

# Danelectro DG66

This year marks the 70th year since Danelectro first went into business - and so far it's been a busy one releasing a new range of exciting and inspiring guitars that can accommodate just about any budget. **Nick Jennison** inspects the latest in the line, The '66.

**T**o the casual reader, the term “pawn shop guitar” might seem derogatory, pejorative even. You, dear guitar player, know better. Who doesn't dream of finding a quirky vintage classic in amongst the old hi-fi separates, last gen iPhones and fishing tackle in the window of a dodgy looking local emporium? Well, dream on, because these kind of finds are incredibly rare, and the guitars you do come across will - for all their '60s charm - most likely be sonically and functionally hideous.

Seriously. Take a moment to open your favourite search engine and look for catalogue guitars. You'll undoubtedly be greeted with a raft of cool and unusual looking beasts. Now, seek out a veteran guitar player who actually remembers owning a catalogue guitar and ask them about the experience. I doubt you'll get a glowing report.

With the Danelectro '66 however, you can have your cake and eat it. This remarkably handsome vintage-looking beast is a very recent design by the masters of retro chic, inspired in no small part by the Mosrite guitars made popular by surf bands like The Ventures in the '60s. Look deeper though, and you'll find a thoroughly modern instrument made to the highest standards.

Like its older brother the '64 (see GI issue 43 for a full review), the '66 features a reverse offset design with a protruding lower horn, a slanted single coil in the neck and a double lipstick humbucker in the bridge (more on that later). This newer incarnation differs from its predecessor in two important ways: the Bigsby trem has been replaced with a fully adjustable wraparound tailpiece, and the body is a semi hollow design with a centre block and a German carved top. This gives the guitar a woody bark when played acoustically, and lends some earthy lows and mids to complement the bright and vibrant pickups.

Talking tones, the neck single coil has a nice shimmer without sounding shrill or thin and excels at clean chording. The star of the show is the dual lipstick pickup; there's huge punch at the front of the note, and a wiry top end that sits on top of the fat and throaty humbucker voice. This position loves fuzz, retaining its character no matter how filthy things get. Pop up the coil split, and you'll be rewarded with a leaner, more hollow tone that has a very slight quack to it; full of character and very versatile. One slight gripe is that while the period correct die-cast knobs certainly look the part, they're a pig to »



## STAR RATING



### PROS

- » Beautiful retro stylings
- » 21st-century playability and reliability
- » Fantastic tones (especially bridge pickup)

### CONS

- » Activating the coil split is awkward
- » Modern guitar fans might not enjoy the looks

Check **THE SPEC**

#### **Danelectro DG66 //**

Reversed double cutaway offset horn shape // Semi-hollow body with center block // Fully adjustable wraparound bridge // Dual humbucking Lipstick bridge pickup // Vintage style large housing single coil neck pickup

For more information, please visit: [danelectro.com](http://danelectro.com)

“If retro chic is your thing, it’s a **no brainer!**”

get your fingers under to activate the coil split!

The guitar plays well straight out of the box, with a low action and smooth even frets. Speaking of frets, you might have noticed the zero fret just past the nut - a common feature on lower priced instruments from the '50s and '60s that unfortunately became somewhat synonymous with “cheap” guitars. In fact, the zero fret has a whole bunch of advantages. It eliminates the effects of nut

inconsistencies (including wear); it allows for a lower action; it makes open strings sound more consistent with fretted notes. Whats not to love?

In summary, the Danelectro '66 looks every bit the thrift-shop beauty we all dream of finding, but with none of the tonal or playability issues that plague the instruments that inspired it. If retro chic is your thing, it’s a no brainer! **END**◀

