

# Wayne Rock Legend

**Price: £1,499** The legendary luthier Wayne Charvel is back with a new range of quality electric guitars, designed to please every rocker...

IF YOU HAVE ANY INTEREST in the American metal scene of the early eighties, the name Wayne Charvel will be familiar to you. Along with one time partner Grover Jackson – yes, that Jackson – he built guitars which helped shape the music of the time. Although almost every metal band of that era was wielding either a Charvel or Jackson axe, it was Edward Van Halen and Randy Rhoads – both dyed-in-the-wool masters of the electric guitar – who made the fledgling company into a household name, paving the way for the aforementioned other, lesser, players.

From humble beginnings in Azusa California, the man has lived, breathed and built electric guitars. Wayne Guitars is the latest in an illustrious – if not always entirely successful – series of ventures, following in the first-steps of W Charvel Guitars, WC Guitars and Ritz guitars. The somewhat murky history of the degenerating relationship between Charvel and Grover Jackson is widely available across the Internet.

This Rock Legend is one of four basic models to

which prospective players can add embellishments. The simplest Wayne guitar is the single humbucking Legend, an instrument that goes for £1,399, but as with most small production electrics these days, virtually anything goes – pickup configuration, bridge type, different tonewoods and so on – and Wayne will quote prices accordingly.

This version is loaded with a pair of Seymour Duncan

pickups – a JB Zebra at the bridge and the slightly subtler Alnico II in the neck. In fact, flicking through the list of options available makes you believe you're back in 1981. Floyd Rose, Michael Charvel and top graphics man Jim O'Connor are all on board, and custom guitars include replicas of the Van Halen 'yellow stripy' (famous from the band's tour on the back of their

## The rivals

- Peavey Wolfgang **£1,399**
- ESP Skolls & Snakes **£1,599**
- Carvin DC400C **£1,079**
- Ernie Ball Axis **£1,399**

second platter), Steve Vai's pre-ibanez Green Meanie and the quite preposterous Hydra...

Charvel was always most famous for what became commonly known as the

"Super-Strat". It was

Jackson who was more prepared to go reverse headstock, Flying V crazy and the Legend is indeed modelled on the double-cutaway favoured by EVH, Gary Moore and Alex Lifeson among many others of that time. Although it may resemble a Fender from afar, once you have it in your hands you realise

Fully loaded, Wayne Guitars come stocked with quality pickups



## Spec check

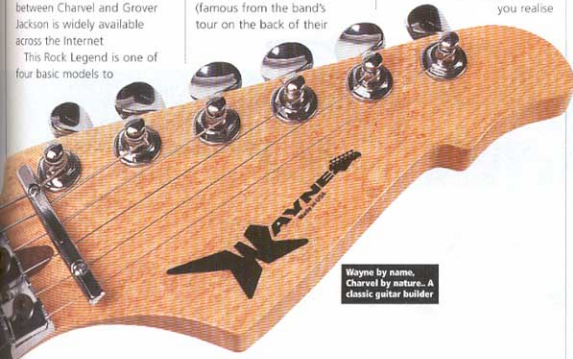
**WAYNE ROCK LEGEND**  
**PRICE:** £1,499 (with hard case)  
**ORIGIN:** USA **TYPE:** Offset double-cutaway bolt-on electric  
**BODY:** Premium alder **NECK:** Birdseye maple bolt-on **SCALE LENGTH:** 648mm (25.5-inch)  
**NUT/WIDTH:** Locking nut, 41mm **FINGERBOARD:** Ebony **FRETS:** 22 Jumbo **HARDWARE:** Floyd Rose Original double-locking trem, Gotoh machines **STRING SPACING, BRIDGE:** 55mm **ELECTRICS:** Seymour Duncan JB at bridge and Alnico II single-coil at neck, volume, three-way toggle pickup selector switch **OPTIONS:** Fixed Bridge, h/s/s, s/s/s, h/s/h, or single humbucking pickup configurations, tone control, custom graphics, rosewood fingerboard etc. POA. Prices start at £1,399 **LEFT-HANDERS:** Not at present. **FINISHES:** Rock white (as reviewed), candy red, blue, black, sunburst **CONTACT:** Wayne Guitars (UK) 0151 646 9285 **WEB:** www.wayneguitars.co.uk

that it's a guitar designed its own right. The shaping and shallow contours are miles away from those of Leo's finest invention and the fact that the jack socket is on the lower edge rather than the body's top makes for a more streamlined look.

"We don't have a lot of dealers," explains Wayne Charvel. "We just go through a select few shops that we know are really good, but we're always back-ordered and it's a challenge to keep on top of orders at this point, which is kind of good."

It would seem that he is keen to keep things small at this time and, even though orders can and are accepted from the UK as well as the US, don't expect a finished article to appear on the doorstep after only a few days.

"We don't have any partners



Wayne by name, Charvel by nature... A classic guitar builder

or anything," says Charvel. "And we're doing it on a budget so things take a little longer to happen, but it was a conscious decision to do that. We don't want to get too big. I feel there's a lot more to life than working seven days a week for 20 hours a day and I really want to have some fun too. I really love what I do, and it's a blessing to be able to do guitars, but I want to keep this very manageable.

"I don't want to sell tons of guitars to the huge stores this time and we're only selling in the US and UK at the moment.

"I do 95 per cent of the building myself and my sons are involved with different aspects. But there's really only five or six of us. At the moment we're building about 40 guitars a month, at a push we can do 50, but we're aiming for 100."

So what does the Rock Legend actually feel like? Well, there's no denying that this is one hefty instrument. It's reassuringly heavy without ever endangering your shoulder ligaments and the dimensions of the bird's eye maple neck echo yet again those halcyon days –

it's wide enough for a middle-friendly string-spacing but still one of the most comfortable of its type.

If you think of a Peavey Wolfgang locked in a dark room with a Music Man Axis and a plate of

oysters, this neck is what you'd have in nine months – absolutely superb!

A quick word about the Floyd Rose vibrato too. This Legend is fitted with an Original model, both in name and genre and, although Wayne offers the option of a hardtail, the inclusion of a Floyd rubber-stamps this as the genuine

article. The unit itself is slightly raised off the body so there is at least a little reverse movement available – almost a full tone on the G-string, for example – but there's no tone and pitch-destroying rear-routing here. This particular guitar was set up perfectly out of the case and reaffirms our belief that if you need a wide-travel, in-tune vibrato – Allen keys and all – this is the one.

**Sounds**

There's no doubt that rock and metal will be the styles that the Rock Legend is most frequently played in, but such is the quality of both the parts and the construction that any guitarist will surely find a use for it at least somewhere.

The JB is one of Seymour Duncan's most favoured humbuckers and here its characteristic bite suits the alder body perfectly for those high-gain moments. Each string rings out evenly with the amp blowing fit to bust; chords are meaty and full with just the required amount of top-end.

The neck's Alnico Pro II

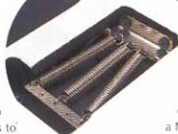
has a far lower output than the JB, and this equates to a throaty gurgle that is in no danger of ever getting muddy or indistinct. In fact, backing off the gain here, the Rock Legend would be perfectly at home at the local blues venue – it would certainly wake up the 'Fender Strat or nothing' brigade, if nowt else!

The middle position combines the twang of the JB with the honey-dripping murmur of the Alnico to provide, arguably, the ultimate clean tone. Okay, some may miss a tone control for added versatility but Wayne can provide one of those for you should you desire. But there's no getting away from the fact that the Legend is designed to rock, and this it does with the best of them.

**Verdict**

With all of these compliments you may be tempted to simply go out and get yourself a Warmoth body, a second-hand neck, your own choice of pickups and hardware, break out the Dulux gloss and put together your

The Rock Legend can be specified with a range of hardware



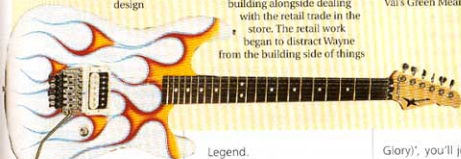
## Wayne's world

WAYNE CHARVEL'S CAREER began with the Charvel Manufacturing Company in the early seventies, producing custom guitar parts and undertaking warranty repairs for Fender, which led on to building full custom guitars.

Charvel Guitars' customer list began to read like a Who's Who of the guitar world. Among them were a certain Mr E Van Halen, Michael Anthony, Dusty Hill and Billy Gibbons, Pete Townshend and John Entwistle and members of Deep Purple. Wayne sold Charvel Guitars, including the rights to the Charvel name, to Grover Jackson in the late seventies and the company was renamed Charvel/Jackson.

After Charvel, Wayne began working for BC Rich, setting up an automated guitar-making factory and designing guitars while at the same time producing his own guitars under the name W C Guitars. When the BC Rich project was completed,

Wayne was asked to design



own

'Legend'. To be fair, every guitarist should attempt this idea at least once, because it really is excellent fun, but don't expect your own finished article to even be worthy of standing in the shadow of the Wayne Rock

guitars for Gibson.

This three-year partnership produced two guitars, the SR71 and the Gibson WRC (Wayne Richard Charvel).

When the Gibson contract ended, Wayne founded The Ritz Guitar Company. Although this venture gained a lot of interest and earned a 'Best New Guitar Design' award, for the Golden Shell Ritz, at the Chicago NAMM in 1989, production was stopped due to Wayne being unhappy with some of the manufacturing standards.

Enough interest had been generated in the Ritz Shell guitars for Wayne to decide to form WRC Guitars and rectify the aspects of the Ritz line that he didn't like. He took an overseeing role and sales began to rocket, but he decided to abandon the project and urban California for a small town called Paradise in Northern California. WRC Guitars continued for a while but production has now ceased.

Wayne opened a music shop and carried on designing and building alongside dealing with the retail trade in the store. The retail work began to distract Wayne from the building side of things

so his eldest son Michael took over the store and Wayne moved into a workshop and became more engrossed with his designing and building. Due to the amount of enquiries received about original Charvels, Michael suggested to Wayne that they started building guitars like they did in the old days. One day Michael drew the name Wayne in the shape of a star. Wayne looked at it, liked it and Wayne Guitars, in 1998, was born.

The guitars in the range at the moment are the Hydra, Rock Legend, Wayne Special and the Star, plus re-issues of the Van Halen Charvel and Steve Vai's Green Meanie.



Legend.

The quality of the craftsmanship here is second to none but the real appeal of the Wayne is the fact that it feels so good. As we said right at the start, if you believe that life began with 'Van Halen I', rather than 'Are You Experienced?' or 'What's The Story?' (Morning

Glory)', you'll join me in applauding the return of Wayne Charvel. The bottom line is that this is a quality electric guitar.

A Legend with this exact spec will set you back around £1,500 depending on the finish and bridge option but, with a

single-HB version, complete with original Floyd, going for £1,399 you'll get one of the most playable guitars we've ever encountered for a more than reasonable price.

Simon Bradley **G**

Wayne Charvel interview by Jordan McLachlan. The full transcript is on [www.intermusic.com](http://www.intermusic.com)



Strong build, sexy body. The ultimate dream guitar?

## WAYNE ROCK LEGEND

BUILD QUALITY	●●●●●
PLAYABILITY	●●●●●
SOUND	●●●●●
VALUE FOR MONEY	●●●●○
VERDICT	●●●●●

**WE LIKED** The feel, the sound, the vibe — it's all good.

**WE DISLIKED** It may be dismissed as a one-trick pony. It's not.