

## When Was My Lowden Made?

In order to find out the date your guitar was made and the workshop of origin, it is necessary to first identify the 'era' in which it was made. You can do this by looking at the interior label. Since we were true to our times and rather 'laid back' about everything other than the guitars themselves, we do not have extensive detailed serial number archives for the early years. However, since production numbers were so very small in those days, the math is not all that difficult.

Please select from the list below the design of your Lowden's label or Serial Number to find out more about your guitar.

[Serial No. 0-143, Rectangular light blue \(occasionally white\)](#)

[Serial No. up to 5000, Rectangular light beige](#)

[Serial No. \(re-started\)- 0001-1306, Oval cream with green edge, new Lowden Logo](#)

[Serial No. 1307-1846 and 1847-15000, Oval cream with green edge](#)

[Serial No. from 15001, Large white rectangle](#)

### **Serial No. 0-143, Rectangular light blue (occasionally white)**

Era: 1974-1980

Origin: High Street, Bangor, Co. Down, Northern Ireland

- These guitars were built 1974 to 1980 in the very first workshop in Bangor, Northern Ireland by a hand picked and personally trained team of 4, under the direct supervision of George Lowden. Approximately 143 guitars were made during this period. The first guitars with A-frame bracing and the dolphin voicing profiles were made in 1976 and in many ways have established the Lowden guitar's distinctive and unique sound. The Lowden guitar was born.
- "What is now called the O25 (L25) had arrived, along with another three models all of the same shape, bracing and simple cosmetics. I was happy with the voicing of the bracing, craftsmanship, general design and most of all, tone, of these guitars."

### **Serial No. up to 5000, Rectangular light beige**

Era- 1980-85

Origin- Guitars are built under License from George Lowden by the S Yairi, Nagoya workshops, Japan

- Guitars with this label were built between 1980-1985 in a small Japanese workshop under license to George Lowden. Approximately 1000 guitars were made per year. In 1980, our Swiss dealer asked George if he could source a small and expert company to make his guitars under license, so they would be more widely available.
- 'Thus began a five-year period when my guitars were made in Japan by a small, dedicated band of luthiers near Nagoya. I visited the S. Yairi workshop regularly to give the designs and check quality. I learned about Japanese craftsmanship and their serious approach to work. I found the folk I worked with to be honorable and courteous, and I had the greatest of

- respect for their hard work and excellent guitars. I learned a lot about production and tools, they in turn were delighted to be able to make original design guitars to this quality level.'

### Serial No. (re-started)- 0001-1306, Oval cream with green edge, new Lowden Logo

Era: 1985-89

Origin: Balloo Industrial Estate Workshops, Bangor, Co. Down, Northern Ireland

- As a result of the rampant fashion of this era for all things electronic in music, sales of acoustic instruments slumped worldwide. The owners of the Japanese factory decided to consolidate by closing their workshops and moving production of Lowden guitars to a larger factory where other brands were made. George was concerned about this proposal and decided to try setting up a new factory in Ireland. He managed to rent an empty shell of a building in Balloo Industrial Estate, Bangor, Co. Down and began to employ and train new craftsmen from scratch. Lowden Guitars of this period between late 1985 and November 1988, were labelled with a slightly smaller version of the oval label.

### Serial No. 1307-1846 and 1847-15000, Oval cream with green edge

Era- 1989-2003

Origin- 1307-1846- Balloo Industrial Estate,

1847-15000- Glenvale Industrial Estate Workshops, Newtownards, NI

- NEW MODEL NAMES: At around the end of 1991, model designations changed. Previously the letter had indicated the botanical name of the wood used for the back & sides (eg. S = Swetenia = mahogany; L = dalbergia Latifolia = indian rosewood) . The new model names reflected the increasing range of body size/shape options. So O was introduced = Original body shape/size; F = the new mid size flat-picker's body shape/size; and in 1992 the S was introduced as the brand new Small body. The S when followed by a J was the Jazz nylon string model.
- The License granted to the Lowden Guitar Company ensured that George Lowden retained personal ownership of the Lowden designs and trademark, and enabled him to provide quality control and new designs while remaining independent from the company. he continued to build his own guitars under "George Lowden 'luthier'"

### Serial No. from 15001, Large white rectangle

Era- 2004-present

Origin- New studio workshops in Downpatrick, Northern Ireland

- All Lowden guitars are now built by our family - owned company, George Lowden Guitars Ltd. They are built under George's direct supervision in new 'studio' (atelier) style workshops located close to our home in Downpatrick, Co Down. Ireland.

The integrity and passion - recently described as "Olympic guitar making" - which goes into each and every Lowden guitar, has never been stronger, and we are very proud of our team. George has said, "I consider it fundamental to the integrity and future of the Lowden guitar that I continue to build guitars personally. By keeping my hands on the wood and designing new guitars for individual musicians, inspiration and the creative edge are constantly challenged" So in November 2002 George created a new small-bodied guitar which is about classical size, but not shape. "The new S shape is more 'curvy' than before, more feminine. That was my main aim, just to make it very attractive as a shape, but as always in design, other things come along as well." His client asked about building a shorter scale and of course in terms of the overall scale of the guitar itself, a shorter string scale made sense. Many years ago he had used a 630mm scale and so he re-designed the S to be voiced for this shorter scale. The new S is more comfortable to play, especially for those with smaller hands, but the tone is not compromised in any way at all, due to the voicing choices within the construction details."

- George has also further developed his original F series design (this is the mid sized Lowden) as he always felt he had not "finished with it". The new versions of the 'F' and the new 'S' are part of our current range, along with the re-designed Jazz (nylon string) model. Devotees of the 'O' (=original Lowden body shape) will be happy to know it remains unchanged. George has no plans to alter that one! We have added the Baritone model, Signature models and a Custom Shop to the Range. (Truly) Limited Editions also appear from time to time whenever some really special wood comes our way. All models since 2004 are built with the original 'dolphin' hand carved bracing.

The current era of production is signified by the new rectangular interior label, each of which is personally signed by George. Every guitar is also accompanied by an individual provenance document which gives full details of the guitar specifications and year of building, in addition to the warranty booklet.

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