

Musical details: Mayson M1/SCE

Canton now seems to have become the production center of affordable Chinese guitars. With twenty factories in the area Western manufacturers have a wide choice to find a production facility. Mayson is made in China, owned by Chinese and even a family business. Like another Chinese manufacturer Eastman they make beautiful guitars and introduce their own ideas. Owner Alex Wang continuously has his team working on renewing the structure of the acoustic guitar. He was first advised by some Americans, like Bob Taylor and Chris Martin and with this information he moved on to follow his own ideas. The result in all four series of Mayson is impressive. By NICKY Moeken.

Although Mayson states that their Marquis shape is their own invention, I do not believe that the slight deviations from commonly known Auditorium shape make a big difference. What amazes more are the finishing quality and the sense for details that Mayson showcases. One could complain about occasionally too much paint, and on our test model the topnut is just a little too wide. However, the construction of M1 in its price range is rather unique. Bindings are not made of plastic, but two species of genuine wood. The nut and bridge saddle are not made of Micarta or another composite, but of real bone. The inlay is sober and back and sides are made of laminated mahogany; those are the only cost savings you will find on this guitar. I don't like the strings much, they feel a bit sharp when bended. But now I start wining. From the moment you grab this baby the balance in sound will surprise you. The low E might be a little bit too low in volume, the other strings sound perfectly balanced. With a little bit of work on that E it should be solved in no time and from then on you can play for hours and hours while enjoying the pleasant sound.

Fishman's Sonitone with Sonicore

This might be an entry level guitar, still Mayson selected the extensive Sonitone system of Fishman. A Sonicore piëzo pickup is amplified by the active Sonitone preamp, with its soundhole mounted volume and tone controls. Playing live will be as flexible as it can be, and the sound of the electronics to me is surprisingly open and musical. Because of the soundhole the guitar is sensitive to feedback, so on stage I recommend using a feedback buster.

Keeping their secrets

I believe that Mayson should tell more about their unique sound concepts. They do this partially by showing a factory tour on their website (very nice!) but they don't reveal the secret of their unique soundbar construction. Off course it will solve itself: a small mirror was invented a long time ago and an experienced luthier will discover the changes immediately. An explanation from the side of Mayson however would leave a much bigger impression.

This instrument is a nice introduction to Mayson's abilities. A few months ago we reviewed the more expensive MS9/S. Once impressed by this entry model you would want to move on to the more expensive instruments based on special, solid woods. Mayson Guitars is here to stay and their group of followers will grow quickly.



In a glance

Mayson Musical Instrument Co., Ltd,
Hey Yuang Industry, Guangzhou, China
Model: M1/SCE Marquis model from the
 Luthier Series
Design and construction: Alex Wang, China

Retail price: € 495
 Left-handed available

Main Features:
 6-string acoustic Marquis model with a unique bracing construction and shape

Wood species:

- Solid Engelmann spruce for the top
- Laminated mahogany for the back and sides
- The neck is made of mahogany with an Indian rosewood fingerboard
- The bridge and headstock are made of rosewood
- For the braces they use Sitka spruce
- Rosette has rosewood rings
- The bindings are composed of two strips of wood: rosewood and maple

Dimensions:
 Total length: 103.7 cm
 Scale 64,5 cm
 Nut width: 4.27 cm
 12th fret width: 5.27 cm
 Radius: unknown

Electronics:
 Fishman Sonitone preamp with Sonicore piëzo pickup. Tone and volume controls are mounted inside the soundhole. The battery compartment is positioned next to the endpin jack.

Hardware:
 Produced in Taiwan, Mayson designed 372 AS open machine heads with a ratio of 14:1

- 20 nickel silver frets
- Two strap buttons
- Double action trussrod
- Bone nut and saddle

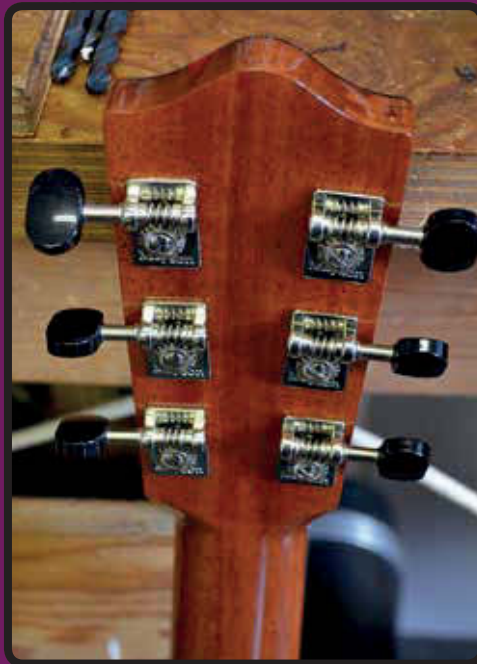
Accessories:

- 2 year warranty against manufacturing defects
- Trussrod adjustment wrench
- Care instruction with cleaning cloth
- D'Addario coated strings 0.012 Gauge

After a day

With a bone topnut and bridge saddle, wooden bindings instead of plastic and the modern Fishman electronics system the special attention of Mayson's staff are easily recognisable. Especially when considering the price range. The Mayson magic is in the positioning of the soundbars. The traditional X-bracing pattern was slightly modified resulting in a well balanced sound of each string. The lower volume of the E-string (especially audible when played amplified) was easy to solve. So to be honest, there is nothing to wine about. This is an incredible guitar at an incredible price.

With thanks to Verweij Music from Zaandam for providing us with the test model.



Vintage guitars

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