

Cigar Box Guitars Look, Sound Unique

Cigar box guitars have been around for more than 150 years and there's still a lot of demand for them, says Tim Wall of Thundaburke CBGs in Whitakers, N.C. He's been making customized cigar box guitars full-time for the past five years.

"They date back to the Civil War when people didn't have the money to buy a guitar. They'd build one," he says.

Cigar boxes are made of cedar that doesn't rot. Bugs don't like them and they're light, so they vibrate well. They have a very distinct sound.

"I've been a musician all my life," he says. "When I saw my first one, I thought to myself that I'd never seen anything like this and bought it on the spot."

After buying multiple cigar box guitars, Tim's wife, Lisa, suggested he try to make one. Tim's years as a machinist came in handy when he started the project.

He started with one, built a second, which grew into three guitars, and then it took off from there. As his business grew, he began selling at his local flea market, music festivals, and through his online Etsy store.

"I've got a shop out back, and I go out there and build every day," Wall says. "I can build a simple CBG model in less than two days. Normally, I have several going at the same time."

"I'll cut the boxes, make the necks, get them all sanded and stained," he says, "and then I'll start putting them together, which is the easy part. Getting to that point takes time."

He also does custom guitars, which are fully electric, fully fretted, fully toned, and completed in about 20-30 hrs.

"I can do just about anything on a guitar," Wall says. "If they have a certain kind of guitar they like, I can make one that looks just like it. I've done a lot of what I call 'tribute



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builds,' including cars, hot rods, and many other things."

He makes just 3-string and 4-string guitars because 6-string guitars are "a whole different animal."

With all the guitars he's made during the years, he still has a favorite that has a unique name.

"I call it Old Grumpy," he says with a laugh. "It's just made out of an old metal desk drawer with a little rust on it. It's a 3-string guitar that has an actual upside-down dog bowl inside of it to use as a resonator. That gives it a unique sound."

Prices vary based on what each customer wants on the CBG. The most recent prices on Wall's Etsy site range from \$130 to \$225.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Tim and Lisa Wall, 112 South New St., Whitakers, N.C. 27892 (ph 252-673-2051; timlisa@embarqmail.com; www.etsy.com/shop/Thundaburkecbgs).



The strawberry bench is a 12-ft. long, 44-in. wide stand with a bench top at 35-in. tall made of commercial-grade galvanized tubing. It accommodates up to 48 gallon-size mesh bags to hold the growing media and strawberry crowns.

Easy Pickin' Strawberry Bench

The IBEX strawberry bench makes it easier to plant, irrigate and maintain plants, all without stooping.

"It's off the ground so there are no disease issues. Nutrients can be run through the drip lines getting the optimum performance for each plant," says Richard Barnes, fruit producer, researcher and inventor of the system. "The berries are high quality. We're getting \$7/lb. and can't supply enough."

Through work with the USDA, universities and grants, he developed the system for strawberries on his 10-acre berry farm.

The result is two products, one for homeowners and the other for commercial growers who sell U-pick berries.

The strawberry bench is a 12-ft. long, 44-in. wide stand with a bench top at 35-in. tall made of commercial-grade galvanized tubing. It accommodates up to 48 gallon-size mesh bags to hold the growing media and strawberry crowns. The kits come with drip emitters, stakes, tubes and a pressure regulator/filter ready to screw into a garden hose.

"It's hydroponic, so it's soilless using coconut coir, Canadian sphagnum moss, and

perlite, so it's light and holds water well. The bags are fabric, so they drain and keep the soil cooler, and they air prune as the roots grow out. When roots touch the bag, it creates more feeder roots."

A basic system comes with 24 bags, irrigation and a poly weather guard for \$1,849. Additional options include a misting system to protect plants from frost.

"The commercial system is pretty much the same, but 102-ft. long and they stake into the ground. They are unique in that you can put a tunnel on top, but they are less expensive than a high tunnel," Barnes says.

So far, a couple of producers have purchased 20 benches (or more) for their operations.

"They are very accessible. We have many elderly people and people in wheelchairs who come to our farm to pick," he notes. It's also easier for workers to pick for the ready pick market.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, IBEX Growing Systems, 3850 Concept Court, Suite 101, Fort Wayne, Ind. 46808 (ph 800-506-6615; hello@IBEXgrows.com; www.ibexgrows.com).



Each year the DSC holds a gathering of masons. In 2021 they had 33 masons build 52 ft. of 4-ft. tall wall in 25 hrs., working in 2-hr. shifts.

Learning To Build Dry Stone Walls

The Dry Stone Conservancy (DSC) is the place to go to learn how to build or restore old stone walls. The organization restores free-standing and retaining walls and stone structures. It's also teaching a new generation of masons to do the work.

"All you need is a hammer, a chisel and a strong back, and you can make it happen," says Russell Waddell.

The DSC does the rest. They have been doing workshops for the past 25 years, holding from four to six classes in the spring and again in the fall. In the spring of 2022,

several classes will be held in N.Y. state and a few in Kentucky, with one possible in Kansas.

"Classes sell out pretty quickly," says Waddell. "We've trained 5,000 to 6,000 dry stone masons over the years."

Dry stone masons lay up two courses of face stones with small stones (heating stones) filling in the gaps and pin stone wedges. Larger face stones are usually laid in the first lift on a foundation of crushed rock. Smaller stones are used in the upper or second lift. A top layer, called cope stones, adds height and cap the wall, all without

mortar. The classic stone wall narrows as it goes up.

The DSC was created in response to the pending loss of such walls. In the mid-1990's, a roadway called the Harris Pike near Lexington, Ky., was to be widened. Doing so was impossible without destroying miles of historically significant, tourist-attracting, scenic dry stone walls to either side of the roadway. The state funded the training of masons to tear down and reconstruct the walls. The people involved established the DSC modeled on the Dry Stone Walling Association of Great Britain.

"They put us in contact with masons there who were brought over to train masons here," says Waddell. "Dry stone walls are a pretty significant part of our region, and soon people who owned farms or managed cemeteries were contacting us as to how they could rebuild their failing walls."

From there the organization grew, finding demand for expertise and training around the country. "We have worked in Georgetown, D.C., and a large number of national parks. We recently put in 800 ft. of dry stone wall in the Tall Grass Prairie in Kansas and have rebuilt a CCC (Civilian Conservation Corps) wall at a small roadside park in Minnesota. The CCC did dry stone retaining walls all

over the country."

Each year the DSC holds a gathering of masons. In 2021 they had 33 masons build 52 ft. of 4-ft. tall wall in 25 hrs., working in 2-hr. shifts.

"Workshop participants include homeowners who have retaining walls and want to maintain them to landscape contractors who want to offer the service to engineers who want to incorporate dry stone walls into their designs," says Waddell. "We offer three levels of courses, from introductory for people who are curious to intermediate and higher levels for those with some experience."

For those who don't want to build or restore walls themselves, the DSC maintains a list of trained masons around the country. Prices will vary by site, stones and the equipment needed.

"We have old stone walls getting hit by cars or otherwise in need of repair," says Waddell. "Repair is pretty straightforward but can run \$150 per linear foot. It could be more if building a new wall."

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