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Avalon

S320A Americana

Reviewed September 18/8 Price: £2750

Avalon's lead project for this year has been the Americana Series, designs aimed at evoking the aura of vintage US flat tops. First out of the starting gate is this beautiful small-body picker. Loosely described as a parlour, it actually uses the company's 14.5"-wide concert body, adapted for retroness with a 12-frets-to-body neck, slotted headstock with open-back tuners, and a pyramid bridge. Like upcoming Americanas – a super jumbo and a slope-shoulder dreadnought – the timber combination is spruce and rosewood, the top finished in a fab low-gloss sunburst. Workmanship and detailing are immaculate.

As expected, the S320A has a fingerstyle neck, but it's not too dauntingly broad at 45mm across the nut. It plays a treat, in fact. The sound, helped by the relatively deep-sided body and possibly by the bridge's more rearward position, is generous, the tone warm and sweet, and the supple response precisely defined. A rich maturity beckons, contributing to a guitar that's an absolute smasher... one of the best 00-styles we've tried. Period.

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