

Special Features of the Guitars of Sebastian Stenzel

While all handmade guitars are built to sound beautiful, play comfortably, and look nice, there are some features which are unique to Stenzel Guitars:

- **SOUND**

It is difficult to describe sound, as its most valuable property is a dynamic process which happens in interrelation with the player and is thus highly elusive. Better than words are good, true recordings, but nothing can replace the experience of playing and listening to the real instrument. That said, here is my best attempt to describe the sound of my guitars:

Sonorous, floating basses, a warm, creamy mid-range, lyrical, singing trebles, as well as very good balance and power. Of great importance to me are modulation capacity (the ease with which tones can be formed) and the specific quality of attack: crisp but not harsh. My instruments have a full and saturated, yet sweet, tone and exhibit a vast range of sound colours, offering many possibilities to the musician without being obtrusive or fixed to a certain timbre.

- **THE BEST INTONATION POSSIBLE** (with parallel straight frets, straight bridge bone, and average strings) Engineer Ernst Frisch from Germany had theoretically solved the main problem of intonation in fretted instruments already in the 1980s. Since 1993, Stenzel has cooperated with Frisch and adapted his findings to achieve a practical solution for improved equal temperament intonation. As a result, not only chords containing thirds sound more in tune, but the whole guitar sounds better because there is more resonance between the strings.
- **THE DOUBLE-WARPED FINGERBOARD:** improved ergonomics for the left hand
The fingerboard, as it were, follows the left hand when changing positions. The nut is lower on the treble side, the fingerboard is lower on the bass side towards the sound hole as is common. With this design, Stenzel makes the best of the traditional shape while providing added comfort for the player.
- **THE ASYMMETRICAL NECK PROFILE:** better ergonomics
The asymmetrical neck profile allows the left thumb to slide more easily down the treble side of the neck when playing in higher positions, especially above the 12th fret.
- **A SECOND DIMENSION OF ASYMMETRY** in the soundboard construction adds power and malleability to the sound. Stenzel's soundboard design was inspired by his own Arabic ouds, by Francisco Sanguino (who made guitars in Seville a hundred years before Antonio de Torres,) and by Vincente Arias.
- **A SPECIAL VARNISH** based on propolis on the inside of the soundboard: longevity for more than a lifetime.
There are three forces limiting the longevity of a guitar: the natural decay of wood, the strain from string tension and playing, and the strain through changes of humidity. After thorough experiments, Stenzel developed a varnish that does not completely seal the wood, but slows down the exchange of humidity in the soundboard without compromising the sound quality, thus enhancing the life span of the guitar.
- **THE ROSETTE**
Stenzel's rosette design has become a unique "trademark" and is considered by many to be one of the most beautiful patterns ever made. Every part of Stenzel's guitars (except the tuning machines) are made by Stenzel himself – the rosette after a design he made in 1993. Since that time, the rosette design has changed only marginally. The mosaic made from walnut and maple uses different cutting angles to differentiate the two patterns formed by the maple.
- It goes without saying that all the materials used in Stenzel's guitars are of the highest quality, and the craftsmanship is second to none.