

Godin

in the press

REDLINE 3



GODIN

Redline 3

BY STEVE QUIMETTE



As featured
in the
October 2009
issue of
Premier Guitar
Magazine



GODIN

Redline 3

BY STEVE QUIMETTE



Take one look at Godin's website and you will see a company that offers a wide variety of innovative and unique instruments. From affordable acoustic archtop guitars (5th Avenue and Kingpin) to nylon and steel-string acoustics that include MIDI capabilities and feedback-rejecting designs (Multiac series) to crazy and downright cool designs like the Glissentar, an 11-string fretless acoustic, Godin makes a point of always bringing something new and useful to the table. In their electric series they offer a fairly wide range of guitars to meet most styles, but not until recently did they have an option for the modern metal or shredder guitarist.

The Redline 3 is an attractive and thoughtful instrument that was born to rock... er, shred... and is styled around a rock maple neck with a rosewood or maple fingerboard (the review guitar was rosewood) and 22 of the biggest jumbo frets I've encountered on a guitar. The scale is 25-1/2" and the fingerboard measures 1-11/16" at the nut. The body is constructed from a silverleaf maple center with poplar wings. The review guitar came with a killer—and perfectly book-matched—transparent red flame maple top and sported a pair of EMG active humbuckers (85 in the neck, 81 in the bridge). Standard controls include a 3-way slide switch with one Volume and one Tone knob, shared by both pickups. Topping off the



Redline 3 is a licensed Floyd Rose tremolo with a deep recess cut in the body for reverse dive-bomb pull-ups.

In play

Before plugging in, I spent some time with the guitar unplugged to get an idea of what was happening with its tone. This is a snappy instrument with a lot of pop and bite, but not at the expense of some body in its sound.

The maple center gives the guitar an immediate attack, and the poplar wings add warmth to the tone to balance it out. Notes rang out clear and fairly long, though the Floyd did take a little of the natural sustain out (a common side effect of virtually any tremolo), but not enough to be an issue. It sat nicely on my lap, and the contour body cut was a welcome design choice, keeping the guitar comfortable during long playing sessions. Rather than a neck plate, the RL3 uses four recessed screws that stay completely out of the way and add an elegant touch to the look of the back of the guitar, as does the rear bottom horn-to-body contour. The neck is radiused very flat at 16", which allows you to rip and bend across the guitar with pinpoint accuracy and extreme speed. The neck carve isn't terribly shallow, nor is it baseball bat-like, and it fit my hand nicely without inducing much fatigue. While I prefer a slightly "clubby" neck, that isn't necessarily in line with this style of guitar, so Godin hit the mark for their target audience. The neck is finished in a light satin that adds to the sleek and speedy feel, and the massive frets make sure you get big tone and killer control without sacrificing playability. Nice.

Since there were a variety of amps at the studio during my time with the RL3, I had the chance to run it through quite a few to get a feel for how it handled different situations. Whenever I think of a shredder guitar, it usually involves pickups like a Duncan Distortion or DiMarzio Super Distortion Humbucker, but that's just my age talking. Godin went the modern route with EMGs, and it lends a decidedly modern sound to the guitar. Through most of the amps, I had to back down the gain on the amp to accommodate the higher-output pickups. This type of front-end hit to an amp can be used quite beneficially, if you're looking for a super-tight bottom and searing top end. These pickups are certainly not subtle, and it's obvious why so many modern metal bands use this exact

combination! Not surprisingly, the guitar tended to favor higher-gain amps like an Engl Ritchie Blackmore head, Mesa Boogie Dual Rectifier and a Krank Rev Jr. With classic amps, like a Marshall Super Lead and a VOX AC30, the tone was decidedly less "classic" and lacked some of the dimension that comes through with lower-gain pickups. To be fair, Godin did not intend to create another Les Paul or Strat, so there's no reason to spend a lot of time trying to make it something it isn't. Clean tones were more sparkly than chimey on the top end, but the solid low end was very impressive and lent an authoritative presence to the sound that would never get lost in a mix.

Getting a little trem


I was blown away with the Floyd Rose trem, which was the best implementation of one I've ever experienced. The arm pops into place, rather than being threaded or screwed in, so it will never strip or need tightening. The feel is ultra-smooth with no binding whatsoever, and you can pull back far enough to break a string due to the recessed well cut into the body behind the assembly. Sure, this has been around for years as part of the design on other guitars, but for some reason it just seemed smoother, tighter and more precise on the RL3. And of course, the trem stayed in tune flawlessly no matter how hard it was abused.

Some other design choices include a 3-way Strat-style selector rather than a toggle, as well as a single Volume and Tone knob. Having only one volume and tone setting for the two pickups is limiting—for those who don't want to be fiddling with the knobs—but it's nothing radical and keeps the guitar simple. Having a toggle switch can be effective in creating machine gun-style rapid on/off effects with the neck pickup off, so I'd be lying if I said I didn't miss that. It's also nice to have that setup so you can shut the sound off altogether between songs without rolling the volume down, especially with the ability to create so much gain. It's a nice feedback shutoff mechanism, too.

The neck heel area is designed to give the player ultimate access to all of the frets, and it achieves that very nicely. However, my hands continued to bump the top of the heel when playing around the 15th fret. It wasn't until I checked against another one of my

guitars with a traditional bolt-on design that I realized this was quite an improvement. The action on the guitar was set up higher than anticipated and would probably be a bit too high for some players, but no doubt a quick neck adjustment would fix that. Being made of wood and traveling from Canada to the killing desert heat of Arizona probably didn't help much either!

The Final Mojo

Godin has made a nice entrance into a new market for them. The RL3 is a tight, fast and snappy guitar that has just enough attitude to get noticed but could easily hang next to collectible guitars with high-end tops. Godin also sent two Redline II guitars, which are 24-fret guitars with fixed bridges. These guitars showed that the action setup on the RL3 was a fluke, because both of the Redline IIs had killer low action. For the price of the RL3 you just can't go wrong. So there you have it! A great guitar company adds another offering to round out their fine collection of instruments. Definitely one to check out! 

Buy If...

modern and heavy tones are your business.

Skip If...

you don't need a speedy guitar.

Rating...

4.5

ON THE Web

Head online for sound samples of the guitar in action at

premierguitar.com



Godin Guitars
Street \$819
godinguitars.com