

Vintage Guitar[®] Gear Reviews

magazine

Tonal Stow-and-Go

The Voyage-Air Belair Electric Travel Guitar

Ashamed to play your travel guitar in public because it's too small, oddly shaped, or missing a headstock? Fear no more – the Voyage-Air Belair has arrived.

shoulder bag that's just slightly larger than you'd use for a laptop computer.

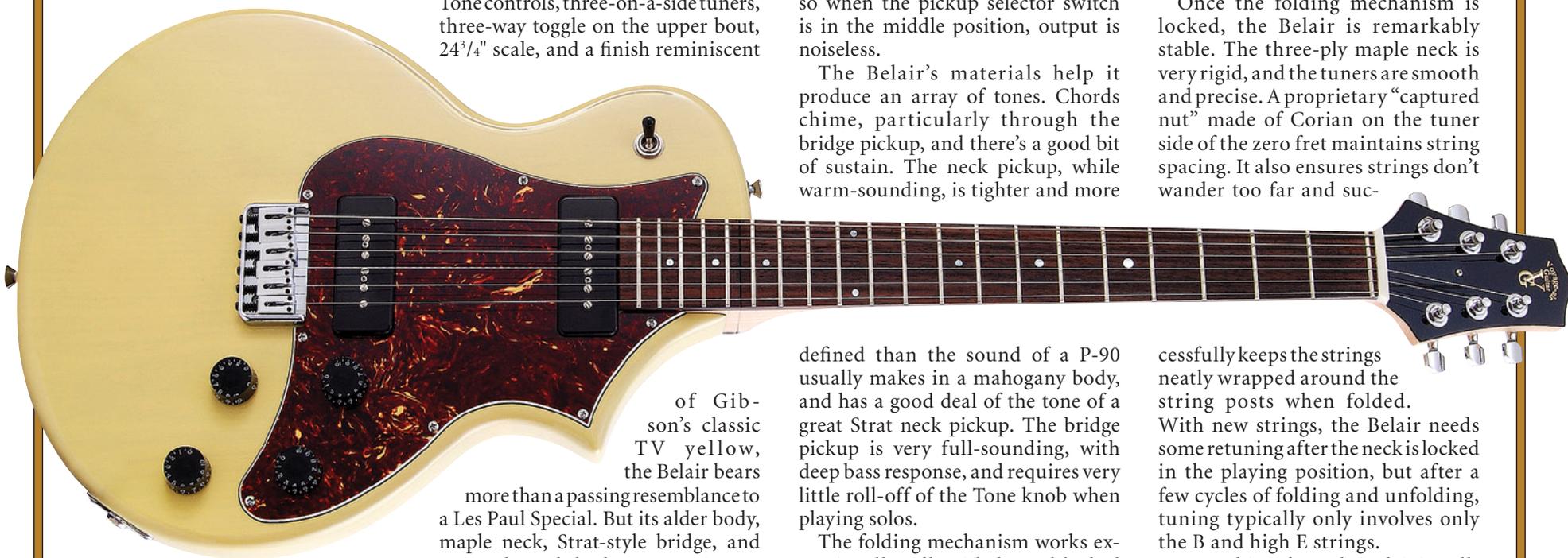
The Belair is a blend of Gibson-like form and Fender-like materials. With twin P-90 pickups, dual Volume and Tone controls, three-on-a-side tuners, three-way toggle on the upper bout, 24³/₄" scale, and a finish reminiscent

Special-type tones; the neck pickup is warm and woody, while the bridge is bright without being harsh. And both are fairly quiet for single-coils. The neck pickup is reverse-wound, so when the pickup selector switch is in the middle position, output is noiseless.

The Belair's materials help it produce an array of tones. Chords chime, particularly through the bridge pickup, and there's a good bit of sustain. The neck pickup, while warm-sounding, is tighter and more

its parts line up perfectly. The process takes just a few seconds.

Once the folding mechanism is locked, the Belair is remarkably stable. The three-ply maple neck is very rigid, and the tuners are smooth and precise. A proprietary "captured nut" made of Corian on the tuner side of the zero fret maintains string spacing. It also ensures strings don't wander too far and suc-



Using the same proprietary hinge as the company's line of acoustic travel guitars, the Belair simply folds at the 16th fret, where the neck meets the body, and tucks neatly into a semi-hard

of Gibson's classic TV yellow, the Belair bears more than a passing resemblance to a Les Paul Special. But its alder body, maple neck, Strat-style bridge, and string-through-body construction are pure Fender.

Like the construction, the sound is a pleasant hybrid of the two brands. Plugged in, the pickups, designed by Tonerider, deliver excellent LP-

defined than the sound of a P-90 usually makes in a mahogany body, and has a good deal of the tone of a great Strat neck pickup. The bridge pickup is very full-sounding, with deep bass response, and requires very little roll-off of the Tone knob when playing solos.

The folding mechanism works exceptionally well. With the neck locked in place, it's wood-to-wood contact between neck and body, and getting the Belair ready for its case requires only the release of a locking tab on the back plate, and, when unfolding,

cessfully keeps the strings neatly wrapped around the string posts when folded. With new strings, the Belair needs some retuning after the neck is locked in the playing position, but after a few cycles of folding and unfolding, tuning typically only involves only the B and high E strings.

Everything about the Belair is well-conceived and executed, including the case's Velcro loop that holds the strings away from the body during transit, and the padded strap that holds the neck in place. – **Bob Dragich VG**



VOYAGE-AIR BELAIR

Price: \$799 (list)

Contact: voyageairguitar.com.