



AN INVITATION FROM GOURLEY MUSIC

THE AUSTRALIAN GUITAR BUILDING EXPERIENCE

*A 15-Day Immersive Lutherie Residency.
Culminating in Your Bespoke Instrument.*

YARRA VALLEY, AUSTRALIA



The Philosophy: This is not a factory kit. This is a legacy.

WELCOME TO GOURLEY MUSIC. Our boutique workshop in Cottles Bridge is a sanctuary for artists and makers. The studio is named in honour of Master Luthier Brend's great-grandfather, Harry Gourley, a dedicated technical educator and craftsman. Brend chose this name as a tribute to him and his grandparents, proudly carrying forward a family legacy of dedication and meticulous skill.

Over 15 immersive days, you will start with raw, beautiful Australian timber and finish with a bespoke, concert-quality acoustic guitar. Guided by Brend, you will learn the true art of traditional guitar building. **Beyond the ordinary.** This is a highly focused, highly rewarding environment where you will learn to truly understand the wood, mastering the meticulous processes of precision structural bracing, carving a custom neck profile and finishing an instrument that carries your **unique sonic signature.**

No Prior Craftsmanship Required

Whether you are a seasoned woodworker or have never held a chisel, our master-guided process ensures an exceptional, professional-standard build. With a strict maximum of three students per intake, we provide the highly personalised, dedicated support needed to guarantee your success.

"I asked my good friend to build a guitar for me, and I was genuinely surprised when he turned me down. He just smiled and told me, 'You can build it yourself.' Looking back, that was the best 'no' I have ever received. It pushed me to start a wonderful journey. I ended up building a classical guitar that holds a very special place in my heart. We even managed to incorporate a piece of timber from my home country into the build. It was such a happy experience full of laughter, and I play that guitar with so much love today."

Pablo, First-Time Builder



The Tonewoods:

The Koa Connection

Australian Blackwood is a close botanical relative to the highly coveted Hawaiian Koa. While it shares a similar breathtaking visual figure, Blackwood possesses a slightly denser grain structure. This characteristic is highly prized by master luthiers, as it delivers a uniquely punchy midrange and exceptional acoustic projection, establishing it as a world-class tonewood in its own right.



The Classic Tier

Each student will construct a professional-grade acoustic guitar utilising world-class native materials. Our standard residency includes:

- Back and Sides: Tasmanian Blackwood, offering a rich, warm tone rivalling the finest mahogany.
- Soundboard: Bunya Pine or Silver Quandong for exceptional volume, clarity and dynamic range.
- Neck: Highly stable Tasmanian Oak or responsive Queensland Maple.
- Standard Appointments: Round fretboard markers and quality machine heads.

The Luthier's Reserve + £695



For those seeking the pinnacle of acoustic artistry, we offer **exclusive access to our premium tonewoods**. These premium upgrades allow you to select incredibly rare, visually breathtaking timbers for your build:

- **Back and Sides:** Stunning Tasmanian Blackheart Sassafras featuring dramatic natural streaking, or Master-Grade Fiddleback Blackwood for unparalleled visual depth.
- **Soundboard:** Choose the beautiful, rich warmth of King Billy Pine, or opt for ancient Huon Pine recovered from deep within Tasmania.
- **Neck:** Visually striking and highly stable upgrade options are available, including richly coloured Tasmanian Myrtle or beautifully textured Lacewood.
- **Hardware:** Upgraded ultra-smooth, high-ratio tuning machines for exceptional precision.

"At 83 years old, I am currently building my fourth custom guitar. Having built with others in the past, I can honestly say Brend's level of dedicated support, patience, and meticulous attention to detail is simply unmatched. It absolutely shows in the quality and tone of the final instruments. You will not find a better guide for this journey."

Pete, Four-Time Builder

The Itinerary: Your 15-Day Residency



Dates: 20 July – 3 August 2026. Private accommodation is secured from 19 July to 4 August, providing a complimentary buffer day on either side to settle in and depart at your leisure.

Your time at the bench is highly structured to ensure an exceptional outcome, blending intense focus with time to recharge in one of Australia's most celebrated natural landscapes.

- **Week 1: The Foundation.** Select your timber, join the soundboard, bend the sides, and install precision bracing. We cap off the week with a tasting at an award-winning Yarra Valley winery.
- **The Excursion Day.** A mid-build rest for your hands. We explore the region, featuring Healesville Sanctuary, the Yarra Valley Dairy, and a bespoke local tasting curated to the group.
- **Week 2: The Architecture.** Carve the neck, establish the fretboard radius, and complete the meticulous final sanding. We celebrate this milestone with a second premium winery tasting.
- **The Capstone.** After stringing your instrument, participate in an exclusive songwriting masterclass with touring artist Ernest Aines. The day culminates in a private concert and professional video recording of your guitar's debut.

"As an accountant, my daily tools are spreadsheets, not chisels. I came in with zero woodworking experience. I made a clumsy cut, but Brend didn't miss a beat. He stepped in and helped me reshape it into a flawless custom feature... With Brend looking over your shoulder, you truly cannot fail."

Steve, Brisbane



Our Featured Artist: Ernest Aines

The final morning of your residency features an exclusive, private masterclass with award-winning contemporary folk artist Ernest Aines. This session is designed for absolutely everyone, meaning no prior songwriting or musical experience is required. Ernest helps you bring your new creation to life and discover its true sonic voice. The masterclass culminates in a **private concert** where Ernest will perform your newly written song on the very guitar you just built, leaving you with a beautifully captured live session to share with friends, family, and fellow musicians.

Beyond his role as your guide, Ernest is an internationally touring musician. With nearly 20,000 monthly listeners on Spotify, his soaring career includes:

- **Award-Winning & Streamed:** Nominated for *Australian Folk Alliance Artist of the Year* (2023 & 2024) and the *2025 People's Choice Award*, with his debut album *Spiral Bound* garnering over 800,000 streams.
- **Extensive Global Touring:** Completed major UK tours with live BBC features, alongside ongoing tours in the US and Australia, including the *MacManus Guitar Fest* in Seattle and upcoming shows in Sydney.
- **Major Festivals & Recognition:** Showcased at the UK's *Celtic Connections* and *Cambridge Folk Festival*, and the US *Library of Congress Archive Show*, where folk legend Tom Paxton personally exhorted him to continue his craft.

Exclusivity & Investment

Strictly limited to three benches, this is an all-inclusive residency. Your investment covers Classic Tier tonewoods, your completed guitar, a professional flight-ready hard case, and all daily transport between your private accommodation and the workshop.

To commission a bespoke acoustic guitar from rare Australian timber alone typically requires £4,295 or more. Factoring in 16 nights of private lodging, all meals, 15 days of dedicated tuition, a tailored Yarra Valley experience, and a private recording session, the true value of this experience exceeds £11,585.

Custom Luthier-Built Guitar	£4,295
15 Days Dedicated Tuition	£2,750
16 Nights Private Cottage Stay	£1,950
Private Songwriting Masterclass	£595
Professional Concert Recording	£595
Locally Catered Lunches & Dinners	£950
Personalised Yarra Valley Tour	£450
TOTAL VALUE:	£11,585+

ALL INCLUSIVE

Your Investment

£6,295

Stage Upgrade: + £395. A precision-engineered hybrid system delivering studio-mic transparency and total feedback rejection, integrated directly into your guitar build.

**Course fees exclude international and domestic flights, airport transfers, travel visas and personal travel expenses.*

"Strumming that first chord on a classical guitar I built with my own hands is a feeling I will never forget."

Gloria, First-Time Builder

Lifestyle Enhancements

For those seeking an elevated travel experience or wishing to share this journey with a loved one, we offer the following enhancements to finalise prior to your residency. (Please refer to your accompanying Accommodation Guide).

The Luxury Winery Apartment Upgrade + £995

Upgrade your 16-night stay to a magnificent, self-contained apartment at an award-winning Yarra Valley winery estate. Wake up to panoramic countryside views over rolling vineyards and the distant Kinglake Mountains. Each luxury suite features a king-sized bed, an en-suite bathroom with a classic clawfoot bath, a private balcony for sunset views, and a welcoming hamper of breakfast provisions accompanied by a complimentary bottle of premium Yarra Valley wine upon arrival.



The Partner Package: The Yarra Retreat + £1,495

While you build your masterpiece, your partner will experience the very best of Australia's renowned Yarra Valley wine region. We have designed a tailored boutique experience so you can focus entirely on your craft while they unwind in the tranquil countryside. Seamlessly integrated with your workshop schedule so you can reconnect every evening in your private cottage, it includes:

- Two exclusive mid-week wine tastings.
- A complimentary 60-minute luxury day spa massage.
- Full inclusion in all curated workshop lunches and regional culinary menus.
- A personalised Yarra Valley excursion featuring the iconic Healesville Sanctuary and Yarra Valley Dairy.

Global Logistics & Take-Home Support

We understand that travelling internationally with a highly valuable, newly built instrument can be daunting. We provide full assistance with the preparation of **Tourist Refund Scheme (TRS) documentation** so you can claim a portion of your tax back at the airport, provided you are flying out with your completed instrument.

Alternatively, if you prefer to travel light, we can arrange **secure, fully insured international shipping** directly to your door.

"Brend had previously built a custom guitar for my father in Geneva, so I already knew his craftsmanship was world-class. When I travelled to Australia to build my own, the experience was incredible. Brend even handled shipping my finished instrument safely back to Switzerland so I could continue my travels completely stress-free."

Alex, Geneva, Switzerland

Securing Your Bench & Workshop Guidelines

Because benches are strictly limited to three per intake, securing your place requires an approved Builder Profile. This ensures we understand your woodworking experience and can source the correct timbers for your specific sonic goals.

- **Booking Deposit:** A 20% non-refundable deposit of the standard course fee to secure your bench.
- **First Instalment:** 40% of the standard course fee, plus 50% of any selected upgrades, is due 60 days prior to the residency start date.
- **Final Balance:** Due in full 30 days prior to the residency start date to facilitate your Tourist Refund Scheme (TRS) documentation.

"I came to the workshop with an unfinished instrument from a previous project. Fortunately, I found Brend at Gourley Music. Not only did we finish that first one to a high standard, but I've since returned to build a second. This time it was a 21st birthday gift for my daughter. Using Tasmanian Blackwood for such a special milestone made it a legacy project. The guidance here is steady and expert. Most importantly, he sees the job through to the final polish."

Liam, 2-Time Builder



Begin Your Legacy

Your legacy instrument awaits. Scan the code or visit the link below to submit your Builder Profile and secure your bench.

GOURLEYMUSIC.COM.AU/AGBE-APPLICATION-UK



Gourley Music

hello@gourleymusic.com.au

Cottles Bridge, Victoria, Australia

The Australian Guitar Building Experience