

DANELECTRO BLACKOUT '59M NOS+

A moody version of the lil' guitar with a huge sound

£619

Danelectro might well have started building guitars back in the 1950s, but most of us will have experienced the Korean-made reissues that first surfaced back in the late 90s. The archetypal mail-order instruments, Danos were cheap 'n' cheerful with a unique construction: a pine or softwood frame and centre-block faced, top and back, with Masonite (which we'd call hardboard) body material. They were pretty funky with, of course, their fabled 'lipstick tube' single coils, 'coke bottle' headstocks and aluminium top nuts. But they make superb slide guitars in particular, and are perfect for 60s stylists who love their jangle tones. On top of that, via a unique control circuit, those two single coils when selected together are in series, not the usual parallel, which for many is the trump card – Jimmy Page included! These cheapo planks can sound *huge*.

Today's Danos, like our 2023 release here, are made in a much more detailed fashion than those originals. The '59M NOS+ is the Page-style with its modded Badass-style recessed bridge and the so-called 'short-horn' body style with its large 'seal' shaped scratchplate. These Blackout versions come in a trio of Metalflake colours, the vinyl tape around the sides is black, not the usual off-white.

The construction retains the softwood (pine) frame, but now uses top and back plates that are a pressed-wood material, like MDF. This semi-solid construction means the guitars are lightweight: ours is just 2.89kg (6.36lb). The 25"

scale length is the same halfway between Fender and Gibson that's used by PRS, and there's quite a Fender-y feel to the neck in terms of width and depth although the fingerboard radius is relatively flat at 14". And while many of the earlier reissue Danos went for a slightly flat-backed 'U' shaped profile, ours is a more mainstream 'C'. Thanks to the six adjustable bridge saddles intonation and setup are very good as is the detailed finishing and fretting.

But it's the pickups here that seal the deal. The bridge is thin and bright, the almost mid-placed 'neck' pickup is a little fuller: think bright and wire-y Telecaster. But the combined series selection – which virtually doubles the output – gives us a much thicker, but still grainy hot and wide single coil-meets-humbucker voice. It's seriously useful, not least if you want to add some character to anything from classic rock to Americana. It's great, too, if you're tracking guitars on a recording: instant character.

Yes, there are still some quirks: the strap button on the long heel means top fret access isn't great, and those concentric volume/tone controls feel a little cheap and don't exactly move independently. Far from a function band guitar, though, this Dano retains an addictive time-warp vibe. Don't blame us if you get hooked!

Dave Burluck

SUMMARY	FEATURES	SOUND QUALITY	VALUE FOR MONEY	BUILD QUALITY	PLAYABILITY	OVERALL RATING
	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★

1 BRIDGE
Original Danos used a very basic bridge with a single rosewood saddle that couldn't be accurately intonated. Jimmy Page modded his Dano with this Badass wrapover bridge that was popular during the 70s with its tune-o-matic-style adjustable saddles.

2 PICKUPS
The NOS+ lipstick tube pickups are "based on a pickup we designed in 1998," says Danelectro. "In 2009 we discovered a bunch of these pickups in a warehouse in Korea. We then engineered a new pickup and named it the NOS+."

3 CONTROLS
The controls have unusual values: 100k ohms for the volume and 1M ohms for the tone. The pickups have low direct current resistance too: 3.73k ohms (bridge), 3.79k ohms (neck) and both-on, in series, 7.53k. But don't sweat the details, plug in and enjoy!

AT A GLANCE

BODY: Pine core with MDF top and back plates
NECK: Maple, 'C' profile, bolt-on
FINGERBOARD: Rosewood
FRETS: 21, medium
PICKUPS: 2x Danelectro NOS+ single coils
CONTROLS: 3-way toggle pickup selector, stacked volume/tone controls for each pickup
HARDWARE: Adjustable wrapover bridge (recessed into the body), Kluson-style tuners
FINISH: Purple Metalflake (as reviewed), Black Metalflake and Green Envy
CONTACT: JHS, www.jhs.co.uk



THE GAS
STATION

