

Fender American Telecaster Ultra

Written by P.G Fitzgerald

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The Byron Bluesfest 2020 was cancelled due to the CoVid-19 pandemic sad to say, plus I can't see myself travelling overseas in the near future any time soon. I was sitting at home during the lockdown in April thinking about these things and how I'd never really brought a top of the line guitar. I'd paid off my mortgage so could afford a guitar of quality.



I like Fender Telecaster type guitars, but I've always thought it would be good to get one that had a carved body, like a Stratocaster and I'm not a big fan of the Telecaster three piece bridge. I've always thought I'd get a custom-made Fender Telecaster one day with all the specs I like.

Then, in a guitar magazine, I saw it! The new Fender American Telecaster Ultra! I looked around the Australian music shops and one of my favourites, Derringers in

Adelaide, had a really good price on them. Instead of near \$4 grand I only paid near to \$2.5 grand, a usual Derringer great price. They also shipped it to me free! So after taking the money out of my mortgage and transferring it to Derringers I awaited the guitars delivery.

In a few days it turned up in a Fender delivery box, which I eagerly opened to find a Fender Elite Moulded Travel Case. This really looked the ant's pants I can tell you. Opening up the box I smelt the odours of wood and resin typical of a new guitar. I picked up the guitar and admired the workmanship with the Cobra Blue alder body striking at me, especially with the "Modern D" maple neck that has rolled fingerboard edges. I played it sans amp, and it seemed a fine instrument.



Then I found that I had to put the locking nuts onto the strap as the guitar was already fitted with locking nuts. A bit of a pain I thought as you'd think they'd do that for you. Maybe they were thinking that the owner may want to use another strap? They could have provided more strap locks if that was the case.

So, after fixing the strap the guitar was played into a Vox amp. The sound was good, especially the Noiseless Vintage pickups and the 6-saddle American Tele bridge with chromed brass saddles. They seem to give a certain thickness to the sound compared to the other Teles I've got, almost comparable to humbucker pickups.

I like Teles and tend to find playing them comfortable. However, with the Ultra I found I was cutting myself on the bridge screws, so I had to send the guitar to

Allen Rigg for him to fix this problem – an annoyance on a top of the line guitar. The sculpted rear contours I thought would be great, but the guitar probably needed a front contour, like the Strat, as I'm hitting the controls when I play rhythm. I can change the place I play rhythm in to stop that, but it's not natural for me. Pit, a good mate of mine, brought a second-hand Fender Tele that was not made in the US and its satin neck is superb, while the Ultra's neck is supposed to be Satin Urethane, but the surface feels thicker. The last point is the bridge edge is sharp as I keep hitting it when playing rhythm, so I'll have to see as the last guitar I had that did that I traded in.

So, a little disappointed with the Fender Ultra Telecaster as the last two Fenders I brought, the Meteora HH and the Six Sixty were sooo good as they were so comfortable to play. I'll be persevering with the Ultra, trying to tame its idiosyncrasies, but sometimes the best, even with all the great reviews, might not be the guitar for you. That's why I still think it's best to play a guitar first before buying as compared to buying it off the Net. Maybe there's future modifications, or mods, I can do to help with the comfort and playability of the guitar? I've already had Allen Rigg do some fixes. I'll keep you updated.



Ed: I've hardly played this guitar since I brought it and its currently April 2026! I'm being urged by many friends to sell it especially as I'm looking at getting Fender to make a custom Meteora – a present to myself to cheer me up after my partner Jocelin left. Hopefully I'll have more luck with that guitar!