

## Title:

How to buy a pawn shop guitar the safe way

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## Summary:

There is something about pawn shops. In fact, some people recorded whole albums about them. As a man, I think it's the smell. Seriously. Next time you walk past a pawn shop, walk in and take a big huge sniff. It's the smell of a potential bargain, a possible rip off. Pawn shop hunting is the modern day civilised hunting expedition.

So here are my rules for pawn shop guitaring the safe way so you don not get stuck with an absolute lemon.

## Keywords:

guitar, how to, buy guitar, pawn shop

## Article Body:

There is something about pawn shops. In fact, some people recorded whole albums about them. As a man, I think it's the smell. Seriously. Next time you walk past a pawn shop, walk in and take a big huge sniff. It's the smell of a potential bargain, a possible rip off. Pawn shop hunting is the modern day civilised hunting expedition.

On a recent hunting trip I managed to trap a PRS SE Single Cut Soap bar Model. It's an SE, so it's a Korean model. I had a look online and it lists for about 700 pounds, so it's still a bargain.

Basically, I was looking for a cheap guitar case at the pawn brokers because I'm one case short these days, and as I was leaving I saw it in the window. I came home, asked the better half if I can get guitar number seven and she said ok, because she knows how much I want a PRS, and [suck up mode] because she is the most lovely person in the word [/suck up mode].

I went back up to the pawn broker, and asked for a play. It was awful. Absolutely unplayable. He said he had it in there for a while and that it had been reduced because for some reason he can't sell it. All the problem was is that the bass side of the bridge was WAAAYYY to low. I pulled out a ten cent coin, four turns of the bridge bolt, BINGO, perfect playability.

Yeah, the tone control will likely need replacing, but big whoop. It sounds beautiful, even with the dead strings on it. I even got him to throw in a case

for \$0. Bargain and a half.

How much I hear you all ask?

\$499 Australian Dollars. Go do the math! I can't wait to finish paying this off in the next few weeks and going wild. It just seems to be that every guitar I want is falling right in front of me. A few months ago, I was really wanting an S-S-S Strat. Then I get a phone call from someone I had not seen in two years offering me her partner's guitar that he does not play. It was an S-S-S Strat. \$100 later and it was mine. Now I get the PRS I've been wanting for years.

So here are my rules for pawn shop guitaring.

### 1. Never impulse buy

You see something you like, don't just grab it and run (unless you think you can get away without getting caught). Play the guitar for a while. Put it down and come back in the next few days. See if it still feels the same and has the same appeal as that initial reaction. The last thing that you want to do is to buy a guitar that you loved at the time only to take back to the same pawn shop a few weeks later.

### 2. Have a goal

This follows on from tip number one. Have a goal as to what type of guitar you are after. By that I mean you should have a clear definition of what you want to buy. This will help you avoid the impulse buy, and focus your attention so you don't get distracted by all the shiny things in the shop. Going back to my PRS example, I've been looking for a nice guitar with soap bar style pickups now to round out my collection. I wasn't necessarily after a PRS, but that came as a giant bonus. It was the only guitar that had the features I was after, and as such was the only guitar I picked up and tried. Don't buy a guitar that you don't need, unless of course it is something exceptional.

### 3. Play with the knobs and know how a guitar works

The ones on the guitar you dirty fiends. Turn all the knobs, waggle the lead, and flick all the switches. Make sure they all work, and if not, have a rough idea if you can fix it yourself or how much it may cost you. You don't want to spend \$100 on a guitar and then have to do \$300 worth of work on it. The PRS has a busted tone pot, and I can most likely fix that myself, and at worse, I know someone who will fix it for a few beers. You also need to know a little about the setup of guitars. The PRS again is a great example. The strings were too low, and after looking down the neck I could tell the issue was just the bridge height. Simple things like that can get you a bargain. This guitar had been ignored by who knows how many people before me because they did not know how to

correct that simple problem. A little knowledge is your friend here.

#### 4. Try some different amps

This is very important. The person running the pawn shop will always plug you into a small Fender combo and crank the reverb. I honestly think that those small combos were designed by Fender exclusively for the pawn shop industry because they make every guitar sound great. So try the guitar with that crappy 15W no name amp as well. It will give you a much better idea on the true sound quality.

#### 5. Don't pay for the case

From my experience, the person who pawns off any decent guitar will have had it in a case, and the case will likely be out the back of the shop. Ask about the case, ask if it is included in the price, and if not ask why not. 75% you'll get the case for free, 20% heavily discounted, and the remaining 5% involves you walking out of the store. They want the sale just as bad as you want to buy the guitar so let them chase you.

Well, I've got a few weeks until I get my new pawn shop beauty. I'll make sure to let you know how she settles in. Till next time...