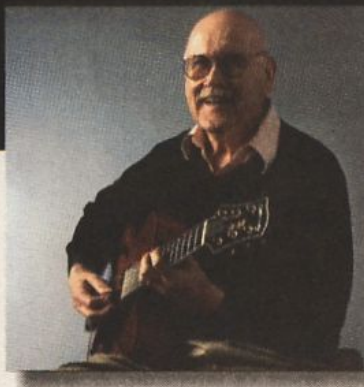




# Sadowsky

## Jim Hall Signature Model



Jim Hall

By Ray Matuzo

Luthier/repair guru Roger Sadowsky has been a main stay in the Big Apple for quite some time. Ask any hip cat on the New York scene about his custom solid body guitars and basses and you'll more than likely be the recipient of a big thumbs up. Also, many a well known player's axes have been laid down on the Sadowsky workbench to be repaired, refitted or refretted. One such instrument that has been cared for by Roger's adept hands over the past 15 years is jazz legend Jim Hall's D'Aquisto Archtop.

Instinctively knowing the fine quality of this instrument, Roger realized that acquiring a D'Aquisto at this point in time is a veritable pipe dream for the working jazz guitarist and since Jimmy D himself is no longer available to build instruments at least on this earthly plane, he came up with the idea to design and build an affordable jazz guitar based on Hall's beloved. After four years of collaboration between Hall and Sadowsky, the Jim Hall Signature Model Archtop was born.

Built in Japan at the Sadowsky Tokyo shop under the supervision of top Japanese luthier Yoshi Kikuchi, with its final fretwork and set up done here at Sadowsky's Brooklyn digs. The instrument features a 5 ply maple top, back and sides with a built in humbucking pickup. While the jazz box purists might raise a 13b9 chord or two over the acoustic validity of these attributes, Hall and Sadowsky, staying true to the original, agreed that a laminate top sounds superior to a solid top instrument when played through an amp. They also agreed that a floating pickup held no sonic advantage with this type of guitar and opted for the convenience of the built in humbucker. In similar fashion, Sadowsky has adopted D'Aquisto's late period minimal ornamentation showing an instrument with clean lines and organic countenance underscored by the choice of ebony for the tuning buttons, pickguard, control knobs, bridge and tailpiece.

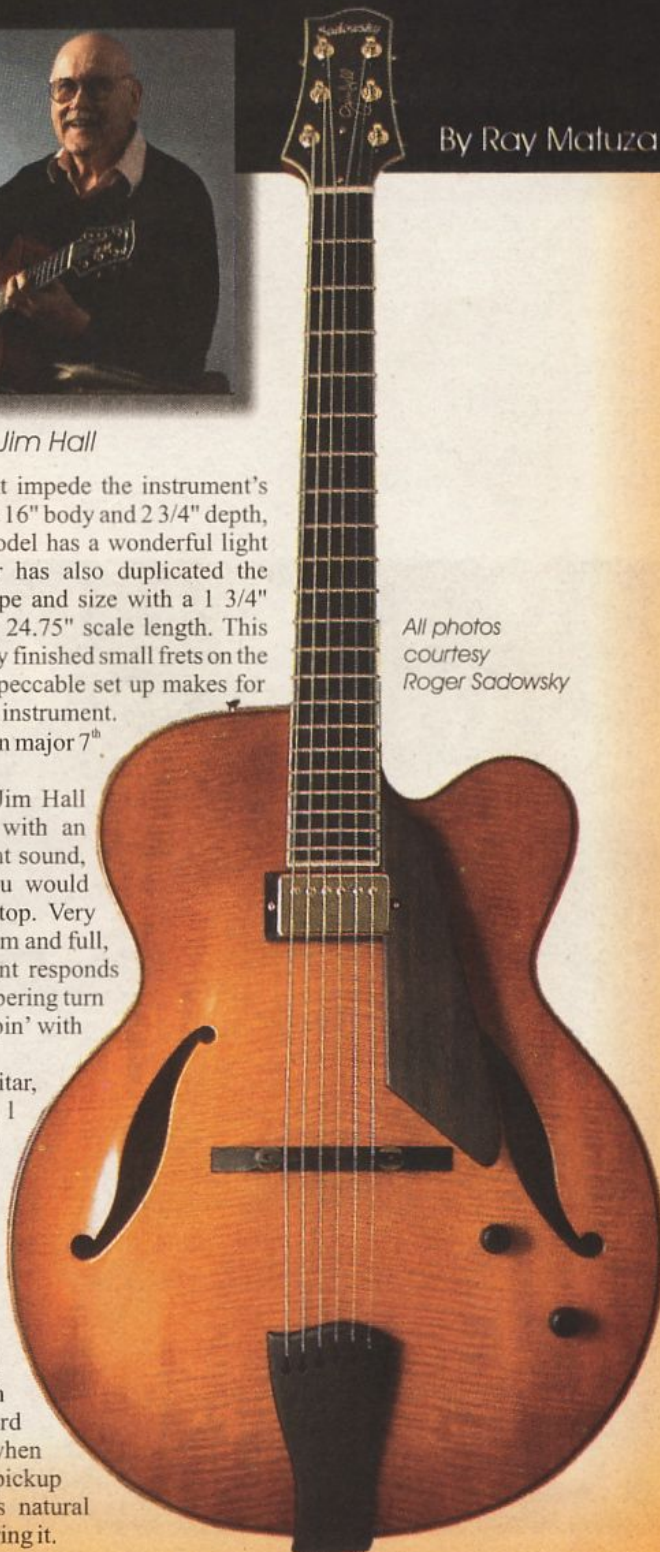
The scrumptious and toasty orange-brown nitrocellulose sunburst (named the JH sunburst) sits under a commendably thin layer of clear coat. Although buffed out to a high gloss, the finish has a slight unevenness to it when looking at the instrument under a light. Roger informs me that due to the very thin layers and the nature of nitro

itself, the finish tends to "ride" the flames in the highly figured maple and preferred this to having a

thicker finish which might impede the instrument's sound. Measuring in with a 16" body and 2 3/4" depth, the Jim Hall Signature Model has a wonderful light and balanced feel. Roger has also duplicated the original's maple neck shape and size with a 1 3/4" width a the nut running a 24.75" scale length. This combined with the perfectly finished small frets on the ebony fingerboard and impeccable set up makes for an incredibly easy playing instrument. Dig those 6 string 5 fret span major 7<sup>th</sup> chords? No problem here.

The parallel braced Jim Hall Signature Model speaks with an open, articulate and vibrant sound, in fact, more so than you would expect from a laminated top. Very balanced with a crisp bottom and full, warm highs, the instrument responds dynamically to every whispering turn up to full on hard core boppin' with a nice presence.

For amplifying the guitar, the original DeArmond/Guild humbucker was analyzed and duplicated by DiMarzio's Steve Blucher. The resultant tone steers away from the typical humbucker mid range bump producing a more transparent sound that doesn't interfere with complex or dense chord structures yet sounds full when blowin' single lines. The pickup enhances the instrument's natural voice rather than over coloring it.



All photos  
courtesy  
Roger Sadowsky