

## Gear

## ROUNDUP



**GuitarPlayer**  
EDITORS'  
PICK

## SADOWSKY SEMI HOLLOW

"WHEN I DESIGNED THIS GUITAR, I WAS NOT LOOKING TO make another 335; there are plenty of those type guitars, and the world does not need another one," says Roger Sadowsky. "I designed a small body, light-weight, semi-hollow that would be able to get a traditional jazz tone from the neck pickup, yet be able to perform in big band or high volume situations without feedback." The end result on review here is the aptly named Semi Hollow, a lightweight and nimble guitar that plays beautifully and certainly owns up to the versatility that Sadowsky intended. While not an overly flashy instrument, the Japanese-made Semi Hollow is a showcase of fine craftsmanship. The body is given a light sunburst finish that beautifully highlights the figuring in the maple, and perfectly executed multi-layer bindings surround the top, back, heel cap, and the ebony-faced headstock. The mahogany neck has an ultra-comfy shape and its bound rosewood 'board arcs to a generous 12" radius and wears 22 carefully worked medium frets (fretwork and final setup are done at Sadowsky's workshop in Long

Island, NY). Subtle pearl dots are all you get for positional reference, but they're in keeping with the SH's streamlined ethos. Hardware includes a Tune-o-matic bridge and stop tailpiece, along with two Sadowsky humbuckers, which feed a 3-way switch and Volume and Tone pots that are topped with smooth ebony knobs. One small complaint: The output jack is very close to the strap button, which means that any cord with a straight plug will get crushed when you lean the guitar against an amp.

The Semi Hollow sounds warm, lively, and more *acoustic* than any guitar I've heard with a log in it. There's not a trace of honkiness in its voice, and everything sounds even and balanced with ample lows, nice mid-range color, and silky highs. These qualities are revealed when amplified too, as the Semi Hollow has an inspiring sense of dimension that makes it a joy to play cleanly or with a moderate amount of distortion for some bluesy texture. The body's lightweight spruce center block (which has been carved to remove mass where it's not needed) helps to mitigate

any howls at higher volumes, and it also contributes to the guitar's easy transition into singing sustain and controllable feedback when you dig in a little through a gained-up amp or overdrive pedal. The sweet tones of the Semi Hollow make it a natural choice for jazz and styles such as country swing, where its clear and articulate voice brings out the nuances in complex harmonies and melodic lines. It's also a cool guitar for blues, roots rock, and pretty much anything else that you'd point a semi-hollow at. The light weight of this instrument makes it easy to shoulder for long stretches, which is something I *can't* say about a certain Gibson ES-335 that I have. The Sadowsky is closer to a hollowbody ES-330 in heft, which makes it a real bantam in the world of semi-hollow guitars!

What a hip guitar, and one that deserves a life of making music for a dedicated owner. Yes, it's expensive, but the Semi Hollow is a high-end instrument for discriminating players, and to that end it earns an Editors' Pick Award. —ART THOMPSON

## MODEL

## SEMI HOLLOW

CONTACT [sadowsky.com](http://sadowsky.com)

PRICE \$4,275 street

## SPECIFICATIONS

NUT WIDTH	1 11/16"
NECK	Mahogany
FRETBOARD	Amazon rosewood, 24.75" scale
FRETS	22
TUNERS	Gotoh with ebony buttons
BODY	Laminated 5-ply maple with carved spruce center block
BRIDGE	Tune-o-matic with stop tailpiece
PICKUPS	Sadowsky humbuckers
CONTROLS	Volume, Tone, 3-way switch
FACTORY STRINGS	Sadowsky Nickel Plated Steel, .011-.048
WEIGHT	6.78 lbs
BUILT	Japan
KUDOS	Excellent quality. Plays beautifully. Amazingly resonant tone.
CONCERNS	Wish the output jack was moved down a few inches.