

**Hello Harp Techs**, the iconic HOHNER Golden Melody has received a major makeover! Since the early 1980's, legions of harmonica players gravitated to the Golden Melody for its comfortable form factor and playability. Professional players, such as Howard Levy, Carlos de Junco and Jason Ricci relied on the HOHNER Golden Melody to hone their unmistakable playing style.

As time wore on, so did the tooling required to manufacture the Golden Melody harmonica. As a result, playability of this harmonica suffered and many players (present company included) began shopping for alternatives.

### **WHY IT MATTERS**

Thankfully Hohner management decided to retool the Golden Melody machinery and give the instrument a modern upgrade. Many of the changes are obvious, but others less so, unless you look under the hood...



The packaging harkens back to the good 'ol days with a cardboard box and recognizable artwork



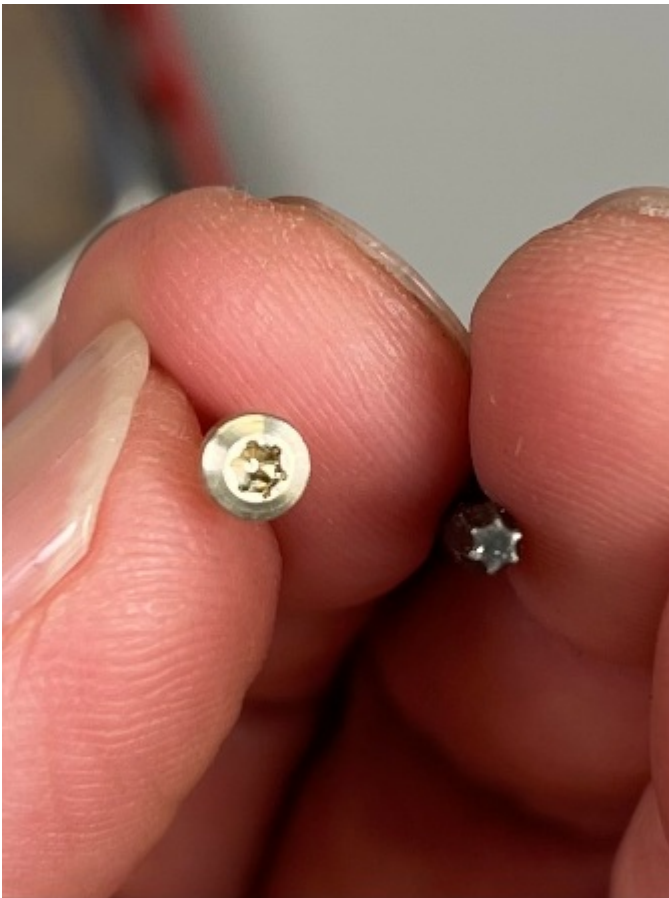
The fundamental ergonomic shape of the 2023 Golden Melody harmonica is the same as the original. Players will find the polished UltraGlide mouthpiece with rounded outer edges *super* comfortable in any embouchure. Single note (read: Overblow) harmonica players will appreciate the **12-Tone Equal Temperament Tuning**.



On the left is the side profile of the original Golden Melody. On the right is the 2023 Golden Melody. Students of David Barrett will immediately recognize the benefit of this tilted embouchure design



On top is the new 2023 Golden Melody and below the original Golden Melody. Look carefully and you will notice there are no vertical cover plate screws. HOHNER engineers cleverly embedded the TORX fastener into the sides of the comb. For you Harp Techs, your prayers have been answered. Removing the cover plates for general harmonica maintenance is a breeze!



Close up of the TORX fastener with the T7

TORX bit (sold separately)



The original Golden Melody cover plates were non-vented with shallow rear openings--producing a muted voicing to the instrument



The new crush-proof stainless steel cover plates feature four megaphones that resemble the jet exhaust ports of a spaceship. The indentation on the top and bottom cover plates serve as comfortable holds for your finger and thumb. This new 2023 Golden Melody will not go quietly in the night, **you will be heard!**

## BENCHCRAFT

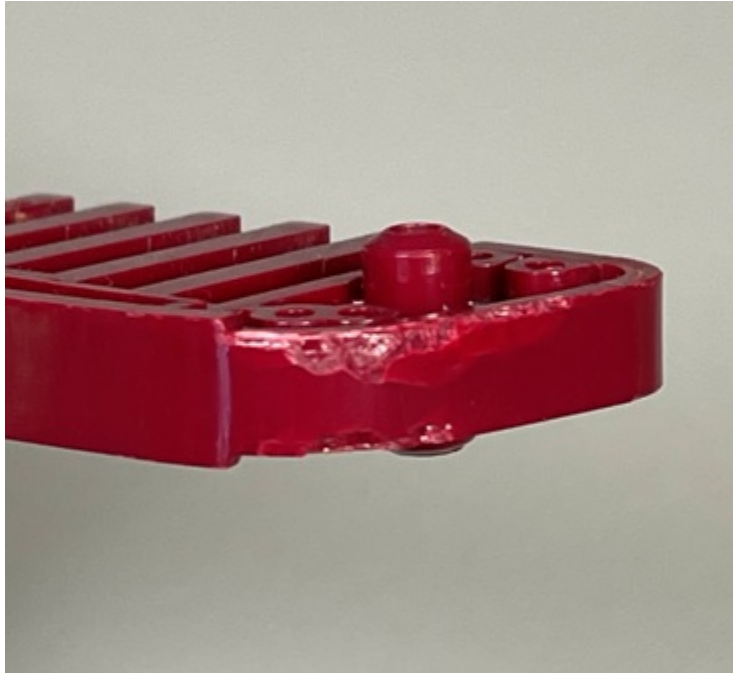


The cover plate tabs disappear into the comb



The 2023 Golden Melody disassembled.

The world class **reeds** are **EXACTLY** the same as those installed into all HOHNER Marine Band and Progressive Series Harmonicas (the reed plates are unique to the Golden Melody). Notice the two captive receivers for the TORX cover plate fasteners



I have never been a fan of the original Golden Melody acrylic comb. It was too brittle and prone to cracking and breaking



The new 2023 Golden Melody comb is injection molded with red **ABS** plastic

(Acrylonitrile Butadiene Styrene). The same ABS material found (black) in numerous HOHNER products, including the popular Special 20.

The benefits of ABS are found with *stability, air tightness, impervious to moisture, and flexible to prevent breakage*. True Golden Melody aficionados will notice the sprues are missing from the slots--**YES!** This will enhance airflow and increase ease of servicing the reeds of an assembled harmonica

### **HOW DOES IT PLAY?**

When I judge the playability of a harmonica, I always assess how the harmonica plays “out-of-the-box”. This places the onus squarely with the factory that built it. The 2023 Golden Melody passed this test with flying colors. It had exceptional Reed Treatments; the Zero Points set to .001” the free end reed gaps ranged from .009” (lower octave) to .003” (higher octave) perfect for most harmonica players. The “Closing Door” profile on all twenty reeds was spot on.

*For you Customizers out there, the 2023 Golden Melody is an exceptional instrument to supercharge for your serious harmonica customers.*

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

For Blues Harmonica Players accustomed to *Just Intonation* or *Compromised Just Tuning* may find the 12-Tone Equal Temperament Tuning of the Golden Melody a tad brash for their chordal playing style. Not to worry, followers of the HARPSMITH bench know it is relatively easy to retune any harmonica to your desired playing style.

*I recently learned that HOHNER Endorsee, Indiara Sfair’s Insta-Posting had 11 million clicks since HOHNER’s product launch! It appears the HOHNER 2023 Golden Melody Harmonica is a hit. Don’t hesitate, most HOHNER Distributors will have **your** next harmonica in stock for immediate delivery.*

### **GOING DEEPER**

Did you know the Golden Melody shape was first introduced in 1957?



An important milestone in the development of the Golden Melody, this 1957 Special Model for the HOHNER Centenary Celebrations was given to each of the guest of honors and employees (photo courtesy of Gerard Muller)



1970 U.S. NAVY BAND (rumors told me this was Lee Oskar's first HOHNER harmonica)



This 1975 Bicentennial Harmonica also featured the future Golden Melody shape





Imitation can be the sincerest form of flattery  
(circa 1998 my collection)



1956 HOHNER Chrometta 12 (my collection)



DAS DESIGN der  
1950er Jahre  
brachte zahlreiche  
neue Hohner-Modelle.

The HOHNER 1950's Comet and Contessa  
Your **HARPSMITH, Kinya**