



The X Files

These Precision Crystal nail files from Wolfram will keep your talons smooth *Words Glenn Kimpton*

If you've recently seen either Martin Simpson or Michael Messer tearing it up on slide guitar, you would have seen and heard the beauty of their signature Wolfram slides. Now the boffins at Wolfram are focusing their attentions on a couple of slightly humbler, if no less impressive, products designed for fingerstyle guitarists, a brace of Precision Crystal nail files. Says Wolfram founder David Browne: "A number of years ago I started using a glass nail file and I realised it was better than anything else I had used, so I began looking at how we could make that type of file better and tailor it for guitarists. What I focused on mainly was how to get the finish on the nail as perfect as possible for a fingerstyle player, because it is so critical for tone and comfort.

"The main difference between our files and others is the abrasive surface itself. On a regular nail-file, the surface is sharp – much like sandpaper, which is harsh on the nail. Our surface is acid-etched into the glass and it creates an undulating rounded surface, which means you can control the depth of the cut with the pressure you use. That means it will cover every aspect of filing and finishing that a guitar player requires, without the need for extra polishing, et cetera. Also, the surface itself is perfectly uniform, which creates a very smooth nail surface and filing experience; there will be no catches on the nails or unevenness at all, whichever direction you file.

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"They are made in the Czech Republic from a very high quality Bohemia crystal glass with an acid-etched surface and sand-blasted logo. It is all one piece and it is twice heat-treated to harden it." We ask if a glass object will stand up to wear and tear and travel? "They are the toughest glass nail files in the world," David guarantees, "and the heat treatment means that the core of the material is very supple, with the outside extremely hard. But it is glass, and if you really wanted to, you could probably break it. But the grit surface itself will never wear out, you need only rinse it under warm water if it clogs and it will be restored to one hundred per cent effectiveness."

One piece of feedback Wolfram received from Tony McManus, was that the file was a touch tame for players with acrylic nails, which got the company thinking and ultimately resulted in the Precision Crystal Pro file, with two filing surfaces – one the same as the regular file and one coarser, to tackle the harder materials. "The Pro has been designed for artificial nails," says David, "and it is about 50 per cent thicker and heavier than the standard model, due to the coarser second surface. That one will be released in September, along with a pocket-sized version of the Pro, which is about 9cm long, compared to the 13cm of the Standard and Pro models." The tone-boosting tool you never knew you needed? **G**

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