



**FACTFILE**  
**TANGLEWOOD**  
**TVC KOA-C**

**DESCRIPTION** Cutaway electro. Made in China  
**PRICE** £499

**BUILD** Solid cedar top, laminated koa back and sides. Mahogany neck with 20-fret bound rosewood fingerboard. Rosewood bridge, bone nut and saddle, gold open-g geared tuners, two strap buttons. Undersaddle pickup; Fishman Presys with Volume, Bass, Middle, Treble, Phase, tuner and display, battery LED

**OPTIONS** See TVC KOA-S. Also all-koa TVC KOA (£469)

**LEFT-HANDERS** No  
**FINISH** Gloss natural

**SCALE** 650mm/25.6"

**NECK WIDTH**

**Nut** 43mm

**12th fret** 54mm

**DEPTH OF NECK**

**First fret** 20mm

**Ninth fret** 22.5mm

**STRING SPACING**

**Nut** 35mm

**Bridge** 56mm

**ACTION AS SUPPLIED**

**12th fret treble** 2.0mm

**12th fret bass** 2.4mm

**MAX RIM DEPTH** 115mm

**MAX BODY WIDTH** 403mm

**WEIGHT** 2.0kg/4.4lb

# TANGLEWOOD

## TVC KOA-C & TVC KOA-S

### ELECTRO-ACOUSTICS

For stripe, flame, colour and sheer showmanship, it's hard to beat the beauty of Hawaiian koa - even if it's only a veneer. Review by **Jerry Uwins**

**T**anglewood's Evolution Exotics already included models with figured timbers like flame maple, spalted maple and bubinga, and they've now added a koa trio. All three are cutaway grand auditorium electros, one all laminated koa, the other two with, respectively, a solid cedar and solid spruce top, both described as triple-A grade. A Fishman Presys system provides the common powering.

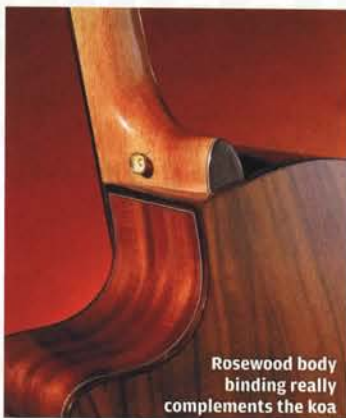
#### TVC KOA-C

Measuring just under 16" across the lower bouts and with a generous

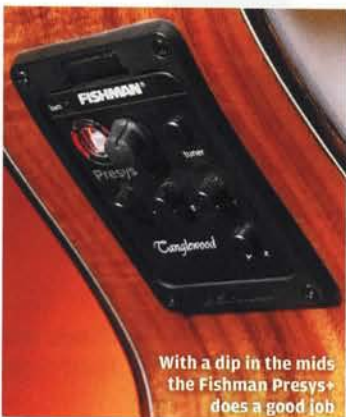
maximum rim depth of 115mm, this cedar-topped version is, like all the KOAs, an elegantly styled instrument. The body is bound in rosewood with inner white/black coachlinings and purflings, the soundhole rosette is abalone, and the outer koa veneer on our sample's bookmatched back displays some pretty gorgeous patterning in the attractive golden-brown hue that typifies this Hawaiian tonewood. Interestingly, the inside laminate looks like rosewood, something Tanglewood subsequently confirms, though it's not clear what timber comprises the in-between third

ply. The whole instrument is lacquered to a handsome high gloss, while the spade peghead carries a rosewood-bound, koa overlay to coordinate with the back and sides. The unbranded, gold Waverly-style machineheads lend a suitably retro touch and hold tuning well, though there's some slack and occasional stiffness in their gearing.

Kicking off at a mainstream 43mm across the nut, the full-scale, three-piece mahogany neck is fashioned to a fairly shallow, flat-backed 'C' profile, providing speedy, versatile playability, aided by decent string spacing at the bridge and well dressed fretting along



Rosewood body binding really complements the koa



With a dip in the mids the Fishman Presys+ does a good job



Left, the cedar KOA-C; right, the spruce KOA-S

**FACTFILE**  
**TANGLEWOOD TVC KOA-S**

DESCRIPTION Cutaway grand auditorium electro-acoustic. Made in China  
PRICE **£499**

BUILD As TVC KOA-C except for solid spruce top  
OPTIONS See TVC KOA-C  
LEFT-HANDERS No  
FINISH Gloss natural

SCALE 650mm/25.6"  
NECK WIDTH  
Nut 43mm  
12th fret 54mm  
DEPTH OF NECK  
First fret 20mm  
9th fret 22.5mm  
STRING SPACING  
Nut 35mm  
Bridge 55mm  
ACTION AS SUPPLIED  
12th fret treble 1.9mm  
12th fret bass 2.2mm  
MAX RIM DEPTH 115mm  
MAX BODY WIDTH 403mm  
FINGERBOARD RADIUS 14"  
WEIGHT 1.02kg/4.45lb

CONTACT Tanglewood Guitars, 01959 571600  
www.tanglewoodguitars.co.uk

the bound rosewood fingerboard. There are no front markers, but side dots supply the necessary references, and we're pleased to see a second strap button at the heel.

Fishman's Presys preamp is familiar territory, offering three-band EQ on small, centre-detented rotaries, phase reverse and an auto-chromatic tuner which usefully both mutes the system when powered and is usable acoustically. In the usual manner for Fishman's larger units, the control plate flips out for a quick battery change.

**Sounds**

We're in decent GA territory here. The acoustic delivery is respectably punchy, and the cedar top is clearly contributing warmth to the lows and mids, helping offset a slight tonal tinkliness from the top E and B. The Presys allows decent powered scope. The EQ bands have sensible ranges of cut and boost, and how they'll be set up depends on phase, as the sound is noticeably warmer when it's not reversed. The midrange takes on a hard edge when boosted, so flat or below is the answer for a natural voicing.

**TVC KOA-S**

This is essentially the same as the KOA-C, except sporting a spruce top. It's a very clean, close-grained example, with some generous if subtle cross-

silking, and the quality of its appearance justifies its AAA-grade claim, as does its stablemate's cedar front. The guitar's back isn't quite as strikingly patterned, but the visual quid pro quo is more vivid striping around the rims. Overall quality - save again for one or two stiffly geared tuners - is once more excellent, and the neck, fashioned to the same profile and dimensions, also scores highly for comfort and playability.

**Sounds**

Deceptively on first strum, the guitar seems to lack a little of the Cedar's acoustic fullness, but this is because the sound is a mite scooped in the mids by comparison, and the general tone - not surprisingly, given the spruce top - is a shade brighter. Dynamics, in fact, are on a par, and a hint of sweet zing to the easy sustain lends a pleasing sense of vibrancy that amply compensates for any perceived shortfall in projection. The amplified abilities of the Presys are pretty much a re-run of the C's, the only real difference, tonally, being that, due to the guitar's intrinsically sunnier timbre, it's wise to go easier on the treble band to avoid the top end sounding papery and a tad brittle. For some unknown reason, the S's system delivers a bit more gain, but that's not to say that the Cedar's is unduly lacking in this regard.

**Verdict**

Tanglewood has done a very commendable job with these KOAs. They look classy, thanks to the natural beauty of the koa wood, and they play easily. No doubt, these are definite short-list contenders for those in search of a quality, affordable GA electro. Which of the two you might choose is entirely down to tone: the relative warmth of the cedar model, or the brighter, subtly bouncier texture of the spruce. Take your pick.

FINAL SCORE	
TVC KOA-C	
Build Quality	18/20
Playability	18/20
Sound	18/20
Value for money	17/20
Looks	18/20
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>89%</b>

FINAL SCORE	
TVC KOA-S	
Build Quality	18/20
Playability	18/20
Sound	18/20
Value for money	17/20
Looks	18/20
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>89%</b>

**Like these? Try this...**

**Washburn**  
WG55SCE  
Solid spruce/koa grand auditorium includes wood/abalone body binding and a Fishman Presys+ system  
RRP **£462**

**DEAN**  
EXOTICA KOA  
Another cutaway GA-style, this time all made of koa. Features spoked wood rosette and three-band preamp with tuner  
RRP **£479**

**Martin**  
OMCX1KE  
Cutaway OM with solid spruce top, koa-patterned HPL back and sides and multi-layer Stratatond neck. Powering is a Presys+  
RRP **£807**