

# Hamer Monaco III

## Hamer Monaco III

- 1.650" nut width
- 25½"- scale rosewood-on-mahogany set neck
- Chrome Schaller tuners
- Carved spruce top
- Double chambered mahogany body
- Seymour Duncan single-coil pickups
- Master volume and tone controls, 5-way rotary pickup selector
- Bigsby vibrato
- Tune-o-matic-style bridge
- 9.2 lbs



By Art Thompson

**H**amer guru Jol Dantzig was unabashedly jazzed about his latest addition to the Monaco line when we checked in with him at NAMM last January. "The Monaco III is a guitar I've always wanted to make," he exclaimed. "It's like a Strat meets a Gibson ES-5 Switchmaster. It has big, fat single-coil tones which I love, and it can sound like an archtop, too."

The Monaco III (\$3,474 retail) is a unique, vintage-style instrument that fills a gap between Strats, Les Pauls, ES-335s, and big jazz boxes. It's bluesy in spirit, yet it has a flexible voicing that makes it suitable for the toughest rock styles.

### Inside Story

Examine the Monaco III closely and it's easy to see why Hamer's production is relatively small at around 60 guitars per month. The single-cutaway body features a one-piece mahogany back that has been carved out to form two chambers separated by a thick center section. This inte-

gral "block" forms part of the oversized-dovetail neck joint, and it also provides a rock-solid platform for the bridge, tailpiece, and pickups. Hand-carved from solid spruce, the top sports a complex series of arcs, curves, and bevels that flow seamlessly under the glossy, transparent-red finish. The pickup routs perfectly hug the rounded corners of the soap-bar-style single-coils, and the junction between the top and fretboard is ultra clean. Ivory-colored celluloid binding rings the top, fretboard edges, and headstock. It's so flawlessly applied you can't see any joints or feel any height differences

between the binding and wood.

The three-piece, mother-of-pearl position markers are set into the 14½"-radius rosewood fretboard without a trace of exposed glue or filler. A pearl "Hamer" logo also graces the black-faced headstock. One particularly cool detail is the bone nut, which is highly polished and set so precisely that its edges are undetectable. The 22 large, mirror-smooth frets are beautifully crowned and tightly seated. Their carefully trimmed ends are sheathed in binding, so



## JURY BOX

### Hamer Monaco III

**Pros:** A+ construction and finish. Outstanding playability. Broad array of tones. Distinctive look.

**Cons:** None.

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