

## These LuLus Are Real Head Turners

LuLu's handcrafted ukuleles are masterpieces you can play

*By Breeze Kinsey*

It can be hard being the guy that brings a ukulele to a jam session. Though true lovers of the jumping flea know what joy the instrument can bring, they also know the pain of the groans and guffaws it can elicit from fellow musicians. With its handcrafted instruments, LuLu Ukuleles aims to turn that situation around with a line of ukes that are as wonderful to behold as they are to hear in action.

The LuLu ukulele company has made it their mission to bring high-end, handcrafted ukuleles into an affordable price range. I had an opportunity to take a close look at a pair of their abalone-festooned, top-of-the-line models, the C2A concert and T3A tenor, and I was impressed by both. Though the price may not make them an impulse buy for some, these ukes are far less expensive than most comparably-equipped instruments. LuLu has put care, creativity, and craftsmanship into every element of the experience from the construction to the case.

The LuLu C2A concert size ukulele has a solid spruce top with boldly contrasting, streaked rosewood side wood offset by a light-colored stripe of wood binding and complemented by a sleek glossy finish. Its sound is like a cool glass of lemonade on a hot day—a refreshing blast of bright, clear tone with plenty of powerful volume.

The T3A tenor goes in a different direction. Made entirely of solid koa, this matte-finished model has a richer, warmer tone, more akin to a rich chocolate cake than its tangy sibling. Both have good volume, smooth playability, and are simply a pleasure to play.

A slew of subtle touches take these instruments from the realm of mere novelty to sheer artistry. From the abalone used on the purfling and inlays to the subtle groove outlining the headstock, these instruments exude refinement. They aren't just about looks though—that same level of quality carries over to the sound as well. Through a combination of high-quality materials and careful craftsmanship, LuLu has created a pair of ukuleles that really sing.

The nut and compensated saddle are made of Tusq, a synthetic replacement for ivory that seems to offer both ukes a full and lively quality to the tone. To facilitate good tone and intonation, the saddles also are compensated, so each string sits at a slightly different length to correct for differences in string thickness and tension.

The luxury experience doesn't end with the ukes themselves. These models, like many of LuLu's ukuleles, arrive

### **LuLu C2A**

*Concert ukulele with solid spruce top, solid rosewood back and sides, and neck with a rosewood fretboard*

*\$680 (MSRP); \$480 (street)*

[luluukuleles.com](http://luluukuleles.com)



***BOTH MODELS  
FEATURE***

- *Abalone rosette, bound body, and fingerboard markers*
- *Grover tuners*
- *D'Addario Nyltech Strings*
- *Graph Tech Tusq nut and compensated saddle*
- *Ten-year limited warranty*
- *Woven leather-covered hardshell case, with hygrometer and humidifier*

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***LuLu T3A***

*Tenor ukulele with solid koa body, and rosewood fretboard*

*\$815 (MSRP); \$575 (street)*

[luluukuleles.com](http://luluukuleles.com)



with a deluxe hard case thrown in to sweeten the deal. The cases are coated in woven black leather and are padded with plush burnt-orange velvet. These lockable cases even have ukulele shaped leather tabs for opening the inner storage compartment and a hygrometer mounted on the compartment door to monitor the humidity, so you can keep your instrument in good condition and do it in style.

If these two ukes from LuLu are any indication, the company is hitting its mark when it comes to making aficionado-ready instruments at as affordable price. These ukuleles would be a great gift for a player who's graduating to a higher-level instrument, or if you're up for treating yourself to something that makes you look and sound great on stage. If the standard models aren't quite what you're after, the company will soon begin production of custom ukuleles. Whatever you're after in your next uke, LuLus are worth a look.

