

FIRST PLAY



DANELECTRO BLACKOUT  
'59M NOS+

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**WHAT IS IT?** Semi-solid electric  
update to the 'Jimmy Page model'  
with NOS+ lipstick tube pickups



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# Show Time

Danelectro's most famous guitar recently celebrated its 60th Anniversary and now gets a stage-aimed refresh for 2023

Words Dave Burrluck Photography Phil Barker



## DANELECTRO BLACKOUT '59M NOS+

**ORIGIN:** Korea  
**TYPE:** Double-cutaway semi-solid electric  
**BODY:** Pine core with MDF top and backplates  
**NECK:** Maple, 'C' profile, bolt-on  
**SCALE LENGTH:** 635mm (25")  
**NUT/WIDTH:** Aluminium/42.2mm  
**FINGERBOARD:** Rosewood, cream dot inlays, 356mm (14") radius  
**FRETS:** 21, medium  
**HARDWARE:** Badass-style adjustable wrapover bridge (recessed into the body), unbranded Kluson-style tuners – nickel/chrome-plating  
**STRING SPACING, BRIDGE:** 52.5mm  
**ELECTRICS:** 2x Danelectro NOS+ single coils, 3-way toggle pickup selector, stacked volume/tone controls for each pickup  
**WEIGHT (kg/lb):** 2.89/6.36  
**OPTIONS:** No  
**RANGE OPTIONS:** Dano Shorthorns start with the Stock '59, in 5 colours (£549)  
**LEFT-HANDERS:** A lefty 59M NOS+ is listed on the USA website  
**FINISH:** Purple Metalflake (as reviewed), Black Metalflake and Green Envy – all gloss poly with black vinyl taped sides

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**PROS** Tidy, refreshed version of 64-year old design; very well set up and in tune; the sound of both pickups on series seals the deal

**CONS** Without modding, those stacked controls don't work independently

1. Danelectro uses a unique hollowed sandwich construction: the core (a centre block and outer rim) looks and smells like the pine we'd buy at our DIY store; the front and back panels are a pressed board, like MDF
2. There's a light back-angle to the 'Coke bottle' headstock. The nut is aluminium, attached to the 'board end with a single screw. Tuners are vintage Kluson in style but with standard posts (not split)
3. With a PRS-like 635mm (25-inch) scale length, Dano necks are typically maple screwed directly to the body with no neckplate or cupped washers. The fingerboard here is a dark rosewood with a flattish radius of 356mm (14 inches)
4. Historically, the coil wire is directly wound around a bar magnet, wrapped in tape and stuffed into the 'lipstick tube' casings. DCRs at output are: 3.73kohms (bridge), 3.79k (neck) and 7.53k (both on, in series). The pots are full-size Alpha 'Made in Korea' (100k volume; 1meg-ohm tone); each tone uses a .1µf capacitor

**W**e last caught up with Danelectro back in 2020, in issue 464, with a pair of typically funky six-strings: the 'shorthorn' '59 Divine and the single-cut '57. Then priced at £899 and £799 respectively, neither had that 'impulse buy' appeal that many readers will remember of the original reissues. To be fair, though, the so-called Stock '59, which is based on the original 1959 3021, kicks off the current range at more wallet-pleasing £549 and features the classic two-pickup double-cut body with a long seal-shaped scratchplate, original-style wooden saddle, and four-way adjustable bridge.

Now, while the '59M NOS (£619) – what most of us would call the 'Jimmy Page model', with its modded Badass adjustable wrapover bridge – is still available in the UK, it has been superseded by the '59 NOS+ (at the same price) with NOS+ lipstick tube pickups. "[It's] based on a pickup we designed in 1998/'99," Danelectro told us. "Around 2009 or so we discovered a bunch of these pickups in a warehouse in Korea. They were so popular, we soon ran out. We then engineered a new pickup close to the NOS ones, and named it the NOS+." The latest additions are these 'Blackout' versions with black vinyl-taped sides and a trio of colours: Purple Metalflake (as here), Black Metalflake and Green Envy.

The guitar is lightweight, with a Fender-width, thin-deeped neck and low frets. Thanks to a long body heel that extends to the 14th fret (plus Dano puts the strap button at its end), the potential for easy high-fret access of the famous double-cut body is diminished. Our sample came with a slinky, in-tune setup and actually has a slightly hotter, brasher sound than a '59 Divine we'd borrowed for reference. The stacked concentric volume/tone controls feel a bit cheap and it's hard to move the lower, larger volume without also moving the smaller cream-topped tone control.

The switch, of course, gives us each pickup independently – the bridge is thin and bright, the almost mid-placed neck pickup a little fuller – but in the both-on centre position we get a series link, which is where the action lies. It's an altogether bigger, beefier widescreen sound. We added a couple of small washers under the top knob of each stack, which means the volume and tones can move independently, and with a bit of classic gain there is plenty of potential to subtly blend the gritty voice. Nothing quite sounds like a Dano, and this one sounds a treat. **G**

