



Zemaitis 12 string

1959 possibly the first ever made

Newsletter Date

In due course I received a phone call from Don Day asking if he could bring his Z 12 string over for me to look at.

As to how Don came by the guitar I am not sure. I have no doubt he will put an article in the mag and let us know.

The first thing to do was to remove the fingerboard, photos 1 & 2. Note the position of the fret markers, 9th in the 10th position and the 15th in the 14th position, photo 3.



Perhaps a mistake who knows, I can think of no reason for it. It has been said that Tony put the 12th marker on a guitar in the wrong place. I think this goes one better.

Now we shall remove the front and see what is going on in side , The braces have

photo 1

photo 2

photo 3

come away from the front, photo 4. You can see it was originally braced with the Torres 7 fan strutting, which is usually used on a classical guitar. But the outer two struts are still remaining photo 5 with a new Chunky brace fitted under the bridge. I then noticed the back had been removed to gain access to the front . It had been cut out about 3/4" in from the outside leaving the lining and part of the back in place. photo 6 and new back braces fitted in new positions Photo 7.



and a new back fitted on top of the old one.

photo 4

photo 5

photo 6 and 7 >>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>



Now lets remove the peg head veneer as it is badly damaged. Another surprise it used to be a six string with a square top, an extra piece has been put on top to allow for 12 machine heads. photo 8 .It looks as if it has just been stuck on top, but it hasn't.

I won't go into how it is joined on to the top as it will take for ever. Picture 8 shows the join and the original machine holes and the extended peg head.

Now lets look at the bridge, eleven holes in the bridge,

Sorry, what did you say eleven holes in bridge. 12 strings - eleven holes. Tony must have made an error when calculating the hole pitch. How did that happen you might ask, well after lots of maths I decided thus. Out side pitch of strings,

That's two holes, take the measurement of the pitch. (example) Take 2.125 string pitch .divide by 10 because there is 10 strings left = 0.2125

Mark off @ 0.2125 you get 10 pitches but only 9 holes - 9 + the two outside holes = 11

Photo 8 shows bridge holes.

So he must have put two strings through one hole.

So I carried on working and made a new bridge with 12 holes. Then a customer of mine turned up to have some work done on his box, I explained to him about the bridge

photo 8

And how I assumed it had come about to only have 11 holes. No, he said nothing to do with maths, if it was originally a six string it would have had six holes in the bridge, so the only place you can stick more holes is in-between the existing strings, and that's five holes making a total of eleven So I kicked him round the workshop and pushed him out the door, any fool knows that said I biting my lip.

So we fix all the bits and bobs inside and stick the top back on photo 9

And photo 10 is a photo of the inside label.



The finished guitar.

Quick slap of varnish and a polish, string it up – as easy as that.

I wish!!

John Degay