



The BG-140's slope-shouldered body shape harks back to the Gibson models of the 1940s and 1950s

The Blueridge's larger lower bout brings a warm, booming tone to the table; perfect for small jam sessions

Solid top, back and sides mean this acoustic will sound great after a few years of playing it in

A shorter scale length makes for an unbeatable playing experience, even for small hands

£469

# BLUERIDGE BG-140

IT'S OFFICIAL – THEY DO MAKE 'EM LIKE THEY USED TO! WORDS: HENRY YATES



## > There had better be a good explanation for that price!

If we're brutally honest, the acoustic market can get quite repetitive. So when a luthier turns up out of the blue, telling us they have built an acoustic based on the instruments of the 1950s, and asking if we'd mind spending a week with it on our lap, TG was bound to be interested. And maybe the Blueridge BG-140 is quite expensive, but rarely has a price tag justified itself so fast.

They don't make guitars like the BG-140 anymore. This model harks back to the days of pre-war dreadnought construction when companies like Gibson introduced a 'slope-shouldered' body design to compete with the more boxy, 'square-shouldered' shape of a typical Martin. After Gibson phased out these models in the late 1960s, the slope-shouldered design went the way of the Betamax video, and that's what makes the BG-140 such a breath of fresh air. These guitars are currently the toast of the US bluegrass circuit, and a million men with funny moustaches can't be wrong.

## OK, tell me more

Alongside its sloped shoulders, the BG-140 has a large lower bout that should deliver a warm tone and booming natural volume. When you apply your fingers to the fretboard, you will also notice that it has a shorter scale (24.75-inches) than your average modern dreadnought, hinting at an easy playing experience. Throw in the open-backed tuners and quaint sunburst finish, and it's like being transported back to the Mississippi Delta... just stay away from the crossroads!

## I'd expect decent materials for £469...

The BG-140 is made of solid woods, meaning the tone will take a while to 'settle in,' but should give a more characterful sound in

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the long term. Mahogany is the basis for the back and sides, with a low profile neck also carved from a chunk of the dark stuff and attached to the body via a dovetail joint. The top is made of solid sitka spruce (although you'd never guess beneath that sultry tobacco finish) and the 'century wreath' fret inlays complete the rosewood fingerboard in style. In fact, if that pickguard didn't look so much like Peter Stringfellow's leopardskin thong, we would declare this the tastiest acoustic we have ever seen.

## Tune it up, then

Er, we're trying! The truth is, these ivory buttons aren't the smoothest we've tried. Fortunately, they're the only thing that will dampen your enthusiasm for this stunning guitar. While genuine acoustics from the 1950s are probably coming apart at the seams by now, the build quality of the BG-140 means it will still be delivering the goods when you're listening to Slipknot through an ear trumpet. As you might expect for the thick end of £500, Blueridge have kept everything neat and tidy across the board, with an attention to detail that suggests this guitar is more than just a showboater.

## And the comfort?

You don't have to work to get a powerful sound out of the BG-140. As we'd hoped, the shorter scale and low profile neck create a playing surface that welcomes barre chords, while the dimensions of the body brings out more volume than you might expect. There's a great sense of control, which will

## WHO'S IT FOR?

Anyone who's bored shitless by the sea of identikit acoustics in guitar shops

## INFORMATION

**ORIGIN:** China  
**TOP:** Solid sitka spruce, with vintage sunburst finish  
**BODY:** Solid mahogany  
**NECK:** Carved mahogany, with dovetail neck joint  
**FINGERBOARD:** Rosewood, with 'century wreath' inlays  
**HARDWARE:** Bone nut and saddle, open back vintage-style tuners with grained ivory buttons  
**SCALE:** 24¾"  
**CASE:** No  
**LEFT-HANDER:** No  
**CONTACT:** Gremlin Music 01273 491333  
**WEB:** www.hobgoblin.com

## ALTERNATIVELY

Yamaha FG700S – £195  
 Blueridge BR-40D – £249  
 Blueridge BG-40 – £299

see your fingers getting faster the more time you spend with it, and a constant need to push your technique. If anything, we'd say fingerpicking sounds more authoritative than strumming, with our *Back To The Old House* (The Smiths) ringing out as easily as our take on Bon Jovi's *Wanted Dead Or Alive*.

## What's the tone like?

Referring to the tone of an acoustic as 'balanced' can be something of a back-handed compliment. At its worst, it can mean flat and uninspired, with nothing leaping out of the mix to take charge. At its best, it can mean something like this: as Blueridge claims, the combination of the mahogany construction and large lower bout gives the BG-140 a natural warmth that underpinned all our riffs. But digging hard with fingers also brought a delicious twang to the table for lead runs and country-style plucking. It responds perfectly to your mood; complementing dreamy chord sequences with a mellow warmth and lending rasping attack to your Richie Sambora solos.

## But I can't plug it in!

At £469, the Blueridge BG-140 is an undeniable luxury. As impressive as that natural volume is, you won't be able to play serious gigs without using a mic. Rather, this is the kind of acoustic TG dreams of having at the foot of our bed, ready to translate our ideas into chiming chord sequences when we wake up in the middle of the night. You won't find many better guitars at this price, and even fewer with this much character.

*FOR: Huge character and glorious tone  
 AGAINST: That price ain't exactly old-fashioned, is it?*

TG RATING:

