

Godin

MONTREAL PREMIERE

Thinline semi-hollow body electric with custom Godin humbucker pickups



SPECS

Canadian Wild Cherry top, back & sides
with "Breathe-Through" carved Spruce core-
Mahogany set-neck-
Rosewood fingerboard-
Contoured high-gloss black headstock-
Custom Polished high-gloss finish-
Graphtech ResoMax bridge system-
Double-bound binding-
2x Custom Godin Humbucker pickups-
3-way Toggle Switch, 1x Volume, 1x Tone-
12" (300 mm) fingerboard radius-
24 3/4" (629 mm) Scale-
1 11/16" (43 mm) nut width-
Colors: Trans Black HG, Trans Red HG,
Sunburst HG & Natural HG-
Includes deluxe Godin gig bag-
Made in Canada-



Godin Montreal Premiere

For online Sales and Information on all products: sales@upfrontguitars.com

For local sales, tryouts and demonstrations: Please call 508-686-6697 for an appointment.

Up Front Guitars & Music LLC - 16 Beaver Pond Road - Bellingham, MA 02019

Finished in an attractive old-school sunburst, the Godin Montreal Premiere is packed with highly quality features:

- Semi-Hollow Canadian Cherry Body
- Double white binding
- Truss-style carved spruce core
- Mahogany set neck, 23-3/4" scale, 22 medium frets
- Rosewood fingerboard
- 2 Godin Humbucker pickups
- 3-way pickup switch
- ~~Individual volume and tone controls for each pickup~~
- Graphtech Resomax bridge and tailpiece
- ~~Schaller strap locks~~
- Dual action truss rod
- Godin Deluxe padded gig bag
- Made in Canada
- **List \$1795; Street \$1495; UFG - Sunburst \$1249+Tax@\$78 = \$1327. OHSC = +\$99.**

The Godin Montreal Premiere is the latest addition to Godin's line of set neck guitars that began back in 2010 with the Icon series. Featuring semi-hollow cherry construction, the Montreal produces clean, airy tones in a thinline format.

While cherry may not qualify as a "classic" tonewood to traditionalists, it turns out to have some very attractive qualities. Cherry is acoustically loud, clean and produces a very clear midrange with nice upper end detail. Sonically it is crisp like maple but with a little stronger bottom end. The grain is pretty nice too, and the fact that it is domestically available in Canada helps to keep the cost down.

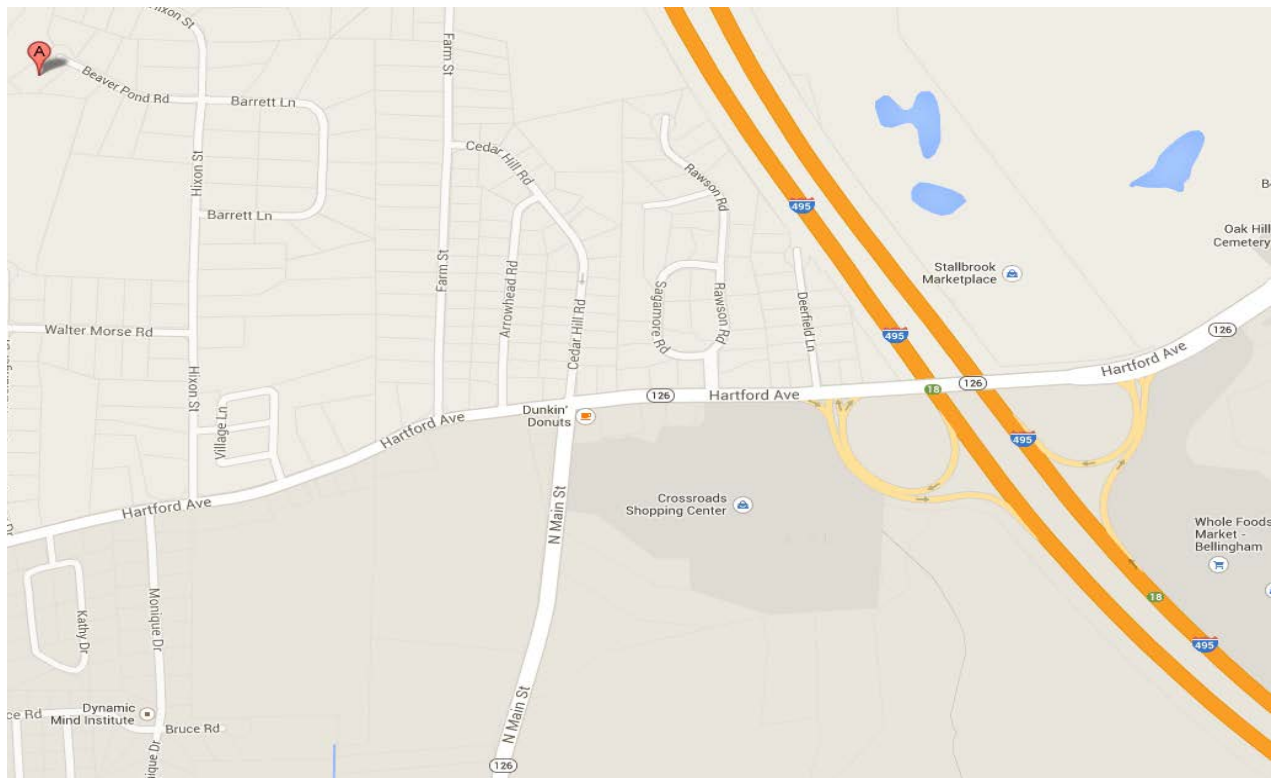
The nickel plated Godin humbucking pickups are moderate in output, and are the same ones used in their previous Montreal model, and the 5th Avenue Uptown. These pickups complement the cherry construction, and are naturally clean, with good note separation, a smooth top end, and a slightly soft attack that makes them easy to control. The Montreal is devoid of the sometimes heavy, muddy midrange that afflicts many humbucker guitars and works very well for clean rhythm playing and snappy lead work. Rolling off the tone control provides a smoother jazzier side, but the Montreal never gets particularly woody or wooly

sounding. The boosted and distortion tones are lean with a lot of top end sparkle and harmonics, and are well suited to crunchy blues and fusion more so than the chugging low end needed for harder styles of music. The spruce center core effectively manages any feedback issues, so you can crank this guitar without fear of it howling.

As with all Godin guitars, the neck profile is comfortably slim without being wimpy, and the fretwork consists of nicely finished medium frets and a factory setup that affords low action that is virtually buzz-free even when played aggressively. Godin guitars are very consistent out of the box (or gig bag), and require very little - if any - adjustment to get them dialed in.

While the Godin Montreal Premiere does not break any barriers in modern guitar design, it's an attractive and nicely crafted instrument that is well suited to pop, rock, fusion and jazz styles of music. If you are a fan of famous 335 players like Larry Carlton and Lee Ritenour, the Godin Montreal can get you into the zone at an extremely attractive price.

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It's a clean construction: the edges of the 'f' holes are neatly painted and the cream binding is very crisp

Image: 1/3

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Godin Montreal Premiere

A new spin on the semi-acoustic guitar

Dave Burrluck (Guitarist) March 29, 2013, 11:30 UTC

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The Montreal Premiere was unveiled in January at the 2013 NAMM show. This is a departure for Godin, and isn't part of the 5th Avenue range. Instead, it sits in the upmarket Signature range - along with the now discontinued previous Montreal models and the still current hybrid Multiac Jazz.

It might use the name of a

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premiere is a very different guitar - not far off a single-cut ES-335 with a unique centre block design.

"It might use the name of a previous model, but the new Premiere is a very different guitar"

Build

Just under 378mm (15 inches) wide and just shy of 479mm (19 inches) in length, the Montreal Premiere is trimmer than a Gibson ES-335. In terms of depth, however, things are virtually identical - rim depth is 45mm (1.75 inches), and both back and front are arched.

Of course, like an ES-335, the arching is created not by carving solid wood but by the curve of the pressed laminates. The sides, however, appear to be quite thick - there are no linings to maximise the gluing area as you'd normally see.

Through the 'f' holes you can also see what Godin calls its 'breathe-through' centre block. Made of spruce, not the usual maple or mahogany, the block runs from top to bottom of the body but only fully connects

"The carved 'breathe-through' core of the Premiere lets air travel freely through and under the centre block"

Verdict More often than not, Godin creates trends rather than follows them. Here is a case in point: a new spin on the centre-blocked semi that looks old-school, but sounds more contemporary.

RRP: \$1,795.00

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with the top. Three arched cut-outs allow air to pass through the block so it connects less with the back - like the feet of the spans on a viaduct.

"The top, back and sides are in fact laminate Canadian wild cherry over a very interesting internal structure routed out of a block of Adirondack spruce," explains Godin's Richard Bunze.

"This ends up shaping the entire body of the guitar and essentially becomes the guitar's 'skeleton', where the wild cherry laminate becomes - continuing the anatomical references - the 'skin' of the guitar over the skeleton. The carved 'breathe-through' core is really the heart and soul of this instrument. It allows the air to travel freely through and under the block from one side of the body to the next. This is crucial to promote air-flow, giving the guitar a very vibrant feel and increased resonance."

It's a very clean construction: the edges of the f holes are neatly painted and the cream binding around the top and back edges is very crisp. The old-style brown-to-black sunburst is only applied to the top; the back, sides and neck are all a mid-brown mahogany-like colour, although you can see the whiter colouration of the wild cherry through the f-holes.

The neck joins the body bang on the 15th fret, has a compact heel and a medium depth (22mm at the first fret, 23.8mm at the 12th) that's a good palm- full, without feeling overly big. Here, the frets are medium jumbo and nicely polished and finished, while the unbound rosewood board, with a striped mid-to-dark brown colouration and simple pearloid dots, uses a Gibson-style 305mm (12-inch) radius that matches the Gibson-style 628mm (24.75- inch) scale length. The black- faced, back-angled, scarf- jointed headstock certainly suits the style of the guitar.

Tuners are vintage Kluson-style, and while the tune-o-matic and stud tailpiece setup is common enough, here the bridge is Graph Tech's ResoMax NV1 design made from a lightweight 'ResoMax' alloy (including the saddles) intended to "enhance harmonic content and keep the 2kHz bite of a metal saddle"; it also features a magnetic lock (four small magnets are buried in the underside of the bridge ends) that holds it in place if you remove all your strings.

A rounded shoulder is the ideal place for the dual pickups' toggle selector switch, we just have a single volume and tone - not the Gibson four-control standard - and the classic- looking covered pickups are simply referred to as Godin Custom humbuckers.

Removing a pickup reveals they are made by Korean brand G&B, which supplies numerous guitar companies, not least PRS's SE range; Godin informs us it uses Alnico 5 magnets.

Sounds

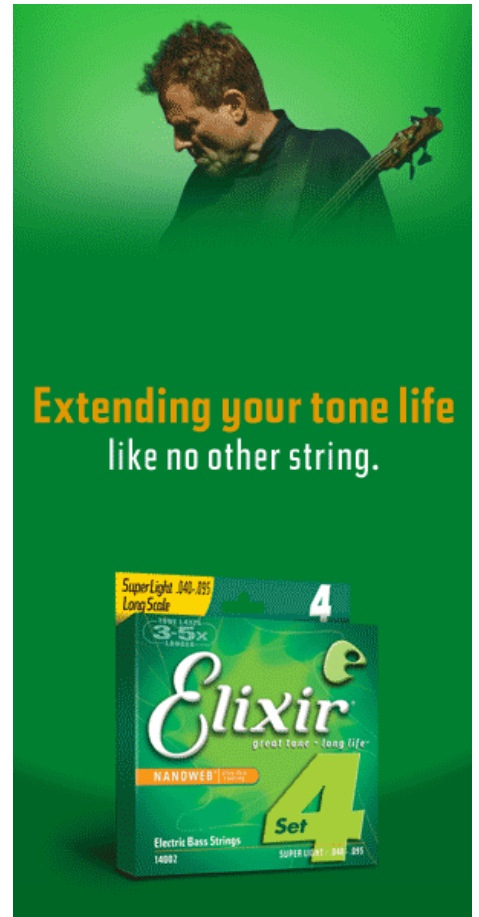
The unplugged response of the Montreal is revealing. It's fairly quiet, but with decent sustain and a very sprightly, even tone, unlike the more midrange-y voice of a good ES-335 unplugged.

Listening clean to the neck pickups, the Montreal is thick and plummy, but with an articulation that will appeal to players using more complex chord voicings. It seems unaffected by any feedback until we get to pretty loud levels - even then, although the guitar certainly becomes very lively, it's reasonably controllable and easy to coax into harmonic feedback.

It certainly veers on the more 'acoustic' side; there's less solidbody character to the sound than a contemporary ES-335, whether it's the pickup's voicing, the spruce centre block or indeed the Graph Tech bridge. But there's a crisp, almost crystalline character to the sound that sounds perfect with modern modulation and delay effects, though even with some tone roll off doesn't really nail that rounder-nosed classic Gibson- style semi tonality.

Certainly, comparing it with a variety of semis from Fret-King to PRS, it emerged with the most pristine clarity, especially that bridge pickup. To our ears then, the Montreal Premiere sounded at its best on the cleaner side of the tone tracks: more Fender-y and Grestch-y perhaps than classic Gibson. It makes the Bigsby

"The Montreal is thick and plummy, but with an articulation that will appeal to players using more complex chord voicings"



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option an appealing prospect.

At the quoted suggested selling price (SSPs) this Godin represents excellent value for money. Godins have a very workmanlike feel that reflects both their price point and intention: they feel like working guitars, not collectables.

The Montreal Premiere, like many modern semi-solids, is very hard to pigeonhole: its semi aesthetic seems applicable to virtually all styles, a very classy, retro-looking guitar but with a contemporary, clear, balanced and breathy tonality.

Add in great playability, light weight and lively resonance and you have a very appealing instrument. But it doesn't really nail that rounder-nosed Gibson ES-335-like character, and maybe a different spec pickup or a different 'breathe-through' core could be an interesting future option.

Variac

Peavey Vypyr VIP 3

MusicRadar Rating

Pros

Very tidy build. Retro/modern design. Light weight. Resonance. Clarity.

Cons

Aside from those strap buttons and the side-mounted jack socket which may work loose, very little. A little more 'dirt' sonically wouldn't go amiss for some.

Verdict

More often than not, Godin creates trends rather than follows them. Here is a case in point: a new spin on the centre-blocked semi that looks old-school, but sounds more contemporary.

Specification

Scale Length (Inches)

24.75

No. of Frets

22

Hardware

Graphtech ResoMax bridge with stud tailpiece, unlogo'd Kluson-style open-backed tuners

Country of Origin

Canada

String Spacing

52.5

Weight (lb)

6.75

Neck Material

Mahogany, glued-in

Left Handed Model Available

No

Circuitry Type

3-way toggle pickup selector, master volume and tone

Nut

Graph Tech Tusq/43.34mm (1.7")

Scale Length (mm)

628

Weight (kg)

3.1

Fingerboard Material

Rosewood

Pickup Type

2x Custom Godin humbuckers

Body Style

Single-cutaway, thinline centre-blocked electric

Available Finish



Guitarists in a tone rut tend to look to different pedals or amps, or perhaps switch from single-coils to humbuckers. Those who look to semi-hollows as a means of transformation are fewer in number. On the surface, it's not hard to understand why. Less experienced players who tinker with hollows and semi-hollows often return with harrowing tales of wailing feedback and opaque, dark, and wooly tones. For others, the very sight of an f-hole suggests uptight, uptown, precious, and a not-very-rock-'n'-roll approach—no matter how many Marshall stacks Alvin Lee ripped to shreds with his ES-335.

But as any half-resourceful player who has taken the time to explore that world can attest, they are guitars of incredible potential—brimming with overtones and resonance, and capable of moving from mellow to explosive with the twist of a volume or tone pot. Godin's new Canadian-built Montreal Premiere delivers on the promise of this potential—sometimes spectacularly. It's also a cool deviation from established semi-hollow design templates that, beyond good looks, delivers a more playable, comfortable, and even unique sounding guitar.

Cool and Compact

Godin's ability to deliver killer quality at an exceptional price never fails to impress. At around 1,500 bucks, the Montreal Premiere is a little more than some guitars in this category, but you're also getting a lot of attention to detail from workers right here in North America.

The Premiere's handsome sunburst finish is almost entirely without imperfections, save for a little finish build up at the binding around the neck joint. The subtle grain of the arched cherry top looks good with the sunburst, though some suitors might wish for a more spectacularly grained top at this price point. The arched cherry back is finished in a flawless and shiny mahogany-like finish that matches the mahogany neck. But here again, both the grain and finish are subdued to a point that some players may wish for a little more flash. Customers looking to the Montreal as a sonic tool probably won't give a hoot, but those who like a combination of flash and playability might expect a touch more.

Ergonomically, the Montreal Premiere is a joy to hang out with. The dimensions are pretty similar to Gibson's compact semi-hollow ES-339. But the Montreal's single cutaway, light weight, and comfortable dimensions are at times reminiscent of a Guild Bluesbird or slimmed-down Ibanez George Benson. Elsewhere, the construction is well executed and thoughtfully designed—most overtly on the inside of the body, where you can behold Godin's breathe-through core. Unlike more traditional semi-hollowbodies that rely on a solid center block to improve sustain and quell the feedback potential of hot humbuckers, the Godin uses a relatively more engineered approach. The result is a spruce block just a little wider than the pickup rings that's arched at the three points along its length. The visual effect is akin to having a old stone bridge or Roman aqueduct inside your guitar, and the practical result is a smart compromise between weight savings, sustain, and structural integrity. According to Godin, this core considerably enhances the guitar's resonant qualities.

The hardware is familiar, fairly straightforward and tasteful stuff—two Godin Custom humbuckers, a 3-way switch, volume and tone knobs, and Kluson-style tuners that are visually well suited for the slender headstock. The bridge is a Graph Tech ResoMax, but you can also get the Montreal Premiere with a Bigsby and roller bridge.

Jack-of-All-Tones

If you've ever been scared off by a semi-hollow for any of the reasons discussed above, you'll be surprised at how forgiving the Montreal Premiere can be. If your first-call amp is a 100-watt 4x12, this might not be the best match, but it will do amazing things at high volume—particularly if you're a player who savors the sounds you can find at the boundaries of chaos.

Through a wide-open Fender Twin Reverb, the Montreal was less prone to feedback and more inclined to highlighting the amp's natural compression at high volume—an effect you rarely experience with a Stratocaster on the other end. At these higher volume levels, the bridge pickup exhibits a unique mix of boxy, compressed, and ringing, harmonically charged tones. You don't have to work *too* hard to send the amp into fairly musical feedback zones. But the more compact body is fairly easy to control and with a little practice you can get into some cool spaces where the singing qualities of the humbucker mingle with the resonance and edge-of-feedback overtones generated by the body. If there's one thing you won't really get, it's the stinging tones and response you get from a solidbody—but then again that's true of most semi-hollows. And even with the Montreal's tone control wide open and a fat dose of amp treble and mid,

there is a slight but discernible softness and compression to the attack.

While the Montreal Premiere will both behave and yield cool tone surprises at high volume with a big amp, it's definitely most at home with small- to medium-power amps. The bridge pickup will dish nasty garage rock chords and singing-to-snappy lead tones. The guitar's airiness—an acknowledged design objective of the breathe-through core, is most apparent in the middle position, where the two pickups work in unison to generate a paradoxically spacious-but-tight tone that's perfect for fast, syncopated Tony S. McPhee clean rhythm work or compressed Nashville leads. The neck pickup, as you might expect, is well suited for mellow Wes Montgomery moves, but it does lack some of the harmonic complexity of a bigger bodied guitar, which gives you less room and range for manipulating the tone control. I tended to keep the tone wide open to generate the most dynamic range, and in the lower three-quarters of the tone control's range the capacity for pick dynamics fell off considerably.

The Verdict

If you're a dedicated solidbody player, you might make a case that the Montreal Premiere tries to be a jack-of-all-trades at the expense of doing any one thing extraordinarily. But the more time I spent with the Montreal, the more I was impressed with its versatility. The lack of dedicated tone and volume controls, which would have expanded the tone and expressive potential significantly, was an ongoing frustration—particularly in louder rock settings where you could use a four control set up to generate feedback effects and explore more dramatic color shifts on the fly.

But while there are times the Montreal Premiere feels a bit unorthodox, it also inhabits a pretty unique stretch of tone turf that ranges from airy and spacious to bossy and rowdy. The balance and playability are excellent, the guitar is beautifully built, and you'd be hard-pressed to find a classier looking date onstage. The near-\$1,500 price tag does give pause, but for such a carefully crafted guitar, the price tag isn't unfair either. And if you're intrigued by the potential of a semi-hollow but less keen on going down the same-old imported semi-hollow route, you'd be a fool not to explore where the Montreal Premiere fits into your own tone agenda.



Gear Editor Charles Saufley is a career writer and editor from San Francisco. Before joining Premier Guitar he served as Associate Editor at Acoustic Guitar magazine (where his predecessor was esteemed PG Editor in Chief Shawn Hammond.) He became music obsessed not long after birth—thanks in no small part to older siblings who ‘babysat’ him with a set of headphones, Revolver, and Sticky Fingers. Charles still spends a lot of time listening to records. And his many git-fiddle heroes include Roger McGuinn, Pete Townshend, Tom Verlaine, Eddie Phillips, Nokie Edwards, Gabor Szabo, John Cipollina, Randy Holden, Erkin Koray, Greg Ginn, and Sonic Youth.

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Ratings

Pros:

Unique tone palate. Great for airy rhythm textures and lead tones from chunky blues to clucking Nashville leads.

Cons:

No dedicated tone and volume controls for each pickup.

Tones:



Playability/Ease of Use:



Build/Design:



Value:



Street:

\$1,495

Company

godinguitars.com