

## FIRST PLAY



**FURCH VINTAGE PURE SM**  
€1,458

**WHAT IS IT?** An OM-size acoustic with traditional design, premium body woods and open-pore finish



**FURCH VIOLET  
DELUXE SM**  
€1,341

**WHAT IS IT?** An all-solid wood Grand Auditorium acoustic with a cutaway and front and back bevels

# Two's Company

This pair of finely crafted acoustics from the lower end of the Czech Republic maker's price band may look simple and stripped back, but they're fully loaded with tone

**Words** David Mead **Photography** Phil Barker

**F**urch – a maker that has been on our radar for some time – has featured in these review pages before and we've been greatly impressed by the level of craft and tone on display. Both the models we have before us now are representative of the lower end of the Furch price list – an OM from the Vintage Pure category and a Grand Auditorium from the Violet catalogue.

For the uninitiated, Furch has categorised its different price bands colourfully with Violet at the low end of the spectrum, ascending through Blue, Green, Yellow and Red as the models become gradually more higher end and feature laden. It all culminates with the Rainbow Series, which, according to the company, "gives guitar players a chance to









design a customised instrument that truly fulfils their dreams and expectations”. Alongside the colour range, Furch has Vintage, Travel, Grand Nylon and Limited Edition options, too. So there is no shortage of choice to be had, with virtually all points covered, as a quick look at the website will reveal.

As a thumbnail guide, the Vintage Pure instruments are essentially high on build quality but low on whistles and bells, concentrating on providing no-nonsense examples of established acoustic guitar designs. As an example, the range includes a dreadnought (with or without a cutaway), an OM with a cutaway, as well as the smallest body size in the group, labelled OOM and with 12 frets to the body, all retailing at the same price.

Turning to the Violet Series, the Grand Auditorium model that we have here sits alongside a Sitka/mahogany dreadnought and a Master’s Choice GA, the latter being stage ready with the inclusion of an LR Baggs Stagepro Element pickup.

Zooming in on the OM to begin with, construction details are fairly straightforward, with a Sitka spruce top that has been listed as “AA Grade” by Furch and certainly lives up to that categorisation with a tight grain pattern

and some first-class book-matching. Ornamentation is plain and simple, too, with a walnut rosette and a mock tortoise pickguard in contrast to the ebony bridge and compensated Tusq saddle. The simple-but-functional theme continues with the African mahogany back and sides, once again AA Grade according to Furch, with tortie binding front and back.

The mahogany theme continues with the neck, which looks to us to be a two-piece affair with a separate heel (if there’s a scarf joint present towards the headstock end, we certainly can’t detect it), and a set of open-back Gotoh tuners at the top end seal the deal. Fingerboard is ebony with a nut width of 45mm, although the model comes with an option of both 43mm or extra-wide 48mm on request. All in all, the OM has a considerable amount of kerb appeal that yells “play me” from the outset.

Turning our attention to the Violet Deluxe SM, the story is similar to the OM in terms of construction details. But this time we have a couple of whistles and bells to look at in the form of forearm and waist bevels. But, just to recap, we’re looking at a Sitka spruce top – this time a single-A grade and so its appearance is a little bit more plain than its counterpart. The back and sides, however, are the same



1. Both our review models occupy the lower end of the Furch price range, but no expense has been spared where quality of craft and materials are concerned
2. The AA-grade Sitka spruce top on the Vintage Pure SM displays some fine grain figuring
3. A waist bevel on the Deluxe SM – similar to that which you’d find on a Strat – is included to boost player comfort

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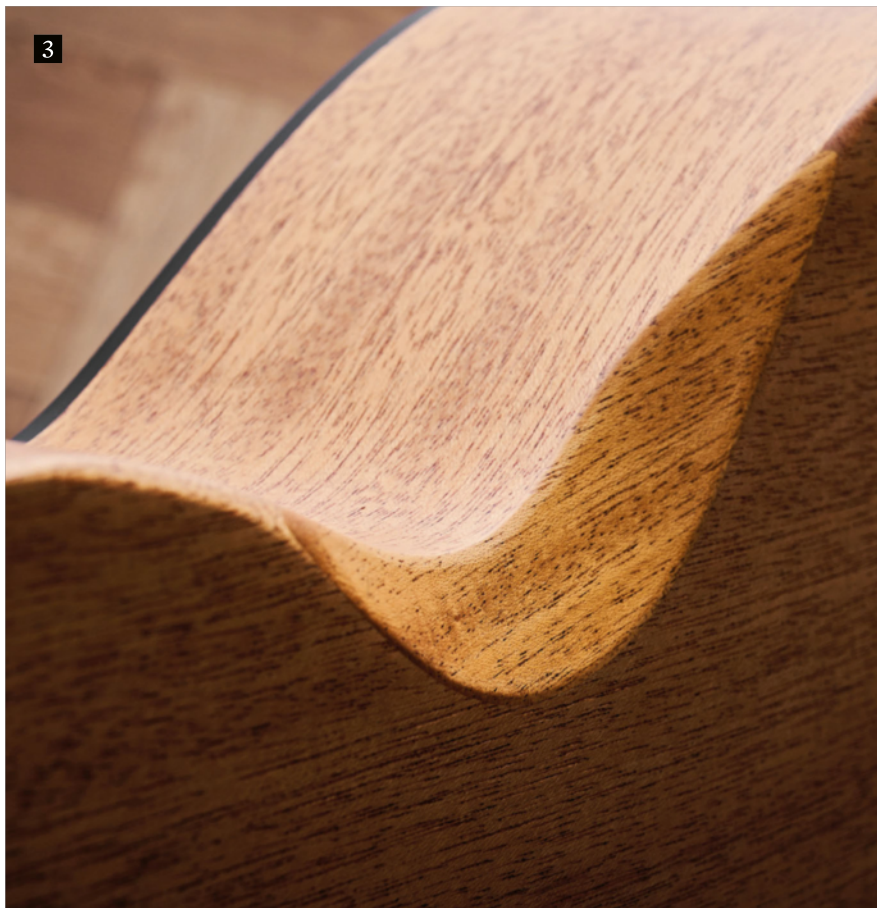
double-A grade as on the OM. Forearm bevels are becoming a familiar sight on acoustic guitars these days and Furch uses a super high-tech method of 3D-printing to produce a seamless, precise fit and a very smooth transition to and from the binding on either side.

The waist bevel is not as familiar and is present here on the player's side of the instrument's upper waist. Think Strat, only much shallower. Furch refers to this as the "Bevel Duo" and goes on to say that its presence "significantly enhances player comfort and elevates the instrument's exclusive appearance..." We'd vouch for that, of course, adding that the Violet's appearance is very elegant and that graceful swoop of the cutaway is the cherry on top of the design.

Other than that, it's mahogany for the neck, ebony for the fingerboard and a very similar complement to the OM. True to say the tuners here are closed back and Furch branded, the scratchplate is plain black, as is the binding, but both are very close in all other respects.

### Feel & Sounds

We were drawn towards the OM even before we picked it up as it sits as a favourite acoustic-guitar body shape here at the ranch. Not as potentially ungainly



3





4

4. Both our review samples have African ebony fretboards that are devoid of position markers topside, enhancing their stripped-back cosmetic appeal

5. The Deluxe SM's ebony bridge has a fully compensated black Tusq saddle and plastic string pins

as a dread or a jumbo, perhaps, but not as petite and demure-sounding as a parlour at the same time. Furch describes the neck profile here as a “soft V” and visually this checks out as you can easily see the contouring with a casual glance. But once you get it in your hand the V-ness all but disappears as it's just a great, comfortable fit. Not a hint of clubbiness, just a good workmanlike handful.

We're not disappointed with the sound, either. It's amazingly balanced with the

full tonal spectrum well represented and no shelf in the bass where it drops to nothing on the final few frets on the low E string. Instead, we were greeted with a full-bodied range of tones, very good sustain and great musicality. One slight criticism is that the action was a tad too high for our tastes, but preferences in that area are incredibly subjective and what's slightly too high for some could be dead right for others.

The Violet Deluxe SM Grand Auditorium feels very similar in the hands. The open-pore finish on both of these guitars enhances the tactile aspect of the instruments. It feels like it puts the player a little closer to the action in a strange way. It's as if you're holding unfinished wood and, while that may not appeal to everyone, here it suits both guitars down to the ground and we like it a lot.

Obviously, we're dealing with a bigger body size on the Grand Auditorium and, as you might expect, it has a fuller, throatier voice with a more pronounced bass and a rise in volume level, too. Strummed chords leap out of the soundbox, making the Violet a good choice for a singer-songwriter on a budget and who is looking for a musical companion. Single notes cut through the mix, too – install a pickup and the live stage is all yours.



5





6. The Vintage Pure SM's back and sides are from AA-grade African mahogany with mock tortoise binding

### Verdict

If we were to launch any criticism at Furch, it would be that neither of these guitars come with a case or gigbag, which you might expect from instruments in this price range. While you might not want a case and already own a gigbag that would do the job, it's nice to have the choice and it strikes us as something worth rethinking. However, a Furch-branded Hiscox hard case would increase the cost of the OM, for instance, to around the £1,600 mark,

Strummed chords leap out of the soundbox, making the Violet a good choice for a singer-songwriter on a budget

still making the guitar good value, but would-be punters could potentially find the add-on price a bit off-putting.

Having said that, both these guitars tick practically all the boxes for us. Craft is top of the line and they sound very good indeed. We love that almost 'unfinished' look and feel to both instruments, and would heartily recommend a look in Furch's catalogue if you're in the market for an acoustic guitar that combines good looks with great sound. **G**



### FURCH VINTAGE PURE SM

**PRICE:** Approx. £1,229 (€1,458)  
**ORIGIN:** Czech Republic  
**TYPE:** OM  
**TOP:** AA grade Sitka spruce  
**BACK/SIDES:** AA-grade African mahogany  
**MAX RIM DEPTH:** 402mm  
**MAX BODY WIDTH:** 377mm  
**NECK:** African mahogany, soft V profile  
**SCALE LENGTH:** 650mm (25.6")  
**TUNERS:** Gotoh SE700 with nickel patina  
**NUT/WIDTH:** Tusq/45mm  
**FINGERBOARD:** Ebony, 400mm (15.75") radius  
**FRETS:** 20  
**BRIDGE/SPACING:** Ebony/55mm  
**ELECTRICS:** To order – see below  
**WEIGHT (kg/lb):** 1.54/3.4  
**OPTIONS:** Pickup options include LR Baggs EAS-VTC, LR Baggs Stagepro Element, LR Baggs Anthem, LR Baggs Stagepro Anthem at extra cost. Gigbag (£82), Hiscox hard-shell case (£296). Also available with 43mm or 48mm nut widths  
**RANGE OPTIONS:** The Vintage Pure SM is available in several different body shapes: a dreadnought, dreadnought with cutaway, OM with cutaway and OOM body shape all at approx. £1,229  
**LEFT-HANDERS:** Yes  
**FINISH:** Natural open-pore

8/10

**PROS** Does everything you'd expect from an OM; great build, quality woods and good sound

**CONS** Doesn't come with a case or gigbag included in the price



### FURCH VIOLET DELUXE SM

**PRICE:** Approx. £1,130 (€1,341)  
**ORIGIN:** Czech Republic  
**TYPE:** Grand Auditorium  
**TOP:** A grade Sitka spruce  
**BACK/SIDES:** AA-grade African mahogany  
**MAX RIM DEPTH:** 115mm  
**MAX BODY WIDTH:** 398mm  
**NECK:** African mahogany, soft V profile  
**SCALE LENGTH:** 650mm (25.6")  
**TUNERS:** Furch logo – machine chrome-plating  
**NUT/WIDTH:** Tusq/45mm  
**FINGERBOARD:** Ebony 400mm (15.75") radius  
**FRETS:** 20  
**BRIDGE/SPACING:** Ebony/55mm  
**ELECTRICS:** To order – see left  
**WEIGHT (kg/lb):** 2.08/4.6  
**OPTIONS:** As Vintage Pure SM  
**RANGE OPTIONS:** Violet Master's Choice (c £1,105) including an LR Baggs Stagepro Element pickup; Violet SM dreadnought (c £842)  
**LEFT-HANDERS:** No  
**FINISH:** Natural open-pore

Furch  
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[www.furchguitars.com](http://www.furchguitars.com)

8/10

**PROS** Great presence to the sound and bags of toneful volume with eye-catching good looks

**CONS** As with the OM, it does not come with a case or gigbag