

OZARK 3146



Ozark come over all Celtic with this ornate looking electro acoustic... **Words:** Tim Slater

One of the really great things about acoustic and roots music is its inclusivity. Anyone is welcome to get up and have a go and if you intend to get stuck in to the folk scene you may as well look the part, too. To be honest, though, despite its bucolic image the Ozark 3146 model is actually a well spec'd electro acoustic guitar that includes good quality Grover sealed tuners and an active onboard preamp. The electronics offer an impressive degree of control over the amplified tone courtesy of a compact five-band graphic equalizer, a built-in digital tuner with LED readouts and there is even built-in anti-feedback countermeasures in the form of a phase inverter switch. Balance this hardware against the Celtic knot sound-hole and matching wooden fingerboard inlays and

you've got a workable blend of modern and traditional influences, plus a padded gigbag is also included.

Celtic ambience

On first picking up this Chinese-made guitar we immediately noticed that there is something unusual about it but we couldn't quite put our finger on it until we suddenly realized that the 3146 is one of very few electro acoustic guitars that we've seen that doesn't feature a cutaway! The return to a more traditional jumbo shape whilst retaining the onboard preamp is an interesting idea because it helps this Ozark guitar stand out as something virtually unique compared to most of its competitors in this price range. The lack of a lower cutaway also seems to create a more balanced look whilst also helping to improve the visual impact of the Celtic knot sound-hole. The 3146 features a combination of solid and laminated construction and stylistically it blends the unadorned feel of a working musician's instrument with the more florid touches courtesy of its ornate Celtic decorations. The satin finish solid cedar top is flanked by laminated rosewood back and sides, trimmed with an attractive combination of traditional black and white pinstripe and so-called 'scraped' edge binding where two strips of bare timber ring the circumference between the guitar's top, back and sides. The

overall standard of finishing is on a par with any of the respected far eastern manufacturers and in case you were wondering how on earth you manage to slip a 9 volt battery through the Celtic knot's tiny slits, the side-mounted preamp's quick release chassis just flips out, making swift battery changes dead easy.

The moth-shaped Celtic knot sound-hole certainly lends this guitar an individual image that is mirrored – as we mentioned in the introduction – by the intricate wooden fingerboard inlays set at intervals in the otherwise plain rosewood fingerboard. The 14th fret neck joint suggests that this guitar would serve well as a soloist's instrument and indeed, despite the lack of a cutaway, access to the upper frets is made easier by the slightly extended mahogany neck.

Acoustically, the tone has a distinct top end shimmer that isn't unusual in any new acoustic guitar but the overall balance still sounds quite good. The highs don't seem to shriek in that slightly hysterical vaguely unpleasant way that you sometimes find on some mid-priced far eastern acoustic guitars and the mids are similarly well mixed and uncongested, with a nice solid bass thump when you need it. The amplified tone is a more than fair approximation of the acoustic character, although with so much tone-shaping options to hand courtesy of the on-board EQ means that the player isn't limited to the

guitar's basic voice. Of course, you can adjust the overall timbre to match virtually any venue or environment. The Artec preamp's anti-feedback switch is something then you'll hopefully never need recourse to use but it's nevertheless handy to have to hand; after all you never know when you might need it. **PM**

SHOULD I BUY ONE?

Don't let the lack of a cutaway put you off. The Ozark 3146 is an attractive looking and well made guitar with great onboard equipment; our only concern is that players with a hard strumming technique might be well advised to invest in a self-adhesive scratchplate (you can buy transparent ones for around £5.00 if you don't want to cover up the wood). We can vouch from experience that even solid plain cedar tops like the type fitted to the 3146 very quickly get marked and can even wear completely through with regular heavy use; if you are cool with that then fine but otherwise it's probably a good idea to find a way to protect the guitar, especially when it looks and sounds as nice as this Ozark.

OZARK 3146

SRP £460.00

All prices include VAT

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