

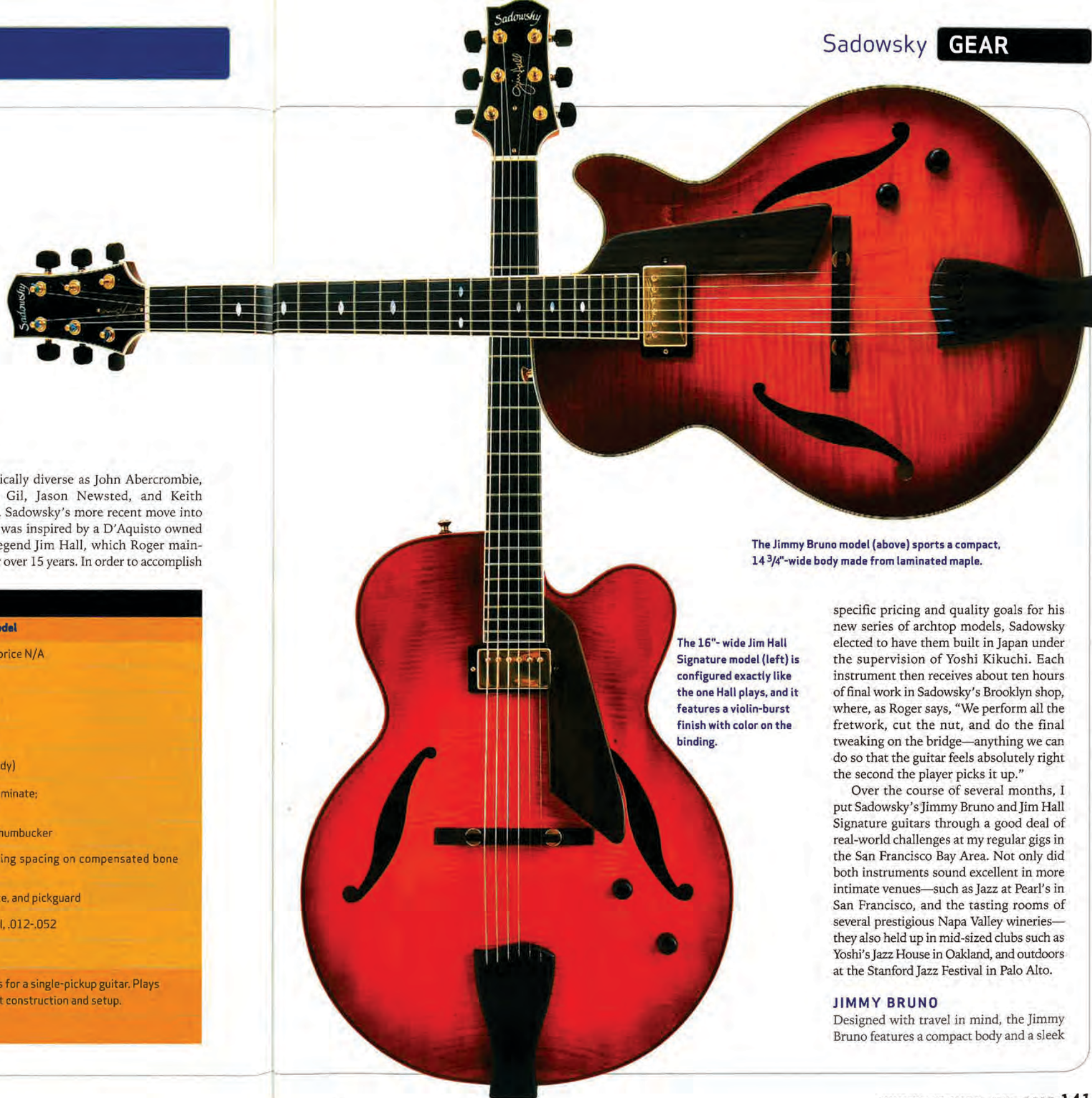
Sadowsky

Jimmy Bruno and Jim Hall Signature

TESTED BY JOSH WORKMAN

FOR MORE THAN 25 YEARS, ROGER SADOWSKY has maintained and repaired instruments for New York's top session players. His move into guitar making began in 1980, and, since that time, Sadowsky's reputation for high-quality solidbody guitars and basses has drawn customers

as stylistically diverse as John Abercrombie, Gilberto Gil, Jason Newsted, and Keith Richards. Sadowsky's more recent move into archtops was inspired by a D'Aquisto owned by jazz legend Jim Hall, which Roger maintained for over 15 years. In order to accomplish



The Jimmy Bruno model (above) sports a compact, 14 3/4"-wide body made from laminated maple.

The 16"-wide Jim Hall Signature model (left) is configured exactly like the one Hall plays, and it features a violin-burst finish with color on the binding.

SPECS | Sadowsky Guitars, (718) 422-1123; sadowsky.com

	Jimmy Bruno Model	Jim Hall Signature Model
PRICE	\$3,995 retail/street price N/A	\$3,895 retail/street price N/A
NUT WIDTH	1 11/16"	1 3/4"
NECK	One-piece mahogany	One-piece maple
FRETBOARD	24 3/4"-scale ebony	24 3/4"-scale ebony
FRETS	22 (15 clear of the body)	21 (14 clear of the body)
BODY	5-ply flamed maple laminate with four color choices; 14 3/4" wide, 2 3/4" deep	5-ply flamed maple laminate; 16" wide, 2 3/4" deep
PICKUPS	Custom DiMarzio humbucker	Custom DiMarzio JH humbucker
BRIDGE	Ebony with 2 1/8" string spacing on compensated bone saddle	Ebony with 2 1/8" string spacing on compensated bone saddle
HARDWARE	Gold plated	Ebony bridge, tailpiece, and pickguard
FACTORY STRINGS	Sadowsky Pure Nickel, .012-.052	Sadowsky Pure Nickel, .012-.052
WEIGHT	5.6 lbs	6.25 lbs
KUDOS	Plays like butter. Solid tones and feel. Excellent construction and setup.	Great range of sounds for a single-pickup guitar. Plays wonderfully. Excellent construction and setup.
CONCERNS	None	None

specific pricing and quality goals for his new series of archtop models, Sadowsky elected to have them built in Japan under the supervision of Yoshi Kikuchi. Each instrument then receives about ten hours of final work in Sadowsky's Brooklyn shop, where, as Roger says, "We perform all the fretwork, cut the nut, and do the final tweaking on the bridge—anything we can do so that the guitar feels absolutely right the second the player picks it up."

Over the course of several months, I put Sadowsky's Jimmy Bruno and Jim Hall Signature guitars through a good deal of real-world challenges at my regular gigs in the San Francisco Bay Area. Not only did both instruments sound excellent in more intimate venues—such as Jazz at Pearl's in San Francisco, and the tasting rooms of several prestigious Napa Valley wineries—they also held up in mid-sized clubs such as Yoshi's Jazz House in Oakland, and outdoors at the Stanford Jazz Festival in Palo Alto.

JIMMY BRUNO

Designed with travel in mind, the Jimmy Bruno features a compact body and a sleek

neck with fairly narrow string spacing. This guitar is perfect for showcasing a player's chops while still delivering a big sound. It offers a surprisingly warm tone, and I was pleasantly surprised at the clarity and intonation of every note, no matter where I played on the neck. I'm used to notes petering out above the 12th fret on most hollowbody electrics, but on the Bruno they sang all the way up the neck.

Sadowsky has addressed the little things, as well. For example, the pickguard is gradually elevated as you move away from the strings in order to provide a comfortable rest for your palm or fingers while picking. Also, the output jack is positioned closer to the strap button than on most guitars to avoid having the cord poke you in the leg, or get in the way on the stand. And because Jimmy Bruno does a lot of videos and clinics, Sadowsky has added

attractive, mother-of-pearl cat's-eye inlays on the fretboard so students can better see what he's doing. I played this guitar in numerous venues using a variety of amps—including a Fender Deluxe Reverb and Twin Reverb, a Gibson GA6, an AER Compact 60, and even directly through the P.A.—and, each time, I was able to dial in a happening sound with no trouble. In spite of its smallish body, the Bruno's surprisingly full acoustic tone also makes it well suited for practicing without an amp. This great-playing instrument is ideal for players who like to travel light, yet still want the tonal richness and complexity that a larger-bodied archtop delivers.

JIM HALL SIGNATURE

Based on Hall's D'Aquisto—which in turn, was inspired by the guitarist's old Gibson ES-175—the Jim Hall Signature model (a standard Jim Hall model is also available in four color choices) captures the timeless beauty of classic vintage archtops without the hassles that typically go along with them. With its maple top, this guitar is less muddy and feedback-prone than a spruce-topped instrument, and the tradeoff is only a slight loss of acoustic volume. As with the Jimmy Bruno, you get a well-balanced sound with excellent intonation all over the neck. The string tension is perfect for playing with a wide range of dynamics, and even when picking softly, you can feel each note resonating through the super-thin top and back. The tuning is so stable that I lowered the sixth string to *B₁* to double the bass line on a gig, and then took a solo without going out of tune one bit. On the same gig, I turned the guitar completely off in order to accompany the bass solo with a great acoustic sound that effortlessly filled the room. I figured as I was playing a Jim Hall guitar, why not try to replicate the sound of him comping behind jazz bass legend Ron Carter?

Played through the same selection of amps, the Jim Hall Signature always delivered a crystal-clear sound, yet had plenty of punch for louder blues gigs—and this is with just a neck pickup. I also used the guitar on several recordings, and I found that it required very little in the way of EQ. The custom-wound DiMarzio JH delivers the power you'd expect from a humbucker, yet leaves out the low-end mud, which is not an easy feat. In fact, the only thing that would improve the Jim Hall would be for it to have two of these pickups. But even in stock trim, this is one fabulous jazz guitar. ■

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