

Rodney Stedall Guitars



Classical Guitar Summer School 2024 Catalogue

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2024 Classical Guitar Summer School. News from my workshop

Welcome to my guitar display for 2024. Retiring from my optometry day job 2 years ago opened the door to full time lutherie and I have been very busy with an array of guitars. Some were unfortunately sold before they could reach this display.

This year I have a great variety of guitars in different wood combinations on display. Most are constructed using my very successful traditional Santos Hernandez 1924 (Segovia guitar) construction and bracing details. Up until now I have always displayed 650mm scale guitars, but noting a worldwide trend and based on previous commission requests, I have included a 640mm scale guitar this year. While In Granada in 2022 I noticed that respected Granada luthier Antonion Montero Marin was finishing a classical which had a radiused convex fingerboard. This is also a new feature available in some of my guitars.

What may be of special interest is an exciting prototype enviro-upcycled guitar where I have used a combination of scrap tone woods and exotic species as well as Tasmanian blackwood from the Tsitsikama forest in the Eastern Cape of South Africa. Tasmanian blackwood is a declared a noxious weed and is an invasive species in South Africa invading forests and waterways and depleting native flora. These trees are logged in the forest and sold by auction for their popular wood. Money from the sales goes back into conservation. This guitar also contains bits of upcycled endangered Pre-CITES Brazilian rosewood and retired piano key ivory. The fingerboard is a beautiful scrap of African blackwood which was too thin for a normal fingerboard. This was laminated onto an otherwise great piece of blemished puriri which would have been destined for the tip! This photo shows the placing of the spruce soundboard offcuts prior to gluing up with hot animal glue. Despite all the upcycled pieces, this guitar has still been given all the love and attention which I would normally put into my guitars including the time-consuming French polish finish. This guitar will be sold by silent auction this week where the proceeds above the reserve price of \$2000 will be split equally between a conservation charity of the buyer's choice and the Taranaki Health Foundation as my contribution to the Strings of compassion-a concert for cancer.

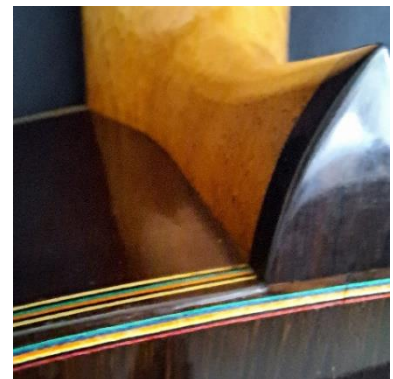


Spruce offcuts prior to gluing

In my recent most artistically creative stage of building I have started building guitars which are a one-off collectors piece called my "artist collection". I have been using my most treasured woods and dedicating aspects of the decoration to a renowned artist; be that a painter, musician, ethnic group art or even a historical guitar maker. The artist guitar originally destined for my display here was a replica of the 1934 Domingo Esteso guitar once owned by Augustine Barrios. This guitar has been sold and will not be on display here. It will however be heard and seen in the hands of tutor Joshua Rodgers. If you get a chance have a look at the intricate and colorful rosette and inlays. This guitar also showcases some exquisite dark brown Brazilian rosewood and a torrefied (artificially aged) European moon spruce top. Little was known about Domingo



Esteso's building style as he told no secrets and he employed no assistants who could spy on him! Historians who have examined the guitars of Esteso have concluded that he largely built guitars with the same specifications of the very famous 1912 Manuel Ramirez guitar which was Segovia's main instrument during his first 25 years of concertizing.



My building philosophy is contrary to Estesó's secretive nature and I now have students whom I actively encourage to follow my tried and tested Spanish construction method. Both students are nearing completion of two promising guitars.

At the Nelson 2023 classical guitar school I had the opportunity to examine and measure the fabulous guitar of Canadian tutor, Isabelle Heroux. Her short stature and small hands were ideally catered for with not only a 640mm scale but also a mildly convex and narrower fingerboard. A Nelson inspired commission made last year was based on these specifications and it turned out very successful. The upcycled guitar mentioned earlier also has this radiused convex fingerboard on a 650mm scale. I invite you to pop by and give it a try during the week.



My first use of the beautiful African rosewood is also on display in a 640mm scale classical. This rare wood was personally selected about 20 years ago from a wood dealer in my hometown of Pretoria, South Africa and has been well aged in my humidity-controlled workshop. The three piece back features African blackwood which was also used in the bindings. African rosewood (bubinga) is not a true Dalbergia rosewood. Its beauty and popularity resulted in this wood being categorised along with the other rosewoods when declared CITES 2 classification in 2016.

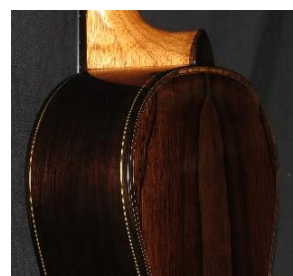


This guitar is a 640 scale and will be loaned to Niki Todesco for her concert and workshops this week. It is for sale and should you wish to play it please ask Niki to make it available to you.

Also on display is another tiny gem the Torres style parlor guitar in exquisite Brazilian rosewood and



Western red cedar and made with a 615mm scale length. This instrument is well suited to music from the mid-19th century. This guitar body is a copy of Antonio de Torres' 1884 guitar labelled FE18.



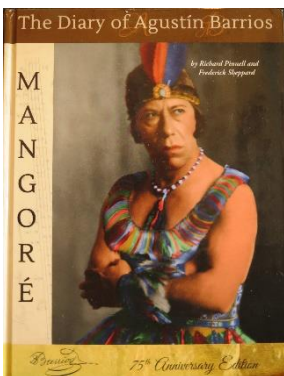
I recently acquired a great selection and quantity of wooden veneers to use in my embellishments. A noticeable feature of my current guitars is my use of very colorful dyed and natural wood veneers in my unique hand-crafted rosettes and purflings. Another form of artistic expression which I am really enjoying. I also love my new koru design rosette which is featured on the upcycled guitar.



Tasmanian blackwood is one of my favourite woods. It's a great tonewood, easy to work with and has a beautiful variety of honey colours which are enhanced by a quality French polish. Some of our Kiwi guitarists are now playing my Tasmanian blackwood guitars so I have made another which is on display this week.

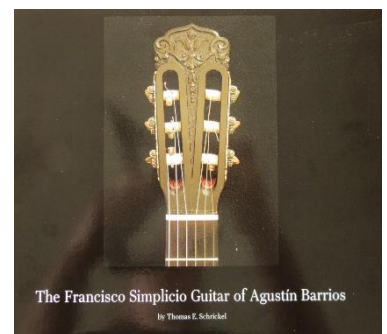


Lastly, it looks like a flamenco, it was built as a flamenco but has as much of a classical sound too. Traditional Spanish luthiers did not build classical or flamencos. They built guitars! The cheaper "family" guitars were made of cypress. Simple setup adjustments make them more suitable for one or the other discipline. Come in and surprise yourself by playing some of your classical repertoire on this predominantly Kiwi wood blanca.



Having recently completed the Barrios Esteso guitar has led me to research the historic guitars of Augustine Barrios. Federico Sheppard is an historian and Barrios expert and author of the English translation of Augustine Barrios' concert diary. He has kindly gifted me a signed copy of his book which is on my display.

The Francisco Simplicio guitar of Barrios is another guitar on my radar for future construction.



The Francisco Simplicio Guitar of Agustín Barrios
by Thomas E. Schickel

I would love to see you during the week. Please feel welcome to pop past and play what I have on display. I am also open to discussing a customised guitar build at your request.

Enjoy a musical week!
Rodney



Kiwi Woods Blanca

This vibrant guitar is of Santos Hernandez flamenco design featuring his beautiful rosette pattern. My choice of NZ kahikatea has shown to be an excellent substitute for the traditional Spanish cypress flamenco.

Specifications

- Top: Swiss spruce
- Back and sides: New Zealand Kahikatea
- Neck: Local Lawson's cypress
- Fingerboard: New Zealand Puriri
- Headstock veneer: New Zealand Kowhai
- Bridge: Indian rosewood
- Bindings: African blackwood
- Scale: 650mm
- Weight 1195g
- Cavity resonance: Between G and G#
- Nut width 51.5mm

Price \$4375

Summer school special \$4100



Concert Classical Guitar

Specifications

- Top: European spruce
- Back and sides: Tasmanian blackwood
- Neck: Cedar
- Bridge: Brazilian rosewood
- Fingerboard: Ebony
- Scale: 650mm
- Nut width: 52mm
- Cavity resonance: Between F# and G
- Weight: 1490g
- Tuners: Gotoh
- Finish: French polish

Price \$4900



Concert Classical Guitar (Bubinga)

The master-grade European spruce soundboard has been hand-thicknessed and braced based on Santos Hernandez' 1928 Segovia guitar

Specifications

- Top: Master grade European spruce
- Back and sides: African rosewood (Bubinga)
- Neck: Honduran mahogany
- Fingerboard: Ebony
- Bindings: African blackwood
- Nut width: 52mm
- Scale: 640mm
- Weight: 1746g
- Resonant frequency: F#-G
- Tuners: Gotoh 510 series
- Finish: French polish
- Additional features: 20th fret

Price \$ 6500



Parlor Classical Guitar

This short scale parlor guitar was built with the body specifications of an 1864 Antonio de Torres guitar labelled FE18 and describing Torres' 18th guitar of his first epoch of guitar building. This is an example of the highest quality and cut of Brazilian rosewood which is seldom seen nowadays

Specifications

- Top: Western red cedar
- Back and sides: Brazilian rosewood
- Neck: Spanish cedar
- Fingerboard: African blackwood
- Bindings: African blackwood
- Scale: 615mm
- Tuners: Rubner
- Finish: French polish

Price \$ 4000



Upcycled Eco-Classical

Specifications

- Top: Joined offcuts of top-grade guitar top Spruce
- Back and sides: African Tasmanian blackwood (felled as noxious weed In the Tsitsikama forest, South Africa). Back centre strip Brazilian rosewood (Pre-CITES 1)
- Neck: Cedar
- Bridge: Madagascan rosewood with retired piano key ivory (CITES 1) tieblock inlay
- Fingerboard: African blackwood offcut laminated to Puriri scrap
- Bindings: Madagascan rosewood
- Headstock veneer: Brazilian rosewood (Pre-CITES 1)
- Scale: 650mm
- Weight: 1478g
- Tuners: Gotoh
- Finish: French polish (ethanol and shellac with no harmful hydrocarbons used)
- Additional features: convex radiused fingerboard

Sale by silent auction

Reserve price \$2000

Note: Proceeds above the reserve price of \$2000 will be split equally and donated to a conservation charity of the buyer's choice and to the Taranaki Health Foundation as my contribution to the Strings of compassion-a concert for cancer