

Santa Cruz Brad Paisley Signature B/PW

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Brad Paisley's image as a Tele-slingin' shredder might tend to overshadow the fact that he's also an astute acoustic player with a deep appreciation for the sound of fine steel-string flat-tops. His decision to partner with Santa Cruz Guitar Company to create a signature model has led to the introduction of yet another awesome guitar in the SCGC line: The Brad Paisley Signature—or B/PW as we'll refer to it from here on—is based on the company's Pre-War Dreadnought model and features a body made of solid Indian rosewood with a top of figured "bearclaw" Sitka spruce that's supported by spruce bracing in a scalloped/advanced-X pattern.

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Assumedly wanting to make his model more practical and affordable for working players, Paisley kept the B/PW's cosmetics tasteful and not overblown. Herringbone binding surrounds the perimeter of the top, and a multi-ring "violin purfle combo" rosette embellishes the 4" soundhole. Plain ivoroid binding and a "zipper" stripe class-up the beautifully grained rosewood back, while the fretboard is adorned with small dots on the edge and an inlaid pearl "SCGC" logo at the 5th fret. The ebony peghead overlay sports a cowboy-hat inlay, and the tuners are nickel-plated Waverly 4060s with bean-shaped buttons. Even the case is an eye catcher with its western-style tooling on the covering.



Joining the body at the 14th fret, the V-shaped neck offers a comfy grip and wears a silky feeling clear lacquer finish. The factory setup with medium-gauge strings works perfectly here, as the B/PW plays easily, sounds sweet and focused, has great touch sensitivity, and is loud enough to stand out on an acoustic stage (pickup options are available if you need to plug in). Firm lows and a rich stringiness throughout the mids and highs combine to give it a beautiful sonic presence, and the B/PW sustains well too—a factor that always enhances the playing experience. This is just an all-around cool guitar, and an excellent choice for flatpickers, rhythm players, fingerstylists, and anyone who simply appreciates great steel-string tone. Considering that it will probably become even more complex sounding as it ages, what a great investment if you're looking for a guitar to enjoy for years to come.

We've never failed to be impressed by any Santa Cruz guitar that's shown up at the GP office, and, as another example of SCGC's inspired craftsmanship and dedication to tone, the Brad Paisley Signature receives an Editors' Pick Award. — Art Thompson



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