

# Revival RG-26M

**Compact, all-mahogany guitar delivers good tone and playability in an affordable package**

BY GREG OLWELL

This solid-mahogany mid-size guitar offers a host of features worthy of a good look. While Revival set its sights on getting the RG-26M into the hands of people who aren't comfortable on dreadnoughts, it's more than that. It's a handsome, comfortable guitar that delivers a very nice sound for an irresistible price.

Revival is a San Francisco Bay Area-based guitar company with a nationwide network of dealers for its steel-string acoustics. (In 2018, the company joined up with Lark in the Morning, a brick-and-mortar shop and online retailer specializing in world instruments.) Like all Revival guitars, the RG-26M was built at a shop in China that the company has worked with since its beginnings in 2006, and set up by a luthier in the U.S. If the all-solid-wood RG-26M I tested is any indication, Revival is delivering an impressive bang for the buck with its smart, affordable guitars.

## COMPACT AND COMFORTABLE

The RG-26M measures 14-3/4 inches across the lower bout, putting its body between the standard 00 and 000. It's also slightly thinner than those stalwart sizes, measuring four inches deep at the endpin and 3-11/16 at the neck block. This was another intentional step by Revival to make a guitar that's a bit more accessible for people who have difficulty reaching around the standard dreadnought. Call it a "00 positive" or "000 negative" if it helps you visualize the size. Still, after hours of playing the RG-26M, I'll just call it comfortable.

The neck's medium-thin, C-shaped profile will feel great to just about anyone, from experienced acoustic players to beginners and recent converts from the electric guitar. In the past few years, I've gravitated toward big necks because they feel comfortable in my hands, but this shape's speedy feel and svelte proportions have me reconsidering my fixation.

With a satin matte finish giving the mahogany a warm presence, and contrasting bling



from the abalone, the Revival exudes an understated but fancy vibe. The black walnut fretboard is an excellent alternative to rosewood that looks good and features nicely seated and crowned frets, making the Revival easy to play and buzz-free. A few lovely touches also help give the instrument an upscale look. Abalone is seen extensively throughout, including the fretboard position markers, soundhole rosette, and headstock logo. The body and neck are bound in maple, giving the instrument an attractive, natural look.

#### WARM AND WOODY TONE

All-mahogany guitars have a reputation for dry, woody tone and warmth, and the Revival delivered those attractive traits in spades the more I played it. Like many review instruments, it sounded new when it arrived. However, just a few hours of playing time revealed richer tones and a more dynamic response. Like other guitars in this price range, the RG has moderately good projection. It delivers a good amount of volume—

enough to hold its own at a jam with guitars costing quite a bit more. But even from the start, the Revival's thick tone drew me in for fingerpicking, and that's how I spent most of my time with the guitar.

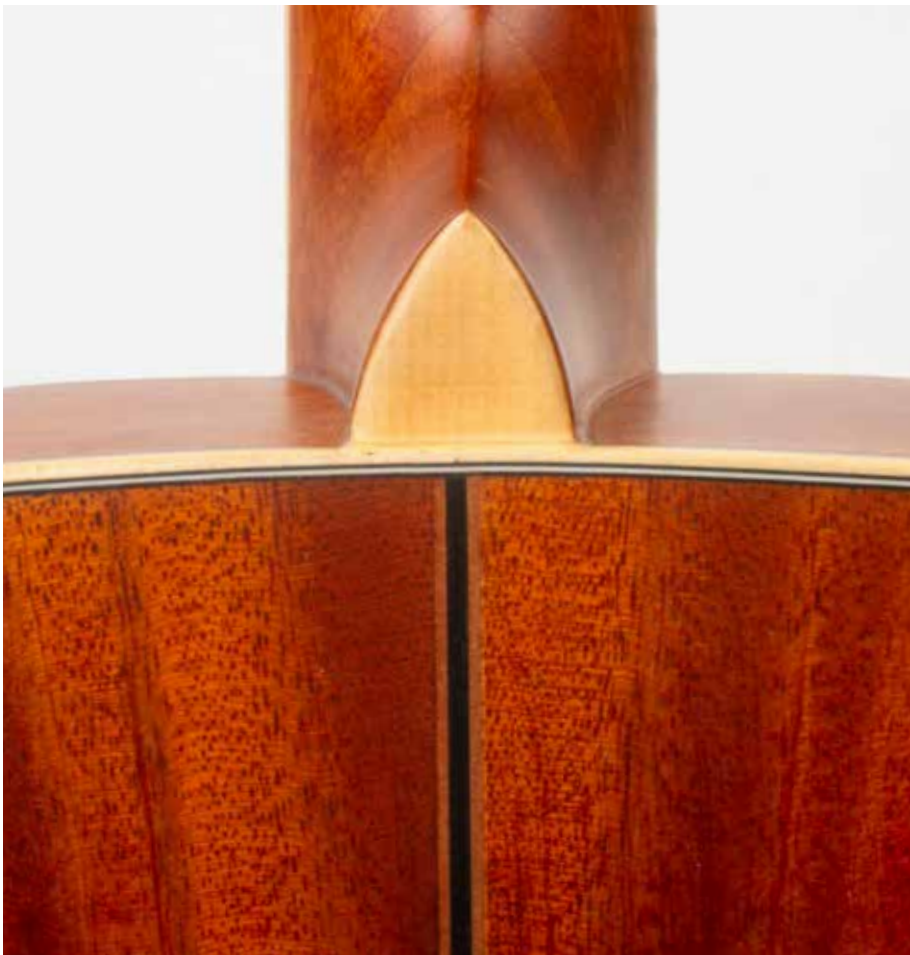
### Just a few hours of playing time revealed richer tones and a more dynamic response.

The same fundamental-heavy midrange tones that works well for fingerpicking are apparent when strumming, too. Digging in harder gives the tone more compression and

results in greater focus in the punchy midrange frequencies. The RG-26M comes equipped with light strings, and I suspect that a heavier set would help give this guitar a little more horsepower, along with an even more satisfying tone—something to keep in mind if you're considering purchasing one. But even with the light strings, the Revival exceeded my expectations in just about every way that matters for an acoustic guitar. It's dynamic and fun to play.

#### THE BOTTOM LINE

For players looking for a small-bodied mahogany guitar at a very affordable price, the Revival RG-26M delivers a lot for under \$500. It's a super comfortable guitar that's set up nicely and easy to play, and it makes a pleasantly warm and resonant sound for fingerpickers and flatpickers alike. While Revival might not be a brand you're familiar with, the RG-26M is well worth checking out if you're searching for a terrific instrument on a budget. It's the kind of guitar you're likely to find yourself reaching for repeatedly. **AC**



#### SPECS

**BODY** Solid mahogany top, back, and sides; forward-pattern X-bracing; maple binding; abalone rosette; ebonized black walnut bridge; compensated bone saddle with 2-5/16" spacing; plastic tortoiseshell pattern pickguard; satin finish

**NECK** 25-5/8"-scale mahogany neck with 14 frets to the body; dovetail neck joint; dual-action truss rod; black walnut fingerboard with 20 medium-size frets; 1-11/16" bone nut; maple heel cap; offset abalone fingerboard position markers and abalone headstock logo; chrome Grover tuners; satin finish

**OTHER** D'Addario EJ11 80/20 Bronze strings (.012-.053)

**MADE IN** China

**PRICE** \$479 (direct)

revivalacoustics.com