What to do when purchasing an instrument:

1. Set a price range. Typically, the higher the price, the better sounding the instrument will be. Don’t start playing instruments that you can’t afford or that you’re not willing to pay for; otherwise you’ll be setting yourself up for heartbreak. Keep in mind that a bow, case, accessories, etc. will usually be extra or separate from the instrument, so don’t forget to factor that into your budget.
2. Call the shop and set up an appointment- they will pull instruments to the specifications of what you’re looking for, and you’ll have more time to compare.
3. Don’t base your purchase on looks- while it can be a part of the decision, the only concern should be how it sounds and how it feels when you play it. My advice would be to look at maker, model, style of the instrument, etc. after you play it.
4. What to play when you’re trying instruments? Keep it consistent so that you can feel how each instrument reacts under similar pieces, as well as hearing the range. I would play the following:
   1. Scales (definitely C and G, make sure you’re getting into 3 octaves to hear the upper range) Long, slow tones (straight and vibrato), as well as bowing variations (some staccato, spiccato, brushed)
   2. Etude, something fast for responsiveness in the mid-range of the instrument
   3. Lyrical- I would suggest a Bach unaccompanied suite- anything memorized would be fine

I would start with scales and play them back to back and immediately get rid of instruments that you don’t like. Once you eliminate your choices down to one or two, you can start going through more repertoire. If you don’t like the sound of and instrument, don’t keep playing it!

Have someone from the shop play the same material on instruments you’ve narrowed it down to- listen with your eyes closed so you don’t know which one they’re playing. Have someone else give you feedback while you’re playing as well.

1. Have fun! Don’t settle for something you’re truly not happy with. Find an instrument that fits what you want and has a sound that will grow and mature with you.