



Gibson's SG Finally Gets Credit With 'The SG Guitar Book' by Tony Bacon

Many popular musicians today are being photographed performing with a cool Gibson SG guitar of some model. Tony Bacon, the author of the SG Guitar book, is known for his knowledge and documentation of guitars through his past books: 'The Ultimate Guitar Book', 'History of the American Guitar' and 'Sunburst'. He is also a co-founder of music book distribution sources Jawbone Press and Backbeat UK. In this writer's humble opinion a book on the Gibson SG is long overdue and I'm very pleased Bacon was the author to do it.

The abbreviation, SG, actually stand for Solid Guitar and the

model was launched at a time when Les Paul guitar sales were slipping! Bacon traces the lineage of the SG back to Gibson's radical launch of the Flying V, Explorer and ES335 models in 1958 thanks to Ted McCarty's forward vision.

The upstart Fender guitar company was also applying pressure to Gibson with their sleek and thin new designs. Gibson made the brazen decision it was time to revamp their entire solid body guitar series. The best engineers at Gibson developed the SG design although when first released in 1961 it was billed as a replacement

design for the Les Paul.

The body was made of thin mahogany that was highly beveled and sculpted with a glued in neck (similar to Les Paul designs). By 1963 the Les Paul part of the name was dropped as Gibson felt Les's popularity was waning at that time so the guitar was marketed as the SG.

Bacon follows the developments and innovations of the guitar through the years were a better vibrato, longer neck tenon (part of neck glued into the body) and various pickup configurations plus student models like the Melody Maker Double.

Classic photos like the one of George Harrison playing his 1964 Gibson SG Standard guitar really drive home the impact these instruments have had. Several pages are dedicated to Eric Clapton's SG that was custom painted by the Dutch Art duo Fool and thus was named this art guitar.

Two guitarists that truly helped popularise the SG were Tony Iommi, of Black Sabbath, and Frank Zappa. AC/DC's guitarist, Angus Young, has played an SG since the beginning of the band he started with his brother Malcom and Gibson has developed two different SG signature models for him.

During the 80s and 90s, Gibson continued to refine the SG by building reissue models and The SG Standard, The SG Deluxe and the Special II. The most famous SG double neck (EDS-1275 model) was played by Jimmy Page from Led Zeppelin and Gibson created a signature model limited edition that was signed by Page in 1999.

In recent years Bacon documents Gibson launch of the SG Zoot Suit, Anniversary 12 String, Robot SG, Government series and faded models. One of the most popular current musicians using an SG for his main instrument in the studio and the road is Derek Trucks, formerly of the Allman Brothers and now of Tedeschi Trucks Band.

A nice reference listing is provided in the back of the book for players and collectors to determine their own make and model. I've owned a number of Gibson SG guitars over the years and I have a 62 reissue that I play frequently now.

The SG has never gotten the credit it deserved or the attention of similar icon instruments like Les Pauls' and Stratocasters. Hopefully Tony Bacon's new book 'The SG Guitar Book' will help rectify that oversight, if you're an SG fan you'll want this book! **Eric Dahl**

"A nice reference listing is provided in the back of the book for players and collectors to determine their own make and model..."

The SG Guitar Book: 50 years of Gibson's stylish solid guitar by Tony Bacon, reviewed by Eric Dahl