



✓ VG APPROVED GEAR

KNIGHT TIME Teye Guitars' Master Series Knights Templar

Guitar fanatics find inspiration from different players. And if Woody swapping licks and practicing “the ancient art of weaving” with Keef while playing his famous pearl-topped, single-cut Zemaitis gets your juices flowing, one look at Teye’s Master Series Knights Templar just might send a shiver up your spine.

When discussing this guitar built by Texas-based luthier/musician Teye, it’s impossible to put aside the remarkable story of the Knights Templar, given the degree and nature of its ornamentation. The mosaic of white mother-of-pearl that covers the top is quartered by synthetic coral in the shape of a red Templar cross. Teye’s incredible engravings on the aluminum metalwork, front and back, refer to the legendary warrior-monks with symbols, Latin inscriptions, and a vision of hard-charging knights, bannered lances aimed at the enemy. Every piece of pearl is figured, and every detail from the headpiece, with its custom tuner buttons, to the ornate pickup bezels rings like steel on steel.

The wasp-waisted body and set neck are carved of korina, a legendary lightweight and resonant solid-body tonewood. The guitar’s proprietary Shipwreck finish is applied and rubbed out by hand, creating a warm contrast to the bright white pearl. The neck also features Teye’s trademark *trompe l’oeil* “tiger-neck” finish.

Vital statistics include a lightly arched bound ebony fingerboard with a 25.5" scale and Bedouin pearl inlay at every fret. The bone nut is 1.75" wide, and the body is fitted with a Teye SuperSustain bridge and tailpiece. Acoustically, the guitar has a distinctive ring and long sustain, the sonic impact of korina with overlaid pearl and machined aluminum.

The electronics are a new development for Teye, the all-analog Master Mojo wiring with controls serving varying functions. The five-way selector in position 5 (up), selects neck pickup only, 4 selects neck and bridge out of phase, middle is neck and

Prices: \$37,500, Master Series (as tested); \$12,950, Emperor Series
Info: www.teye.com

bridge in phase, 2 selects bridge and coil-tapped, and 1 (down) is bridge pickup only. That’s a thoughtful double humbucker wiring, but it only scratches the surface of possibilities.

Teye has liberated a variety of tones by using potentiometers instead of mini-switches. As per Teye’s suggestion, the Templar was plugged through a single-channel tube amp.

Teye’s suggested presets provided a good starting point for experimentation. The Mojo wiring accessed a spectrum of useable sounds, rhythm and lead, through manipulation of the proprietary potentiometers with end detents that allow the player to bypass the Mojo wiring and click

into the Templar’s “natural tone.” With or without the Mojo circuit, the Lollar humbuckers spoke authoritatively when a strong solo voice was called for – inventive wiring, resonant timbers, extraordinary metalwork, and pearl top all conspiring to deliver classic rock lead sounds. Just a suggestion of finger vibrato made for terrific sustain with any voice.

Finding the right place in a band mix can be a challenge, especially with multiple electrics in full roar, but the Mojo circuit summoned funky and fat rhythm sounds with full-bore humbucking voices or snarly, slinky single-coil tones. Stomping in both gain stages of a Seymour Duncan Palladium overdrive pedal made the Templar practically dance by itself.

The Teye Templar is deceptively lightweight despite the décor, and it sits comfortably in the lap and on the strap. General playability is tuneful and silly-easy on the sizeable, comfortably carved neck. Just holding the Templar is an experience, because the concept and execution are awesome. If it didn’t sound and

play so well, it’d be the most amazing display piece ever. As it is, it’s simply amazing. – **Chip Wilson VG**

