

Gibson Sunburst Les Pauls From '58 To '60

# THE BEAUTY OF THE 'BURST

By Yasuhiko Iwanade

Foreword By Ted McCarty



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# **THE BEAUTY OF THE 'BURST**

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Gibson Sunburst Les Pauls From '58 To '60

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I have known Yasuhiko Iwanade since 1982 and have often admired his work. He has written some articles about me and I am very pleased to be given the opportunity to write this foreword for this book.

This book of his is about the Gibson Les Paul model. It was designed and marketed during my 18 years as president of Gibson Guitar Company, and was the first solid body guitar in the long history of Gibson.

The first prototype, which I took to Delaware Watergap to show to Les Paul was finished in Sunburst. Though it was not cherry sunburst, it was definitely a sunburst finish. It was so natural for a Gibson guitar at that time to be finished in that color. It was only after Les's involvement when the finish was changed to gold. It stayed that way until the change to cherry sunburst in '58.

The wood for the top, fiddleback maple, was very difficult to get even in those days. To make those book-matched Les Paul tops, which were exactly 1/2 inch thick, we had to start from an odd size lumber. Larger lumberyards tended to cut maple in regular 4/4 which was too thin for our use. They also did not like to sort out those figured logs as it interfered with the flow of production. Eventually, we had to call in several small lumberyards as our suppliers. They were able to accommodate our needs because of their size.

Since its birth in '52, Les Paul Regular had a few minor changes and those made from '58 to '60 were the last of the single cutaway design made during my years. It is simply amazing to learn that even after so many years, it still is one of the most sought after electric guitars ever made.

Again, I am pleased to be included in this work of exploring and discussing this model of guitar.

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*Theodore M. McCarty*

October 1996  
Theodore M. McCarty







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SERIAL NUMBER LIST

SUNBURST LES PAUL PHRASEOLOGY

# THE BEAUTY OF THE 'BURST



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S U N B U R S Y

1958

L E S P A U L

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1958

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LES PAUL

**8 3096**

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# 'BURST VIEW

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BACK



**HEADSTOCK**



A 1958 owned by Slash of Guns N' Roses fame. It truly has an appearance of a road warrior having gone through hundreds of battlefields. Note elbow wear on body edge, missing finish around tone knobs, and deep picking wear on pickguard As to the serial numbers, this is one of the lowest being 3096.

## **'BURST VIEW**

Deep, blackened weather check lines tells the guitar's history on the road. Note picking wear on the bridge pickup mounting ring.

## **BACK**

The back also shows heavy use over the years. Although it has 1958 serial numbers, the heel is small.

## **HEADSTOCK**

A white rectangular sticker is attached for use as a record of maintenance. The low E tuner is the double-ring style from later years.

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1958  
LES PAUL  
**8 5388**







# 'BURST VIEW

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BACK



**HEADSTOCK**



A sunburst top with strong red still left. Medium width of gradation. Quarter sawn grain near center joint and the outer edge.

### **'BURST VIEW**

Strong, fine flame shows a hint of blistered figure. The intense figure covers the entire top.

### **BACK**

Mahogany back shows wild grain pattern. Amount of fading is medium. Medium to large heel.

### **HEADSTOCK**

Tuners have been replaced with early 1950s tuners

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1958  
LES PAUL  
**8 5413**

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# 'BURST VIEW

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**BACK**



**HEADSTOCK**



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