



# RESSLER GUITARS

"finger pickin' good"



## **BUILDING AN ACOUSTIC GUITAR WITH JOHN RESSLER**

**May 29 – June 3, 2012 (Tuesday – Sunday)**

### **COURSE OBJECTIVES**

Building your own acoustic guitar will be an experience of a lifetime. If you are a guitar player, you will appreciate the difference between a custom-built guitar vs. a manufactured guitar after building your own guitar.

In this course, you will learn to build the guitar from start to finish. (Some parts are partially made due to time constraints but will need to be completed by you.) Some luthier skills you will learn include tap tuning tops, fretting and leveling the fingerboard, binding, and guitar set up (playability, neck angle, intonation, etc.). Our goal is to complete the guitar and have it strung when you leave. The guitar style we will be building is similar to a Martin OM. The materials will be Sapele Mahogany back and sides with a Sitka spruce top and a Mahogany neck.

You will find that your skills will be challenged and elevated as we blend precision woodworking skills, creativity and music all in one package! Time will also be spent in discussing guitar set up and maintenance that will be valuable information that can be used on any guitar.

### **CLASS STRUCTURE**

Guitar building can be very intense, especially when compressed in a 6-day class. All of the steps of the process will be demonstrated. This class requires us to all work together, and you will be expected to help the other students occasionally, as many steps require a second set of hands. Not everyone has the same level of woodworking skills, so we will need to work together to make sure that everyone is on schedule.

All steps of the process will demonstrated and I will have illustrated handouts for some of the more detailed processes.

Please be prepared to work long days if needed. This is not an 8-5 class. How late you work will vary depending on your skill level, but past experience shows that most will need to work some late nights in order to complete the guitar. You will leave exhausted, but with a big smile on your face!

If you intend to build a guitar in the future, bring a camera and take a lot of pictures. This will help you in your future endeavors.



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## INTENDED ITINERARY

### DAY 1

- Guitar Anatomy
- Brace the back
- Fit the sides to the form
- Install end graft
- Install kerf lining

### DAY 2

- Route and install rosette in top
- Make top braces and glue to top
- Carve top braces and tone braces
- Route out brace pockets
- Glue back to sides
- Complete body assembly

### DAY 3

- Install Binding
- Fit the neck to fingerboard
- Install truss rod
- Inlay fingerboard
- Inlay headstock
- Route and install binding and purfling
- Fit neck to body of guitar

### DAY 4

- Glue neck to guitar
- Level fingerboard
- Install and level and polish frets
- Fit and install nut
- Fit bridge to body
- Finish Inlay

### DAY 5

- Install tuners
- Locate bridge and install bridge bolts
- Fit end pin
- Final fit nut
- File nut for strings
- String guitar

### DAY 6

- Final set up procedures
- Set Intonation
- Discussion and instruction on finishing (finishing is student's responsibility after class)
- Discussion on care and maintenance of the guitar

**2:00 Wrap up and Class Evaluation – You should be able to leave around 3:00 PM**

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## TOOL LIST for GUITAR BUILDING CLASS

The following is a list of tools that you should bring to the guitar building class. This class is designed for the intermediate woodworker, however, beginners will be successful as well. It is most helpful if you know how to tune a guitar. If you don't, perhaps you can find a friend to show you how. We look forward to an exciting week!

The following tools will be necessary for successful completion of your guitar. Let me know if you have any trouble finding sources for these or if you have questions about which to purchase.

### Everyone needs to have their own ...

- "Stanley" or "Record" Block Plane (low angle cut, 12 degree)
- Convex Finger Plane (47mm body/18mm blade) (available from Stewmac\*\*)
- Japanese type pull saw (with back support)
- Xacto Knife
- Razor blades
- 1/4", 1/2" & 3/4" Straight Chisels (1/8" chisel is useful as well)
- 100 - Stationary / binder spring clips (3/4" wide)
- Flexible Cabinet scrapers – rectangle shape
- 6" square (any style is OK)
- Small flat file or needle file set
- Awl or scribe
- 12" Center Point Rule (available at Woodcraft, Lee Valley, etc)
- 6" or 12" rule with 1/32" graduations
- Side cutting pliers
- Magnifier (Visor type or glasses type) 3-4 power
- Dremel Tool
- Precision Router Base (for the Dremel tool available from Stewmac\*\*)
- 1/16" & 1/32" router bit (end mill) to fit Dremel tool (available from Stewmac)
- Jewelers Saw (If you want to do an inlay) blades will be provided
- Drill bits (1/16", 3/16", 1/4", 9/32")
- Cordless drill (If you are flying, you can use one from the school)
- 3" soft paint brush (cheap one for cleaning off parts)
- 1 Roll 3/4" wide blue painters tape
- An old bath towel
- Hawaiian shirt
- Drinking straw
- Any other favorite hand tools



### OPTIONAL TOOLS

- Dial or Digital Caliper (6 or 8" OK)
- Fret Hammer
- Tapered Reamer (5 degree)
- Small Phillips screwdriver & standard straight screwdriver
- 1" Paring chisel for carving braces (I like the Sorby chisel)
- FZone® Tuner or other digital instrument tuner (available from Stewmac)

### All materials are provided, including strings and tuning machines (guitar case not included)

If you would like to purchase a guitar case, let me know before class time and I will make a group purchase from Guitar Center where they will give us a group discount. We should be able to purchase for approx. \$90. If you bring your own case, you will need a case that will fit an OM size guitar (14 fret). (It will fit in a Dreadnought size as well, it just won't fit quite as well)



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For questions about the class or technical questions, please feel free to contact me direct:

John Ressler

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815-786-2021, ext 267

Cell – 815-378-1944

## RESOURCES

### Lutherie Supply Sources

\*\* Stewart McDonald ([www.stewmac.com](http://www.stewmac.com), 800-848-2273)

Luthier's Mercantile International ([www.lmii.com](http://www.lmii.com), 800-477-4437)

### Books

If you are interested in doing some reading prior to class, I would recommend Build Your Own Acoustic Guitar by Jonathan Kinkead

Although the methods vary from our approach in this class, this will give you a good overview of what guitar building is about. This can be purchased at [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com).

### DVD

If you want a good DVD on Acoustic Guitar building, I would recommend "Acousting Guitar Making" by Frank Finnochio. This is available at Stewmac. The processes are very similar to the processes we will be following in our class. This is a very complete DVD (9 hours!)

Another pretty good DVD (slide format) is Build a Guitar with Robert O'Brien. This is a 2 DVD set and is available from Luthier's Mercantile International