

Joe Till Guitars - Handmade in California

Hello, Welcome ... and Thanks for visiting TillGuitars.com.

Wouldn't you know it? Right when a nice article about my guitars comes out in Beyond the Acorn (click) magazine, my website starts acting funny. The pictures are disappearing and... It might be awhile before I can fix it. So, may I ask you to please visit my Facebook Page (click), it's much more dynamic and informative than this page, anyway.

Of course, you're welcome to read on, there are plenty of pictures in the menu items.

Contact Information Update:

For some reason the message box on my Contact Us page is not working, either. I do not receive messages sent through my contact page. Please email me directly at Joe@TillGuitars.com

The address and phone number are good, just don't bother filling in the boxes.

Now then...Till Guitars is... basically... me. I make about fifteen or twenty guitars and basses a year. Each one is handmade from start to finish. No robots, no automated machinery. That would just be... wrong. Those things are for making airplanes, not guitars.

For my first dozen or so years of building, I concentrated on two original guitar designs - the TG-100 "Solo" and the TG-250 "Lady on the Beach". That seemed like the best way for me to fine-tune my skills.

But these days, after 20 years in the game, I'm stretching out and introducing a new model about every year. This year I introduced my eighth original design, the TG-521, which features my curviest body to date.

And in 2014 I introduced "Shorty Joe" and the Shorty Joe Bass.

I've also recently added a Baritone version of the TG-250 to the Till Guitars catalog.

As the happy owner of the first one said, "...it's like having tone like an expensive, large piano held in your hands lightly..." (Thanks, Gary)

And I've always got a couple of Till Basses in the works. Not many people get to see them because they usually sell before I complete them.

I'll continue building one-off pieces like this Double-Neck Bass/Six, too. Projects like this help keep the creative juices flowing. This one has a 24 3/4 inch six string guitar on top and a 30 inch bass on the bottom. You can do anything you want with it, but I designed it mainly to be used with a looping pedal. Click [here](#) for a demo, but be sure to come back here when you're done.

By now you've probably noticed that if you click on the red highlighted words (except these ones), you'll go to a page about that subject. Another way to see everything on this site is to click the red "Next" buttons at the bottom of each page. And if you see any "Page 2" buttons, click them, too. If you get in any trouble, wave your arms and run in a zig-zag pattern. That works for so many things!

I try to keep my Currently Available Guitars Page up to date. This is where I post my "private stock" models that are complete and ready to ship. The way it works is... you go there, wait for one to call your name, then you write to me with any questions you might have. The more specific you are, the more specific I'll be. I'll get back to you asap with detailed answers and probably a few questions. I discuss pricing here, but I don't get too specific because every guitar I make is unique.

TillGuitars.com is just my introduction to you, like an online brochure. But, if you want the most juicy gossip and current information about Till Guitars, check out the Joe Till Guitars Facebook Page. I do my best to post as many pictures of my work in all phases of construction that I can. I include some tutorials and videos of my construction methods, and so on. I also post a few special offers on Facebook. Please leave any comments or links - including your own website, videos and booking details. And, "Like" me, if you will.

From my hands to yours...

Till Guitars are Built by Hand from start to finish. I can't imagine another way to build a musical instrument. Automated and computerized machinery (robots) by definition can only make copies. You won't find any of that here. You get nothing but the real deal from Till Guitars. After 19 years of makin' these things, I'm still a one man operation. My big dream is to one day have a helper... maybe someone to take over this computer stuff because my time is much better spent out in the woodshop kickin' up sawdust. But for as long as there is a Till Guitars, we will always celebrate basic woodworking skills. (Yay!)

After you're done looking around, please contact me with any questions/comments. You can't just click a button and buy one of my guitars from this site. I'm afraid you're gonna have to deal directly with me. Ideally, you can make your way to my shop in Westlake Village, Ca., but if that's not possible, let's plan to have a few good back-and-forths through email or on the phone.

By the way, I have a growing body of video demos on the Joe Till Guitars Channel on Youtube. And it's no big deal to shoot a video on my phone if you see something here that you don't see on Youtube. Just remember, the camera adds 10 pounds... to each cheek (Why, that's 40 lbs!).

If my sUbliMinAI messaging is working, some of you have found your way here from Ebay. Welcome! Just one more step and you've saved yourself a bundle (about 13%!). If I have something on there that you just gotta have, all you gotta do is let me know. I'll make sure that I don't relist it after the auction ends. But, keep an eye on the number of views each piece gets. I have a pretty good batting average when the "counter" tops about 250.

I've begun to place my work in a few stores again, after quite a few years without bothering. Things are starting to feel a little better... sometimes... for a little while... sometimes... awhile back.

One thing I've really noticed when I walk into music stores, though, is how identical everything is starting to look. Like everything was stamped out of the same machine, dipped in some funky plastic and shipped off to the mall. Boring! I mean, I get it. There's some kind of comfort in that. All those familiar old names, 75 year old designs... I tell people that I want to be their 5th guitar. Everybody's gotta have their Strat for the Dire Straights stuff, a Les Paul for the heavy stuff, a Martin for that stuff, and a PRS to prove... something. Then you get a Till Guitar when you want some real inspiration.

Please read on. Take your time. And stop back by from time to time to keep an eye on my progress. Look around the web to see what others are saying about my work (I hate doing that!). And whenever you're ready to, drop me a line. I've had customers tell me that they met me at some guitar show somewhere five years earlier and had kept my guitars in the back of their mind the whole time. I know it can take a long time to wrap your head around new things.

I didn't just wake up one morning 19 years ago and decide to build guitars. No, it was well past noon. I'd been up for hours and had already been to the Simi Swapmeet where I found an imported "Flying V" with a broken bolt-on neck - for \$25. - with a real Gibson case!

I bought it because it was loaded with upgraded hardware including Grover tuners and Seymour Duncan humbuckers, all of which I planned to use on other guitars in the future.

But, when I got back to my woodshop I wondered how hard it would be to shape a new replacement neck. About 5 minutes later I had my answer: Not too hard. I just took my Surform tool, a spokeshave and a rasp and I gnawed away at a piece of scrap wood until it was round. But, I thought, rather than make a replacement neck for a meaningless import, I might as well design and build a complete guitar from the ground, up. Three days and no sleep later TG-100 no. 001 was playin' the blues.

Now, by this time - 1996, I'd had my own dedicated cabinet shop for about ten years. Most of my work filtered down to me from neighboring shops who only built square, simple cabinets. They would send me the weird stuff - angular and curved things because the easy jobs paid too well for them to waste their time on anything else. That was about when I started developing my own philosophy about craftsmanship (including musicianship), which is basically that I think every craftsman has an obligation (at least to himself) to continually push his craft to the limits of his ability. A philosophy completely at odds with the times, it seems. But I stick with it to this day.

Here's an unusual fact: All male Tills are born wearing nailbags and holding Skilsaws. My earliest memories are of my dad sawing away in the garage while my brothers took turns holding up long pieces of plywood as it came off the radial arm saw outfeed table. Sternly barked orders of "Keep it level!" and "Don't pull!" echo in my ears, still. Hard to do while walking backwards over piles of laundry. But that was when my destiny as a woodworker appeared to be set. Other strong influences followed. One was a field trip to the Pacific Design Center in Santa Monica back in high school ('76) to see a woodworking exhibit. There were fully functional bicycles made of wood! Incredible stuff. High art, for sure.

And there was my friend Paul Carpenter who could make a piece of wood do anything he told it to. Flowing designs with all kinds of different colored woods. You should see his stuff today. He's up in Eureka, Ca.

Alembic guitars also caught my eye back then. The perfect mix of beautiful woods, style, tone and playability. Pure creativity. All handmade, too. Everytime I see Rick Turner I tell him so.

Having been born in 1959, I didn't get to actively participate in "The Sixties", but I had a good ringside seat, thanks to my older sisters and brothers. We lived in what was then a small, isolated community in Malibu Canyon , just a fun 10 minute ride from the beach. Surfers, hippies, cows and coyotes. Heaven.

To be continued...