

## Making Music Out of Wood

Written by: Rene Varro, 9/29/09



Today's Gibson electric guitars represent the history as well as the future of the electric guitar. The models whose designs have become classics: the ES-175, ES-335, Flying V, Explorer, Firebird, SGs and Les Pauls-are a testament to Gibson's wide appeal, spanning more than four decades of music styles.

To produce their famous guitars, Gibson uses large kilns to dry a variety of exotic wood species, such as maple, ebony and mahogany. One kiln dries 2000 board feet at a time, which means that 100 guitars can be created in each batch. In 2009, Gibson engineers hired Vacutherm, Inc, a vacuum lumber drying company, to install a new kiln control system, called touchDry<sup>®</sup> inside five of their Woodizers kilns.

Vacutherm, Inc. designs vacuum kilns that are used to dry lumber and wood components - from 10,000 board feet to 10 million board feet or more of high quality wood per year. All Vacutherm vacuum kilns use the new touchDry kiln control system. Each system integrates a wireless moisture meter, relative humidity and an 8.4" color touch screen.

RT Engineering was hired to help integrate the software for the touchDry kiln control system, built by Fuji Electric Corp. of America HMI Division, into the kilns. Vacutherm tailored the control system inside each Woodizer to meet Gibson's specific application requirements. The system is used by Gibson engineers to monitor the pressure and temperature inside the kiln, in order to dry the lumber used to build guitars faster.

According to Jim Parker from Vacutherm, "the touchDry kiln control system has a better user interface, provides more control over the drying process and better access to historical drying data (when compared to similar systems)." He also mentioned that Gibson engineers stated that "Gibson has increased drying quality significantly and decrease drying time by 30%."

For additional information, please contact:

Jim Parker  
Vacutherm, Inc  
2535 Airport Rd.  
Warren, VT 05674  
802.496.4241  
[www.vacutherm.com](http://www.vacutherm.com)