



Strapping Young Axe

FRAMUS DEVIN TOWNSEND STORMBENDER

By Chris Gill



THE FRAMUS TEAMBUILT Pro Series, which comes between the company's flagship Masterbuilt Custom Shop models and import Standard D-Series line, offers several different Artist Series models for an interesting group of players that includes Phil X, Stevie Salas and Alice In Chains frontman William DuVall. But by far their most interesting artist is progressive metal musician Devin Townsend (best known for the Devin Townsend Project, Strapping Young Lad and his work on Steve Vai's *Sex and Religion*), who collaborated with Framus on an appropriately out-of-the-ordinary model called the Stormbender Devin Townsend Artist Series. Fitting for a visionary, genre-defying artist like Townsend, the Stormbender seems like an unconventional instrument, but it makes perfect sense once you get to know it.

FEATURES Although it is built from conventional tonewoods, including a

mahogany body and set maple neck, the Stormbender features a generously thick 2-inch body with a carved and contoured top and back with a AA flame maple top inset in an oval section running down the middle of the body. The neck has a 25.5-inch scale, 22 extra-high jumbo frets installed with Framus's Invisible Fretwork Technology (IFT) and Plek set up. The model is available in transparent Nirvana Black, and the tigerstripe ebony fretboard is minimally adorned with a Devin Townsend circle at the 11th through 13th frets.

Pickups are a pair of Townsend's signature Fishman Fluence Transcendence ceramic magnet humbuckers with a hybrid magnetic circuit that provides two distinct humbucking and single-coil tones accessed via a push/pull switch on the master tone knob. The Evertune bridge and Graph Tech Ratio locking tuners keep the guitar perfectly in tune.

PERFORMANCE The Devin Townsend Stormbender Artist Series boasts very aggressive and distinctive midrange, thanks to the 635Hz/3.4kHz (bridge) and 780Hz/3.4kHz (neck) peak frequencies of their humbucking and single-coil settings. As a result, the guitar delivers a throaty, full-bodied sound that works equally well with high-gain and clean amp settings and also seems to pull more tonal variation and range out of standard amp tone controls. Even with a graphic EQ set to a scooped mid setting the guitar's tone remains robust and chunky.

Our example weighed a little more than nine pounds, but the weight is well distributed and the guitar feels much lighter when strapped on and played in a standing position. The fretwork is stunning, with a smooth, fast feel, and access up and down the neck is unrestricted, thanks to the neck heel that is contoured seamlessly to the body like a neck-thru design.

CHEAT SHEET



STREET PRICE:
\$3,999
MANUFACTURER:
Framus,
warwickbass.com/en/Framus

- A pair of Devin Townsend's signature Fishman Fluence Transcendence pickups provide a selection of two distinctive full humbucking and single-coil tones.

- The guitar always stays perfectly in tune thanks to the Evertune bridge, locking Graph Tech Ratio tuners and Graph Tech Tusq low-friction nut.

- **THE BOTTOM LINE**
With the Stormbender Artist Series, Framus's Teambuilt staff and Devin Townsend have joined forces to offer a solidbody guitar with style and sounds that are as innovative, appealing and distinctive as Townsend's music.