

SEAGLASS GUITARS

By Ward Meeker

SeaGlass Guitars was founded in mid 2011, when Roger Mello decided to combine – and employ – his lifelong love of woodworking and guitars.

“I’ve been woodworking for 25 years and made my first guitars about 18 years ago, mainly for friends and personal use,” he said. “Though there was a bit of a hiatus while raising a family, the desire to start a boutique guitar company has been with me for quite some time.”

Not long before starting SeaGlass Guitars, Mello began prototyping a model and showing it to various musicians and other music pros in his circle. “I’d work out improvements based on their comments, and I now feel ready for the next step – selling to a broader audience.”

We talked with him to get the story.

When you started building, was it a part-time venture, or did you jump in full-time right away?

Part-time, and it still is a part-time venture, though I find myself investing more time than even my full-time job as the owner of a security systems company. I work a lot of long nights, but it’s truly a labor of love.

How many models do you offer?

I currently offer two – the Route6 and Route6A Carvetop. Both are single-cut, chambered mahogany-bodied with a figured maple top and a set mahogany neck. The Route6 is a flat-top and Route6A is a carvetop. It’s a fairly traditional wood combo, though I’m using a 25½” scale. I’ve also just introduced a third version, the Route6jr. It’s the same basic style but without the maple top or nitro finish. That version has a contoured body and a hand-rubbed oil finish, and will price out less than its big brothers.

What sets your guitars apart?

At this point, I’m not trying to reinvent the wheel, but simply trying to put out a top-quality, hand-made instrument for a reasonable cost. I’m using top-quality lumber and components. My guitars are truly hand-made, so the buyer can feel and hear the quality that goes into each.

Do you work alone in the shop?

I do, from planing rough lumber to carving necks to spraying the nitrocellulose lacquer finish. My wife has been very supportive and



helps with the logos, website, and bookkeeping. I am, however, at the point it would be beneficial to partner with dealers to help with marketing and sales.

What are your hopes for the future of the industry?

There will always be musicians who are passionate for a great-sounding, hand-made instrument, so I think the future is bright. And, growing up repairing guitars, you were pretty much limited to local people. With the internet, though, one can reach millions of people with the stroke of a few computer keys.

What are your goals for SeaGlass?

Tone is in the ear of the beholder. My goal as a guitar builder is to provide musicians with a quality instrument that can help them find that sound they’re searching for. I’ll continue to build guitars of the highest quality that are aesthetically beautiful, but above all else, sound great. **VG**



A rendition of SeaGlass Route6A Carvetop.