

VINTAGE V100 ICON

SOLID-BODY ELECTRIC GUITAR

It's taken a beating, but may play better for it *By Craig White*



WE HAVE already taken a look at the V6 Icon in this issue, so you will be aware of my position on the process of distressing a guitar's finish in the 'relic' fashion, which was pioneered by big-dollar custom shops to mollify the middle-aged grumbling of stockbrokers who had spent too much time on the trading floor and not enough on their chops, yet still felt that their material resources should be able to buy them the kind of respect that you really only earn by putting in time on your instrument.

Vintage is one of the first budget manufacturers to adopt this practice. We have had a great experience with Vintage guitars in the past; the best have been exceptional, while the standard across the entire range has been more than acceptable. In short, they have been one of the most impressive new lines introduced in this country for a long time, and it is good to see them finally achieving a decent market presence and becoming more widely available across the country.

WEIGHTY RECONSIDERATIONS

We originally reviewed the V100 back in issue 48. Looking back at that article, it was the beginning of our refrain of "Vintage guitars are cool, though some are that much cooler than others" – I said back then that the V100 was my least favourite of the three Vintage models we had seen to date, but that this was a function of the other models being very good rather than any shortcoming on the part of the V100. We have looked at a number of Vintage models since then, and our early assessment has proven true across the entire range. We have never seen a bad one, but we have seen some real beauties.

Again, upon reading that first V100 review, I would have to say that either this example is a touch better or I was a little rough the first time around – the V100 is still not as impressive as the V6, but on feel and tone alone, it should be a clear leader for this style of guitar in this price range. One of the most striking things about this model is the weight, and the V100 Icon is easily a half pound or so heavier than my Les Paul. To fans of this style of guitar, the advantages of a weighty body should be obvious, and this situation perfectly suited the Wilkinson humbuckers, which were quite impressive and true to expectation for this type of pick-up (the last time we looked at the V100, the review model featured Wilkinson mini-humbuckers).

NOW I AM REALLY DISTRESSED...

The other striking thing about the V100 Icon is how playable it is. Again, revisiting that first review, I suspect that it was not as compelling in this regard, which may be indicative of an unintended practical benefit due to the aesthetic process of distressing the finish. In the case of the V6 Icon reviewed elsewhere in this issue, which we compared directly to a standard V6, there was definitely a difference in the feel, which could only really be attributed to this variation, and in the case of this particular V100 it seems that this may have been particularly beneficial. Though another coat of finish is applied after the distressing process, by this stage much of the original finish has been removed in irregular sections meant to suggest years of wear and tear, and the result is a lightly finished neck that is very playable.

THE BOTTOM LINE

You can check my review of the V6 Icon elsewhere in this issue for a more thorough rant against the distressing process, though I guess basically the same is true for this model – forget the Icon and check out the (cheaper) plain V100 as soon as you can. The only reservations I have regard the fact that this Icon version seems to be more playable than the plain V100, though that may just as likely be a trick of memory, or due to differences in configuration, as it is the process of distressing the finish producing some unintended practical benefit. What is quite obvious though is that the V100 is a whole lot of guitar in a style that is difficult to deliver at this price point. Vintage have been a welcome addition to the Australian market, and guitars like this one only make us even more excited about the imminent arrival of their premium Advanced series.

SPECS

- Made China
- Price \$795
- Body Mahogany
- Top Maple
- Neck Mahogany (set neck)
- Fingering Rosewood
- Scale Length 24.75" (628 mm)
- Frets 22
- Neck Inlays Pearlloid Crown
- Tuners Wilkinson Deluxe WJ44
- Bridge Tune-O-Matic
- Pick-Ups Wilkinson WMVC
- Hardware Chrome
- Controls 2x volume, 2x tone, 3-way toggle

WHAT WE RECKON

PROS

- ▲ The V100 is a real heavy mother... (shut your mouth!)
- ▲ I love the Wilkinson MWVC humbuckers
- ▲ This one plays great

CONS

- ▼ Obviously, the distressingly distressed finish



CONTACT

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