

ROZAWOOD 28-D DREADNOUGHT

A new twist on a familiar looking model meets the critical eye of David Mead...

Rozawood hail from the Czech Republic and if you cast your mind back, you'll remember that almost exactly a year ago I looked at a Rozawood Woodstock Lady, a parlour style guitar that I liked quite a lot. This time around it's the turn of the company's 28 Dreadnought, very likely a homage to C.F. Martin & Co.'s favourite son, but quite a stunning good looker in its own right. Running my eyes down the spec, there are some interesting upgrades to the basic dread complement and so let's dive straight in and take a look...

BUILD QUALITY

My introduction to Rozawood guitars last year was a good experience. Just in case my memory was playing tricks, I re-read my review of the Woodstock and remembered it as being a small-bodied guitar that was simply packed with character. It was extremely versatile too, in that it had an uncanny ability to move seamlessly between different music genres and come up trumps every time. The most amazing thing was that it hadn't been long off the workbench – and looking at the interior label on the 28, I find that this guitar left the workshop in late March this year. Another

young'un, then!

Rozawood has elected to use master grade alpine spruce for the top wood on the 28D and it's a fine-looking piece of timber with a very subtle horizontal watermark that's only really visible in certain light. It adds a shimmer to the top and a character all its own. I suspect that the top has been stained slightly in order to produce that amber glow we all know and love – but this instrument is only a couple of months old and so it's a bit early for it to be natural.

A bottle blonde, perhaps? The top inlay is the familiar herringbone pattern and the rosette is unashamedly "28 style" too, as is the mock tortoiseshell pick guard.

Back and sides are East Indian rosewood with an unfussy straight grain, the back

bearing a zig-zag centre strip, offsetting the ivoroid binding around the back edges nicely.

Moving on to the neck, it's Honduran mahogany all the way. A timber that is getting harder and harder to source, this type of mahogany has been the tonewood of choice for many makers over the years. The spec tells me that not only is the neck equipped with a double action truss rod, it's also been carbon reinforced, too. The contour of the neck is down as a "hybrid C/V" shape and this is something I remember from the Woodstock, only I think that here the V is more pronounced, whereas I found it very subtle on the Lady. There is a diamond shaped volute trespassing onto the squared off headstock and the slightly weathered looking open gear Gotoh tuners are a perfect match for the vintage vibe already in place here.

Flipping the guitar over, we find the Rozawood logo emblazoned upon a pearl banner that is both subtle and attractive at the same time.

Another flash of luxury is the Madagascar rosewood headplate – this really is turning out to be the recipe for a great sounding instrument.

The ebony fingerboard sits below a bone nut and bears 20 finely finished medium frets with snowflake inlays, which brings us back to the ebony bridge and bone string saddle. It's

a nice touch that the end pin and string pegs are ebony too – very classy!

The 28D has been finished in nitrocellulose and so it's definitely going to age gracefully – in fact I'm dying



ROZAWOOD 28 DREADNOUGHT

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION

Manufacturer: Rozawood
Model: 28 Dreadnought
Retail Price: £2,720
Body Size: Dreadnought
Made In: Czech Republic
Top: Alpine spruce
Back and Sides: East Indian rosewood
Neck: Honduran mahogany
Fingerboard: Ebony
Frets: 20
Tuners: Gotoh open gear
Nut Width: 44.5mm
Scale Length: 644mm
Strings Fitted: .013 Martin SP Lifespan
Left Handers: To order
Gig Bag/Case Included: Optional hardshell case

ACOUSTIC TEST RESULTS

Pros: Great build quality and a mature tone
Cons: Nothing to report, here!
Overall: A new take on an established model with some fascinating refinements along the way

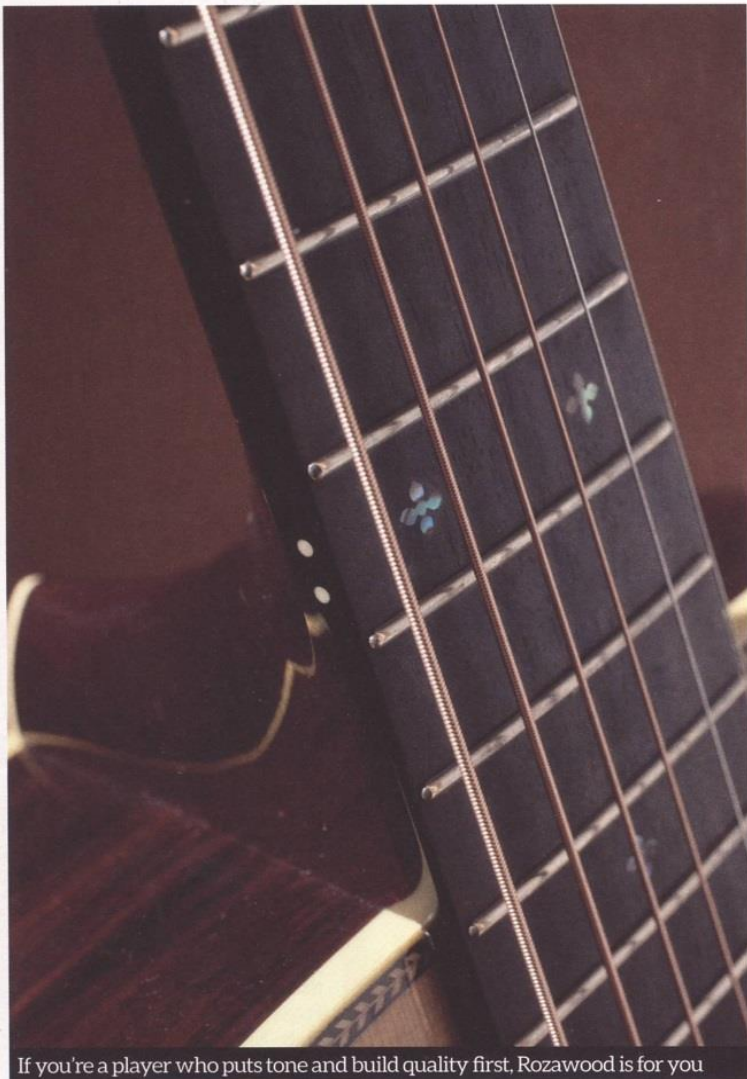
ACOUSTIC RATING

Build Quality ★★★★★
Sound Quality ★★★★★
Value for Money ★★★★★

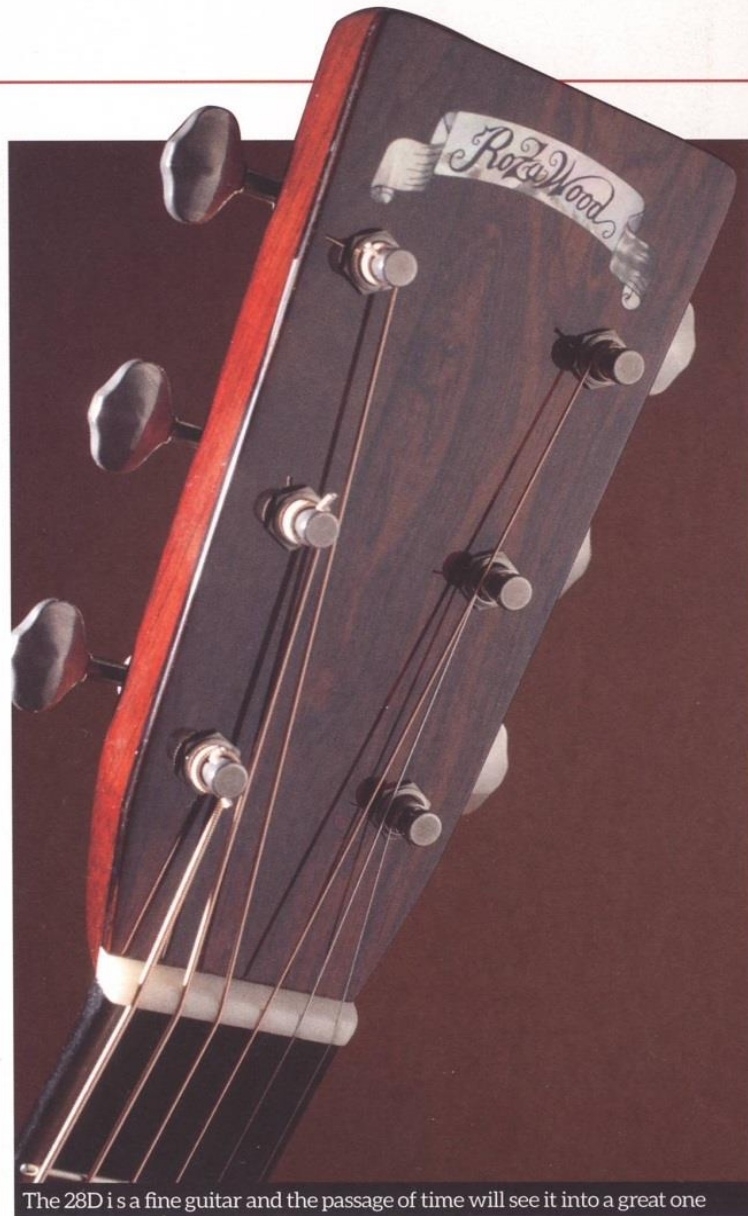
5 Stars: Superb, almost faultless.
4 Stars: Excellent, hard to beat.
3 Stars: Good, covers all bases well.
2 or 1 Stars: Below average, poor.

CONTACT DETAILS

Rozawood Guitars
www.rozawood.cz



If you're a player who puts tone and build quality first, Rozawood is for you



The 28D is a fine guitar and the passage of time will see it into a great one

to find out if this guitar has already acquired the same sort of maturity in its short life as I heard from the Woodstock...

SOUND QUALITY

In general, I think we know what to expect from a dreadnought; they were produced at a time when volume and presence were paramount for an acoustic guitar and onboard amplification was plain science fiction. Later on, a single microphone often had the job of bringing an instrument's voice to the audience and the robust nature of the dreadnought's sound became a staple for the troubadours from the early 70s. Having said that though, I've found some contemporary dreadnoughts to be very mid-rangey and muddy and so it's always difficult to judge these things. Happily, the Rozawood has tone a-plenty with the sort

of balance you'd expect only from a top gymnast. It really is amazing how they manage to get such a grown-up tone from such a young guitar – it certainly bodes well for the future and how it'll sound then.

The V profile to the neck has a great feel to it and the 44.5mm nut width is great for those of us with aspirations towards fingerstyle, too. I think that dreadnoughts probably come into their own when playing

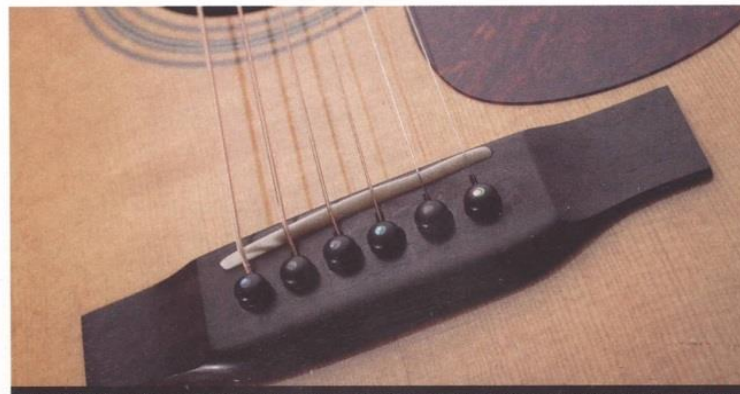
chordal accompaniment and, as such, I concentrated on bashing out some singer-songwriter friendly material as best I could and the 28D handled it all like a true pro. It's loud without being brash, trebly without sounding brittle with a sort of golden sheen to everything it produces. It faired well with drop D tuning too, without a hint of sogginess in the bass and I suspect that I could have experimented with alternative tunings all day long

without losing any of the feisty good nature of the 28D along the way.

CONCLUSION

As you can no doubt tell, I like this guitar a lot. I think it's fair to say that Martin's D28 is an instrument against which all others are judged and the Rozawood really does enter that hallowed arena with considerable style. I'd quite happily compare it to a HD-28V in terms of its crispness of tone and the quality of the build. Of course, many would mourn the lack of the Martin logo on the headstock and it could be argued that you can buy a Martin for less. But if you're a player who puts tone and build quality first then Rozawood is definitely a company to explore. The 28D really is a very fine sounding guitar and I'm sure that the passage of time will see it turn into a great one.

David Mead



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