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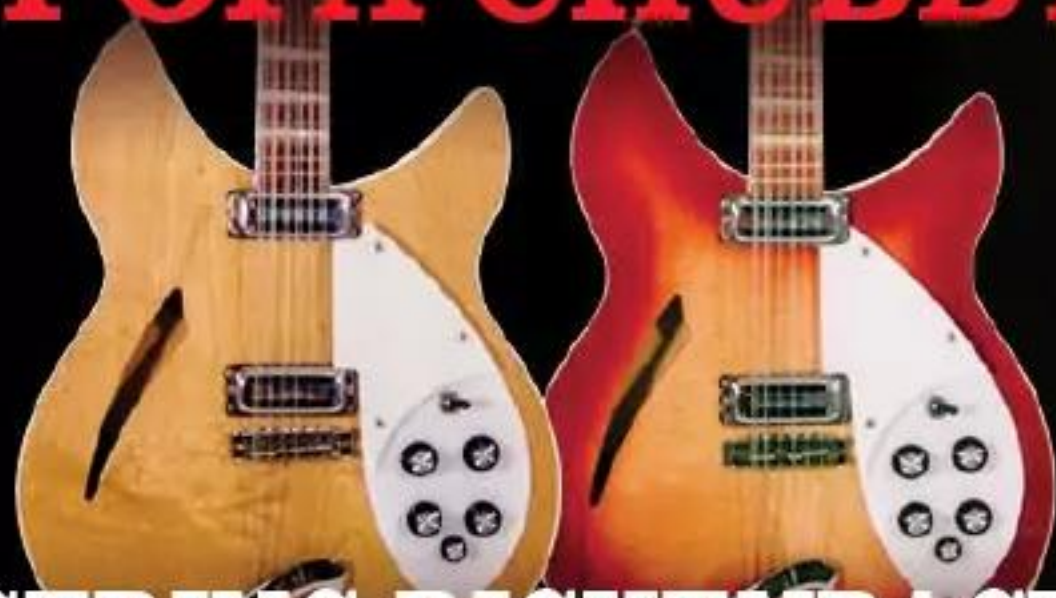
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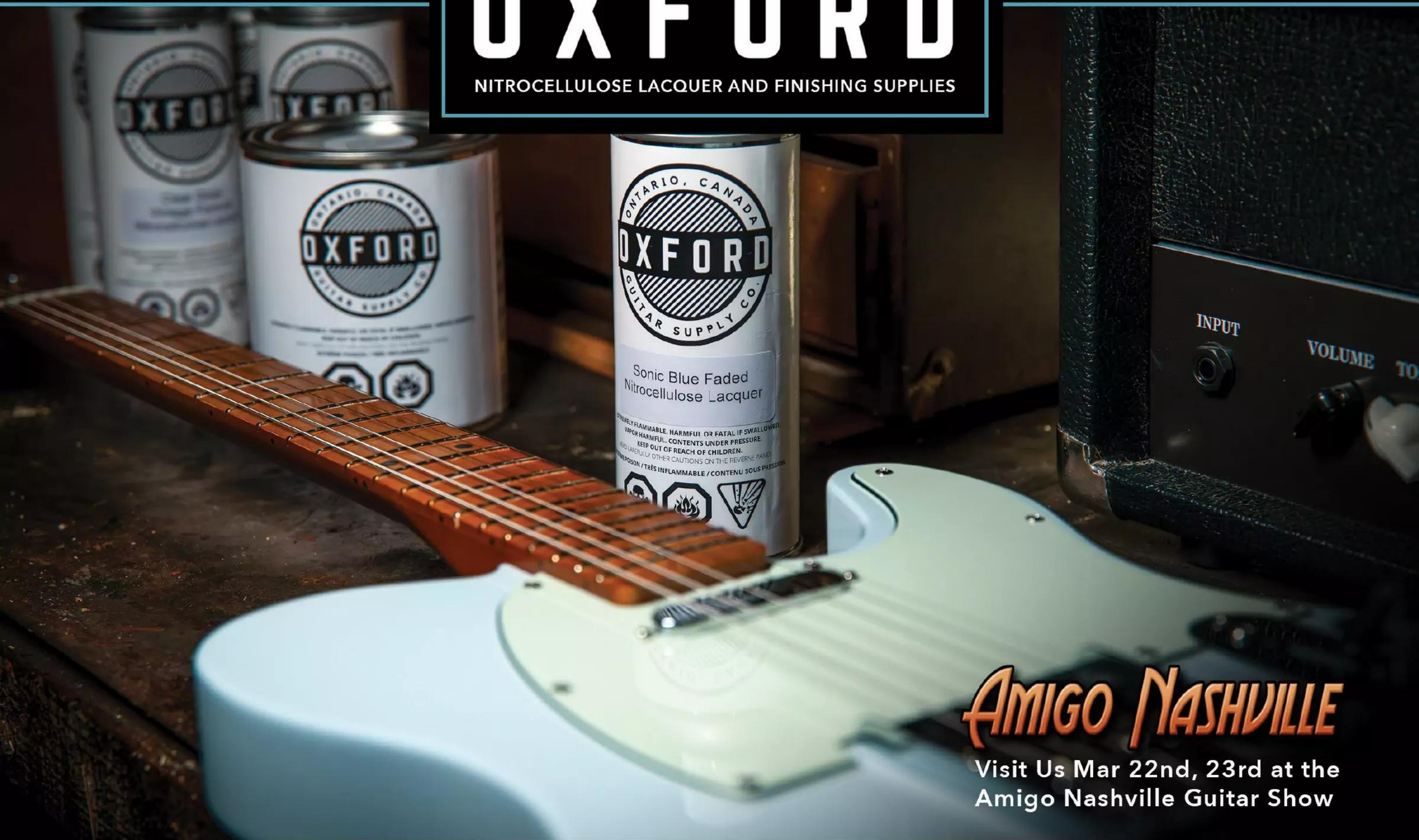
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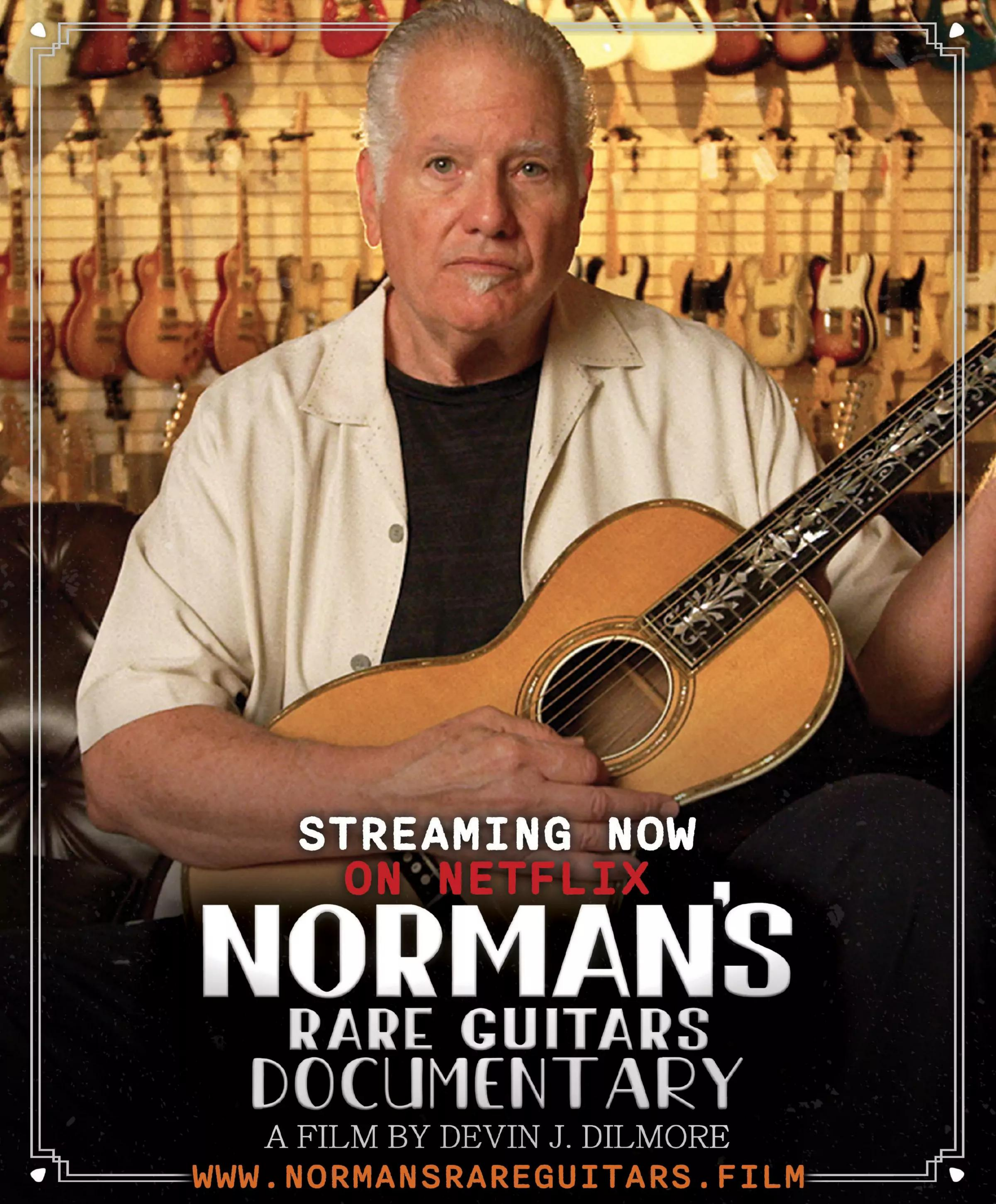
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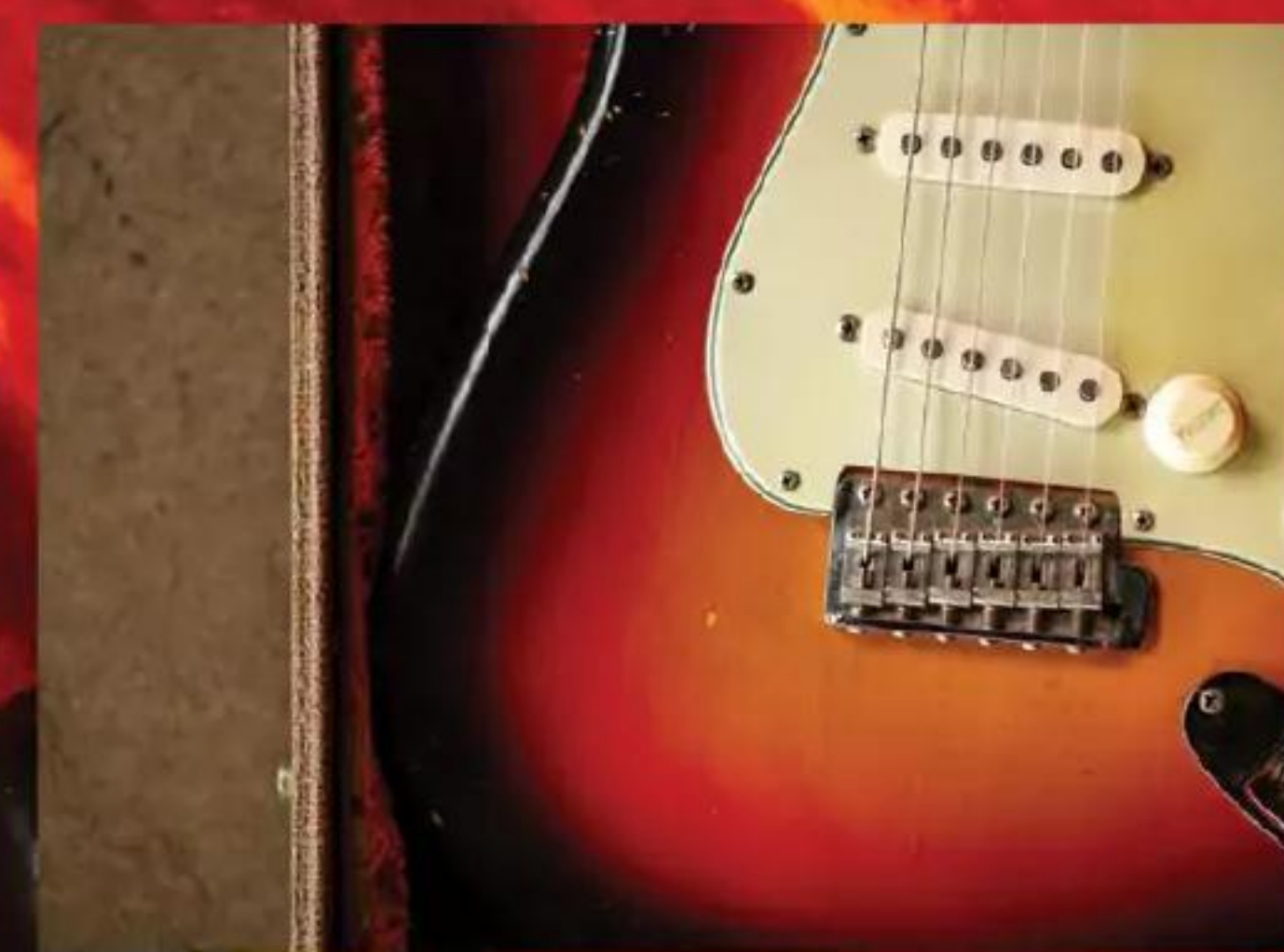
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we heard them say: "We forgot our gee-tars"!

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Bizarre story of 2 factory original '64 Fenders.

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Joe Satriani

26 DOUBLE-BOUND FOR GLORY Rickenbacker's Electric 12-Strings

Though Rickenbacker set the stage for electric guitars in the early 1930s, it languished post-war as Fender and Gibson moved to dominate the market – until F.C. Hall hired designer Roger Rossmeisl. | **By Richard Smith**

30 LIGHTNING STRIKES The Supro Thunderbolt S6420

Though “catalog-grade,” Supro amps are beloved for their eccentric splendors and have been used by many noteworthy guitarists. This is the preferred workhorse. | **By Dave Hunter**

34 CLASSICS

Part of the original SoCal vintage scene, Marc Schoenberger raced the I-5 to buy old guitars every time a new issue of the *Recycler* hit the

streets. After a decade in the game, he'd seen and heard nearly everything. Then came this '54 Rickenbacker. | **By Ward Meeker**

56 JOHN SYKES 1959-2025 Remembering a Heavy Hero

The British guitarist died in January at age 65. For more than 40 years, he rocked with high-volume bands like Whitesnake and Thin Lizzy, establishing himself by blazing on a Les Paul Custom before “shred” had a name. | **By Pete Prown**

59 JOHN SYKES Arc of an Icon

Known for his style and flair influenced by Page, Clapton, and Blackmore, he was a Gary Moore disciple. And no matter the setting, his playing was consistently great. We offer a curriculum vitae. | **By Oscar Jordan**

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COVER PHOTOS: John Sykes: Krasner/Trebitz – Ebet Roberts Studio. Reverend Peyton: Tyler Zoller. Rickenbacker 12-string: VG Archive. **THIS PAGE:** Joe Satriani: JonLuini



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READER MAIL

THE RIGHT CHORD

When it comes to playing guitar, I'm a hack – the only instruments I seem to have talent for is cajun and triangle – bing bing! But your magazine always hits the right chord. A few years ago, I got a Tommy Castro (February '25) CD at a goodwill store. It's great and still gets played occasionally. One day, I was browsing through the bins there and some great blues was playing over the speakers. I asked the dude stocking shelves, "Who's that playing?" He blooped on his phone and told me, "Tommy Castro!"

I saw Grand Funk ("Pop 'N Hiss," January '25) at the The Warehouse in New Orleans in late '69 or early '70; Mark Farner climbing the Marshall stacks and jumping off was as entertaining as the music!

VG always has something that seems to have been written just for me, like the Grand Funk story or the interview with Larkin Poe (January '25), who was just on a rerun of Jimmy Kimmel. They are such a fresh sound, and made me think, "If Bonnie Raitt and the Allman Brothers had a baby band, it would sound like these girls!"

George Lopez
La Place, Louisiana

I appreciate that VG highlights gear, artists, and music that one would not read about in other publications. I also appreciate the "vintage" ethic, because it's important to look back at these stories and people. Plus, it's fun!

Linda Tucker
Azle, Texas

I read every issue of VG cover to cover and enjoy all of it, especially finding out about new artists and new music from new *and* well-known players. Wolf Marshall and Dan Forte do superb work.

One suggestion regarding your amp and guitar reviews: I'd like to know the weight of the items, as that is a factor for me, and frankly, I'm usually too lazy to visit the builder's web page to find out. Yeah, sorry not sorry!

Steve Preactor
Boynton, Florida

AMPED UP!

I really enjoyed Dave Hunter's "Mad Maxed: High-Powered Arena-Rock Alternative Amps" feature in the February '25 issue, but a couple amps were missed, most notably the high-powered Sun Coliseum amp, a mainstay in early-'70s rock. I had friends who

regularly gigged with those on the Long Island rock circuit and remember seeing them with name bands, as well. Earth amps were also big at the time, as they had a lot of power, as well.

Wes Beech
Shelby Township, Michigan

I enjoyed Dave Hunter's feature on arena amps of yesteryear. I'll never forget those tuck-and-roll Kustoms – so fashionable! Used ones were for sale everywhere, and our bass player, Dale Pherson, scored a 3x15 cab in Blue Sparkle as a complement to his Les Paul Recording Bass. For at least one gig, he drove it with a borrowed Kustom stack while our other guitar player used Dale's Ampeg V6B along with a homemade cab. My rig was a silverface Band Master, and with my Ventura goldtop copy and all the knobs dimed, it sounded awesome. Good times!

Bob Crelin
Branford, Connecticut

JangleBox



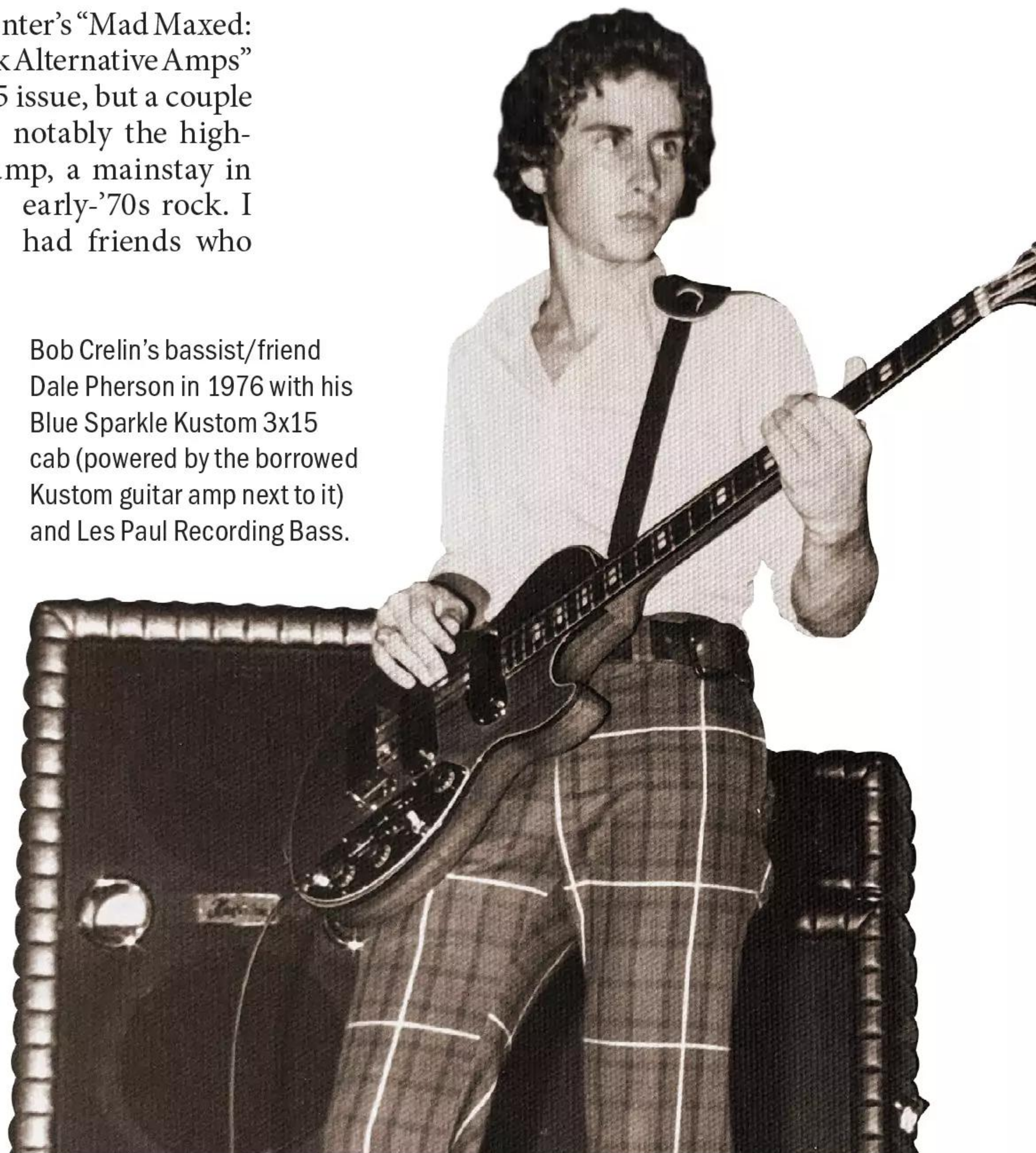
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Bob Crelin's bassist/friend Dale Pherson in 1976 with his Blue Sparkle Kustom 3x15 cab (powered by the borrowed Kustom guitar amp next to it) and Les Paul Recording Bass.



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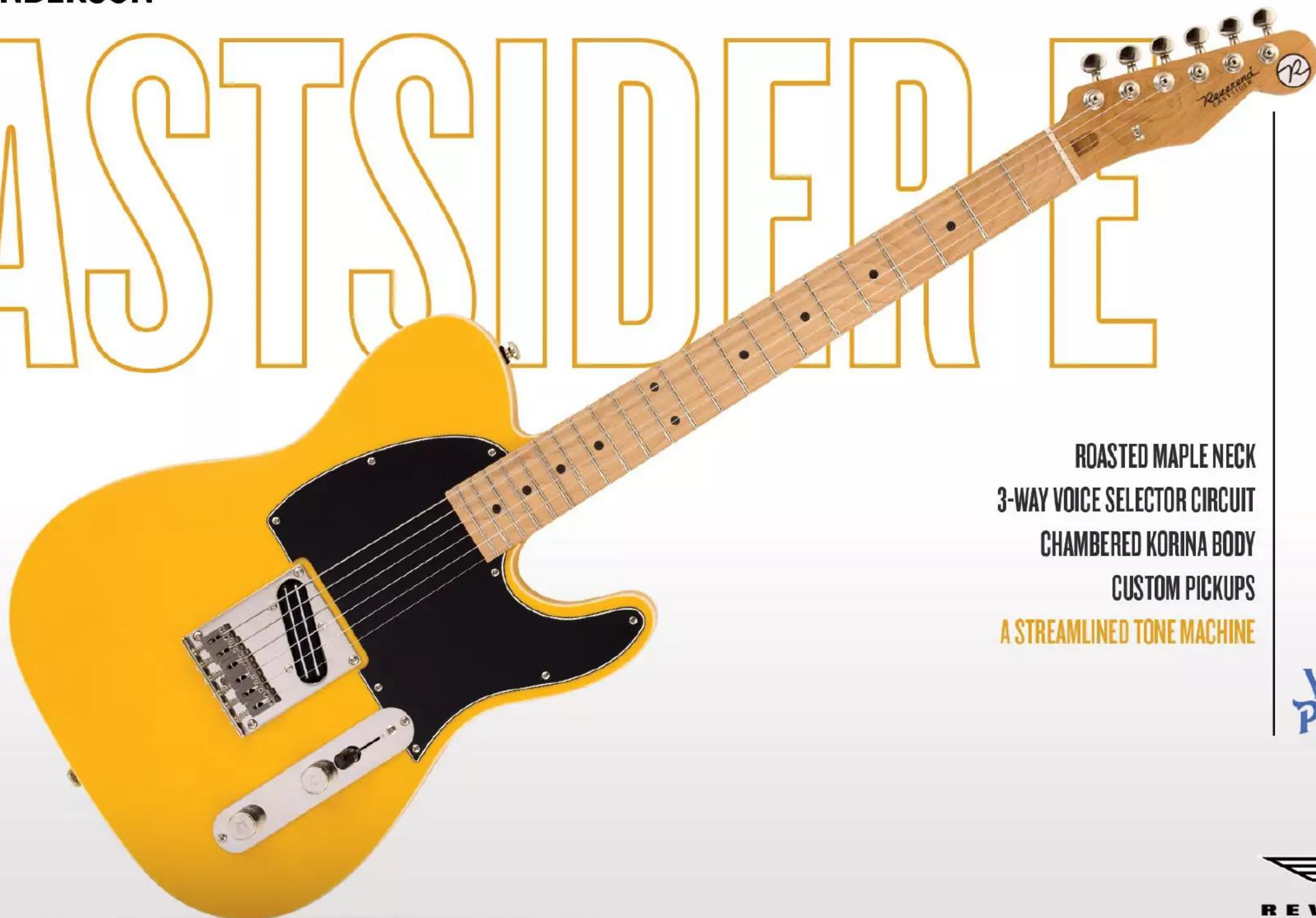
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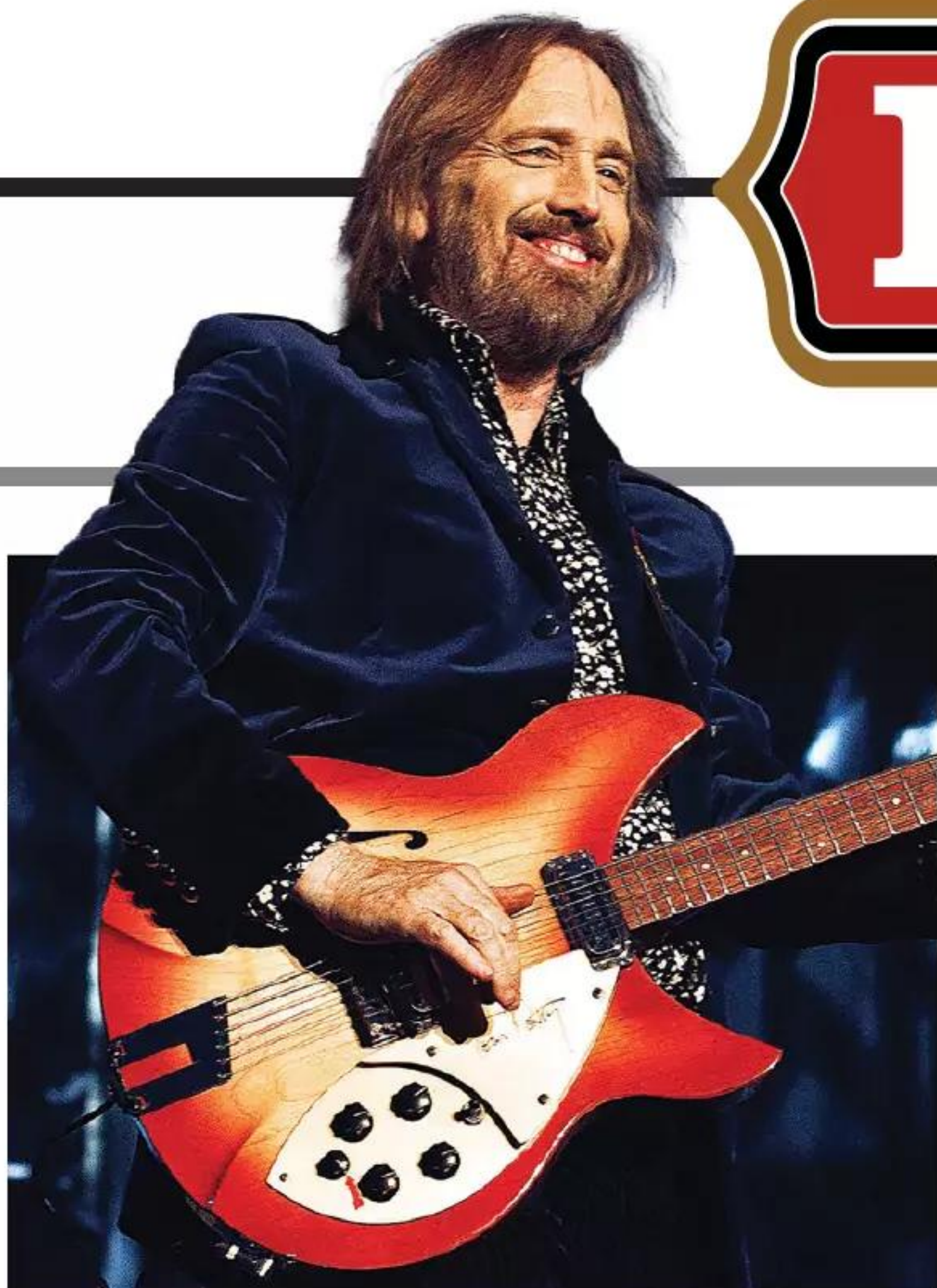
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Tom Petty

TOM PETTY ESTATE DONATES TO L.A. FIRE VICTIMS

The Tom Petty Estate has partnered with GoFundMe to benefit residents of the recent Los Angeles wildfires, with donations of \$15,000 going to several families, saying the late musician cherished his adopted home of L.A. and experienced the devastation of fire first-hand.

The estate also donated \$12,500 to the MusiCares charity's disaster-relief effort for music professionals impacted by the fires, and donated 10 percent of a week's sales from the Tom Petty online store.

Another \$12,500 along with a share of proceeds from a limited-edition "Last Dance with Mary Jane" print signed by artist Blaze Brooks was given to Healthcare for Homeless Animals, a non-profit that helps fund veterinary care.

The estate continues to back fundraising efforts across social media, encouraging fans to participate.

PROWN BOOK RECOGNIZED

Vintage Guitar music editor Pete Prown was recently informed that his book, *The Ultimate Book of Blues Guitar Legends: The Players and Guitars that Shaped the Music*, has been nominated for the 2025 Association for Recorded Sound Collections (ARSC) Award for Excellence in Historical Recorded Sound Research.

OOPS! DEPT.

Our January '25 "Hit List" review of the Po' Ramblin' Boys' *Wanderers Like Me* album appeared with the incorrect title *Rounders Like Me*. VG apologizes for any confusion created by the error.



MIKE CAMPBELL

Got Lucky

Mike Campbell is one of the most-heard guitarists on earth thanks to his work in the legendary Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers and their catalog of hit singles ("American Girl," "I Need to Know," "Refugee," "The Waiting") and certifiably

classic albums (*Damn the Torpedoes*, *Hard Promises*). He has also written for and played with many others, notably Don Henley's hit "The Boys of Summer." After Petty's sudden passing in 2017, Campbell formed his own band, the Dirty Knobs.

Mike Campbell: Chris Phelps.

His latest project is an autobiography, *Heartbreaker: A Memoir*. Campbell's life is a remarkable story, from childhood poverty to the pinnacle of fame and professional respect.

Several times in the book you refer to yourself as a quiet and shy person. Given that, was it difficult to talk about yourself, and therefore challenging to write the book?

It wasn't, because the shy, insecure guy was much younger. I've gained a lot of confidence now that I've gotten older, so I found it very easy to talk about things. As my wife puts it, "You've become very chatty in your old age!"

Where did that confidence come from?

Well, success gives you confidence. Once we started making records and they started doing well, you start to feel a little more confident about yourself. I came out of my shell slowly.

Was this the first time you'd been asked to write a book?

Yeah. Writing a memoir never crossed my mind. In my wildest thoughts, I might someday like to write a book of fiction or something. But a friend of mine, Jaan Uhelszki, knew a writer who was interested in doing a book about me. No one asked before. Ari Surdoval is his name, and I really liked him and he was really keen to do it. They talked me into it, and I'm glad they did.

Petty doesn't always come across very well.

Well, the book is truthful, and every band should have a Tom Petty. If you want to succeed, as a leader you sometimes need to be a little hard-edged to get things done. In the book, I touch on that edge he had, which he probably got from the way his father treated him growing up. He had a determination and drive that none of us had. Without somebody in the band with that quality, you probably won't succeed.

No, he wasn't a perfect person. People may read it and think, "There were some dark spots..." but you could say that about anybody. There's also a loving, sweet, gentle human being in there. That was my thread – bands are delicate, and someone has to lead the band or it'll fall apart. Fortunately, we had Tom, who always stood by the band. He could have gone solo, but he loved the band and he fought for himself, but he also fought for us.

You talk a lot about recording demos.

When you're writing, it's free. You're with the muse and just accepting it. You're not thinking, "This has to be a record..." or "This sound has to be perfect." You're about the creative flow and the gift that's coming to you. When you're in the studio making a record, it's a different energy – there's pressure to pay attention to details. Sometimes you get lost in the details and forget the spark. But demos capture the creative passion in a song, unencumbered by expectations. You go with it, put it down, and have fun.

We had to take demos into the studio and try re-creating them. The game was called "Beat the Demo."

You discuss influences like Bob Dylan, George Harrison, Roger McGuinn, and others, and the fact you worked with them. Have you accepted that you're now an influence, too?

In some ways, I have, because people tell me, or they say, "We played 'Here Comes My Girl' at our wedding." The songs meant something to people. I know what it's like to be enamored with someone else's music, such as my heroes that I've worked with. I know that feeling, and I try to respect that when someone gives me a compliment.

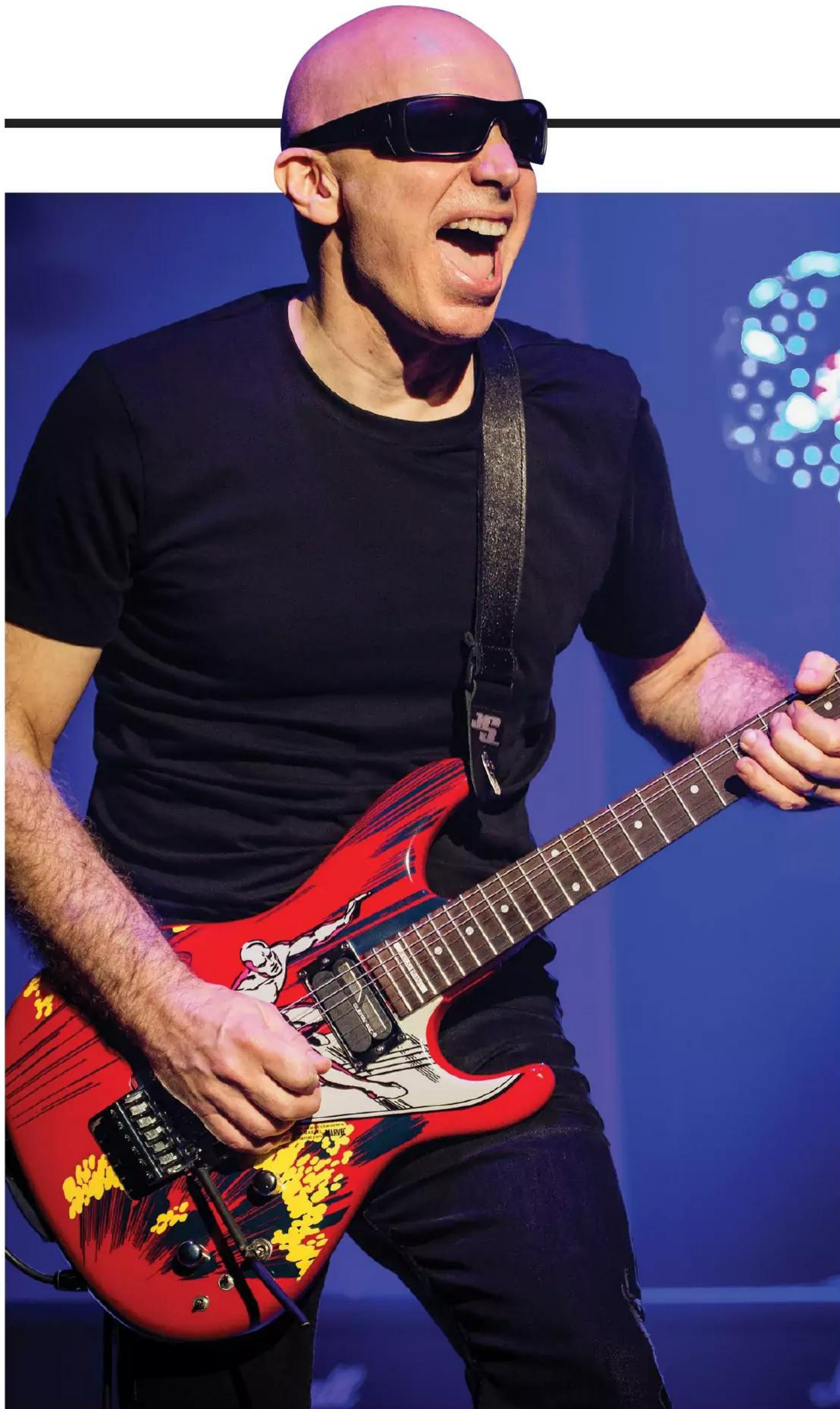
I get this feeling sometimes like, "How did I get here? Why me? How did this happen to me? Why am I so lucky?" I've had a very charmed life. – **Bret Adams**



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JOE SATRIANI

Top of the World

The hardest-working guitarist in show business, Joe Satriani recently wrapped up a successful Van Halen tour, a G3 Reunion tour, a live album, a residency in Las Vegas with Sammy Hagar, and is now supporting an album co-written with Steve Vai. Does Satch ever rest?

The G3 Reunion Tour sent everyone back to the guitar woodshed.

It was such an unbelievable turn of events that led us to be able to do that (laughs). Everyone changed everything they were doing at the

swagger to it. It was something we did as a unit; very often, people overlook that and see only the technical or production elements. On that song, the band came together in a very rock-and-roll way. I was proud of the band and how they played with me. I don't know how they follow me sometimes, but they did an amazing job (laughs).

What resonates for you after performing so many Van Halen songs?

What a joy it was to play nothing but hit songs for two and a half hours (laughs). It was mind-blowing! It was rhythm guitar with a

last minute so this could come together. Everyone liked the idea of simply re-doing exactly what we did back in 1996. Steve opened the show, Eric would be second, and then we picked crazy cover songs to jam to. It was intense, but we pulled it off. It was a beautiful reunion.

"Big Bad Moon" is an excellent choice for the single.

We weren't thinking of doing a live album. We were concentrating on the tour. Then, EarMusic said "We'd love to have a live album!" I thought it would be a fun opportunity to release "Big Bad Moon." Something I don't do very often is sing, if you can call it that (laughs). Bassist Bryan Beller said that particular performance of "Big Bad Moon" had

couple of 16-bar solos – the polar opposite of my show, which is melodies and solos non-stop. Part of it was a relief, physically. I had a big stage and really enjoyed being a part of a band and not having to front.

And, it's good-time music. I can only think of one song that was slightly moody – "The Seventh Seal." The rest was upbeat. We played outside, and the audience loved hearing the music. The Van Halen OGs loved hearing Michael Anthony and Sammy Hagar doing their stuff.

Was it challenging to find the right rig?

It was a crazy journey, figuring out what gear to play so I could properly represent the decades of Eddie and his development. The guitar sounds from "Ain't Talkin' 'Bout Love" to "Panama" to "Summer Nights" or "Judgement Day" are so completely different. You wouldn't want to walk onstage and step on some modeling thing where you change your sound. It would drive you nuts.

What did you come up with?

I wound up focusing on *Live Without a Net*, from 1986. That was Eddie playing Marshalls with a bit of stereo chorus. They were still doing a lot of Roth-era material. I thought, "That's the way to do it. Go onstage with one really big sound and have a party!" I worked with Dylana Scott at 3rd Power Amplification to cover that – chimy for the rhythms, enough gain but still with that slinky, sexy, exciting kind of single-note sound that Eddie was always getting.

It was particularly hard because I don't play like Eddie. The more I got into it, the more I realized *how much* I don't play like Eddie and how much I avoided learning his style because I didn't want to copy him. If I learn the beginning of "Mean Street," I'll write songs that sound like that. So, I had better just be a fan and just listen to it. By the time we played, the audience was so appreciative. They saw Sammy and Mike giving their all every night. We did everything we could to represent this body of work as best we could.

Edward played in a very unique way. Sometimes, I would find myself standing still onstage, forgetting to run around, staring at my hand, and going, "This is really cool (laughs)!" Eddie had a way of always making it sound fun. I was always amazed at that.

What can fans expect from you and Steve Vai on the *Surfing With The Hydra* Tour?

We are writing and recording our album. It's progressing, it's crazy, and it's all over the place with beautiful, crazy songs. We'll start rehearsing with a new band and hit the road. We've never done anything like this before. – **Oscar Jordan**

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DAN HAWKINS

Toast of the Town

When The Darkness roared out of England with its 2003 debut *Permission to Land* and the hit “I Believe in a Thing Called Love,” the music world was slapped across the face. The band reminded people that melodic hard rock steeped in ’70s influences was supposed to be catchy, fun, and sometimes outrageous. Guitarist Dan Hawkins, vocalist/guitarist Justin Hawkins, bassist Frankie Poullain, and drummer Rufus Taylor have just released *Dreams on Toast*, The Darkness’ eighth studio album.

Vintage Guitar caught up with Dan Hawkins.

How did the songwriting work on *Dreams on Toast*?

Quite often, I have written the music, Justin the lyrics and melody, but we are all together when it happens, and soar musically and lyri-

cally off each other, so even if Frank and Rufus haven’t contributed chords, melody, or lyrics, we still split the songwriting contributions. Rufus many times has played a drum beat that has informed a riff or chord progression of mine.

Has the way you all write changed dramatically over time?

We are pushing each other to come to writing sessions with pre-formed ideas. We have all contributed solo contributions to this album with each of us taking a turn to be the vocalist on our offering.

You produced *Dreams on Toast* and produced or co-produced previous albums. What goes into that decision, and is it easy or difficult to step back and just be a guitarist?

Producing has been an obsession of mine since a young age. I wanted to go to London when I was 17, with the aim of being a sound

engineer, but things didn’t quite go to plan. I built a commercial studio in Norfolk when the band got big and had many established acts record there.

From the start of The Darkness, I was in the role of producer. I wasn’t credited, but I produced the first album with Pedro Ferreira. Halfway through, Frankie thought I was taking too much control away from the band, so I stepped down. But when it came to dishing out credits, Pedro conveniently forgot that I was his co-producer for half of the album. I knew it was wrong at the time, but didn’t say anything, as I just wanted the band to do well and not rock the boat.

I’ve been on a mission to prove myself as a top producer and not rely on engineers or mix engineers ever since! I have produced everything I’ve recorded, apart from our *Pinewood Smile* album, which was produced by Adrian Bushby. It was magnificent fun and Adrian is amazing, but it was just for one album, as I’d had a baby and was exhausted. It was really fun just being a guitar player, though!

***Dreams on Toast* has a variety of styles. “Rock and Roll Party Cowboy” and “I Hate Myself” rock out. “Hot on My Tail,” with its acoustic-guitar strumming and catchy piano, is like country rock. The straight pop influences are evident on “Don’t Need Sunshine” and “The Longest Kiss.”**

My agenda as producer was not to make music for our audience, but to follow the song no matter what style it was. We had upward of 70 songs on the cutting room floor before we even thought of entering the studio. The (Beatles’) White album was quite an influence on us this time – the freedom to explore rather than supply our fans with more of the same.

A new documentary, *Welcome to The Darkness*, covers the band’s highs and lows. How do you think it turned out?

It was a massive pain in the arse. Cameras on us for seven years! I don’t really think it came across, how much fun we have as a band. It was more about picking out the drama. Still, director Simon Emmett did a great job. I think of it more like a wildlife documentary. We didn’t have a say in much.

What guitars did you play on *Dreams on Toast*?

I used a 2000 Les Paul Standard, a 2024 355 – my new fave – a ’64 Epiphone Casino, and Atkin and Brook acoustics. My 355 is a beautiful guitar I got from the Gibson Garage last year. It sounds quite aggressive but with so much personality. I can’t wait to play it live on the next tour. Justin kept nicking it for solos, as it just sings! It’s the sound of this album for sure. – **Bret Adams**



ERIC LINDBERG

The City and The South

“I’m always trying to do things I haven’t done before,” says guitarist/banjoist Eric Lindberg, who has toured and recorded for a decade with wife Doni Zasloff as the bluegrass duo Nefesh Mountain.

“A lot of folks know us as a bluegrass/mostly acoustic band, but I really have been getting back into my personal roots – electric, jazz, rock, and blues from my formative years.”

Those broader horizons and the expanded Nefesh Mountain Band with keyboard, mandolin, bass, and drums dominate their double album, *Beacons*. Disc one is Americana originals and amplified playing, while disc two’s modern acoustic bluegrass features A-list guest pickers. Joining mandolin ace Sam Bush and dobroist Jerry Douglas are banjoist Rob McCoury, fiddler Stuart Duncan, and guitarist Cody Kilby.

Growing up in Brooklyn, Lindberg explored his parents’ wide-ranging record collection including the 1996 David Grisman-Jerry Garcia bluegrass collaboration *Shady Grove*, which he calls “a big one for me.” Discovering his dad’s Pat Metheny CD made the guitarist “one of my North Stars.” Bill Frisell and Jon Scofield later became favorites.

Studying classical guitar at 10, his first guitar was a nylon-string that was soon augmented by a Harmony 335 copy played through a tiny solid-state Marshall.

His uncle, Tim, who lived in Georgia, was a guitarist with impressive gear of his own.

“We would pick Allman Brothers tunes,” Lindberg recalls. “That’s probably why I love what I love today – that mixture of the city and the south. Those two sides of me.”

Discovering Bela Fleck and the Flecktones in high school “...reminded me of a bluegrass version of the Metheny group, though they’re nothing alike.”

Fleck’s *Bluegrass Sessions: Tales from the Acoustic Planet Vol. 2* introduced him to Bush, Douglas, Duncan, and another major guitar influence – Tony Rice.

Lindberg finally embraced five-string banjo in 2013, taking lessons from Tony Trischka. That led him to Doc Watson, Clarence White, Norman Blake, John Hartford, Flatt and Scruggs, Bill Monroe, and the Stanley Brothers, as well as modern acts like Nickel Creek. At Rutgers University’s Mason Gross School of the Arts, he focused on music and continued studies with jazz-guitar great Vic Juris, which

started in high school. Along with jazz, Juris encouraged his interest in bluegrass.

“Vic introduced me to certain Tony Rice records,” he said. “I was lucky I had him as a mentor.”

Beacons includes his heartfelt Rice homage “Man of Manzanita.”

Lindberg and Zasloff, who reside in the New York area, created the album there and in Nashville.

“I wrote the songs starting in January, 2024, and we did all but three in Nashville that April. We brought our band down for a few days, then Sam, Jerry, Stuart, and all my heroes came the last three days.”

Lindberg’s gear blends new and old. He acquired a 1981 ES-175 while studying with Juris – a factory second with a small knot in the wood. “Vic said it was one of the better ones he’d played.”

On the bluegrass disc, he used only a custom-made Preston Thompson acoustic with Madagascar rosewood he says is “really beautiful.” He also used his Deering five-string banjo.

For the Americana disc, he used two electrics, one being a ’52 Tele reissue he’s had for 25 years. Before meeting Zasloff, he used it on USO tours in the Middle East. “Mother” features him soloing using the neck pickup; engineer Brendan Bell used dual compression so it “...doesn’t sound super Tele.”

“Milestoned,” by contrast, is super Tele. After college, he says, “...even though I was playing a lot of jazz, I was really into Brett Mason, Johnny Hiland, Brad Paisley, and of course James Burton and Danny Gatton. I was really trying to do the Tele thing. It’s fun to step back in, and I’m playing a lot of that stuff live.”

“Keep Your Lamp Trimmed and Burning” is his Custom Shop ’64 SG with a Murphy Lab finish, and he’s especially drawn to its thick neck shape.

After Tim passed, he visited his aunt and returned with his uncle’s ’65 SG Junior and an ’81 Strat.

“I’ll see if I want to take the ’65 on the road,” he said. “It’s a pretty wonderful-sounding old piece of wood.”

For the Americana tracks, he used a modded Fender Princeton, a ’90s Deluxe Reverb (both borrowed from a friend), and a new Magnatone.

With the Nefesh Mountain Band on tour through ’25, Lindberg and Zasloff are looking to their next record, as Lindberg reflects on the band’s voyage.

“We’ve come a long way from that first record to where *Beacons* is now.” – **Rich Kienzie**



ALAN GOGOLL

Harmonic Convergence

Hailing from the Australian island of Tasmania, Alan Gogoll is reshaping acoustic guitar before our eyes. Sure, you've heard artificial harmonics, but Gogoll has refined it into a fluid technique that is, quite simply, breathtaking. Heard on his latest, *Lioness Lullabies*, bell-like notes cascade like a waterfall over each song – truly, it's something you have to hear to believe.

Tell us about *Lioness Lullabies*.

It feels like a musical postcard from the past two years while I've been traveling from Australia to Hansa Studios in Berlin. Each of the eight songs was recorded live in a single take. There's something special about playing a piece in one take; it preserves the raw emotion, the imperfections, and the magic of the moment. For recording, their live room has this perfect balance – resonant but not overpowering, intimate but expansive. They

also have legendary and rare microphones like Neumann's U67 and SM2, and the RCA 44, all of which brought out a beautiful depth in the guitar.

Your picking hand is positioned more-parallel to the strings than most fingerstylists.

Yes, that allows me to control the harmonics more precisely and get a clearer tone. It's something that developed naturally over time, as I found what worked best for producing the sounds I wanted. It's certainly a trade off – the classic trap of the guitarist who wants to do it all – but I'm happy to be a one-trick pony and do that one trick to the best of my abilities.

The thumb of your picking hand is like a band – it's playing the bass line and keeping rhythm. Talk about the different jobs your fingers do.

That's a great way to put it! I see the thumb as the metronome and bass, the index finger as perhaps the band leader for attack. My other fingers come in and out when needed. It's like

they all have their own role in a conversation, working together to create a full guitar sound.

Does using a capo improve the chiming qualities of the harmonics?

I have a rule that whichever capo position I start an idea with, I keep it for the final song. A capo gives a brighter, chime-like quality, but it's a trade off because it lowers the string tension and shortens the string length. So, all things equal, harmonics are much easier without a capo but I would say more fun with one.

What are your preferred open tunings?

I actually only have one tuning and I've used it for a very long time. Originally, I wanted an unusual tuning so I could create my own musical identity. E-A-C[#]-E-B-E is the tuning that just struck me and felt like home. I believe you can now search "Alan Gogoll tuning" online and that will come up, which is cool.

Which guitar did you use on the album?

I played my Åstrand, which is my dream guitar and I really can't express how much I love it. Ted Åstrand's luthiery work is exquisite and he's just about to finish building a second guitar for me; it'll be a smaller, brighter guitar to complement my OM, which I see as the orchestral guitar.

What tonal qualities are you looking for in a guitar?

In terms of timber, we all know the luthier plays the largest part, but I do love my spruce and African blackwood OM for a large orchestral sound, while I have a soft spot for spruce and maple for smaller-bodied guitars. Though they're built nearly a decade apart, they share the same piece of bearclaw-moon spruce for the tops, which was a very cool detail.

Guitar players must come to your shows and stare at your right hand. How did your cascading harmonics approach on guitar evolve?

It's funny, people always ask about my right hand, but the real work and effort happens in my left. Ever since I was a kid, I really loved harmonics – it's like there's a hidden instrument in the guitar, one you can access with some practice. I really love that.

Was there a moment that really upped your playing game?

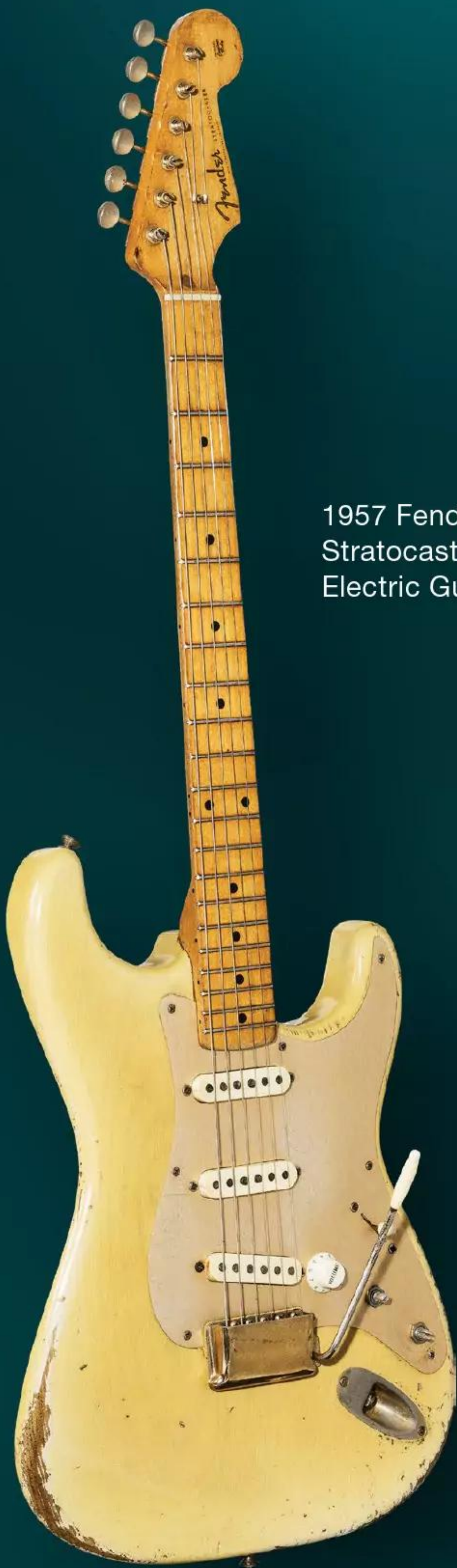
When I was 20, I slipped with a knife in the kitchen and injured my left hand. That forced me to only use my right hand for some time, so I started looking at how many harmonics I could do over the soundhole. Once my fretting hand healed, I started translating what I'd been doing with my picking hand to my fretting hand, and the rest is history. It's exciting because the guitar really does seem to have infinite possibilities. There's still so much undiscovered. – **Pete Prown**

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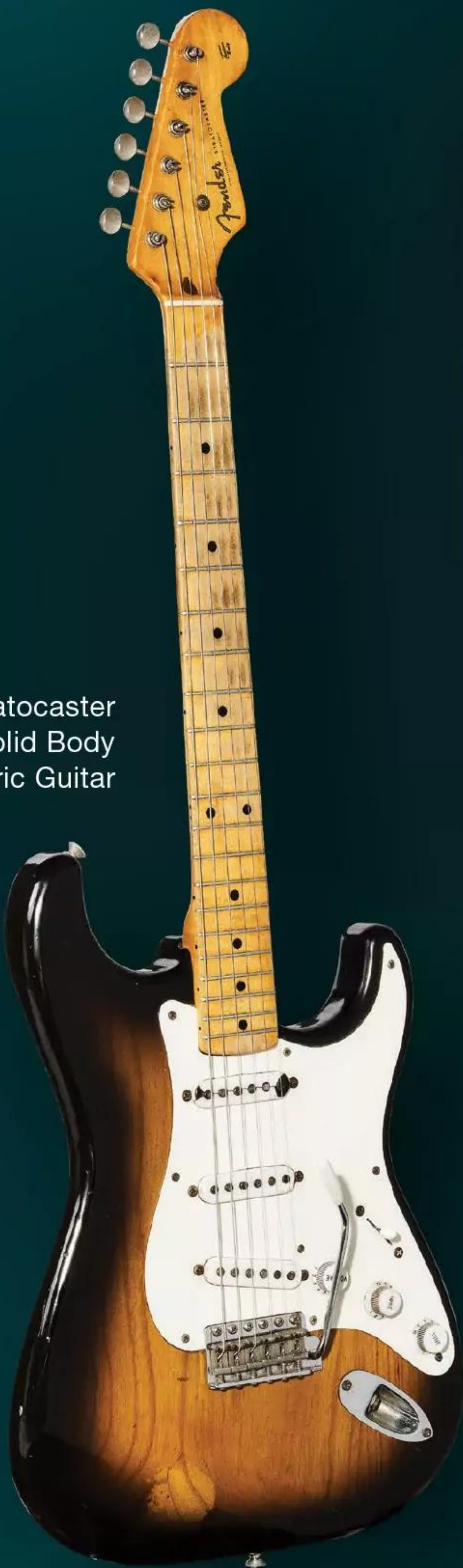
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Harmonica player Billy Branch joins you on some of *Honeysuckle*.

That dude is so interesting and so fun. He played on “Nell (Prison Cell Blues).” I recorded his part in one of the rooms on the Legendary Rhythm & Blues Cruise in the middle of the Caribbean Ocean (laughs). He’s a legend.

You also have

a duet with Colton Crawford on banjo for “The Good Die Young.”

Colton is so cool. The Dead South is an interesting band.

They’re Canadian, but absolutely steeped in American music. Colton is, honest to God, one of the best banjo players alive. He can play Scruggs-style as clean as anybody in Nashville, do the old-time thing, or grab a flat pick and play the banjo like a tenor guitar. But he does it on a five-string.

With all of the special guests, I didn’t say too much as far as direction. For Colton, I said, “I want you on this song. You tell me what you want to do.” I have lots of ideas, but I don’t want to muddy the water. Colton elevated the whole thing. With The McCrary Sisters, they asked, “What do you want?” I said, “I want The McCrary Sisters!” I said, “Listen to this and tell me what you would do.” “Looking For A Manger” had a gospel feel, and they elevated it to a point beyond anything I could have ever done by myself. They were incredible.

Do you have a #1 guitar?

Sometimes, I wish I was like Willie Nelson or B.B. King, where I had that one guitar I always play, but I rotate stuff. Part of the reason is because of all the tunings I play; certain guitars speak in different tunings. There is a guitar all over this record, which is a 1930 National Triolian. When I got it, it was in a little box because someone had taken it apart and stripped the paint off of it. It had a yellow-brown color with palm trees on it, and now it’s rusted with a crazy patina. There was no way I could have ever afforded it when I was young. I’ve worn the thing out, and if I could pick *one* guitar, it’s this one. If there were a fire, it would be the one I save. It’s magical – there are ghosts in it (laughs). I also have a ’34 National Trojan I used on the record, and that’s a pretty close second.

What’s next for you?

Writing, recording, a big European tour, and we’re going to Alaska! – **Oscar Jordan**

REVEREND PEYTON

Time-Traveling Blues

On the latest release from Reverend Peyton’s Big Damn Band, Peyton explores the gutbucket sounds of pre-war country blues. *Honeysuckle* is loaded with passionate singing, wicked resonator tones, and talented guests – but his secret weapon is an instrument that has survived the ravages of time and space.

Who is your true north for feel?

My first love is the country blues fellas like Charley Patton, Furry Lewis, Fred McDowell, and Bukka White. A lot of guys might start with The Allman Brothers. For me, it was straight fingerstyle country-blues slide guitar. That’s where I started. One of the things about slide guitar that speaks to me is how vocal it can be. It’s closer to the human voice. The beauty of it is there is a whole lot of music, melody, and tension between the frets. That’s where the magic happens. When it comes to blues guitar, where a lot of people make their mistake is that the original blues scales were West African.

When you flat the third, you’re flattening it to an actual place. You’re not just bending up the third because it sounds cool. The beauty of slide guitar is you can find those notes and speak with inflections. A lot of times, lyrics don’t say it as well as a slide guitar can.

What is it about Charley Patton’s playing that speaks to you?

Charley was the guy who first fired me up, but I tried listening to as many of the old guys as I could. I got hold of this compilation CD called *The Slide Guitar: Bottles, Knives & Steel*, and more than any other record, it absolutely changed my life. I was like, “Oh my God! This is incredible!” Especially when it got to Charley Patton. His slide playing is incredible. He played fingerstyle on his lap, and I didn’t know that at the time because I was playing his stuff regular bottleneck style. That influenced the way I play. He does a lot way up past the 12th fret. It’s very vocal. Some of his best slide work was his gospel stuff.



POPA CHUBBY

Ready For Freddie

Road warrior Popa Chubby has assembled a crack team of blues professionals for his latest, an homage titled *I Love Freddie King*. Guests include Eric Gales, Christone “Kingfish” Ingram, Albert Castiglia, and Joe Bonamassa, to name a few. The result is a truly loving tribute with awe-inspiring blues guitar.

Freddie doesn’t get as much ink as other blues icons.

He doesn’t get as much as B.B. or Albert King because he died so young. He was like Jimi Hendrix in the sense that he left a legacy and a body of work that was so vast and all-encompassing. He did a lot in a very short amount of time.

He was the first blues-rock.

He was an unmitigated blues-rock! He defined two of the greatest blues-rock songs of all time – “Hide Away” and “Going Down.” How many guitar players came to the blues after hearing Clapton playing “Hide Away”? And it doesn’t even hold a candle to the Freddie King version! That song and “Going Down”

have been staples in the blues-rock world forever. Beck, Bogert & Appice did one of the best versions.

How did you approach the material, sonically?

I got away from the Strat. I wanted to re-create what Freddie did, but not exactly. He played a goldtop on the early-’60s instrumental stuff, and later played a 345. So I gravitated to my P-90 guitars. I used my ’54 goldtop, my ’63 335, my ’59 345, and my ’54 Black Beauty, which was pretty much my go-to. It’s an amazing guitar.

What were you plugged into?

I used a ’65 Princeton and a ’66 Deluxe. For overdubs, it was a ’52 Deluxe and a ’57 Vibrolux.

Did you plug straight in?

I’m not gonna lie, I like overdrive. I’m a rock guy. Analog Mike made a bunch of souped-up Tube Screemers and a couple of King of Tone pedals for me, and my friend Andy Fuchs made a couple of really good pedals for me, like the Cream Classic Tube Screamer. I also like the Robin Trower Overdrive by Fulltone. It’s a lot like a Tube Screamer but a little grungier and darker. On “Going Down,” Joe Bonamassa

is playing a ’59 ’burst through a Dumble on 12. The amount of tone and gain he has is ridiculous!

You two jam well together.

When you do something with Joe, you rise to the occasion. That’s where the fun happens. Arthur Neilson and I play together a lot. When we listen back, we can’t tell who’s who because we wind up emulating each other. When it comes to chops, the guys on the record bury me. There’s so frickin’ good! I’m just trying to keep up.

You and Eric Gales and Christone Ingram are simply killin’.

The level of guitar competence that exists now is mind-boggling. There were always good players out there, but the ante has been upped. Guys like Joe, Eric, and Christone are so frickin’ good.

How did you decide on the songs?

Freddie had a bunch of stages in his career. In the early days, they were trying to make him a pop star. He did duets with female artists. That stuff you never hear except on the compilations. He broke with the guitar instrumentals like “San-Ho-Zay” and *Let’s Hide Away* and *Dance Away with Freddie King*. They were trying to market him to a younger, white audience. It was a unique time in musical history when a black blues artist could become relevant in a racially segregated world to a younger white audience.

A lot of that had to do with a regional TV show called “The Beat.” Gatemouth Brown was in the house band, and they had Freddie as a guest all the time. They had all these white chicks in go-go boots dancing (laughs)! The minute they left the studio, they couldn’t be seen on the same bus, on the same street, or eating in the same restaurant. Music transcended racial boundaries, which was amazing in the late ’50s and early ’60s.

There’s also the Leon Russell period, where he made music for Shelter Records. Especially *Getting Ready* and *Texas Cannonball*. Those records are stellar. That’s where “Going Down” came from. It’s got Jim Gordon on drums, Donald “Duck” Dunn on bass, Don Nix on rhythm guitar, Leon Russell on piano, and Freddie on guitar. Those records are mind-blowing.

The third part was the *Burglar* era. He went to London and made a record with Mike Vernon, who produced the Beano record. It’s the funkier record ever made. I wanted to make sure I included the best stuff from those eras so people could get the full picture.

You’re about to tour...

Yeah, a bunch of U.S. dates and a full European tour! I’m excited! – **Oscar Jordan VG**



DOUBLE-BOUND FOR GLORY

Rickenbacker's Electric 12-Strings

RICHARD R. SMITH

George Beauchamp and Adolph Rickenbacher founded Electro String in 1931 to manufacture what everyone would soon call “Rickenbacker” guitars. Success came early and their lap steels set standards of quality, performance, and tone. On the other hand, the company’s electric bass viols and violins excited segments of the industry but never sold well. Same for the novel Bakelite standard guitars. While it’s true Rickenbacker set the stage for modern electric guitars, after World War II, the company languished as others, like Fender, capitalized on them.

F.C. Hall, who was a partner with Fender Sales, knew the market well. When he bought Electro String in 1953, he immediately started remaking it, and soon, everyone would call the company “Rickenbacker.”

Adolph Rickenbacher had come to guitars with a background in industrial arts. He liked to work with cast aluminum, Bakelite, and stamped metal, which led to many of the company’s early innovations, but also limited its designs. Hall moved the factory toward finely crafted wood, the more-traditional guitar material for good reason – it worked better.

The solidbody Combo guitars and 4000 basses followed, but had only limited success. The latter’s neck-through-body would prove to be the other way to make solidbody basses (compared with Fender’s). Though the idea would later sell in the thousands and influence numerous high-end builders, nobody knew that in 1957.

Rickenbacker’s final break with the ’30s came when Paul Barth left the company and Hall hired master builder Roger Rossmeisl.

Photos: VG Archive.

A German handy with a French curve, he revamped the solidbody line and created the new acoustic/electric Capri Series. In visual terms, Rossmeisl's guitars were among the most-appealing electrics ever produced.

By '58, Rickenbacker produced both Deluxe and Standard double-cutaway acoustic/electric models. The Deluxe 360 and 370 had triangle-shaped fretboard inlays, bound necks, and bound bodies. Moreover, they came with a Rick-O-Sound jack after mid 1960; hooked up with a special junction box, it divided signal from the pickups to produce a quasi-stereo effect through two amplifiers. The standard models 330 and 340 had dot inlays and no bindings. The $\frac{3}{4}$ -sized 310, 315, 320, and 325 had Standard features, as

well (Rickenbacker designated vibrato with a 5 as the last digit in a model number).

By '63, Hall must have been frustrated, having created all these beautiful six-strings, yet he still had no blockbuster. The 360 and 365 sold well, but not like Fenders and Gibsons, which had the solidbody market locked tight. While Danelectro and Gibson did turn out earlier 12-strings, Hall still sensed an untapped market. A Rickenbacker, he believed, had potential if designed correctly and played by musicians looking for a new sound. Since Rossmeisl had by then moved to Fender, Ward Deaton developed ideas at the factory, including what would become Ric's highly regarded headstock design. Crowded but

1965 Rickenbacker
Model 360 in
Mapleglo and '65
370s in Jetglo
and Fireglo.

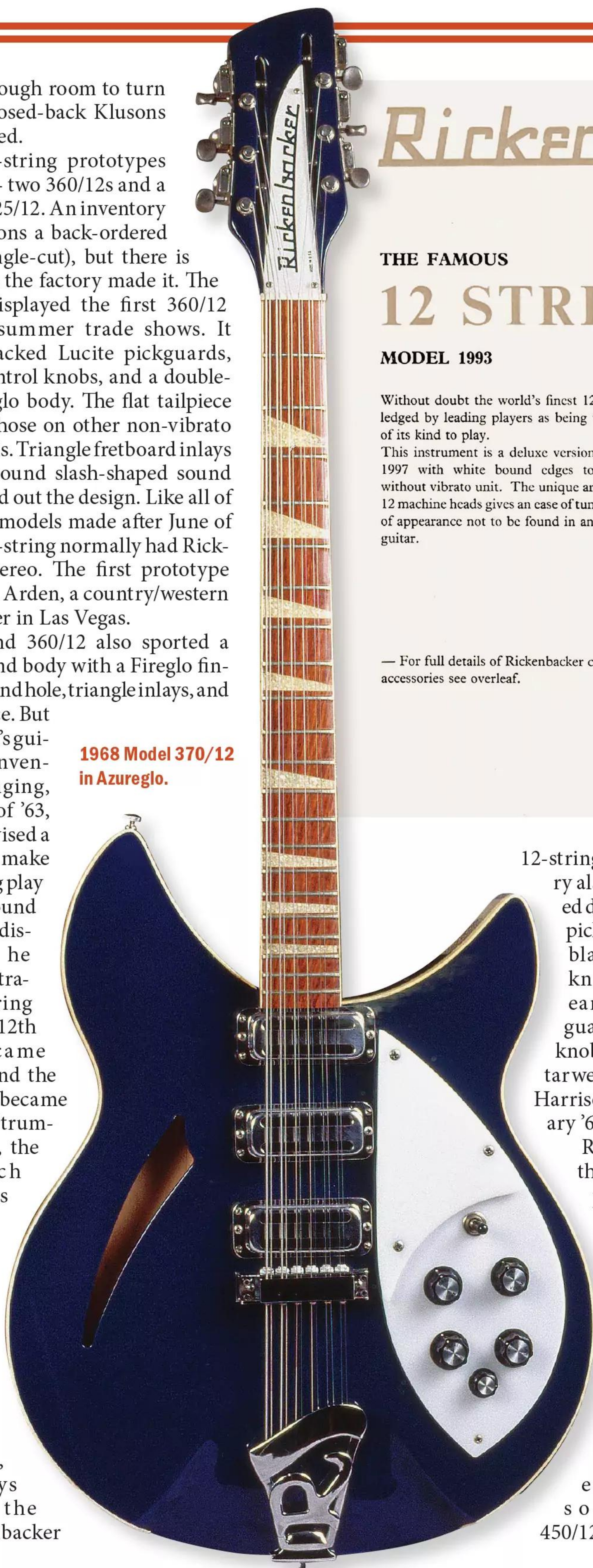


with just enough room to turn easily, 12 closed-back Klusons were snugged.

Three 12-string prototypes were made – two 360/12s and a solidbody 625/12. An inventory sheet mentions a back-ordered 360F/12 (single-cut), but there is no evidence the factory made it. The company displayed the first 360/12 at the '63 summer trade shows. It had gold-backed Lucite pickguards, TV-style control knobs, and a double-bound Fireglo body. The flat tailpiece resembled those on other non-vibrato Capri models. Triangle fretboard inlays and an unbound slash-shaped sound hole rounded out the design. Like all of 360 Deluxe models made after June of 1960, the 12-string normally had Rick-O-Sound stereo. The first prototype went to Suzi Arden, a country/western lounge singer in Las Vegas.

The second 360/12 also sported a double-bound body with a Fireglo finish, slash sound hole, triangle inlays, and a flat tailpiece. But while Arden's guitar had conventional stringing, by the end of '63, Hall had devised a novel way to make his 12-string play easier and sound even more distinctive – he reversed the traditional string setup. The 12th string became the low E and the 11th string became the octave. Strumming down, the lower-pitch string was hit before its octave counterpart. Since the second prototype was the first with this stringing, Hall always called it the first Rickenbacker

1968 Model 370/12 in Azureglo.



Rickenbacker GUITARS

THE FAMOUS

12 STRING

MODEL 1993

Without doubt the world's finest 12-string, acknowledged by leading players as being the easiest guitar of its kind to play.

This instrument is a deluxe version of guitar model 1997 with white bound edges to the body, but without vibrato unit. The unique arrangement of the 12 machine heads gives an ease of tuning and sleekness of appearance not to be found in any other 12-string guitar.

— For full details of Rickenbacker carrying cases and accessories see overleaf.



12-string. The factory also substituted double-white pickguards and black control knobs for the earlier Lucite guards and TV knobs. This guitar went to George Harrison in February '64.

Rounding out the saga of '63 prototypes, the first 625/12 traveled to a few trade shows, but Rickenbacker made a more economical solidbody 450/12 instead. In

From a '66 Rose-Morris catalog showing the Model 1993 12-string, boasting, "Without a doubt the world's finest 12-string, acknowledged by leading players as being the easiest guitar of its kind to play."

the '70s, Mike Campbell of Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers bought the original 625/12 used for \$125, having no idea what he'd found. Petty holds the guitar on the cover of *Damn the Torpedoes*, which sparked a 12-string revival and pushed the 625/12 into production.

Back in the '60s, though, while the first 625/12 was still in limbo, Harrison made good use of the 360/12 on "You Can't Do That," "A Hard Day's Night," and "Eight Days a Week." Certainly, no one at Rickenbacker worried about the next big thing for awhile. Because of increased demand, the factory (by then situated in Santa Ana) could barely keep up. The 12-strings became production items, though the features remained in flux through the summer. The 360/12 displayed at the '64 NAMM show had white pickguards, a double-bound body, triangle inlays, and an f-shaped sound hole. Its flat tailpiece and controls were the same as George's earlier model, but the show guitar had chrome-top knobs.



Las Vegas country-western lounge singer Suzi Arden in 1960 with the prototype 360/12 Deluxe.

In '63, a new body design for the Models 360 to 375 hit the drawing boards. The factory shipped the first known example, a Model 365, on June 1, 1964. The new form featured rounded edges on the face. Hall described the look in a press release, saying, "The smooth roundness avoids all that is harsh and yields flowing lines for smooth, easy playing." The new design did not allow for binding on the top/front edge. Instead, bound sound holes became standard. All other Deluxe features remained.

360/12 models made after the summer of '64 had the new body style, which used a cast/chrome-plated R tailpiece. A lack of this part delayed production for several weeks. Roger McGuinn, after seeing the Beatles in *A Hard Day's Night*, bought one of the first off the rack and later had the factory add a middle pickup and special wiring (three-pickup models were in the 370 series). Meanwhile, Rickenbacker struck a deal to produce an export line for England's Rose, Morris Ltd.

The export line, with its own numbering scheme and features, quickly caught on with British Invasion groups. Pete Townshend perfected his guitar-smashing skills with the 12-string Model 1993. It sported a double-bound body, f-shaped sound hole, and dot inlays. The factory equipped it with a flat tailpiece and a mixer control.

After the introduction of the new-style 360/12 and the Rose-Morris 1993, the factory still made a number of the old-style double-bound 12-strings for the domestic market. This included a few guitars identi-

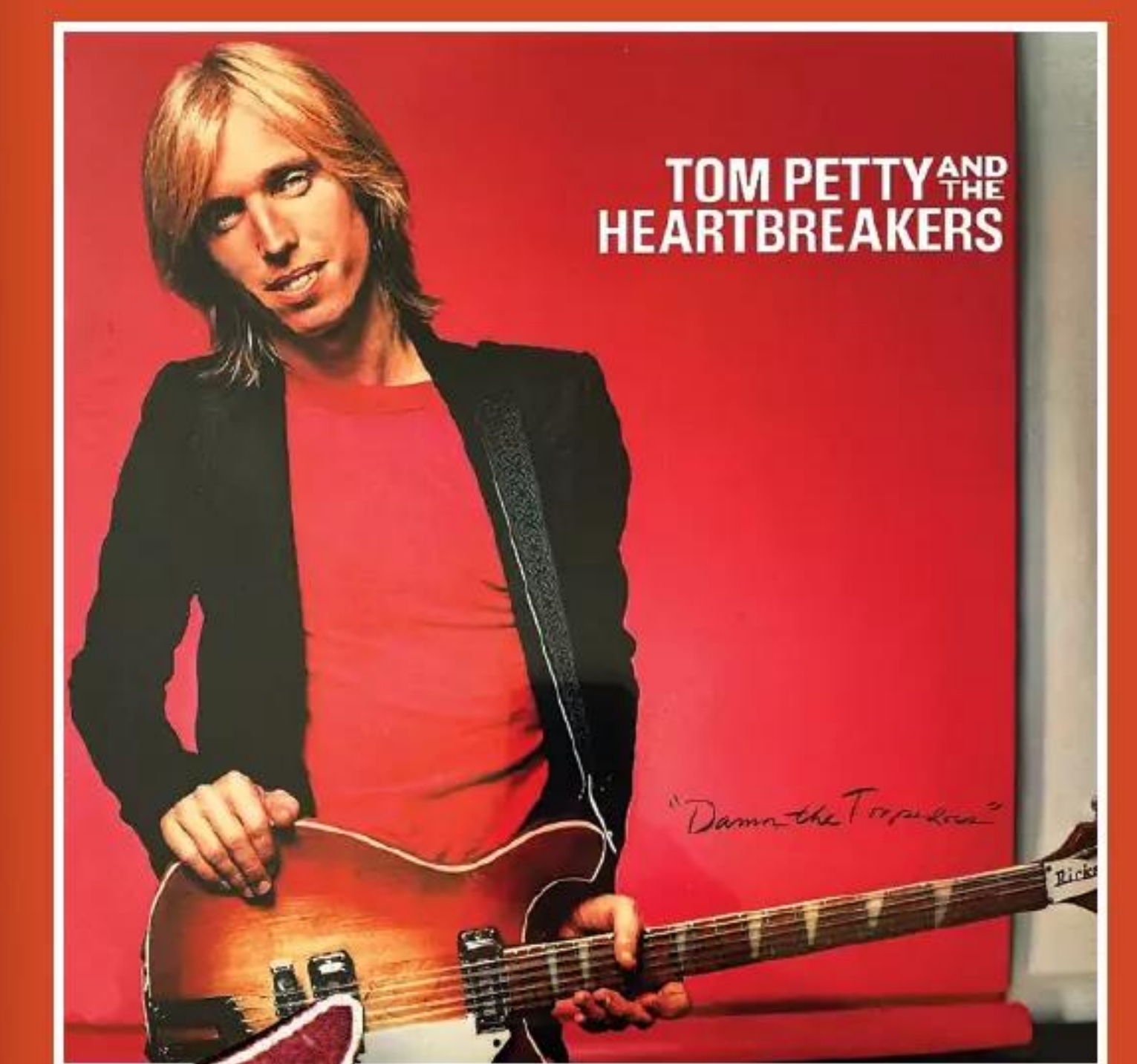
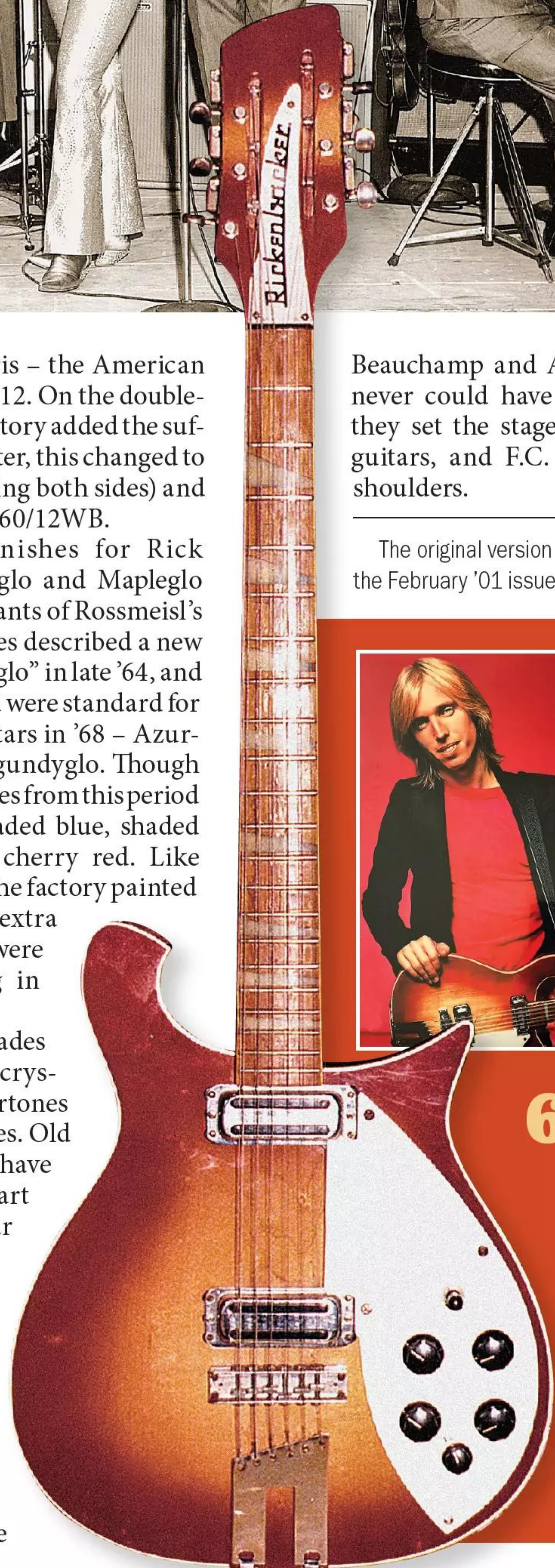
cal to the Rose-Morris – the American version was the 330S/12. On the double-bound 360/12, the factory added the suffix O.S. (old style). Later, this changed to "WBBS" (white binding both sides) and then just WB, as in 360/12WB.

The standard finishes for Rick 12-strings were Fireglo and Mapleglo (natural), both remnants of Rossmeisl's reign. Factory invoices described a new "lighter shade of Fireglo" in late '64, and the other colors listed were standard for all Rickenbacker guitars in '68 – Azurglo, Jetglo, and Burgundyglo. Though not listed, other finishes from this period included orange, shaded blue, shaded green, walnut, and cherry red. Like Fender and Gibson, the factory painted custom colors at an extra cost. Satin finishes were available beginning in the mid '70s.

It has been six decades since Rickenbacker's crystalline 12-string overtones first filled the airwaves. Old yet new, these guitars have become an essential part of post-modern guitar playing in which the best sounds of different decades combine to create the sounds of today. Ricks, especially the 12-strings, still play a key role in defining tone and design in a way George

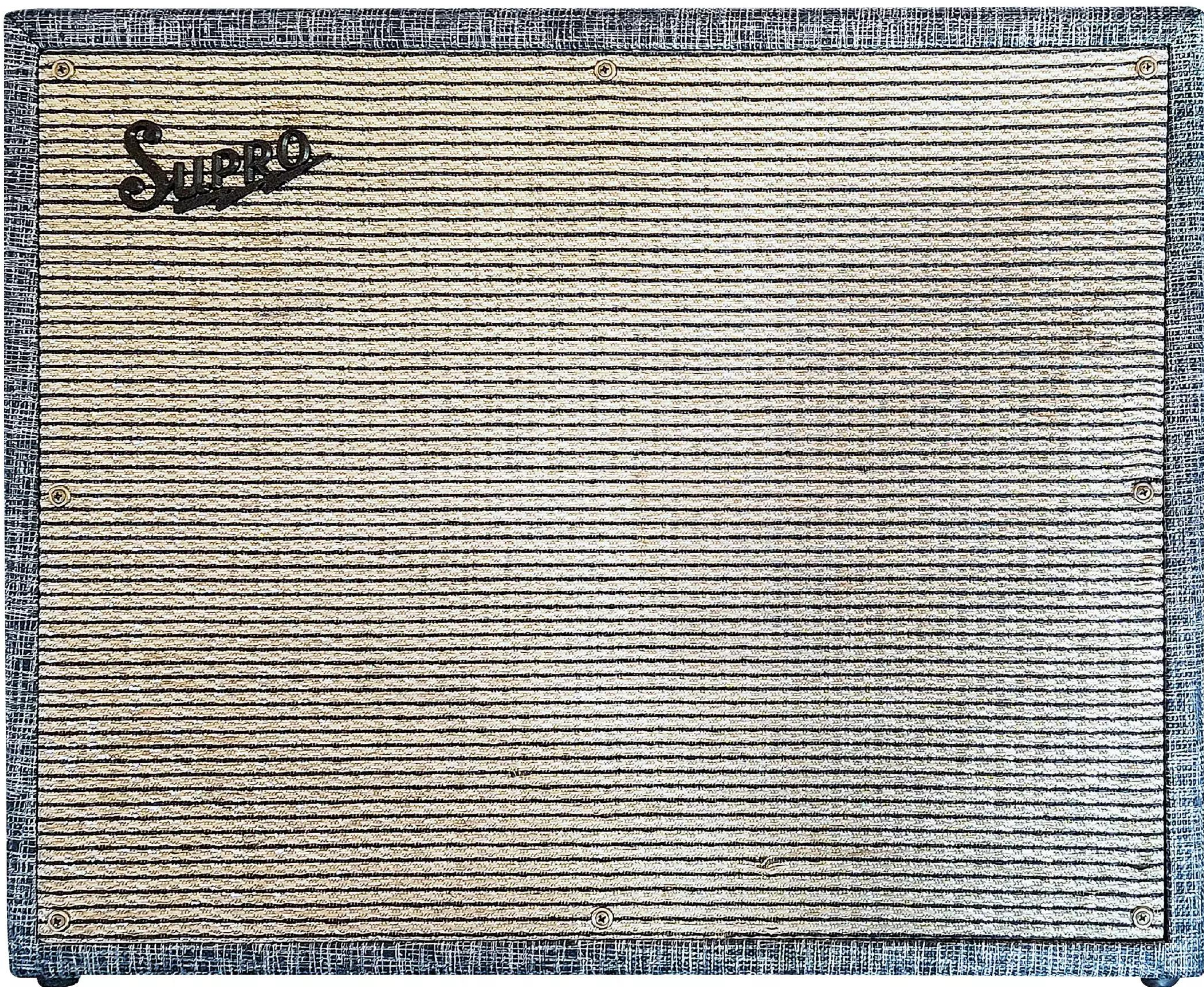
Beauchamp and Adolph Rickenbacher never could have imagined. Pioneers, they set the stage for modern electric guitars, and F.C. Hall stood on their shoulders.

The original version of this feature appeared in the February '01 issue.



625/12

Mike Campbell's 625/12 was the first one off the line. Campbell bought it used for \$125 in the '70s, and Tom Petty holds it on the cover of *Damn the Torpedoes*.



LIGHTNING STRIKES

The Supro Thunderbolt S6420

BY DAVE HUNTER

Despite their catalog-grade status, Supro amps have been used by several noteworthy guitarists. For many, the sturdy Thunderbolt is the preferred workhorse.

It's been a long time since Supro amps were any kind of secret find or hidden gem; players have long recognized the eccentric

splendors of certain mid-sized examples, with their thumping tremolo and gritty-but-gutsy tube tone. Also, reissues by the

1964 SUPRO S6420

- Preamp tubes: two 12AX7
- Output tubes: two 6L6GC
- Rectifier: 5U4
- Controls: Volume, Tone
- Speakers: Jensen C15PS
- Output: 35 watts RMS

revitalized Supro company have brought the name back front and center.

One of the ubiquitous models among the lineup – and an amp often thought of as a Supro cornerstone – the Thunderbolt arguably delivers less of the quirky signature Supro circuit characteristics while somehow remaining in step with the legend.

Introduced in 1964, the Thunderbolt was promoted purely as a “bass-guitar” amp, as

Amp and photos courtesy of David Figie.

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stated on the combo's control panel. Like other low-powered early offerings for the four-string, however, it has been used far more often by guitarists who quickly discovered that many of the qualities contributing to an underpowered all-tube bass amp can equate to just right with a higher-register instrument plugged in. Riding atop the tone, of course, is the perpetually cool Supro styling, comprising a black "rhino hyde" covering, silver grillecloth with black pinstripes, and that iconic logo with the lightning-bolt swoosh. And it's fitting that the image speaks to an ageless form of hip in the guitar universe.

Supro's origins date to the days before the electric guitar and the formation of the National Resophonic guitar company circa 1926, with its resonator guitars. Supro's par-

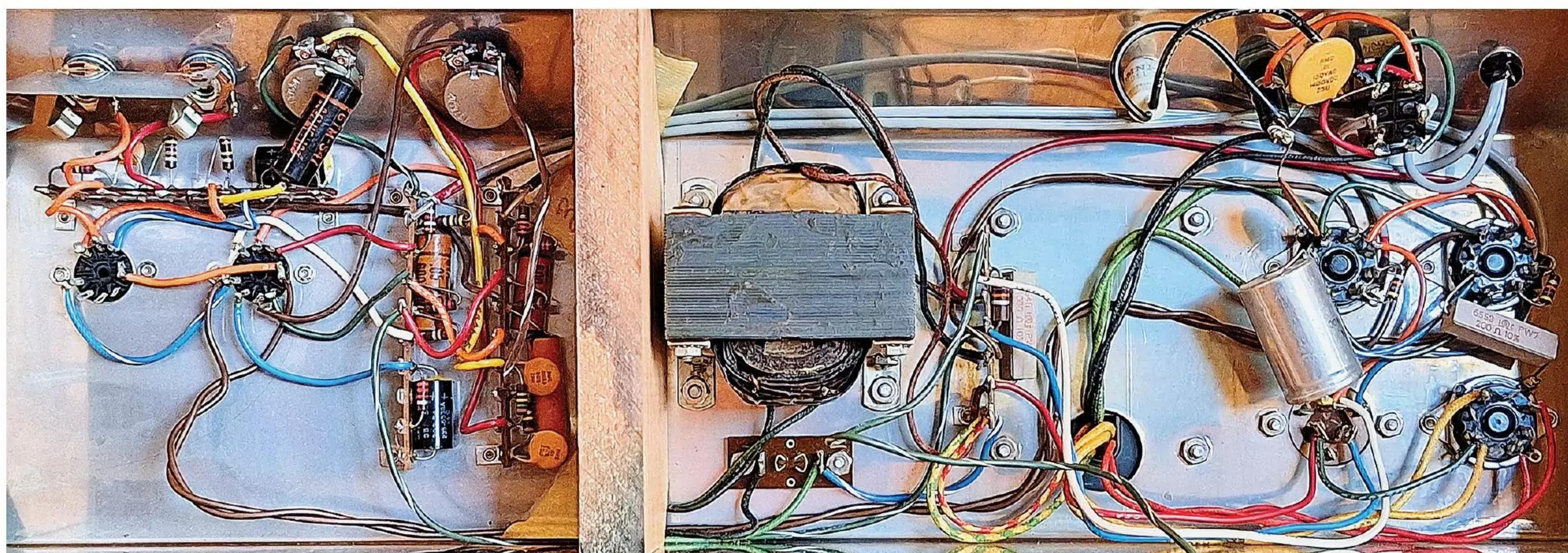
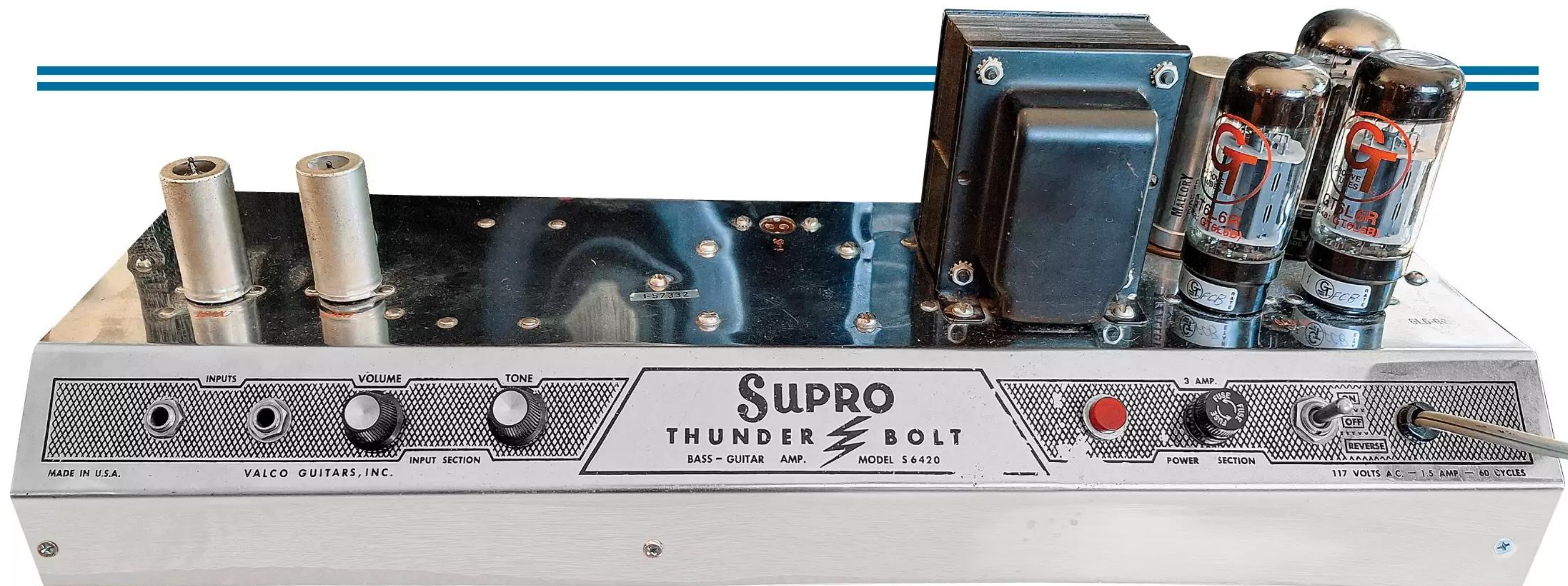
ent company, Valco, was founded in '35 by Victor Smith, Al Frost, and Louis Dopyera (the company name derived from the first letters of the first names of each, plus "co"), who had bought the remnants of National Dobro for that purpose.

Smith and Frost had been employees of National, while Dopyera was co-owner, having helped establish National and then Dobro resophonic guitars alongside Adolph Rickenbacker and George Beauchamp in the mid/late '20s (Beauchamp and Rickenbacker went on to produce some of the first commercial electric guitars and amplifiers under the Rickenbacker brand by the mid '30s, as the quest for loud evolved from aluminum resonator cones to tube-powered pulp paper). Just a year after founding the company, Dopyera, Smith, and Frost moved

Simplicity itself: the back reveals the bottom-mounted chassis, sparse control panel, four tubes and 15" Jensen speaker that make it all happen.

Valco from Los Angeles to Chicago, which was then the hub of the musical-instrument industry in the United States. It was also a central location from which they could easily service the many house brands that would form the core of their clientele, including Gretsch, Kay, Harmony, Airline, Oahu, and a few others.

Supro's amplifier line of the early/mid '60s carried modern styling, though its circuits were still basic, as was its construction, with the chassis mounted in the bottom of the combo cabinet with a slanted, rear-facing control panel – a format that had faded from popularity a decade or more before. The



'64 catalog "boasted" of the Thunderbolt: "No frills – no fancy circuits – no extra weight – just fine quality and clean, true bass response. For the mobile Bass player and those 'one-night' stands."

Indeed, the circuit uses just about the bare minimum of stages and components to get signal through the preamp to the output stage. One lonely 12AX7-derived triode carries it through the Volume and Tone potentiometers in the amp's single channel – and a coldly-biased one at that – with half of that tube remaining unused, while the phase inverter employs the second 12AX7. A pair of 6L6GCs generate approximately 35 watts, cathode-biased with no bypass capacitor in place, presumably to avoid swamping the stage with unflattering low-end.

This catalog listed the amp at \$179.50 – \$10 more than a Princeton Reverb made the same year, and we know which one most guitarists would take today! Our featured example remains with its original owner, VG reader David Figie.

"In 1964, I was 11 years old and playing in a band called The Rising Sons, in West Allis, Wisconsin," he said. "I played a Gibson EB-0 and my dad bought me this Thunderbolt. It was not good for bass, so Dad bought me a Gibson Titan."

Many agreed, apparently, and Valco attempted to firm-up the Thunderbolt's performance through the decade, adding further bracing to the baffle to try to help the 15" Jensen C15PS – and the cabinet in general – stand up to the low-end onslaught. In '68, they revamped the design. Even before, however, guitarists had begun discovering what the stock Thunderbolt S6420 could do – Jimi Hendrix among them, who toured one with Little Richard and the Isley Brothers before heading to London and gaining massive solo fame.

Figie's Thunderbolt sat unused a lot longer than that, though he never thought to sell it.

"Occasionally, I played my brother's Rickenbacker 366/12 convertible through it. In 1989, I bought a Stratocaster and have

Just two inputs along with Volume and Tone controls occupy the front panel of this "Bass-Guitar" amp. There's about as little going on inside the chassis as out – a spaghetti junction of wiring, perhaps, but not all that busy.

been using the Thunderbolt ever since. I replaced all the tubes; I still have all the originals, and everything else is original. This amp sounds great for guitar!"

Designed to get a bass signal from input to output with minimal flubbiness or distortion, the Thunderbolt is predisposed toward a warm, rich, and slightly woolly tone, which sounds best when pushed to drive those 6L6GCs into a little breakup. There's a whole unused triode stage sitting there in the preamp's lone 12AX7, which can be used to add another gain stage or an active EQ stage, but most guitarists who dig the Thunderbolt love it for what it does naturally. That might not be thunderous by nature, but it's a juicy, throaty, edge-of-breakup drive that epitomizes a certain breed of vintage tone, and has a lot to offer on its own. **VG**



An early ad shows the Combo's original tapered headstock. Emblematic of the hand of Roger Rossmeisl – its German carve (left).



The Combo 600's back reveals extensive routing and basic wiring for the horseshoe pickup.

Classics

Marc Schoenberger was part of the early-'70s vanguard on the Southern California guitar scene – not as a gigging musician, but among the crowd that raced the 101 freeway to check out old guitars every time a new issue of the *Recycler* hit the streets. He'd also been repairing guitars for friends and local shops since he was a kid.

Do you have a collectible/vintage guitar with an interesting personal story that might be a good fit for "Classics?" If so, send an e-mail to ward@vintageguitar.com for details on how it could be featured.

All photos by Marc Schoenberger. Combo ad: Martin Kelly.

One of his repair clients was Eddie Frawley's store, Central Coast Music, in Morro Bay, where a stop one day in 1984 became memorable. He had a repair to deliver, but was also picking up \$1,300 for a '36 Martin R-18 that he'd consigned. But, just minutes before he arrived, Frawley had hung an old Rickenbacker Spanish-style guitar on his wall. Being a lap-steel collector, Schoenberger immediately recognized its "horseshoe" pickup.

"I'd been thinking about building something like it so I could use one of those pickups I had laying around," Schoenberger said. "So I grabbed the guitar and asked Ed if I could take it in exchange for the money from the R-18. He nodded and I walked out maybe two minutes after I'd arrived (laughs)!"

Having never seen anything like it, Schoenberger knew nothing about the guitar.

"Back at my shop, I looked at it and thought, 'Well, it's been refinished,' because I could see gray primer. But when I removed the back cover, I started to think that was probably the only finish it's ever had. Taking a closer look at the pickup, I figured it had been hacked out of a lap steel."

Other details added to the intrigue.

"It looked like the bridge had been moved – twice – and it *still* didn't intonate (laughs). Looking at the saddles, you think, 'What's going on *here*?' and 'How did they forget to use blocks to anchor the screws into the back plate?' The truss rod is poking out from the top of the neck, and it's put together with random screws."

The oddity hung on Schoenberger's shop wall, garnering little attention – until two years later, when a stranger walked in, looking to sell an Epiphone Sheraton (finished in Burgundy Mist) and noticed the Rick hanging on the wall.

"He said, 'Oh, you bought my guitar!'"

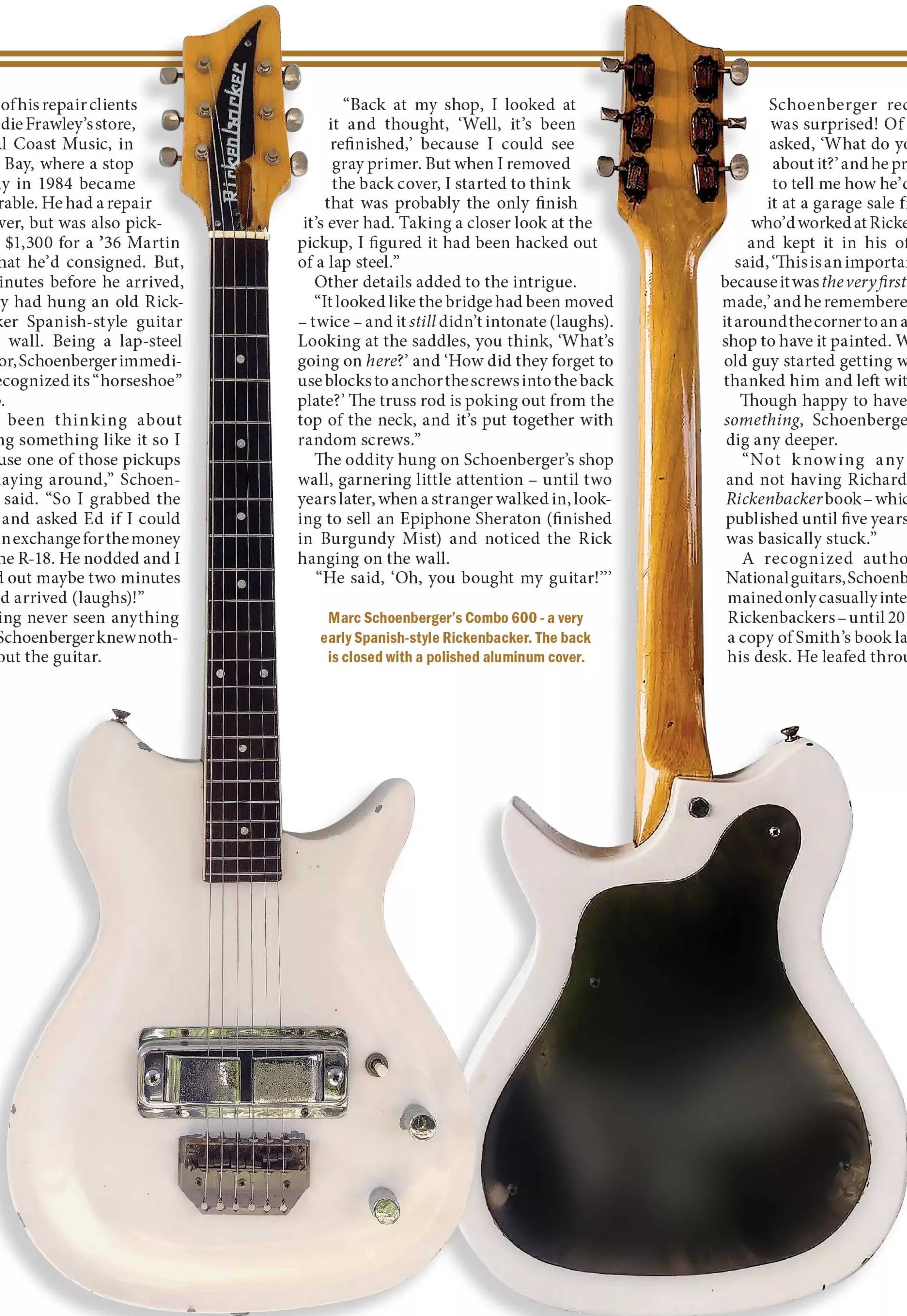
Marc Schoenberger's Combo 600 - a very early Spanish-style Rickenbacker. The back is closed with a polished aluminum cover.

Schoenberger recalls. "I was surprised! Of course I asked, 'What do you know about it?' and he proceeded to tell me how he'd bought it at a garage sale from a guy who'd worked at Rickenbacker and kept it in his office. He said, 'This is an important guitar because it was *the very first one* they made,' and he remembered taking it around the corner to an autobody shop to have it painted. When the old guy started getting weepy, he thanked him and left with it."

Though happy to have learned *something*, Schoenberger didn't dig any deeper.

"Not knowing any names and not having Richard Smith's *Rickenbacker* book – which wasn't published until five years later – I was basically stuck."

A recognized authority on National guitars, Schoenberger remained only casually interested in Rickenbackers – until 2010, when a copy of Smith's book landed on his desk. He leafed through it...



“On page 65 was a picture of Ward Deaton, who the caption says was Rickenbacker’s longtime factory manager until he retired in the early ’80s. Thinking that if I could track him down, he’d probably know something. I found an Atascadero phone book from ’86, and there was a listing for a Stacy Deaton. I called several times over the next week and nobody ever answered.”

The trail cold, Schoenberger was left with a lot of unanswered questions, in part because early Spanish-style Ricks are from the days when company owner F.C. Hall and guitar designer Roger Rossmeisl were figuring out how to make them, and they were never consistent from one to the next. The Combo 600 and 800 were designed by Hunt Lewis then adapted for production by Rossmeisl; the body outline and original tapered headstock shape were by Lewis, while the German-carved top and production headstock were Rossmeisl’s.

Also, time has since revealed that Deaton and his wife, Barbara Jean (who wound the pickups on the Rick 325 that John Lennon played for The Beatles’ first appearance on Ed Sullivan) lived in Costa Mesa and had two sons, but no daughters. Ward passed away in 1993, Barbara Jean in 2018.

The serial number on Schoenberger’s guitar dates it to 1954 – the first year of production (there are two prototypes with tapered headstocks, one of which resides at the Rickenbacker factory), and its white finish makes it exceedingly rare. He hopes its story reminds guitarheads of Rossmeisl’s genius (see page 26 for a feature on his 12-string models).

“All these years later, I’m still amazed at his radical design ideas,” he said.

Guitar collector Collin Whitley notes that Rickenbackers are gaining traction in the vintage market.

“If you’re into vintage guitars for the historical aspect, there is a lot to love about Rickenbacker,” he says. “The brand played a pivotal role in guitar history, and its in-



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struments have a distinct tone and character. For many of us who were too young to collect vintage guitars in the ’80s and ’90s, Gibson, Fender, and Martin were cost-prohibitive, but older Ricks were relatively inexpensive and had such great

The truss extends further than modern examples. The pickup grounds to the aluminum back plate. Pots are labeled in pencil – the top “Volume,” the lower “Tone.”

history attached to the brand. They were my gateway.”

Schoenberger has contacted Rickenbacker about buying his Combo 600, but they’ve declined, so he’s hoping to find a good home for it.

“I’m looking at you, Mike Campbell,” he laughs. – **Ward Meeker**

Special thanks to Martin Kelly, author of *Rickenbacker – Pioneers of the Electric Guitar*.

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2) GIBSON

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3) BELLTONE GUITARS

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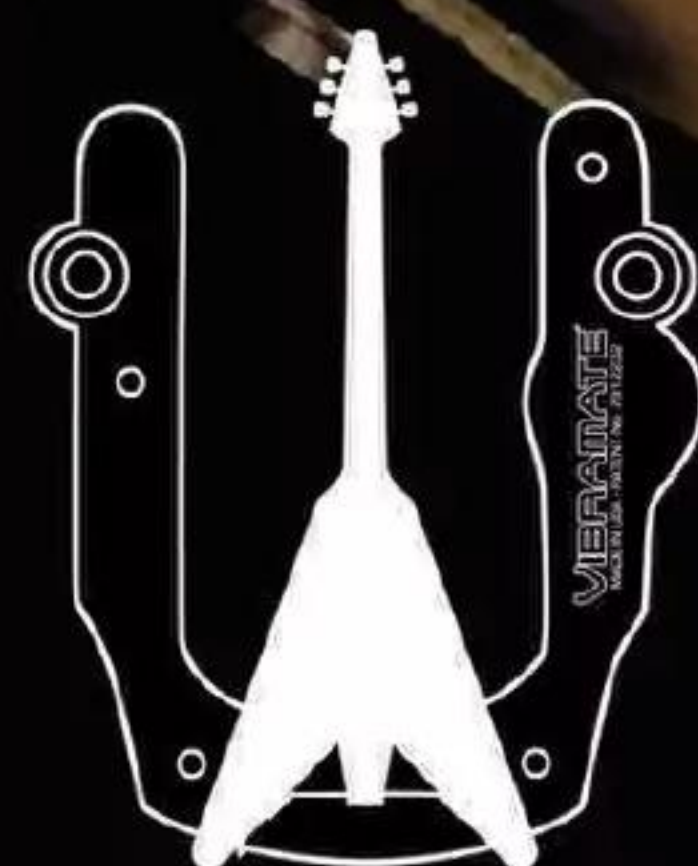
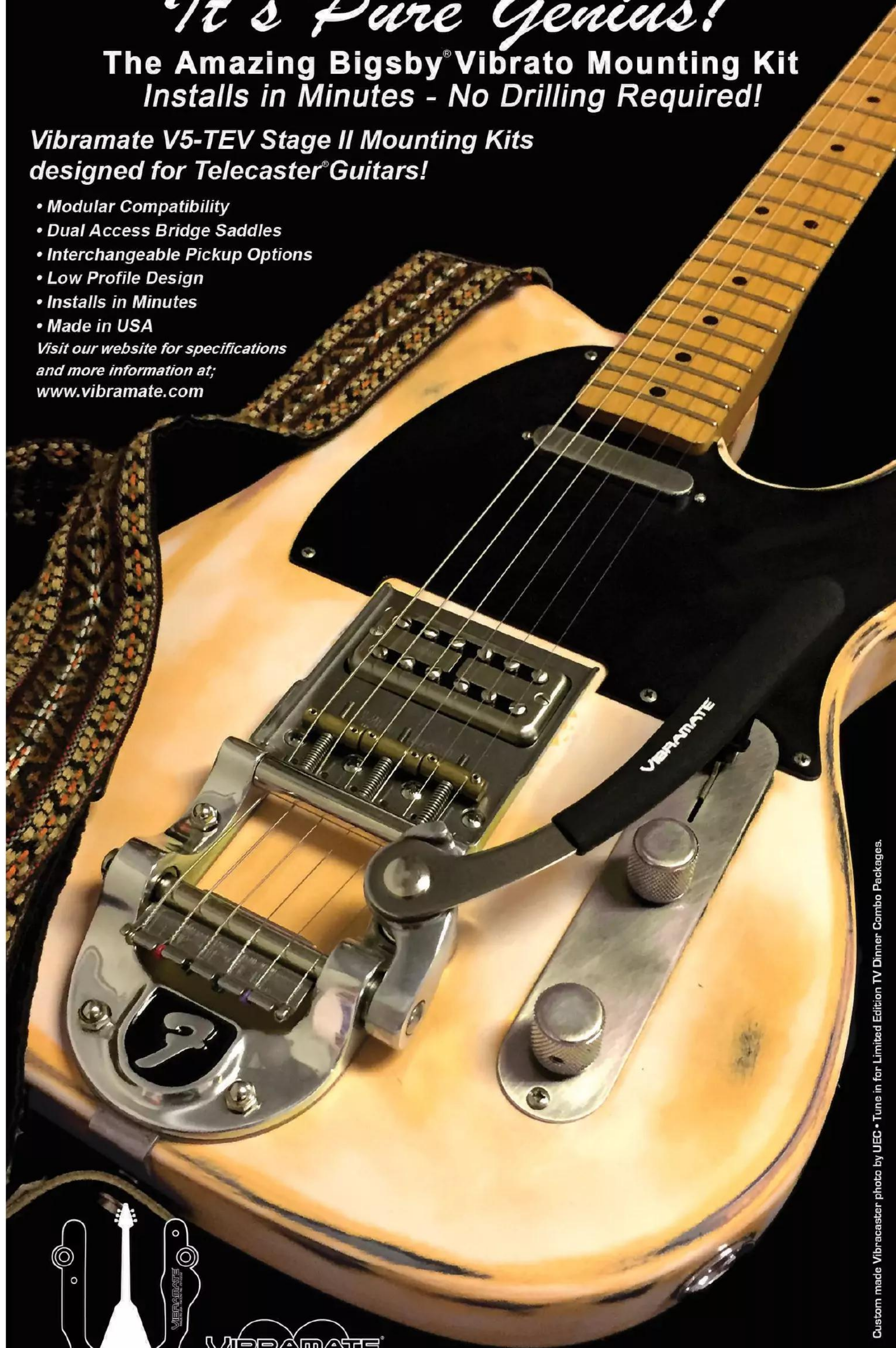
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Price Guide

By Alan Greenwood & Ram W. Tuli



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ES-335

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1969	Ampeg Dan			
	Armstrong Lucite	Smoke	\$3,000	\$5,000
1970	Ampeg SVT Bass Head		\$2,000	\$2,875
1994	Ampeg SVT-15			
	Bass Cabinet	1x15, compact	\$325	\$500
1999	B.C. Rich Mockingbird	2nd Rico era	\$2,250	\$3,000
1979	B.C. Rich			
	Mockingbird Supreme	Later long horn	\$5,500	\$7,250
1990	B.C. Rich Warlock	2nd Rico era, neck-thru	\$1,500	\$2,000
1977	BC Rich Eagle (USA)	Painted wood	\$3,050	\$4,000
1994	Blade California Custom	maple	\$1,000	\$1,375
1986	Boss Digital Delay DD-3	Keeley modded	\$125	\$200
2000	Boss Dynamic Wah AW-3		\$75	\$100
1970s	Bruno Fuzz Machine		\$300	\$400
1965	Burns GB66 Deluxe		\$1,000	\$1,500
2008	Collings 02H		\$3,250	\$4,250
1967	Danelectro Dane B Series	6-string, 3 pickups	\$1,250	\$1,625
1967	Danelectro Dane D Series	12-string	\$1,625	\$2,125
1959	Danelectro Model 3412 Standard (Shorthorn)	Kidney 'guard, 4-string	\$1,000	\$1,200
2020	Death By Audio			
	Time Shadows		\$250	\$350
2012	EarthQuaker Devices Talons		\$100	\$150
2012	Egnator			
	Tourmaster Series	Various	\$525	\$750
1976	Electra MPC X320		\$900	\$1,250
1935	Epiphone Emperor (Acoustic Archtop)	Sunburst	\$7,000	\$9,000
1965	Epiphone FT 30 Caballero		\$850	\$1,125
1964	Fender Esquire Custom	Sunburst	\$25,000	\$32,500
1962	Fender Jazzmaster	Rare Color	\$23,000	\$45,000
2004	Fender Precision Jr.	3/4 size	\$450	\$600
2003	Fender '65 Stratocaster (Custom Shop)	NOS	\$3,000	\$4,000
2016	Fender American Elite Stratocaster		\$1,375	\$1,750
2013	Fender FSR Hot Rod Stratocaster		\$500	\$650
1960	Fender Stringmaster Steel (Three-Neck)	Blond	\$1,750	\$2,500
1992	Fender Stu Hamm Urge (USA)		\$1,500	\$1,950
1975	Fender Telecaster	Blond, Black, White	\$3,500	\$4,500
2021	Fender American Ultra Luxe Telecaster	Floyd Rose HH	\$1,500	\$2,000
2011	Fender Brown's Canyon Redwood Telecaster	COA	\$1,750	\$2,250
1978	Fender Custom Telecaster		\$2,750	\$3,500
1970	Gibson B-25-12/ B-25-12N		\$1,125	\$1,500



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YEAR	INSTRUMENT	FEATURES	EXC. COND.	
			LOW	HIGH
1947	Gibson BR-9 Lap Steel		\$650	\$850
1960	Gibson C-1 Classical		\$775	\$1,000
1999	Gibson ES-175 D-AN	Natural, P-90s, limited	\$3,000	\$4,000
1965	Gibson ES-335	Cherry, Bigsby	\$20,000	\$25,000
2010	Gibson ES-355 Curly Maple Limited Edition	Natural, flamed	\$4,500	\$6,000
1939	Gibson GS-85			
	Classical/Gut String 85	Brazilian	\$3,750	\$4,750
1994	Gibson L-2			
	1929 Reissue		\$2,500	\$3,000
1920	Gibson L-3 (Archtop)		\$2,500	\$3,250
1935	Gibson L-30		\$1,500	\$2,000
1960	Gibson L-5 CN	Natural	\$11,000	\$14,000
1930	Gibson L-12		\$6,000	\$7,750
2009	Gibson Les Paul 50th Anniversary Les Paul			
	Standard (Sweetwater)		\$5,250	\$6,750
1955	Gibson Les Paul Special	TV Yellow	\$15,000	\$20,000
1979	Gibson Les Paul			
	Standard (reintroduced)	Wine Red	\$3,500	\$5,000
2003	Gibson '60 Les Paul			
	Flametop/Standard '60s	Brazilian, figured	\$12,750	\$16,500
1902	Gibson Style O-1	Celluloid binding	\$8,500	\$11,000
1966	Gibson Thunderbird II	Sunburst, non-reverse	\$6,000	\$8,500
2006	Gibson X-Plorer/			
	X-Plorer V New Century		\$1,250	\$1,625
1963	Gretsch Corvette (Solid Body)	Custom color, 1 pickup	\$1,875	\$2,500
1968	Guild Foxy Lady Fuzz	2 knobs, made by E-H	\$500	\$700
2000	Heil Sound Talk Box		\$60	\$85
1994	HiWatt Bulldog SA112	50 watts, 1x12 combo	\$1,500	\$2,000
2008	Hofner Club Model 40			
	John Lennon Limited Edition		\$1,750	\$2,250
1978	Hohner Jacaranda			
	Rosewood Dreadnought		\$200	\$300
1975	Ibanez Jetlyzer JL70		\$500	\$575
1995	Ibanez Joe Satriani			
	JS5 Rain Forest	Rain forest graphic	\$8,000	\$10,000
1940	Kalamazoo KG-12	Rare flat top, L-00 sunburst	\$2,750	\$3,500
1965	Kalamazoo Model 1		\$325	\$450
1965	Kay K360			
	Apollo/K365 Apollo II		\$1,000	\$1,500

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			LOW	HIGH
1947	Kay K48 Artist Master			
	Size Archtop	Non-cut	\$925	\$1,250
1989	Kustom KBA-30 Combo		\$40	\$60
1967	La Baye 2x4 6-String		\$2,250	\$3,000
1996	Line 6 AM-4			
	Amp Modeler		\$70	\$130
1976	Maestro Fuzztain			
	MFZT-1		\$250	\$550
1960s	Magnatone Model 432		\$775	\$1,075
2001	Marshall AVT 20	Combo	\$195	\$250
1973	Marshall Model 1959	Custom color,		
	Super Lead 100-Watt Head	printed C.B.	\$2,600	\$3,925
1993	Marshall Model 8200	Hybrid dual		
	200-Watt Valvestate Head	100-watt	\$200	\$275
2006	Martin 000-18			
	Norman Blake Signature		\$3,000	\$4,000
2003	Martin 000-JBP			
	Jimmy Buffet Pollywog		\$3,500	\$4,500
1950	Martin 00-28G	Brazilian	\$4,250	\$5,500
2005	Martin 00-41 Custom		\$5,000	\$6,500
1983	Martin D-28			
	50th Anniversary		\$2,500	\$3,250
1996	Martin D-3R		\$850	\$1,125
2019	Martin D-45 Woodstock			
	50th Anniversary		\$9,500	\$12,500
2009	Martin LX1E		\$300	\$400
1999	Martin Mini-Martin			
	Limited Edition		\$1,875	\$2,500
1932	Martin OM-28	Standard tuners,		
		full-size 'guard	\$70,000	\$90,000
2011	Martin OMCPA2		\$1,375	\$1,750
1965	Martin SS140	large amp	\$900	\$1,350
1963	National Studio 66	Jet Black,		
		neck pickup	\$1,500	\$2,000
1960s	Nomad Fuzz Wah		\$100	\$175
1940s	Orpheum Style B		\$725	\$950
1995	Ovation Country			
	Artist Classic Electric 6773		\$625	\$825
1976	Ovation Patriot			
	Bicentennial		\$1,250	\$1,625
1984	Ovation Ultra		\$500	\$650
2008	Peavey Classic 30/112	Badge front	\$350	\$500
1965	Peavey Musician Head		\$125	\$200
1990	PRS CE Bass-4	Alder	\$1,000	\$1,500
2002	PRS Dragon 2002	Single-cut	\$18,000	\$25,000
2001	PRS SE Series	Higher-end		
		models	\$525	\$900
1951	Silvertone H1214		\$575	\$750
1979	Steinberger L2	Black	\$2,500	\$3,500
2020	Supro Keeley Custom 10	25 watts, 1x10	\$600	\$800
1967	Supro Taurus		\$750	\$1,000
2000	Taylor Baby Taylor BT3	Maple	\$250	\$350
2003	Taylor WHCM			
	Windham Hill		\$2,000	\$2,500
2021	Vigier Texas Blues		\$2,000	\$2,750
1920s	Wurlitzer			
	Model 2077 (Martin 0-K)		\$4,500	\$5,750
1960s	Wurlitzer			
	Wild One Stereo		\$750	\$975

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GUITARS AND GROWL

Savoy Brown's *A Step Further*

By Willie G. Moseley

Founded by guitarist Kim Simmonds in 1965, Savoy Brown was front and center in the United Kingdom's blues movement, and fans – especially guitarists – view their fourth album, *A Step Further*, as definitive of the genre.

Joined by Chris Youlden (vocals), “Lonesome Dave” Peverett (guitar), Tony Stevens (bass), Roger Earl (drums) along with producer Mike Vernon, the group created a dynamic showcase highlighted by Youlden’s vocals, Simmonds’ guitar tones, and the arrangement/production.

“[Chris was] one of the greatest white blues singers in the world,” Peverett said in a 1991 interview with *VG*. And in a '93 feature, Simmonds concurred.

“One time, Chris and I got to sit in with the great Bobby Blue Bland. That was a great time for Chris, because he held his own. Bland’s face was about a mile long!”

Buddy Whittington, a Texan who for 15 years played lead guitar with British blues icon John Mayall, learned much about Mayall’s peers from the '60s, including guitarists and singers.

“I love Chris’ vocal stylings,” he said. “It wasn’t until later that I began to think that he had been influenced by Peter Green’s singing. I can’t imagine anyone in that day and age *not* being influenced by Green’s singing or playing.”

Simmonds acknowledged that as a guitarist, he had been influenced by Green and Eric Clapton in the early years, but by '69, his playing and sound had come into their own, generated mostly with a Gibson Flying V.

“That was a pretty rare guitar in Britain back then,” he recalled. “I bought it used, and it not only looked good, it sounded good, as well.”

“All of the great Brit blues players we know and love were drinking from the same well, tone-wise,” Whittington

added. “A Les Paul and a Marshall or Fender amp. You can hear the influence of all of them in the guitar tones on *A Step Further*.”

Peverett was the group’s rhythm guitarist, and usually used a Les Paul Junior or ES-330. When asked about his first choice, he said, “The Junior is a great guitar for my type of playing, which

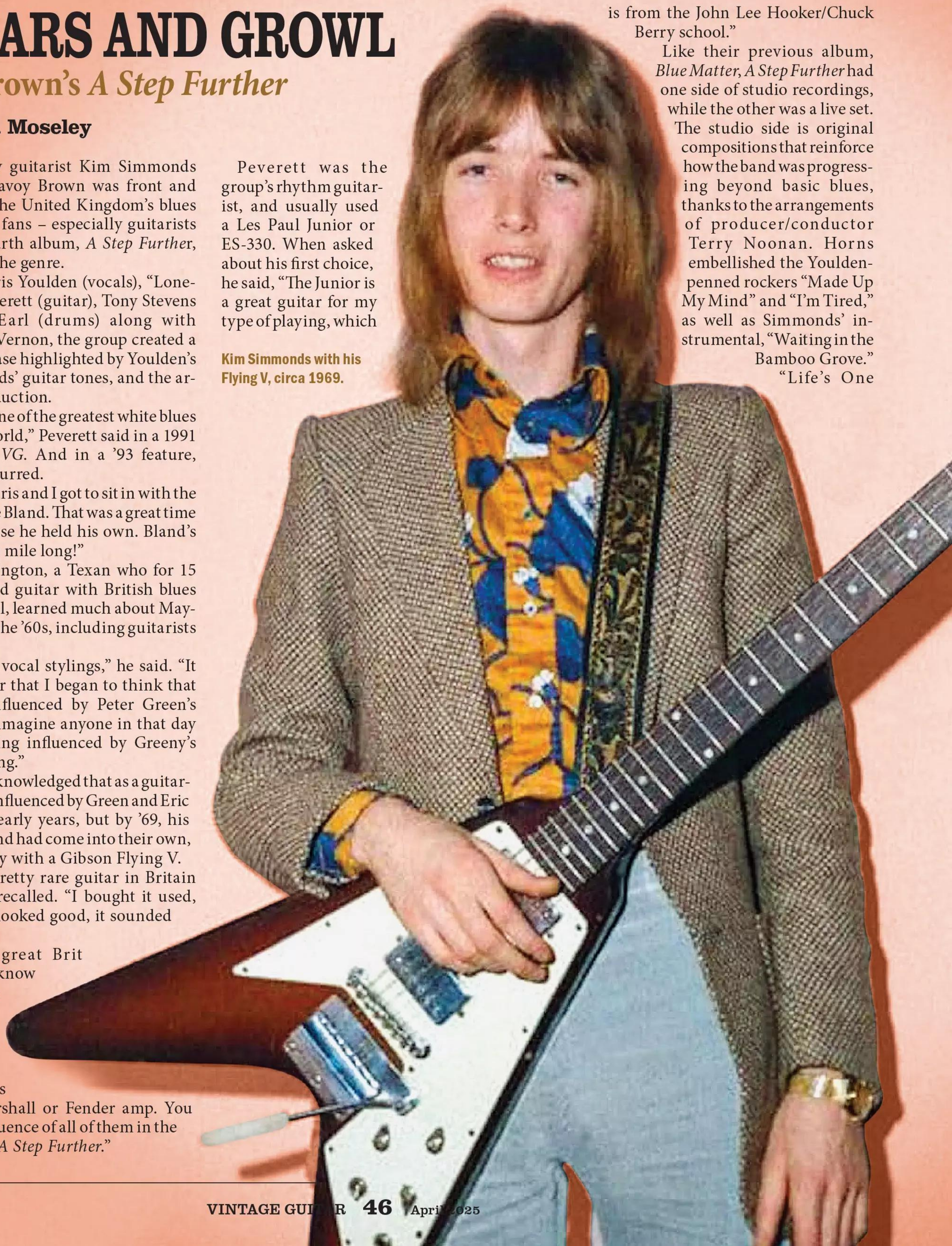
Kim Simmonds with his Flying V, circa 1969.

is from the John Lee Hooker/Chuck Berry school.”

Like their previous album, *Blue Matter*, *A Step Further* had one side of studio recordings, while the other was a live set.

The studio side is original compositions that reinforce how the band was progressing beyond basic blues, thanks to the arrangements of producer/conductor Terry Noonan. Horns embellished the Youlden-penned rockers “Made Up My Mind” and “I’m Tired,” as well as Simmonds’ instrumental, “Waiting in the Bamboo Grove.”

“Life’s One



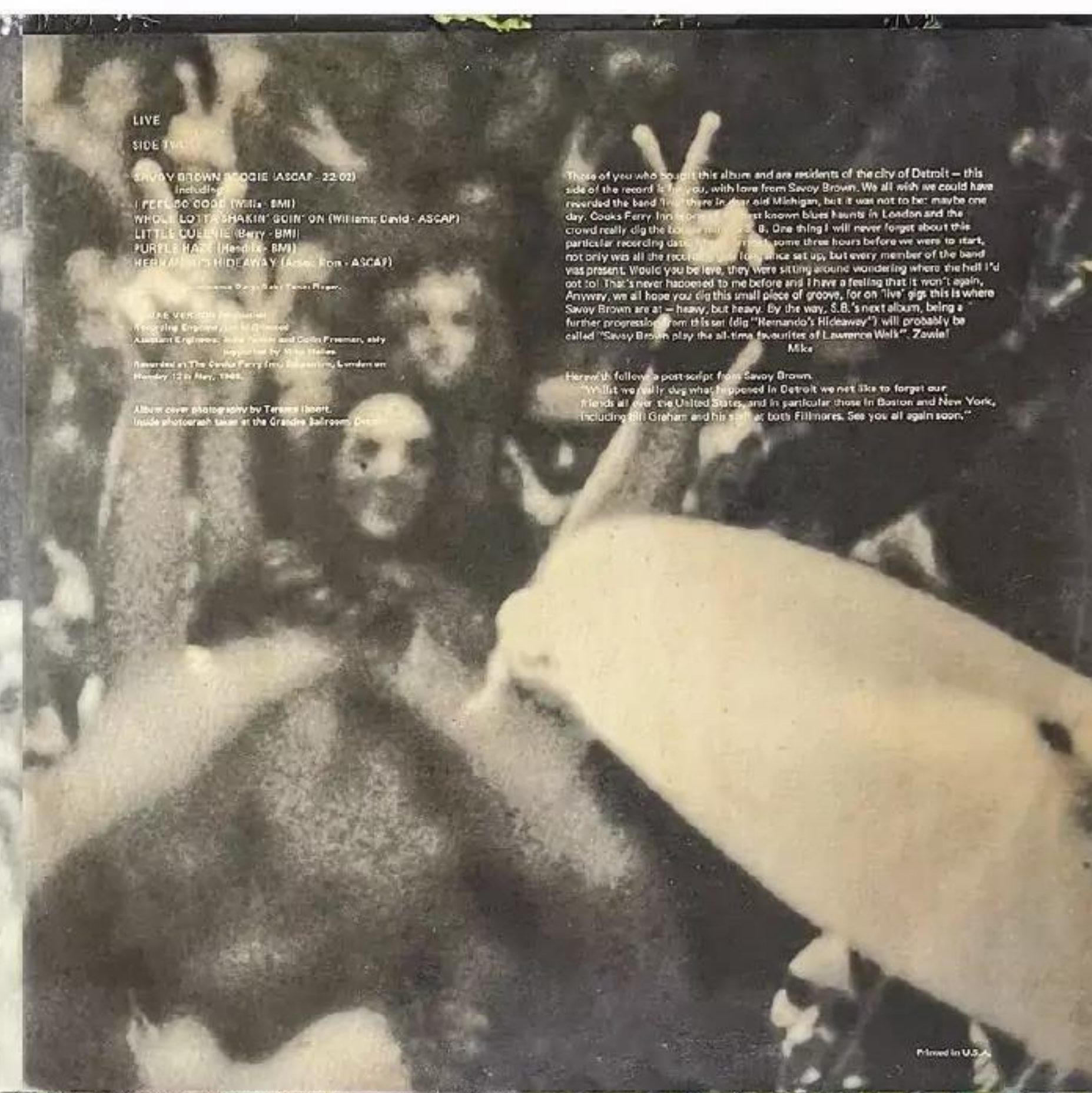
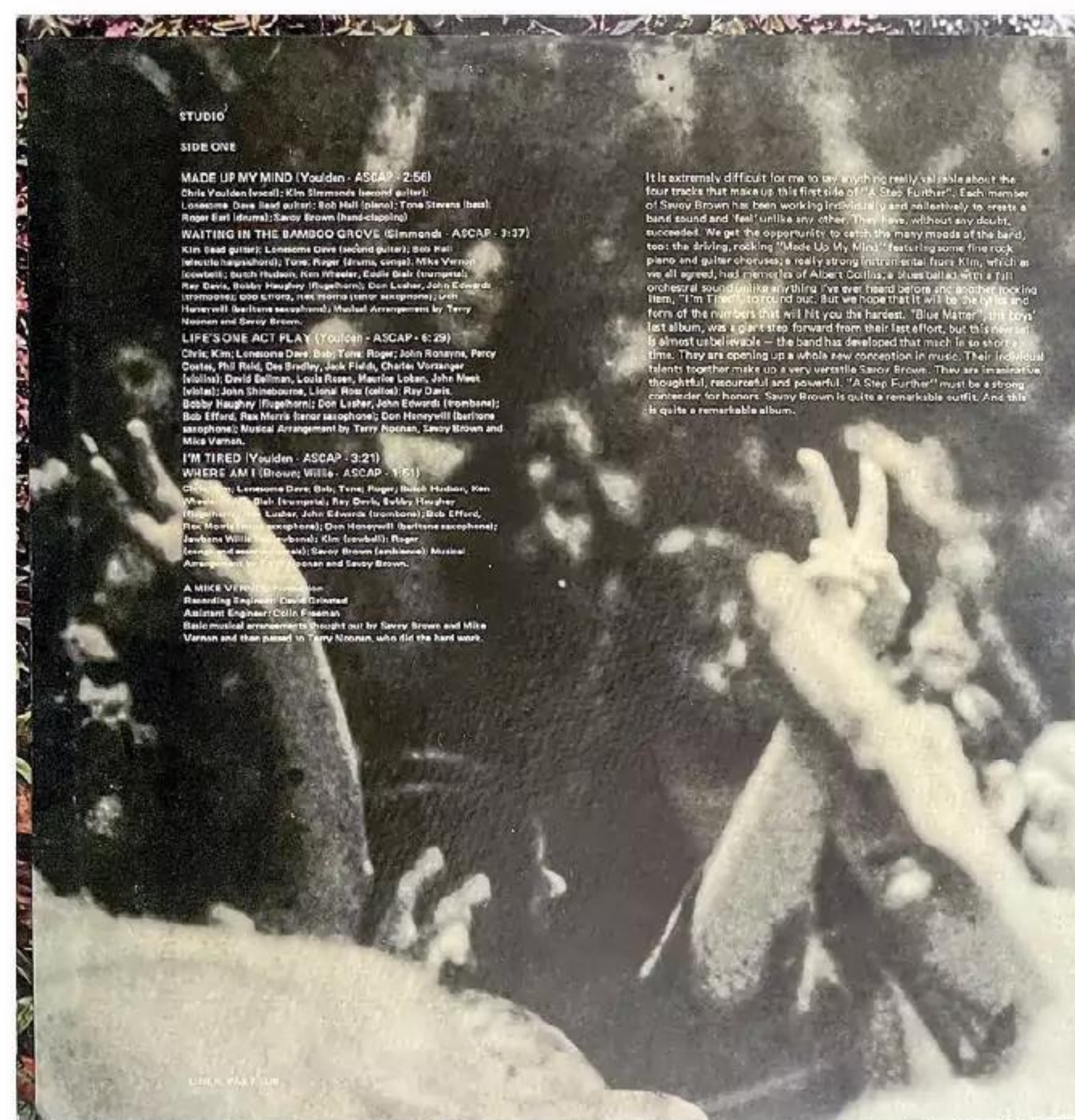
Act Play” goes that step further with horns and strings, proffering a mournful rumination by Youlden with a raw guitar interjection from Simmonds.

Busier production aside, any perception that the band was preparing to abandon its roots were obliterated when the LP was turned over, where a power chord opens the show at Cook’s Ferry Inn, an erstwhile jazz club in the Edmonton township near London. Crashing into the audience just before Youlden bellows, “This is the Boogie!” it introduces the phenomenal “Savoy Brown Boogie,”

which Peverett rightly called “pure John Lee Hooker.” A typical medley of the era, it goes on an extended jam that showcases Youlden’s yowling vocals and skill as a front man. Accompanied by guitars, he cajoles

the crowd with pseudo-effete repartee: “You paid your admission fee! You might as well kick the hell outta the walls!” There’s also his guttural, blatantly sexual (and hilarious) grunting. According to Simmonds, there wasn’t a time limit when the band was in such a groove.

“We used those occasions to jam, and that particular version of the band was very good at it!” he said. “We would open a set with a boogie, then my brother, who was managing



us at the time, convinced us to put a boogie tune at the end of a set, instead.”

The medley includes snippets of “I Feel So Good,” “Whole Lotta Shakin’ Goin’ On,” “Little Queenie,” “Purple Haze,” and – improbably – “Hernando’s Hideaway,” a tango borrowed from a Doris Day movie soundtrack.

“Savoy Brown Boogie” is still going strong as the encore fades out after 22 sweat-drenched minutes. One wonders how much longer they played, and if there’s tape of the entire performance.

Whittington noted his favorite tracks.

“‘I’m Tired’ stands out to me, mainly because I covered it in some of my early bands,” he said. “And there was ‘Savoy Brown Boogie.’ Listening in hindsight, it’s a bit of a ramble, but in those days it was par for the course.”

Bob Hall’s boogie-woogie piano was another critical asset on both sides of *A Step Further*, and it would be his last recording with the band.

After 1970’s *Raw Sienna*, Youlden departed for a solo career and the band released *Looking In* as a quartet with Peverett handling lead vocals. He, Stephens, and Earl left soon afterward and formed Foghat in ’71. Members and the musical direction of Savoy Brown changed numerous times over the ensuing decades, but Simmonds soldiered on for more than half a century.

“I’ve always thought I’ve had the pulse of the band and what direction it needed to take,” he said in ’93. “That’s not to say I’ve done it all by myself; I’ve had a lot of other talented players and singers over the years.”

Cancer claimed the lives of Peverett, who passed away February 7, 2000, and Simmonds, who died December 13, 2022. **VG**



Roger Earl (left), Kim Simmonds, Chris Youlden, Tony Stevens, Dave Peverett.



B.B. King in '71 with a block-marker ES-355TD-SV "Lucille."

ROYAL SOUNDS

B.B. King's *Live at the Regal*

By Wolf Marshall

By 1964, B.B. King had come a long way from cotton fields in Mississippi. Acknowledged as King of the Blues – an exceptional singer, guitarist and entertainer – he personified electric blues beyond T-Bone Walker and Muddy Waters.

At that point, King had recorded more than a decade's worth of R&B hits and was an early crossover artist, breaking racial barriers in Vegas nightclubs. Following the emergence of The Beatles and British bands, blues received greater global attention via the Stones, Yardbirds, and Eric Clapton – and King was among the most-revered. Lionized by counterculture hippies, white blues guitarists, and rock performers, he cultivated an incipient audience at venues like the Fillmore. Opening for the Byrds and Electric Flag, he was introduced by Mike Bloomfield as "the greatest blues guitar player in the world." After that night, he needed no introduction.

Live at the Regal memorializes his rise.

Released at the height of the British Invasion in 1965, it nonetheless made *Billboard's* charts and consistently rates as one of the greatest blues records, enshrined by the Library of Congress in 2005. Where better than Chicago's Regal Theater for the King of the Blues to document his first live album? Recorded on November 21, 1964, during a week-long engagement with his band – Duke Jethro (piano), Leo Lauchie (bass), Sonny Freeman (drums), Kenneth Sands (trumpet), Johnny Board and Bobby Forte (tenor saxes), it's a set honed by countless gigs capturing blues traditions taken to their most-soulful heights. Live blues albums previously had dubious sonic quality, but *Regal* changed that forever.

King had played the venue hundreds of times, but never to such an enthusiastic crowd. "I've never had a young black audience; blacks were with me according to my age," he says in the liner notes to the 1992 *King of the Blues* box set.

"But at the Regal, they still think well of and respect me and the dignity of the blues. That particular day everything came together and the audience was right in sync." Interaction between artist and audience is electrifying, which is one reason the record remains inspiring across generations from Clapton, Hendrix, Allman, and Bloomfield to Santana, Knopfler, Mayer, and Bonamassa, who has cited the album as pivotal. Prior to 1960, most blues albums were compilations of singles and live performances reflected that practice.

Predictably, King's repertoire consisted largely of RPM and ABC singles, the exceptions being "My Own Fault" and "You Done Lost Your Good Thing" from his favorite studio album, *My Kind of Blues*. What's unpredictable is the fresh soulfulness, eschewing rote recitation of blues clichés (many established by King) and the finesse with which he delivered the material.

The opener, "Every Day I Have the Blues," was B.B.'s theme song and a Top 10 hit from '55. One of the most-covered blues standards, Count Basie and Joe Williams recorded a big-band version in '55, concurrent with King's, and both received Grammy awards. Originally recorded as a relaxed shuffle with an arrangement by Maxwell Davis, B.B. performed the tune in concert as an uptempo B^b blues with

B.B. King: Heinrich Klaffs/Wikimedia.

Fast Shuffle

*Tone change from bridge to bridge pickup

B.B. at his swinging best. “Everyday I Have the Blues” was an early hit and remained his opening number for years. He reignited the 12-bar blues in B^b at the Regal with a much faster tempo, hard-charging feel, and exciting improvisation. This excerpt (1:38) is from his second solo and contains a number of

evocative facets – a tone change from warm to bright in measure 1, minor/major pentatonic and blues-scale mixtures in 2-6, patented use of the “B.B. Box” in 7, arpeggio lines in 10-11 (note the deliberate and jazz-based flavor of Cm7 on F7), and his famous hammered-pulled mordent at the final cadence in 12.

the same horn riffs played double-time. From the outset, he establishes the signature approach of coaxing his guitar to sing lines responding to the horns, first in the intro (0:28) and then solos (1:20-1:55).

“Sweet Little Angel,” closely associated with King, enjoys a similarly deep lineage. It was recorded in 1930 by vocalist Lucille Bogan as “Black Angel Blues” and received Tampa Red’s treatment in ’34, followed by Robert Nighthawk’s (with Willie Dixon) in ’49. Tampa Red rerecorded it as “Sweet Little Angel” in ’50, followed by Earl Hooker in ’53. But these price-less versions pale next to King’s take. Inspired by Nighthawk, his ’56 version reached #6 that July and again in ’57. Reflecting Modern Records’

approach, writing credits were shared with an executive, one of the Bihari brothers listed as Jules Taub. King’s *Regal* rendition epitomizes the storytelling aspect of the “real old blues” with an homage to its mythic goddess igniting spirited interplay between artist and audience. The unhurried $\frac{12}{8}$ D^b slow blues is a showcase for his emotive style played over a quasi-rubato feel and the first song of a three-part medley. He confines his improvisation to two 12-bar solos (0:31 and 3:30) and lets his guitar rest during verses – a common practice on record and stage.

“It’s My Own Fault” was a 1952 RPM single attributed to John Lee Hooker. In *Encyclopedia of the Blues Volume 1, A-J*, King expounded “Whenever they say true blues, pure blues,

Hooker comes as close as anybody I’ve ever heard.” Through King’s prism, it’s the second song, also in D^b, of a memory-lane slow-blues medley that segues seamlessly from “Sweet Little Angel.” He shares a different story lamenting the lovelorn side of blues with a heavier pulse and again leaves Lucille idle during vocal verses where sax lines provide call and response. His solo at 2:44 drives the tortured points home with rhythmic phrases that ultimately modulate to D for the medley’s final tune.

“How Blue Can You Get,” written by jazz critic Leonard Feather, was first waxed in ’49 by Johnny Moore’s Three Blazers (with guitarists Johnny and Oscar) in the West Coast style while Louis Jordan offered his big-band rendition in ’51. B.B. recorded it as “Downhearted” on *Blues in My Heart* (’63) and enjoyed a 1964 crossover hit (R&B #21/*Billboard* #97), under his new ABC contract. A fixture of his show, he advises the crowd to “pay attention to the lyrics, not so much my singing or the band,” but introduces the intimate slow-blues with “I’d like to play a little bit.” He lays down an opening statement (0:33) colored with unmistakable dynamic shadings, ghosted notes, vocalesque string bends and vibrato, fall-offs, flurries, and judicious use of space. The arrangement includes responsorial sax lines in verses

and stop-time ensemble breaks (2:37) in the final verse.

“Please Love Me,” B.B.’s early original (#1, June ’52) co-credited to Taub, emphasized Mississippi roots in the opening. He invoked an immortal chord figure, endemic to Delta-blues performers and popularized by Elmore James (“Dust My Broom”), transplanted into a modern shuffle setting in E^b; rewriting the blues-guitar textbook for future rock players. The riff was recalled in the Beatles’ “Revolution,” Jeff Beck in “The Nazz are Blue” and quoted by Clapton in “Hideaway.” A more-distorted Lucille is featured copiously in the intro and driving three-chorus solo.

“You Upset Me Baby,” (#1, September ’54)

has been ascribed to Joe (Bihari) Josea and Maxwell Davis as well as King and Taub. Compared to the mournful mood of slow blues or the insolence of "Please Love Me," it's a lighter "happy blues" celebrating the joys of male-female infatuation in its swing-dance groove and R&B horn riffs. The moderate 12-bar shuffle in G propels King's intro solo, vocal verses with stop-time figures, and a honking two-chorus sax solo backed by B.B.'s active chord comping – a rarity in the catalog, as he typically lays out instead of assuming a rhythm-guitar role underscored by his assertion.

“Worry, Worry” is begun with King’s most-recognizable lick and narrative stating his intention to “Go way back... way back.” The slow blues in A attributed to Taub and Texas bandleader Plumber (Plummer) Davis was first recorded by King in ’59 (B-side of “I Am”) and is an ideal vehicle for his nuanced guitar style and storytelling/testifying vocal proclivities. Picking up where his earlier slow-blues medley left off, it features extended guitar playing in the monumental three-chorus intro solo. One of his most-lengthy (0:14-2:14), it grows organically from short, incisive flurries and melodic cells to longer sustained passages embellished with “hummingbird” finger vibrato and aggressive rhythmically-charged riff-based lines that drive the band toward an early climax for the verses. Throughout, B.B.’s space-conscious phrasing, dynamic gradations and dramatic timbral shifts are beautifully displayed.

“Woke Up This Morning” (#3) is a King original boasting a variety of influences and tangents. An avowed jazz fan who adored Kenny Burrell, B.B. reveals repurposed swing-jazz leanings at the outset with a catchy guitar riff alluding to Duke Ellington’s “Don’t Get Around Much Anymore” over the blues-rumba beat connoting a Latin/rock synthesis. The 12-bar

Slow Blues

The image shows a musical score for the song "The Sound of Silence" by Simon & Garfunkel. The score is written for guitar and includes a TAB section. The key signature is three flats (B-flat major/D-flat minor) and the time signature is 4/4. The guitar part features a "rake" effect and a "full" effect. The score is written for guitar and includes a TAB section.

Db7

Gb7

Db7

Ab7

King's improvisational abilities are showcased in "Sweet Little Angel." Another beloved standard, the D^b slow blues shone a spotlight on his soulful phrasing, vocalesque delivery, and strong sense of rhythmic placement. This example is from the intro solo; the opening lick is a trademark melody while the remaining phrases draw on his reliable mixture of D^b major and

minor blues melody, skillfully working the minor-third F^b against G^b7 and A^b7 chords, and favoring the major third F on D^b7. B.B. enlarges on this premise with sultry string bends, singing vibrato, raked chord figures, arpeggio outlines, and strategic use of the sixth B^b. Notable is his alternation of legato versus staccato articulation and the effective dynamic changes throughout.

blues in C has a concise pop arrangement, progressing from the Latin feel to a horn-driven shout-chorus shuffle (0:52), the perfect backdrop for B.B.'s spirited hollering.

“You Done Lost Your Good Thing Now” (#23 in September ’60) is the King/Josea composition that opened *My Kind of Blues*. Accompanied by only piano, bass, and drums in the opening,

Moderately Fast Shuffle

Eb

Ab7 Eb7

Bb7 Ab7 Eb7 Bb7

Eb7

Ab7 Eb7

“Please Love Me” was a concert favorite. Marking the transition from country slide-guitar blues to the modern urban style of which B.B. is a leading exponent, it embodied both. The opening statement in measures 1-4 updates the bottle-neck chordal riff (usually played in open tunings) of rural players transferred

to post-T-Bone electric style. The remaining phrases find B.B. expounding on Walker’s jazz-tinged language with similar swinging lines bearing unique major-minor scale combinations, double-stops, and emphasis on evocative chord tones like the A^b on B^b7 in measure 9 and F[#] and G coloring an E^b arpeggio in 15-16.

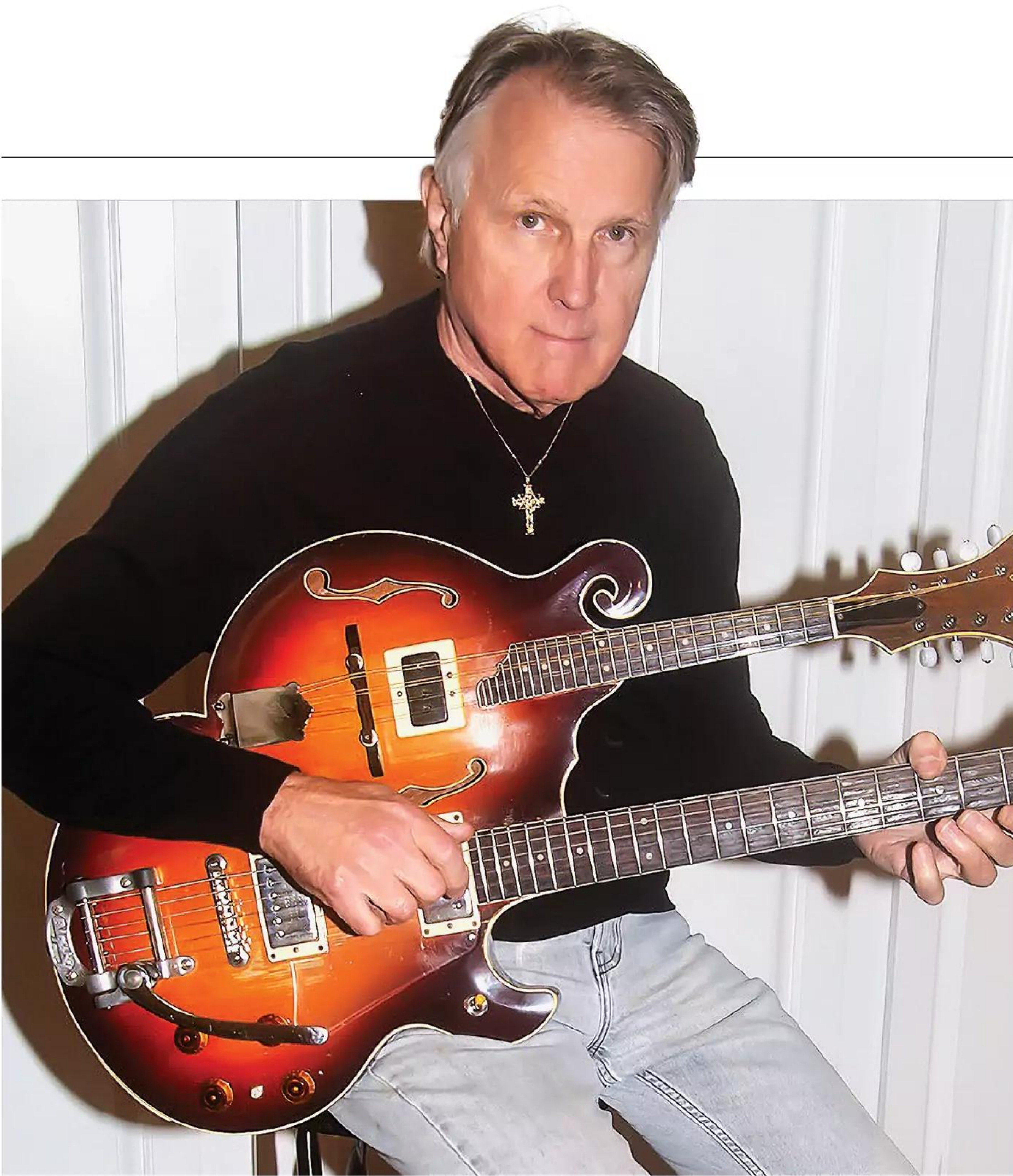
B.B. recalls the earlier version, also a 12-bar slow blues in A, that departed from his customary horn-dominated arrangements to favor a smaller combo sound. He begins with a commanding (but understated) solo reminiscent of the original track and trades vocal/guitar phrases in familiar dialog fashion during the verses. Horns enter subtly at 2:10; building from sly backing riff to greater prominence with each verse, allowing Lucille to withdraw as instrumental forces grow. King directs the crowd to respond to the performance with, “How about a big hand for my band? They’re working hard tonight.”

“Help the Poor” was composed by Charlie Singleton, and King first recorded it for ABC. A lighter A-A-B-A pop song in D minor, it received a moderately slow cha-cha groove laden with horn-section pads and background riffs, but no guitar work – instead highlighting B.B.’s crooning abilities. Those disappointed by the absence of Lucille would be more than satisfied when King reimagined the song as a guitar-dominated instrumental on *LA Midnight*.

The guitar tone on *Live at the Regal* is definitive – deep and warm or bright and twangy as required, sustaining and horn-like, slightly overdriven, and characteristically singing. By ’59, King had switched from archtop electrics to Gibson’s new ES-335, as seen on the cover with custom-ordered Vari-Tone circuitry and Bigsby vibrato.

King favored Fender tube amps, and in ’64 employed a new Twin Reverb.

Wolf Marshall is the founder and original Editor-In-Chief of *GuitarOne* magazine. A respected author and columnist, he has been influential in contemporary music education since the early 1980s. His latest book is *Jazz Guitar Course: Mastering the Jazz Language*. Others include *101 Must-Know Rock Licks*, *B.B. King: the Definitive Collection*, and *Best of Jazz Guitar*. A list credits can be found at wolfmarshall.com.



DOUBLENECK REDUX, PART 3

Homeward Bound

By Dan Erlewine

My past two columns focused on the repair and restoration of a doubleneck “Guitolin” I made in 1977 that came back into my life 47 years later. This month, we’ll conclude the work and send it back to Dan Schafer, a Nashville musician whose dad, Jerry, was the original owner. Jerry ran Schafer Music, in Mount Pleasant, Michigan, and I repaired guitars for the store (and occasionally played in his band).

The instrument spent many years in northern Michigan, with its cold, dry winters and warm summers. When Jerry passed, Dan inherited the Guitolin. Nashville having a comparatively warm, humid climate (plus being stored for years in a case) probably caused the bindings to crack and loosen, especially along curves.

1) The peghead was missing a chunk of binding. Rather than splice in a piece, I cut some Royalite binding and dissolved it in acetone to create a paste. Royalite is bone-colored, like Gibson binding from the ’50s.

2) To protect the finish, I made a dam with brown masking tape on the vertical end of the peghead and applied pin striping tape on the face to protect the finish. The binding on the bass side had been previously glued, *very* out of place.

3) After the paste had set for an hour, I clamped the neck vertically and began re-paring the binding. I removed the hot-melt glue someone had previously used, cleaned the glue out of the channel, and glued the binding in place using canopy glue, which is superb for adhering dissimilar materials, in this case wood and plastic. It’s not the only glue I use for such jobs (acetone/solvent-based glues, and superglue are also favorites), but



Photos: Kate Erlewine.

an advantage of canopy glue is that it's water-soluble, so you can clean squeeze-out with a damp rag. It also sets up reasonably fast. I then left it overnight so the paste could dry.

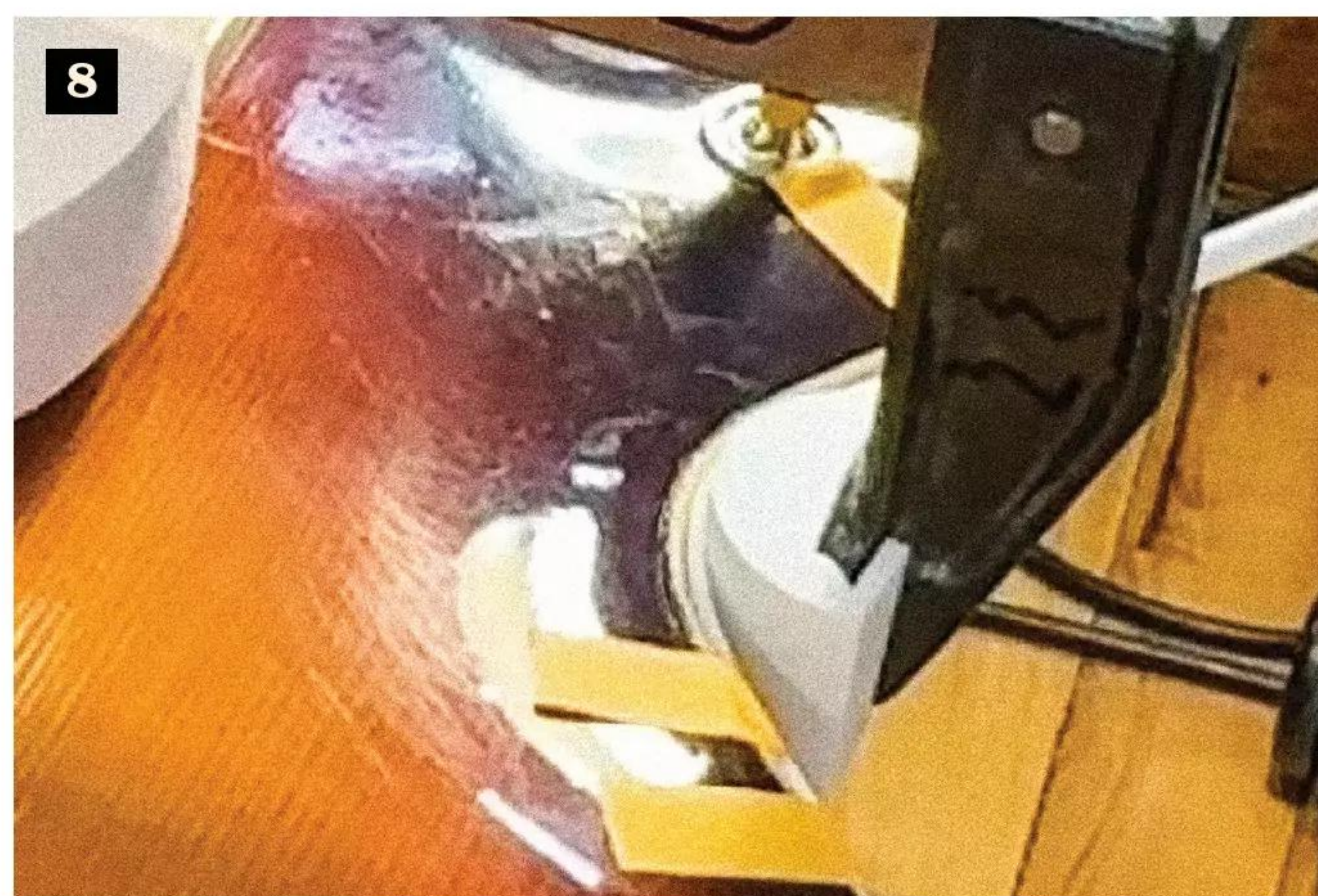
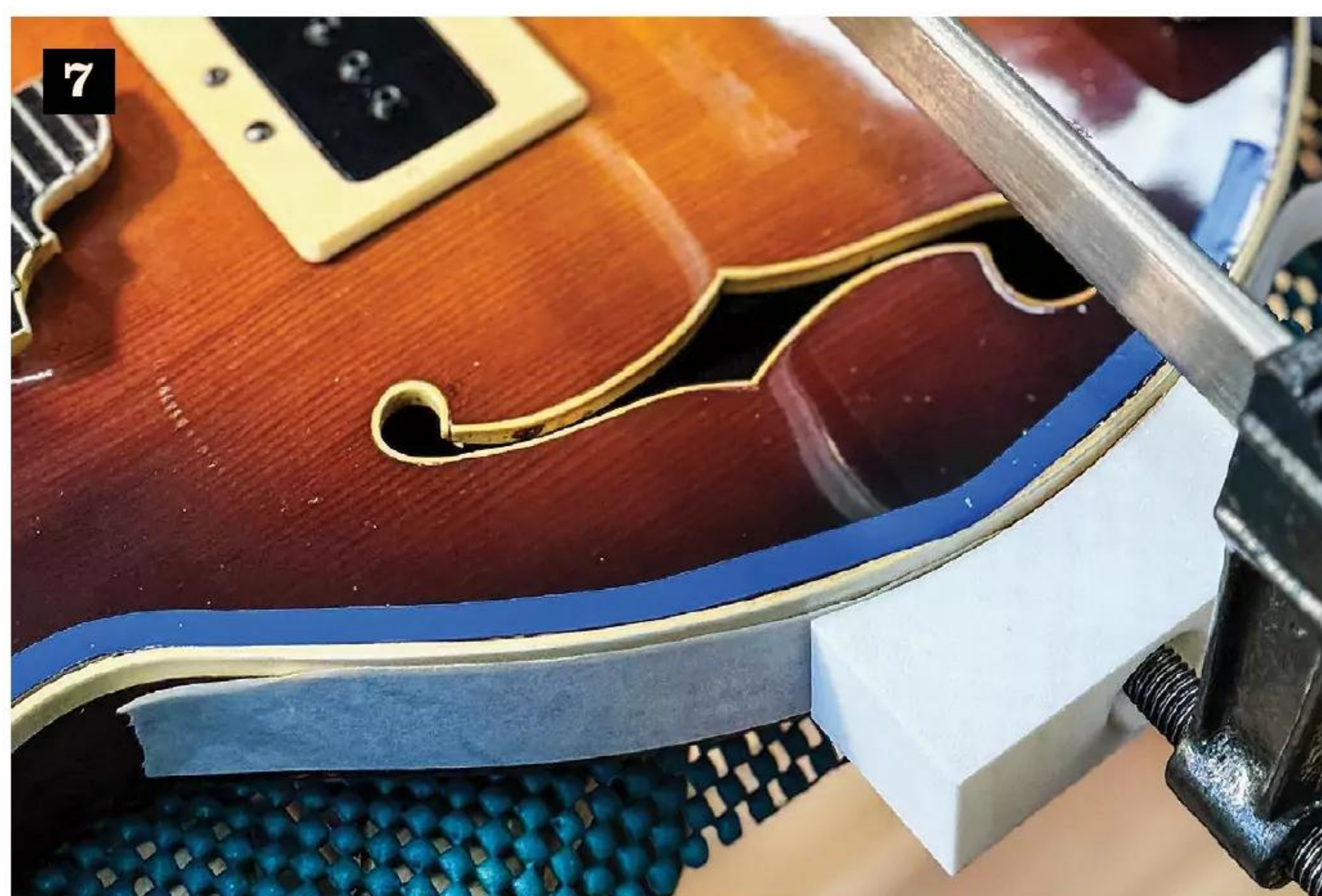
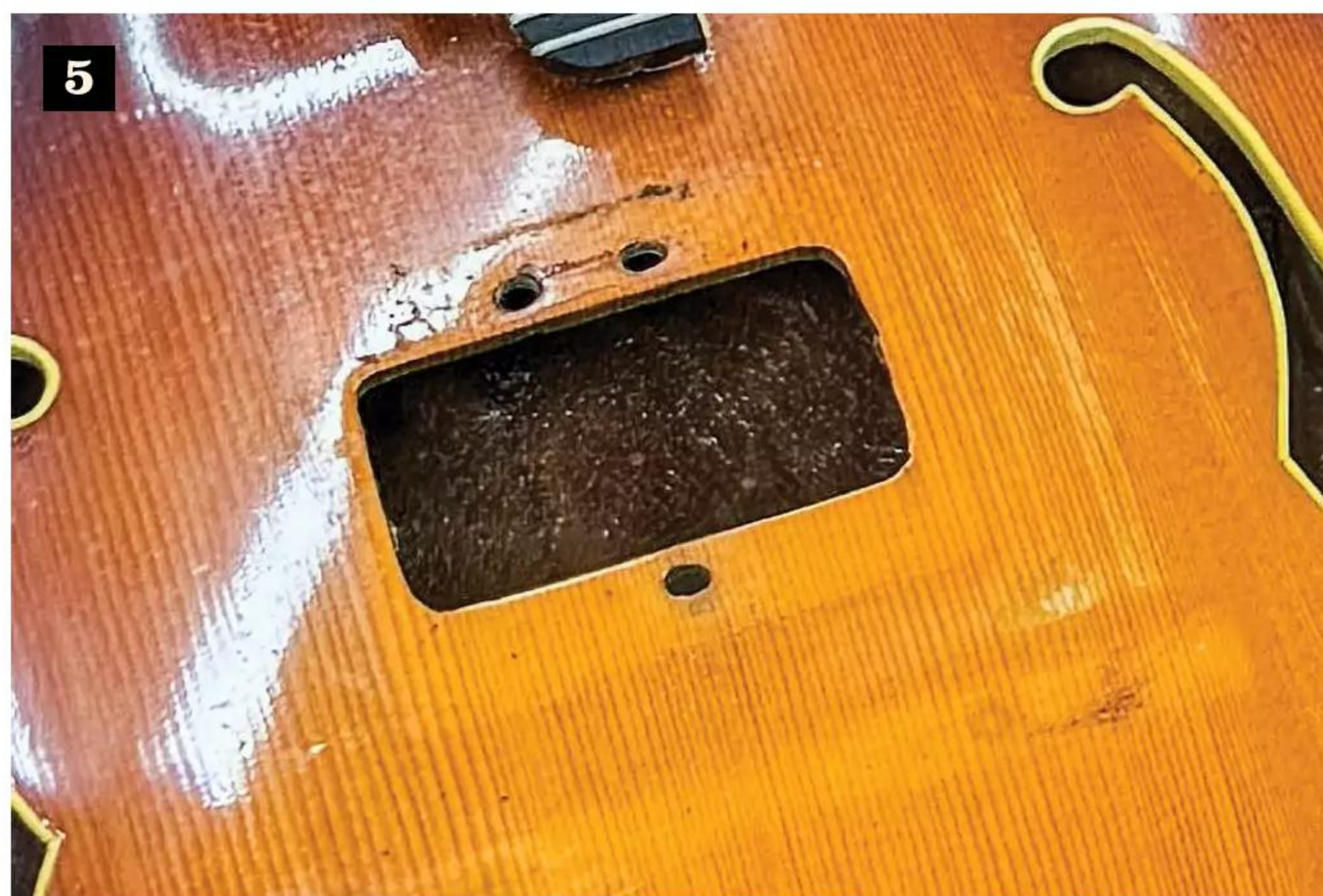
4) Canopy glue also made it easy to repair this section of binding in the cutaway.

5) A piece of fretboard binding had fallen through the sound hole into the top/man-dolin body. I discovered it when I removed the pickup.

6) I reattached the curved section with medium-viscosity superglue by holding it

in place with a stick and using glue accelerator. Then, I brushed on StewMac's Bind-All solvent-base glue on the longer section, wrapped it around the curve, and taped it in place.

Again, binding in some curved areas



loosens because as plastic ages and dries, solvents break down, causing it to shrink. This is especially true of vintage nitrocellulose binding like this. Here, you see a typical glue-up for loose waist binding.

7) I removed old glue and dust from the open area and applied canopy glue using a very thin spatula and gravity for assistance. I then used a long bar clamp across the body secured to plastic cauls that I 3-D printed to match the curves. I made one for the convex side of the mandolin...

8) ...and one for the concave waist of the guitar. Cauls spread the load and ensure the binding will dry flush to the sides. Without them, it's difficult to clamp on curved sur-

faces – and easy to damage them. I taped the binding in place with a 1/4" x 1/8" strip of non-stick Teflon plastic against it to ensure it was pressed tightly into the channel – especially at the bottom edge, which tends to tip outward. Printing custom cauls is usually faster (and better) than carving them by hand from wood.

9) To plug a stripped strap-button hole, I used a plug cutter from StewMac's Guitar Screw Rescue Kit. I cut a .183"-diameter walnut plug with the grain oriented like the guitar body.

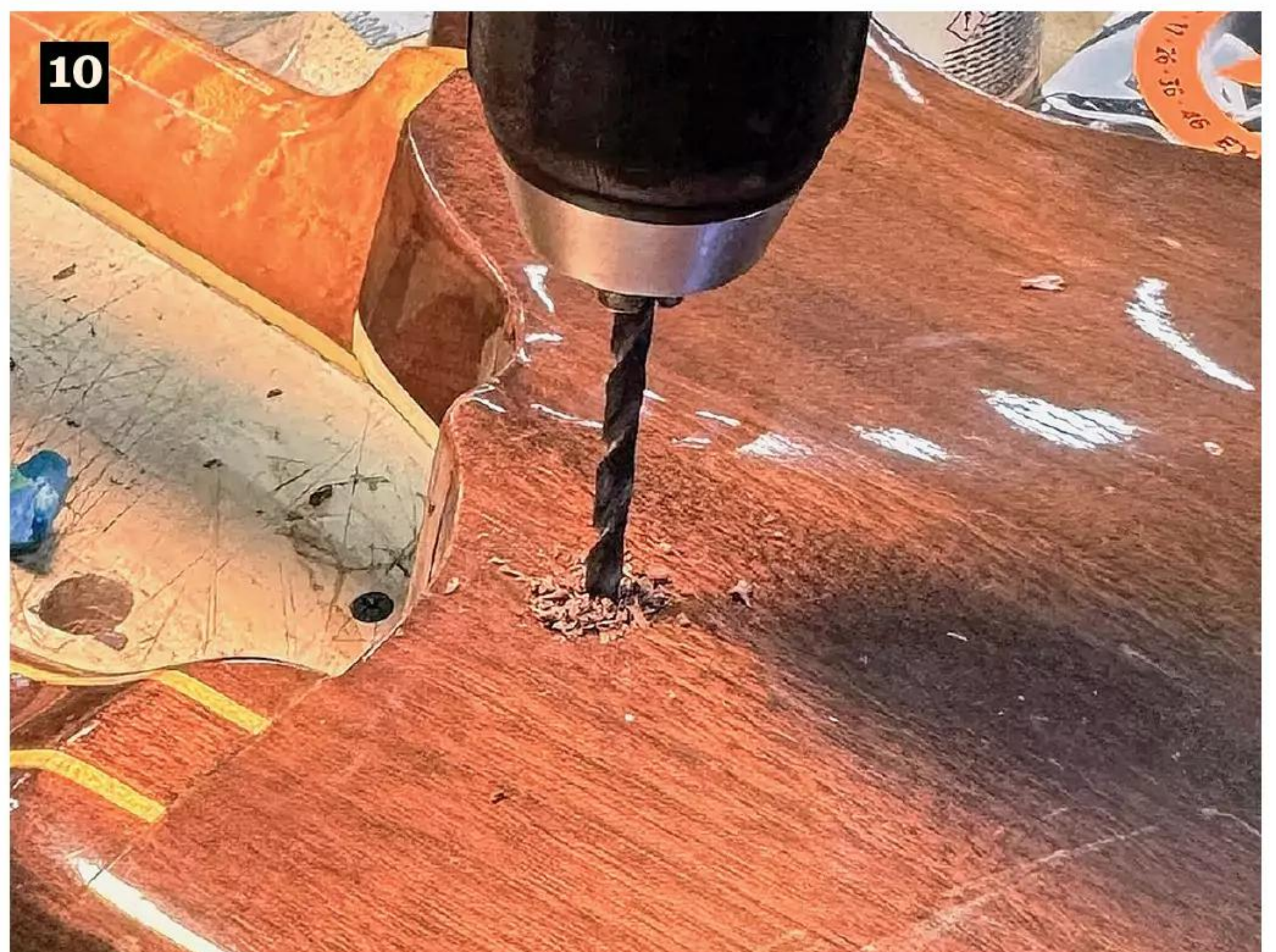
10) Using a #14 bit measuring .182", I drilled the stripped hole...

11) ...then installed the plug using Gluboot, which is a good choice when you need the work done quickly. Otherwise, I'd use one of my wood glues.

12) The strap lock has seen many gigs, and now it's good for many more.

This was a particularly rewarding project, given my history with the instrument and its owners. Special thanks to Dan for the opportunity.

Dan Erlewine has been repairing guitars for more than 50 years. The author of three books, dozens of magazine articles, he has also produced instructional videotapes and DVDs on guitar repair. From 1986 through his retirement in late 2019, Erlewine was part of the R&D team, and company liaison for Stewart-MacDonald's Guitar Shop Supply. Today, he operates a repair shop in Athens, Ohio, as well as building replicas of the guitars he made for Albert King and Jerry Garcia in 1972. This column has appeared in VG since March, 2004. You can contact him at danerlewine@gmail.com.





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1959 Framus 5/120
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1963 Gibson Johnny
Smith Double MINT
1963 Gibson Tal
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Oval Hole Leo Kotke
1995 Gibson L-5CES
100th Anniversary



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Custom early issue
1974 Gibson Les Paul
Custom Minty Original
1976 Gibson Les Paul
Custom Maple Neck
1978 Gibson Les Paul
Custom Silver'burst
1981 Gibson Les Paul
Custom Gold'burst
1984 Gibson Les Paul
Jimmy Wallace '59 Re.
1989 Gibson Les Paul
3-pickup Custom
1996 Gibson Les Paul
LPR9 Featherweight



1958 Gibson Les Paul Jr. a rare '58
1962 Gibson SG
Special Polaris White
1974 Gibson SG
Custom 3 pickups
2016 Suhr ClassicT
Thinline Custom Shop
1999 PRS Carlos
Santana II dead mint
1976 Gibson L5-SN
ultra rare Blonde !
2006 Gibson Les Paul
Supreme Dead Mint
2007 Gibson Flying V
'67 Reissue Mint COA



1952 Fender Telecaster
very early example
1960 Fender Stratocaster
Fiesta Red Slab Neck
1963 Fender Duo
Sonic 3-tone'burst
1968 Fender Custom
aka Maverick Minty
1974 Fender Telecaster
See-thru Blonde
1993 Fender Jaguar
1-off "Fred Stuart"
1997 Fender Strat '57
4 of 4 Custom Shop
1999 Fender Strat
'60 Reissue Relic Lefty



1852 Martin 2 1/2-21
173 year old original
1940 Martin D-18
rare Tortoise h'stock
1944 Martin 0-17
Scalloped Braces
1947 Martin 000-21
rare Tapered Braces
1957 Martin 0-18
Incredible Tone !
1969 Martin D-21
Brazilian Rosewood
1946 Gibson J-45
rare Mahogany Top
1980 Jose Ramirez 2a
Brazilian Rosewood

Sykes with a custom-color Strat in 1984.

John Sykes

1959-2025

REMEMBERING A HEAVY HERO

BY PETE PROWN

T

he guitar universe was rocked on January 20 by the announcement of John Sykes' death from cancer, at age 65. Forty years ago, the British guitarist rocked with high-volume bands like Thin Lizzy and Whitesnake, establishing himself before "shred" guitar had a name. Blazing on a Les Paul Custom, he was as fast as any human alive.

Within hours of hearing the tragic news, current Whitesnake guitarist Joel Hoekstra (VG, June '23) told *Vintage Guitar*, "Like most rockers, I was a big fan of John's work with Whitesnake, along with Thin Lizzy and Blue Murder. He played from the heart and had tremendous prowess both as a guitarist and vocalist. Unfortunately, I never had

John Sykes 1984: Ray Palmer/Archive/IconicPix.



Thin Lizzy at the Manchester Apollo, 1983: John Sykes (left), Phil Lynott, Scott Gorham, and Darren Wharton.

the chance to meet him, but always tried to pass along my admiration and respect for John through mutual friends.”

John James Sykes was born in Reading, England, on July 29, 1959, and started playing blues-rock licks on acoustic, initially inspired by Eric Clapton. Later influences included Gary Moore, Jimmy Page, and fretboard rippers like Michael Schenker and Uli Jon Roth. Barely 21, Sykes made his recording debut in 1980 with the band Streetfighter, which appeared on a New Wave of British Heavy Metal (NWOBHM) compilation, *New Electric Warriors*. The track, “She’s No Angel” already displayed nods to Thin Lizzy, with its melodic harmony lines.

Before long, he left Streetfighter to join Tygers of Pan Tang and helped record two solid albums in 1981.

“It’s very sad to hear of John Sykes passing,” Marty Friedman told VG. “His work with Tygers of Pan Tang was by far my favorite of the NWOBHM. A wonderful guitarist who played with bristling energy and new levels of ability. Forced me to up my game – something which I remain eternally grateful to John for.”

Subsequently, Sykes auditioned for Ozzy Osbourne’s band, but later found himself in the studio with Thin Lizzy frontman

Phil Lynott. Working as a one-off duo, they conceptualized the pop-metal nugget “Please Don’t Leave Me.” A fast, tasty guitar solo bore hallmarks of the former Lizzy monster Gary Moore, who was off starting a solo career. The project was more than enough to convince Lynott to grab the 22-year-old Sykes, where he would play across the stage from Lizzy veteran Scott Gorham.

The result was the final Thin Lizzy studio album, 1983’s *Thunder and Lightning*, which has become revered as a metal masterpiece – arguably Lizzy’s only authentic heavy metal album. The lead single was “Cold Sweat,” co-written by Sykes and possessing an explosive solo with Van Halen-style tapping, over-bends, and brutal riffing. Another track, “Baby, Please Don’t Go,” was a metal master class containing one of the most-thrilling leads of Sykes’ career. As ’80s-era Thin Lizzy keyboardist Darren Wharton told *Music Radar*, “When [guitarist] Snowy White decided to leave Thin Lizzy, John was the natural choice to join us. While Snowy brought a laid-back, bluesy feel to the band, John introduced a heavier, more-intense element that Phil absolutely embraced.

“Recording *Thunder and Lightning* with John was also a creative highlight, full of

excitement and energy,” he added. “John and I lived with Phil at his house in Kew Gardens... it was a special time, filled with camaraderie, music, and plenty of laughs.”

A mediocre live album, *Life*, was issued in late ’83, coming not long after Thin Lizzy disbanded in the wake of spiraling substance issues of Lynott and Gorham (Lynott died in January, 1986). After hearing the news of his former guitar partner’s death, Gorham said on social media, “So sad to hear about the passing of John Sykes. He and I played some sweet music together and he was a great musician. We’ll miss him.”

With Lizzy out of commission, Whitesnake’s David Coverdale feverishly tried to get Sykes into his band and, after heavy negotiation, landed the young guitar whiz. Their first task was finishing what became the *Slide It In* album, where Sykes appeared on the U.S. version while Mickey Moody and Mel Galley played on the U.K. mix. The album put Whitesnake on the map as a rising arena-rock draw and in January of ’84 they played to 500,000 fans at Brazil’s Rock in Rio festival.

Talking to the Metal Rules website in 2008, Sykes said, “I liked [David Coverdale’s] work with Deep Purple, especially, *Burn*, because I loved Ritchie Blackmore



Sykes in 1983.



Onstage with Thin Lizzy in 2007.

and all the Purple stuff before that. I think David sang great on that one, and he had an amazing voice – but I always felt he needed a rock player who could really drive him, not just strum along. He needed something like a kick in the arse, you know?”

The group reappeared with *Whitesnake*, titled 1987 in Europe and featuring new songs co-written by Coverdale and Sykes. The LP turned into a platinum seller, moving eight million copies, earning 24/7 video rotation, and establishing Whitesnake as a definitive ’80s “hairband.” MTV-encrusted hits included “Here I Go Again” (of which there are two versions, one with guitarist Adrian Vandenberg’s solo and another with studio man Dann Huff), as well as the Sykes-fueled power ballad “Is This Love.” But it was the guitarist’s riffs and faster-than-lightning solo on “Still of the Night” that established Sykes as a guitar god – it’s a metallic performance for the ages. Sykes later told veteran rock journalist/blogger Steve Newton, “[Producer Bob Rock] actually created my guitar sound on the *Whitesnake* album, and we’ve been friends ever since. I wanted to go for an early ’70s type of sound more than a late ’80s thing, and Bob was also into early Purple and Zeppelin, so it was great.”

As a sad irony is that by the time *Whitesnake* became a smash, Coverdale had fired the band, as its dynamic had become acrimonious. The project was further delayed

because Coverdale required surgery for vocal issues. The long and short of it was that Sykes was out, replaced on tour by Vandenberg and ex-Dio guitarist Vivian Campbell. Coverdale and Sykes never reconciled, but the former expressed his thoughts on social media, saying, “Just heard the shocking news of John’s passing. My sincere condolences to his family, friends, and fans.”

After being cut from Whitesnake, Sykes formed the power trio Blue Murder with drum icon Carmine Appice and bassist Tony Franklin (The Firm). Their 1989 debut and ’94 follow-up *Nothin’ But Trouble* provided potent MTV metal, earning a cult following for “Jelly Roll” and the Whitesnake-styled “Valley of the Kings.” Despite being well-received, Blue Murder never connected with fans on a mass scale and, with the arrival of grunge and alt-rock in the ’90s, was all but doomed as a commercial venture. In hindsight, however, the project not only reinforced admiration for Sykes’ guitar prowess, but also his powerhouse vocals. In fact, at times he sometimes sounded more like David Coverdale than David Coverdale, notably on the stomper “We All Fall Down.”

Sykes is universally identified with his ’78 Les Paul Custom with Dirty Fingers humbuckers – a tour-ravaged Black Beauty with plenty of battle wounds. Behind him, a row of 50-watt Marshall JCM800 heads or

Mesa/Boogie Coliseum heads, along with 4x12 cabinets provided a mighty backline roar. Even decades later, the gigantic tones of Sykes-era Thin Lizzy and Whitesnake remain a thing of crunchy wonder.

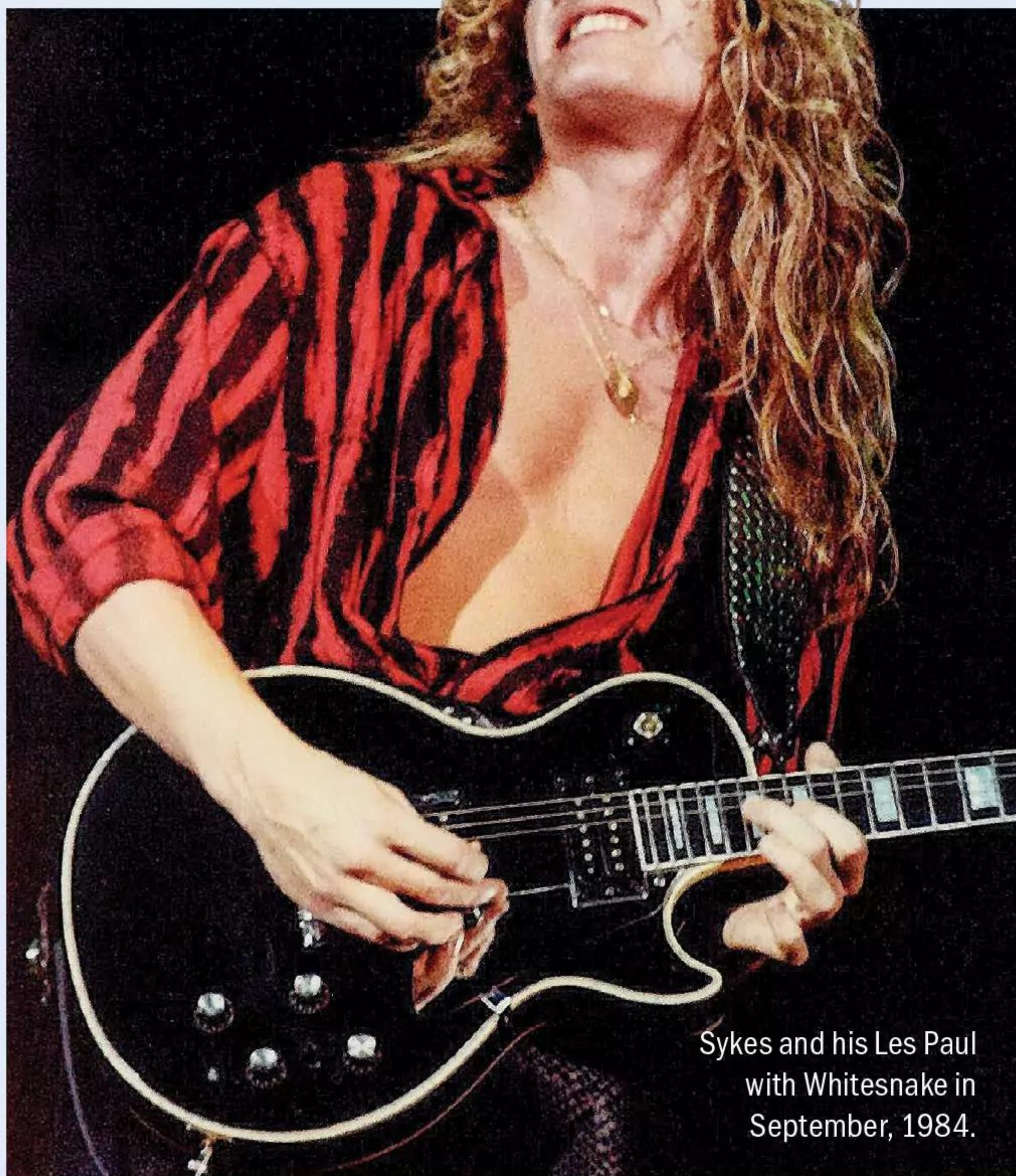
In the mid ’90s, Sykes reconnected with Scott Gorham, drummer Brian Downey, and keyboardist Wharton for a touring-only Thin Lizzy lineup. The show proved a powerful homage to Lynott and carried on for over a decade, with John offering a potent reinterpretation of Lynott’s vocal phrasing and style. The live *One Night Only* appeared in 2000; at the same time, Sykes launched a solo career with a few modest-selling albums and singles.

On social media, fellow Whitesnake alumnus Doug Aldrich posted, “I met John several times and will never forget the conversations we had. He was a funny and cool guy [who] was fierce on the guitar and sang his ass off. John is now up there with Eddie, Gary, Randy, Jimi, and a whole lot of our heroes.”

Billy Idol guitarist Steve Stevens summed up Sykes’ impact with this pithy post: “Hearing that John Sykes has passed. Man, his work on the 1987 *Whitesnake* album was just incredible. You’ve got 12-year-old kids on Youtube still learning his stuff!”

Pete Prown is music editor at *Vintage Guitar* and author of *Ultimate Heavy Metal Guitars: The Guitarists Who Rocked the World*.

Sykes and Lynott: Steve Knight/Wikimedia Commons. John Sykes 1983: Steve Knight/Wikimedia Commons.



Sykes and his Les Paul
with Whitesnake in
September, 1984.

John Sykes

ARC OF AN ICON

In the golden era of guitar that was the '80s, A-list players like Edward Van Halen, Slash, Stevie Ray Vaughan stood alongside guys like Michael Hedges, Allan Holdsworth, Leo Kottke, Andy Summers, and Craig Chaquico, creating a great stylistic melange.

Also contributing was John Sykes, who became known for his idiosyncratic style and flair for the dramatic. Influenced by Jimmy Page, Eric Clapton, and Ritchie Blackmore, Sykes was a Gary Moore disciple who followed in his footsteps when he joined Thin Lizzy in 1984. Sykes' breakout performance was on the 1987 self-titled Whitesnake album, but no matter the setting, his playing was consistently great. Here, we offer a curriculum vitae.



STREETFIGHTER

Sykes' recording debut happened in 1980, with the Streetfighter track "She's No Angel," on the compilation *NWOBBHM Thunder: New Wave of British Heavy Metal: 1978-1986*. Sykes' playing is fast, melodic, and raw, with edgy, spiraling solos that would remain a trademark of his musical identity.



TYGERS OF PAN TANG

Sykes joined Tygers of Pan Tang

for a trial-by-fire debut in front of 60,000 people at the Reading Festival in 1980. He performed on the albums *Spellbound* and *Crazy Nights* and played on the tracks "Love Potion No. 9" and "Danger in Paradise" on 1982's *The Cage*.

With Tygers, Sykes' playing was more-polished and confident. Tunes like "Gangland," "Hellbound," "Don't Stop By," and "Mirror" display muscular riffs that leaned heavily into the British metal style of the era. His muted runs, heavy vibrato, harmonized guitar lines, and artificial harmonics became a mainstay of his artistry.



THIN LIZZY

After leaving Tygers, Sykes auditioned for Ozzy Osbourne, then re-recorded with Streetfighter before briefly joining vocalist John Sloman and Whitesnake bassist Neil Murray in the Wales-based Badlands. He then replaced Snowy White for Thin Lizzy's final album, *Thunder and Lightning*, released in '83. Joining forces with a visionary band that included bassist Phil Lynott and guitarist Scott Gorham, Sykes was entering his prime.

With Lizzy, his growth was huge. On the title track, he unleashed blazing staccato lines and heavy vibrato. Highlights include the haunting "The Sun Goes Down," the severely rocking co-write "Cold Sweat," "Holy War," and the riveting "Baby Please Don't Go."

Thunder and Lightning was Thin Lizzy for head bangers, and Sykes was key in its heavier, more-intense guitar sound. It charted at #4 on the U.K. album charts and was followed by *Life: Live*, recorded in March of '83. A must-own for aficionados, the double album was mostly recorded at the Hammersmith Odeon during the band's farewell tour and features former bandmates Eric Bell, Brian Robertson, and Gary Moore. Sykes is on fire, particularly on the power ballads "Still In Love With You," and the definitive version of "Don't Believe A Word." It features not

one but two epic guitar solos in each song. The live versions of "Are You Ready," "Got To Give It Up," and "Waiting For An Alibi" are sweltering. On the song "The Rocker," Bell, Moore, and Robertson join Sykes and Gorham in a firestorm of pentatonic passion.



WHITESNAKE

As Lizzy was disbanding, David Coverdale was looking for a flashy guitarist to match his stage presence. Adrian Vandenberg reluctantly declined, and Sykes pinged Coverdale's radar when their respective bands shared festival bills on European tours. After passing on Michael Schenker, Coverdale courted Sykes by making him an offer he couldn't refuse — lots of money.

Before Sykes joined, the U.K. version of *Slide It In* had already been recorded and British fans ate it up, but it received harsh reviews by the British press for its poor production and trite lyrics. Geffen Records refused to release the album in the U.S., so Sykes and Murray were flown to Los Angeles to re-record certain guitar parts, layer others, and replace all the bass. Producer Keith Olsen remixed the album, and the re-recording was a success, with improved production and a heavier, more-modern blues-rock sound. Sykes and Murray were confirmed as members of Whitesnake in January of '84, culminating in Sykes playing in front of 500,000 people at the Rock in Rio Music Festival when they replaced Def Leppard the following year.

The U.S. version of *Slide It In* became Whitesnake's first major success. Coverdale's middle finger to the British press, it sold more than half a million copies and put the band on the map, partly due to Sykes' aggressive playing. On the 2019 remaster, Sykes plays to complement the song, respectfully building from the ideas of guitarists Mel Galley and Micky Moody. His contribu-

tions are lyrical, adding girth, emotion, and his trademark pinch harmonics.

Exhibit A is Sykes' re-do of the guitar solo on the title track. While Moody's version is perfection, Sykes builds on his ideas, taking it to a more-modern, fiery, and melodic place. He finishes the solo with an epic arena-rock crescendo. Live versions of these songs with Sykes are breathtaking.

The 1987 *Whitesnake* album made Sykes famous. Deeply involved in co-writing nine of the 11 songs with Coverdale, his solo on the re-recording of "Crying in the Rain" is among the greatest of that era. But, on "Still of the Night," he unleashes truly crafty six-string drama; dynamics, tension, release, bombast, and his distinctive vibrato are used to masterful effect.

Leaning into a polished and contemporary hard rock sound, Sykes and Coverdale recorded the album then parted ways.

Adrian Vandenberg was hired to replace Sykes' guitar solo on "Here I Go Again." Dann Huff plays the solo on the radio mix.

The album is an immaculate blues-rock masterpiece. Coverdale, with his British metal-frontman persona, was the perfect emcee to deliver the songs with swagger, bolstered by Sykes' guitar mastery. The opening riff of "Bad Boys" rocks with all-out gusto, while the ominous Led Zeppelin atmosphere of "Still of the Night" displays Sykes' trademark melodies, muted 64th notes, lyricism, and epic crescendos.

While Sykes could light up the fretboard, he could also dig deep, delivering soulful guitar lines and beautifully harmonized backing. On the sugary ballad "Is This Love," his silky smooth legato lines are cherry filling. *Whitesnake's* seventh record, it became Coverdale's most successful album to date, selling more than eight million copies in the U.S. while reaching #2 on *Billboard*, where it resided for 10 weeks.



BLUE MURDER

In late '87, Sykes began recording demos for a band that was to include drummer Cozy Powell, bassist Tony Franklin, and vocalist Ray Gillen. After hearing them, Geffen Records A&R exec John Kalodner encouraged

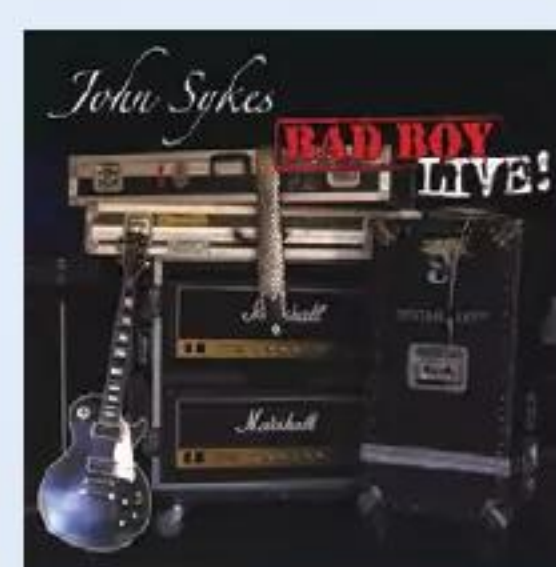
Sykes to front the band himself; he then added drummer Carmine Appice. Produced by Rob Rock, its self-titled debut was released in April of '89 and is Sykes at his most-opulent. Songs like the title track display his trademark soloing, while "Valley Of The Kings" is his most-epic. Lost on most guitarists was his powerful singing within the context of arena rock, acoustic country blues, and accessible pop-metal.

One of that era's finest hard-rock records, *Blue Murder* peaked at #69 on *Billboard* and garnered positive reviews. "Jelly Roll" became a minor hit, receiving rotation on MTV, peaking at #15 on Album Rock Tracks. Selling an estimated 500,000 copies in a changing music scene, the album failed to meet expectations.

During this period, Sykes was considered to join Def Leppard after singing background vocals on the *Adrenalize* album. He lost out to Viv Campbell.

Moving on, Sykes released *Blue Murder's* second album, *Nothin' But Trouble*, in August of '93. He'd continued writing and playing in the style that made him famous, but also presented even heavier material; mammoth riffs infiltrated passionate songs with big choruses, ethereal dynamics, over-the-top soloing, and rich Les Paul tones. "Cry For Love," "I'm On Fire," and "I Need An Angel" is top-tier. "We All Fall Down" peaked at #35 on the Album Rock Tracks chart.

After the album essentially failed, Appice and Franklin left, replaced by drummer Tommy O'Steen and bassist Marco Mendoza. They released the live *Screaming Blue Murder: Dedicated to Phil Lynott* in 1994, which contained a mix of songs by Thin Lizzy, Whitesnake, and Blue Murder. Incendiary versions of "Cold Sweat," "Dancin' in the Moonlight," "Still of the Night," and "Jelly Roll" are worth the price of admission. Unfortunately, Sykes was dropped by Geffen Records, and the band then split.



SOLO

Sykes' solo debut came in '95 with the release of *Out of My Tree*, followed by *Loveland* and *20th Century* (both '97), *Nuclear Cowboy* (2000), and *Bad*

Boy Live! ('05). He also joined a reformed Thin Lizzy from '96 to '09 and auditioned for Guns N' Roses in '09. In '11, he began recording demos for a power trio with drummer Mike Portnoy and bassist Billy Sheehan. Tentatively called Bad Apple, the project folded due to scheduling and personality conflicts. After Richie Kotzen replaced Sykes, the band morphed into the highly successful Winery Dogs. In January of '21, Sykes released "Dawning of a Brand New Day," followed in July by "Out Alive."

GEAR

Sykes' main guitar was a black '78 Les Paul Custom with Dirty Fingers pickups. He also used a '59 Standard on *Loveland*, played a '61 Strat on "Is This Love," and a Charvel with a Floyd Rose on "Black-Hearted Woman" and "Ptolemy."

A Marshall user who favored 50-watt JCM800 heads modified by José Arredondo paired with 4x12 cabinets, with Whitesnake and the first *Blue Murder* album, Sykes used two Mesa Boogie Coliseum heads, Mark III preamps, rackmount units with Dual Rectifiers, Mark IIC+ heads, TriAxis preamps, a Strategy power amp, a rackmount Dunlop Crybaby, Lexicon PCM 41 and PCM 70 delays, and an H&H V800 power amp. Later, he was partial to the EVH 5150III with EL34s.

LEGACY

To hear the cream of Sykes' six-string artistry, Thin Lizzy's *Thunder and Lightning*, *Life: Alive*, *Whitesnake*, *Blue Murder*, and *Bad Boys Live!* are key. Sykes was no '80s shredder clone; he wielded the theatrical intensity of Gary Moore, the scalar melodicism of Randy Rhoads, and techniques from Edward Van Halen, creating a blues-based hard-rock aura. With his British blues-rock attitude, signature vibrato, and out-of-the-box phrasing, he brought new life to palm-muted bass notes, bent harmonics, and pick slides.

His soloing incorporated an array of hard-rock techniques, such as super-fast alternate picking, pinch harmonics, exaggerated vibrato, muted pentatonic runs, and spiraling scale sequences. His playing was otherwise highlighted by behind-the-nut bends, harmonics, ostinato passages, seamless legato, and rapid-fire picking. Compositionally, the themes in his music dealt with straightforward guitar-centric hard rock as well as grandiose Egyptian-tinged mythological imagery and roots-oriented compositions like "Jelly Roll," with its D^b-A^b-D^b-A^b-A^b-D^b tuning (low to high).

His influence was deeply felt by guitarists in the hard rock and metal community like Zakk Wylde and Slash, as well as subsequent members of Whitesnake, including Adrian Vandenberg, Vivian Campbell, Steve Vai, Reb Beach, Joel Hoekstra, and Doug Aldrich. **VG**

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Denotes a new or updated listing.

2025

MARCH

CarolinaGuitarShow - Asheville, March 8-9, 2025 at the WNC Ag Center I-26, Exit 40, 1301 Fanning Bridge Rd., Fletcher/Asheville, NC 28732. For more info, call Bee3 Vintage at 828-298-2197 or visit www.bee3vintage.com

Big Als' Lake County Musician's Swap Meet, Sunday, March 9, 2025 at Renninger's Florida Twin Markets, 20651 Hwy 441 Mt. Dora FL. Hours 8-3 For more info contact Allen at info@lcmsm.com, (352)735-0025 or visit www.lcmsm.com

Cincinnati Guitar Show, Sunday, March 16, 2025 from 10am - 4pm at the Sharonville Conv. Cntr, 11355 Chester Rd, Sharonville, OH 45246. Contact Denny 513-503-1072 - more info at cincyguitarshow.com & FB.

KC Guitar Show, Sunday March 16 from 11am to 5pm at the Embassy Suites KCI, 7640 NW Tiffany Springs Pkwy, Kansas City, MO 65153. Contact Mark at 816-520-8430 or visit kcguitarshow.com

MidAtlanticGuitarShow & Swap Meet, March 21-23 at the Atlantic Sands Hotel and Conference Center, 1 Baltimore Avenue Rehoboth Beach,

DE 19971. Presented by Frantic Music Project a 501c3 charitable organization. More info 302-402-3055 or email contact@franticmusic.org www.midatlanticguitarshow.com (See Advertisement on page 65.)

Amigo Nashville Guitar Show 2025, March 22, 10-5 and March 23, 10-4. Williamson County Ag EXPO Park, 4215 Long Lane, Franklin, TN. For more info contact Ruth Brinkmann (817) 312-7659 ruthmbrinkmann@gmail.com, Larry Briggs (918) 288-2222, shows@amigoguitarshows.com, Dave Crocker, davelcrocker@gmail.com (417) 850-4751. www.amigoguitarshows.com. (See Advertisement on page 62.)

APRIL

West Coast Guitar Show - Northwest, Saturday, April 5th, 2025 from 10am - 3:30pm at the Renton Community Center - Renton, WA. For more info contact Bruce Adolph 253-445-1973, bruceadolph@mac.com, www.WestCoastGuitarShows.com (See Advertisement on page 61.)

The Indiana Guitar Show, April 12-13, at the Hendricks County Fairgrounds 1900 E. Main St. Danville, IN. For more information contact Eddie at (317) 272-5222 or visit www.theindianaguitarshow.com (See Advertisement on page 61.)

MAY

Dallas International Guitar Festival, May 2-4, 2025 at the Dallas Market Hall, 2200 N Stemmons Fwy, Dallas, TX. For more info visit www.guitarshow.com (See Advertisement on page 63.)

Jake's Guitar Show & Music Swap Meet, May 3-4 at the Indoor Treasure Barn, 1380 Rt 100, Barto, PA. Hours 8-1. For more information contact Justin at (484)256-6515 or info@jakesfleamarket.com

Big Als' Lake County Musician's Swap Meet, Sunday, May 11, 2025 at Renninger's Florida Twin Markets, 20651 Hwy 441 Mt. Dora FL. Hours 8-3 For more info contact Allen at info@lcmsm.com, (352)735-0025 or visit www.lcmsm.com

Midwest Music Gear Swap, presents its Spring Swap meet, Sunday May 18 at Emidio's Event Center, 48 E Bath Rd, Cuyahoga Falls, OH from 10am to 4pm. Contact Corey at midwestmusicgearswap@yahoo.com or 330-753-5050

The Las Vegas Guitar Trade Show May 30-June 1, 2025 at the Silverton Lodge, 3333 Blue Diamond Rd., Las Vegas, NV 89139 from 10am - 5pm daily. More information at lasvegasguitartradeshow.com

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Upcoming Events

JUNE

Elmira Vintage Guitar Show, Sunday, June 1st from 11am-4pm at the Woolrich Memorial Centre, 24 Snyder Ave S, Elmira, ON N3B 1K8. For more info, visit www.elmiravintageguitarshow.ca.

Sarasota Guitar and Amp Show, June 6th - 12pm - 5pm (dealer day), June 7-8, 9am - 6pm at the Roberts Arena, 3000 Ringling Blvd, Sarasota, FL 34237. Contact: Kevin Wood at 941-993-3098 or visit Sarasotaguitarshow.com

2025 Summer Ohio Guitar Show, Sunday, June 8, 2025 at the Makoy Center 5462 Center St, Hilliard, OH 43026. Show hours 11:30-5:00. For more info, contact Marc at (740) 797-3351 or guitardigest@frontier.com, www.ohioguitarshows.com. Ohio Guitar Show on Facebook and Instagram

SEPTEMBER

Amigo SoCal World Guitar Show, September 13-14, 2025, OC Fair & Event Center, Arlington & Fairview St., Costa Mesa, CA. For more info call Larry at (918) 288-2222, amigoshow@stringswest.com, www.amigoguitarshows.com.

Jake's Guitar Show & Music Swap Meet, Sep-

tember 20-21, at the Indoor Treasure Barn, 1380 Rt 100, Barto, PA. Hours 8-1. For more information contact Justin at (484) 256-6515 or info@jakesfleamarket.com

The Indiana Guitar Show, September 27-28 2025, at the Hendricks County Fairgrounds 1900 E. Main St. Danville, IN. 10:00 to 5:00 on Sat & 10:00 to 3:00 on Sun For more information contact Eddie at (317) 272-5222 or visit www.theindianaguitarshow.com

OCTOBER

Chicago Vintage Guitar Expo, Sunday October 5, 2025, Holiday Inn, 1000 Busse Rd, Elk Grove Village, Illinois. 9am to 3PM. For More information Contact Beverly Bakes, R&B Productions 847-931-0707,

Mesquite 2025 - formerly Guitarlinton, October 18-19 at the Mesquite Convention Center, 1700 Rodeo Dr, Mesquite, TX. For more info contact Ruth Brinkmann (817) 312-7659 ruthmbrinkmann@gmail.com, Larry Briggs (918) 288-2222 larryb@stringswest.com, Dave Crocker (417) 850-4751 davelcrocker@gmail.com, Fax 817-592-3381 www.amigoguitarshows.com

The Tampa Guitar Show, from 10-5 October 25

and 10-4 October 26, 2025 at the Florida State Fairgrounds, 4800 US 301, Tampa, FL 33610. Dealer day October 24 from 9-5 - Vendors can register @ Mvvguitarshows.com. For more info contact Marty Beeson at info@mvvguitarshows.com or 813-400-0803 (See Advertisement on page 65.)

NOVEMBER

Ann Arbor Music Instrument Swap, Sunday November 9, 2025 from 10am - 4pm at the Eastern Michigan University Student Center, 900 Oakland St., Ypsilanti, MI 48197. Contact Shawn VanSteeland at 517-410-6409 or visit www.musicinstrumentswap.com

Midwest Music Gear Swap, presents its Fall Swap meet, Sunday November 16 at Emidio's Event Center, 48 E Bath Rd, Cuyahoga Falls, OH from 10am to 4pm. Contact Corey at midwestmusicgearswap@yahoo.com or 330-753-5050

If you have information regarding upcoming guitar shows or events, visit <http://www.vintageguitar.com/guitarshow-submission> or e-mail james@vintageguitar.com. All submissions must be received by the 10th of each month, or they will appear in the next available issue. This listing is done as a service to our readers and we reserve final determination as to its contents.

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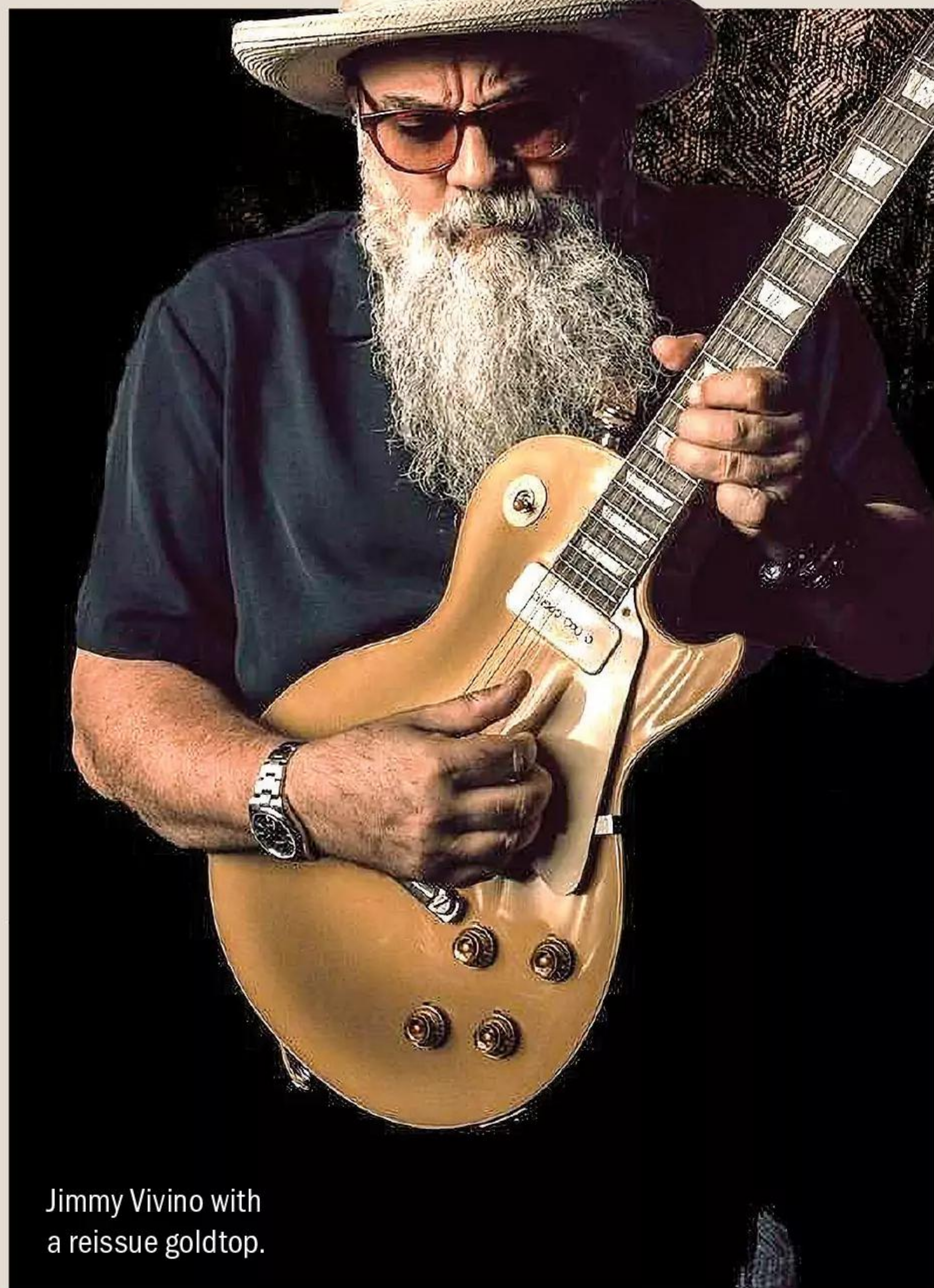


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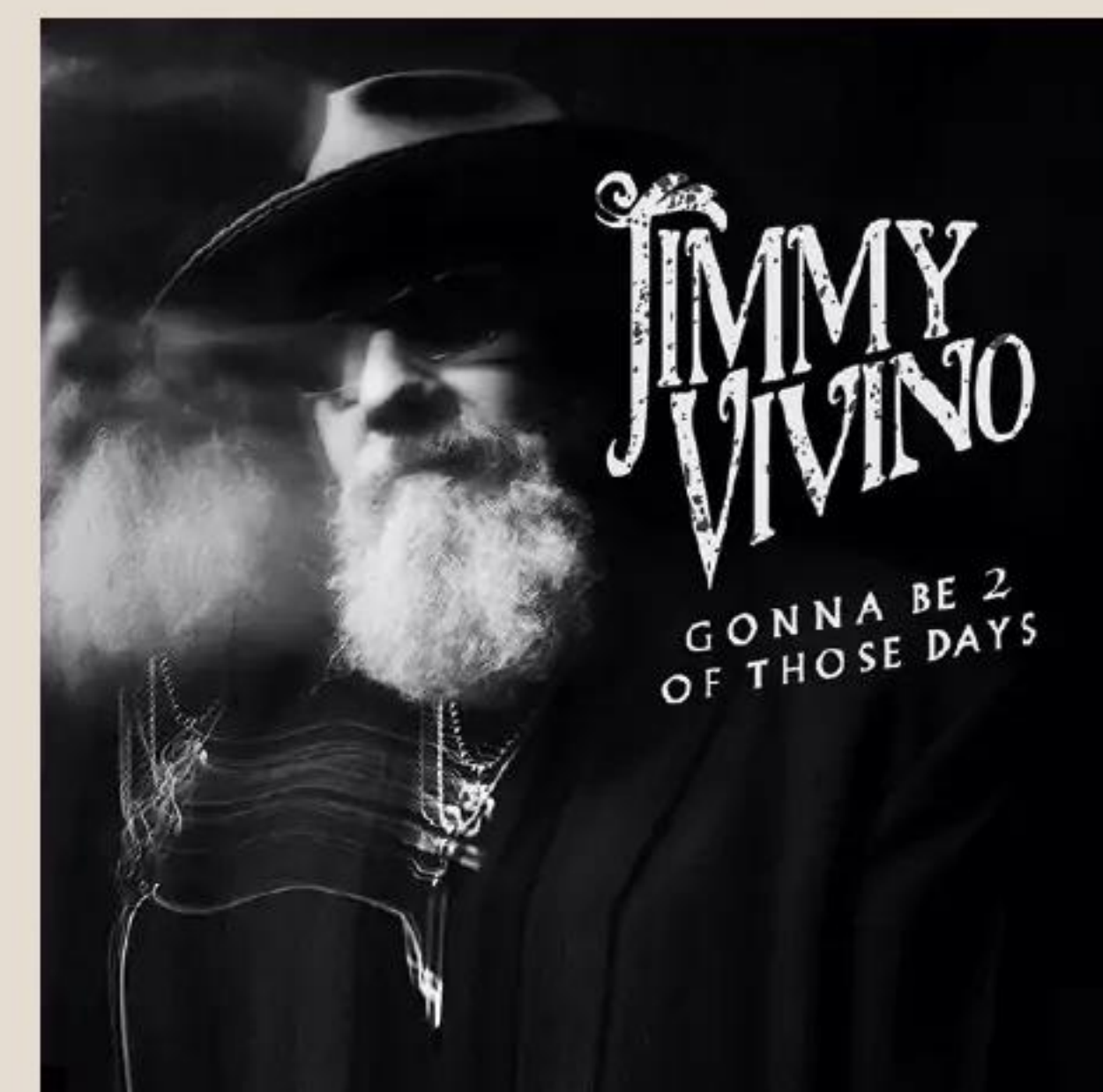


Jimmy Vivino with a reissue goldtop.

BLUES-FRIED

A veteran vocalist/guitarist/keyboardist and purveyor of blues, R&B, and rock', Jimmy Vivino has an incredible résumé. A longtime fixture in Conan O'Brien's house band, he has played on movie, radio, and Broadway projects and worked with Levon Helm, Hubert Sumlin, Al Kooper, Jimmie Vaughan, Donald Fagen, Warren Haynes, Laura Nyro, along with innumerable others. He's also a current member of Canned Heat.

Deservedly, Vivino (VG, July '13/vintageguitar.com) grabs the spotlight for himself here. "Blues in the 21st" is midtempo blues/funk with lanky riffs and shimmering slide fills; guitarist Joe Bonamassa sits in, and the lyrics are a cheeky hoot. The slinky "Ruby is Back" includes smooth guitar solos and Vivino's effective Hammond B3 organ accents. Call-and-response blues vamping describes the title track, while "Ain't Nuthin's Gonna Be Alright" is outer-space blues with Vivino laying down a precise,



Jimmy Vivino Gonna Be 2 of Those Days

fluid solo. A catchy pop edge lightly buffs "Better Days Past." Raw electric blues define the percolating "Fool's Gold," a '50s rockabilly shuffle vibe wraps "Crossed My Mind," and "Shady Side of the Street" is stark blues dripping with R&B overtones courtesy of Vivino's guitar and piano work.

This is a cool, entertaining blues-fried album with musical and lyrical twists to keep it from becoming predictable. – **Bret Adams**



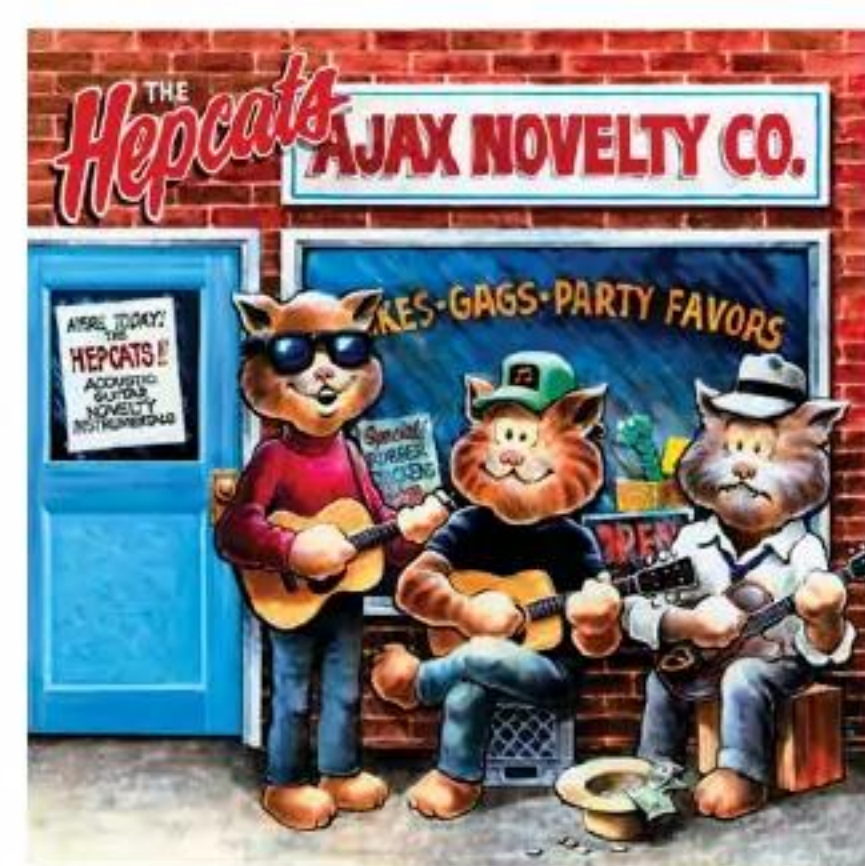
Alan Gogoll Lioness Lullabies

Venture online and watch a few videos by Tasmanian guitarist Alan Gogoll and you'll see he's nothing short of a phenomenon. On acoustic, he conjures artificial harmonics in a manner that almost defies gravity. Better still, he never shows off these chops – everything on *Lioness Lullabies* is in the service of the song and melody.

Delivering those rapid-fire harmonics using the middle and ring fingers of his picking hand, on "Bella's Harmonic" the notes ripple like wind chimes. It might sound like a guitarist and a kalimba finger-harpist playing together, but no, it's just Gogoll, live. In the $\frac{6}{8}$ -time "Sleepgarden," his guitar sounds like a music box chiming gently on the night stand. It's sublime stuff, as is "Goldfish Ocean." Recorded using rare

and expensive microphones, Gogoll suggests each track is a personal conversation.

You'll be hearing the name Alan Gogoll in the coming years. He has mastered the art of bell-like artificial harmonics, and players will be craving to learn his secrets. There's a reason the Aussie acoustician has amassed more than 600,000 social-media followers. – **Pete Prown**



Paul Johnson The Hepcats Live at the Ajax Novelty Company

This isn't live, there may not be an Ajax Novelty

Company, and the three felines known as the Hepcats are actually the brainchild of Paul Johnson, whose Belairs were early-'60s pioneers of surf music. Suspend reality and dig how the "trio" expertly articulates layers of acoustic guitar.

Across decades, Johnson has embraced folk-rock, psychedelia, and Christian music, and his eclecticism is on full display here. Ten of the 17 tracks are originals, including an unplugged take on the surf classic "Mr. Moto," which he wrote when he was 15.

Even when it was unfashionable, he stuck to his guns, championing instrumental music. Covers include the Shadows' "Apache" and "Tico Tico," which has been recorded by everyone from Charlie Parker to Paco De Lucia. He gives the minor-key "Midnight in Moscow" (a 1962 hit for Dixieland trumpeter Kenny Ball) a Gypsy flair, which is both somber and uplifting.

Johnson's trademark melodicism shines throughout, along with noninvasive ornamental touches. Equally impressive, his tone is warm but crisp. In addition to his role as elder statesman to today's surf revivalists, this is the third album Johnson has released under the Hepcats model, and it's the best. – **Dan Forte**



Mike Campbell with Ari Surdoval Heartbreaker: A Memoir

In his autobiography, Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers guitarist Campbell admits he's quiet and shy. Self-doubt plagued him his entire life, and when problems arose in the Heartbreakers, a lack of confidence had him blaming himself first, even when he wasn't responsible. Perhaps his attitude was psychologically rooted in his impoverished childhood and coming from a broken home.

Campbell worked hard to learn guitar: "I was not some prodigy," he says. "None of it came easily. It was just all I did. It was all I wanted to do anyway."

Topics include the hardscrabble days including pre-Heartbreakers band Mudcrutch, the extreme highs and lows of the Heartbreakers (including Petty's control-freak personality and shocking death), working with Bob Dylan, George Harrison, and his current band, Dirty Knobs.

Creating music is covered in straightforward, yet captivating detail, and guitar stories are plentiful, including how he acquired his 1950 Broadcaster, an early goldtop reissue, and the Rick 625/12 Petty holds (and played) on *Damn the Torpedoes*.

This book is an exceptional memoir from a guitarist everybody has heard but few really know. – **BA**



The Wildhearts Satanic Rites of The Wildhearts

In the raging '90s, The Wildhearts blasted out of Newcastle upon Tyne like some unholy melding of Guns 'N Roses, Cheap Trick, and The Replacements. Hard rock, power pop, and punk still make up their secret sauce, heard on this latest effort with original singer/guitarist Ginger Wildheart. Ben Marsden plays lead, while Kavus Torabi adds extra guitar.

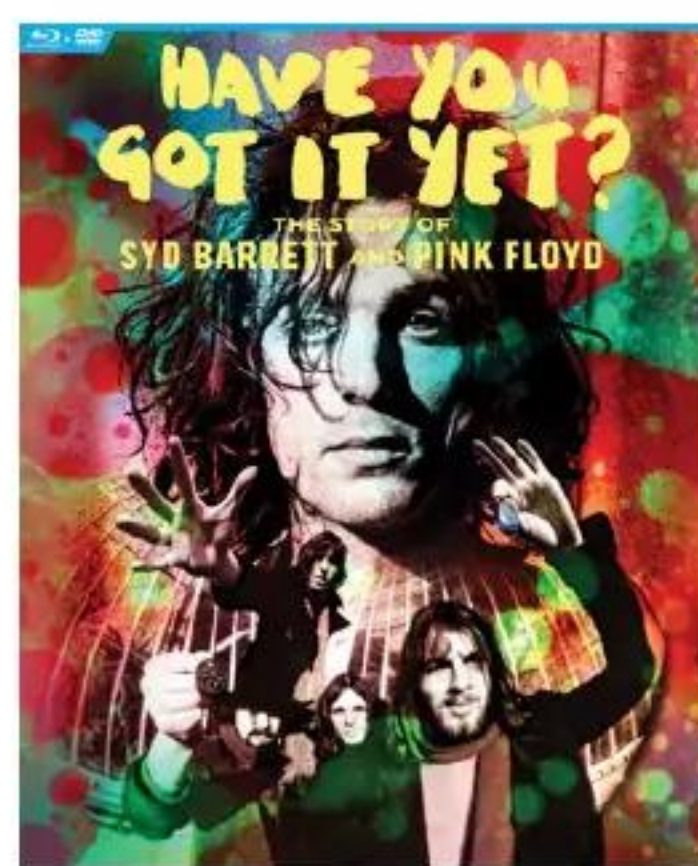
It goes without saying, *Satanic Rites* kicks royal ass. "Eventually" is a crunchy anthem, full of heavy riffs and a madcap solo. "Scared of Glass" is another butt-moving rocker, but stays true to the Wildhearts' credo by weaving in pop elements. Slide leads off "Troubadour Moon," which is – shocker – another fiery jam custom-made for live shows, with dashes of Thin Lizzy guitar harmonies. Producer Jim Pinder and mixer



Mike Campbell

Carl Bown are more than adept at making a studio album sound like a concert stage; this album verily blasts out of the speakers. "Hurt People Hurt People" is a gentler track, akin to mid-tempo U2. Other than that, no ballads allowed.

If you dig '90s *rawk* like Goo Goo Dolls, Weezer, and Lit, Ginger Wildheart and his band have you covered. It's fun and furious, with savage guitar tones and drum beats that never let up. – **PP**



Pink Floyd Have You Got It Yet? – The Story of Syd Barrett and Pink Floyd

It's understandable that fans warily approach the flood of pseudo-documentaries and biopics. Add the fact that the late Syd Barrett, Floyd's original guitarist/leader, suffered from mental illness, and exploitation alarms are sure to go off. But this documentary handles the subject with dignity instead of sensationalism.

Interviews by longtime Floyd cover artist Storm Thorgerson with surviving members drummer Nick Mason, bassist Roger Waters, and guitarist David Gilmour, Syd's sister, managers, schoolmates, and girlfriends lend credibility and depict Barrett as intelligent, humorous, and talented, albeit later unstable. There's trippy footage of the psychedelic pioneers performing the instrumental "Interstellar Overdrive," partially inspired by Love's "My Little Red

Book," with Pete Townshend explaining that Barrett employed *two* Binson Echorec magnetic-disk delays.

Following hit singles "Arnold Lane" and "See Emily Play" in '67, the rigors of gigging combined with lots of LSD resulted in disturbing songs like "Scream Thy Last Scream" and "Vegetable Man." Fired by the band in early '68, Barrett became one of rock's great mysteries and recluses.

After *The Madcap Laughs* and Barrett solo albums and not being seen for six years, Syd shockingly turned up during a session for Floyd's 1975 "Shine On You Crazy Diamond." Snapshots show him heavy, balding, and unrecognizable. In 2006, the 60-year-old died of cancer. – **DF**



Yes Close to the Edge: Super Deluxe Edition

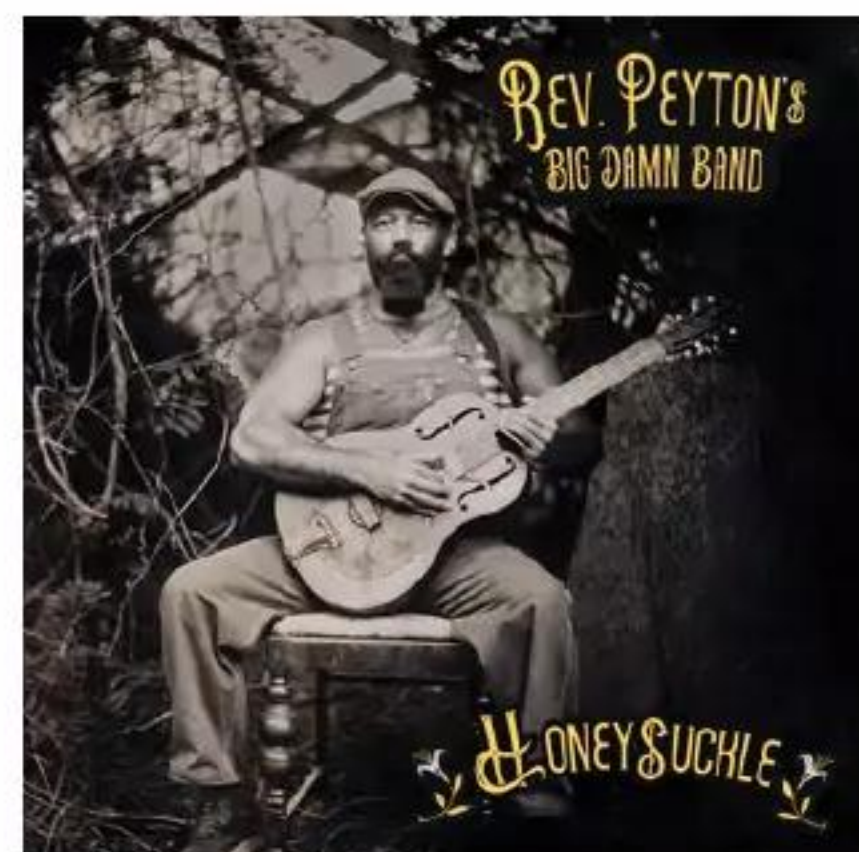
Are you a high-fidelity audio geek? If the answer is, well, yes, this Rhino release brings together an HD experience of *Close to the Edge* in no fewer than four versions, plus rarities and a '72 concert. For starters, the 2025 remaster sounds as close to the analog 1972 mix as you're going to get on CD. Conversely, the Steven Wilson remixes are much different – brighter, crisper, and more sonically detailed. Preference is, of course, a matter of taste, but the non-Wilson mixes are warmer and less-brash. A cool curveball is a completely *instrumental* version of the



Reverend Peyton

album, which gives guitarists and bassists front-row seats to the virtuosity of Steve Howe and Chris Squire. If you've ever tried to learn "And You & I" or "Siberian Khatru," it's a godsend.

To fully geek out, a Blu-Ray disc contains Wilson mixes in Dolby Atmos and 5.1 DTS-HD MA. Lastly, much of the '72 London Rainbow concert is here, including stompers like "Roundabout" and "Heart of the Sunrise." Here, you can listen to a 25-year-old Steve Howe fully off the chain – and reinventing rock-and-roll guitar in real time. – **PP**



Reverend Peyton's Big Damn Band Honeyuckle

Resonator-slide specialist Reverend Peyton returns to his primary influences – early 20th-century African-American music – compelling him to shout from

the hollers and the hills. Rootsy, acoustic, inter-war blues is the specific genre, and Peyton doesn't hold back. With top-tier tutelage from the likes of David "Honeyboy" Edwards, T-Model Ford, and Robert Belfour, he masterfully appropriates the key ingredients and manifests a universe of evangelical fire.

Produced by Peyton and mixed by Grammy winner Vance Powell, guests include The McCrary Sisters on the gospel-infused "Looking For A Manger" and harmonica icon Billy Branch on Blind Lemon Jefferson's "Nell (Prison Cell Blues)." Fiddler extraordinaire Michael Cleveland joins the tour-de-force "Freeborn Man" while banjo master Colton Crawford gets melancholy on the transformative "The Good Die Young."

For resonator high points, Peyton performs the hell out of Robert Johnson's "If I Had Possession Over Judgement Day," and the intricate fingerpicking on Blind Lemon Jefferson's "One Dime Blues" is a fascinating trip back to the 1920s. As he belts and plays with virtuosity and abandon, *Honeyuckle* conveys Peyton's passion, expertise, and unadulterated love for acoustic blues. – **Oscar Jordan VG**

extra. EXTRA



CALEB KLAUDER & REEB WILLMS

Gold In Your Pocket

There's something special about male-female duets in country and bluegrass, as this Portland duo demonstrates. With expert help from Rusty Blake on lead and pedal-steel guitars and co-producer Chris Scruggs (of Fabulous Superlative) on tremolo'd electric, Klauder and Willms add mandolin and acoustic guitars to a set of future classics. The vocals and songwriting absolutely shine. – **DF**



MASON RAZAVI

Even Keel

This Bay Area player's latest is full of jumpin' tunes, embellishing the timeless jazz-organ trio with tenor saxophone. On "Hot Butter," Razavi covers all the bases, with comping, melodic improv, and sumptuous Gibson L-5 tone. For torchy sounds, "Per My Last Email" is sweet altered blues, custom made for organ, sax, and Mason's licks hailing from the Barney Kessel and Howard Roberts playbook. – **PP**



THE DARKNESS

Dreams on Toast

These '70s-glam lovers return with their eighth studio album. It includes gloriously majestic rockers and genuinely sensitive pop. Vocalist Justin Hawkins' singing is disciplined and guitarist Dan Hawkins' playing is alternately flashy or reserved. "Rock and Roll Party Cowboy" is the wild tune. "I Hate Myself" is Sweet-like. Enjoy the strummed acoustics, too, like on "Hot on My Tail." – **BA**



FANTASTIC NEGRITO

Son of a Broken Man

Intense, personal, and sanctified, the latest from multi-Grammy winner Fantastic Negrito is a memoir of hardship, abandonment, and defiance. The funk is severe, dosed with blues and the black church by way of Sly Stone. Poignant guitar sparkles over powerful confessions without a speck of cookie-cutter blues. Guitarist Masa Kohama delivers a smoldering gospel-blues solo on "I Hope Somebody's Loving You." – **OJ**



NEFESH MOUNTAIN

Beacons

Singer/banjoist/guitarist Eric Lindberg and vocalist Doni Zasloff broaden their range on this powerful two-disc set. Disc One offers amplified, full-band Americana with strong vocals and Lindberg's smoking lead guitar on "Race to Run." Disc Two's solid, unplugged bluegrass is just as impressive vocally and instrumentally, with cameos from luminaries including Jerry Douglas and guitarist Cody Kilby. – **Rich Kienzie**



COLEMAN MELLETT

Sing You a Brand New Song

You may not know his name, but Mellett was Chuck Mangione's guitarist; sadly, he died in a 2009 airline crash, at age 34. Friends have just finished his solo album, a breezy charmer that mixes jazz-pop with Coleman's wistful voice, recalling James Taylor or Paul Simon. "Everymornin'" and "Life Goes On" blend mellow pop with Mellett's tasty jazz lines. – **PP**

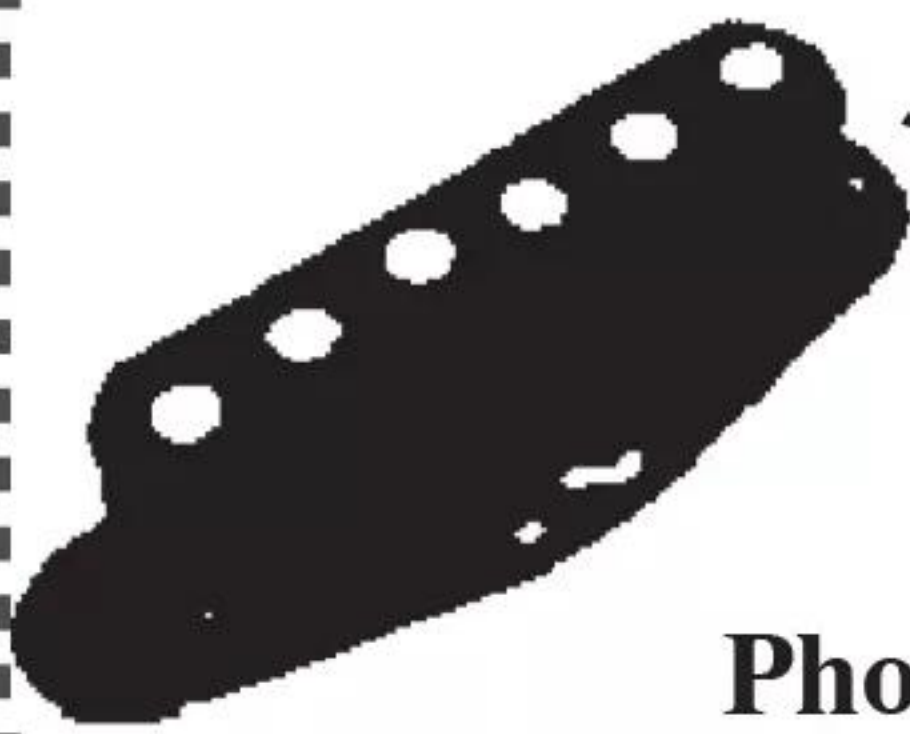
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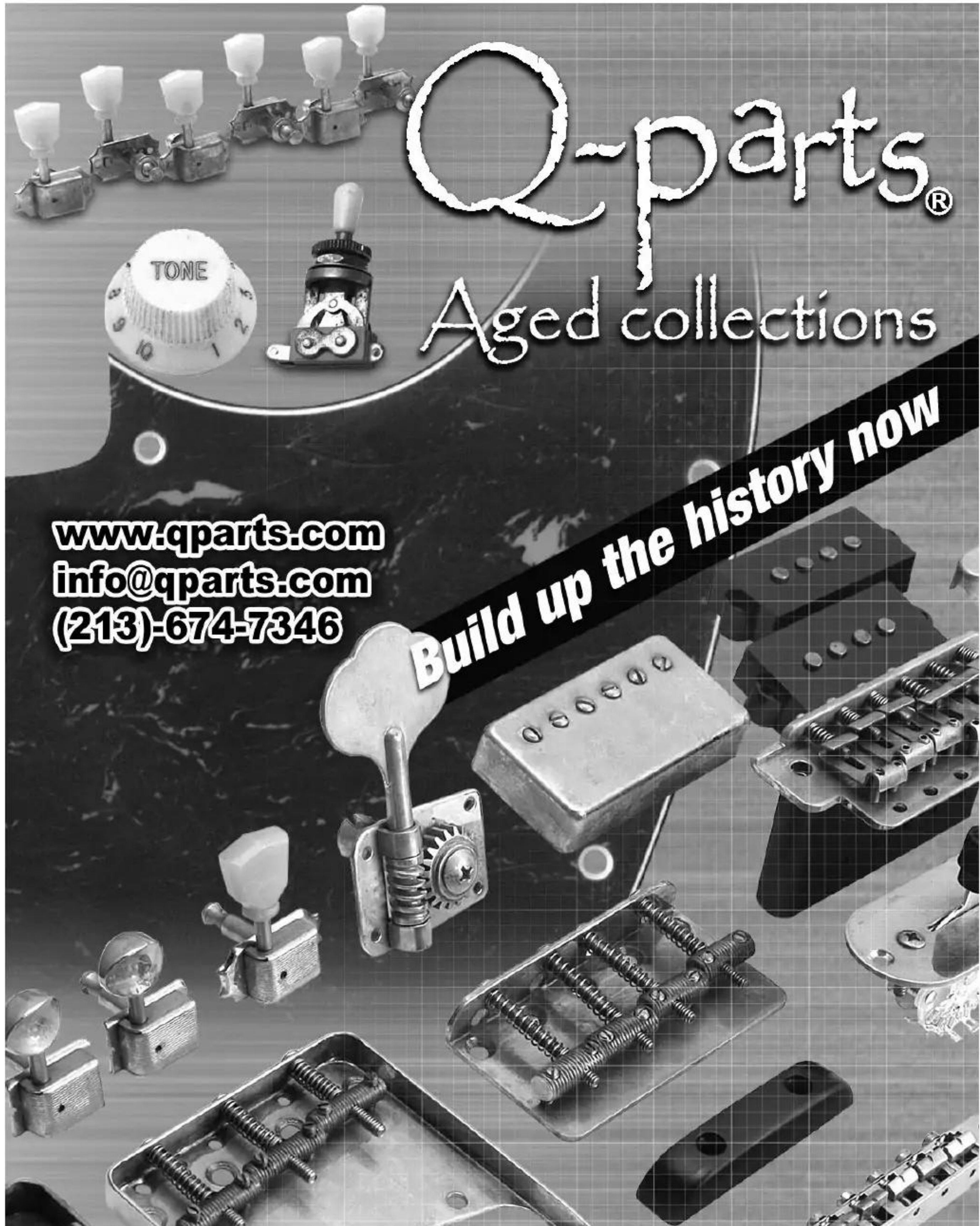
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RETRO-GREAT

The Bad Cat Era 30

So often has the phrase “Mark Sampson era” been applied to pre-2000 Matchless amps or early examples of the Bad Cat line that the term has become a “thing” in and of itself. As applied to Bad Cat’s new Era 30, it means Sampson is back in the fold (see our interview in the March ’25 issue) while giving the company’s latest offering the full weight of his acknowledged mastery of tube-amp design and construction.

As such, there are few surprises regarding specs and build quality, yet several clever twists that take familiar Sampson designs forward. For shorthand, we might consider the Era 30 an updated Bad Cat Black Cat or Matchless DC30, each of which shares Sampson’s flagship circuit with one EF86 pentode-preamp channel, one 12AX7 channel, and 30 watts of ostensibly Class A (a.k.a. cathode-biased) power from four EL84s. Notable updates to the format include a Treble control to enhance the six-position Depth switch on the EF86 channel, individual Volume controls for each channel in addition to the global Master, and footswitchability to select or blend the two. Circuit construction is hand-wired/point-to-point using top-quality components and the exterior is austere and stylish, with two stages of illumination for the nameplate to indicate standby/on status.

Tested with an ES-355 and Telecaster into 1x12" and 2x12" cabs, the Era 30 cruised straight to the sound and feel of several Sampson-designed amps from

the past. The terms “chime” and “bloom” inevitably come to mind, along with an undeniable depth, multi-dimensionality and clarity. With either guitar, the Era 30 delivers impressive headroom before things start to sizzle – with a little more girth on the EF86 channel versus added treble shimmer on 12AX7 – but its clean tones are always rich and toothsome.

Pushing it further revealed the delectable edge-of-breakup tones that made Sampson’s designs famous, perfect for everything from meaty country twang to crisp blues soloing or textured indie/garage-rock grind. Despite the multiple output-level controls, though, the Era 30 really sounds its best when pushed pretty hard, where things get loud and the EL84s begin to sing. A half-power mode (as found on several of his previous 30-watters) would be nice, to enable this at slightly lower volumes. Overdrive tones lean a little fizzy when reining in the Volume and Master controls too much, but there’s glorious stuff here otherwise, and a very welcome return from one of the founders of the boutique-amp boom. – **Dave Hunter**



Price: \$3,899
www.badcatamps.com



Price: \$399
www.chasebliss.com

POSH SQUASH

The Chase Bliss Clean

With this Clean compressor, Chase Bliss set out to create a pedal that would duplicate the vivid interactivity of a dirty tube amp, but with a completely clean tone.

While a standard compressor can give your guitar (bass, keyboard, etc.) a professional sheen, the Clean is a stereo unit that can polish mixes or deliver side-chain compression.

Users will appreciate its straightforward operation, wavy “sag” (again, like a tube amp), and amazing control through its top knobs and switches, along with two banks of customizable DIP switches in the back. Using the Attack knob and swell footswitch (labeled “Aux”), it’ll conjure wobbly, watery effects like a tremolo or vibrato to go alongside compression. On the right, Wet and Dry raise or lower volume to the effected and uneffected tones, and can be a surprisingly powerful preamp boost. Another switch saves two presets; use it to adjust the clean tone or reveal the pedal’s secret dirty side. Another surprise is the excellent manual, which is cleanly written and inviting to newbies.

A fun, intuitive, and versatile piece of gear, the Clean is a serious rethink of compression that will have pros salivating and intrigue everyday players with its “wow.” Compressor freaks, rejoice! – **Pete Prown**

CHET POWERED!

The Eastwood Super Axe

Wait – *what?* Did Eastwood just bring back the Super Axe, that incredibly rare bird from the late '70s?

Indeed, they did. A Korean-made reissue, it captures the spirit of Gretsch's chambered curiosity.

Grabbing one, the first thing you'll notice is the oversized yet *thin* body, with its arched top and the enchanting lines of its neck/body joint. The Super Axe has the general footprint of an archtop, but reduced to something even thinner than a traditional thinline. Since it's "tone chambered," the weight is a reasonable nine pounds – hefty, but not uncomfortably so. The body is mahogany with maple veneer on the top, back, and sides, and a familiar Orange finish or a darker option called Ebony Stain. The set neck is maple, with a shape that's thin, quick, and sports a 24.5" scale, appointed with a bound ebony fretboard with cube inlays.

There are two humbuckers, master Volume, two Tone knobs, and three-way pickup toggle. Where the Gretsch Super Axe had onboard phase shifter and compressor effects, Eastwood (knowing those effects are commonplace today) made clever substitutions. First, there are coil-tap switches for each humbucker. Don't

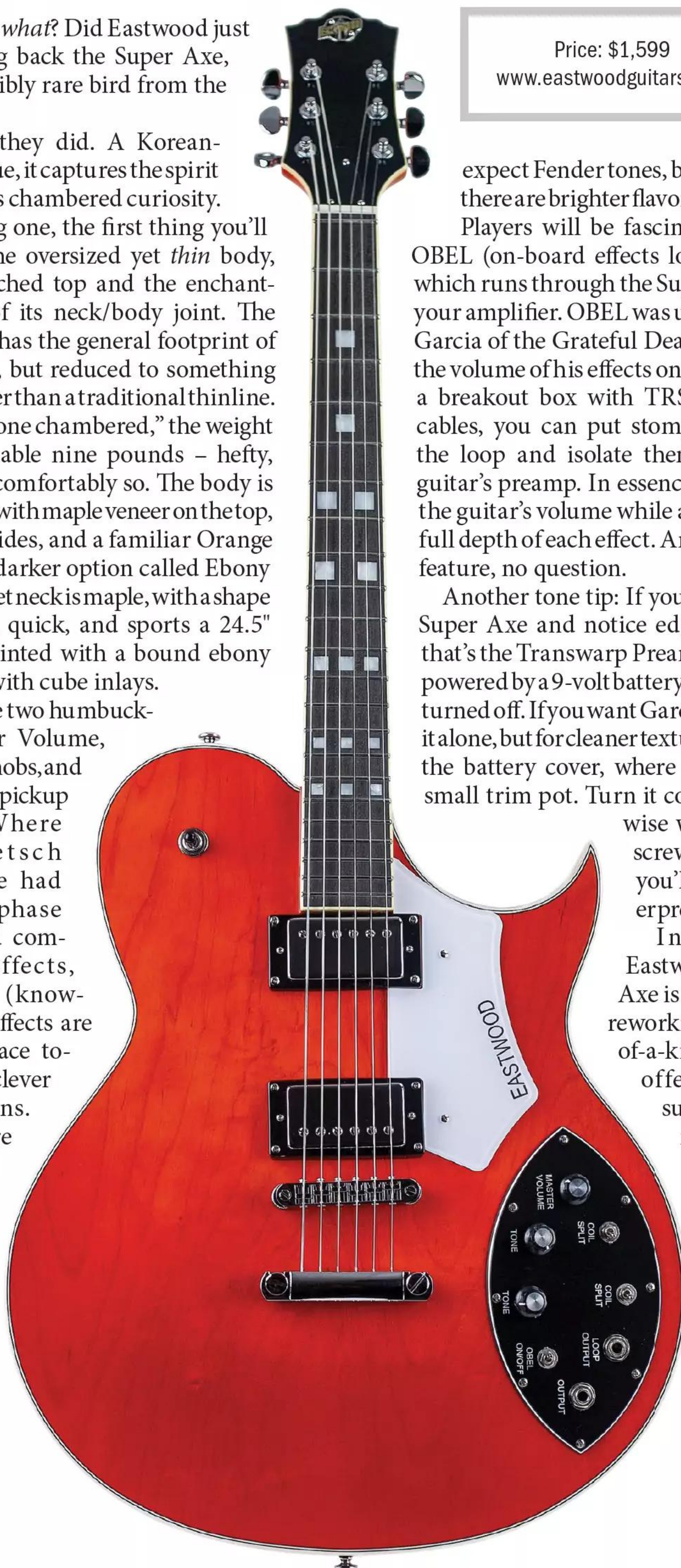
Price: \$1,599
www.eastwoodguitars.com

expect Fender tones, but certainly, there are brighter flavors to explore. Players will be fascinated by the OBEL (on-board effects loop) circuit, which runs through the Super Axe, *not* your amplifier. OBEL was used by Jerry Garcia of the Grateful Dead to control the volume of his effects onstage. Using a breakout box with TRS and other cables, you can put stompboxes into the loop and isolate them from the guitar's preamp. In essence, it reduces the guitar's volume while allowing the full depth of each effect. An innovative feature, no question.

Another tone tip: If you plug in the Super Axe and notice edgy breakup, that's the Transwarp Preamp, which is powered by a 9-volt battery and can't be turned off. If you want Garcia grit, leave it alone, but for cleaner textures, remove the battery cover, where you'll see a small trim pot. Turn it counterclockwise with a small screwdriver and you'll find cleaner preamp colors.

In all, the Eastwood's Super Axe is an excellent reworking of a one-of-a-kind '70s axe, offering great sustain, a fast neck, and cool electronics.

Twang one. – Pete Prown



REVEREND SENSEI H90

Reverend Guitars' Sensei H90 has a korina body, three-piece korina neck, and a rosewood fretboard with 12" radius. Its proprietary humbucker/P90 pickup setup can be blended to produce tones ranging from crunchy to twangy.



AGUILAR DB316 MID EQ MICRO

Aguilar's DB316 Midrange EQ pedal is designed to be an always-on EQ that can give bass players a subtle mid boost or secondary tone profile when they change instruments or adapt playing styles.



VENUS REVOLUTION ELITE

The Venus Revolution Elite is U.S.-made with a basswood body, figured-maple neck, and an ebonized fretboard. It has customizable quick-swap pickguards, DiMarzio Air Classic pickups, Sophia 2-22 vibrato with proprietary mounting system.

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MUSICAL, MULTIPLE

Walrus Audio's Mako Series MKII

Walrus Audio's Mako Series MKII bolster the sounds of their first-gen predecessors, using altered algorithms, new controls, and better tonal quality. The most-obvious changes are new fine-tune settings and a menu screen.

The M1 High-Fidelity Modulation Machine offers Chorus, Phaser, Tremolo, Vibrato, Rotary, and Filters. Running between a Deluxe Reverb a Les Paul Traditional or Strat, it generated '70s phasers, '80s chorus, tremolo, and a plush rotary sim with a clarity that didn't diminish the amplifier's essential tone. Moving from one sound to the next was easy, and punching up the intensity was a breeze.

Sounds from the D1 High-Fidelity Delay were also clear and crisp – everything from rockabilly slapback to the strange and the

beautiful. After choosing from Digital, Mod, Vintage, Dual, Reverse, and Grain modes, its user can quickly modify the number of repeats and time, then use Tap Tempo to lock in with a song. Its doubling effect can be used with pitch modulation for rhythmic staccato effects or dreamy soundscape trails; it and the Reverse option are a nice touch.

The R1 High-Fidelity Stereo Reverb houses six verb types, EQ control, 128 presets, and a new ducking/swelling feature. Spring, Hall, Plate, BFR, and Refract can simulate any room setting – from church-like sounds reminiscent of

massive stone interiors to warmer, smaller rooms with subtle reverberation, arena rock sounds as well as modern slapback. It works great for ethereal volume swells.

The ACS1 Amp+Cab Simulator approximates classic British, vintage American, and high-gain tones and cab combinations with the ability to mix, swap, and EQ them (and/or add reverb and gate. Cool presets help get the ball rolling, and all very musical. – **Oscar Jordan**

Price: \$349.99 each (M1 Modulation Machine, D1 Delay, R1 Stereo Reverb); \$296.34 (ACS1 Amp+Cab Simulator)
www.walrusaudio.com



LIVELY DRIVES

LSL Instruments' Lucid OD and OG OD

LSL Instruments is best known for high-end Leo-style guitar builds, but they've also started delving into overdrive pedals. The Lucid OD is their version of a Klon Centaur – one of the priciest stompboxes in human history (\$5,000-plus for the first-gen gold box with the horse logo).

The box offers Volume, Gain, and Tone knobs – the latter functioning *backward*, meaning it gets darker as you turn it clockwise and more trebly as it's backed off. Plugged into a Vox clone, it produced everything from “unity gain” clean to chunky dirt tones, akin to a non-Master-Volume Marshall. The Tone knob might have you thinking differently about EQ – indeed, how much treble do you really need? Sometimes, less is more, especially when you consider the stroke-inducing price of a vintage Klon. For a mere fraction, the Lucid offers a highly transparent

overdrive that pairs well with any guitar and amp, especially tube amplifiers that enjoy a little front-end smack.

If the Lucid OD is LSL's take on a Centaur, the OG OD is their *original gangster* spin on the Maxon/Ibanez Tube Screamer. Again, the emphasis is on organic tone, using an RC4558P IC chip to deliver warm tones across the board. You get the standard Volume, Tone, and Gain dials, but also an added Bass switch offering three unique voices. This is a handy feature, as you can dial-in the best overdrive flavor for whichever amp you're using at the moment.

Tonally, you can get everything from a just-off-clean to half-stack bite without treading

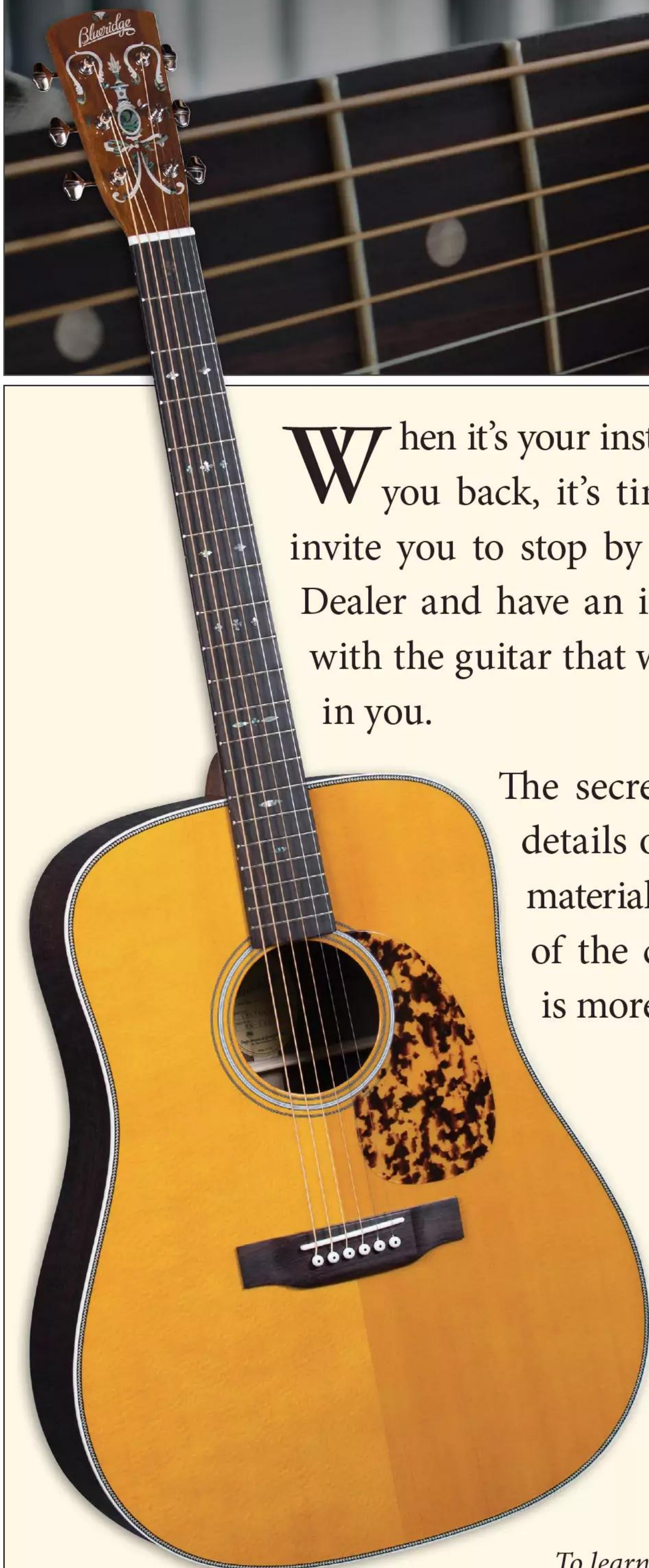
into any distorted metal flavors. The goal is to dial in the perfect amount of crunch, especially with the Bass switch, and come up with something that sounds as good as rockin' guitars did 50 years ago.

Cranked up, the OG OD proved so versatile and lively that it was hard to resist leaving it on *all* the time. – **Pete Prown VG**

Price: \$229 (Lucid OD), \$200 (OG OD)
www.lslinstruments.com



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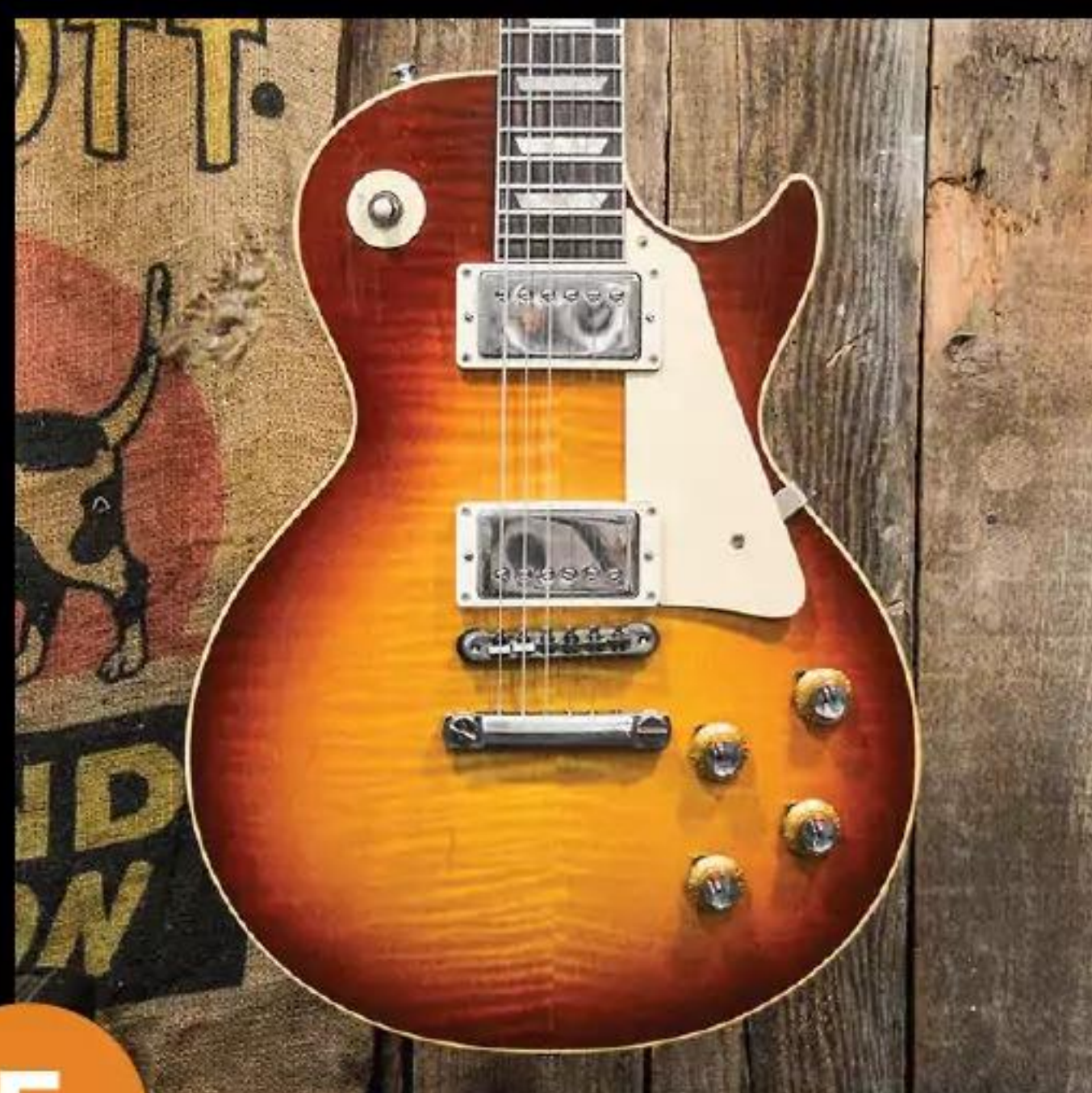
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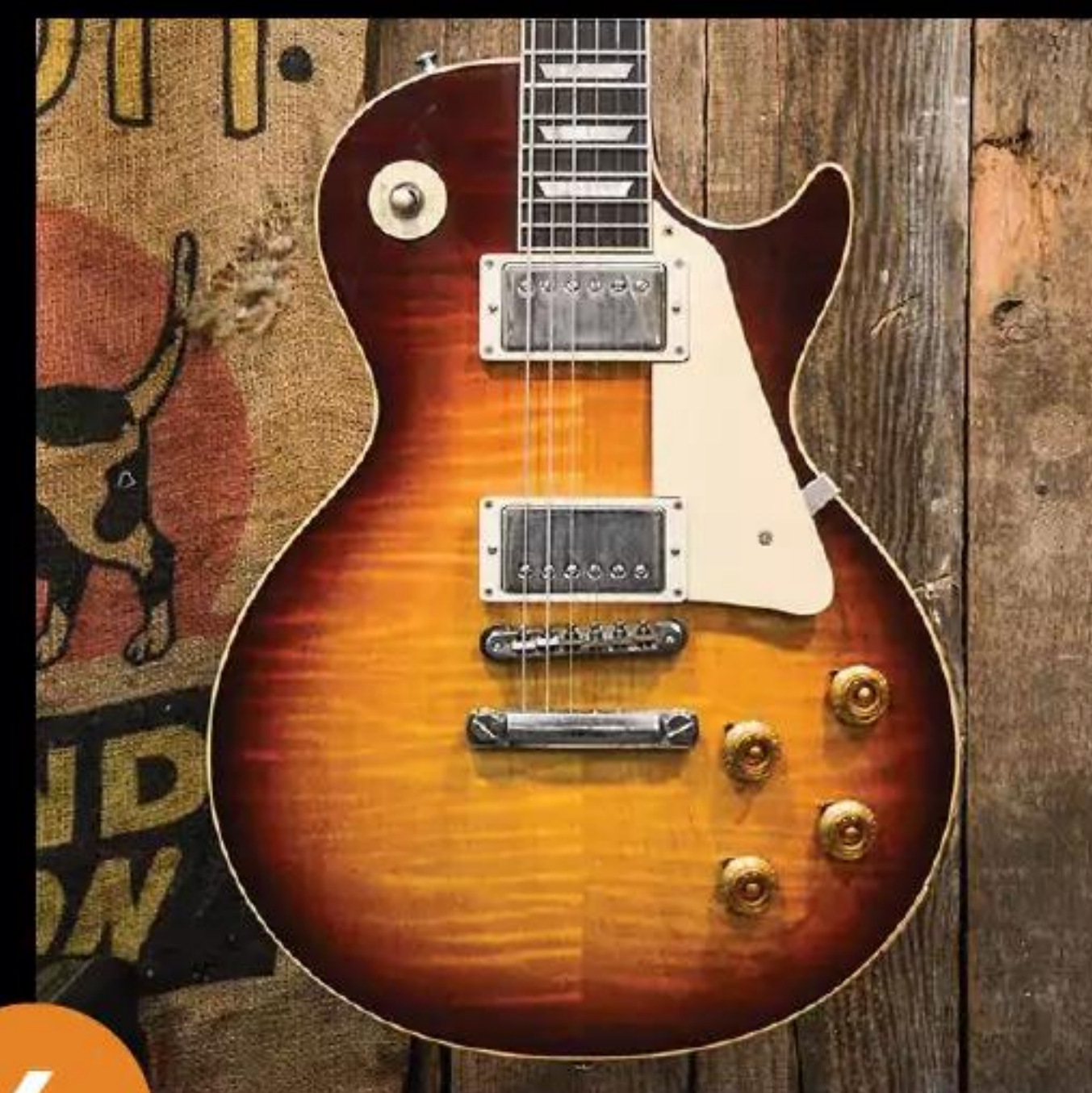
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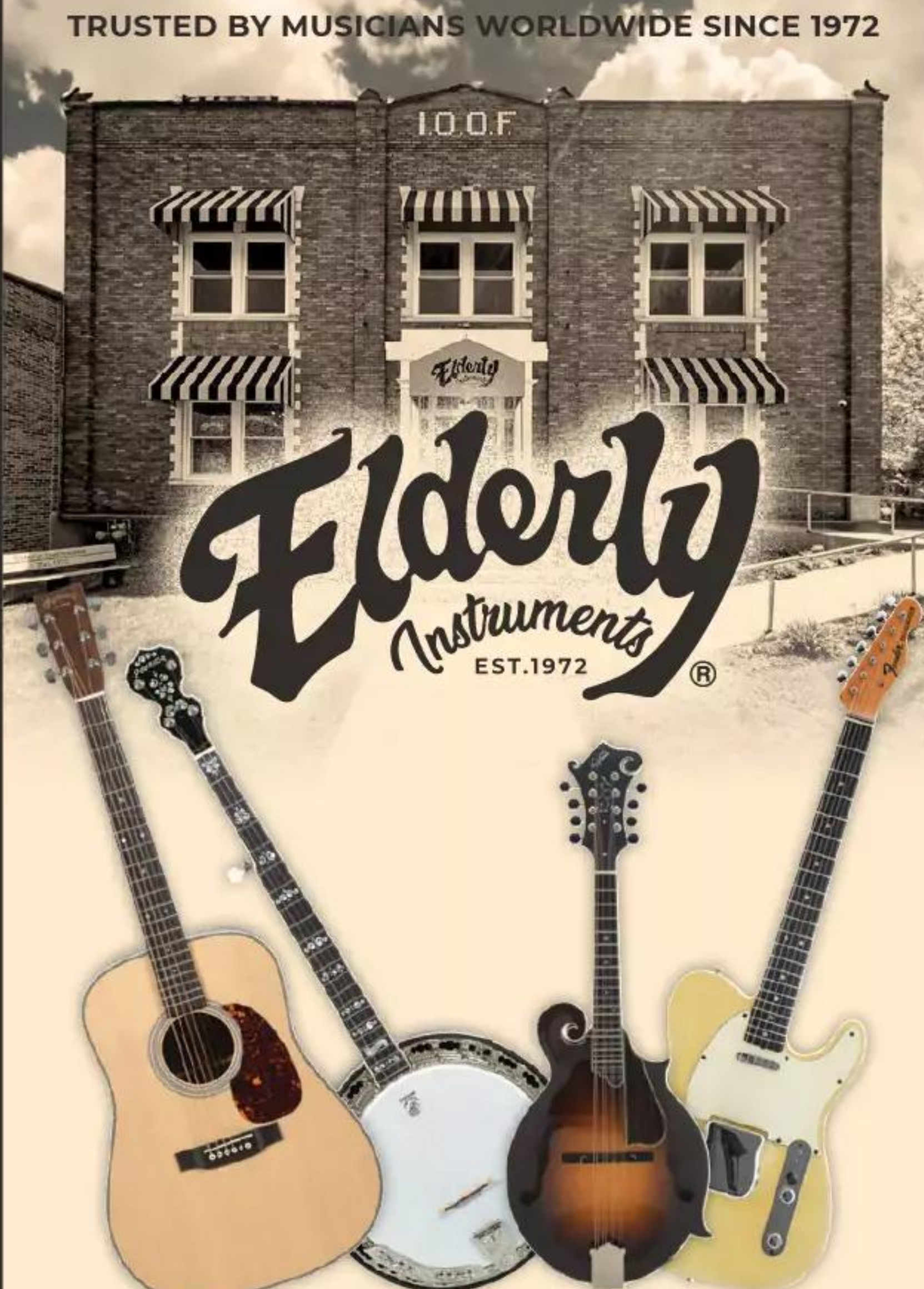
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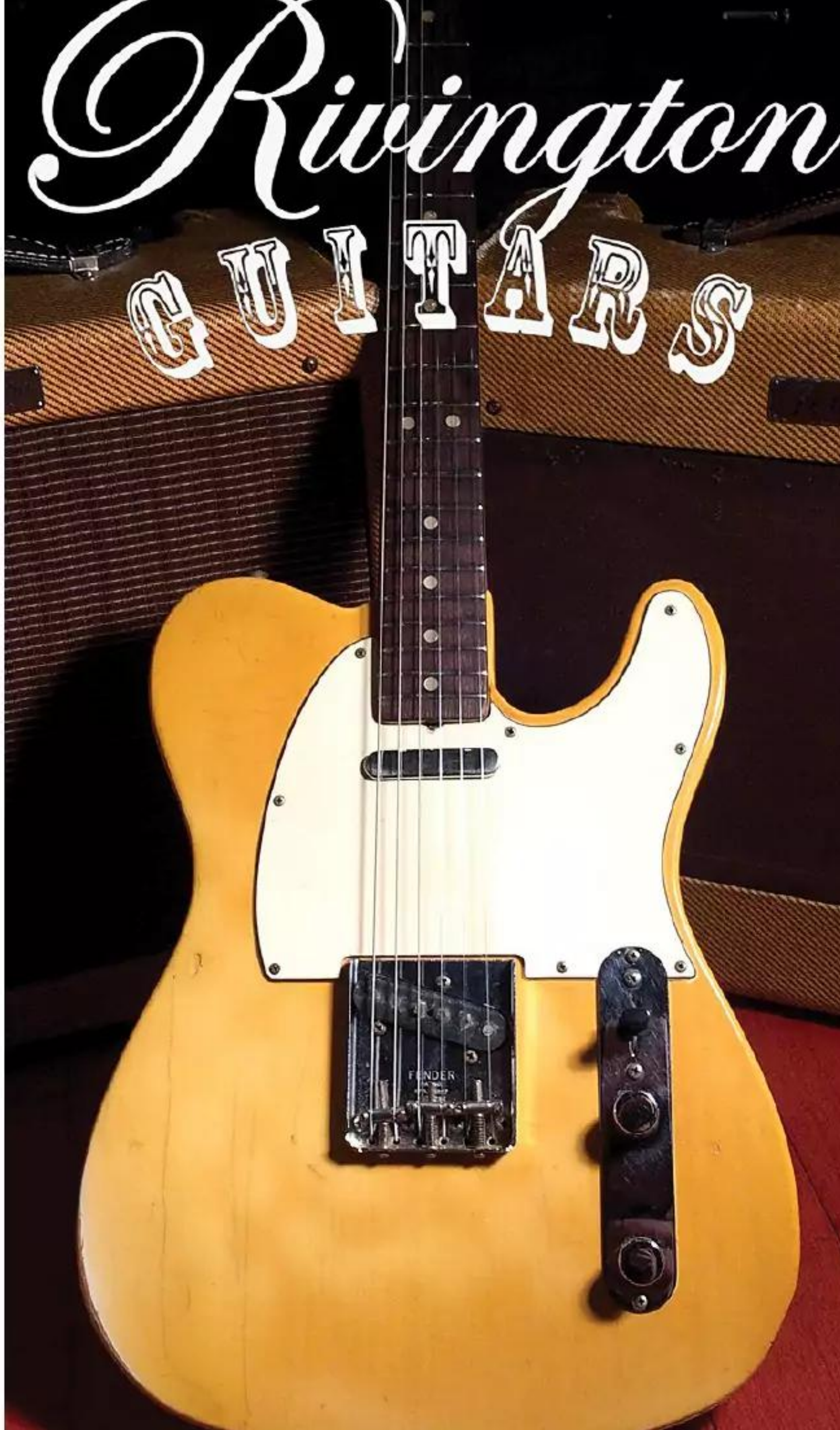


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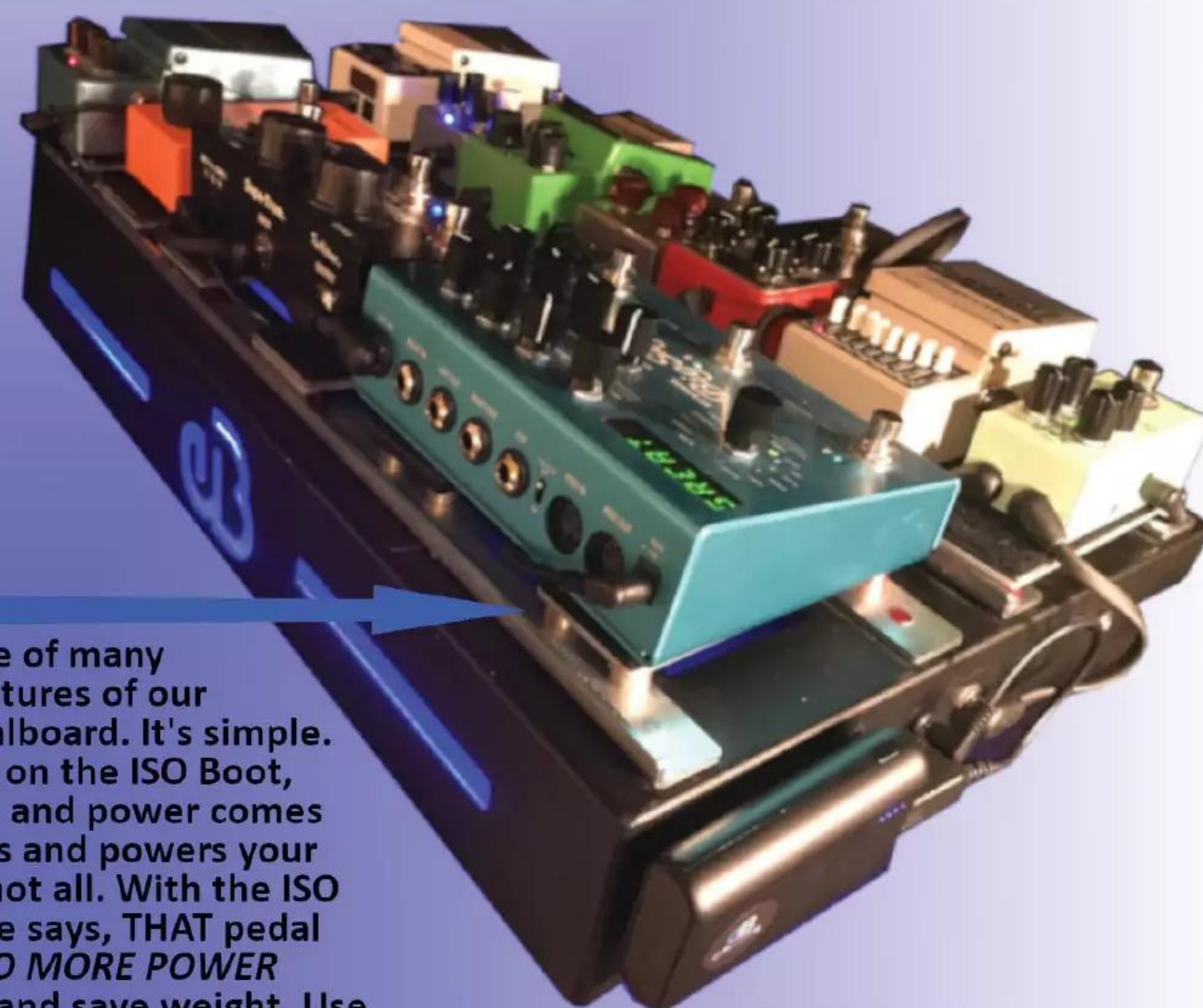
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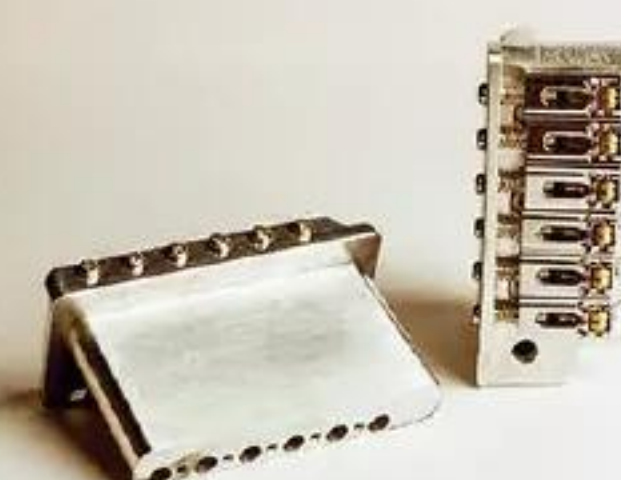
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01 Joe Mickey plugs his vintage Silver-tone 1488 into a suitably vintage Lyric combo.

02 James Richardson likes to team his '78 Music Master bass with his early-'80s Rickenbacker 330.

03 Taddy Mitsui parked his Porsche 987 behind his '55 Les Paul goldtop conversion, '82-reissue Standard, '60 'Burst, and lefty '71 Les Paul Custom.

04 Longtime subscriber John Childs matches his moods with this PRS McCarty (top left), SE Custom Semi-Hollow, Les Paul Custom Murphy Lab, Les Paul '59 Murphy Lab in sunburst, and a PRS NF3. From left along the bottom are a Nash T72, two Koll Duo Glides, and a Nash T52.

05 Douglas Brimmell has been reading VG for 20-plus years and expanded his collection to include these modern Gibsons - a J-45 Standard (left), L-1 Blues Tribute, L-00 Vintage, and J-185 Original.

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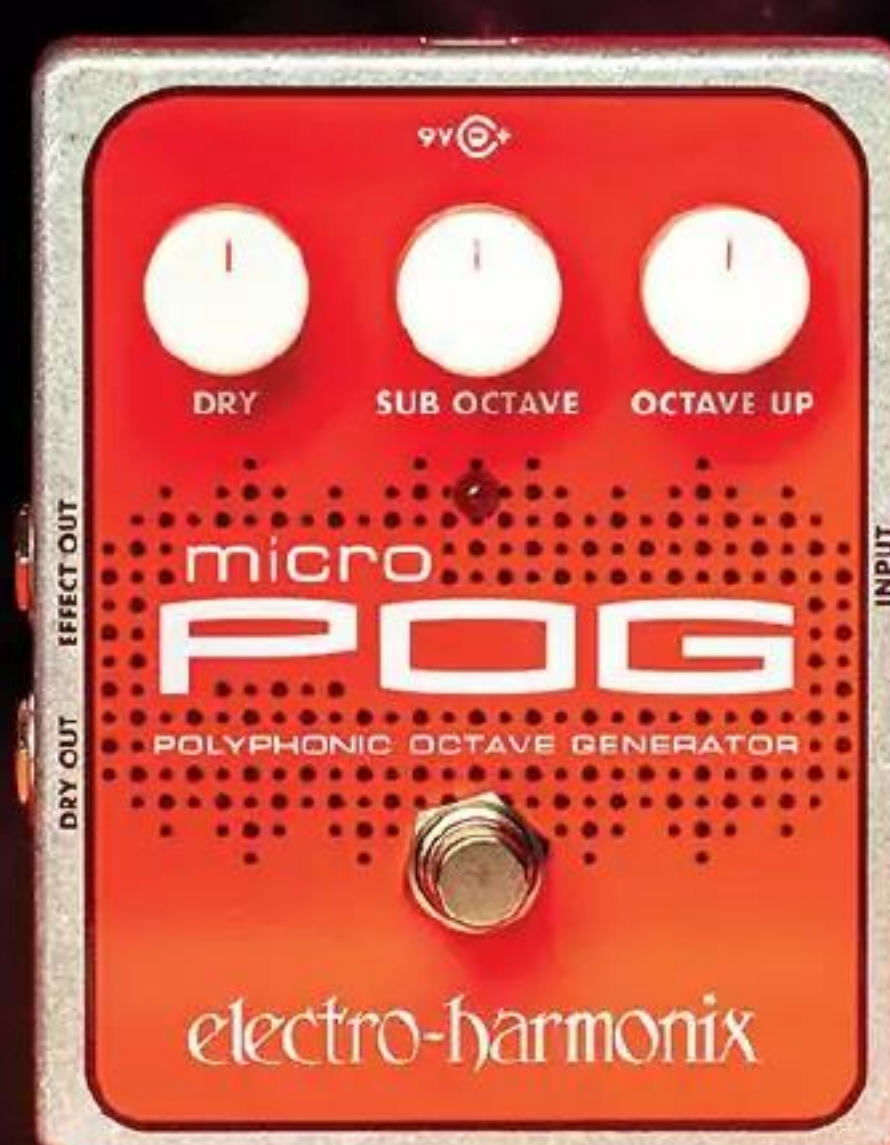
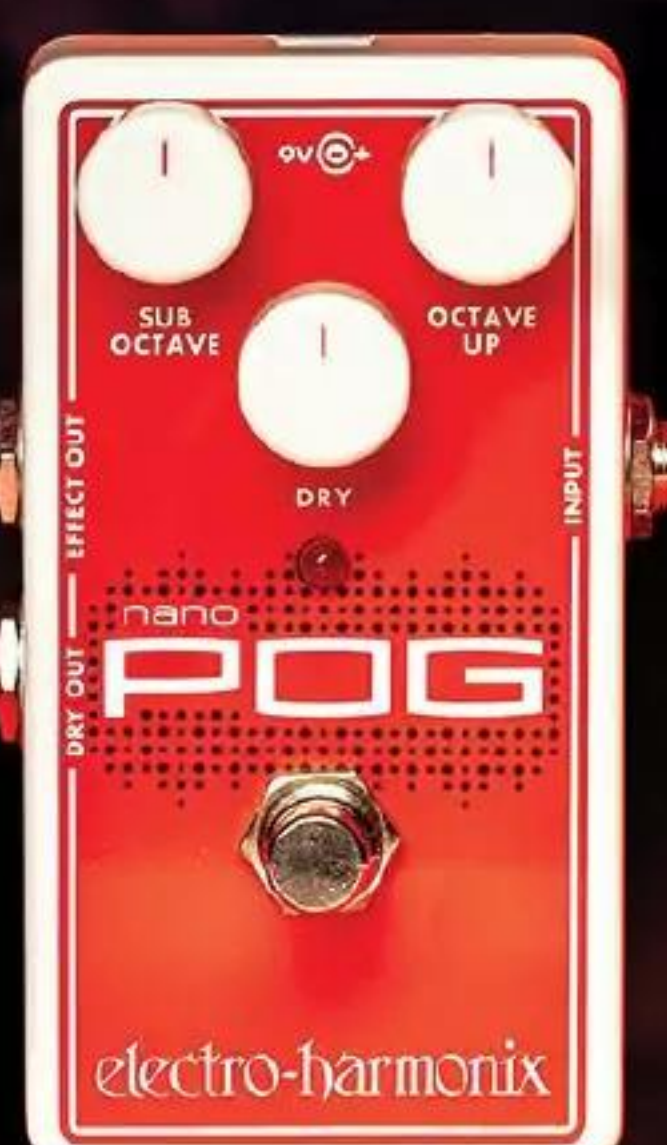
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