

BESPOKE
THE ESKY GUITAR

If you're looking to raise your strumming game, shun off-the-peg six-strings and get one with braggings rights built in

IF YOU WALKED into any guitar shop intent on buying a decent Martin or Taylor, you'd have to part with the best part of three grand. But, much as with tailoring, when you're dealing with this kind of budget the best you can buy is bespoke.

This is where The North American Guitar comes in. The company acts as an axe-man's consultant — analysing your playing style, discussing what you want from the instrument, then introducing you to a luthier (great word, right?) who will build you just the sort of guitar you're looking for.

To test the service, we

commissioned a piece that had to be easy to play, comfortable to hold, mellow in tone yet loud and strong enough to take a good knock — not an easy brief. The North American Guitar secured Seattle's Brent McElroy, whose guitars are beautifully made with a warm, complex tone, and set to work. The stunning Esky guitar, right, is the result. Catherine Hayward, our very own style siren, maintains that once you go bespoke you never go back. And judging by this, we'd have to agree.

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To see the Esky guitar in action, go to esquire.co.uk

01
GET PERSONAL

We wanted our guitar to have chic sterling-silver livery, with our mascot on the fret board and on the top-E tuning head, as well as Esquire's logo on the 12th fret.



02
GOOD WOOD

The back and sides are sculpted from resilient claro walnut coupled with the Bearclaw Sitka spruce to produce a strong body with warm and clear sound.

03
SIZE ISSUES

We opted for the 000 model — slightly smaller than standard, it's still loud yet snug to hold.

Build time: three to six months. Price: from £6,000



MUSIC MAESTRO

THE FOOS GET BUTCH



The man who produced Nevermind, the latest Foo Fighters album. Back on driving cabs and making millions

You're back with Dave Grohl and Nirvana bassist Krist Novoselic for the first time in two decades for this Foo record. What was that like? It was intense. Krist was guesting on the album and he's standing there saying, "Hey, how's it going?" My brain is going, "Holy shit! We haven't been in a room together for almost 20 years." Dave opened up a bottle of wine, a friend had sent me a bottle of bootleg whiskey, we started sipping on that, and just sat there and told stories. We were there until about two in the morning. It was powerful, all those memories come flooding back.

You recorded in Dave's garage. Are times hard? Dave set up a tent in the backyard, so it was very much like being in the UK at a festival. His daughters would wander in whenever they felt like it. The environment is one of those things that you can't always put your finger on, but it directly affects the performances and sound. Something about the loose vibe there really translated to the tracks: they weren't uptight, they just played great.

Which was the hardest track to lay down? The second to last song, "I Should've Known", which is one of my favourite songs on the record. Definitely the darkest — I don't know

exactly what that was about, but I think it is channeling the spirit of Kurt Cobain.

Nirvana, Smells Like Teen Spirit, Smiling Face with Heart for Tongue, the Foo. As a band, let's just say that I don't really look out, things fall out naturally. I'm coming having some time off because I've been in studio with the Foo's bandmates writing songs recently.

We haven't... well, enough for you! Hal! Well we've been for five years. We're point where we were on the songs, get the finished and then we want to do with.

Do you ever regret your choice for that street? No, but I do regret piano lessons. I'm the only person in my class, but I've my class up. And it's important to be quick. I figure that piano is guitar when working on an album.

As a former cab driver, even the taxi drivers. No, it's not. They're unsuitable for the urban environment. Foo Fighters were in West... light, and

