



# Peak Floyd

DEAN CUSTOM 550 FLOYD By Chris Gill

**D**EAN GUITARS MAY be best known for its angular Razorback, ML, V and Z models, but since the Eighties the company has also produced a wide variety of curvaceous Superstrat models, like the Bel Aire and Signature. The Custom 550 Floyd is the latest addition to the Dean legacy, featuring the timeless and popular offset double-cutaway contoured body shape, a pair of powerful EMG active humbuckers and a Floyd Rose 1000 bridge. Providing the playability and aggressive tones that have made Dean guitars the choice of guitarists like Rusty Cooley, Dave Mustaine, Vinnie Moore and Michael Schenker, the Custom 550 Floyd is ideal for players who are attracted to the Dean mojo but prefer a traditional guitar shape. It's also perfect for Superstrat aficionados who are looking for a high-performance shred machine.

**FEATURES** Although the Custom 550 is made from separate components that include a maple through-body neck, an elegantly arched mahogany top and a comfortably contoured mahogany body, it feels like one continuous, solid piece of wood, thanks to its smooth neck-to-body transition and glossy Classic Black or Metallic White finish. Expertly crafted in Korea, the Custom 550 features a 24-fret neck with a 25 1/2-inch scale, 1 11/16-inch nut width, slim C-shaped profile and ebony fingerboard with pearl dot inlays and a stylized pearl V at the 12th fret. Single-layer white ivoroid binding surrounds the fingerboard, while the headstock features five-layer multi-ply white-and-black binding.

All of the 550's hardware is finished in black, including the Grover mini tuners, master volume and master tone knobs, and Floyd Rose 1000 vibrato bridge/locking nut, providing "none more black" styling with the Classic Black finish and attractive two-tone contrast with the Metallic White finish. The pickups are the time-honored and true combination of an EMG 81 bridge humbucker and EMG 85 neck humbucker. Controls are as simple and straightforward as it gets, with a three-position blade pickup-selector switch and no push/pull coil tapping, phase switches or other shenanigans. The output jack is mounted on the side, keeping the guitar cord out of harm's way.

**PERFORMANCE** The combination of active EMG humbucking pickups, maple neck-through-body design and mahogany "wings" gives the Custom 550 an attractive balance of aggressive attack, tight bass, and warm, sustaining midrange. While its note



For video of this review, go to [GuitarWorld.com/Nov2012](http://GuitarWorld.com/Nov2012)

\* optimized for iPhone, iPad and Android!

## CHEAT SHEET



- **LIST PRICE** \$1,099  
**MANUFACTURER** Dean Guitars, [deanguitars.com](http://deanguitars.com)
- The maple neck-through body with mahogany wings design provides exceptionally comfortable playability and lively tones with an attractive balance of attack and warmth.
- Metal-approved features include active EMG 81 (bridge) and EMG 85 (neck) humbuckers and a Floyd Rose 1000 locking vibrato unit.
- **THE BOTTOM LINE**  
With its simple, streamlined electronics, outstanding construction and playability and attractive tones, the Dean Custom 550 Floyd deserves recognition as a new class of guitar—the Superstrat

definition is quite articulate, the guitar's tone never gets harsh or shrill. This 550 really thrives when played through an amp set to extremely high levels of gain, where chords retain character and single-note lines cut through as if a mixing engineer were riding the faders in your favor. But it also delivers sweet, robust clean tones and delightfully raunchy overdrive textures with plenty of balls and bite.

The Dean arrived in perfect tuning and stayed in tune even after the Floyd was subjected to 15 minutes of dive bombs and flutter flicks. The relatively flat medium jumbo frets provide a "fretless wonder" feel but with enough meat to dig into when bending notes without losing sustain, and the deep, contoured cutaways provide comfortable access all the way up the neck to the 24th fret. The easy-access compartment for the EMG pickups' single nine-volt battery pops open with a flick of the finger, allowing you to change batteries in seconds, with no tools.