

[Home](#) > [Guitar](#) > [Guitar User Reviews](#) > [Warren](#) > [Classic II](#)

Warren Classic II

Summary

Features	10 (1 response)
Sound	10 (1 response)
Action, Fit, & Finish	10 (1 response)
Reliability/Durability	10 (1 response)
Customer Support	10 (1 response)
Overall Rating	10 (1 response)

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Price Paid: US \$1899 base plus upcharge for maple top

Purchased from: N/A

Don Warren at an area guitar show.

Features: 10

This is a strat style guitar with MUCH more than strat options and tones. The body is very light and resonant alder with a thin, almost in-layed, quilted maple top. The finish is a beautiful translucent amber that looks great from every angle. I could find no finish flaws -- believe me, I looked... absolutely perfect. The neck is straight grained maple with a rosewood fretboard. The tuners are a highly polished set of Schaller locking tuners. The neck angle is straight and uses one string tree. String angle at the nut is more than ample. The frets are medium sized and beautifully crowned and polished. The ends of the frets are completely smooth. The neck uses a 12 inch radius which feels glorious in my hands. I'm not exactly sure what Don Warren does in the sculpting and finish process to his necks but they are truly spectacular to play. More on this later. The neck uses a 25 1/2 inch scale and has a nice substantial feel to it. The pickguard and rear tremelo cover are white pearloid and all mounting screws are chrome in color. The pickups (S-S-S configuration) are a special Lindey Fralin design made to Don's exact specifications. The tremelo is a Don Warren design that is smooth and sustains for days. The jack plate is chrome as well as the strap buttons. The volume pot is a push-pull design that engages the neck pickup when pulled out -- allowing for all three pickups to be used simultaneously or simply the neck and bridge pickup like that of a Tele. The volume pot must use resistors because there is no high-end signal loss when you turn it down. The middle control pot is a type of passive mid boost/cut. The third pot is another push-pull design that works as a normal tone control to roll off high end but also serves to put the pickups in series rather than parallel when pulled out. These pots are EXTREMELY SMOOTH. The guitar came with a rectangular case with a plush black liner.

Sound: 10

Where do I start? This guitar does just about everything extremely well. With the versatile electronics scheme it is possible to coax a plethora of sounds from this TONE MACHINE. Firstly, it is the ultimate in strat tones. I don't know what the hell Lindey Fralin is doing in his workshop of late but these pickups are phenomenal. Think of all the very best characteristics of a prized vintage strat tone and then intensify and focus that sound -- this is the sound of legends. The lows are tight, clear, and full of blazing attitude yet are never harsh or brash. The mids are full and sweet with a wonderful stringyness to their attack and decay. The highs are round and full and never shrill. No matter where you play on the neck they sound great. Every position is a sweet spot. Output from pickup to pickup is consistent and even. There is no volume jump when switching pickup configurations. Each of the five standard pickup settings are simply beautiful. I have never played a Fender (even Custom Shop designs), G&L, Carvin, Tom Anderson, or Brian Moore strat that even comes close to sounding this good (and I have played more guitars than one man ought to be allowed to play).

[Home](#) > [Guitar](#) > [Guitar User Reviews](#) > [Warren](#) > [Classic II](#)

Warren Classic II

Then you get to experience whole new dimensions of sonic bliss when you engage the other tonal weapons contained under the hood. You can run all three pickups at once as well as neck and bridge pickups only when you use the pull function on the volume pot. Then to make things really interesting you can use the parallel/series function on the second tone pot. Put the bridge and middle pickup in series and you have a fabulous humbucker tone. Or try the neck and middle pickup in series. But don't forget to try the neck and bridge pickup in series also, or all three at once. Now sweeten the mix and play with the mid control on the other tone pot (the middle one). Increase it and you get a full, thick tone in humbucker mode or try the same in a parallel configuration and be equally impressed. Still further, roll back the tone control to get a "woman tone" that will rival anything out there and put most other guitars to shame. And did I mention that these pots are sooooo smooth and responsive. Even the slightest movement makes a difference and yet I could not find a bad or displeasing sound with any setting. Every setting is completely usable. Now roll back the mid control. The sound suddenly becomes almost "acoustic" in its presentation...wow! What more can I say? This thing is simply amazing. It feels completely broken in, has Vintage Tone with capital letters, can out perform any of my other guitars, even those with humbuckers, coil taps and phase switches, and is breathtakingly beautiful.

By the way, I have used this guitar with a varied array of amplifiers and it sounds great through each of them. These include: 1965 Fender Deluxe Reverb, 1972 Fender Deluxe Reverb, 1993 Mesa Boogie Mark IV combo loaded with a Celestion Vintage 30 and mated with matching EV 200 loaded Theile Design cab, Mesa Blue Angel head mated with Mesa 3/4 backed Celestion Vintage 30 loaded cab, Spirit Studio Pro with Weber 10 inch Alnico speaker, Carvin Vintage 50 head mated with Carvin 4-10 cab loaded with Celestion Vintage 10's, Carvin XV 112 combo with Mesa Custom 90 speaker. Run clean or distorted the guitar sound great.

Action, Fit, & Finish: 10

In terms of setup I spoke with Don at length about how I like a strat to play and feel. I requested a slightly higher than average string height and settled on using 9 1/2 guage strings. If I later decide to go to 10's he will recut the nut for them. When he delivered it to my home the setup was perfect.

Pickup adjustment? Now this is important. Don spends a huge amount of time when performing a setup with pickup height and angle. He recommends that the customer NOT play with the pickup settings since much of the beauty of his guitars is determined by their proper settings. After playing this one I concur. No adjustment necessary...you get what you pay for...perfection.

The finish is stellar. The quilted maple top is gorgeous. The neck pocket is air tight. The neck angle to the body is perfect. And the neck relief is slight... quite straight. All screws are properly seated. There are no rough edges anywhere. The neck plays like butter. Intonation is dead on. The top of the body is cut at an angle where your playing hand rests against it which alleviates any discomfort in the forearm area of your strumming hand. The rear is also carved in the upper curve to rest comfortably against your stomach and/or rib cage.

All electronics are dead quiet when you move them -- no pops, scratches or dropouts. And did I mention that they are sooooo smooth?

The nut is nicely filed at the edges so that no roughness is ever detected, even if you purposefully move your hand across it.

Reliability/Durability: 10

I cannot foresee this guitar ever not performing flawlessly. Don uses only the VERY BEST components in his construction. If treated with respect this thing should never fail. His hardware is top notch, his strap buttons are slightly oversized ensuring a good hold of your strap, and the finish seems road ready. Would I ever use this guitar on a gig without a backup? Certainly! If I brought a backup guitar with me to a gig it would be another Warren Classic II or a Warren Special. Once going Warren, there is no turning back.

[Home](#) > [Guitar](#) > [Guitar User Reviews](#) > [Warren](#) > [Classic II](#)

Warren Classic II

Customer Support: 10

Don has been more than helpful and you will never meet a more friendly or personable guy. Other than his wife and children his customers are his main concern. He will always take time to speak to you about your questions and concerns. Give him a call and see. His number is (518) 233-0888 or check out his web page at www.warreguitars.com or email him at dwarren@capital.net. You will be happy that you did.

Overall Rating: 10

I have been playing for over 25 years and play a variety of styles: blues, light jazz, rock, and several acoustic styles. I've already listed the amps that I use in the above section so I'll just list the other guitars in my arsenal: 1963 Gibson SG standard, 1968 Fender Musicmaster II, Hamer Studio Flametop with Seymour Duncan JB and 59 pickups, Hamer Special with P-90's, Hamer Special with DiMarzio DP-154's, mid-eighties Carvin DC-200 Koa with set neck and fixed bridge, 1994 Carvin DC-200 Koa with Floyd Rose tremelo, Carvin "The Bolt" with DiMarzio Virtual Vintage pickups (Blues, Standard, and Heavy Blues), Carvin Mahogany LB 40 bass with active electronics, Kramer bass, Guild D-40 NT, Martin HD-28, Larrivee D-09, Everett P with soft cutaway. Needless to say ---- I love music, I love guitars. If I had to be limited to only one electric and one acoustic then I would choose the Warren and the Everett without any hesitation.

There is nothing that is missing on the Warren that, in retrospect, I wish I had ordered. It is perfect.

If lost or stolen I would order another one in an instant.

I love the broken-in feel of this guitar. It is like an extention of the player. It never fights you when you try to coax a sound from it, but simply delivers spectacular tone. And although it has many possible pickup configurations you are never confused about what setting you are using. Everything is very intuitive and easily accessed. It is possible to generate so many shades of tonal colors and with such finesse that playing is both a means of expression and a means of exploration. Subtle changes and minute refinement of your tone are only a slight hand movement away.

This guitar has no equal. As I've said before, I've tried the Fender Custom Shop stuff, the Tom Anderson line, the G&L line, the Brian Moore line (for strat-type guitars) and this thing blows them all away. I am always on the lookout for better and finer instruments and often stop in music stores when I travel. I have yet to find a better guitar at any price.

Submitted by [Mike](#) at 06/20/2001 22:19

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