

Fender Alternative Reality Meteora HH

Written by P.G Fitzgerald

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Those readers who looked at the July issue may have read about my purchase of a Fender Sixty-Six from Adelaide's Derringers Guitar Store in Forestville store when I was visiting friends in July 2019. I'd originally gone there to purchase a Fender Meteora HH as these were not available in Sydney, but Derringers did have them online, but I wanted to play one first as they are a new offset shape and I wanted to feel what it was like to play.



I'd originally been interested in the original Fender Parallel Universe Meteora, but these were expensive being over three and a half grand and they were snapped up so quickly I didn't even get a chance to play one. They rarely pop up on the second-hand market.

The original online blurb of the Fender Parallel Universe Meteora was: "Throughout 2018, the Parallel Universe Collection has unveiled several innovative and impressive guitars that combined the DNA of Fender's classic models. There was the mischievous Troublemaker Tele, the regal Whiteguard Strat and the mind-bending Jazz-Tele combo, just to name a few.

Now, there is another instrument entering the Parallel Universe that has baffled one of the most brilliant guitarists out there today: Jim Root. Named the Meteora, this guitar is a completely new body shape from Fender boasting features that harken back to Fender's (ahem) roots.

Up until this point, the Meteora only existed in the dreams of Fender designer Josh Hurst. Hurst had toyed with the thought of the Meteora around in his head since 2011, but he fell in love with creating guitars as a child.

"I remember my dad sitting around the kitchen table with his buddies and they always said, 'I have this million-dollar idea,'" he said. "As a kid, I'm listening from a distance and I'm like, 'Why aren't they doing anything with these million-dollar ideas. I need to design this stuff!'"

"My initial goal was to become an inventor, but during the process, I discovered the guitar. I think everybody wants to become a guitar player at some point in their life, so I veered in that direction."

Over the years, Hurst did his research, diving into guitar books and magazines to see what was already on the market and to see where he could set himself apart. With the Meteora, he wanted to make something that was revolutionary while also recalling Fender's rich history.

Perhaps the most extreme design in this collection, the Meteora is a completely new offset body, with sleek and balanced lines evocative of a Jazzmaster that pair well with the American Vintage "Mid-'60s C"-shaped Jazzmaster neck.

And the sound is just as arresting, as the Meteora boasts a Custom Shop vintage-style bridge pickup and Custom Shop Twisted Tele neck pickup. In addition, its American Professional Telecaster bridge sports three compensated brass barrel saddles for accurate intonation and vintage-informed tones.

All of it comes together in a Butterscotch Blonde package with a black pickguard, recalling the Telecaster's 1952 roots. "To introduce something so unique to Fender, you have to introduce it in a familiar package," Hurst said. "The familiar package just happens to be a Telecaster configuration.

"My design ethic leads me towards more futuristic shapes, more angular shapes. With this particular guitar, I had quite a few iterations. But once I finally settled on one, I took it from the piece of paper and started processing it in the computer. I wanted to make something that was unbelievably traditional and very familiar to Fender, and then make something that was crazy futuristic to say, 'This is where it could lead.'"

Hurst knows that the Meteora is set to turn some heads once more people get a good look at its space-age flair. But he also believes that its undeniably Fender-centric aspects will make it a worthy addition to anyone's collection. "My goal is that I hope this guitar becomes a new platform for Fender. It's almost as if it's a Fender-style shape evolved," he said. "It's definitely unique. It's going to ruffle some feathers. It looks familiar to our product line, but it's different enough that it's going to get some attention." (By Mike Duffy, <https://www.fender.com/articles/gear/futuristic-and-familiar-inside-the-fender-parallel-universe-meteora>)



That was the original Fender Parallel Universe Meteora which I'd never got to play, so when the Fender Alternative Reality Meteora HH came out I was quite keen to get to play one to see what they were like. Although they had the same body shape they were a different animal altogether having a maple neck with pau ferro fingerboard, two humbucker pickups, Adjusto-Matic bridge, and a push-pull tone pot. Being made in Mexico, instead of the USA like the Fender Parallel Universe Meteora, it was also half the price.

If you'd read my previous article in the July Songsmith, you'd realise that I'd been seduced by the Fender Sixty-Six as it was the ultimate funk machine and I had a number of Fender guitars with humbucker pickups, like a Toronado and a 72 Thinline so felt I couldn't justify also buying a Fender Alternative Reality Meteora HH. So, I left it in Adelaide.

However, the way the guitar played and especially the smoothness of the pau ferro fingerboard haunted me for weeks. So, I bit the bullet and ordered the Fender Alternative Reality Meteora HH I had played in Adelaide's Derringers Guitar Store in Forestville. They only had a few in Surf Green and the not the red, or blue, I favoured, but I've come to like the colour now. Derringers had a great price as well, as well as free delivery, so within days I was playing it through my tube Vox amp, and it was magic. Is it the alder body, or the satin neck? Or, as usual, a whole combination of factors that make this a great guitar?



Some guitars you have to work at playing, but some play you in a magic way. Like my Fender Pawn Shop 51 and Fender Sixty-Six the Fender Alternative Reality Meteora HH has become a major part of my electric guitar arsenal.

Fender's blurb about the Fender Alternative Reality Meteora HH was:



"Fender's Alternate Reality Series is a limited-edition run of instruments where multiple Fender design clues are mixed and matched within a single model. But the Meteora HH takes those clues to another level.

Initially created by Fender designer Josh Hurst, the Meteora first saw the light of day in a single-coil version that highlighted 2018's Parallel Universe Collection.

That guitar turned heads with a sleek and completely new offset body evocative of a Jazzmaster. The Alternate Reality Meteora HH also remands attention, this time adding a pair of fat-sounding Player Series humbucking pickups, a comfortable "Modern C"-shaped neck profile and a stable Adjusto-Matic bridge.

A push-pull tone pot also splits the coils of the humbuckers, giving you classic Fender single-coil sound instantly." (By Mike Duffy, <https://www.fender.com/articles/gear/inside-the-alternate-reality-meteora-hh>).

Some guitars make you so glad you brought them and the Fender Alternative Reality Meteora HH really fits into that bracket as it makes you want to play it, then not put it down. These were a limited release, but you may pick one up second hand. Fender has released some really interesting guitars of late and the Meteora shape should be up there with the Telecaster and Stratocaster, but most of the guitar buying public tend to be very conservative. So, I'm lucky to like things left of centre! Like the Fender Alternative Reality Meteora HH!

