



STRANDBERG BODEN ESSENTIAL

The imaginative Swedish ergonomic specialists unveil their very first affordable line

Any discussions around forward-thinking brands fixated on evolving the design of the electric guitar will almost always include a mention of Strandberg – and with good reason. Though founded in 1982, the Swedish company have risen to prominence over the last decade with an impressive list of endorsees, from Australian instrumental mastermind Plini and Scar Symmetry's Per Nilsson to American YouTuber Sarah Longfield and Haken's Charlie Griffiths.

Up to this point, however, their instruments had been aimed at the higher end of the market, typically catering to more advanced players with the budget to accommodate for more of a custom shop feel. And though they partnered with PT Cort in Indonesia back in 2017 – a factory who have also been entrusted to oversee the PRS SE line with unprecedented levels of success – it's only now that they've delivered a Strandberg at under a grand.

Given the names associated with the brand and the aesthetic of their lines, it would be all too easy to write off the Boden Essential as a tool for modern metallic types on a search for futuristic shred machines. Far from it, in fact, when you start experimenting with the different humbucker and single-coil variations on offer, which can take you all the way from a Strat-y spank to a much thicker mid-focused roar. And that's just the tip of the iceberg when it comes to the innovation at the core of this design. The

headless construction and ergonomic cuts at every corner of the body dramatically reduce the weight, with this review model sitting at little over four pounds.

Those dramatic curves also ensure it's a comfortable fit whether you're stood up or sat down. Make no mistake, this is as user-friendly as a guitar can get. Then there's the patented EndurNeck, which Strandberg claim provides a more restful thumb grip that guarantees players keep a straighter wrist, and such promises seem to ring true. It may take a short while to get used to, of course, but it's a neck that can make the most ambitious of stretches and convoluted of chords feel like a breeze – making the player feel like they're capable of almost anything. The EGS Arc bridge and string locks are also geared towards creative excellence, providing a tuning stability that doesn't seem to falter, with micro adjustments done at the base as per famous headless models of the past.

You might look at a guitar like this and think it's too far evolved from the Strats and Les Pauls that made history in the 1950s. But that could prove to be regrettable – the Boden Essential may be a modern classic, but it's a classic nonetheless.

Amit Sharma

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

£999

1 HEADSTOCK
Clearly a striking, revolutionary design, the Boden Essential is weighted correctly and doesn't feel lopsided in the way headless models from other companies have in the past.

2 NECK
Invented by Ola Strandberg, the EndurNeck creates less stress on joints and tendons, encouraging relaxation while reducing fatigue, resulting in less risk of injury and better playing.

3 PICKUPS
From running each humbucker alone to mixing the bridge with either coil of the neck, or even the neck inner coil in isolation, there are tones aplenty here.

AT A GLANCE

BODY: Meranti
NECK: Roasted Maple
FINGERBOARD: Rosewood
FRETS: 24
PICKUPS: Strandberg custom OEM neck and bridge humbuckers
CONTROLS: 5-Way Pickup Selector, Volume, Tone
HARDWARE: Strandberg EGS Arc Cast Zinc Fixed Bridge and String Locks
LEFT-HANDED: No
FINISH: Elemental Blue [as reviewed], Black Granite, Astro Dust
CASE: Strandberg Essential gig bag
CONTACT: Strandberg, strandbergguitars.com

