



*By Jim Basara - GJD*

Today's award category is &quot;Innovation&quot;, slightly altered from last year's category. This category is meant to honor companies who made significant, and positive, design innovations. It might be a completely new product, or it might be a giant step forward on an existing product, but it has to be for the better, and it has to be significant.

First up is the new carbon fiber guitar from [XOX Audio Tools](#) , called &quot;The Handle&quot;,. Over the years, there have been a variety of electric guitars made from alternate materials - nearly all have been discontinued, and none have made a real impact on the industry. Several things about this instrument strike me as greatly different from those other attempts.

To start, the design is nothing short of stunning. It was impossible to walk by the XOX booth at NAMM without doing a double-take and stopping to take a closer look, and indeed their booth was packed during the entire show. Designed by Milan-based Peter Solomon, this guitar is sleek and seductive. It is a next-generation design made with next-generation materials. Too many times, builders take a classic body design like a Les Paul or Strat and build it with futuristic materials, but the result is a guitar that just doesn't seem to &quot;fit&quot;,. XOX has solved that problem by going futuristic all the way, in both design and materials.



