

Evening Standard

Best travel guitars for playing and learning on the go

Hey Joe, where you going with that handily-sized travel guitar in your hands?



Vintage Mahogany Series

By James Grimshaw

For a great many people, playing an instrument is the purest form of ‘happy place’.

Committing time and energy to the development of a craft, the generation of a new creative thought, or the performance of a lifetime is a profound pleasure - whether you’re doing so alone in your bedroom, out on the street, or up in front of thousands.

If you’re a guitarist – newcomer or old hand – who has experienced some form of the above, then you’ll know all too well the pains of attempting to bring that ‘happy place’ on the road with you.



Best for: bards and old-school folksters

We return to Vintage, and its Paul Brett signature series, for an alternative take on an instrument we've already met. The 'Viaten' Tenor is a four-string tenor guitar variant of the Viator, with a similar shape and slightly longer scale length of 22".

Tenor guitars are folk instruments through and through, and often the next step in the learning journey for folk-inclined ukulele players. Of course, the tenor is a viable mode of expression in its own right, and stands apart as a tonally beautiful way to approach playing.

There are no surprises here with the Viaten; it displays the same warmth and responsiveness of the 'Viator' Nylon, but the steel strings add some chime and bit to proceedings. The sonokeling fingerboard has a practical and pretty flourish to it, with half of it extending down over the fingerboard to enable higher runs.

The Viaten is a well-built, warm-sounding and enjoyable alternative to travelling with a six-string, and naturally lends itself to bard-like travels through the green.