



## **Now is the Time to Stock Inventory**

Adam Buchwald, Owner of Allied Lutherie - South Burlington, VT has been a supplier of tone woods as well as parts and supplies for guitar making since 1979. In September of 2019, Adam Buchwald, the current owner, moved the business to Vermont from Healdsburg, CA. “We’re geared towards professionals that build guitars and are focused on providing them quality woods,” said Buchwald. “We have CNC machines for making parts for people. We make tons of electric guitar parts, including for Creston Guitars in Burlington, VT. Currently we’re starting a job for a guy that left fender to start his own business, and we work for companies all over the world. They call us and give us the specs they need. With our CNC and experience, the parts are machined to perfect specs. We also have specialty wood on hand that we can sell too.”

Most of Buchwald’s business revolves around his website, though the covid-19 pandemic’s potential business impact was still concerning at the beginning. “It was pretty scary when Covid hit, as it’s the first year that I’ve owned the business,” said Buchwald. “But it turns out everyone was home building guitars! We have prospered and grown during the pandemic. I also have a business that makes guitars here, and in addition to supplying woods and material to builders, we have a few brands that we make here. The orders just went through the roof in the past few months, I’ve had to hire more people. Everyone is home on the internet looking for stuff to do, and people are learning new things or working in their shop.”

That doesn’t mean that there haven’t been changes at Allied Lutherie due to the pandemic. “A lot of people aren’t coming by anymore,” said Buchwald. “We used to do repair work, but no one is doing that right now really. We still do some repair work but we’re not spending time with customers. They drop stuff at the door and we call them when it’s done. The workshop is big enough that we aren’t on top of each other, and we wear a mask when needed. It was tough not allowing staff to go home for Thanksgiving, because we’re all self-quarantining. Our six employees understand that it was necessary though. They’re happy to have a job and to be getting paid and keep doing what they love. It’s a good crew, and I’m definitely interested in finding more people that are talented in this realm. You can’t just hire anyone to do this job. Milling and turning lumber into guitar parts, CNC work for parts, building guitars, it all takes experience. All the guys here are trained professionally at school or with other builders and have been building for 10-15 years. It’s not a factory job where one person is assigned to one particular job all day. These guys can do everything and they’re all serious guitar makers.”

Supply chain issues did hamper Allied Lutherie during the beginning of the pandemic. “Going forward, I definitely want better control over inventory,” said Buchwald. “We weren’t able to get a lot of stuff during the early stages of the pandemic, especially from overseas. Being in this business for just a year, I have most of the cash tied up in growing and improving and not in back stock of inventory. Now the focus is more on stocking inventory and not have to wait weeks or months to get it. It was definitely an issue everyone has faced.”

Buchwald is open to other businesses visiting his location and learning more about what they do there. “Lucas Jenson, from The Tree House Hardwoods and Millshop is my neighbor, and asked me to join VWWC, and I thought it would be a good opportunity to network,” said Buchwald. “It’s good to meet other businesses in the same industry. You can pick up ideas from them or learn more about the materials they use, the equipment or processes they use in manufacturing and processing material. All of that might help grow my own business.