



Taylor Gold Label 814e SB

The American guitar giant delivers a 4K Dolby Atmos version of a classic flat-top with a new Super Auditorium body style and tone to spare

By Chris Gill

▶ **“GOLD LABEL” IS** a designation usually found on an upper echelon of “vice” products like spirits and tobacco, but considering the addictions many of us have to guitars it’s perfectly fitting that Taylor gave the “Gold Label” name to its latest collection of upscale acoustic guitars.

Taylor describes the Gold Label Collection as instruments with an “old soul,” but it has developed a ton of new features to accomplish that.

The Taylor Gold Label 814e with its mid-size new Super Auditorium body style and luxurious appointments is the kind of acoustic that’s perfect for snuggling up with in your favorite leather chair, a glass of Scotch and a fine cigar within reach.

It’s a full-size guitar that measures 16 ¼ inches across the lower bout and is 4 ½ inches deep, but it doesn’t feel unwieldy or bulky. Its beautifully rounded curves evoke many of Gibson’s coveted vintage Depression-era flat-tops.

Also new is the fanned V-Class bracing pattern with braces affixed by old-school hide glue and a long-tenon neck joint where the neck is attached to the body without glue.

Also of note, the headstock shape and Taylor logo are markedly different from current Taylor guitars – signifying an exciting new change and musical voice for this collection.

Tonewood options for the Gold Label Collection are Honduran rosewood or figured Hawaiian koa for the back and sides, with all current models having a torrefied Sitka spruce top. The neck is finely crafted from neo-tropical mahogany with a West African Crelicam ebony fretboard.

That sounds like one hell of a prix fixe menu, and indeed the quality and combination of those woods make a wonderful recipe for tasty tone.

Built-in LR Baggs Element VTC electronics preserve all the personality and nuances of the guitar’s natural acoustic tone, making for an equally pleasant experience when plugging in.

We were sent the “SB” model with Honduran rosewood back and sides, and featuring a honey-amber hued sunburst finish with a warm, smoky glow.

Filigreed “Continental” mother-of-pearl inlays decorate the headstock, fretboard and pickguard, contributing an elegantly understated vintage visual aesthetic that

“An investment-grade, pro-quality guitar that will provide decades of playing enjoyment before it becomes a treasured family heirloom”

complements the natural beauty of the wood grain.

The Gold Label 814e’s neck is sort of a modern interpretation of a pre-war neck, featuring a modern slim profile with a shallow curve and just the slightest hint of a “V” peak near the center.

The action is super-comfortable, making it easy to play all the way up the neck to where the body meets the neck at the 14th fret with solid, precise note definition and no fret buzz.

Playability and sounds

The Gold Label 814e is truly a new guitar with an old soul. Its punchy bass, singing mids and shimmering treble remind me of smaller L-2 flat-tops from the early ’30s, only the Taylor is like the 4K Dolby Atmos version compared to the Gibson’s DVD resolution.

The sound is focused, loud and dynamic with sweet harmonic overtones and rich, reverb-like resonance. The balance between single-note lines and chords is remarkable, almost like having a sound engineer riding faders to match levels.

Although the Gold Label 814e is not inexpensive, it’s also not overly expensive and it provides excellent value for players looking for a top-quality acoustic with sound quality that will mellow and mature gorgeously over the years to come.

Even brand new from the factory it is exquisitely touch-responsive, delivering notes with full body even when the strings are delicately stroked or plucked. It also has a distinct rich character that’s instantly classic – as ideal for blues fingerstyle as it is for more modern rhythmic explorations.

The LR Baggs Element VTC system keeps up no matter how hard or soft you play, never getting overdriven when the guitar is played vigorously and remaining whisper quiet when the strings are silent.

GUITAR WORLD VERDICT



The Taylor Gold Label 814e provides tones that are as dazzling and warm as its upscale, classic looks. Built from top-quality tonewoods with innovative new features and meticulous craftsmanship, it’s an investment-grade, pro-quality guitar that will provide decades of playing enjoyment before it becomes a treasured family heirloom.

PROS

- + A dazzling flat-top acoustic with vintage-style looks.
- + Timeless sound.
- + Very comfortable slim neck profile that provides stellar playability.
- + Natural-sounding built-in LR Baggs Element VTC pickup and preamp system.

CONS

- Expensive, although the price is justified by the materials and craftsmanship.

SPECS

TYPE: Super Auditorium acoustic guitar
TOP: Torrefied Sitka spruce with fanned V-class bracing
BACK AND SIDES: Honduran rosewood
NECK: Mahogany, with long-tenon joint
SCALE LENGTH: 25.5”
FINGERBOARD: West African Crelicam ebony with filigreed “Continental” MOP inlays, 15” radius
FRETS: 20
NUT/WIDTH: Tusq/44.45mm
BRIDGE/SADDLES: Honduran Rosewood “Curve Wing”, bone
ELECTRONICS: L.R. Baggs Element VTC
HARDWARE: Gotoh 510 tuners in Antique Chrome with ebony buttons, faux Tortoise Over Ivoroid with Engraved “Continental” Motif
FINISH: Sunburst [as reviewed], Natural
CASE/GIG BAG: Taylor Deluxe “British Cocoa” vinyl hardshell guitar case included

