

INTRODUCTION

by Zachary R. Fjestad

Welcome to the new and improved 15th Edition *Blue Book of Acoustic Guitars*. At 892 pages, no other book or publication comes even close to providing you with up-to-date acoustic guitar information and accurate values. We started this project in 1991 and continue to monitor not only the vintage guitar marketplace, but we strive to be at the forefront of new guitar manufacturers and models. Our goal is encompassing to include all guitars, not just the extremely collectible and valuable ones, but the less expensive and harder to find instruments. I've noticed several changes since our last edition.

MSR PRICING - 86'ED

In 2014, we saw the acceleration of manufacturers dropping MSR pricing and going strictly to MAP. For those unfamiliar with these terms, we use them heavily in this book. MSR (Manufacturer's Suggested Retail) is traditionally what manufacturers used to price their instruments; however, guitar dealers rarely sold them at this price - it was simply a benchmark. MAP (Minimum Advertised Pricing) appeared in the mid-1990s to help level the playing field between brick and mortar stores and the new rising technology called "the Internet." Twenty years later, many manufacturers exclusively use MAP pricing and disregard MSR. Large manufacturers such as Fender, PRS, and Gibson all abandoned MSR pricing in 2014. You'll notice in the book a lot of "N/A" listings in the MSR field, meaning there isn't one anymore.

NEXT YEAR'S MODEL

Also gone is the age of a manufacturer offering the same guitar over the course of several years. To generate interest (and sales), many manufacturers are producing an entirely different line of guitars from year-to-year. This is a challenge for us in the *Blue Book of Acoustic Guitars* because we don't have the physical space to list a different guitar each year (especially when the differences are so minor). Limited Editions are increasingly popular as well. Think of the number of J-45 variations offered over the past five years. During the 1970s, there was one J-45 produced for the entire *decade*. We'll continue to do our best to list as many guitars as possible, but the shift may force us to rely more heavily on our online offerings.

NEXT YEAR'S MODEL

Technology and guitars (once as compatible as oil and water and largely dismissed as unnecessary) are now part of nearly every manufacturer's line-up. The guitars in Martin's Performing Artist Series have become some of their most popular models. Utilizing Fishman electronics, the Performing Artist fills the need that many musicians are looking for in a guitar suitable for both studio and on stage. Gibson offers electronics as standard equipment on all of their acoustic guitars today. Look for technology to become even more important in the future.

VINTAGE PRICING

I believe we have finally hit the bottom of the vintage guitar market, and values overall are inching upward. Most collectible vintage acoustic guitars saw a modest gain since the last edition.



Author Zachary R. Fjestad with sons Daniel (left) and Joshua (right). Hopefully they'll both be playing guitar soon!

The acoustic guitar market was never inflated as much as the electric market (meaning guitar values didn't fall as hard), so many models didn't change at all in value. I hope we see a gradual increase in the future instead of the sharp rise we saw in the mid-2000s. Nobody wants to go through that again!

THANKS

Again, this book is more of a team effort each year. We're always adding models, but nothing gets deleted, which is why page count increases by each edition. This means there is that much more work to do on each edition, and I lean on several key staff members to get this book completed and they should be mentioned. Beth Schreiber, our operations manager, entered her first guitars into the database for this edition. Kelsey Fjestad (who is also my sister) continues to update more sections and joins me annually at the NAMM Show in Anaheim, CA. Clint Schmidt published another book in record time and continues to be one of the easiest guys to work with. I also have to thank my uncle, Steve Fjestad, for the opportunity to work on this project. Who wouldn't love to work with guitars every day?

Lastly, I want to thank all of our faithful readers - without you we wouldn't be publishing a book. I also want to hear feedback from you! There are thousands of guitars that could be added to this book, but we only have so much space and time, so please let me know what is important to see between these covers.

Sincerely,

Zachary R. Fjestad
Author
Blue Book of Acoustic Guitars