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Price: \$2,395
www.seaglassguitars.com

SMOOTH ROCKER

The SeaGlass RM3

Hand-building electric guitars one at a time in his Massachusetts shop, luthier Roger Mello's latest, the RM3, is an upscale take on the traditional maple-top-on-mahogany set-neck.

Played straight out of its case, the RM3 exhibited remarkable resonance and tone even before being plugged in. Its generous D-shape neck allowed for a lot of resonant wood and mass without feeling like a baseball

bat, contributing to a bigger natural sustain. The RM3's weight and design are otherwise similar to a Les Paul, and the hand-rubbed oil finish gives a velvety feel (the tester was lightly relic'd). In short, it looks and feels like an instrument that *wants* to be played. The aged-nickel Kluson tuners and TonePros tune-o-matic bridge (wrap-around is an option) also lent the impression of a comfortably broken-in guitar, though one might prefer a bone nut to nylon on such a well-conceived instrument.

The RM3 follows the classic concept of a 24.6"-scale-length on a rosewood 12"-radius

fretboard, which in combination with the mahogany set neck, contributes to its round and well-balanced

tone. And as one would expect from a boutique build of this caliber, the RM3 sustains naturally and evenly across the fretboard.

All of the RM3's natural acoustics are further enhanced by its Lollar Imperial pickups. The neck holds depths without getting muddy, and when trying jazzier tones by rolling off the tone through the Emerson Pro Bumble tone caps, it sounds articulate and present. The bridge pickup has a rich punch that cleans up nicely when the Volume is being dialed back yet maintains its full-bodied spectrum and clarity. Like all great boutique builds, the SeaGlass RM3 breathes quality and class. It's a true joy to play. — **Anders Fransson VG**