ESP GUITARS PRESS RELEASE

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ESP Guitars Celebrates 50th Anniversary in 2025;
Company Announces Limited Edition 50th Anniversary ESP Custom Shop Horizon Guitars and LTD EC-2025 50th Anniversary Guitar

ANAHEIM, CA (JANUARY 23, 2025) – From its humble beginnings in 1975 as a small Tokyo-based guitar repair shop to its current status as one of the world's largest and most respected electric guitar and bass manufacturers, ESP Guitars (NAMM Booth 210D) has never been a brand to rest on its laurels. While celebrating its milestone 50th anniversary in 2025, the company is still far more focused on the future than looking back on its past.

"If you remain static in the world of guitar design and manufacturing, you're already falling behind," says Matt Masciandaro, president and CEO of the ESP Guitar Company. "For ESP, there are constant innovations that happen along the way, from the components we select, to the materials we source, to the methods we use to create high-quality instruments at all price points. 50 years is a great achievement for ESP, but our sights are set on what's coming next."

Founded in 1975 in Tokyo, Japan, ESP was started by businessman Hisatake Shibuya as "Electric Sound products," or ESP for short. Through 1982, ESP slowly cultivated a reputation as a supplier of high-quality upgraded replacement parts for existing guitar brands, and began creating their own instruments not long after.

In the early/mid 1980s, ESP became a go-to brand for influential New York City-based musicians like Bruce Kullick (Kiss), Vernon Reid (Living Colour), and Page Hamilton (Helmet). It was in 1986 that George Lynch (Dokken) discovered ESP while on tour, and ordered the custom guitar that would become his legendary Kamikaze model. He was quickly followed by Metallica guitarists Kirk Hammett and James Hetfield, whose custom guitars would also become some of ESP's earliest Signature Series models.

The following year, ESP established their first US headquarters in New York, first in a loft on 19th Street, then on 48th Street to be closer to the city's famous strip of music stores of the era. In 1993, ESP's US headquarters moved west, opening an office on Sunset Boulevard in Hollywood, CA. They eventually settled on what would be their main HQ for decades, in North Hollywood, CA.

In 1995, looking to take ESP's reputation for high-quality guitars and market them at more affordable pricing to a wider range musicians, ESP launched their LTD brand. The result — combined with the company's excellent business relationships with US dealers and international distributors, as well as the high visibility of ESP's family of endorsed artists — was a explosion of popularity for the ESP brand

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overall. In 2008, ESP Guitars was named by Music Trades magazine as the musical instrument industry's fastest growing company.

Other significant milestones for the company include the foundation of their ESP USA shop in 2014, manufacturing high-end guitars that are handcrafted by expert luthiers in Southern California. In 2015, ESP took over US distribution of renowned acoustic guitar manufacturer Takamine (which has since expanded to Mexico distribution as well). In 2019, the company began US/Canada distribution of ENGL Amps, the highly acclaimed German tube amplifier manufacturer.

In 2023, ESP relocated their US headquarters to their current large facility in Los Angeles, housing their offices, showroom, service, distribution, and warehouse space. ESP currently offers a multitude of instrument series that include ESP Custom Shop and ESP Original Series that are handmade in Japan; the ESP/LTD Signature Series; ESP USA guitars that are crafted in Southern California; ESP E-II instruments that are factory-built in Japan; and LTD guitars and basses that are distributed in over 50 countries worldwide.

To commemorate the major milestone, ESP has announced a special limited edition batch of guitars from the ESP Custom Shop in Japan. Just 15 pieces each of the ESP 50th Anniversary Horizon-CTM Flamed Maple and ESP 50th Anniversary Horizon-CTM Buckeye Burl are being handcrafted by the company's expert luthiers using custom components and extraordinary tonewoods, and no two are identical.

A more widely available commemorative guitar is the LTD EC-2025 50th Anniversary. Based on the single-cutaway EC shape, it's being offered in Metallic Gold finish with black hardware and black single-ply binding on the body, neck, ad headstock, appropriate for the company's golden anniversary celebration. It features a special "50" graphic fingerboard inlay at frets 11-13, as well as a full 50th Anniversary logo on the guitar's headstock. Built with set-thru construction at 24.75" scale, the guitar employs a mahogany body with maple cap, a three-piece mahogany neck, and a Macassar ebony fingerboard with 24 extra-jumbo stainless steel frets.

Features on the EC-2025 include LTD locking tuners, a TonePros locking bridge and tailpiece, and a set of Seymour Duncan humbucker pickups that includes the ESP-exclusive Custom 14 in the bridge, and the iconic APH-1N in the neck. Coil splitting is accessible with a push-pull control.

More information on ESP Guitars is available on the ESP web site at www.espguitars.com.

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About ESP Guitars

Founded in 1975, the ESP Guitar Company is a leading global manufacturer of quality musical instruments. ESP brands include ESP Custom Shop, ESP Original Series, ESP/LTD Signature Series, ESP USA, ESP E-II, and LTD. For more information call 800-423-8388 or visit www.espguitars.com.