





# EPIPHONE SG SPECIAL P-90

£349

Inspired by Gibson... and could it be the perfect compromise?

**I**s the P-90 the best of both worlds pickup? There's definitely an argument for it being the tonal middle-ground between the traditional single-coil and humbucker. With a single pole-piece, P-90s are single-coil by anatomy and their shorter and wider bobbin allows for greater low end girth and grit. They're also tied closely to the Gibson story – the company's solid body electric pickup of choice until the advent of the humbucker in 1955.

Which bring us to another best of both worlds question – is Epiphone's 2020 'Inspired By Gibson' range also the perfect blend of value and tone? We best take a look.

The Faded Pelham Blue here follows the 2019 Gibson model's

reassuring news is that the fretwork is even and tidy here.

The 60s slim taper neck still feels meaty but less of a Marmite shape than our Gibson's chunkier 50s shape, but we're surprised to find that unlike that guitar, this will dip on the strap if you let go. Both weigh 7lbs exactly too.

The P-90 Pros here have a darker tonality than we've found on our own mahogany Thinline Telecaster. And they feel closer to the vintage-voiced humbucker side of the field in that respect, and that makes for a bridge pickup that's satisfying for classic rock and blues sustain with low end presence, while sounding organic and full for cleaner territory. The neck is a little too murky though and may need a hotter upgrade in time, or raising in the interim.

## A COMPELLING OPTION FOR PLAYERS PRICED OUT BY GIBSON

take on a classic, but it isn't faded in the natural grain way of our early 2000s Gibson SG Special Faded (or the 2020 Epiphone SG Classic). It's a metallic gloss lacquer and it's a very appealing take on a familiar colour.

If you're picky about setting your intonation, the 60s-style lightning wraparound bridge could prove a sticking point here. Like the Epiphone Les Paul Special there's no Tune-o-matic here. Of course, you could upgrade to an intonatable version in the future but we'd prefer it as a stock feature to offer more home setup control.

We like low action but this is a little buzzy for us and a neck check reveals a small truss rod turn is needed and an easy fix. The

**1 HEADSTOCK**  
The 2020 Inspired By Gibson range sees Epiphone using the 'open book' headstock design that is closer to Gibson models

**2 PICKGUARD**  
A more minimal Special pickguard than the significantly larger 'batwing' style found on SG Standards allows the finish to shine

**3 PICKUP**  
The P-90 Pro pickup is fully wax potted to help eliminate unwanted feedback

### AT A GLANCE

**BODY:** Mahogany  
**NECK:** Mahogany with 60s Slim Taper profile, 12" radius  
**SCALE:** 628mm (24.72")  
**FINGERBOARD:** Indian laurel  
**FRETS:** 22  
**PICKUPS:** 1x P-90 Pro Soap Bar  
**CONTROLS:** 2x volume, 2x tone, 3-way pickup switch  
**HARDWARE:** Lightning Bolt Wrap Around Combo, Epiphone Deluxe tuners with Ivory buttons  
**LEFT-HANDED:** No  
**FINISH:** Faded Pelham Blue (reviewed), Sparkling Burgundy  
**CONTACT:** Epiphone  
[www.epiphone.com](http://www.epiphone.com)



The CTS pots make for a responsive way to clean up your sound from the guitar with the volume control, taking advantage of the P-90s' strummier, more open strengths over some traditional humbuckers.

All in, this is a stunning-looking guitar for £349 that finds Epiphone offering a compelling option for players priced out by Gibson. One they can enjoy and then invest in to upgrade.

**Rob Laing**

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