

# *Manuel Rodriguez -* A Classical Passion



Manuel Rodriguez (R), his son Manny Jr (C) and brother Norman (L)”

The Madrid-based guitar manufacturer Manuel Rodriguez makes and sells high quality classical guitars in 120 countries worldwide. **Stuart Bull** meets the head of the family business, Manuel Rodriguez, for a revealing interview.

In this age of globalisation, you can't take anything for granted. 'American' guitars can come from China, 'British' amplifiers from Korea and 'Spanish' guitars - well, that's a slightly difficult one as the word 'Spanish' may refer to the style of guitar, but all the same, a lot of 'Spanish' guitars have never been anywhere near Spain! That is certainly not true of Guitarras Manuel Rodriguez and Sons, however. At least, not now it isn't - back in the 1960s, though, you might have found a Rodriguez guitar made in Hollywood, California, as our video interview reveals! Now, suffice it to say, all the company's renowned classical guitars are manufactured in Spain.

Manuel Rodriguez, the grandson of flamenco guitarist Manuel Rodriguez Marequi and son

of classical luthier Manuel Rodriguez Perez, learned the art of making traditional guitars at the age of 13 in Madrid. After a chance encounter with a UCLA lecturer, holidaying in Spain, Manuel emigrated to Los Angeles in 1959 and opened a business there, making guitars for professional musicians and a clutch of Hollywood actors, as well as teachers and students.

As the current head of the company, the younger, Californian born and raised,



Manuel Rodriguez explains in our interview, the company decided to move back to Spain in 1973, driven by the desire for authenticity - since when it has never looked back.

Today, Manuel Rodriguez guitars are extremely highly regarded. GI's own Giorgio





The logo for 'Gi' magazine, featuring a large white 'G' and a smaller orange 'i'.

### Manuel Rodriguez Interview

Serci reviewed two in [Issue 18](#) and his study piece for this issue, Study n. 10, played as the introduction to our interview, is also this issue's Quiet Room lesson, was specially written for this feature and played on a Manuel Rodriguez MR 10 Caballero.

Today, the company places great store by its 'eco friendly' credentials both in terms of the way the factory operates and in its use of materials. It also runs an active charitable programme which has involved some major international figures over the years, as Mr Rodriguez explains.

In a world dominated by mass-produced instruments manufactured by largely faceless

corporations which might just as easily be making candy bars or cornflakes, it is reassuring that the ancestor of the guitars we all play and love - the traditional Spanish guitar - remain in the hands of a family business which still burns with a very special Spanish passion.

Our thanks to Manuel Rodriguez for visiting Guitar Interactive's London studio and JHS.co.uk for organising the session. Giorgio Serci's Study n. 10 can be heard performed in its entirety in Giorgio's First Steps In Fingerstyle column in this issue, where you can also learn how to play it.

