



DANELECTRO 59X

£579

Does X mark the spot for this revamped semi-hollow?

Of all the companies that benefitted from the Black Keys/White Stripes-fuelled pawn-shop guitar surge, we'd wager Danelectro was near the top. Its electric range has always been off-the-wall, but its low prices and unique build and sound have seen a raft of new models surface in recent years. Now the 59X sees the company give its most iconic outline – and old favourite of a certain Jimmy Page – a new lease of life.

First things first: this is a bit of a dog's dinner in the looks department. That angled, humbucker-sized single coil, coupled with the slash across the end of the fretboard, looks a little rough and ready. Why Dano didn't

compression when you dig in, the slanted pickup position resulting in a more even string response.

The bridge humbucker, meanwhile, has all the top-end sparkle and jangle of Lipsticks, but with the added heft of 'bucker output, all without getting woolly. It's a hugely addictive voice, while the coil-split lowers the output and thins out the sound, but retains that Lipstick punch.

There's great clarity with gain, too: that distinctive high end, combined with Danelectro's idiosyncratic semi-hollow construction, makes every note in a chord sing. There is some treble loss when winding down the volume knob, but that's hardly uncommon at this price point. Regardless, the 59X will handle

“THERE'S CLARITY WITH GAIN; THAT DISTINCTIVE HIGH END”

just stick a matching Lipstick single coil up there, we'll never know. Still, we've no complaints about the Lipstick humbucker in the bridge, which is coil-splittable via the tone knob.

The actual build quality is hard to fault, however, with no finish or setup imperfections to speak of. It's the best put-together Dano we've seen for some time. The wraparound bridge provides solid tuning stability, although a hefty rout behind reminds you the 59X is also available with a Wilkinson vibrato (the 59XT, £649).

But forget the looks: we implore you to play this guitar. LP players will feel right at home with the gloss-finished neck, and the comfortable 25" scale length means this could quickly become your go-to pick-up-and-play electric. The neck pickup has a fat single-coil response, with a sweet

just about any genre – whether you're a fan of classic-rock, blues, post-rock or indie, you'll find something here to please your ear.

Given its suitability for big riffs and solos, it's frustrating that Dano still refuses to update the 59's greatest shortcoming: its upper-fret access. You might as well forget about playing past the 18th fret – those shallow cutaways and the chunky heel are total rock-blockers. However, if you believe the old Tommy Tedesco saying “There's no money above the 5th fret”, there are some phenomenal tones to be had here.

Michael Astley-Brown

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

1 CONSTRUCTION

Don't bother asking about tone wood: Dano lists the 59X's body build as 'composite/plywood construction'. Thankfully, it doesn't dampen the superb plugged-in sounds

2 PICKUPS

There's a certain top-end magic that only Lipstick pickups can tap into, and the 59X has some of the best yet, courtesy of that humbucker

3 CUTAWAYS

If you can call them that, that is. Come on, Dano, deepen those grooves – what's the point in having 21 frets if you can't actually reach them all?

AT A GLANCE

BODY: Composite/plywood with centre block
NECK: Maple
SCALE: 635mm (25")
FINGERBOARD: Rosewood
FRETS: 21
PICKUPS: 1x Lipstick humbucker (bridge), 1x vintage-style single coil (neck)
CONTROLS: 1x volume, 1x tone (w/ push/pull coil-split), 3-way pickup selector switch
HARDWARE: Wraparound bridge – nickel
LEFT-HANDED: No
CASE: No
FINISH: Black (reviewed), Dark Red, Dark Blue, Cream
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