

VINTAGE

VV60TA

Vintage pay homage to one of the electric guitar's most original and futuristic designs... **Words:** Tim Slater

Outrageous, dramatic...

beautiful: The Flying V is an iconic guitar design that has found its natural home among the lurid theatre of hard rock and HM, an appropriately flamboyant environment that has shaped and refined the modern V into the supercharged weapon of mass destruction so beloved of 21st Century rockers from Metallica to Trivium. As a statement of intent there are very few guitars that even come close to rivalling the Flying V but the new Vintage VV60TA is an altogether different animal from the tribal tattooed beast that the Flying V is generally associated with nowadays.

If you fancy a Flying V with a more classic vibe to it then the Vintage VV

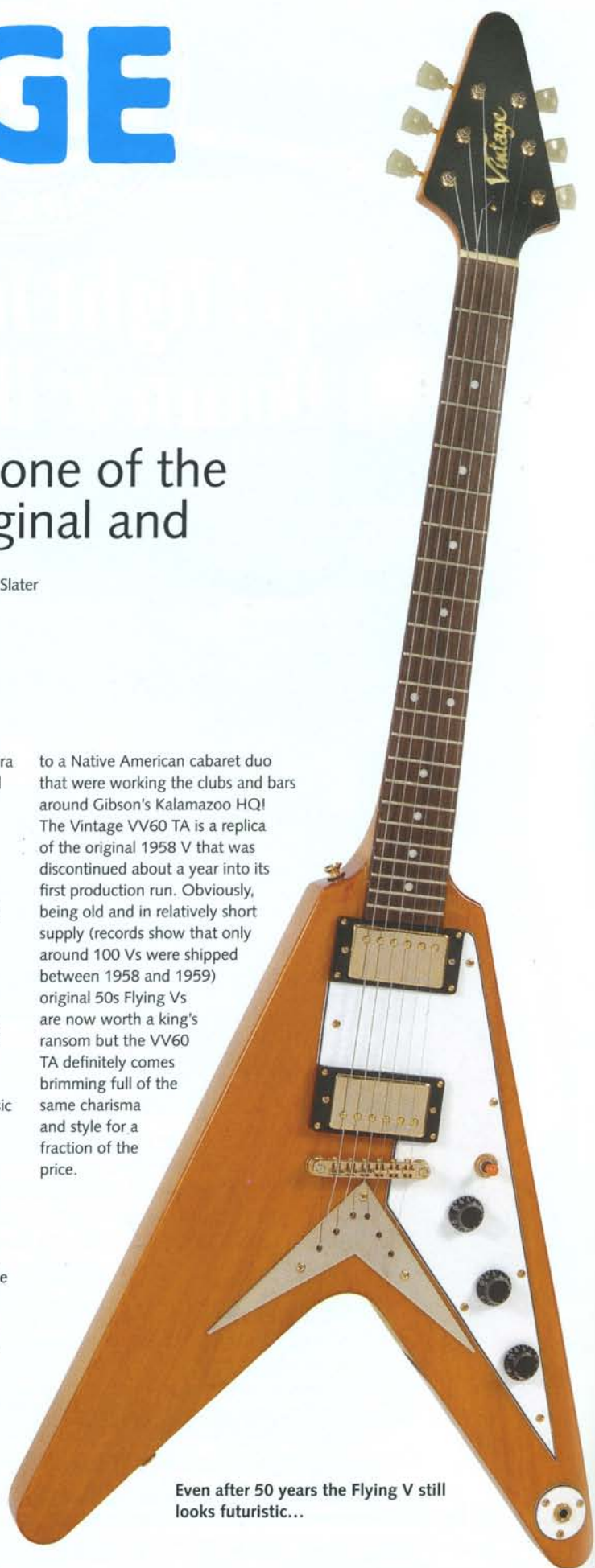
60TA marks a return to a different era in the history of this remarkable and often misunderstood guitar.

Get to the point...

The Flying V's angular shape was way ahead of its time when it first appeared during the late 1950s and consequently the first generation of flying Vs didn't sell well. At all. In today's climate where we are exposed to weird and wonderful guitars virtually on a daily basis it is perhaps a little harder to appreciate how shocking those early Vs must have seemed to a public that had barely got used to rock and roll music but in many ways the Flying V is also a reflection of the spirit of the pioneering age that spawned it.

Whilst post war Britain was still enduring a slow recovery from the ravages of WWII, America was spearheading an exciting technological revolution in which the rapid development of the electric guitar played a relatively small but no less significant part. The original Gibson Flying V first took flight in 1958; the year after the Russians launched the first Sputnik orbital satellite, and the V's thrusting aerodynamic lines were surely inspired by the whole jet age/space race fever gripping the nation, although legend also has it that the designer Ted McCarty gave a couple of early prototypes

to a Native American cabaret duo that were working the clubs and bars around Gibson's Kalamazoo HQ! The Vintage VV60 TA is a replica of the original 1958 V that was discontinued about a year into its first production run. Obviously, being old and in relatively short supply (records show that only around 100 Vs were shipped between 1958 and 1959) original 50s Flying Vs are now worth a king's ransom but the VV60 TA definitely comes brimming full of the same charisma and style for a fraction of the price.



Even after 50 years the Flying V still looks futuristic...

VINTAGE VV60TA

SRP £329.00

All prices include VAT

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Both pickups both sound incredibly breathy and articulate with masses of sustain and a rich plummy tone that can only be described as 'classic'.

V, Myself & I...

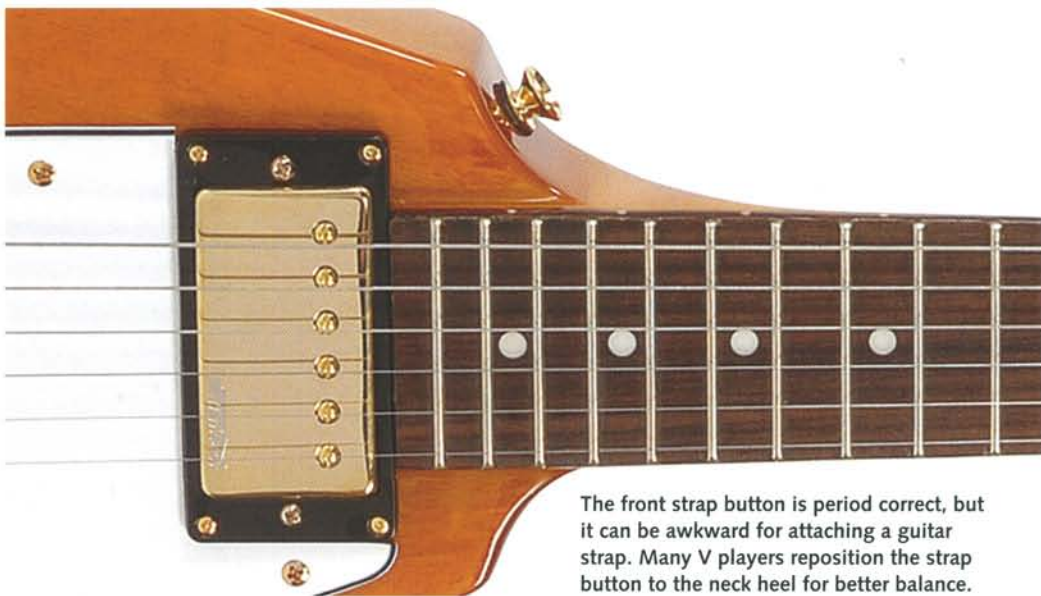
The Vs traditional popularity with rock players is partly explained by its amazing playability; compared to a Les Paul or even a Fender Stratocaster the Flying V offers virtually unhindered access to the entire fingerboard. This V is always a joy to play, with the extra bonus that the reasonably slim neck profile also allows players with small hands to gain a good purchase without feeling overwhelmed. In place of the traditional 50s style table leg, we find a consistently comfortable 'C' neck profile that feels nimble and easy to play. Full marks to Vintage's distributor John Hornby Skewes for a very good setup that saw the frets uniformly profiled, polished and a nice medium to low action. To accommodate its price range the VV60 TA departs from the original Gibson Flying V's Korina construction and instead opts for less costly poplar for the body and set neck. The poplar body's centre joined two-piece design is based very accurately on the original '58 Flying V; the grain on both wings of the distinctive 'V' shape is angled in towards the centre join, creating a strong and smoothly flowing symmetrical effect. Personally speaking, the use of poplar instead of the V's more traditional mahogany doesn't really feel like an issue. The lacquer's golden polyester tint does a pretty convincing job of simulating the original 58 V's unmistakable appearance, which should begin to fade to a slightly less lary-looking attractive dark orange brown over time. The set neck on our review guitar is a two-piece design with a separate headstock that is attached to the main neck shaft using a traditional scarf joint. Some due care has been taken to try and match

the grain patterns between the neck shaft and headstock and the careful attention to detail means that the join between the two separate pieces of timber isn't so obvious that it spoils the guitar's classic lines. Acoustically this V produces a lively

Flying tonight!

The VV60TA comes fitted with a pair of gold-plated Wilkinson WVC humbuckers; pickups that Wilkinson claims are based very closely on the design of the original vintage Gibson PAF. Using specs that were directly

that the neck and bridge pickups both sound incredibly breathy and articulate with masses of sustain and a rich plummy tone that can only be described as 'classic'. Combined with the Vs naturally bright ringing tone these pickups lend the VV60TA a combination of muscle and clarity that is fairly rare in many modern humbucker-equipped guitars. Where sheer power often takes precedence over dynamics, in this case there is no real sense of the fingernails-down-a-blackboard screech or the slightly soggy sounding bloated low end that you sometimes get with so called 'vintage' style humbuckers. What you do get is a nice balance demonstrated



The front strap button is period correct, but it can be awkward for attaching a guitar strap. Many V players reposition the strap button to the neck heel for better balance.

ring with a decent amount of natural sustain, and it's great to find that the Vintage V features traditional 50s-style through-body stringing with the strings emerging via the cool looking gold-plated 'V' shaped tailpiece before threading their way over the gold-plated Tune-o-Matic fixed bridge. The overall combination of gold-plated hardware and the warm golden orange tinted finish lends the VV60TA a very authentic look and feel that still manages to look futuristic, even more than 50 years on from the debut of the classic guitar that it is so closely based on.

passed to Trev Wilkinson by none other than the man that invented the original humbucking pickup – Seth Lover – these pickups are not the fire breathing high output types that one has come to expect from a modern Flying V but that doesn't mean that they lack tone or definition. Plugged in, the overriding impression is a guitar that sounds absolutely butter smooth all the way across the tonal spectrum: overdriven tones reveal

by a tight bass, firm but not overly hard-edged mids and a piercing but still sweet sounding treble. Out and out metal -heads might find themselves looking for more firepower but classic rock or blues players shouldn't find themselves needing to change anything apart from their underpants when they plug this baby in, this thing just oozes tone like honey dripping out of bee hive. **PM**

With virtually unhindered access to the entire fingerboard this V is always a joy to play...

SHOULD I BUY ONE?

The only question mark that this guitar raises is whether or not you can live with its outrageous defiantly flashy shape. The Flying V is not just a classic design but it also the ultimate fashion statement that really should come equipped with a government health warning – or at the very least a wind machine and wedge monitor to rest your foot on! If you've always been intrigued by the Flying V and have been contemplating buying one then the Vintage VV60TA is a great way to savour the great tones and fantastic playability that has made the V a legend, without straining your wallet.