

**Epiphone**

**review**



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## **Joe Perry Boneyard Les Paul Standard**

### **The Epiphone "Joe Perry Boneyard" Les Paul Standard**

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### **EPIPHONE BONEYARD**

Now, this is quite some looker. The Boneyard's maple cap has been stained to emphasize the grain, then finished in a glorious orange; add in the bright orange switch tip, and this guitar is more 'easy tiger' than 'tiger striped'. The back and neck - including the front of the headstock - are all satin black, but the hardware is regulation Les Paul and the chrome plated hardware has a soft, slightly blue/gray hue that looks very classy. The machineheads are Epiphone-branded replicas of the Klusons found on all those collectable Gibsons. They have the correct spec "single ring" buttons, but a higher gear ratio makes tuning easy and accurate.



There's cream binding all around the front of the body and along the edges of the rosewood fingerboard. Trapezoid pearl markers help you find your way



around, and they match the pearl Epiphone script and the skull-adorned "Boneyard logo on the headstock (there's even a Joe Perry signature truss rod cover). Cream-colored pickup surrounds, jack plate and switch plate complete a striking but harmonious look - and there's no scratchplate to clutter up your spare parts drawer in years to come.

## SOUNDS

Often, Les Pauls with lightweight old-style tuners seem to have a brighter and clearer acoustic tone than those with cast Grover types. Perhaps all that extra mass at the headstock does make a difference. True or not, the Boneyard sounds naturally bright, with plenty of natural depth and resonance as well. (Note: Weight tested - 8.25 lbs)



The whole playing experience benefits from the faultless frets, a nicely carved nut and a medium-low setup. The neck is what I would call a 'proper Les Paul neck', with a nice C profile and medium depth. Les Pauls somehow never seem right when the neck is skinny - like an American muscle car with a tiny engine.

Fortunately, a pair of genuine USA-made Gibson Burstbucker pickups - a 2 model at the neck and a slightly hotter 3 at the bridge - harnesses all that tone potential. We tried Burstbuckers out in the Humbucker Shootout back in Guitar 13/4, and we were impressed. Gibson has made a decent stab at recreating its original 1950s classic, using unpolished alnico magnets, and leaving the coils unpotted for a little more acoustic

response. It also makes sure that both the coils are wound unevenly: although they lose a little of their hum-canceling ability, there's also a little more bite and cut.

Gibson is obviously doing something right, as both Gary Moore and Joe Perry have specified Burstbuckers for their signature models. We can only agree with the big boys, because this guitar has tone. The voicing is unashamedly vintage and the acoustic tendencies of the pickups shine through, providing a responsive feel that you'll rarely find on humbucker-loaded guitars. Dig in or add a touch of vibrato and the Boneyard goes all the way with you. The bridge has bite and body with good chunky low-mids. The neck sounds very different, with a smooth bluesy transparency and eons of sustain.



Surprisingly, you'll find that the in-between setting (both pickups) is wired out of phase, Peter Green-style, producing a very interesting tone that sounds like someone has activated a cunningly concealed on-board phaser. The volume drops slightly, but it produces a very interesting rhythm tone - and you can flip the toggle switch up or down for extra drive when you need it.

Any worries about the unpotted pickups feeding back microphonically were quickly dispelled when the Boneyard was plugged through an MXR Wylde Overdrive. The in-between setting took on an even more interesting tone that sounded like a static wah pedal or some other unusual EQ (I'm sure I recognize it from various 1970s records.) Those sweet bluesy sounds give way to an aggressive, punchy overdrive that retained clarity and string separation. If you want to play blues-based rock music like Joe Perry does, you'd be hard pushed to find a guitar better suited for the job.