

Oriolo™

GUITAR COMPANY, LLC.

Built Right

Oriolo Guitar Company

Who knows why we do what we do. How can we explain the paths we take in life? We can all point to a handful of events, people, places and things that have dramatically affected and determined the course of our lives. In retrospect we gain deeper insight into our life-long path in the making, observing the most significant of life's influences and personal aspirations that led us to where we are now. Here's how it worked out for Don Oriolo when a simple act of kindness instantly manifested into an inspiration of love for the guitar at an early age,



then over the years evolved into a passionate dream to build some very special guitars, and in the most providential order of time—put all the people in place to make his dream a reality when he launched Oriolo Guitar Company in 2010. Don has spent most of his ca-

reer in the music industry as a talented musician, songwriter and producer and many years as an executive at some of the biggest music publishing companies. He continues to work in the music industry, is a studio guitar player and an avid guitar collector.

For the last 25 years, Don has been the “Felix the Cat Guy” as the CEO of Felix the Cat Productions, Inc. His father Joe Oriolo was the co-creator of the modern day Felix cartoon character and Don took over the Felix the Cat franchise when his father passed away in 1985. Felix the Cat has been his “creative muse” since he was a child. He wanted to share the beloved cartoon character of his youth with old and new generations and has successfully reintroduced Felix the Cat into the International Market.

Adding to his extensive list of talent, Oriolo is a prolific painter, cartoonist and writer. His artwork in every medium can be found in galleries around the world. He was named artist of the year 2015 by Fine Art Magazine and his third book of Felix the Cat reached #5 as an Amazon best seller. The life-long and personal identification with the cartoon fuels his creative appetite as he paints almost daily using Felix as the subject. Painting Felix is his outlet of personal expression and a dedication of his work in remembrance of those who helped him become the artist he is today.

Growing up he played various instruments and has been captivated with music throughout his life. His involvement in the music industry ignited his dream to create his own guitar company. Don is an instinctive soul and on one evening in Las Vegas while having dinner with executives from Martin Guitars he put his dream into action—the Oriolo Guitar Company.

In the realm of living in a highly creative environment Don revealed his vision of a new line of instruments as he presented his notebook full of acoustic and electric guitars into the Felix the Cat art department. With his unlimited imagination and working in a world without creative limits— from concept, design, and being crafted by the hands of world class luthiers— Oriolo guitars are created.

It's hard to enter the guitar world and then to be unique and remain commercially popular. There are just so many ways to sensibly design a guitar and players are fickle in what they find acceptable, let alone inspiring and they don't dare stray far from the familiar shapes of the past. Don's design goal is “putting fun back into playing music”. “Combining both guitars and Felix the Cat seemed like a perfect combination for me.” Each Oriolo guitar is unique featuring his sketchbook designs and the craftsmanship of world-class luthiers. Oriolo has 30 different acoustic and acoustic bass designs, over 30 electric guitar and bass builds, over a dozen ¾ size

-continued-

acoustic guitars and 16 varied concert-grade ukulele models. He graciously sent us his two favorite electric guitars.

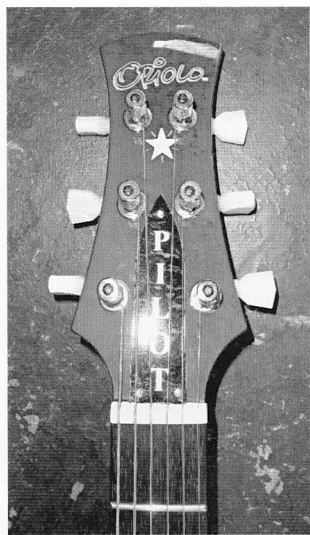
TQR: What was your inspiration to create the Oriolo Guitar Company?

Since I was 7 years old—my cousin Judy gave me her Stella guitar and I've been in love with guitars, the shape, the smell, the sound and design. After I designed the successful $\frac{3}{4}$ Felix guitars and the D28 guitars for Martin my desire was to create my own line and so I did.

TQR: Can you identify the guitar models from the past that have inspired you most significantly?

Definitely my first electric guitar—the Gretsch anniversary model with Bigsby vibrato and the contour of the neck of my 66 Fender Jaguar...not to mention the Les Paul Junior helped me formulate the look and feel.

TQR: The Markus Super 6 and the Pilot are both very toneful and unique guitars. Will you describe how each was inspired and developed? (Our version of the Super 6 and Pilot features a Bigsby tremolo)



When I showed my then art director, Rod Ollerenshaw a sketchbook of my designs he noticed one sketch in the back of the book and asked me what it was. I said "don't pay any attention to that... that's just a doodle of how I drew a guitar when I was a kid". Rod replied "I love it, that's a winner". Note that Rod is a devotee and a collector and player. I asked a confirming "Really?" and made a prototype named the Markus, named after my first grandson. The Pilot was an

amalgam of the various solid body guitars that I've always loved to play. The cutaways are similar to the FEO1 if you look, they are very much in homage to Felix the cat's ears.

TQR: What has been the most surprising aspect of creating a guitar company?

Probably the instant acceptance of the look and feel of the guitars by so many high profile guitar players not to mention the public at large. It's a great feeling.

TQR: Which is your favorite Oriolo model and what's on

the drawing board for the future?

My favorites to date are the Markus, the Pilot and the Helix tone wood spruce top curly maple sides and back. It's the acoustic that I play when I'm out. It always draws attention. Right now, I'm working on a couple of signature guitars for various famous guitarists and that's very exciting.

Markus Super 6

This Oriolo guitar features a semi-hollow body. The Markus Super 6 features a 22 fret set neck, rosewood finger board, dual humbuckers, f-holes and a Bigsby. Tuners are Kluson with dual action, frets are medium jumbo and the neck is a uniform C shape. Weight is 8.05 pounds. Despite the Markus' funky body style, it is a smooth player with a good feel. The



neck shape and feel are righteous and the Bigsby works perfectly on this guitar. The pickups are clear with good midrange and not tinny in the treble frequencies. The neck pickup alone is warm and well defined. The middle setting is slightly brighter with good definition, and the bridge pickup

is bright still with good bass and midrange, and a treble character that is pleasing without being too strident. While the body style will require you make a leap from what you are accustomed to, the Markus is a good playing and toneful guitar. Quest forth...*TQ*

Oriolo Pilot

Here is another excellent import from Oriolo. The solid body Pilot features a single humbucking pickup and Bigsby on a mahogany body and maple neck. The rosewood fingerboard features custom X pearloid inlay fret markers and the frets are medium jumbo and finished nicely. Tuners are Kluson, adjustable from the top and back. The bridge is a standard size and there is a two-way toggle switch for the pickup between the volume and tone controls.

The neck is a uniform size moderate C shape. Frets are neatly installed, well dressed with no rough edges. The guitar weighs 7.9 pounds.

-continued-



The pickup is bright and detailed. In the first position the pickup sounds clear and bright, in the second position it acquires more girth and power, producing a powerful tone with sustain at higher volume levels. The thick tone is excellent for hard rockin' and the clean sound of the pickup in the first position is a good all-purpose sound. The guitar plays extremely well, and tunes up nicely.

It is also extremely well made, with a perfect worn cherry finish and a good feel. Somewhat reminiscent of a Melody Maker or

Les Paul Junior, the Pilot plays very well, sounds good and the price is right. Quest forth...*TQ*

oriloguitars.com

OrioloTM
GUITAR COMPANY, LLC.

