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Subject: Stonebridge guitars?

Posted by [guitar.ottawa](#) on Tue, 20 May 2008 14:39:59 GMT

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Note: is this an appropriate post for this section of the forum? I honestly don't even know what the "general" area is (I only get IDEA.EMUEnsoniqPARIS, whatever that is)... apologies if I should have posted to a different area...

I went out last week to try a Larrivee acoustic at the local shop. The salesguy asked me a few questions about what I was looking for, pointed out a nice Larrivee LV-09E, but also invited me to try this Stonebridge 23CR.

I didn't know much about Stonebridge, but he told me a bit about them, and a later search on the web revealed a few things. Made in the Czech Republic (well known for luthiers making other stringed instruments like violins and cellos, but a relatively new comer to the world of acoustic guitars). The 23CR is solid rosewood back/sides, a very nice cedar top, ebony fingerboard, tusq saddle and nut. No electronics at all, so you have to account for the addition of <whatever> if you're going to compare it with the Larrive LV-09E.

First chord I strummed was stunning on the Stonebridge. Chimes like a piano. Just unbelievable. In comparison, the Larrivee sounded muffled (note that the Larrivee has a spruce top, which takes a bit longer to open up than the Stonebridge's cedar top, if I recall?).

Since I know little about acoustic guitars, and also since I don't have such good ears, I wanted to ask around and see what others know about Stonebridge. I'm sure its resale value would be a lot less than a Larrivee or a Taylor (can hardly find any on eBay or Craigslist). But "investment value" aside, and just for the sake of its quality and sound, any opinions out there?

I did find a few flaws with it: (1) When bending strings, the Stonebridge goes out of tune (whereas the Larrivee staid perfectly in tune). Is there a nut-tweaking approach to solving this? (2) No electronics at all, though many here would consider this an advantage, i.e. get the guitar you want, then add the electronics you want; (3) Very strong mids, which might be considered an advantage, I'm just not sure... sometimes it sounded a little nasal, but I wasn't playing my best, was in the middle of a showroom, and didn't spend much time.

Anyhow, if any of you out there have played a Stonebridge, I'd like to hear your opinions.

For the record, the 23CR's cost is \$1900, while the Larrivee LV-09E was \$2500. Once you add the electronics into the Stonebridge, you're about at the same cost (or close enough) to a sure-valued Larrivee.

Any input much appreciated...  
Dan

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Subject: Re: Stonebridge guitars?  
Posted by [guitar.ottawa](#) on Tue, 20 May 2008 15:47:55 GMT  
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Regarding the Taylor: I was looking at Larrivee because I was led to believe that Taylors are great, but overpriced. And the comments were along the lines of: "you can get much more guitar out of a Larrivee"...

Good points about the strings on the Stonebridge, and that they might have been incorrectly wound around the tuning peg.

Dan

"DC" <dc@spammersinhell.com> wrote in message news:4832f44d\$1@linux...

>  
> The loss of pitch when bending is probably the way the strings  
> were wound on the tuners or the way the strings were installed  
> on the bridge.  
>  
> I would say to use your ears rather than caring about the brand.  
>  
> You hear well enough to immediately hear the difference and  
> you liked the Stonebridge better. Trust your instincts.  
>  
> You might want to try a Taylor too.  
>  
> DC  
>

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Subject: Re: Stonebridge guitars?  
Posted by [dc\[3\]](#) on Tue, 20 May 2008 15:54:53 GMT  
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Subject: Re: Stonebridge guitars?  
Posted by [John \[1\]](#) on Tue, 20 May 2008 17:56:11 GMT  
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you're enjoying the 12 string like harmonics you get off a cedar top with a light satin finish most likely. Wonderful sound. Try a \$400 Seagull with the same setup.

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Subject: Re: Stonebridge guitars?  
Posted by [dc\[3\]](#) on Tue, 20 May 2008 21:42:20 GMT  
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I don't know why no one seems to buy the lower-priced Taylors. I have a 410 I paid 850 for about 10 years ago and it is wonderful.

anyway, good luck with your search.

my suggestion is to try lots of them. Buy the one that speaks to you.

DC

"D.P." <[guitar.ottawa@gmail.com](mailto:guitar.ottawa@gmail.com)> wrote:

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>that Taylors are great, but overpriced. And the comments were along the

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Subject: Re: Stonebridge guitars?  
Posted by [Sarah](#) on Wed, 21 May 2008 10:01:14 GMT  
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I, too, have a 400 series Taylor, a 414K I bought in 1999 because it sounded so good. I've had nothing but compliments on the sound of this, both live and recorded. I was originally thinking about the fancier, spendier 714, but this one sounded better to me. Don is right, and I use the same phrase in advising people on guitar purchases . . . find one that speaks to you. Do it blindfolded or something, so you have only your ears and fingers to judge. Maybe you'll wind up with a \$300 Takamine. :)

S

"DC" <dc@spammersinhell.com> wrote in message news:483345bc\$1@linux...  
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Subject: Re: Stonebridge guitars?  
Posted by [Jamie K](#) on Wed, 21 May 2008 10:31:11 GMT  
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Absolutely right on that, Sarah and Don. I have a classical guitar that I picked out of a shipment of more than a dozen. The difference between the best and worst was night and day, and these were all the same model.

Cheers,

-Jamie  
www.JamieKrutz.com

Sarah wrote:

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Subject: Re: Stonebridge guitars?  
Posted by [Ed](#) on Wed, 21 May 2008 13:16:45 GMT  
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Dan, I have a few comments...

Being a guitar player since the 70's I been through many different brands and types of guitars and mainly acoustics. I have always been a peasant, so I could never afford anything extravagant. But my red flags would go up very high and fast if I was trying out an expensive guitar and it went out of tune just by a simple play. Yes, perhaps it could be the way the strings are wound and it could be a glitch in that guitar's heads, but I would immediately put it down and move on.

I personally never had a guitar go out of tune because of the way I strung it... never! When restringing a string and tuning, I adamantly bend, twist, pluck and abuse the little bugger at first. If after the first few times it don't stay in tune, it is most likely the heads... most likely cheap junk heads. I did have a Kramer that done this and i replaced the heads with good Gibson heads... never had the problem since... So I would move on to another guitar if I was trying it out and it won't stay in tune. By the way, I am a hard player... to where I have bloody fingers after a long sessions. Sometimes I don't know it until I have a bit more light and see spots all over.. lol. Yeah, i know, remind yourself not to let me play your guitar... I heard that a zillion times... roff.

Anyway, if a company is going to charge top dollar for a guitar, it better perform top dollar anytime and anywhere. Period! Bottom line with me!

That said... and I am sure others will jump in here and try to dispute this... but I am not sure where some folks are getting their information or what they are playing, hearing and buying. Like I read an article in Musician's Friend magazine recently about the old myth "cheap guitars"... in many cases, those days of the "cheap" Ibanez are over (as far as quality, playability and sound). They actually make really really good guitars these days. I am big fan and an owner of Gibson's! I wouldn't sell any of my Gibson's

for the life of me... but I also own Ibanez too. My favorite is the EJ-160 John Lennon... I love this guitar! And I would match that up to any guitar over \$500 for sound and quality. I am not trying to start a guitar war thread... it just pickles me to think that the 70's, and perhaps 80's mentality of cheap-guitar is still out there with some products... Ibanez use to be the poor man's guitar. But I honestly believe their quality has improved and some guitars I know match up to the more extravagant.

Lastly, in my opinion you are in the proper newsgroup and not off topic... politics and someone's back yard animal is off topic. Music related is not... that's just my opinion and hope others feel the same...

Have a great day and do yourself a favor and try out those Ibanez and save yourself hundreds... unless you just like spending money... I am still a peasant and can't do that.

---

Subject: Re: Stonebridge guitars?  
Posted by [Bill L](#) on Wed, 21 May 2008 13:43:31 GMT  
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Never heard of the brand, but one thing when trying out guitars in a store is look at the condition of the strings. If the Larivee had old strings its tone could never compete with a guitar with fresh strings. Your mention of the strings going out of tune indicates they may have been very new.

D.P. wrote:

> Note: is this an appropriate post for this section of the forum? I honestly  
> don't even know what the "general" area is (I only get IDEA.EMUEnsoniqPARIS,  
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Subject: Re: Stonebridge guitars?

Posted by [kerryg](#) on Wed, 21 May 2008 15:40:23 GMT

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Don, if you haven't committed to an instrument yet -

I went to the local guitar boutique many times with my engineer to cost out instruments for recording and to look at a wide range of prices. We kept coming back to the cut-rate Martins (the DX series with the composite

necks). It's true that out of the ones I've tried some have been uneven in quality/tone, ranging from superb down to merely "good". But the superb ones have been amazing - not "good for their price", just "really good" - they've completely blown away guitars costing six or seven times as much, including much more expensive Martins. The best ones have definitely got "that thing" that says "record me".

If you can get a bunch of them together and find the "pick of the litter" you might be pretty surprised at what you're holding for \$500.

- Kerry

On 5/21/08 6:16 AM, in article 483420bd\$1 @linux, "Ed" <askme@email.com> wrote:

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Subject: Re: Stonebridge guitars?  
Posted by [Ed](#) on Wed, 21 May 2008 18:38:07 GMT  
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Kerry Galloway <[kg@kerrygalloway.com](mailto:kg@kerrygalloway.com)> wrote:  
>Don, if you haven't committed to an instrument yet -  
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>- Kerry  
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That is directed to me and what I posted?

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Subject: Re: Stonebridge guitars?

Posted by [kerry](#) on Wed, 21 May 2008 19:06:24 GMT

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Oh, hi Ed - I wasn't really following who said what specifically, but in hindsight, yes, it was your own post that inspired mine. I'd agree wholeheartedly that my experience confirms your own, that there are some extraordinarily good values in "cheaper" guitars nowadays and that \$500 or under can buy a great deal of guitar for a smart shopper. The Martins happen to be fresh in my mind because I just played them again yesterday afternoon.

- Kerry

On 5/21/08 11:38 AM, in article 48346c0f\$1@linux, "Ed" <askme@email.com> wrote:

>  
> Kerry Galloway <kg@kerrygalloway.com> wrote:  
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Subject: Re: Stonebridge guitars?

Posted by [TCB](#) on Thu, 22 May 2008 14:21:40 GMT

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I've always liked the sound of the Taylor 400 series, I think because I generally like acoustic geetars with mahogany back/sides instead of rosewood.

I agree that with acoustics in particular you just have to play a ton of them to find the right one, but in my experience the really expensive ones do sound better. I've played a bunch of really crap sounding cheap acoustics while I've never heard a bad Collings or Breedlove. Doesn't mean the great sounding \$300 Takmine isn't out there, but I think the boutique guys are just a lot more selective about the wood they use.

TCB

"Sarah" <sarahjane@sarahtonin.com> wrote:

>I, too, have a 400 series Taylor, a 414K I bought in 1999 because it sounded

>so good. I've had nothing but compliments on the sound of this, both live

>and recorded. I was originally thinking about the fancier, spendier 714,

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Subject: Re: Stonebridge guitars?  
Posted by [John \[1\]](#) on Thu, 22 May 2008 16:24:49 GMT  
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i thought martins were probably a boutique snob guitar until i tested 50 guitars  
at 5 or 6 guitar stores all over the east coast, florida and even in indiana.  
I bought the martin for \$900 and put elixer strings on it and have a sound  
that makes me very happy.

---

Subject: Re: Stonebridge guitars?  
Posted by [dc\[3\]](#) on Thu, 22 May 2008 19:56:36 GMT  
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BTW, Takamines have one thing they do really really well, and that is the PU and electronics. Absolutely beyond what you would expect at the price point.

DC

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Subject: Re: Stonebridge guitars?  
Posted by [John \[1\]](#) on Thu, 22 May 2008 22:25:55 GMT  
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Subject: Re: Stonebridge guitars?  
Posted by [Sarah](#) on Fri, 23 May 2008 08:40:21 GMT  
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[http://www.laguitarsales.com/pages/3157/Taylor\\_Custom\\_Shop\\_Pallet.htm](http://www.laguitarsales.com/pages/3157/Taylor_Custom_Shop_Pallet.htm)

S

"TCB" <nobody@ishere.com> wrote in message news:48358174\$1@linux...  
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> \_do\_ sound better. I've played a bunch of really crap sounding cheap  
> acoustics  
> while I've never heard a bad Collings or Breedlove. Doesn't mean the great  
> sounding \$300 Takmine isn't out there, but I think the boutique guys are  
> just a lot more selective about the wood they use.  
>  
> TCB  
>

> "Sarah" <sarahjane@sarahtonin.com> wrote:  
>>I, too, have a 400 series Taylor, a 414K I bought in 1999 because it  
>>sounded  
>  
>>so good. I've had nothing but compliments on the sound of this, both live  
>  
>>and recorded. I was originally thinking about the fancier, spendier 714,  
>  
>>but this one sounded better to me. Don is right, and I use the same  
>>phrase  
>  
>>in advising people on guitar purchases . . . find one that speaks to you.  
>  
>>Do it blindfolded or something, so you have only your ears and fingers to  
>  
>>judge. Maybe you'll wind up with a \$300 Takamine. :)  
>>  
>>S  
>>  
>>  
>>"DC" <dc@spammersinhell.com> wrote in message news:483345bc\$1@linux...  
>>>  
>>> I don't know why no one seems to buy the lower-priced  
>>> Taylors. I have a 410 I paid 850 for about 10 years ago  
>>> and it is wonderful.  
>>>  
>>> anyway, good luck with your search.  
>>>  
>>> my suggestion is to try lots of them. Buy the one that speaks  
>>> to you.  
>>>  
>>> DC  
>>>  
>>>  
>>> "D.P." <guitar.ottawa@gmail.com> wrote:  
>>>>Regarding the Taylor: I was looking at Larrivee because I was led to  
>>>>believe  
>>>>  
>>>>that Taylors are great, but overpriced. And the comments were along the  
>>>>  
>>>>lines of: "you can get much more guitar out of a Larrivee"..  
>>>>  
>>>>Good points about the strings on the Stonebridge, and that they might  
> have  
>>>  
>>>>been incorrectly wound around the tuning peg.  
>>>>  
>>>>Dan





>wrote:  
>  
>>  
>> Kerry Galloway <kg@kerrygalloway.com> wrote:  
>>> Don, if you haven't committed to an instrument yet -  
>>>  
>>> I went to the local guitar boutique many times with my engineer to cost  
>> out  
>>> instruments for recording and to look at a wide range of prices. We kept  
>>> coming back to the cut-rate Martins (the DX series with the composite  
>>> necks). It's true that out of the ones I've tried some have been uneven  
>> in  
>>> quality/tone, ranging from superb down to merely "good". But the superb  
>> ones  
>>> have been amazing - not "good for their price", just "really good" -  
they've  
>>> completely blown away guitars costing six or seven times as much, including  
>>> much more expensive Martins. The best ones have definitely got "that  
thing"  
>>> that says "record me".  
>>>  
>>> If you can get a bunch of them together and find the "pick of the litter"  
>>> you might be pretty surprised at what you're holding for \$500.  
>>>  
>>> - Kerry  
>>>  
>>  
>>  
>> That is directed to me and what I posted?  
>>  
>

---

Subject: Re: Stonebridge guitars?  
Posted by [TCB](#) on Fri, 23 May 2008 19:35:44 GMT  
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To me this argues against the idea of the \$300 dream Takamine. This would argue that superior crafts(wo)manship can overcome inferior materials. One thing you'll never get from a Seagull or a Takamine is an instrument maker really working overtime to get the absolute best quality possible out of the wood.

Funny thing? I was at the 2001 NAMM show so I probably saw this guitar, though I don't remember it.

TCB

"Sarah" <sarahjane@sarahtonin.com> wrote:  
> [http://www.laguitarsales.com/pages/3157/Taylor\\_Custom\\_Shop\\_P\\_allet.htm](http://www.laguitarsales.com/pages/3157/Taylor_Custom_Shop_P_allet.htm)  
>  
>S  
>  
>  
>"TCB" <nobody@ishere.com> wrote in message news:48358174\$1@linux...  
>>  
>> I've always liked the sound of the Taylor 400 series, I think because  
I  
>> generally  
>> like acoustic geetars with mahogany back/sides instead of rosewood.  
>>  
>> I agree that with acoustics in particular you just have to play a ton  
of  
>> them to find the right one, but in my experience the really expensive  
ones  
>> \_do\_ sound better. I've played a bunch of really crap sounding cheap  
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