

KENTUCKY KM-150S

PRICE: £159 CONTACT: GREMLIN MUSICAL INSTRUMENT COMPANY, 01273 491333, WWW.GREMLINMUSIC.CO.UK

■ **Mandolins: are they a stupid waste of wood with too many strings and not enough space to put your fingers, or fascinating instruments used to brilliant effect by the likes of Led Zeppelin, REM and Primal Scream? Opinion is divided in the *Guitar Buyer* office, but the arrival of the KM-150S has just strengthened the hand of the mando-lovers.**

From its height-adjustable rosewood bridge to its simple, open-g geared tuning machines, everything about this pint-sized strummer whispers understated elegance. That is, it does until you pick it up and start to play. The solid spruce top and solid maple back and sides give a bright tone that's strong and brash enough to cut through a band playing at unamplified levels – which it needs to be, as a

mandolin is nowhere near as loud as a typical acoustic guitar.

For £159 we're extremely impressed with the standard of construction and finishing. The top, back and fingerboard are all neatly bound in cream plastic, and the edges of all 20 tiny frets are neatly filed down to avoid any discomfort. Our only criticism is that the nut is slightly too narrow for the neck, which looks a little untidy but doesn't have any effect on the action.

You'd pay a lot more than £159 for a guitar of equivalent quality, and the MN-150S looks like good value. If your fingers are slim enough, and if you've ever wanted to sound like Jimmy Page on the folkier parts of Led Zeppelin IV, give it a go. **AG**

GBRATING
★★★★☆

■ **'Losing my Religion' just wouldn't sound the same without one of these**

