGER BEAT is both a meaty and soft Overdrive. As well as a Smooth setting, it has the capacity to add even more 'bite' through a selectable Boost switch. The other controls are Drive, Tone and Volume.

The name alone immediately suggests the explosive nature of this Distortion unit which, in additional to the usual Distortion, Tone and Volume controls, has a further Frequency Cut switch to exclude medium frequencies.

The Fat Boy is a straightforward Boost with a Volume control and switch that can select Bass or High for the desired frequency boosts.

The LIONFIELD is a versatile and dynamic Boost, set by modifying the Sustain (which also operates as a Gain control), Tone and Volume levels.

For more information please refer to our website www.ekoguitars.it.

Come to visit our booth at Namm, Hall C – Nr. 4897, you are welcome to try all our products.
EKO by Lorenz

A little bit of History

During the 1960's, the Marche region of Italy became a centre point for the World stage of musical Instruments. Because, at this time, a company named FASEL was born. This small business began producing power transformers and output transformers for the most important manufacturers of musical instruments in and around the territory of Recanati-Castelfidardo. Manufacturers that in those years dominated the world stage. Among its customers was EME-Thomas-Vox, who at that time were producing the near legendary Vox AC30 model, (who’s success was no small way helped by the FASEL output and power transformers) and the equally well known "wha-wha" with the famous FASEL 500mH inductors. In later years, Luigi inherited from his father, (a partner of FASEL *) not only the tools and traditions of this great company, but also something that cannot be bought, only learned, the experience of great craftsmanship.

Over the years that followed he carefully observed every gesture, learned every trick of the trade and therefore gained this invaluable knowledge. Through the ability gained during his time in the company from 1990 to 2000, he was able to see the direction his work should follow: technological innovation, even higher quality of the product and advertising investment, which allowed the company to pass, in the short span of a decade, from regional to national level. In the early 1990’s he met with the chief of engineers of "EME Thomas Vox", further deepening his knowledge on the design of musical instruments. Over the following ten years FASEL became FASE and developed a branch dedicated to audio.

In 2000, the company separated and Synthesis was founded in order to become more active in the audio industry.

For more information please refer to our website www.ekoguitars.it.

Come to visit our booth at Namm, Hall C – Nr. 4897, you are welcome to try all our products.
THE STORIED ITALIAN guitar maker EKO Music Group has appointed F.G. Guitars as its exclusive distributor for the entire United States, cementing its return to the U.S. market after two decades away. With its re-entry, EKO is introducing reissues of its most popular vintage models—including the EKO 700, Kadett '67, Cobra, Ranger XII, and Ranger VI—along with new designs by Remo Serrangeli, an original EKO designer.

Founded in 1959, EKO was Europe’s first major guitar manufacturer. Founder Oliviero Pigini, a one-time accordion maker, had traveled to the U.S. in the early days of rock ‘n’ roll, pegged the guitar as the “cool” instrument of the younger generation, and put his own spin on the instrument. With guitar designs described as “stylish,” “mod,” and “quirky,” EKO quickly gained popularity throughout Europe. Collaborations with top U.K. retailer Rose Morris, the owner of “Beatle brand” Vox, tied EKO to Beatlemania, sparking further success. In 1962 EKO was introduced to the U.S. market, where it won a loyal following with its innovative body designs, ultra-slim necks, and low action. By 1970 the company was established on five conti-
The EKO Ghost VI, a re-creation of a model EKO produced for Vox in 1966, features unique headstock and bodyshape designs licensed to EKO by Phantom Guitar Works.

in a matter of minutes, or remove the neck to pack up the guitar for travel. The FastLok System will be officially introduced at the 2011 winter NAMM show.

EKO’s new distribution agreement with F.G. Guitars seals the brand’s reintroduction to the U.S. market. Goshen, New York-based F.G. Guitars is headed by John Petromilli, whose family has recorded its own tradition of musical instrument making in Italy. For more than 75 years, the Petromilli family has manufactured instruments in the small coastal town of Castelfidardo in Italy’s Marche region, not far from the original EKO company. In a statement on the agreement, Petromilli said he was honored and excited to help bring the Italian-designed guitars back to the U.S.

www.ekousaguitars.com
EKO

Ghost VI

BY CHARLES SAUFLEY

Though you’re likely to encounter very divided opinion on the subject, many guitarists, myself included, consider the Vox Phantom one of the coolest-looking stringed instruments ever. Over the years, Tom Petty has played Phantom 6- and 12-strings. Joy Division’s Ian Curtis made a high-strapped Phantom one of the band’s visual and sonic trademarks. And perhaps no guitar player ever looked cooler than the Velvet Underground’s black-clad, wrap-around-wearing Sterling Morrison slingi a white Phantom.

Italy’s Eko Guitars, always had a close relationship with Vox. In the 60s, the Eko factory produced many of Vox’s most iconic guitars—the Phantom and Mark VI Teardrop included—under license. And, while certain guitar purists regard them as B-grade vintage instruments, they remain some of the most unique-sounding electric instruments on the planet.

The Eko Ghost VI is a stab at reinterpreting the Phantom for the modern player. With its single-coil-sized blade humbuckers and 5-way, Strat-style pickup switch, the Ghost VI will never be mistaken sonically or visually for a vintage Vox—or Eko, for that matter. But it’s an interesting evolution of what was always a fascinating instrument.

Modern Deviations

The Ghost makes no apologies for its design inspiration. But it also deviates from the Vox Phantom in several fundamental respects. First, the basswood body’s

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profile—though clearly derived from Vox's original, is cut with a shallower arc along the bass side of the body. It's a subtle difference, but it does alter the classic proportions of the original Phantom. The headstock is also slightly smaller, though it retains much of the original's oval shape. And the substantial pickguard, which is in pearloid rather than plain white plastic, comes off as a little glitzy.

The three-in-a-row knob configuration is carried over from the original Vox, but the Bigsby-inspired Hank Marvin Tremolo on the original is replaced by Eko's own very cool-looking and very '60s-Italian-styled adjustable-tension vibrato unit.

Some of the Ghost VI's changes work quite nicely. It has a very comfortable, fast-playing, satin-finished neck with a slim C profile and vintage-sized fretwire that's reminiscent of a '60s Fender neck. It's an ideal fit for the guitar's 25.5" scale.

**Contemporary Color**
Any doubts about where the Ghost VI resides on the line between modern and vintage, from a sound perspective, will be answered the second you plug in and turn up, which I did through a Fender Bassman 4x10 reissue and a silverface Fender Twin. The bridge humbucker has a distinct humbucker-equipped-Telecaster snap that would cut through any band mix, and it worked very nicely with the high-headroom Twin and the darker, meatier Bassman for a little chicken-pickin' paradise. Selecting the bridge and middle pickups transformed the tone into a classic Richard Thompson/ Knopfler-esque, out-of-phase Strat tone that inspired me to play along with a few favorite Fairport Convention jams. It's a great illustration of how these pickups manage to impart a lot of single-coil character with much greater headroom.

With an admitted predisposition about how a Vox-style guitar should sound, I was initially a little confused by the disparity...
between the look of the guitar hanging around my shoulder and the Fender-y tones that spilled forth. And the light setup (the guitar was strung with .009s and low action) confounded my initial attempts to dig in and play the fast, heavy folk-rock arpeggios I'd be inclined to play on a vintage Phantom. But once I was better acquainted with the tonal characteristics of the pickups and the Ghost's slinky feel, I was more than happy to string together some legato runs, full-step bends, and fast finger vibrato. And that re-orientation of my approach to the guitar reinforced my thoughts about how comfortable and playable its neck is.

Neck and neck-and-middle pickup configurations delivered more of the familiar Strat-with-headroom quality you tend to get out of blade-style humbuckers. But they seemed to work best in out-of-phase positions, where working the tone knob summoned all kinds of cool, boxy tones that still sustained and sang beautifully.

In general, the tremolo system was ill-matched to the Ghost as it was set up. The attractive, Bigsby-inspired unit worked with a mellow touch when I reduced the tension on the arm, but that adjustment seemed to also make the guitar more susceptible to slipping out of tune. If you choose to forego the tremolo entirely, it can be tucked away just like a Bigsby by turning the arm around backwards, which also has the benefit of improving access to the aft-most tone control.

**The Verdict**

There is definitely a disconnect between how the Eko Ghost VI plays and sounds and how most experienced Vox fans will expect it to play. But for players unfamiliar with the vintage Vox and Eko legacy of snorkely pickup tones and jangle-ready setups, the Ghost VI is an appealing way to get Fender-style playability and tones while getting a whole different visual vibe. Fans of out-of-phase Knopfler sounds will find a...
EKO
Ghost VI

lot to like about the clarity and headroom from the humbuckers in bridge-and-middle and neck-and-middle settings. And honkytonkin’ Telecaster fans will love the civilized-but-nasty treble bite of the bridge pickup through a loud Fender amp. Will those factors sway a buyer otherwise bound for a Strat? From psychedelic revivalists and garage punks to art rockers Phantom-style guitars have always attracted some very left-of-center characters. But it’s fascinating to imagine how players with those sensibilities might appreciate this very playable take on a ’60s-style icon.

Rating:

Buy If...
you love the out-of-left-field ’60s look but need modern playability and tones.

Skip If...
you think Phantom-style guitars are only good for paddling a canoe.

Eko Guitars
Street 700
ekousaguitars.com

HEADOnline...
or use a mobile device to read this QR code to download audio clips of the guitar at premierguitar.com/dec2010

“Time is on my side”
Kay and Eko guitars

Jimi Hendrix is said to have used Eko and Kay guitars while separated from his Danelectro during military training. It would therefore be one of these makes he was playing when the sound caught the attention of fellow Private Billy Cox, with whom he was to enjoy a lifelong musical affinity.

Kay, along with Harmony, were very much major purveyors of budget guitars to the new rock’n’roll generation. The company dated back to 1890 but started using the Kay name in the 1930s, and they kicked into overdrive in 1955 when they were bought by a group of investors and ex-Harmony man Sidney Katz became president. Soon the market was awash with cheap electric guitars.

Kay made two million guitars in its first decade since the takeover, and at one point 1,500 were emerging daily from its new factory near Chicago’s O’Hare Airport, but when vending machine company Seeburg took over the company Katz resigned. Valco took the company in 1967 but both companies went down two years later. The brand name was sold at auction.

Kay’s automobile-inspired logo block on the peghead was a distinguishing feature of its brand. Volume and tone controls were mounted on the plastic pickguards for cheapness, while neck block inlays were unsubtle. The trapeze tailpieces, retained from semi-acoustic designs of the inter-war years, would not stand up to rough treatment.

The K161 Kay Thin Twin was originally introduced in 1952 and was known as the “Jimmy Reed” or “Howlin’ Wolf” model after the bluesmen who used it. Its single-cutaway body shape seemed to owe something to the Les Paul, and it featured two pickups like that rather more expensive instrument, though a Strat-style pickup selector switch was used rather than the Gibson’s up/down item. The Thin Twin got its name from its two Blade pickups, known for their distinctive clean, sharp sound.

Eko was and still is an Italian manufacturer of electric and acoustic guitars, manufacturing largely for export. It was founded in 1959 by Oliviero Pigini and, after starting out on accordions, soon became the biggest guitar producer in Europe. Their excellent quality-price ratio attracted a generation of impecunious guitarists.

In 1961 they entered the American market by teaming up with distributor LoDuca of Milwaukee, Tennessee, and a range of electric guitars emerged the following year. These varied from violin-shaped instruments to ones with plastic-covered bodies and faux marble or sparkle finishes. These designs would be revived in the late 1990s via a range of Korean-made copies.

The 700 series electric, one of the most popular models of the time, is very similar in body shape to the Supro Ozark that was Hendrix’s first guitar, but with an even more distinctive headstock. It came equipped with a tremolo, unusual for cheaper instruments, and two humbucking pickups.
Above: A laid-back Hendrix is pictured letting his amp take the strain as he poses at Clarkesville, Tennessee’s Pink Poodle Club in June 1962. He appears to be playing an Eko guitar; bassist and long-time pal Billy Cox (far right) appears to have a “proper” Fender Precision as copies did not then exist.