

## A Piece of History: The 1946 Martin Guitar

The Martin Guitar Company has a rich and storied history dating back to 1833 when Christian Frederick Martin Sr. founded the company in New York City. Since then, Martin has been producing high-quality guitars that have become synonymous with craftsmanship, quality, and superior sound. Throughout its history, Martin has produced many iconic guitars, but none are more coveted by collectors and players alike than the **1946 Martin guitar**.

The **1946 Martin guitar** is a unique instrument that represents the pinnacle of Martin's craftsmanship and innovation during the post-World War II era. During this time, Martin had just resumed production after a hiatus during the war, and the 1946 Martin guitar was a symbol of Martin's return to the market.



Martin acoustic guitar owned by Bob Dylan from the fall of 1959 to early 1961.  
EMP Permanent Collection

The 1946 Martin guitar was produced in a time when the company was experimenting with new designs and materials. This experimentation led to significant changes in the design and construction of Martin guitars, which resulted in improved sound quality and playability. The 1946 Martin guitar is an excellent example of the changes made during this period.

The key features and specifications of the 1946 Martin guitar include a dreadnought body shape, solid spruce top, solid mahogany back and sides, and scalloped bracing. The guitar also features a tortoiseshell pickguard and an ebony fingerboard with dot inlays. These features, combined with Martin's superior craftsmanship, result in a guitar that produces a warm and balanced tone that is highly sought after by players and collectors alike.

The significance of the 1946 Martin guitar in the context of Martin guitar history cannot be overstated. This guitar represents a transitional period in Martin's history, where the company was experimenting with new materials and designs to improve their guitars' sound and playability. The 1946 Martin guitar was one of the first Martin guitars produced after World War II, and it marked a significant return to the market for the company.

In conclusion, the 1946 Martin guitar is a legendary instrument that represents a significant period in Martin guitar history. The guitar's superior craftsmanship, innovative design, and warm tone have made it highly coveted by collectors and players alike. The 1946 Martin guitar is a true icon in the world of guitars and a testament to Martin's commitment to producing high-quality instruments.

## Construction and Design of the 1946 Martin Guitar

The **1946 Martin guitar** was built with high-quality materials and crafted using time-honored techniques that were perfected over the course of many years. The top, back, and sides of the guitar were made of solid wood, typically spruce and rosewood, which contributed to the guitar's rich and resonant sound.

The bracing of the **1946 Martin guitar** played a crucial role in shaping its sound. The guitar featured a scalloped X-brace pattern, which was designed to create a more flexible and responsive top. This allowed the top to vibrate freely, resulting in a more dynamic and expressive sound. The braces were also placed in strategic locations to control the flow of air inside the guitar, further enhancing its tonal balance and projection.

The body shape of the 1946 Martin guitar was a dreadnought, which was a relatively new design at the time. The dreadnought shape was first introduced by Martin in the early 1900s and was originally intended for use in country and western music. The shape quickly gained popularity due to its powerful and distinctive sound, and it remains one of the most iconic guitar designs to this day.

In terms of other design elements, the 1946 Martin guitar featured a number of decorative touches that added to its visual appeal. The guitar's headstock, for example, was adorned with an intricate inlay pattern, while the fingerboard and bridge were made of ebony, a dense and durable wood that provided a smooth and comfortable playing surface.

Overall, the construction and design of the 1946 Martin guitar were exemplary, and the instrument continues to be held in high esteem by guitar players and collectors alike. Its combination of high-quality materials, meticulous craftsmanship, and innovative design elements helped establish it as one of the finest guitars of its time, and it remains a prized possession for anyone lucky enough to own one.

## Sound and Tone of the 1946 Martin Guitar

The sound and tone of the 1946 Martin guitar are some of the most sought-after qualities of this

vintage instrument. The combination of its tonewoods, construction, and design elements produces a sound that is warm, clear, and articulate, with a balanced tone across all ranges.

The **1946 Martin guitar** features a solid Adirondack spruce top, which is known for its stiffness and ability to produce a powerful sound with plenty of volume and projection. The back and sides are made of solid Brazilian rosewood, which is revered for its rich, warm, and complex tone.

The use of scalloped X-bracing on the top and back of the guitar contributes to the 1946 Martin's unique sound. This bracing pattern allows for greater vibration of the top and back, resulting in more sustain and resonance.

The sound of the 1946 Martin guitar has been described as rich, full, and powerful, with a balance between bass, midrange, and treble that makes it ideal for a wide range of playing styles. It has a clear and articulate sound that works well for fingerstyle playing and is also well-suited to strumming and flatpicking.

Compared to other Martin guitar models and competitors, the 1946 Martin guitar stands out for its warmth and richness of tone. It has a distinct character and voice that is instantly recognizable to experienced guitar players and enthusiasts.

Expert reviews of the sound and tone of the 1946 Martin guitar have been overwhelmingly positive, with many noting its exceptional playability and versatility. The guitar's sound has been compared to that of other vintage Martins, such as the 1930s and 1940s models, which are also highly prized for their tone and sound quality.

In conclusion, the 1946 Martin guitar is revered for its rich, warm, and complex tone, which is the result of its high-quality tonewoods, scalloped X-bracing, and other design elements. Its sound has been praised by experts and guitar enthusiasts alike and is considered one of the most significant qualities of this vintage instrument.

## Playing the 1946 Martin Guitar

The **1946 Martin guitar** is known for its excellent playability, which is why it has remained so popular with musicians for over seven decades. The guitar's neck is comfortable to hold and play, and the fretboard is smooth and easy to navigate.

The action on the 1946 Martin guitar is low and easy to play, which is especially important for fingerstyle guitarists. The guitar's frets are well-finished, allowing for easy bending and sliding, and the intonation is precise, making the guitar sound in tune across the fretboard.

One of the unique features of the 1946 Martin guitar is its scalloped X-bracing, which allows for greater resonance and responsiveness than other bracing styles. This makes the guitar extremely versatile and suitable for a wide range of playing styles, including fingerpicking, flatpicking, and strumming.

In terms of weight and balance, the 1946 Martin guitar is well-balanced and easy to hold, making it comfortable to play for extended periods. The guitar's size is also ideal for playing on stage or in the studio, as it is not too large or bulky.

Overall, the 1946 Martin guitar is an excellent instrument to play, and its exceptional playability is a significant reason why it is so highly sought after by musicians and collectors alike. Its versatility and ease of use make it suitable for a wide range of playing styles and genres, from folk and country to blues and rock.



## The Value and Rarity of the 1946 Martin Guitar

The 1946 Martin guitar is highly valued and sought after by collectors and musicians alike due to its rarity, history, and exceptional sound quality. As one of the earliest post-World War II models produced by the Martin company, the 1946 Martin guitar is considered a highly collectible item.

In terms of market value, the 1946 Martin guitar is considered a valuable investment. Prices for vintage guitars, especially those in good condition, have been steadily rising over the past few decades, and the 1946 Martin guitar is no exception. According to Guitar Center, prices for vintage Martin guitars have been increasing by an average of 10% per year since the 1970s.

The rarity of the **1946 Martin guitar** also adds to its value. Only a limited number of these guitars were produced, and many have been lost, damaged, or destroyed over the years. As a result, the remaining guitars are highly sought after by collectors and musicians alike.

In addition to its rarity and market value, the 1946 Martin guitar is also highly valued for its exceptional sound quality. Vintage Martin guitars are known for their warm, rich tone, and the 1946 Martin guitar is no exception. The combination of high-quality materials and expert craftsmanship results in a sound that is both powerful and nuanced.

Overall, the value and rarity of the 1946 Martin guitar make it a highly prized possession for collectors and musicians alike. Whether you are a vintage guitar enthusiast looking to add a valuable piece to your collection, or a musician in search of a guitar with exceptional sound quality, the 1946 Martin guitar is a highly sought-after instrument that is sure to impress.

## Maintaining and Caring for the 1946 Martin Guitar

Like any other vintage instrument, a 1946 Martin guitar requires special care and maintenance to ensure its longevity and preserve its value. Here are some tips for maintaining and caring for a 1946 Martin guitar:

1. Keep the guitar in a stable environment: Vintage guitars are sensitive to changes in temperature and humidity. Ideally, a 1946 Martin guitar should be kept in a room with a stable temperature and humidity level, preferably between 60-75 degrees Fahrenheit and 45-55% relative humidity.
2. Use a high-quality guitar case: A good guitar case will protect the guitar from dust, scratches, and other damage. Make sure the case is the right size for the guitar and that it is properly padded.
3. Clean the guitar regularly: Use a soft, dry cloth to wipe down the guitar after each use. For more thorough cleaning, use a slightly damp cloth and a small amount of mild soap. Avoid using any abrasive or harsh cleaning agents that could damage the finish.
4. Change the strings regularly: Strings that are old or worn can cause the guitar to sound dull and lifeless. Change the strings on a **1946 Martin guitar** regularly, at least once every few months, or more frequently if you play the guitar frequently.
5. Check the guitar for any signs of damage: Regularly inspect the guitar for any cracks, scratches, or other signs of damage. If you notice any issues, take the guitar to a professional luthier for repair.
6. Keep the guitar away from direct sunlight: Prolonged exposure to direct sunlight can cause the finish of a 1946 Martin guitar to fade or even crack. Avoid leaving the guitar in direct sunlight for extended periods.
7. Handle the guitar with care: Vintage guitars are delicate instruments, and even small accidents can cause significant damage. When handling a 1946 Martin guitar, always be gentle and take care not to bump or drop the instrument.

By following these tips, you can help ensure that your 1946 Martin guitar remains in top condition for years to come. Regular maintenance and care will not only help preserve the guitar's value but also ensure that it continues to sound great.

## Buying a 1946 Martin Guitar

When it comes to purchasing a vintage instrument like a 1946 Martin guitar, there are a number of factors to consider to ensure that you are getting a quality instrument that is worth the investment. Here are some tips to help you make the best purchasing decision:

1. **Research:** Before you start looking for a **1946 Martin guitar**, it's important to do your research. Read up on the history of Martin guitars, as well as the specific features and characteristics of the 1946 model. This will help you better understand what to look for in a potential purchase and give you a better sense of what you can expect from the guitar.
2. **Condition:** One of the most important factors to consider when buying a 1946 Martin guitar is its condition. Vintage guitars can vary widely in terms of their condition, so it's important to thoroughly inspect any potential purchase for signs of damage or wear. Look for cracks, scratches, or any other damage to the body of the guitar, as well as any issues with the neck or frets.
3. **Authenticity:** Another key factor to consider is the authenticity of the guitar. Because vintage instruments are highly sought after, there are unfortunately many fakes and reproductions on the market. Make sure to do your due diligence and work with a reputable dealer who can guarantee the authenticity of the instrument.
4. **Price:** Vintage instruments like the **1946 Martin guitar** can be quite expensive, so it's important to consider the price and whether it is worth the investment. Make sure to do your research on the current market value of the guitar and compare prices from different sellers to ensure that you are getting a fair deal.
5. **Playability:** Finally, it's important to consider the playability of the guitar. While vintage instruments can have a certain allure, it's important to remember that they were designed for a different time and may not have the same playability and comfort as more modern instruments. Make sure to play the guitar yourself or have a professional musician play it for you to ensure that it meets your standards in terms of sound and playability.

Overall, purchasing a 1946 Martin guitar requires a significant investment of time and money, but with careful research and consideration, it can be a valuable addition to any guitar collection.

## The Significance of the 1946 Martin Guitar in Martin Guitar History

The **1946 Martin guitar** is a significant piece of Martin guitar history, and its influence can still be felt today. In this section, we will discuss the role of the 1946 Martin guitar in the development of Martin guitar history and how it influenced later Martin guitar models.

The 1946 Martin guitar is a product of the post-World War II boom in the United States, and it reflected the country's renewed optimism and prosperity. At the same time, Martin guitar was at the forefront of innovation in guitar design, and the 1946 model was a prime example of this.

One of the most significant innovations in the 1946 Martin guitar was the implementation of scalloped bracing. This design feature allowed the guitar to produce a richer, more resonant sound than earlier models. The 1946 Martin guitar also featured a modified V-shaped neck, which made it more comfortable to play than previous models.

The **1946 Martin guitar** was also notable for its use of high-quality materials. The top of the guitar was made from solid Adirondack spruce, which is known for its exceptional tonal qualities. The back and sides of the guitar were made from solid Brazilian rosewood, which is also highly regarded for its tonal characteristics.

The 1946 Martin guitar's influence can be seen in later Martin guitar models, particularly in the Martin D-28 guitar. The D-28 was introduced in the 1930s but was significantly redesigned in the 1940s, and it incorporated many of the design features of the 1946 Martin guitar.

The D-28 guitar featured scalloped bracing, a modified V-shaped neck, and the use of high-quality materials like Adirondack spruce and Brazilian rosewood. These features helped make the D-28 one of the most popular and sought-after Martin guitar models.



The **1946 Martin guitar** also played a role in shaping the direction of Martin guitar design in the years to come. It marked a significant departure from the traditional Martin guitar design, which

had remained largely unchanged for decades. The success of the 1946 Martin guitar and its influence on later models encouraged Martin guitar to continue to innovate and experiment with new designs.

In conclusion, the 1946 Martin guitar is a crucial piece of Martin guitar history and a prime example of Martin guitar's innovative spirit. Its design and features had a significant impact on later Martin guitar models, particularly the D-28, and helped shape the direction of Martin guitar design for years to come. The **1946 Martin guitar**'s enduring influence is a testament to its exceptional craftsmanship and the vision of its designers.