

THE GAS
STATION



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SOLAR A2.6 TRANS BLOOD RED MATTE

A new breed in metal guitars?

£615

No-one should be surprised when they take the Solar A2.6 out of the case. Sure, you might gasp at how anyone could make a hot-rodded S-style electric look like the sort of lethal weapon you wouldn't be allowed in the venue with, far less play a show with, but this is exactly the sort of design Ola Englund has had on his mind long before announcing his new company, Solar Guitars, in November last year.

As guitarist with The Haunted and Six Feet Under, extreme metal is his bread and butter, and that in turn demands an extreme instrument. With its sharp cutaways, ergonomic contours,

play *Perpetual Burn*. On this, such Herculean feats of shred suddenly seem possible.

A pair of Duncan Solar humbuckers are seated in the neck and bridge positions, with a five-way blade selector to switch between them. In positions two and four, the 'bucker's signals are split. This, allied to a tone pot with plenty of torque, gives the A2.6 a wide range of tones. Englund's core demographic might not wish to hear about the dynamic and bouncy cleans when mixing the pickups, or that the A2.6 performs well through a glacially clean amp with a little modulation thrown in (think Metallica, et al); it's the bright but gutsy metal tones they're after and they'll find

IT HAS A HEADSTOCK THAT YOU COULD HUNT BOAR WITH

and a headstock that you could hunt boar with, it looks the part – and anyone who is familiar with Englund's signature Washburn PX Solar series will recognise the silhouette.

The A2.6 has a solid swamp ash body with a maple neck and ebony fretboard. The neck-through construction makes the neck a part of the body and vice versa. There are no clunky parts; the heel, such as it is, is rounded out into oblivion. Similarly, the neck is whittled down into a profile reminiscent of Ibanez's slimmest Wizard necks. The hardtail bridge is as unobtrusive and stable as they come, and it's good to see a set of 18:1 Grover tuners. But then, nothing here is out of whack – the A2.6 feels like it was precision-engineered by folks who spent their downtime on their Ivy League STEM majors learning to

plenty of combustible chug here. Harmonics are easily teased from the A2.6, and on the bridge pickup especially you'll find it hard to resist peppering your every riff or lead with a pinched squeal. That might upset bandmates and nearby dogs, but then Solar can't be held responsible for your lack of discipline. They can, however, be held responsible for making you play that little bit better. No question, the A2.6 will flatter players of all abilities; it will enable them. And what else could you want from your guitar?

Jonathan Horsley

SUMMARY	FEATURES	★	★	★	★	★
	SOUND QUALITY	★	★	★	★	★
	VALUE FOR MONEY	★	★	★	★	★
	BUILD QUALITY	★	★	★	★	★
	PLAYABILITY	★	★	★	★	★
	OVERALL RATING	★	★	★	★	★

1 NECK
The A2.6's premium-quality, neck-through construction not only facilitates access to the upper frets but helps deliver heaps of durable sustain

2 HEADSTOCK
The lethal-looking reverse headstock completes a super-aggressive S-shape that's all but identical to Englund's previous signatures with Washburn PX Series

3 BODY
Allied to the A2.6's contoured body are two of the most aggressively shaped cutaways you'll ever see on an S-style electric



AT A GLANCE

BODY: Swamp ash
NECK: Maple, neck-through
SCALE: 647mm (25.5")
FINGERBOARD: Ebony with Ola Englund inlay at 12th fret
FRETS: 24, super-jumbo
PICKUPS: 2x Duncan Solar humbuckers (neck and bridge)
CONTROLS: 1x five-way blade pickup selector, 1x volume, 1x tone
HARDWARE: Black, Grover 18:1 tuners, hardtail bridge
LEFT-HANDED: No
FINISH: Trans Blood Red Matte only
CONTACT: Solar-Guitars.com

