



## THE TAYLOR GUITAR BOOK: '40 Years Of Great American Flattops'

**T**here was a time when Taylor was a new name in the world of acoustic instruments, competing against American guitar giants like Martin and Gibson. Time travel to 40 years later and Taylor is a well-established and emulated musical instrument juggernaut that has forged new methods and designs, thanks to people like Andy Powers.

Teja Gerken, author of the Taylor book, is an accomplished guitarist with extensive experience in writing for Acoustic Guitar Magazine and the numerous guitar reference books he has contributed to! In his latest

offering he leads us through the simplistic beginnings of Taylor Guitars as Bob Taylor and Kurt Listug took a small band of builders and designers to launch what would become a major player in the guitar world.

The historical pictures and instruments captured in this book, all the way back to the 'American Dream' guitar days, are worth the price of admission even without the great stories. Bob Taylor started the company as a response to what he felt was missing from the guitar market in the 1970s hand built, top quality, affordable acoustic instruments. Taylor performing

artists now include Zac Brown, Taylor Swift, Rascal Flatts and Clay Walker to name a few.

What many people forget, since it is common place in the industry now, Taylor pioneered the use of bolt on necks for Acoustic Guitars. This went against the tradition of glued on necks that had been the standard since the beginning of acoustic stringed instruments. Gerken expounds on other areas of innovation involving Taylor's increased usage of computer controlled machines and laser cutting. Many players and buyers of Taylor instruments don't know that the electronics and cases are even created at the Taylor facility and research and development is a constant factor.

Another area that Taylor pushed the boundaries in were the exterior instrument finishes which from the beginning were thinner and satin compared to glossy and thicker finishes of their competitors. The pursuit of less is more in the area of finishes continues as Bob and Andy have reduced their finish thickness by 40% just last year.

A turning point for Taylor Guitars, as revealed in the book, happened when Neil Young started using their 855 12 string guitar for his Rust Never Sleeps tour in 1979 and

put them on the map. The 1980s proved to be a lean time for Taylor and his company but the number of popular musicians playing his instruments continued to grow including Nancy Wilson of the band Heart. The 90s saw rise to a maturity in the company as they didn't have anything to prove and sales continued to increase. Taylor also started expressing more artistry in their instruments in the 90s with increased use of hand chosen woods and exquisite fret board and headstock inlays. Eventually, the popular T5 series was launched providing a hybrid of tonal choices between acoustic and electric sounds. This was followed by the T3 and Solidbody launches that was aimed at pure electric guitar players, plus the T5z (a smaller bodied version of the T5). Continued advancements in finishes, electronics and bracing are seen throughout the Taylor guitar company today thanks to Bob Taylor's original vision and the new barer of the torch Andy Powers. In the back of the book Gerken provides a helpful reference listing of current and discontinued models and their features plus the dating system from 1975 through today.

For the Taylor Guitar enthusiast 'The Taylor Guitar Book' will provide the history behind the guitars they play and cherish. Teja Gerken's extensive knowledge of Taylor instruments, history and culture have created a profound book.

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