



the demands of heavy strumming, the L900C's overall timbre for chord work was good and useable, if not inspirational, particularly when A/B'd with Tanglewood's comparative TW45 model.

Luce L450C NS

Although sharing some of the same characteristics as its stable mate, the L450C is a very different proposition to the L900C. An all-mahogany affair, finished in matt, the L450C looks to offer something a little different at what is a very affordable price tag.

Tasteful and discreet binding complement the understated abalone soundhole rosette and rosewood scooped bridge. Cort's website states that this model comes supplied with a tortoiseshell pickguard, though on our review model this is missing. No bad thing in our opinion, for the L450C looks good without one.

Again, the open-g geared Grover machineheads are Cort's choice of tuners and the two-piece mahogany neck is attached to the body utilising a dovetail joint.

Curiously, on this less expensive model, the workmanship around the nut, neck joint and headstock areas is of a superior standard than seen on the more expensive L900C. In terms of its finish, the L450C is very tidy indeed and, bearing in mind its modest £280 price tag, there are really no grounds for complaint.

Sounds

The L450C is something of a pleasant surprise. Punching well above its weight, this little gem belts out a powerful full-blooded tone that, while it couldn't be described as

delicate, certainly has character. As you'd expect with an all-mahogany guitar, the mids are right up front and both chord work and single-note runs are clear and bright. The dry, gritty tone particularly suited playing thirties and forties Delta-style blues – we find ourselves gravitating to old Robert Johnson and Big Bill Broonzy standards.

With the mid-range so present and with a medium gauge pick in hand, we find the L450C is also particularly good at handling semi-muted, percussive rhythm styles.

If you've had your fill of dreadnoughts or jumbos, Cort may yet have a little something for you here. The L450C's tone won't suit every genre or style, but what it does, it does very well and we'd suggest that it

would make a fantastic blues guitar for those that rarely venture out of 12-bar territory.

Verdict

Of the two on test here, we are somewhat smitten with the L450C. In consideration of the fact that you'll get change out of £300, it's a well designed, built and finished guitar. Its classic looks harmonise with its great blues tone. The L900C, however, is perhaps a little

ordinary by comparison. While not actually doing anything wrong, it doesn't seem to have the all-important wow-factor needed to set it apart in what is a very competitive market sector. Notable too, with both models, is the absence of even a padded gig bag. In reality some retailers may well 'throw one in', but it's not unreasonable to expect some form of soft case as standard. Otherwise, these are credible, affordable guitars. **G**

The Bottom Line

Cort Luce L900C NAT

We like: Good quality materials; some well-executed detailing
We dislike: Minor construction/finish niggles
Guitarist says: A good-looking guitar that does everything it should, yet somehow fails to really inspire or impress sonically

Cort Luce L450C NS

We like: The unexpected full-bodied, bluesy tone; great price tag
We dislike: Perhaps not the most versatile of guitars
Guitarist says: A great little blues-voiced guitar – Cort should be on to a winner here

Cort Luce L900C NAT

PRICE: £499.99
ORIGIN: Korea
TYPE: Concert size acoustic
TOP: Solid red cedar
BACK: Solid rosewood
SIDES: Rosewood laminate
MAX RIM DEPTH: 107mm
MAX BODY DEPTH: 373mm
NECK: Mahogany
SCALE LENGTH: 643mm (25.3-inches)
TUNERS: Grover vintage-style
NUT/WIDTH: Bone/45mm
FINGERBOARD: Ebony
FRETS: 20, medium-thin
BRIDGE/SPACING: Ebony/56mm
WEIGHT (kg/lb): 2/4.4
OPTIONS: None
LEFT-HANDERS: No
FINISH: Natural gloss (as reviewed)
Cort Guitars
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www.cort-guitars.co.uk

Test results

Build quality ★★★★★
Playability ★★★★★
Sound ★★★★★
Value for money ★★★★★

GUITARIST RATING ★★★★★

Cort Luce L450C NS

PRICE: £279.99
ORIGIN: Korea
TYPE: Concert size acoustic
TOP: Solid mahogany
BACK: Solid mahogany
SIDES: Mahogany laminate
MAX RIM DEPTH: 107mm
MAX BODY DEPTH: 373mm
NECK: Mahogany
SCALE LENGTH: 643mm (25.3-inches)
TUNERS: Grover vintage-style
NUT/WIDTH: Bone/43.5mm
FINGERBOARD: Rosewood
FRETS: 20, medium-thin
BRIDGE/SPACING: Rosewood/56mm
WEIGHT (kg/lb): 1.6/3.58
OPTIONS: None
LEFT-HANDERS: No
FINISH: Natural Satin (as reviewed)



Test results

Build quality ★★★★★
Playability ★★★★★
Sound ★★★★★
Value for money ★★★★★

GUITARIST RATING ★★★★★