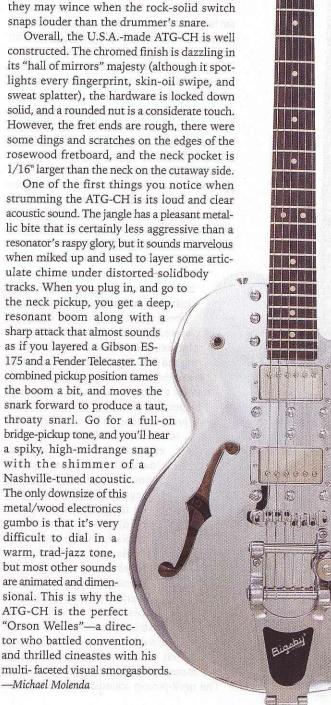
## **GEAR** Fight Club

## The Orson Welles Normandy ATG-

PERHAPS THE MOST STRIKING GUITAR IN THIS cage match, the chromed ATG-CH-touted as the world's first production aluminum archtop—definitely broadcasts the intentions of its maker, Jim Normandy, to be "different, but not too weird or space age." To that end, the Salem, Oregon manufacturer obviously relied on vintage designs, adding only some boss-looking "rivets" and a seemingly Russian military grade kill switch as distinctive accoutrements. Despite its metal body, I didn't find the ATG-CH to be a back buster, but, at 9.4 lbs, it's not exactly like hanging balloons around your neck, either. The wide, slim neck felt good in my hands, and nothing impeded my convulsive chording, sledgehammer riffs, or dainty melodic forays. However, the Volume knobs are placed too far out of reach-at least for me-to allow swells while picking. And while I had a blast performing stutters with the kill switch, if you're in a

band with sensitive, singer/songwriter types, snaps louder than the drummer's snare.

tracks. When you plug in, and go to the neck pickup, you get a deep, resonant boom along with a sharp attack that almost sounds as if you layered a Gibson ES-175 and a Fender Telecaster. The combined pickup position tames the boom a bit, and moves the snark forward to produce a taut, throaty snarl. Go for a full-on bridge-pickup tone, and you'll hear a spiky, high-midrange snap with the shimmer of a Nashville-tuned acoustic. The only downsize of this metal/wood electronics gumbo is that it's very difficult to dial in a warm, trad-jazz tone. but most other sounds are animated and dimensional. This is why the ATG-CH is the perfect "Orson Welles"-a direc-



Super-reflective surface can beam

stage lights into your eyes—or the audience's. Minor construction

issues.

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