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Taylor 314 CE Acoustic, Martin 000 C-1E And Other Acoustic Options For Texas-Based Nelo

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In 2005 Matt Ragland and the rest of the Texas band, **Nelo** left Austin, Texas for Athens, Georgia (a hellhole of vile intrigue -- or at least that is what I was told when I attended the University of Florida). And even though the band -- consisting of Ragland (chief songwriter & lyricist; acoustic guitar), Reid Umstadd (lead vocals) Stephen Goodson (electric guitar), David Long (tenor & soprano sax; flute), Mike St. Clair (bass, trombone, trumpet) and Chris Hill (drums, percussion)--had been playing together for some time, this departure marks the band's true starting point.

The band is a mix of influences--from pop to jazz but when Ragland describes the music he warily calls it "pop."

"I think if it had to be a single genre it would be the pop/rock genre," says Ragland. "When I think of pop rock I think of really silly pop bands and that is certainly not what we are."

Ragland uses two acoustic guitars live and in the studio. He plays rhythm and never uses an electric. One of his guitars is a Martin (Martin 000 C1E) and the other is a Taylor (Taylor 314 CE).

The Taylor 314 CE lists at \$2,238 but you can -- generally -- buy one for around \$1,700-1,800. The body is a grand auditorium style cutaway--basically it is about as wide and deep as a dreadnought but has a narrower "waist." The 314 CE has a Sitka spruce top with back and sides made of African Mahogany. The fretboard and bridge are ebony. This guitar is a rhythm guitarists instrument.

"The Taylor is a cutaway but it is big, When I bought it years ago t was their standard," says Ragland. "It is heavier [than the Martin]. Both have Fishman pick-ups with an EQ on the top of the guitar. It is a fairly small body guitar, good for the stage. When I play acoustic shows I play a Taylor (model)."

Ragland would actually prefer to play the Taylor when playing with the band but he is not comfortable with the weight of the 314 CE. He agrees that the Taylor has a sparkle to it and that, when played with a full band, it cuts through the rest of the music with a brightness a lot of other guitars lack.

"I am sure if Taylor comes out with a body style I am comfortable to me I will probably switch." says Ragland.

After hearing that Ragland was interested in a body style that was similar to his Martin with the Taylor sound I shot an email to Bob Taylor at Taylor Guitars. Taylor had some suggestions.

"Not sure which model Martin he likes the feel of," says Taylor. "If his 314CE is too big, we make a smaller body style called a 312CE."

This guitar lists at \$2,168 and you can likely find one for \$1,600-1,700. It too has mahogany back and sides and a Sitka spruce top. The 312 CE is a half inch shorter in total length than the 314 CE and it is an inch less wide. It is also has a half inch less depth. The 314 CE weights about (give or take a few ounces) four pounds more than the 312 CE.

Taylor said that someone from the company would contact Ragland and give him some ideas as to other possible Taylor models that might fit his bill. Taylor also had something to say about why Ragland likes the Taylor.

"By the way, his comments about the guitar standing out in the band....is EXACTLY why we make guitars with a tone that is more brilliant and not so bass driven," says Taylor. "Many people buy a guitar, playing alone, and fall in love with heavy bass. Then they play with just one other instrument and their guitar sounds muddy, unless, perhaps, that other instrument is a penny whistle. Ha! But with another guitar, or a bass, or a piano, or even drums, the two compete."

More with Ragland on his Martin soon.

For more on [Nelo](#) [5].

Patrick Ogle writes for Gearwire