

Firstplay

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Guitarist
THE BEST GEAR
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FIRST



Versoul Blue Light Special

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Few independent guitar makers can boast that the first of a new design goes to a certain Mr Billy F. Gibbons, the second to Rolling Stone Ronnie Wood, then the third and fourth are snapped up by Mr Gibbons again, just to be sure before he puts his name to it. Guitar number five is pictured here, still with the DNA of Black Crowes' Rich Robinson on its strings after he tuned it up for us at a recent London gig. Rock 'n' roll? You bet.

The guitar in question is made in Finland, by Versoul. "It is based on my Raya model," says Versoul founder and luthier Kari Nieminen. "I designed the Blue Light concept in January 2006. Billy Gibbons just wanted a few changes to the original concept: shorter scale length – from 25.4 to 24.75-inch – and also a chambered body and extra binding on the neck and a gold-leaf finish all over the neck as well as the body." The blue light is

capped back and front with domed blue glass 'lenses' with battery operated blue LED lights inside. When plugged in the light glows subtly – not like a laser – a unique effect.

But it's not just flashy to look at; the craft is superb, from the 23 carat gold leaf work – under a clear cellulose finish – to the finely bound edges, it's a work of art. So too the neck shaping, light weight and resonance, plus it's armed with an airy-sounding Versoul humbucker that's bright edged and energetic with plenty of cut to slice through a bucket load of gain. Needless to say of course that those famed pinched harmonics literally fall out of the guitar...

At €10,000 (approx £7,850) it may be out of reach for most of us, but Versoul's regular hand-made Raya costs from just €2,800 (approx £2,200) – not a bad price to put your name up there on that ever-growing list of rock 'n' roll royalty.