



## A New Scale of Travel Guitar

### The Strobel Rambler Classic

**M**ost guitar junkies wish they could take a guitar everywhere they go. Sure, gig bags make it easier, but sometimes trekking with a full-size guitar just isn't possible. When Russ Strobel was faced with this quandary, he didn't want to compromise with a mini guitar, so he thought up a solution. — the Rambler, a full-scale (but compact) guitar he could take anywhere and conveniently tuck in minimal space. Think of it as a concealed musical weapon!

Unlike other travel guitars, the Strobel Rambler is a full-scale instrument, using a 24½" scale like a Gibson. It also has a practical design that allows the neck and body to be easily separated; this way, they can be stashed inside a standard briefcase or similarly sized computer bag for transport. It actually packs down to a size small enough to fit under an airline seat. Of course, the guitar can also be packed inside a standard carry-on or larger suitcase. Once you're at your destination, it's quickly reassembled so you'll be ready to rock in minutes. The Rambler ships with a padded gig bag.

Strobel's first guitar, the U.S.-

made Rambler Custom, proved so popular he decided to create a standard version. The Rambler Classic, manufactured in Korea, is a lower-priced model with the same design and basic features offered in tobacco and cherry sunburst. A headless instrument, it strings secure through slots from behind the nut, and attach to Strobel's trademarked StringKeeper, which holds the strings in place and fastens at the top of the neck with a thumbwheel. The strings then attach to standard-style locking tuners in the body cutaway behind the bridge. The neck attaches to the body with four thumbwheels. Unscrew them with your fingers or use a coin for disassembling and reassembling. No special tools are required, and it's pretty easy.

The guitar's neck is maple with a rosewood fingerboard, 21 medium-jumbo frets, and dot inlays. The profile is a slim C shape with a flat 12" fingerboard radius. An adjustable double-action truss rod keeps the neck straight. The body is solid maple with a flame-maple top and beveled contours on the inner sides of the waist. A tune-o-matic-type bridge adjusts intonation

and strings attach to locking tuners. The two outer strings on each side (first, second, fifth, sixth) use string guides to achieve proper angles as they travel from the bridge. A pair of proprietary-wound Crystal Sound humbuckers are controlled by master Volume and Tone knobs, and a recessed three-way selector switch.

The Rambler is fun to play. It has a fast neck, the action feels good, the frets are nicely dressed, intonation is pretty accurate, and the body resonates well. We found it easiest to play

#### STROBEL RAMBLER CLASSIC

Price: \$599

Info: [strobelguitars.com](http://strobelguitars.com)

when using a guitar strap so the neck remains in a comfortable position for your hand and you don't have to be concerned with balancing it on your leg while seated. Through a 100-watt Marshall stack, its humbuckers delivered a tasty variety of classic rhythm and lead sounds for rock and blues, both clean and dirty. The maple body and neck combination offers a very articulate and chunky sound with more edge than a Les Paul. We dialed in silky smooth tones from the neck pickup and cutting lead tones from the bridge. While the Rambler was designed for convenience and some may view it as a novelty, it's also very gig-worthy.

Strobel might consider adjusting the space between the Volume and Tone knobs — they're so close that fingers don't fit between them. Given the limited space on the Rambler's small body, it would be a challenge. One option would be to fly sans Tone control, like they offer on the Custom.

The Rambler is not only ready to rock — it's ready to go wherever you go. — *Lisa Sharken VG*

