

Ted Åstrand - Luthier Interview

Posted by Michael Watts on October 04, 2014

Ted Åstrand will be a new name to many, yet he is already establishing a solid reputation as a fine craftsman. Having studied (at the suggestion of Tony McManus who knows a good guitar when he sees one) with Jason Kostal, following graduation from Stockholm's prestigious Academy of Musical Instruments, Ted is now back in Sweden building beautiful acoustic guitars. Our first Åstrand instrument has just arrived and I interviewed Ted to give you an insight into the methods and processes of this exciting new talent.



MW - Tell us about your background before lutherie Ted.

TÅ - "Before starting a career as a luthier I attended several art schools working with everything from photography, painting, sculptures and pottery. I later started working for a small company making custom made roulette tables! This is where my journey and love for woodworking began.

One day I visited a local repair shop to get my old clarinet repaired. Seeing instrument parts scattered around the workshop and the strong smell of wood made me feel like home. It was at that moment it struck me, combining my love for music, guitars and wood. Ever since my life has been dedicated to building guitars!"



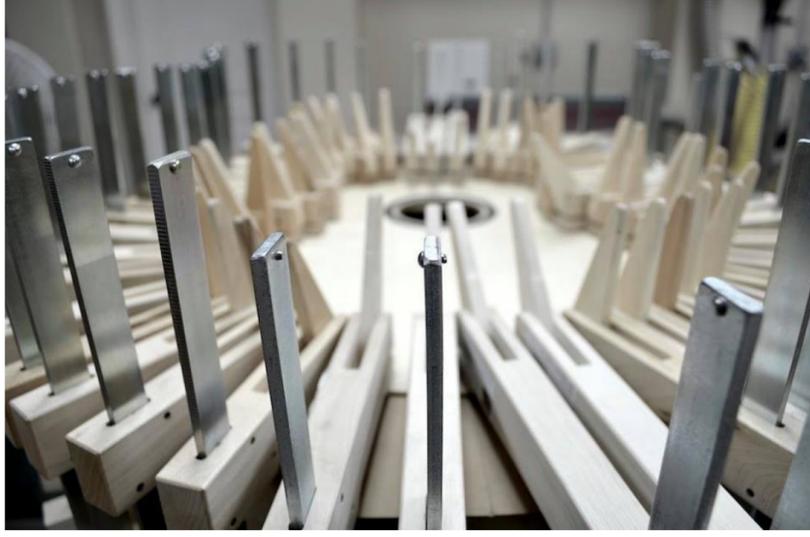
MW - Tell us about your journey so far and your influences

TÅ - "After spending 3 years studying full-time at the Academy of Musical Instruments in Stockholm and a 3 month internship with Jason Kostal I opened my own workshop in Stockholm. I had started taking on commissions already as a student and now that I'm well into my second year in my own workshop I am working on both international orders and order's for local musicians.

Obviously my time with Jason Kostal has influenced my work a great deal.

His way of fine tuning a guitar top and attention to detail is truly remarkable and I learned a huge amount from that experience. I find inspiration from the modern world of lutherie and in my belief the world has never had as many great guitar makers as today. As a builder I find it very important not only to find inspiration within the luthier community but also to look elsewhere. We have a strong tradition in furniture making in Sweden and I love looking at antique furniture where the most amazing fine woodworking can be found.

When designing body shapes and the visual aspects of the instrument the most vivid and interesting influences can come from modern nature."



MW - What is the Åstrand sound?

TÅ - A sound is always difficult to describe with words especially because sound is perceived differently by us all. I believe my guitars land in the category of the modern approach to sound.

I build my guitars with a structural bracing pattern that allows me to work with thin tops for maximum responsiveness and a full and present sound. I voice my tops to achieve a balanced instrument where nothing holds back the true potential of the tonewoods. Working mainly with tone woods yielding a rich and complex sound with lots of overtones.



MW - What are your favourite materials to work with?

TÅ - Without a doubt it's Swiss alpine spruce for the tops. I buy all of my spruce from a small family run company in Graubünden located in middle of the Swiss Alps. These tops are absolutely wonderful and produce a very responsive and overtone rich instrument if voiced correctly. Most builder's take a pretty large upcharge for this wood but I always include it in the base price. Love it!

For the back&sides I feel my guitar's work best paired with rosewood. Madagascar, Brazil and Indian all yield great results. I also love Mahogany, Maple and Wengé.

Thanks Ted!

So here it is, the Åstrand Å-OM in Madagascar Rosewood and Swiss Spruce! Click the pic for more details!

