

FIRST PLAY



GODIN RADIUM £1,299

WHAT IS IT? Canadian-made HSH set-neck with choice of three blue-collar matt finishes. A gigging guitar if ever we saw one!

Rock Of Ages

Guitarist

Along with making guitars for Alex Lifeson, Godin's standard electric range has plenty to offer. We take this pared-down roots-rocker for a long overdue spin

Words Dave Burrluck **Photography** Phil Barker

It's never been easy to pigeonhole Godin, the long-running Canadian maker, which turns its expansive hands to everything from affordable steel- and nylon-string acoustics to £5k-plus signature electric models. If there is a theme, it's practicality: good, solid craft that's always very fit for purpose.

This Radium is case in point. It was actually introduced at the start of 2020, in Carbon Black and Winchester Brown, just before Covid caused its havoc, while the Matte Green version you see here was announced in 2021. A change in distribution meant reviews were on hold, and while we managed to get our hands on the higher-end Radium-X with its LR Baggs X-Bridge back in issue 495, this base model slipped through the net.

"Presenting a new breed of single-cut guitars, which combines all the best elements of the Radiator and the Stadium into one: the Radium!" said Godin at its launch. It's a pretty close cousin to that same-shaped Godin Stadium (T-style bridge, two single coils, long scale and six-in-a-line headstock) and the Radiator (wrapover bridge, two humbuckers, short scale and three-a-side headstock). This is a straightforward design centring on





All mounted on an elongated T-style control plate, the circuit is simple with an angled five-way pickup selector switch, volume and tone (with a pull switch to split the humbuckers)



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1. The Godin-logo'd humbuckers are made in Korea by G&B who supplies plenty of big brands. The covered middle single coil (with a DCR of 5.89k) looks like a Tele-neck style, although it has a large (ceramic?) magnet under the coil. Meanwhile, this tidy bridge with wide-diameter slotted studs uses a Gibson-style raised intonation ridge, and overall intonation adjustment is via those two protruding bolts

a Gibson 'short'-scale mahogany neck glued into a solid Canadian Laurentian basswood body, and is available in a trio of demure finishes. The apparent slab-body elongated T-style design actually has a rear ribcage cutaway and rounding to the back of that bass-side horn – but little truck with any other comfort contours.

The trio of HSH pickups is direct-mounted, although the middle Tele-neck-style covered single coil and the bridge humbucker sit quite high out of the body as the bridge is a chunky wrapover type with stepped intonation ridge and overall intonation adjustment. Also top-mounted

are the controls and output jack. These both sit on a lightly aged and similarly elongated T-style control plate, with the angled five-way lever pickup selector at the front, the output at the base, and wide-spaced volume and tone controls placed in between – the latter with a pull switch to simultaneously split those outer zebra 'buckers.

Feel & Sounds

Strapped on or seated, the Radium certainly feels familiar and fairly Tele-like. Overall weight is trim at 3.24kg (7.13lb) and the satin-finish neck feels special: a medium-depth C with quite sloping shoulders – 21.4mm in depth at the 1st fret and 23.5mm by the 12th. The classic feel is enhanced by well-installed medium-gauge frets on the 305mm (12-inch) radiused unbound rosewood fingerboard with a nice classic incurve to the edges.

2. Following the retro style of the Godin Radium, the headplate is a plastic laminate. The nicely cut nut is Tusq, and also from the Graph Tech stable are the Godin-logo'd Ratio tuners, which have quite a fine-tuning feel, especially on the treble side

3. Pulling out the pickups confirms the origin and each has a 'Ferrite' bridge or neck ID sticker confirming its ceramic magnetic style. Reflecting what we hear, the bridge has a DCR of approximately 15.26k and the neck pickup measures 8.78k (7.98k and 4.36k respectively when split)

A very appealing smooth, sustaining acoustic response is married to that classic feel... It feels like an old friend



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GODIN RADIUM

PRICE: £1,299 (inc gigbag)

ORIGIN: Canada

TYPE: Double-cutaway, solidbody electric

BODY: Canadian Laurentian basswood

NECK: Mahogany, glued-in

SCALE LENGTH: 629mm (24.75")

NUT/WIDTH: Graph Tech Tusq/43.45mm

FINGERBOARD: Rosewood, white dot inlays, 305mm (12") radius

FRETS: 22, medium

HARDWARE: Adjustable wraparound bridge, Graph Tech Ratio tuners (18:1 on bass side, 26:1 on treble side) – nickel/chrome-plated

STRING SPACING/BRIDGE: 52mm

ELECTRICS: Godin Custom zebra humbucker (bridge and neck), Custom Cajun (covered, middle), 5-way lever pickup selector switch, master volume and tone (with pull switch coil-split for both humbuckers)

WEIGHT (kg/lb): 3.24/7.13

OPTIONS: No

RANGE OPTIONS: The Radium-X (£2,599) has a longer 648mm (25.5") scale length with dual Bare Knuckle/Seymour Duncan humbuckers and LR Baggs X-Bridge vibrato

LEFT-HANDERS: No

FINISHES: Matte Green (as reviewed), Carbon Black, Winchester Brown – matt body finish and satin neck back

JHS

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PROS Very competently made in stripped-down style; excellent neck shape and playability; good weight; pretty expansive sounds

CONS Bridge and middle pickup sit quite high from the body face; that screw-on plastic headstock might be a retro detail too far

There's a very appealing smooth, sustaining acoustic response that's married to that classic feel, making the Radium feel like an old friend, rather than a new guitar you're taking on a first date. Sound-wise, there's nothing that's going to upset, either, with a big, thick, overwound voice at the bridge and a more vintage-y sound at the neck. Thanks to the five-way lever switch, we drop into more Strat-like voicings in positions 2 and 4 and a slightly muted centre single coil. With that tone control switch pulled up (which voices only the screw coils of the humbuckers), it's a very usable hardtail S-style, while both humbuckers are cleaner and brighter – but not overly so. We might be tempted to add a treble bleed to the volume control just to maximise the clarity with reduced settings, especially if you use a less gained amp voice. But, overall, it does exactly what it says on the tin.

Verdict

If the Radium displays quite a mash-up of style with an almost T-style vibe married to its 'Gibson' scale-length set neck and wrapover bridge, it certainly covers some ground, sound-wise. There's the beefy rock-aimed 'buckers that split well, and with that middle single coil in play it dips into a Strat's sonic palette.

Our sample was ready for action from the off with a great-feeling neck, good setup and no tuning issues, and it really exemplifies that fit-for-purpose Godin proposition. Now, it ain't hip, but it's pretty fairly priced for a North American-made guitar, not least compared to Gibson USA's start-up models. It's an instrument this writer would happily head off to a gig with, no hesitation. Godin isn't every player's first choice, but for anyone looking for that slightly different vibe, you'll find it here in spades with excellent quality to match. **G**