

Jackson Guitars

Jackson®

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Jackson History:

The Jackson bloodline began back in the late 1970s, when heavy music experienced a flamboyant and virtuosic resurgence in popularity and a small Southern California guitar repair shop became the epicenter of a new level of shred-approved excellence. Ever since then, Jackson guitars have been universally lauded as the metal guitars; the shred machines, highly-original, high-performance instruments of distinctive style and formidable substance. From metal's chart-topping peaks to its darkest recesses, for discerning guitarists all over the globe, Jackson is the only way to go.

To make a long story short, a new generation of talented and extravagant young guitarists who came of age in the burgeoning MTV era of late '70s and early '80s needed more—in fact, demanded more—from their instruments. Six-string luthier Grover Jackson and his small staff of highly-skilled craftsmen answered the call with a new breed of high-performance custom guitars bearing Jackson's own name on their headstocks.

At the time, Grover, a Tennessee native, was just starting to taste success as the owner of Charvel's Guitar Repair, an instrument hot-rodding shop in Glendora, Calif., that he'd bought in November 1978 from his employer of 14 months, Wayne Charvel. Jackson-built Charvel guitars debuted at the 1979 summer NAMM show in Atlanta, and quickly became the axes of choice for the brave new breed of Sunset Strip guitar heroes whose loud, heavy bands were then being signed left and right by major record labels.

In late 1980, Grover was contacted by a relatively unknown but phenomenally talented young guitarist named Randy Rhoads. Following a stint with L.A. metal outfit Quiet Riot, Rhoads had just joined former Black Sabbath vocalist Ozzy Osbourne's new band and wanted to meet with Jackson about designing a

distinctive new guitar.

Grover and Randy met just before Christmas that year and quickly designed the guitar together in the “original” Jackson way—by literally sketching it on a paper napkin. The resulting instrument, dubbed the Concorde for its futuristic, angular shape, was a sleek white guitar with an offset V-shape, neck-through-body construction and, for the first time, Jackson’s own name on the headstock.

Although the Concorde truly was the first Jackson guitar and there are many photos of Randy playing it, it was eventually rejected in favor of a second version that boasted many features suggested by Rhoads himself. Sadly, due to Randy’s tragic and untimely death in March 1982, this guitar was only photographed in his hands a few times. That said, the second model became the legend—the very first guitar known and revered worldwide as the Jackson Rhoads.

From the early ’80s on, heavy metal history would be written with Jackson guitars, staking their claim as a wilder, high-performance alternative to their more traditional Charvel® cousins. Grover Jackson and his talented, often demented henchmen quickly created their own renaissance in metal guitar design with a slew of highly original models, and the popularity of Jackson guitars exploded in the early and mid-1980s.

Legendary and enduring Jackson models including the Kelly™, King V™, Double Rhoads, Soloist™, bolt-on neck Dinky™, and Concert™ Bass all appeared during this fertile period, joined later in the decade by the equally successful PC1 (based on Jackson’s signature model for Def Leppard guitarist Phil Collen) and Jackson’s most outlandish body design, the devilishly X-shaped Warrior™.

Metal music continued a vigorous and highly diverse evolution on both sides of the Atlantic during the ’80s and ’90s, and the Jackson bloodline melded seamlessly with each and every sonic mutation—thrash metal, speed metal, death metal, the NWOBHM, goth, industrial, nu metal, skate metal, grunge, metalcore, rap metal and countless others, too.

Recent years have seen the Jackson bloodline continue to flourish, with all of the company’s most famous models—custom and production series alike—enjoying great success. Jackson signature instruments have also come into their own, with magnificent models bearing top metal names such as Phil Collen (Def Leppard), Mark Morton and John Campbell (Lamb of God), Phil Demmel (Machine Head), Chris Beattie (Hatebreed), Adrian Smith (Iron Maiden), Matt Tuck (Bullet For My Valentine) and others. Furthermore, the Jackson Custom Shop remains the longest-operating true custom shop in the United States, with many members of its original staff still working there and doing what they do best—providing axe-wielding metallurgists worldwide with world-class high-performance instruments that have no equal.

And so, in keeping with its breathtaking three-decade heritage of excellence, the Jackson legend continues to thrive and grow—without fear or compromise.

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