

French and Italian guitars of the 1600's became more and more indented at the middle. Around the time of the American revolution, an extra string, the bass E, was added to the existing 5-string instruments, taking a crucial step toward the development of today's guitar. The Carulli guitar of 1810 was one of the first to have six single strings tuned in the present arrangement: E A D G B E. Portrait of Ferdinando Carulli (1770-1840).



Every Alvarez guitar is adjusted in our shop for maximum playability.

Introduction

How to choose a good stringed instrument

by Gerald Chapman, Luthier and Guitar Adjuster, for Alvarez Guitars.



VERY MORNING I OPEN TWO CASES OF BRAND NEW ALVAREZ GUITARS. ONE DAY THEY MIGHT BE 12-STRING GUITARS, THE NEXT DAY CLASSICAL OR ELECTRIC. I take out each guitar, restring it, inspect it, adjust it, tune it and play it.

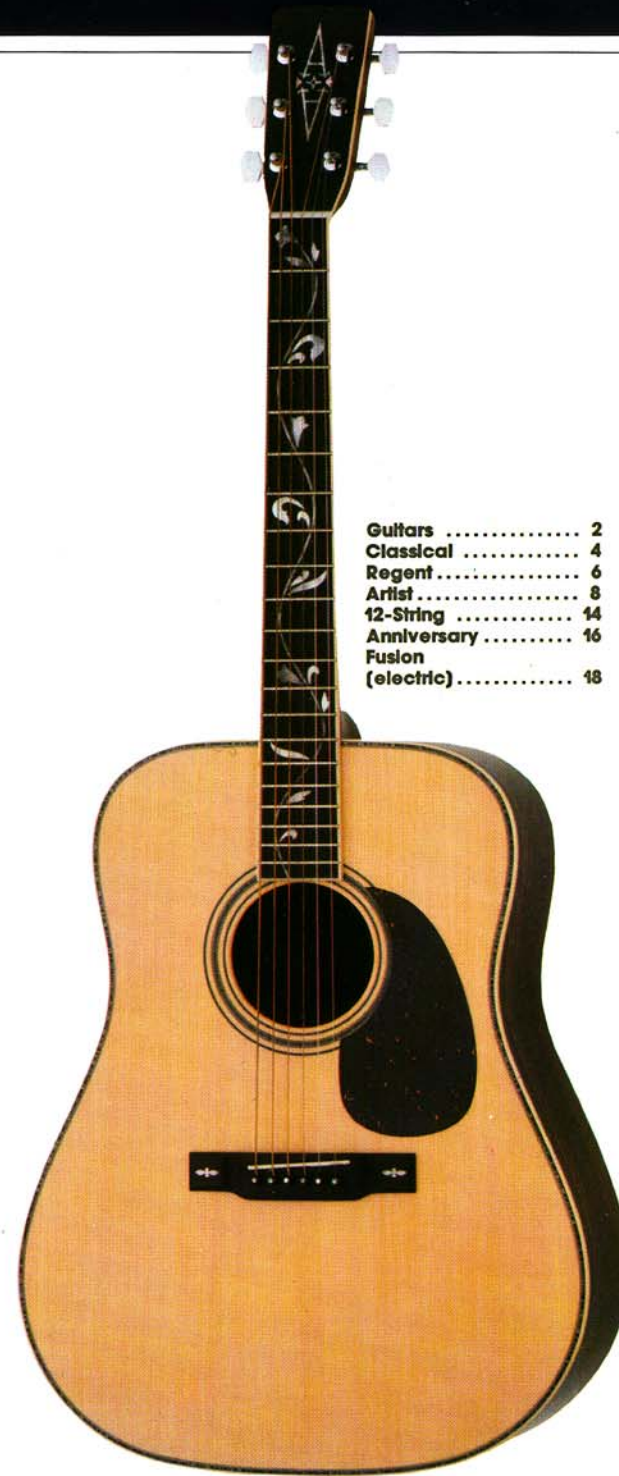
Every instrument that we sell goes through this inspection and shop adjustment.

I look for clues that determine how well the guitar will sound, how easy it will play, and how long it will last.

Last week I found two guitars that didn't meet the standards of St. Louis Music Supply Company, exclusive distributors of Alvarez Instruments. They went to the scrap heap. They weren't good enough to sell, not if we wanted to keep our reputation.

You can't always judge quality by price; just because a guitar costs a bundle doesn't mean it is well built. Knowing what to look for before you buy is the key, so read through this catalog along with me, and I'll show you how I judge a guitar.

Our cover instruments (shown at right): 5056 Tree of Life: Fingerboard has a pearl inlay climbing in a dramatic "tree of life" design. Solid spruce top, flamed-grained rosewood back and sides. Celluloid and wood bindings. Ivory and black wood inlays in sound hole. 4310 Whyte Eagle banjo: see page 20. A800 Ozark Rambler mandolin: see page 26. 13F Natural violin: see page 31.



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The guitar's structural ancestor was the lute: a stringed instrument with a pear-shaped body, a neck with a fretted fingerboard, and a head with tuning pegs. The first guitars borrowed acoustic design principles from the French crotta, an instrument which in the thirteenth century found its way across the Pyrenees to northern Spain, where cross-breeding of lutes and crotas occurred. This was probably the birth of the guitar as it is recognized today.