

FIRST PLAY



CORT G300 PRO
£749

WHAT IS IT? A super slice of modern-aimed electric guitar featuring roasted maple, stainless steel and Seymour Duncan

Modern World

Aside from making guitars for a host of brands including PRS, Cort's own electrics and acoustics are making serious waves. This new G300 Pro throws down the gauntlet

Words Dave Burrluck **Photography** Neil Godwin

If you're serious about your guitars, you'll know that Cor-Tek produces instruments for numerous brands in its Indonesian super-factory. Not everyone wants to shout about that, of course, but plenty do, not least Manson Guitar Works here in the UK and Relish in Switzerland. PRS is also happy to praise its relationship with Cor-Tek in making its SE electric line; only in our last issue we gave a Cor-Tek-made PRS SE Custom 24-08 a 10-star Gold Award.

Cor-Tek's own brand, Cort, predates this huge Indonesian facility, yet now there is proper UK distribution we're seeing more examples. We last caught up with Cort in issue 465 and here we've snagged one of the first of its new 2021 G Series models – and the electrics have some traction. The G300 Pro is the new flagship model and tops the mini-range, which starts at £279 with the G250.

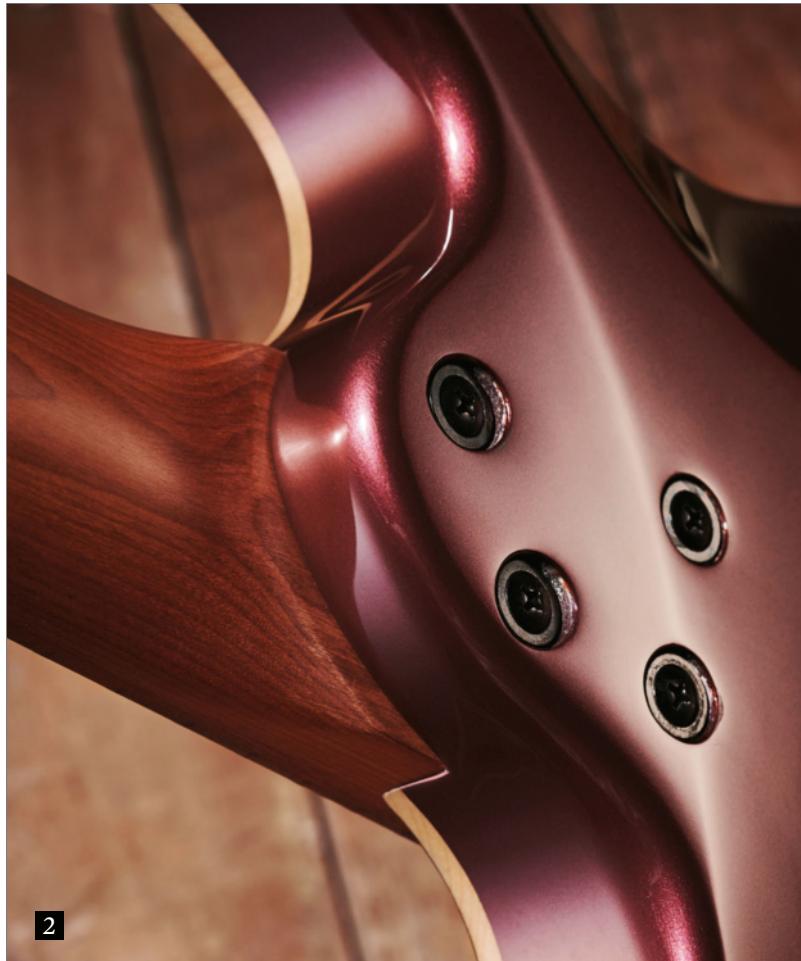
The price doesn't include a gigbag and the cardboard shipping box doesn't exactly suggest the quality of the instrument inside. The thing is, however, this new G300 Pro is a hugely feature-led slice of modern guitar craft, the sort of instrument that covers a lot of ground without overly suggesting a specific genre or style. Admittedly, there's plenty that puts it in the 'modern progressive'







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1. Based closely on Gotoh's 510 vibrato, the CFA-III is a two-post design, here with a back recess. It's an all-steel design with six stainless-steel block saddles. The Seymour Duncan JB is another rock classic humbucker, which, like the Jazz, uses an Alnico V bar magnet

2. The combination of the deep cutaways and this domed heel means upper access to the top 24th fret is easy

3. Classy and functional, the headstock sports rear-locking tuners with staggered height posts and a single roller-style string tree. The nut is Graph Tech's Black Tusq

4. Seymour Duncan humbuckers are used here. The Jazz Model in the neck position dates back to the early 70s. Note the easy-to-adjust spoke-wheel truss-rod – hardly a new design but welcome here

piegeonhole if you listen to guitars from their specification sheets. We have a compound radius fingerboard, big ol' stainless-steel frets and those see-in-the-dark Luminlay side dots that are essential for prog rockers and their sparsely lit performance spaces. Back in the day we'd have called this a 'SuperStrat', pure and simple.

Like Eddie Van Halen's first Music Man signature, the body under that slightly metallic opaque finish is American basswood, with a 6mm maple top and its edges left natural. Its slightly elongated Strat-inspired outline hardly brings any new concepts to the fray, but the ribcage and forearm contours – not to mention the rounded neck heel with inset neck screws – all aid the form. It really doesn't get in your way and, with a good light weight, feels great strapped on or seated.

The vibrato here is based closely on Gotoh's modern classic 510 and has a machined-steel block, steel baseplate and block stainless-steel saddles with two pivot posts and push-in arm with tension adjustment at the collar. It appears to be set flush with the top of the body until you notice the recess. This doesn't actually

increase the up-bend over a similar vibrato with a Fender-style tilt, so when set with just two springs, it has a light feel and we get a minor 3rd on the G and a semitone on the high E, while down bend is pretty much to slack. What we will say, though, is that tuning stability is superb right out of the box – we didn't even stretch the strings. The tuners are rear locking and have staggered posts (three different heights), and the Graph Tech black Tusq nut is clearly doing its job.

But Cort could probably do with a PR person who understands the history of the electric guitar. The Seymour Duncan TB4 and SH-2 humbucker set doesn't mean much unless you know your product codes. We have what Duncan calls its 'Hot Rodded' set: "Seymour created this classic humbucker combination while in England in 1974, and it remains his favourite set of pickups to this day – an SH-4 JB for the bridge and SH-2n Jazz Model for the neck. Together these pickups have become one of the most timeless and versatile humbucker sets ever built."

Both appear to be direct mounted, but they actually sit on foam so you can tweak the pickup heights if you need to.

The G300 Pro is the sort of instrument that spans pretty much every rock genre and quite a bit more



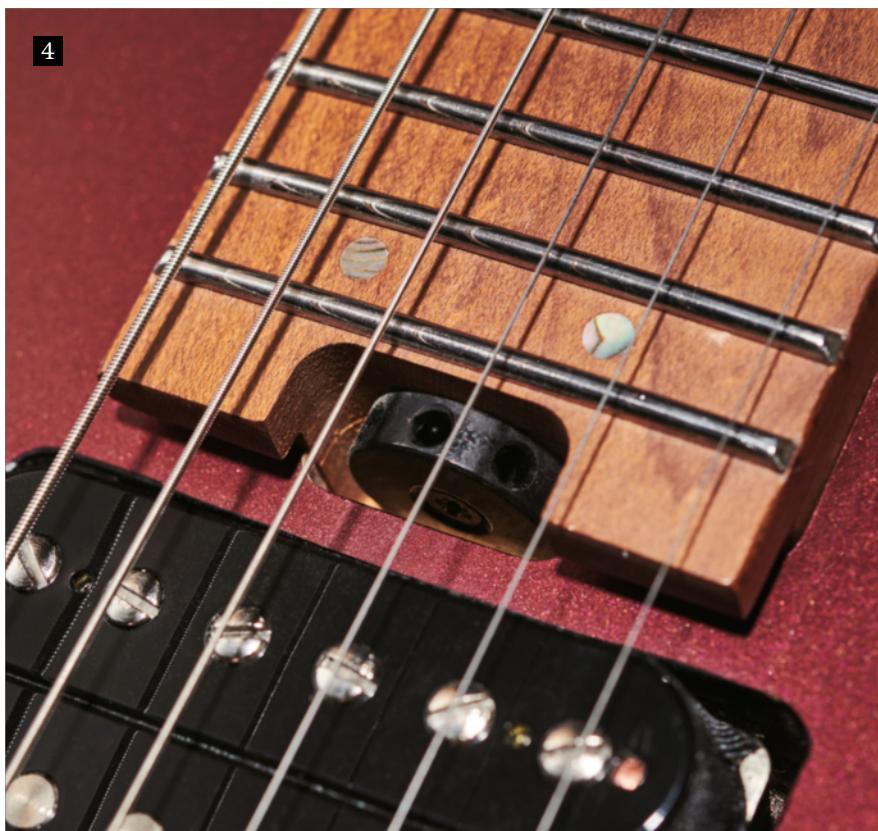
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Feel & Sounds

If the neck specification suggests a certain style, then the actual neck here is really quite full and feels quite 'old Fender' if we're honest. It has a slim but not skinny depth in the lower positions, measuring 21.6mm at the 1st fret, and a D-style profile with quite full shoulders, filling out to almost old-Tele dimensions by the 12th at 24mm. The satin neck back will undoubtedly burnish to a low gloss with playing, but you can't help thinking a quick rub with a Scotch-Brite pad at the factory would just break it in a bit for a slightly slinkier feel.

The fingerboard edges are slightly rounded and, despite the apparently 'flat' fingerboard camber, it feels quite mainstream. The stainless-steel frets could fit into the narrow/tall category, too: they're nicely installed, although a little more polishing of the tops would prevent the slightly scratchy feel as you bend, especially on the wound strings. It's just a few minutes away from turning good into exceptional.

Overall, the supplied setup is flawless and low – pretty much 1.3mm on both treble and bass sides, as supplied. To be honest, that's a little low for us, and raising the string heights to 1.6mm on both sides at the 12th



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The 300 Pro is the only G Series guitar to feature a roasted maple neck with stainless-steel frets and Luminlay side dots

fret felt a bit more universal and gave the strings attack less snap and more air.

Like the rest of the design, the drive is simple and really doesn't get in the way. There are plenty of ways you can wire a pair of four-conductor humbuckers and here we get (from positions 1 to 5): bridge humbucker; screw single coils of both in parallel; both humbuckers; slug single coils of both in parallel; and neck humbucker. It certainly covers a lot of ground. The circuit is simple with 500k Alpha Korean mini pots and a four-pole, five-way switch with a .033 microfarads tone cap.

Now, you could probably have a career on the back pickup alone. The JB is a real classic, hot with a big thumping midrange bark, quite the antidote to the 'wimpy' PAF. Pull the volume back and it can get a little indistinct, but if you're running into a crisp, gained amp voicing that's little problem. That said, a simple treble-bleed circuit would be an easy and cheap upgrade. But there's plenty more to explore here and both parallel mixes not only thin out the voice but add Fender-y funk and bounce. The wide-spaced screw coils sound a little more

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'Tele', the closer slugs coil hints more at a Strat's mix, while the more scooped Jazz at the neck is almost a halfway between those and the JB's thickness. And just like the JB, the Jazz has a useful voice, clean enough for almost single-coil-like clarity on those soupy leads and snappy enough for some funkier blues/jazz comping with clean and crunch amp voices. The dual humbucker mix is perhaps less suited to gained sounds but is surprisingly wide and full with a little snappy clarity on cleaner amp settings.

Verdict

"I think I need a Cort" are probably not words you've uttered – unless you're a Matt Bellamy fan, of course. That said, you've probably played one (at least in terms of where it was made), possibly without even knowing it because not every brand is like PRS who happily credits Cor-Tek for its excellent SE builds.

In a different modern bolt-on style, the G300 Pro is a difficult guitar to fault – it's the sort of instrument that spans pretty much every rock genre there is and quite a bit more, although it does veer towards generic in style. Parts of the market may care that this guitar lacks history, isn't retro nor based on an instrument designed in the 1950s. But don't for a moment think it isn't fit for purpose: it's a real everyman instrument that could sit in a modern metal band just as easily as a function pop/soul ensemble. In fact, for those stylistically diverse wedding/function setlists, we doubt you'd need more. ☐



CORT G300 PRO

PRICE: £749

ORIGIN: Indonesia

TYPE: Offset double-cutaway solid body electric guitar

BODY: Basswood w/ 6mm maple top

NECK: Roasted maple, bolt-on

SCALE LENGTH: 648mm (25.5")

NUT/WIDTH: Graph Tech Black Tusq/42.13mm

FINGERBOARD: Roasted maple, 305-406mm (12-16") radius

FRET: 24, jumbo stainless steel

HARDWARE: Chrome-plated Cort CFA-III 2-post 6-saddle vibrato with push-in arm, Cort staggered-post rear locking tuners

STRING SPACING, BRIDGE: 52.5mm

ELECTRICS: Seymour Duncan JB (TB4, bridge) and Jazz (SH24, neck) direct mount humbuckers, 5-way lever pickup selector switch, master volume, master tone,

WEIGHT (kg/lb): 3.47/7.6

OPTIONS: None

RANGE OPTIONS: The swamp ash/figured maple-topped G290 FAT (£599) is recommended with versatile twin VTH-77 covered humbuckers. The new alder/figured maple G280 (£579) goes for an HSS configuration. Both have two colour options each

LEFT HANDERS: No

FINISHES: Vivid Burgundy metallic (as reviewed), Black – gloss body and headstock face, satin neck

440 Distribution

0113 4433145

www.cortguitars.com



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PROS Superb feature-led build for the money: roasted maple neck, stainless-steel frets and Seymour Duncan pickups

CONS Colour choice isn't great and there's no gigbag. But do we care?