

# Wood & Steel

## Preserving Ebony's Future

A bold plan for sustainable sourcing

**Builder's Reserve VI**  
**Mustache Bridge Jumbo**

**More Than a Store**  
Nurturing a  
**Music Community**

**Open Mic Tips**



# Letters



### Coffey Shop

I just purchased a 2012 Spring Limited cocobolo 814ce and wanted to tell you how fantastic Bob Coffey at Coffey Music is at keeping his Taylor advocates happy. Bob and Zach [Arntz] (your Taylor guy and Coffey's rep) let me try out everything, including a beautiful 914ce that Zach sent out to Coffey for my inspection. Ultimately I purchased the cocobolo Spring LTD. I also ordered a tobacco burst 814ce with a short-scale neck.

Bob Coffey is as good as it gets as a Taylor dealer, and over the years, I have purchased many Taylors from him. It is this kind of extra effort that keeps our local Taylor dealers so connected to the community and keeps people coming back in each week to see "what's new" in the Taylor section. A special thanks to Zach, as well, for providing such top-notch customer service and sales advice. The newest additions to my Taylor collection inspire me to play better and longer than ever before.

My best release of job stress is placing one of your beautiful guitars in my hands. The rest just happens.

**David C.**

### Awesome in Austin

Thank you for the awesome Road Show in Austin, Texas last night. JR and his partner [Corey Witt] (awesome guitar player) did a great job. I am a beginner and plan to be a Taylor owner in the next year. I learned a lot and really appreciate the time they spent covering everything with the audience.

**Frank Varela**

### Case Closed

We are Andy's "other" guitars, and we would like to register a complaint. Andy used to play us all the time, making sure none of us was neglected.

Ever since he bought his Taylor NS34ce, he seems to work no part of us. We haven't seen the light of day in a long time. It's awfully dark in these cases. We've even heard him talk about buying a Taylor steel-string of some sort. PLEASE don't let him. We miss Andy. Could you possibly put out a recall on all Taylor nylon-string guitars? We'd appreciate anything you could do to help.

**Andy Christie**

### After the Fire

I had my old Taylor 550 [12-string mahogany Dreadnought] repaired a year or so ago, and it occurred to me that I never thanked all the great folks there at Taylor for doing such an excellent job.

The 550 was in my garage when it burned to the ground. The firemen had it sitting on top of a pile of debris in the driveway when I found it the next day. Fortunately, it was in a hardshell case and seemed salvageable. I think the Yamaha 6-string I had next to it must have protected it some, as the Yamaha's top had burned off.

At any rate, you all did a superb job of repairing it, and I swear, it sounds and plays better than ever. Thank you all for your excellent craftsmanship and for assisting me with the details of how to ship it without incident.

**Roy Goodman Sunnyvale, CA**

### Not for Sale

In July of 1987 I was looking for a guitar, so I went to my favourite shop that sold acoustic instruments. I told the owner, "I am walking out of here with a guitar today," so he sent me to a practice room and started bringing me guitars. I tried Martins, Larivees and more. Then he brought me a Taylor Dreadnought. "Hmm, I like this!" Then he walked in with a maple Jumbo 615 with a three-piece back. I had never played a Jumbo before. I played one G chord, and that was it, I had found my guitar.

I have been a full-time musician my whole life, and that guitar has been with me every step of the way. I still have the original case, which is held together mainly with duct tape. It has seen a million miles of road. I have let some pretty amazing guitarists play it over the years, including Craig Young, former lead guitarist for Terri Clark. Everyone has said they have never seen its equal. A

few offered to buy it for way more than I paid for it. The answer is no every time. You could offer me a million bucks and I would say no. The guitar is a part of me. I've played it so much that I wore a hole through the top, which I had repaired and a new, slightly bigger pickguard put on. I was thinking of retiring it because it has seen some rough times — it's been knocked over, dropped, smashed into with mic stands, and the headstock even went through a window once. I bought another Jumbo 615 cutaway but, sadly, had to sell it when things got tough. It has been 25 years since I walked into that shop, and I am so glad I did. That guitar is one of the reasons I still play music for a living today.

**Ken McCoy**

### Mongolian Mojo

I am a United States Peace Corps Volunteer serving in Mongolia. When I left the U.S. about a year ago to start my 27 months of service, I struggled with leaving my coveted 300 Series Taylor behind. I remedied this by going out and buying a Baby Taylor the week before I left. A year later the little guy is still going strong. It has weathered harsh conditions, bumpy travel and extreme climates, and still sounds as good as it did the day I bought it. Mongolians absolutely love when I break it out and play for them. I have taken to allowing my Mongolian friends and co-workers to sign the guitar in the traditional Mongolian script. Thank you so much for continuing to produce quality guitars and giving me a beautiful, resilient instrument to remember my experience in Mongolia by.

**Ross DeAeth**

### Better Late Than Never

I've been playing the guitar for close to 47 years. I've had Martins, Yamahas, Washburns, even a Hohner. I still have an old Martin D-28 and a real old Guild 12-string that sings with me. But I have never had such a wonderful instrument as my new Taylor 414ce Limited. It has the sweetest sound of any guitar I've ever owned, and plenty of punch when I need it. It also frets easier than any guitar I've ever had.

I guess it boils down to what a former boss told me: "Son, you catch on quick after a while."

I can't compliment you enough. Rest assured I will own a Taylor from now on.

**Charlie Fite Memphis, TN**

### All About Acoustifest

Just a quick note to tell you how much I appreciate your continuing support of the clinics and Acoustifest put on by Melodee Music. I can't think of a better way to showcase and promote your instruments. I enjoyed Bob Taylor speaking at Acoustifest a couple years ago. For several years I was interested in trying a LKSM6, but could never

find a local dealer with one in stock. Zach [Arntz] brought one to Acoustifest last year, I played it and bought it. You produce fine instruments, but I bet you sell more due to your support of the stores who carry your product. I can't say enough good things about Melodee Music and their involvement with the local community as well as local musicians. I am glad you feel the same way.

**Eric Knight**

### Lots of Love

Love my Taylor 210ce. Love *Wood&Steel*. Love dreaming about my next Taylor guitar. Love the yet unnamed koa SolidBody Standard on last issue's back cover. Love the idea of Taylor having a contest and giving away a koa SolidBody to the person who names the new models. My suggestion: "The Mahalo Series."

Thanks and keep up the great work.  
**Joseph D Godec**

### Beginning with the Best

I can't sleep tonight! Tomorrow, at 43 years young, I will buy my first guitar: a 2008 tobacco sunburst Taylor 814ce. I read Bob's book and have watched over a dozen YouTube videos of the factory processes.

Tomorrow I am buying more than a Taylor guitar. I am providing myself with future blank pages for memories yet to write. My friends asked me, "Why, at 43, are you thinking of starting to play guitar, and why would you spend so much money on your first guitar? In only seven years you'll be 50!" I thought about this for a moment and said, "Well, I've always wanted to play guitar. After researching Taylor Guitars, their quality, their people, Bob's vision, and having a firm belief in myself, why not start with the best? Besides, if I don't buy a guitar, I'll still be 50 in seven years. When I do turn 50, I'll be playing a Taylor!"

**Brian Kennicott**

**We'd like to hear from you**

Send your e-mails to: [pr@taylorguitars.com](mailto:pr@taylorguitars.com)

# Wood&Steel

Volume 72 Summer 2012



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# Kurt's Corner

## Cutting the Clutter

Spring cleaning is a great thing to do with your home. You get to sort through all the junk you've accumulated and throw away things that were once useful but no longer serve a purpose. It's important to do this with a business as well, only sometimes you need to throw away old procedures that once served a purpose but now just make it harder to do good, clean business.

It's normal for a company to add processes and procedures as it grows and matures. Unfortunately, these can add complexities and bureaucracy that get in the way of getting the job done.

## With the process improvements we've made so far, we've been able to increase our daily guitar production by nearly 20 percent.

Occasionally the "fix" for this can add even more complexities and bureaucracy, and lead to more systems. This can absorb a lot of people's time and workload, and really not contribute much value in the end.

Sometimes you just need to step back and evaluate things anew. This will help you redesign your processes and procedures to fit your business today and in the foreseeable future, and jettison all the old, unnecessary steps. I liken this to tearing out most of your old, overgrown landscaping,

keeping just the important, mature plants, and starting over. We've been doing precisely that here at Taylor. Our Process Improvement Project is one of the major initiatives we're working on, and perhaps the most important one.

We're finding that as we free up people's time from tasks that don't add value, they can instead do work that does add value, such as making more guitars to meet the demand, filling dealer orders more quickly, improving our quality assurance, and giving better, more responsive customer service. We're now cross-training our people so they have a broader range

of skills and can work in more departments. With the process improvements we've made so far, we've been able to increase our daily guitar production by nearly 20 percent.

We've removed an amazing amount of time that had been added to the processes of taking an order, scheduling that order in production, making the guitar, and finally shipping it. It used to take several weeks for a guitar that was ordered to be scheduled in production and then started. Now the guitar's production is started the day

after it's ordered. Huge improvement! By removing buffer zones and having the work flow from the day shift across the night shift, we're now completing guitars in production considerably sooner than we used to. Add these improvements together, and we're now able to give much faster service and respond better to customer demand.

As we've developed better reporting this year, we've also been a little surprised to see how high the demand for our guitars truly is, and how many guitars we need to be making to meet our dealers' and your needs. As a result, we've increased guitar production and added several Saturdays to our production schedule in order to deliver guitars at the rate and in the timeframe people want them. We're at our highest-ever number of employees — over 700 people — and this is sure to continue growing. Our goal is to find that magic level where we produce the right number of guitars and the right mix of models so we can offer near-immediate delivery to our dealers, which will enable you to get the guitar you want, when you want it.

Thank you for choosing Taylor, and have a great summer.

— Kurt Listug, CEO

# Wood&Steel

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## 2012 Taylor Factory Tours & Vacation Dates

A free, guided tour of the Taylor Guitars factory is given every Monday through Friday at 1 p.m. (excluding holidays). No advance reservations are necessary. Simply check-in at the reception desk in our Visitor Center, located in the lobby of our main building, before 1 p.m. We ask that large groups (more than 10) call us in advance at (619) 258-1207.

While not physically demanding, the tour does include a fair amount of walking. Due to the technical nature, the tour may not be suitable for small children. The tour lasts approximately one hour and 15 minutes and departs from the main building at 1980 Gillespie Way in El Cajon, California.

Please take note of the weekday exceptions below. For more information, including directions to the factory, please visit [taylorguitars.com/contact](http://taylorguitars.com/contact). We look forward to seeing you!

## Holiday Closures

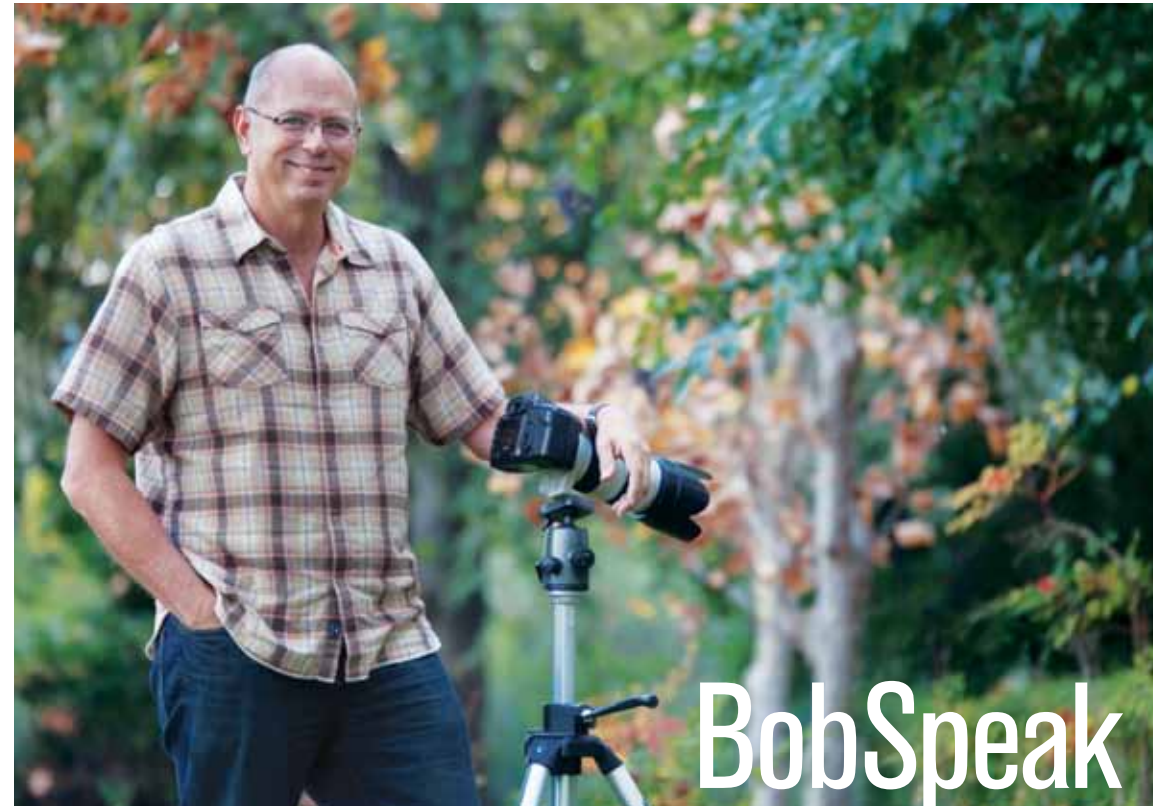
**July 2-6**  
(Company Vacation)

**November 22-23**  
(Thanksgiving Holiday)

**Monday, September 3**  
(Labor Day)

**Monday, December 24**  
through **Friday, January 4**  
(Company Vacation)

**October 15**  
(Taylor Guitars Anniversary)



## A Developing Story

The country of Cameroon is a long way off, not only in travel hours, but in almost every other way we can measure, especially for those of us who live where everything is available to us. As you probably know, we started a small company in Tecate, Mexico over 11 years ago, and it has grown into a vital part of our overall operation. When I take people there for a tour, they always make a comment like, "Wow, this is much nicer and more developed than I imagined. I was expecting something totally different!"

When we first started in Mexico, we were warned about corruption, lack of infrastructure, and the possibility of poor employee relations. We plowed ahead anyway, striving to do the same good job we do here in the States. As is turned out, there *is* corruption, lack of infrastructure, and the possibility of poor employee relations there — just like here in the U.S.! But in the end, our business there is a beautiful, thriving establishment, full of wonderful employees who make Taylor products very well. And even though it was a little harder to get some of the things we wanted to get in Mexico, everything was available in the end.

Cameroon? Well, it's truly a developing country, and there isn't much you can get there. Tools, supplies and materials are all nearly impossible to obtain. These things have to be imported. If we want routers or saws or drill bits, it's easiest to import them, and notice that I didn't say easy; I said "easiest."

Getting there is hard, and being there is hard, as is working there. But once we land and get settled into our company house for the duration of our stay, we get used to the pace and the reality, and we do the work necessary to plan for the future and improve the two factories we own, which produce ebony parts from the ebony trees we are able to buy.

We make ebony blanks for guitar fingerboards, bridges and headstock veneers, and the same for violin parts, cello parts and contra-bass parts. We also make pool cue stick blanks, friction peg tuner blanks, bridge pin blanks and piano key blanks. We try to utilize the ebony down to the smallest parts.

The goal is to operate under a transparent and legal structure. This is easy until we get to articles in the law that contradict each other as to where the ebony can be harvested. We've been invited by Cameroon's forest ministry to help edit the law to make it clearer, and to prevent business or social conflicts from arising as we do our business. Meanwhile, we work with good hearts and minds toward continuous improvement with the goal of a harmonious business that operates within a well-written framework of laws. We and our partners from Spain, Madinter Trade, are quite proud of our clean record.

One of our great assets is the addition of Anne Middleton, formerly from the Environmental Investigation

Agency (EIA), the group that was largely responsible for the successful passing of the Lacey Act Amendment of 2008, which now governs legal logging imports into our country. Anne's passion and expertise are helping us understand all the forest ramifications as well as the laws. She also will help craft laws that make sense for the environment and the business of ebony processing, and in a way that both environmentalists and businesses can embrace. She's living full-time in Cameroon as she works on improving this business.

I hope you get a better sense of where ebony comes from by reading the in-depth article in this issue. I feel strongly that if we can make it in Cameroon, if we can build a wood business around ebony that people will be proud of, we can have ebony for many generations. We are seeking the help and approval of all our environmental friends as well as the bureaucracies that enforce the laws. I hope to be able to tell you better and better stories of Africa as the months and years roll by. I also hope that you'll be able to feel proud of how the ebony for your guitar was obtained, whether you choose a Taylor or even another brand.

— Bob Taylor, President

# Editor's Note

## Outward Bound

In early May I had the pleasure of joining more than 100 Taylor colleagues and friends at a luncheon to celebrate the 20-year anniversaries of two of our own: Chris Wellons, our Vice President of Manufacturing, and Gerry Kowalski, our Training Specialist. Chris joined the company as a self-driven 19-year-old cabinet maker and has risen through the ranks to guide Taylor through several major cycles of production growth. Gerry came to the company as a luthier from Colonial Williamsburg, Virginia, where he built lutes and baroque guitars in dramatic contrast to Taylor's modern approach — preserving the historic methods that were used in the 18th century. Gerry's eye for detail at Taylor prompted Bob Taylor to enlist him to spearhead the development of our first formal training program, which has evolved over time into a robust online teaching platform that plays a huge role in maintaining our quality standards.

During the lunch gathering, Bob shared remarks about each with the group, mixing personal memories and funny stories with glowing testimonials highlighting their important contributions to the company. He related their accomplishments to his philosophy of company leadership, which he described in terms of spheres of responsibility. At the core, Bob explained, is an employee's individual responsibility, which covers the specific parameters of his or her job description. Fulfilling those requirements, in his opinion, represents the bare minimum of the work that someone should do. Next are the larger spheres that extend beyond one's immediate job to address the greater needs within a department and beyond. The growth and success of Taylor, Bob noted, has come at the hands of people like Chris and Gerry, who have continuously expanded their spheres outward, embracing a greater leadership role by supporting and inspiring others, resulting in a broader positive impact.

Listening to Bob speak reminded me of our ebony feature in this issue, and the leadership role that he and the company have embraced. As a manufacturer, Taylor could simply keep its energies focused on its "core sphere" of complying with the environmental laws that govern the way we buy ebony and other woods. But as many of you have come to appreciate, Bob has never settled for doing the bare minimum. As you'll see in our report, his far-sighted vision has been shaped into a working plan that aims to transform the way ebony is harvested and processed in Cameroon. Although it's early in the process, the results harbor the potential to radiate outward and benefit other instrument makers, Cameroonian communities, the environment, and guitar owners for generations to come.

I doubt that Bob, Chris, Gerry or others here at Taylor envisioned the range of positive impact their work might eventually have when they showed up for their first day of work. But for so many of us at Taylor, being part of a culture that supports that is what makes working here so rewarding.

Have a wonderful summer.

— Jim Kirlin

## Wood&Steel *Online*

Read this and other back issues of *Wood&Steel* at [taylorguitars.com](http://taylorguitars.com)



Let's get something out of the way right up front: If I – a relatively inexperienced guitarist with far more enthusiasm than talent – can pull off a satisfying open-mic performance, then you can too. Trust me, you don't need the experience of Eric Clapton or the virtuosity of Tommy Emmanuel to deliver a performance an audience will appreciate. You just have to take care of business before you set foot on stage. With that in mind, here's a seven-step guide that will help you prepare for the big night.

## 1 CHOOSE YOUR VENUE WISELY.

There's almost nothing more daunting and distracting than stepping up on stage for the first time, looking out at the audience, and seeing that everyone is engaged in private conversations, laughing riotously, or dropping silverware. You're probably going to be scared witless the first time, which means it's already going to be difficult enough for you to focus on the task at hand. Now add 27 loud sources of interruption all around you, and it's easy to see how your attention can become dislodged from your objective – which should be delivering a good performance and nothing else. So before you decide to do an open-mic, attend a few of them as a member of the audience. Look for a venue where the music, not the pizza or bratwurst, is the focus. Keep searching until you find a venue where the audience is attentive and supportive of the musicians, avoiding those places where the crowd is completely indifferent to the music or prone to forming an angry mob with pitchforks and torches.

Face it, just because a song is in some way important to you doesn't necessarily mean it will capture and hold your audience's attention. What you want is to launch into your song and realize in the first few seconds that the crowd likes what they're hearing. How will you know that? You'll see smiles forming, toes tapping, and fingers drumming, which will almost never happen if you choose an unfamiliar or depressing song. I gave this a lot of thought before my first open-mic and ultimately decided on a song called "Country Honk," a rump-kicking acoustic version of the Rolling Stones' "Honky Tonk Women." It turned out to be a good choice because the entire audience was singing the chorus with me, which means they were totally engaged with the song and having a good time. Either that or they were politely trying to drown me out.

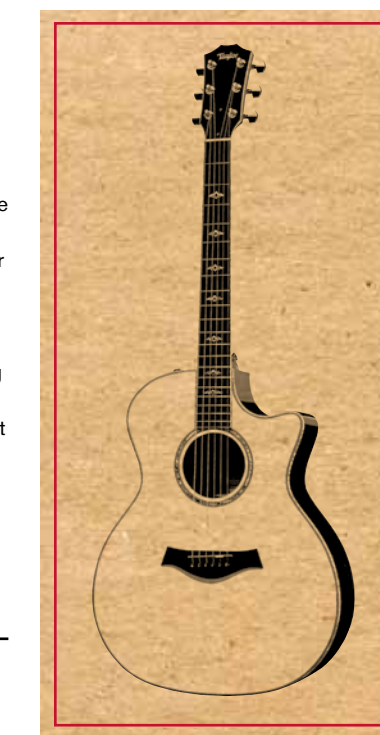
## 2 CHOOSE AN UP-TEMPO SONG.

## 3 TUNE UP OFF STAGE.

Want to know how to make an audience restless? Waste their time by spending even as little as 30 seconds tuning your guitar. I've seen this happen several times to performers who, out of sheer nervousness or a real need to retune, felt compelled to fiddle with their tuning pegs the moment they stepped up on the stage. Most venues will have a quiet place (often called a "green room") where you can tune your guitar right before you go on, which will help you avoid wasting the audience's time.

## 4 KNOW YOUR SONG COLD.

Here's a simple definition of what it means to know a song cold. Someone should be able to wake you up at 3:00 a.m. on a cold Christmas morning, shove a guitar into your stiff-fingered hands, and still be treated to a credible performance of the tune. *That's* the kind of familiarity with a song you're after. In order to get to that place, you need to have rehearsed a song a few dozen times so you're not struggling to remember chords and lyrics when you're up on stage. You should know a song so well that your body and brain go on auto-pilot. Maybe for your first open-mic you should think in terms of an easy three-chord strummer rather than that alternative version of "Classical Gas" you've been watching on YouTube.



As I mentioned earlier, you might be nervous as you step on stage. Your throat might be dry, your hands shaky, and you might feel as though dozens of eyeballs are evaluating your clothing, your guitar and your hairdo. Forget all that junk. Think about the fact that you can knock this song out of the park, and that you've already proved it in your own living room countless times. As you step up on the stage, right before you begin, think about how you start the song. And then... just start it.

Yeah, I know. Your nightmare is that you'll totally botch the beginning of the song, making you even more petrified, and that things will spiral out of control from there. I speak from experience, having recently become so emotionally dismantled by the steam jet of a latte machine that I completely lost focus and botched the beginning of "Autumn Leaves." I remember thinking, I can go on butchering the song or I can just start it all over. I chose the latter course, and the audience was fine with that. They knew it was my first open-mic because I'd told them that. So they understood my nervousness and were rooting for me. Once I restarted the song, it went really well.

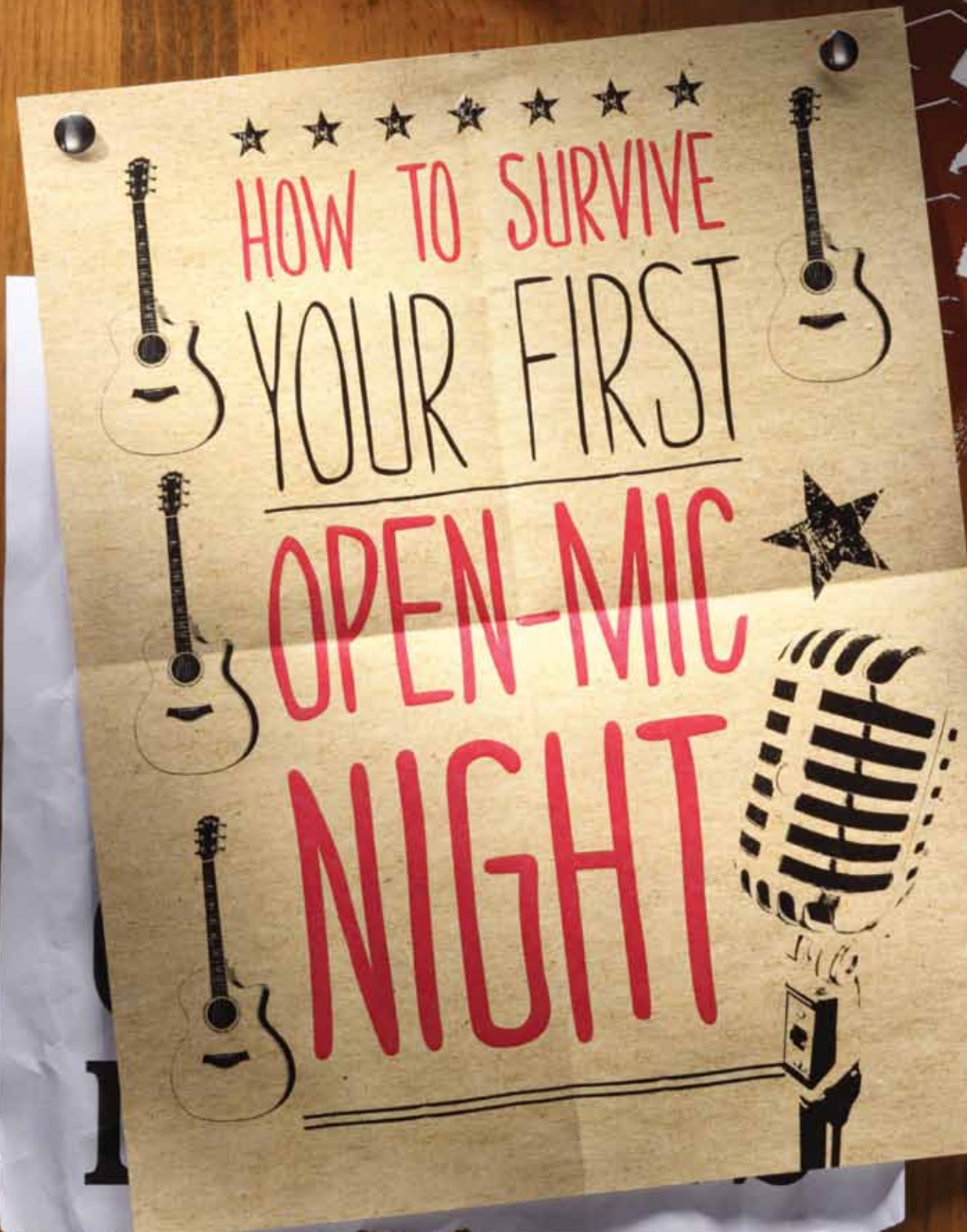
## 6 DON'T FORGET TO HAVE FUN.

Audiences aren't there to watch you wrestle with your personal demons. They've planted their butts in the seats because they want to have a good time – and a good time to them means hearing some tasty music. That's why the song choice is important. But equally important is the audience's perception that you're having just as good a time as they are. Stand up when you perform so that you can get your whole body into the song. Make eye contact. Be responsive to the applause at the end of the song. In short, communicate your enthusiasm to the audience, even if you really feel like you're on the verge of wetting your pants. And one more thing: If possible, have a friend capture your moment in the limelight on video so you can evaluate your performance later. Really, there's no better way to make necessary adjustments to your style or song choice. Which leads me to my final point...

Do an even passable job at your first open-mic and you'll likely be pumped up as you're walking off the stage, the sound of applause ringing in your ears. Good. Now go home and evaluate the video or at least think about the things you did that were particularly effective and the ones that could stand some tweaking. Did you get the sense that the audience's attention was drifting during your performance? Choose a better song. Did you stumble badly on the guitar interlude? Find a song that's easier to play. There's no shame in that. After all, audiences are looking for *good* songs, not necessarily difficult ones. Did you deliver a wooden performance? Practice in front of a mirror so that you can see and hear what an audience sees and hears. Tap your foot while you play. Bob your head. Get into the song. And just know that you'll be even better next time.

Oh, yes...there *will* be a next time, because performing at an open-mic in front of a live audience is as close as most of us will ever get to stardom, and it's an absolutely intoxicating experience. About the only thing you're likely to regret is that you didn't do it sooner. **W&S**

## 7 PLAN THE NEXT ONE.



NEED A NUDGE TO GET UP ON STAGE? BY FOLLOWING THESE TIPS, EVEN A BEGINNER CAN SHINE.

By Dennis Globus

Dennis Globus lives in Seattle, Washington. He played his first open-mic night with a brand-new Taylor 12-Fret he'd just purchased, and also owns an 814ce and a GS Mini.

# BRIDGE —TO THE— PAST

Our classic mustache bridge flashes back to the Jumbo 12-strings of Taylor's early years

When Bob and Kurt first began crafting guitars, one of the body styles they inherited was the iconic Jumbo, whose lineage traced back to the archtop guitars of the 1930s. They applied their own interpretive design touches to the curvaceous shape, which would prove to be a good fit for their 12-string models. The Jumbo's distinctive "mustache"-style bridge was a carryover from Bob and Kurt's pre-Taylor days at the American Dream guitar shop (it was designed by San Diego artist David Randle), where the two had first met.

In the ensuing years, Taylor's seminal Jumbo 12-string model played by Neil Young in the concert film *Rust Never Sleeps* evolved considerably, both cosmetically and structurally, to suit the changing needs and tastes of players. The mustache bridge would give way to a more modern design, and other aesthetic refinements gradually transformed the Jumbo 12 into a more contemporary — and distinctively Taylor — acoustic package.

This Builder's Reserve offering celebrates Taylor's early days with a tribute to the classic Jumbo 12-string.

Our design team began by revisiting our original Jumbo shape, which features a full 17-inch body width across the lower bout. Additional retro touches include early 800 Series appointments like our small diamond mother-of-pearl fretboard inlays, an abalone triple-ring rosette, and of course, the unmistakable bridge, which features contrasting camel bone bridge pins with abalone dots. Gold Gotoh 510 tuners tastefully complete the throwback aesthetic.

From our wood reserves we selected some of our finest sets of figured Hawaiian koa for the back,

sides and peghead overlay (including the truss rod cover), all outlined with crisp white binding. A Sitka spruce top bolsters koa's shimmering tonal response with the help of Adirondack spruce bracing. With modern design features like our NT® neck and Expression System® electronics, this guitar artfully embodies the company's progression from its homespun early days to the latest performance-enhancing innovations.

In keeping with this year's theme of Builder's Reserve acoustic amplifier pairings, we've chosen sets of beautiful koa for a matching Expression System

amp cabinet. Traditional cabinet details like dovetailed corner joints showcase solid craftsmanship and elegant simplicity.

When first built, our Jumbo 12-string delivered a fresh take on a classic design. This Builder's Reserve beauty does the same, and makes looking back more fun than ever. As with our other guitar/amp offerings, these will be sold together, and 30 pairs will be made. For full specifications and a list of dealers who carry them, visit [taylorguitars.com](http://taylorguitars.com). **W&S**



**Clockwise from top left:** Hawaiian koa headstock overlay and truss rod cover with gold Gotoh 510 tuners; mother-of-pearl diamond inlays; the mustache bridge, featuring camel bone bridge pins with abalone dots; the amp cabinet's dovetailed corner joint; back and sides of flamey koa

## Builder's Reserve VI

### Guitar

**Model:** BR-VI

**Shape:** 12-string Jumbo

**Back/Sides:** Hawaiian Koa

**Top:** Sitka Spruce with Adirondack Spruce Bracing

**Headstock Overlay:** Hawaiian Koa

**Inlays:** Mother-of-Pearl Small Diamonds

**Binding:** White

**Tuners:** Gold Gotoh 510

### Amplifier

**Model/Type:** BR-VI ES Acoustic

**Power:** 40 Watts

**Technology:** Solid State

**Speaker Size/Type:** 8-inch Custom Poly Cone Woofer, 1-inch Textile Dome Tweeter

**Speaker Arrangement:** Bi-Amp

**Cabinet:** Hawaiian Koa



# EBONY'S FINAL



# FRONTIER

TAYLOR'S CO-OWNERSHIP OF AN EBONY MILL IN CAMEROON AIMS TO ESTABLISH A NEW MODEL OF SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS

By Jim Kirlin

**W**e in the guitar community love our exotic tonewoods. We savor their beauty, revel in their tonal nuances, and draw inspiration from the craftsmanship that gives them a second life as an instrument. But while our admiration for the finished product may run deep, the back story details of a tree's journey from the forest to the factory are often less clear, especially the more removed we find ourselves from the source. We might have a sense of a wood's native origin (especially those with helpful geographic cues like Indian rosewood, Sitka spruce and Hawaiian koa), but there is always more to the story.

Over the years, Taylor has made an effort to share some of these stories, in part to give you a deeper appreciation for the hard work that often goes into wood sourcing, especially in light of important environmental issues such as legality and sustainability. We've taken you into the jungles of Central America with Bob Taylor to learn of the innovative mahogany sourcing initiatives we've developed with forest communities in Honduras. We've chronicled the guitar industry's collective efforts to promote the sustainable sourcing of Sitka spruce. Now the guitar industry finds itself at a critical juncture with another precious wood species: ebony. This is the first of a series of reports from the Central African country of Cameroon, which has effectively become the last frontier for the legal sourcing of ebony.

As Bob Taylor first mentioned in his column in our winter issue, Taylor recently became the co-owner of an ebony mill in Cameroon, and the implications are far-reaching. This ownership initiative is significant because it brings an instrument manufacturer closer to the source than ever before, which enables greater awareness and control of the supply chain.

Proper management of the ebony supply is a vital issue because if we continue down our former path, the ebony more than likely will go away as we know it. Taylor's co-ownership provides a unique opportunity to develop a new paradigm for ethical, eco-friendly

business, and the framework currently being developed there has the potential to positively affect both Cameroonian communities and the stringed instrument industry. Like a healthy forest ecosystem that fosters a balance of different species of flora and fauna in order to thrive, there is an interdependent business ecosystem that links our fellow instrument makers, communities in developing countries where woods are sourced, and customers. Our efforts require a mix of long-term planning, global collaboration, patience, and resilience against the inevitable obstacles that will arise. But the end result will support sustainable forestry and provide greater economic stability to communities around the world.

## The Lacey Act and Guitar Companies

As we've noted in previous sourcing stories, there was a time when Bob Taylor didn't have to go any farther than a local lumber yard to buy wood. Trees, after all, were a renewable resource, and the wood was readily available. But in recent decades the seemingly endless supply of certain wood species has been outpaced by consumption. This depletion has in turn threatened their surrounding forest ecosystem. As a result, the guitar industry, along with other industries that rely on wood to make their products, bear a greater responsibility for knowing how their wood was sourced, as well as the impact of sourcing on the environment and local communities.

The U.S. Lacey Act, a landmark piece of legislation originally passed in 1900 to protect wildlife and amended in 2008 to include plants and plant products, marked a watershed moment in terms of business responsibility among importers of products made of natural materials, including wood. Even though some guitar makers had already begun to embrace certain "green" initiatives like wood certification through organizations like the Forest Stewardship Council, those were voluntary and not necessarily Lacey-compliant. Lacey,

by comparison, was stronger and farther reaching: It banned the trade of illegally logged wood. Even more important, it shifted the burden of responsibility to wood buyers, compelling them to provide proof to cover the complete chain of custody back to the harvesting of the tree.

It's worth mentioning that compared to other wood-consuming industries like flooring companies and furniture makers, the guitar industry consumes a thin fraction of wood. But guitar makers do consume some of the exotic species that are at risk based on international agreements such as CITES (the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora).

The good news is that with clear legislation and proper management, musical instrument makers, together with communities where these woods are sourced, have the ability to preserve the species we love so that our grandchildren and their grandchildren will be able to enjoy their unique musical qualities.

## Why Ebony?

Compared to the attention we often lavish on the attributes of other exotic tonewoods, ebony is far less glamorous. Used for the vast majority of guitar fretboards, its role is fundamental to the playing experience, yet is often taken for granted because of its more supportive function. The wood's dark complexion also tends to fade into the background compared to other more visually striking woods and appointments on a guitar. Nonetheless, ebony has long been one of the most desirable of woods among instrument makers for other reasons. Its high density enables it to be finished to a very smooth and durable surface, which is comfortable on the fingers. The density also enables solid, predictable seating of the frets. By comparison, softer woods that are sometimes used for fretboards, such as rosewood, can "squish" slightly as the frets are seated, which can lead to

a less consistent fret job. In terms of visual aesthetics, ebony's dark color won't show dirt or grime like a lighter colored fingerboard such as maple. The darker color also creates a crisp contrast with traditional, lighter-colored inlay materials such as abalone and mother-of-pearl. For all these reasons, ebony is an ideal wood for instrument fingerboards. Other components it is used for include guitar bridges, headstock overlays, bridge pins and appointments like binding and rosette inlays.

## Native Origins

Like woods such as oak, walnut or rosewood, there are several species of ebony that grow in different regions of the world. Ebony grows predominantly in Africa and India, although it is also found in places like Indonesia. There was a time when Taylor sourced Indian ebony from Sri Lanka, but Bob Taylor says it was the lesser of most of the ebony. We have also used Macassar or "striped" ebony, which comes from Indonesia, although for backs and sides only. The best ebony species for instruments tend to be African strains (a tree's typical growth cycle is about 80 years), and Taylor has sourced ebony from Cameroon for 30 years. Until fairly recently, the African country of Madagascar was another source of ebony (along with rosewood), but political turmoil following the overthrow of the government in 2009 led to a spike in illegal harvesting within the country's national forests. As a result, the export of ebony and rosewood was suspended entirely, making it illegal to import it under the Lacey Act. That effectively leaves Cameroon as the last area for legal sourcing.

"You actually can get legal ebony out of Congo, including FSC-certified ebony," Bob Taylor says, "but there is very little of it and the price is many times that of Cameroonian ebony."

## Sourcing Challenges

One of the common denominators among the different exotic tonewoods used to make guitars is that many originate in tropical regions of the world, often in developing countries. This can present steep obstacles when it comes to responsible forest management. Such economically underdeveloped countries often lack the proper infrastructure — and the political will — to manage their national resources. Trees are often located in remote forest regions that make it difficult to enforce any existing harvesting regulations, leaving the "back door" open for illegal logging. And the immediacy of poverty can supersede long-term thinking about preserving an area's natural resources, particularly when people need to feed their families. Corruption is regularly a factor. Things often happen more slowly. The available tools are often primitive or in poor condition.

"The reality is just different," Bob says. "In Cameroon, something seemingly simple like cutting a tree can become very complicated. One person might have a chainsaw, another has the chain, and someone else has gas. And there might be a whole lot of conflict just to get that saw through the tree. And that's after you finally determine if the tree can be legally cut or not."

continued next page



### Buying an Ebony Mill

In November of 2010, Taylor partnered with Madinter Trade, S.L., a Spain-based international distributor of guitar parts and tonewoods used to make musical instruments, to explore the possibility of purchasing the company Crelicam, the largest ebony mill in Africa. Located in the country of Cameroon, the company employs 75 people in two mill locations, one in the country's capital, Yaoundé, and another about 180 miles northeast in the city of Bertoua. Crelicam supplies fingerboards and bridges to several distributors, who in turn sell to makers of guitars, violins and other instruments that feature fingerboards, and even pool cues. The company's owner, a Spaniard, had recently decided to sell the business and retire after running it for 12 years.

Bob already had a good working relationship with Madinter's managing director, Vidal de Teresa, as Madinter supplies Taylor with sapele (which also comes from Cameroon) and ovangkol. Madinter also had been an ebony client of Crelicam. The partnership, Bob says, was a natural fit.

"Taylor has expertise in the processing of ebony, while Madinter was already a large distributor of Crelicam ebony and had extensive experience as a supplier to the trade," he says. "Together, we felt that we had all the necessary expertise to not only take over Crelicam, but to improve the product."

Bob and Vidal visited the company in Cameroon in February 2011, and again in July 2011. As prospective owners, the two did extensive research.

"We turned over every stone in

order to put ourselves in position to make a sound purchase," Bob elaborates. "We wanted to identify all the challenges and potential shortfalls of doing business in Cameroon."

Between their two trips, Bob and Vidal spent a lot of time meeting with Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in Washington DC, London, and eventually Cameroon. They learned of Cameroon's high unemployment rate and discovered that those who did have jobs were often expected to take care of anywhere from 10 to 20 people on their wages. They also saw the primitive working conditions at the mill. As their understanding of Cameroon's economy and the milling operation deepened, their original ownership goals evolved.

"Our interest went beyond simply operating a business that only provided clients with uninterrupted supplies of legal ebony and fair prices," Bob says. "Our focus grew to include the workers in the factory, the citizens of the communities where the ebony grows, the truck drivers who transport the wood, and the forest itself in terms of how we can sustain it and set it up for future stability and harvest."

For Bob and Vidal, their vision was grounded in a three-pronged goal: supplying ebony in a way that was legal, ethical and sustainable.

"Today's Lacey Act in the U.S. and the forthcoming EU timber laws address only legality," Bob explains. "So, in essence, each one of us users of ebony, or any other species, could choose to be legal and not worry ourselves with the ethics, traditions or current state of society in the countries from which our woods originate.

But I feel it's important that we in the developed, wealthy parts of the world take special notice of the conditions in these regions."

Bob points to the historical track record of resource exploitation.

"What has happened in developing countries? Well, we go take their diamonds and their coal and their oil and their wood until there's none left. Then we leave the people kind of impoverished. Do you know a lot of places where exotic woods come from that are flourishing and in great shape and are First World powers? If they are, it's a place like Brazil, in which case they say, 'You can't buy our rosewood anymore.' But if the people don't have any power or other means to support themselves, they'll trade their wood for a bowl of rice."

### Cutting Permits

In order to be in the wood business in Cameroon, you need a permit that grants you access to a specific Forest Management Unit (concession). Such concessions can be logged according to certain regulations. For example, there has to be a cutting plan, with a limit to the number of trees that can be cut. Under these specific permits, ebony is strictly off limits. This is because in Cameroon, ebony is classified as a "special species," and a special permit is required to harvest it. One reason why it's not regulated by concessions is that ebony trees tend to be widely dispersed. Crelicam has a special permit for harvesting ebony, but no concessions.

"The way they work it is, you can either cut ebony or you can have a concession and not cut ebony, but you can't have both," Bob explains. "So, we're effectively a man with no land. We have to get permission to cut ebony in places. They have community forests that are part of the country's National Domain, and we can go make a deal with the chiefs to cut ebony there."

There are approximately 13 companies in all of Cameroon who have permits to cut ebony, and there are currently no new permits being issued. Every year a 14-person government commission decides on the permits and the individual quota allocations for each. The total annual limit that permits are issued for is 2000 tons of raw ebony log material.

"When 2000 tons of it has been cut, it's officially over for the year," Bob says. "So, each of those 13 companies is issued a permit that tells them how many tons they get to cut. Our company has permits for 1,500 of the 2000 tons. We're the biggest and best operator there. The other 500 tons are

split between the other dozen permit holders."

One might wonder how Crelicam has been allocated so much of the quota.

"It's a question we wondered ourselves at renewal time, which occurs annually," says Bob. "It appears that our solid business plan, our two legitimate locations, and our 75 employees are unique among the country's other operators, who are hard to locate. The commission respects that and granted our permit renewals."

### A Plan for Social Investment

Owning Crelicam and directly overseeing the milling operation puts Taylor-Madinter in a first-hand position to understand not only sourcing issues, but also Cameroon's cultural and economic conditions. Bob and Vidal quickly recognized that the employees were underpaid, with their wages stretched even thinner due to the country's high unemployment rate and the number of people who relied on their support. As Bob and Vidal spoke with employees as the new owners, they laid out their vision for what the mill would eventually become and announced that everyone's wages would be doubled by the end of this year. They developed an action plan for upgrading the working environment. They explained how the wood processing skills they would learn would enable them to add value and get more money out of the ebony they harvest. Currently, only raw ebony blanks are exported from Crelicam, and the value-added work, whether for guitars or violins, is done in other countries.

"Our Cameroonian employees need to do that work," Bob says. "We're going to start drying and processing the wood so Cameroonians can share in the processing of guitar and violin parts. Currently it's not easy – we don't even have running water. We don't have electricity that you can count on, or a concrete floor that even looks like it'll support a machine. But one day there will be machines making parts for our clients, right there in Cameroon, at the ebony source."

To illustrate his point to the Crelicam employees during one of his early visits, Bob showed them video footage of the ebony processing work that Taylor currently does at our factory in Tecate.

"As a guitar manufacturer I am confident that this can happen in Africa," he says. "We can dry and process four smooth, straight sides, delivering a much better product to guitar factories. Just this simple operation will employ

more people in Cameroon, allowing them to get more value from their resource. I have no reservations about the quality we can perform there. And the benefits to the clients are many, including less shipping weight and volume. One day in the next five years, we'll be able to go to the Cameroonian government and say, 'For every ebony tree that comes out of the forest, we turn it into this much economy here in Yaoundé and in Bertoua.'"

### Learning to Use What the Forest Provides

As Bob and Vidal discovered during their early conversations with Crelicam employees, the challenges of the ebony operation weren't limited to the mill's shortcomings. The harvesting process was another major issue.

The company contracts with about 25 cutters who work in conjunction with Crelicam's ebony cutting permit.

"They go out into the forest, cut trees using our permit, and we buy it by the kilo from them," Bob says.

As Bob and Vidal talked to the cutters to better understand the nature of their work and the challenges they face, a more complete picture of the harvesting process began to form. For starters, they learned that it was an enormous amount of work to deliver the wood. Because the ebony trees closest to the roads had been harvested, the cutters had to go deeper into the rainforest, on foot, to get to the trees. Unlike loggers in the jungles of Honduras who use mules to remove mahogany from the dense forest, in Cameroon people carry it out. This has limited the harvesting range to about eight kilometers (five miles) from a road. A cutter would get permission to cut from a village with a concession and hire a group of people to haul the wood cut from a felled tree.

The cutters said another issue was the wide discrepancy in value between highly desirable black ebony and the more marbled wood (featuring light-streaked variegation), also referred to as "déclassé" (lower class or grade) wood. Crelicam previously only paid a fourth of the black ebony price for the déclassé wood (about 8 cents a pound) because it was less desirable among their instrument-making clients. At that rate, the cutters said, it wasn't worth all the labor to haul the déclassé wood out.

Bob asked them how they determined which trees were black and which were déclassé. They said they cut down an ebony tree and looked at the wood. If it was marbled, they simply left the tree and moved on. Bob asked how many trees on average they would have to cut to find a black one. They said about 10. Bob was shocked.

"This was news to everyone else," Bob says. "Not even the previous owner of Crelicam knew. The cutters don't tell anybody that. I just started asking questions and went down that rabbit hole and they told me."

Bob told the cutters on the spot that he would buy the déclassé ebony from them and pay the same price as the black wood. They were taken aback. But no one will want it, they said.

"Well, now they will," Bob told them. It was a decision he says he and Vidal felt compelled to make to be responsible stewards of the forest resources.

"Now that we know this, we can't un-know the realities here in Africa,"

he says. "We live in a different world, a world where we have to respect that environment. Decisions had to be made, and Vidal and I have proudly made them. Our ebony reflects the reality of the forest. This is what ebony looks like. Here's the good news based on what we learned: There's 10 times as much usable ebony in Cameroon as we thought there was."

Given the complicated issues that surround the sourcing of ebony, one might wonder why an alternative wood isn't used for fretboards. Ebony's superior qualities aside, Bob says the sourcing issues would be similar elsewhere. And since it's legal to source ebony in Cameroon (when following proper

protocols), purchasing a mill gives Taylor-Madinter a chance to introduce measures of sustainability for the industry as a whole.

"If somebody had done in Madagascar what we're trying to do now in Cameroon, maybe Madagascar would still be supplying ebony," Bob says. "And if nobody does what we're trying to do now, how long will ebony be available from Cameroon before the NGOs and the government and everybody just has it up to here with wood being stolen off parts of the land it shouldn't be taken from?"

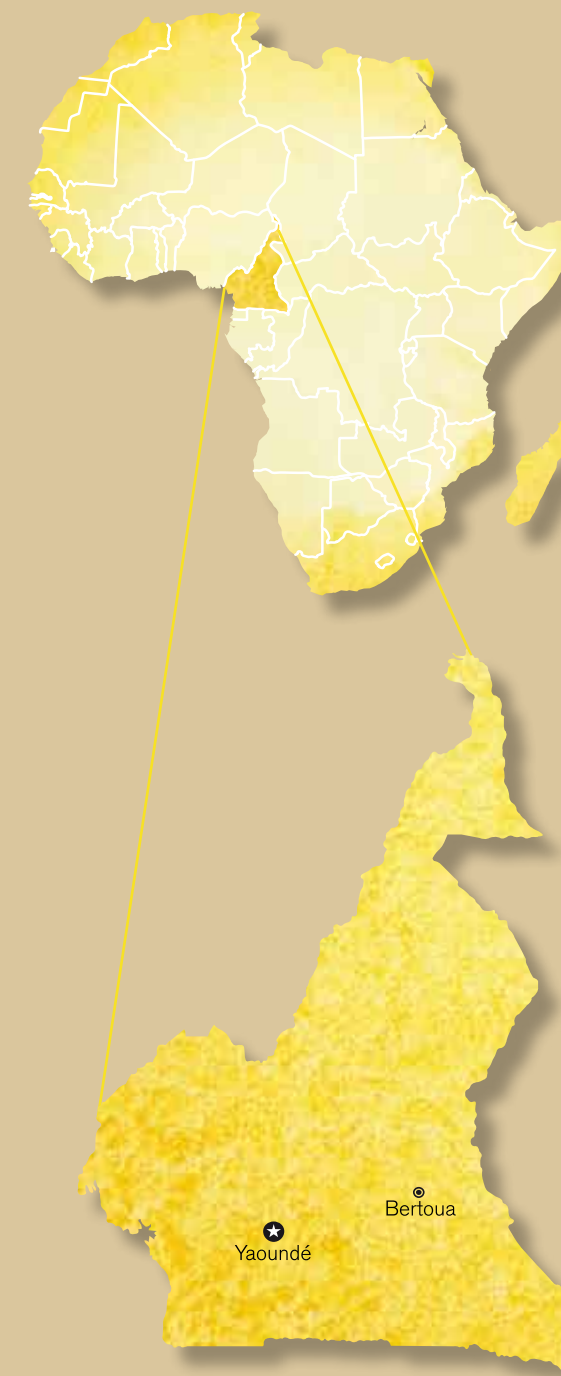
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**Clockwise from top left:** Bob with Crelicam partner Vidal de Teresa from Madinter Trade; Bob documents the milling process; Bob shows employees video footage of the ebony processing work that Taylor does in its Tecate factory. **Opposite page:** The interior of one of Crelicam's ebony mills, located in Yaoundé, Cameroon

### About Cameroon

Cameroon is located on the western side of Central Africa just north of the equator. The southwestern portion of the country borders the Gulf of Guinea, where the port city of Douala is located. Its border countries are Chad to the North, the Central Africa Republic to the East, Congo, Gabon and Equatorial Guinea to the south, and Nigeria to the West. It's been described as having all of Africa in one country for its cultural and geological diversity, which boasts beaches, deserts, mountains, rainforests and savannas. Ebony harvesting occurs in the rainforest regions, which are located in the southern and eastern part of the country. The overall population is about 20 million people, and both French and English are the official languages. The country's capital, Yaoundé, where one of the Crelicam mills is located, has nearly 2 million residents.





## Using Déclassé Ebony

It might surprise you to learn that Taylor has been buying and using what's considered déclassé ebony for decades. In fact, it accounts for roughly 70 percent of the ebony we use for fretboards and bridges. The B-grade designation might be based on coloration, wormholes, cracks or pores in the wood. Our ability to condition the wood into a refined part resolves many of the physical irregularities. Our Tecate factory plays a vital role in this type of wood processing, not only for guitars made there, but also for guitars that will be built in El Cajon. These steps include properly drying the wood, and then planing, tapering, sanding and later shaping the parts by hand and with sophisticated computer mills.

While some other guitar makers use rosewood fretboards for their lower-end models and reserve ebony for their high-end guitars, we use ebony for every guitar. One benefit of doing this, beyond ebony's performance superiority, is that it gives us a broader spectrum of internal grading; in other words, we use it from the Baby Taylor to exotic Builder's Reserve models.

Though there may be some debate among guitar enthusiasts about differences in quality between marbled and black ebony, Bob insists the difference is just cosmetic.

"There's no difference in tone, density, the way it dries or anything like that," Bob says. "Although, one irony is that worms actually seem to prefer the blacker wood."

One other point that inevitably comes up in discussions of ebony's cosmetic appearance is staining it black. Other guitar companies have tried it.

"I don't have an issue with that — after all, we stain maple and mahogany," notes Bob. "But it's not easily done. For us, it would have to be a neck with no binding or inlays because the stain would transfer to those materials."

## Enlisting the Support of Other Guitar Companies

As a new owner of Crelicam armed with a deeper understanding of the ebony situation in Cameroon, Bob Taylor's next step was to share his findings with other guitar makers who were clients of the distributors to whom Crelicam sold their ebony. He put together a detailed presentation and personally visited companies including Martin, Fender, Guild, Collings, PRS, Breedlove and others. He explained the realities of the ebony trade in Cameroon and laid out the new vision for the company: to provide ebony that was sourced legally, ethically and sustainably, and over time to provide them with a better processed product. He explained Crelicam's intent to use trees with coloration in them because a lot of the black ones had been harvested. Ultimately, he invited them to be valued partners who, together as a group, could bring enormous improvement to the forest and communities in Cameroon.

"The 10 to 1 cutting ratio was illuminating to a lot of people," Bob says. "It was the equivalent of showing a picture of an elephant with his face chainsawed off and

then asking them if they want some ivory. Different people had different reactions, but almost everybody said, 'Yes, we'll use that wood, no problem!'"

Following Bob's visit, Gregory Paul, Vice-President of Business Development for C. F. Martin & Co., emphasized Martin's ongoing commitment to the legal and ethical sourcing of ebony.

"There is no question that ebony is very scarce," says Paul. "Scarcity of any species creates a trading environment rife with abuse and illegality. Martin remains committed to sourcing materials from companies who clearly demonstrate that they do the right things for the resource and the people to whom it belongs, all within the confines of the rule of law."

One person suggested making the black ebony available for a premium upcharge, but Bob disagreed.

"What will happen is people will just fight to spend extra money to get the black wood, and that will work its way all the way back to the forest, there will be a price difference between the two, and we'll be right back where we started even though the numbers are different."

Another person suggested that as an ebony supplier, Taylor might be inclined to have two grading standards: one that set aside the black wood for its own guitars, and the marbled ebony for everyone else. It was a fair question.

"I told everyone I was already their great experiment," Bob says, "because I make guitars out of déclassé ebony all the time and have been for years. When the guitars are finished they look great and no one thinks anything of it. We'll probably start to see a little bit more wood with coloration, but we already buy and use this wood."

Besides, Bob says, consumer acceptance of ebony variegation is easier to achieve if it comes from the entire industry together.

## Anne Middleton Joins the Team

In March, Taylor welcomed Anne Middleton to our Crelicam operations team in the role of Environmental and Community Relations Manager. Based in Cameroon, Anne is responsible for Crelicam's traceability and transparency of ebony wood (including FSC certification), legality (including compliance with CITES, the U.S. Lacey Act, the U.S. Foreign Corrupt Practices Act, and the European Union's Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade [FLEGT] Action Plan), sustainability initiatives, building relationships with NGOs and community leaders, domestic and international government relations, and anti-corruption measures.

Before joining Taylor, Anne was a forest campaigner at the Environmental Investigation Agency (EIA) in Washington, DC, where she worked with industry and government officials to develop tools and resources for understanding and implementing the Lacey Act. She also helped build and sustain the Forest Legality Alliance ([www.for-estlegality.org](http://www.for-estlegality.org)), of which Taylor is a leading member. Her educational background includes a B.A. in Biology from Oberlin College and a Master of Environmental Science and Management from the Bren School at the University of California, Santa Barbara.

Middleton says she's thrilled to bring her environmental background into the business world and play a role in fulfilling Taylor's vision as an ebony supplier at Crelicam.

"For the first time in the industry, Taylor has taken a giant step toward supply chain transparency by owning the source," she says. "It's a huge challenge for us, but knowing exactly where the wood comes from and knowing that we're investing in Cameroon and its people is as important to me as the quality of the guitar parts. What happens at Crelicam has the potential to have a positive and far-reaching impact."

With Anne based in Cameroon, we look forward to sharing her regular reports on our progress at Crelicam in *Wood&Steel* and at [taylorguitars.com](http://taylorguitars.com).

**"The United States Embassy Yaoundé is proud to have provided assistance to Taylor Guitars and its Spanish partner [Madinter Trade] during their purchase of two Cameroonian ebony-processing factories. We were happy to advise Taylor on the business climate in Cameroon, introduce company representatives to Cameroonian officials, and host a dinner at the Ambassador's residence in honor of Bob Taylor. At the dinner, Bob met government and non-governmental organization officials who could assist with Taylor's efforts in Cameroon. We applaud Taylor Guitars' efforts to improve employee working conditions at the factories, and its determination to institute less wasteful and more ecologically sustainable use of ebony. We believe by fostering Cameroon-U.S. business initiatives, we not only improve income for American companies, but the livelihoods of many Cameroonians as well."**

— U.S. Ambassador to Cameroon, Robert P. Jackson



**Top down:** Bob captures another step in the ebony milling process; **L-R:** Crelicam employees Vincent Lumpungu Yakawumbu and Jean Paul Ndzé Mvondo. **Top right:** Pre-processed and banded fretboard blanks



A related issue that Bob thinks guitar companies need to consider is the way they have allowed their purchasing decisions to be influenced by people who are removed from the realities of the sourcing process.

"Some companies have their marketing and sales people, who aren't fully aware of the sourcing issues, telling them what color their ebony needs to be," he elaborates. "And you know how that happens? A customer — it could be a teenager — will call the company and say, 'Hi, I bought this guitar six months ago, and it's really awesome. But I was with my friend the other day and he looked at my fingerboard and said it shouldn't have that color in it. And I thought I was buying a quality guitar, and now I found out you have a low-quality fretboard on there, and I'm calling to find out what you're going to do about it.'"

"There's always a friend involved," Bob laughs. "Why that opinion? Well, it was born of the fact that for 100 or 200 years if there was a striped tree and a black tree, we'd take the black one. That same customer might also talk to his dealer, who calls the sales rep at the guitar company and says, 'I have a customer who's really unhappy,' and the sales person tells marketing, and marketing tells the purchasing department, who doesn't understand the wood sourcing issue, and the purchasing department says, 'The ebony must be black!' And this all might have started from a person who buys your lowest grade guitar.

"Those decisions are made through this big chain of fear," Bob adds. "We work through a chain of confidence. We don't bring fear up to the president; we bring confidence down to the customer. Part of my role in the ecosystem of guitars is for me to understand the sourcing issues and make a judgment that brings the most good for the most people. A hundred years ago, I'd have been a totally different guy because it was a different world. But things have changed dramatically."

This is far from the first time guitar makers and customers have had to adapt to changes in the availability of tonewoods. Brazilian rosewood and Adirondack spruce were once widely available. Aesthetic preferences change, too.

"Twenty years ago if there was sapwood in a guitar, a dealer would send it back," Bob points out. "Now the trees are smaller so we use it, and we made it a 'thing.' Some of our customers love to request a cocobolo guitar with sapwood in the middle."

Ultimately, Bob doesn't think having more variegation in some of the ebony will be a huge issue among customers. Dark ebony isn't going away altogether, and companies including Taylor will still grade so that the darker fretboards are used for the higher-end models. And consider that when you look at a fretboard on a guitar neck, you're also looking at elements like frets, strings and inlays. Besides, some of the variegation is truly beautiful. Anyone who's seen some of the Macassar ebony Build to Order guitar bodies we've made in the past will certainly agree. We've also been setting aside ebony with exotic marbling features for special custom and Build to Order guitars. (See pages 18-19.)

As Bob reflects on the initiative in Cameroon and the role that such communities in developing countries play in the ultimate success of companies who rely on their resources, he reiterates the need for social responsibility in business.

"I believe that the best way out of poverty is business," he says. "People need meaningful jobs, where they have some say in their future. I don't believe these problems can be fixed with charity, but I do believe that these people involved in getting our ebony cannot help themselves. They desperately need a partner, as in us, who cares about their plight and will use the business to better their lives." **W&S**



## Embracing Ebony's Artistry

Although black ebony has long been the reigning aesthetic standard for fretboards in the guitar world, ebony trees actually exhibit a diverse palette of colors and character. Rich chocolate and caramel hues sometimes mingle with creamy wisps that sweep along the length of a fretboard. Mottled patterns can range from subtle variegation to wildly exotic marbling. Sometimes the coloration is sparse and random, like the fretboard on the custom guitar shown here.

Taylor's commitment to eco-conscious ebony sourcing means that as we move forward, both as a guitar manufacturer and now an ebony supplier, we have an obligation to use what the forest provides. Black ebony won't disappear, but over time you may start to see less of it. We plan to use it more selectively, most likely on guitars that have more inlay detail, like the 600 through Presentation Series. On some custom guitars, we may not want to add any inlays at all, as Mother Nature will have supplied the artistic touches. In the end, we understand that people's aesthetic preferences are subjective. We also understand that, in the interest of preserving a sustainable supply of ebony, the trees get a say in the design process.



A few decades ago, Bob and Kurt built a foundation for their fledgling guitar enterprise in a grassroots way, sharing their passion for guitars with prospective dealers one store at a time. As Taylor has grown over the years, we've never forgotten the value of building relationships, or the important role our dealers have played in helping to cultivate what has grown into a vibrant extended Taylor community. Though Kurt no longer has to hit the road in a Volvo crammed full of guitars, these days our sales and marketing team has been logging more miles than ever to present in-store Road Show and Find Your Fit events, and we love doing them.

As Taylor's Vice President of Sales and Marketing Brian Swerdfeger likes to say, "Taylor is a brand you can know," and that philosophy is grounded in the events like the Road Show. When Swerdfeger was originally developing its presentation format, he says he was inspired by childhood memories of neighborhood gatherings around his grandfather's outdoor grill, and the natural way that food brought people together. Swerdfeger would be reminded of this when he started playing guitar and was exposed to local music store culture in Southern California, as people would get together to talk about guitars and share licks.

After another rewarding season of dealer visits and Road Show gigs, we thought we'd talk to a few of our dealers about the ways they've cultivated a sense of community through their stores. If there's a common thread, it may be that a good store understands that their success comes not just from sales, but from engaging customers in meaningful ways and nurturing a deeper appreciation for music. It can happen in so many different ways: a father and son who sign up for guitar lessons together; an in-store clinic; a staff that makes customers feel at home. A store is just a store. But a store that connects with its customers is a community.

### Gryphon Stringed Instruments

Palo Alto, California

Just over 44 years ago, Frank Ford and Richard Johnston founded Gryphon Stringed Instruments, named after the mythical half lion, half eagle creature known for its watchful and loyal attributes. The store and its staff are recognized throughout the industry for their extensive guitar knowledge (Ford and Johnston have written articles and books, and Johnston is a frequent appraiser on *Antiques Roadshow* on PBS). In the early days, the two would

Johnston. "A customer came in and said, 'I want to thank you guys for giving me an opportunity to hang out with people other than the ones I work with.' He didn't mean that he didn't like the people he worked with. But finding musicians with similar interests and abilities meant he had a group he could relate to that was separate from where he worked. I think people use a musical community as a pressure release valve from where they work.... Some are high-powered people who like to step out of that role, who like being able to talk about guitars. A store like ours can be a place to get away, a place where you can be someone else to a certain extent."

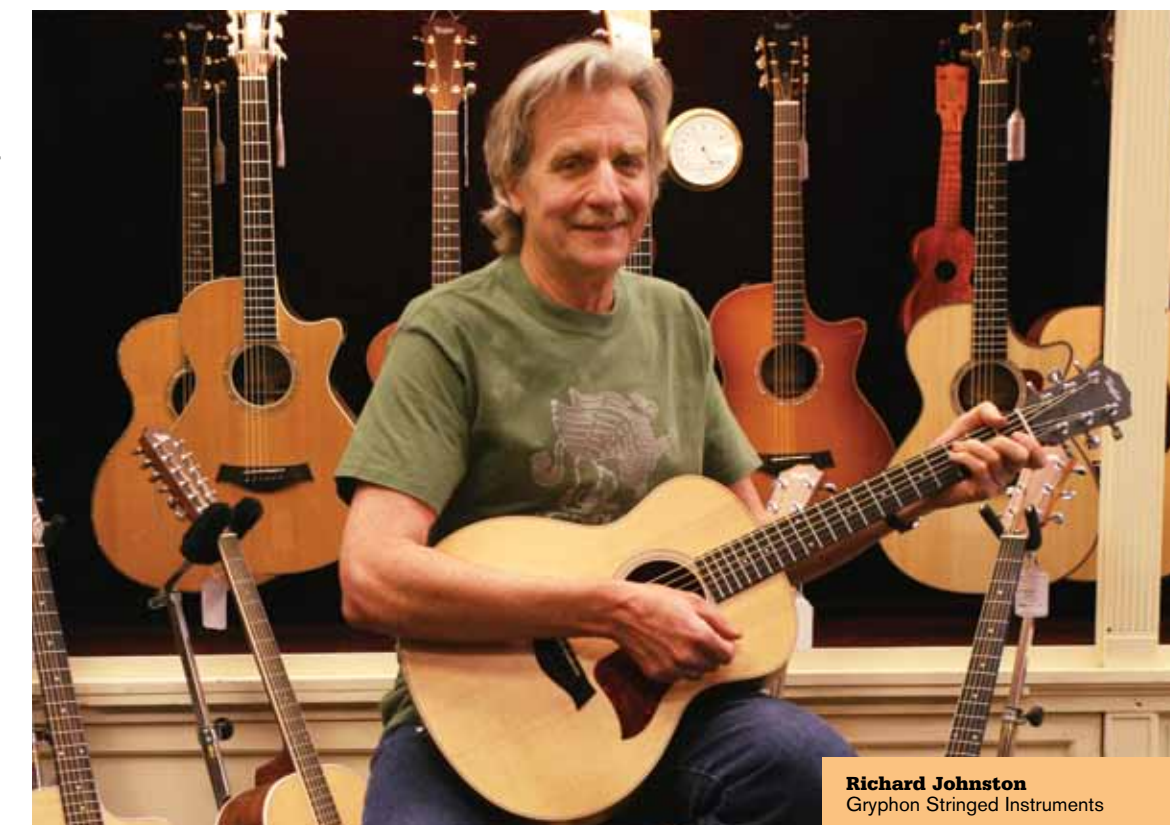
Johnston says his regulars come in on Saturdays, like clockwork. Former

not trying to compete on price. In fact, we won't compete on price. We want to discuss guitars, how they sound, what they're made of, and how they differ. I'm not saying we pretend that price doesn't matter, but anytime you get into that discussion early, you're on the wrong foot!"

In fact, he says, people often come in and want to talk about other things.

"Sometimes they use those reasons to justify the visit, when it's much more social than a fact-finding mission. You don't have to justify it; you just have to hang out and have a good time. All we ask is that you don't scratch things."

Johnston shared another anecdote that speaks to the incredible impact music has on people.



**Richard Johnston**  
Gryphon Stringed Instruments

open the store for jam sessions, house concerts and the like, attracting new friends along the way, many of whom still hang out at the store today. Boasting plenty of Bay Area "earthiness," the store is deeply rooted in the community, has a top-notch service department, and carries an amazing selection of instruments. Over the years, Ford and Johnston have grown their music community through lessons and Saturday workshops. A recent e-mail announcing the store's upcoming events offered a sample of the eclectic array of instructional themes, from blues slide guitar to fiddle techniques to Western yodeling. The store is a place where people have made strong musical bonds.

"One of the most telling compliments I had was years ago," says

customers who've moved away stop by when they're back in town to visit relatives, and they often bring their kids by to show them the shop.

"Frank and I don't like to admit it, but one time a young kid came in and told us his grandparents had met in our store! Lots of couples have met here, and lots of small bands have come and gone."

Johnston attributes the store's captivating vibe to music's natural ability to make people feel good and connect with others. He adds that the shop is a place where harmony between staff members is paramount, and that selling isn't the main focus.

"We have over a dozen instructors teaching lessons, creating customers who like to hang here," he says. "We're

"This customer's family was questioning why he was shopping for another instrument, and he said, 'You don't understand, guitars are a world!' And when you see what kind of iconic instrument the guitar is, and how it's connected to so much more than guitar music, and then you see young kids put a guitar on, they just become different — [it gives them an] identity. We love to see kids go out the front door with a guitar, when it's all they can do to keep their heels on the ground. It's just as satisfying selling to a kid as someone who has several musical instruments."

## Appalachian Bluegrass Shoppe

Catonsville, Maryland

Another store with deep roots in its local community is Appalachian Bluegrass, a family business established in 1960 and owned and run by Emory Knode and his wife Charlene.

"My pop ran a classic, old school sort of store catering to band and orchestra rental programs with elementary schools," Knode says. At the end of the '70s, with music trends changing and his father thinking of retiring, Knode fell in with some bluegrassers and loved both the purity of the music and the spirit of the community.

"There was no façade," he says. "You'd go to a bluegrass festival and see this band of amazing pickers on stage, and then the next band would go on and I'd turn around and see the previous band sitting there behind me enjoying the show. It excited me so much that I thought, in order to keep the business in the family and prevent me from having a real job, maybe I'll start going in the bluegrass direction.

Around 1980 my pop pretty much retired and I took over the business one piece at a time."

Knode says he rebuilt the business by following a simple premise: listening to what customers want and then finding it.

"People would come in and say, 'Emory, I've looked everywhere for

this and I can't find it!' And I'd think to myself, well, somebody's looking for it, which means it's probably manufactured, so there's probably a demand for it. So, I'd find it and order two pieces – one for the person who requested it and the other to hang on the wall."

Knode still follows a similar approach these days, and clearly his reputation for helping others has spread.

"It's funny, I can't tell you how many times people have come in and said, 'Everybody tells me you're the guy to go see. I've got this problem...' You have to listen and sometimes call through what they're saying, because they may not know what they want, but they're throwing ideas at you, and it's up to the person in the store to listen and say, 'Well this person is really asking for *this*, in which case you go into your magic bag of tricks, hand them something, and often they say, 'Oh my word, it's exactly what I wanted.' If you try to jam the square peg into the round hole, all you'll get is friction, and you'll have returns and unhappy people."

Knode prides himself on not only serving the musical needs of customers, but also supporting the broader needs that help the surrounding community thrive.

"It's not just the people who walk in looking for a piece of gear; it's the kid who comes in here and needs to have an ad taken out for the yearbook; it's someone who's got a good cause and needs a donation for a silent auction; it's a jam session if people want to get together and play music. I've always been a big part of the 4th of July cel-

ebation here in my community. It's a grassroots sort of thing. I look back at the years of being in business, the amount of softball and little league and soccer and high school football teams I've sponsored. It's all the little things that you can't put your finger on in terms of whether it will ever make you money; you just do it because you want to put back into the community. It's like that old story of stone soup. When everybody gets together you throw something in the pot; you can't always be taking something out."

Knode's sense of community even extends to include his competition. By working together, he knows that his store's reputation for great repairs and service has enabled him to compete by helping people.

"We've befriended other stores, and some of them will say, 'Go see Emory at Appalachian Bluegrass; he'll help you out.' I mean, they're the competition, and believe me, I'm a competitor, but by the same token, we're allies because we are selling the same thing. We are supporting music. We're trying to bring people into the fold to play music."

Besides, Knode says, the real competition is elsewhere.

"It doesn't come from the box stores or the Internet. It comes from the motorcycle shop, the golf shop, the tennis shop, the garden center. You're really competing for people's time in this business, and whatever the other stores can do, whatever I can do to make that person want to spend their time making music is what will benefit us in the long run."

## Fazio's Frets and Friends

Ellisville, Missouri



**James Gast**  
Fazio's Frets and Friends

The store's name says it all, points out Fazio's Frets and Friends manager James Gast. The Ellisville, Missouri shop, which has been in business for over 33 years, prides itself on knowing many of its customers by name and creating a family-like environment.

"Customers come by just to hang out," shares Gast. "Our guys welcome the chance to chat about guitars, accessories and other gear. There's no pressure to sell, just a chance to connect with likeminded people and possibly learn something new. It's wonderful."

Attentive service is a hallmark of the store. Customers who purchase a guitar receive full service on it as long as they own it. This includes inspections, set-up, cleanups and more, with a minimal charge to cover the cost of new strings and maintenance.

Fazio's also boasts a large student population, with an average of 600 to 700 students visiting the store each week for lessons. The instructors follow a prescribed lesson plan and offer special lessons, including Fazio's Rock Academy, an afterschool program for children which culminates in a live performance at a local venue.

A variety of other events brings a healthy assortment of fun learning

opportunities to the store, including artist performances, clinics and events like the Taylor Road Show, which the store always brings to its customers for little or no cost. The shop also hosts a weekly open-mic night at a local venue. It's often standing room only.

The store is also proud of its work with Six String Heroes, a locally-based organization that provides injured veterans with music lessons. Through the local VA hospital, a team of instructors supplies guitars and lessons to the wounded warriors, donating their time to teaching an eight-week course to groups of about 20-30 students. After completing the course, the students get to keep their guitars, which are paid for with funds raised throughout the year with a donation box in the store. For the extended Fazio's community, it's a chance to give back, and for the vets, a comforting outlet for expressing themselves through music. Graduates of the program often spend time at the store and continue their musical journey. As of press time, the store was beginning to plan its annual Veterans Day sale, a community event slated for later this year that features local artists, raffles and fun, all in support of their program.

## Spotlight Music

Fort Collins, Colorado

Nestled in the Northern Colorado mountain town of Fort Collins, Spotlight Music has become a local institution and a center of community activity. When owners Rob and Jen Curci relocated to their current spot three years ago, they wanted to bring a sense of vibrancy and life to the storefront, and what better way to do that, they thought, than with caffeine and music. The store features a full coffee shop with tables and seating, which opens into a showcase area that houses a full stage, a lighting system, and pro sound that's big enough for brass ensembles and jazz bands. The store's cozy atmosphere and coffee shop storefront make it a beacon for walk-in customers, parents who've brought their kids in for lessons, and lots of regulars.

A glance at the store's monthly event calendar reveals why Spotlight has become a hangout for musicians and music fans. Six days a week they host a live evening performance of some kind or another, from the local Guitar Society meeting and perfor-

mance to the jazz ensemble meet-up or open jam session. Best of all, each event is free, whether it's a standing-room-only clinic, like the recent event with bass virtuoso Victor Wooten, or a recital performed by the store's own music students (Students in the Spotlight).

For the Curcis, it's not just about bringing people into the store; it's also about giving back. Each year the store celebrates its important milestones with a charity raffle where, for a dollar or for three canned food items, people get a ticket for a chance to win music gear, including a Taylor guitar. The raffle, which benefits the Larimer County Food Bank, has continued to raise thousands of dollars, tons of food, and in the process, rally the community around a worthy cause. Often called upon to donate to other events in the community, the store gives away about \$15,000 in merchandise each year to a variety of causes, including the American Red Cross Northern Colorado Chapter, and in individual cases, works with customers having a hard time.

"One of the benefits of really knowing our clientele is that we can work with customers who need the help and build a lot of trust in the process," Jen says.



**Jen and Rob Curci**  
Spotlight Music

## Martin Music

Memphis, Tennessee

Word has it there's not a band in Memphis that doesn't know Martin Music. Eric Martin's shop has a reputation for being the go-to place for guitar aficionados and working musicians looking for a guitar – and, in some cases, a bandmate.

"People will call us and say, 'I'm looking for someone who can do this, or play that,'" shares Martin. "There are lots of people who've met their bandmates just by being here."

While he won't take credit for the formation of any bands, it's apparent that Martin's openness and "of service" attitude are shared by his staff. The store itself is a place for musicians to



**Eric Martin**  
Martin Music

network and hang out, reminiscent of the local corner store where people swapped stories and shared the news from the neighborhood.

"We're a family-owned shop, and we share that sense with our customers, as they're part of that, too," he says. "We want them to feel welcome here, just to come by any time."

The staff's personal care extends beyond the store's main sales floor to the back, where guitars are serviced.

"I was talking to my luthier just the other day about an instrument that had been taken to another place in town [for repair]. He was saying, 'I don't get why the repairman did this.' And I said, 'It's because it wasn't his own instrument.' He said, 'You're right, because every time I repair something, I repair it as if it was my own, as if I loved this instrument.' That's the difference."

## Melodee Music

Sterling and Leesburg, Virginia



**L-R: Chris Davis, Rob Mock, TM Hanna**  
Melodee Music

For Rob Mock, owner of Melodee Music, with stores in Sterling and Leesburg, Virginia, in-store events were an important consideration when they moved into a new building in Sterling back in 1998. The store itself had originally been established in 1971, and their new location saw the unveiling of their instruction and performance center, located on the store's bottom floor, which features private lesson studios and a 130-seat auditorium. Mock had taken pride in hosting Taylor workshops in the late '90s, and he saw the in-store venue as a way to create an even better experience for customers, not to mention performers.

"Even when I tell an artist in advance that we have a small auditorium in the basement, when they walk in for the first time, the response is almost always, 'Wow,'" he says. "I know everyone's a professional and they always do a really good job, but I think you tend to give a little bit better performance when you're not in the corner of the acoustic guitar room with boxes around you. We've got a permanent sound system and lighting, so we tried to make it as top notch as we could without breaking the bank."

It wasn't long before Mock began planning even bigger events around clinics. He's been hosting his annual Acoustifest each spring for 13 years now, covering an entire day and featuring four performers (see page 30). Some guests have driven from as far as New York to attend.

"We have a lot of fun," he says. "We give out prizes after each clinic – T-shirts, hats and stuff – and when I pull out a person's name, I know most of them, so it's a pretty personal connection."

Last year, Mock added to the event by setting up a mini stage upstairs for product demos between sets. Sales

reps from various manufacturers (including Taylor) also attend.

"I look at the event as a cross between a regular music festival and a NAMM show because having it in March means that a lot of the new stuff has just come out but a lot of people haven't seen it," he says. "So that's an added draw."

Another unique event that Mock added to the front end of the Acoustifest weekend starting last year was his Custom Shop Cocktail Party, an evening reception which this year featured presentations from Martin Guitar's Custom Shop and Taylor's Build to Order experts.

"On this year's invitation, for attire we put, 'Dress for the guitar you desire,' he shares. "We had beer and wine and hors d'oeuvres. Everybody who buys a ticket for Acoustifest automatically gets invited, and then I invite my really good customers, and especially at cocktail parties, we encourage them to bring their spouses since it's a higher-brow kind of event. The people who come appreciate that it's a different flavor."

From events like these to Taylor's Road Show and Find Your Fit, Mock loves that his customers have a chance to connect with people from Taylor in a personal way. Bob Taylor came and spoke one year. Taylor's sales rep for the store, Zach Arntz, is known by many.

"I sometimes joke about how many of my customers know Zach," Mock says. "He's been out here at so many events that instead of asking if Taylor's sales rep is coming out, they'll ask, 'Is Zach coming?' It's a very personal thing, which I think is great." **W&S**

*What do you like about your local Taylor dealer? Share your comments at [taylorguitars.com/dealer-stories](http://taylorguitars.com/dealer-stories)*



**Emory and Charlene Knode**  
Appalachian Bluegrass Shoppe

# Soundings

## New World Voice

In April, singer-songwriter **Jeff Larson (GS8, 654, 612, GS Mini**, among others) served up a new album, *The World Over*, giving fans of harmony-rich acoustic pop a fresh helping of shimmering tunes. Larson's natural ear for melody, together with a voice that radiates golden warmth, lays a tuneful foundation that he skillfully builds upon, incorporating layers of acoustic strumming and tight vocal harmonies to create a rich, laid-back vibe, the listening equivalent of a "safe harbor," to borrow an apt description from his liner notes.

Larson has always had a knack for surrounding himself with complementary musical elements, and on this record it all gels wonderfully. His well-chosen partners in vocal harmony include **Jeddrah Schmit**, daughter of Eagles bassist/singer Timothy B. Schmit, and America co-founders **Gerry Beckley** and **Dewey Bunnell**, with whom Larson has frequently collaborated. **Jeffrey Foskett**, the musical director for Brian Wilson's band, also makes a guest appearance to lend signature Beach Boys vocal arrangements to the album's closing track. Other key contributors include guitarist and co-producer **Hank Linderman**, whose tasteful electric work spices up the acoustic glimmer; and multi-instrumentalist **Bob Brozman**, a master of slide, resophonic and other exotic instrument textures, whose playing adds an assortment of world-roots flavors.

Of the several Taylors Larsen used on the record, he says his **Baritone 8-String** helped spur the creative process.

"I used it on two of the tracks: 'Your Way Back Home' and 'This Morning in Amsterdam,'" he says. "I had started both songs but had reached a dead-end. The Baritone inspired me from the outset with the unique voice it brought to the songwriting process. With both songs it forced a new approach and helped me complete them by adding a bridge, a solo and a new overall vibe." Larson says the Bari-8 also changed up his lead vocal approach.

"It locked me into a more resonant tone on my lower end, which was a good fit and natural to work in," he explains. "It's always nice when an instrument inspires you, but in this case the guitar became even more of a songwriting partner. Now I use the Baritone as one of my main turn-to gui-

tars for writing new or re-working older songs that may have gotten 'stuck' along the way."

www.jefflarson-music.com

## Two Artists, One Day, One Song

The online series "Dubway Days" explores the collaborative songwriting process in an intriguing way: by pairing two artists with the mission of composing and recording a song in one day. Each episode, the host and principle artist, singer-songwriter **Ben Arthur (615)**, hatches a songwriting idea with a guest artist, and the two begin a co-writing session. The series spotlights the nature of the creative process, intensified by the pressure to write and record on a tight deadline. Filmed in New York City's Dubway Studios, the series features regular appearances from Arthur's 615. Guest artists include John Wesley Harding, Tracy Bonham, Alex Wong and Grammy-nominated Latin film star Ximena Sarinana. View the episodes online at [www.dubwaydays.com](http://www.dubwaydays.com)

## Going His Own Way

In early May, **Lindsey Buckingham** opened his 2012 solo tour with a sold-out show in Solana Beach, California, just north of San Diego. This tour finds Buckingham distilling his music into an intimate one-man-show, and he treated the crowd to a mix of material from his solo albums, including last year's *Seeds We Sow*, and Fleetwood Mac tunes including "Bleed to Love Her," "Come," "Never Going Back Again," "Big Love," "I'm So Afraid," and "Go Your Own Way." Our artist relations rep Tim Godwin was in the house and said Buckingham's signature fingerpicking sounded great as he swapped between his Rick Turner and Taylor guitars, including his **814ce**. [www.lindseybuckingham.com](http://www.lindseybuckingham.com)

## Hall Access

We're unabashed fans of the monthly series *Live from Daryl's House*, the award-winning webcast and syndicated television show produced by **Daryl Hall (555, 614ce, 615ce, 914ce NS74ce, Custom)** of Hall & Oates. Each episode

pairs Hall and his band with an invited artist as they jam on each other's songs and share stories and great food, usually from Hall's house in upstate New York. The show has featured a gamut of guest artists, from legends like Todd Rundgren and Nick Lowe to the latest generation of young standout musicians, who seem to relish the chance to collaborate with the soul-singing legend. Among the emerging acts who've hit it off musically with Hall is fellow R&B singer **Allen Stone (DN7e)**, who's been called a "pitch perfect powerhouse" by *USA Today* and seems to share some of Hall's musical DNA. In fact, when Hall decided to take *LFDH* on tour, he invited Stone to join him on several dates, along with neo-soul favorites Sharon Jones and the Dap Kings. We also got in on the act, making Hall a custom black Dreadnought with his show's logo on the front, which he's been playing on tour.

Speaking of *LFDH*, in April we caught up with California boys **The Dirty Heads (T5-C2, SolidBody GS8, GS Mini)**, who were fresh from their own appearance on the show, where they put their signature rock/reggae/hip-hop stamp on the Hall & Oates classic "Rich Girl." The band, best known for their No. 1 hit "Lay Me Down" from their 2008 breakthrough record, *Any Port in a Storm*, was readying their new release, *Cabin by the Sea*, when they stopped by the studios of Los Angeles-based BETA TV to shoot an interview and performance. You can access video footage of the session from our *Wood&Steel* page at [taylorguitars.com](http://taylorguitars.com). Look for more of these interviews and performances with other artists in the future.

## Springsteen's Upswing

Music has always been close to the heart of precocious preteen **Alana Springsteen**. The talented 11-year old recently caught the attention of Kristian Bush, half of the multi-platinum-selling duo **Sugarland**. Bush and Springsteen met through mutual contacts while Springsteen was in Nashville working on songs. He invited her to co-write with him and his brother Brandon, keyboardist for Sugarland, earlier this year. Once out on tour, he invited the Virginia Beach native to come to the band's show and be his guest, although this quickly morphed into an opportunity to let her talent shine.

Bush told Springsteen to learn "Baby Girl," from the duo's 2004 debut album, *Twice the Speed of Life*, with the expectation that she would be invited to sing on stage with them. She says she was nervous, since it was her first time performing with in-ear monitors and not

with her **612ce**. She ended up singing the entire tune on her own, and both the crowd and the band loved it. Afterward, singer Jennifer Nettles told the crowd, "My face hurts, like a wedding face, from smiling the whole time."

Springsteen's talent has quickly been recognized by others in the industry. She was invited to be a part of the Tin Pan South Songwriters Festival, a "writers in the round" series, making her the youngest participant ever. [www.alanaspringsteen.com](http://www.alanaspringsteen.com)

## Drama, Light and Tech Support

Latin rockers **Maná** released their latest album, *Drama y Luz*, last year, but it wasn't until earlier this year that their tour stopped included in San Diego, which came with an urgent request. Touring guitarist Fernando Vallin wanted the newest version of Expression System installed in his **GS5e**, and fast, as the band had several more tour dates in front of them.

Once our Service department finished the installation, Monica Martinez from our Human Resources department played the role of translator as the pickup-equipped guitar was delivered to Vallin at the local venue where they were performing. The band's Taylors were well displayed during their acoustic set, performed on a platform in the middle of the arena, as they played many of their hits for the passionate crowd, including "Se Me Olvido Otra Vez" and more. [www.mana.com.mx](http://www.mana.com.mx)

## Wide World of Worship

Brighton, UK-based worship leader **Matt Redman (Baritone 8-String)** looks forward to life on the road, which is a good thing considering his tour schedule. The British musician recently wrapped up a tour through Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Germany and Holland, essentially waking up on the tour bus in a new country each day. Though he's known for his larger worship events, Redman says he appreciates the stripped-down impact of an acoustic guitar.

"At one point each night we'll play three acoustic songs, back to back," he says. I love the simplicity and space that provides. We're basically playing modern-day hymns, so it's a great moment to really hear people singing their hearts out."

Redman says his Baritone 8-String has been a great addition on his tour.

"It adds some low end to the acoustic vibe without losing that high percussive tone that an acoustic guitar brings,"

he explains. "We feature that guitar heavily when we play '10,000 Reasons,' the title track from my latest album. If we could go back and record it again I'd definitely include an acoustic baritone."

At our press deadline, Redman was looking forward to tour dates in Brazil, the U.S., Singapore, Australia and then back to England. He says his extensive travels have highlighted the ways that music bridges different cultures and languages.

"Often the songs seem to arrive there before us," he says. "Modern worship songs can travel through the global church really quickly these days. So, we'll show up in Tokyo or Kiev and hear that they've already taken the songs to heart. I love that. To me it's proof that we can live thousands of miles apart, have totally different cultures, and yet still share a common heart." [www.mattredman.com](http://www.mattredman.com)

## Jack and Zac

You know it's a party when legendary whiskey distiller Jack Daniel's and Grammy award-winning Taylor act the **Zac Brown Band** come together. Both are known for their dedication to their craft, and as an extension of that theme, the two have partnered for a unique promotional campaign in conjunction with the band's summer tour. A video production team from the ad agency for Jack Daniel's is visiting craftsmen around the nation to capture how they do what they do, and Taylor Guitars is among the companies they'll be spotlighting.

In early May, the production crew visited the Taylor factory for a two-day video shoot, during which they filmed a custom "Jack and Zac" guitar as it made its way through the factory. The guitar, a modified **614ce-N**, features a custom fretboard inlay of the Jack Daniel's stylized script, featuring the "Old No. 7" logo and black filigree that has become synonymous with the Jack Daniel's label. The crew also spoke with Bob Taylor about what craftsmanship means to him. The interview and production footage will be posted on their co-branded site, [www.jackandzac.com](http://www.jackandzac.com).

As Zac and his bandmates tour in support of their new album, team Jack and Zac also will be advocating responsible alcohol consumption and helping concert goers with a designated driver program. You can expect to see Zac playing his custom 614ce-N on stage, along with his custom **NS74ce**.



**Clockwise from top left:** Lindsey Buckingham (photo by Daniel Knighton/Pixel Perfect Images); Dustin "Duddy B" Bushnell from the Dirty Heads with bandmates at BETA TV; Daryl Hall on tour with his customized LFDH guitar (photo by Mark Maglio); Matt Redman; Alana Springsteen with her 612ce; (L-R): Jeff Larsen with Gerry Beckley (photo by Henry Diltz); the "Jack & Zac" guitar



# Making Arrangements



**Terry Wollman talks about his new album's multi-layered sound and how his 912ce fits into the mix**

By Jim Kirlin

Photo by Lena Ringstad

If Terry Wollman's musical résumé is any indication, he certainly plays well with others. Since moving to Los Angeles in 1981, the multi-instrumentalist, composer, arranger and producer has worked as a guitarist and/or music director for dozens of acts, including Billy Preston, Al Jarreau, Joe Walsh, Joan Baez and Keb' Mo'. He's served as the music director for several late night TV talk shows, including *The Late Show* and *The Byron Allen Show*. His guitar work has been featured on TV series like *The Larry Sanders Show* (he was the guitarist in the house band) and *Scrubs*. He even played a guitarist on *Desperate Housewives*.

While Wollman's versatile musical chops have kept his phone ringing, he's also found time to make his own artistic imprint in the contemporary jazz

world. His first solo record, *Bimini*, earned him a Grammy nomination. His follow-up, *Say Yes*, scored critical raves for its blend of eclectic guitar textures. Tracks from his latest album, *Buddha's Ear*, have been riding high on the smooth jazz charts since its release last year. The largely instrumental collection, inspired by Wollman's travels, takes listeners on a relaxing ride across exotic terrain, stirring silky jazz melodicism together with worldly rhythmic flavors. Wollman's sonic vistas offer an intriguing weave of stringed sounds – acoustic guitar with baritone electric; electric volume swells with nylon-string acoustic and cello; baritone and high-strung guitar with ukulele; steel-string and classical guitar with Spanish vihuela. The musical flavors range from contemporary groove-jazz to

Brazilian samba; from American R&B to cinematic soundscapes.

Thanks to his knack for arranging, Wollman's multi-layered pieces manage to sound rich yet open, allowing ample room for expressive nuances. And he gets plenty of those with the help of a core ensemble of top-flight session players who also happen to be longtime friends. His main rhythm section is John "JR" Robinson on drums, Luis Conte on percussion, Abraham Laboriel on bass, and Greg Manning on keyboards. Other friends who lent their talents to the project include Keb' Mo', sax players Mindi Abair and Gerald Albright, guitarist Robbie McIntosh, vocalists Melanie Taylor and Melissa Manchester, and cellist Tina Guo.

Wollman dropped by the Taylor factory in early April to get a light tune-up

on his trusty 1996 912ce, which gave us a good excuse to sit down with him for a chat. He talked about how his latest batch of songs came together, the art of writing parts for great players, and what an indispensable tool his Taylor is.

**You're a busy guy. What was the impetus for you to make this record?**

I was with Keb' Mo' at his house working on arrangements for his most recent record [the Grammy-nominated *The Reflection*], and at one point he just turned to me and said, "When are you going to do another Terry Wollman album instead of working on everybody else's stuff like mine?" I said I'd been thinking a lot about it, and he just

looked at me and said, "I think it's time." And then he said we should write a tune, so we sat down with two acoustic guitars on his back porch and wrote "Mandela" right there.

**How would you describe the identity of this record?**

Strong melodies, lots of layers of rhythms and textures, lots of dynamics. I created the sound in my studio, building the tracks up with guitars and piano and some loops. And then I would bring in JR, Luis, Abraham and Greg. I also had all kinds of guest artists. Keb' Mo' played on the tune we wrote together, but he also sang another tune that I wrote. I had string quartet on a couple tunes – I went to Capitol Records to record strings in the big room. I wanted this to be an

audiophile album. I wanted to make an album that, regardless of the style or the listener's taste, even if you don't like the music, you'll still like the way it sounds. And every time you listen to it, it reveals something more to you. I love albums like that – when I hear a familiar tune by Steely Dan or James Taylor or the Beatles and suddenly think, I never noticed there was an accordion in that bridge!

**As a writer, arranger and producer, when you're recording your compositions with such accomplished musicians, do you give them freedom with their parts or do you write out charts?**

I do both. One of the reasons I use these musicians is because they're amazing, but also because we're friends. We've recorded together and played together on many different things over the years, so they have an understanding of where I'm going with something, and I often know what they're brilliant at. They have amazing radar and intuition. I would be limiting myself if I tried to tell them everything to play and where to play it. My job is to inspire them and tell them what I'm going for, what the song is about. So I lay down a foundation. I don't over-arrange anything. I'm capable, but I'm not interested. It doesn't mean that I didn't write out a bass part, but I wouldn't write out the whole thing. I'd write the meat and potatoes, the groove, the foundation of this idea I had when I was writing the tune, and Abraham would read it. But I would also leave the bridge or the chorus open. Being a guitarist primarily, I would orchestrate with a guitar, so I might have a high-string part, or double the Taylor part, or even use vihuelas and baritone guitars and more eclectic instruments, electric guitars, some distortion, some volume swells. Basically I built up this palette and then left space for these amazing musicians to come in. I knew what they would bring to the table, so I didn't completely set it. But they got to hear the tracks and see the charts beforehand. So, by the time we did the session a week later, JR had already decided what snare he was going to use on a tune. It gave everybody the opportunity to make more of a personal investment themselves, to bring their perspective.

**Were there any songs that started out one way and radically changed in the process of realizing them?**

There's one song called "Tulum," which I had written with a Baby Taylor on the beach in Tulum, Mexico with this rainstorm rolling in. I wasn't really sure where the song was going, so I record-

ed that original part with the 912 when I got back home. And then I started layering. Because I have my own studio, I have the opportunity to do stream-of-consciousness in my recording and arranging – just hitting "record" and saying, "I wonder what a vihuela would sound like on this?" and just recording a couple of takes without judging it in any way. And with this piece it took me on a little journey. I didn't know where it would end, whether I would do it with a full band or not. I put my Ramirez nylon on it, added some strums and a high-string guitar. And it just has these layers. I ended up playing it for Luis Conte and explained that I wrote it on the beach and that the storm was coming in and birds were diving into the water and the time just kept shifting because of the way the waves were rolling in – there was a rhythm but there also wasn't; it was very circular. And Luis knew exactly what I meant because he grew up on an island and had experienced the ocean a lot. So we just added a couple layers of percussion, and that was enough. There were still plenty of layers, so it ebbs and flows and it's more organic. There are all these things that sort of swirl and shift internally, these polyrhythms and other things that came from not over-thinking anything, but just responding to the original solo guitar part.

**You've talked about the process of letting a song reveal itself. Writing songs is a fascinating and sometimes mystifying process. If you were to try to break that process down for you, what does it amount to?**

It's fascinating to me, too, because I often stand back and marvel at it when my peers do that, when I watch Luis pick up the perfect shaker and play the perfect part and know when to not play. It comes from years of experience; it's also recording. I went to Berklee College of Music in Boston and had great teachers. During that time I also bought a TEAC four-track quarter-inch tape recorder, and I started recording and multi-tracking and layering things. That was one of my biggest teachers. The more "flight time" I had, the more I found that tape doesn't lie, and neither does digital or whatever format you use. These days I use Digital Performer and analog preamps to keep the sound warm and natural, but I still hold to the experience I had in my 20s: tape doesn't lie. When you're rushing or you're dragging, or it feels tentative, you might [record] and think, wow that felt really good, but then you listen back and think, it sounds insecure and tentative. And you're like, really? Then you go do it again and over again and over again. When you are playing ses-

sions for other people in studios, you have to just tighten your belt and man up and try to bring it up to the level of your peers, as do they. But when I go back to my studio and play with the luxury – sometimes – of recording myself stream-of-consciousness, not over-thinking, I learn a lot. I get some surprising things that wouldn't have happened if I had been thinking about it or trying too hard or feeling the pressure to nail the take.

**Tell me about the personality of your 912ce and how it works for you.**

To me it's a warm, human, crystal-clear sparkly tone that sits really well in the middle of a mix. When I'm painting with different instruments in the actual arranging, in performances, and even the mixing, this is the color that's in the middle, and it's not too thick. The thing that I love about the 912 is that it's already been EQ'd the way it would need to be to sit in a track anyway. It doesn't have a big bottom; it's got an even and clear bottom, and whether I'm playing my music or playing on TV with any artist I've worked with, if I give it the XLR DI out from the [ES] preamp, every engineer just smiles. I played that guitar with David Cassidy on TV years ago, and we started a tune with wah-wah acoustic guitar, and it just sat there in the mix really nicely. It's versatile and responsive – if I want to play it sweetly, it almost has a nylon quality when I want it to, or I can really spank it and play more aggressively and get some grit out of it, but it still sounds like a great acoustic guitar in a mix. And even by itself, if we thicken up the bottom a little bit if I do a solo piece, it's still an even-tempered instrument. There's not a whole lot to hide behind when you play acoustic guitar, and that's what I love about it. It's certainly a humbling thing, but it's also thrilling. For me there's nothing like sitting down with my Taylor and a singer and just knocking it out.

**When you recorded *Buddha's Ear*, did you incorporate the pickup at all or strictly record with microphones?**

I did both. There's a solo guitar piece, "The Blue Pearl," where I combined them. I took an XLR out from the [ES] and then I miked it, and it's recorded in stereo that way. It's a single take, not a double track. I wanted a wider image on it, and at the time I didn't have a stereo microphone, so I was getting really great sound with a [AKG] 414 and the Avalon 737 pre-amp. That's how I got a wider image. It worked out really great. I mastered with Bernie Grundman, and I remem-

ber bringing it to him and just saying, "Does this work for you sonically?" and he said, "It's fantastic."

**One of the tunes on your album, "Lanikai Lullabye," incorporates a Taylor Baritone 8-string.**

Yeah, I borrowed it because I had read about it and was intrigued by it. I thought, I need to play this instrument; I need to find a place on my album for it.

**"The 912ce is versatile and responsive — if I want to play it sweetly, it almost has a nylon quality, or I can really spank it and get some grit out of it, but it still sounds like a great acoustic guitar in a mix."**

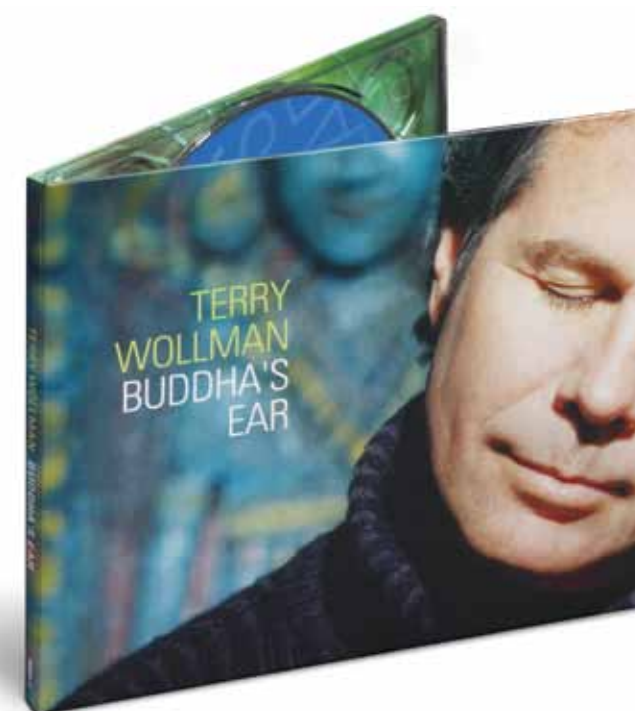
**The song has instruments in different registers on it – a standard steel-string, the baritone-8, high-strung guitar, and a uke in there, too. The way they blend together is cool.**

Thank you. I originally wrote that on my 912 as a solo piece and then thought it would be interesting to develop it and see how I could bring those textures in. For the most part everything seemed to find its place. I would play the track of the original guitar part and just see, range-wise, where it would work, and the eclectic instruments fell in really

easily. With the uke, I had to try different things because the obvious didn't work; it was just too busy and took up too much space sonically. But it's one of the things I enjoy about picking up different stringed instruments like the 8-string bari or the vihuelas or the ukulele or the high-strings: to explore how the instrument can fit within the context of the piece of music you're doing. And to be open to treating it

with a different approach than you would normally take. I find it liberating. I can coax some things out of it that feel good and sound great that don't just sound like me strumming the guitar, and it creates some surprises for me. It makes me get out of my head. So, I don't always treat an instrument like someone might expect it to be treated within the context of a track. Like with the uke, maybe I should fingerpick it. But you don't fingerpick a ukulele. Well, why not? **W&S**

www.terrywollman.com



WHAT ARE YOU

## Working On?

By Chalise Zolezzi

On any given day, the Taylor factory is flush with creative activity. In our recurring feature, we offer a closer look at the work our employees do. With this installment, a guitar neck is sanded and prepared for finish, acoustic amp components undergo “burn in” testing, and the interior of a guitar case is constructed.

## Keith Greenwood

**Neck Production**  
Neck Department

**What he's working on:**  
Sanding a neck



company's ultra-boutique guitar brand, R. Taylor.

These days Keith works in the neck department, and today he'll be inlaying 40 to 50 fretboards, mostly those for the 500, 700 and T5 Series. These will maintain our production reserves. At the moment, Greenwood is in the midst of sanding out 16 to 20 necks.

The Nashua, New Hampshire native

takes the neck of a 314ce and starts with a pneumatic hand sander and silicon carbide 180-grit sandpaper, working along the base of the heel to level any tooling marks left by the computer mill. He moves in small stretches, careful not to “over run” the portions already sanded and to maintain accuracy in movement for a smooth profile. It's important to avoid sanding the narrow edge at the base of the heel, which will later be inset into a pocket routed in the body, while leaving a clean surface for finish where the wood shows. He works his way up to the peghead, sanding along the scalloped contours, and spots a small bit of excess Jet glue around the nut. He uses a razor blade to remove it before he continues. After about five minutes he switches to the 320 grit, a fine-grit sandpaper.

“I love woodworking,” Keith says as he sands. “There are so many different woods and inlays in this process, you really have to pay attention or risk oversanding.” He steers clear of the fretboard, and in the span of a few more minutes the neck has a pristine, ultra-smooth feel. Each fretboard will be covered with tape to protect the surface from any color and/or finish that will be applied. For necks with wood binding along the fretboard, Keith will also tape the binding as well as the

truss rod cover. For necks bound with Ivoroid, the binding, truss rod cover and heel cap will be protected before they move on to the finish processes. He'll also mark the back of the fretboard extension with a “K” to identify that his hands have helped shape it.

Keith also needs to ensure the accurate delivery of the neck to the

finish department. He'll manually check each neck against the production schedule for the day, and once satisfied, will return to inlaying fretboards, which are spread across his work station. It's variety like this that Keith loves most about his job. Plus, as he shares, “all my friends are here.”



## Matt Thayer

**Electronics Engineer**  
Electronics Department

**What he's working on:**  
Testing acoustic amp components

When we reach out to Matt Thayer in our electronics department to find out what's on his plate, he says a burn-in rack for our Expression System® Amplifier. Come again?

“Pop over and you'll see what I mean.”

The ES Amp is new to Taylor and currently available only in extremely limited quantities through our small-batch Builder's Reserve series. Designed for the Expression System electronics that come with our acoustic/electric guitars, the 40-watt amp features solid state technology, a bi-amp speaker arrangement, and a single volume knob, allowing a player to use the ES controls on a Taylor guitar to easily shape their amplified tone.

In this instance, Matt, one of Taylor's resident electronics engineers, is running a comprehensive “burn-in” to verify that the amplifiers are working correctly. The nine amps he's testing have been running for 48 hours straight, sending a full power signal sweep from 20 Hz to 20 kHz to gauge the full range of output. A “burn-in” of this type is a fairly typical test in the electronics world to detect components that may fail prematurely. Between this and a sound test that will be performed once the amplifier is fully assembled, Matt can be assured that the amplifiers these units get paired with will enjoy a long, healthy life. It's a process that not all amp manufacturers go through, but a step that our electronics design team feels is necessary.

A metal chassis that sits against Matt's desk houses the amp components (minus their cabinets), giving him a clear line of sight to assess each amp's performance. There are two lights here: yellow, which is wired to the tweeter amplifier, and green, wired to the woofer amplifier. As the signal sweep passes through the bi-amp, the yellow light blinks, signaling that the tweeter amp is working, and then the green follows, affirming the woofer amp. No sound is emitted, and the

lights are somewhat reminiscent of a scene from *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*.

All 30 amps have been put through this series of tests, and Matt says that to date, none have failed. “If the amps had any issues or any components were installed wrong, they would have ‘burned out’ in the first 24 hours,” he explains. “The design of this amp is built to last a long time in a variety of settings and circumstances.”

Matt has been working for Taylor for 10 months but is far from new to the world of electronics. His pursuit of electrical engineering has always included a desire to work with audio equipment. What he likes most about his job, he says, is being at the forefront of Taylor's new products and designs, some of which we have to keep under wraps for now. Suffice it to say, there's plenty to keep him busy.

For now, Matt is nearing the end of his testing and documentation for these amps. Once he's finished, he'll be taking on new amplifiers from Taylor's engineers to put through the same variety of tests. What might be next from the world of Taylor amplification?

“There will be more to come,” is all he'll reveal, adding a sly smile.



## Yaretzi Meza

**Production Operator**  
Case Department,  
Tecate Factory

**What she's working on:**  
Building cases



In less than a year at Taylor, Yaretzi Meza has become a skilled practitioner of Taylor's innovation-centered mindset, “If you need it, make it.” Yaretzi works in our Tecate, Mexico factory building guitar cases, a production process that Taylor first implemented back in 1989 in order to create a perfect fit for our proprietary body shapes. We produced cases at our El Cajon complex until 2001, when the production was relocated to our new Tecate factory. Currently in Tecate, we make the hardshell brown and black cases found on the 500 Series and up and most of our 300 and 400 Series cases (we'll soon be making them all there). Like everything we produce, there's an acute attention to detail, which makes these cases both durable and aesthetically pleasing.

Yaretzi works in an area of the factory that's dedicated to all aspects of case making, including the application of the outer tolex material, attachment of the lid hinges with grommets, and cutting the “plush,” the velvet-like inside lining that helps create a safe cocoon for the guitar. Yaretzi's focus today is to line the case with plush for an 816ce.

Just a step ahead of where Yaretzi will begin, poplar wood lining is added to the shell of the case to further

strengthen the design and to provide a solid surface against which to glue the additional material. She starts with the tail end of the case, the most detailed part, where the guitar will sit. She takes a thick paint brush and dips it into a crock pot of hide glue, which is heated on a low setting to its melting point. She'll brush the glue directly onto the wood lining and then apply the plush. Next, she'll paint along each side and then attach long strips of specially designed, pre-cut padding wrapped in the plush. This will cushion the sides of the guitar and allow very little movement. Her measurements must be exact, as any uneven insertions or bumpy patches will be noticed. If she trims the plush too much, the wood will show through.

Over the course of her shift, Yaretzi will work on cases with different shapes and sizes. She says she enjoys the people at Taylor as well as the work environment, which she says she finds relaxing. **W&S**







summer 2012

# TaylorWare®

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Patrick (Repair) kicks back in our new Men's Hibiscus T while his colleague Chanthouan (Customer Service) models our Ladies Burnout Tank.

## shirts for the Taylor fan

### A) Ladies' Nouveau T

100% cotton jersey, pigment dyed for a slightly faded effect. "Nouveau" inlay elements from our Presentation Series form a Taylor headstock. (Charcoal #4110, Red #4120; S-XL, \$22.00)

### B) Taylor Dri-Fit Polo

Dri-Fit fabric draws away sweat to keep you dry and comfortable. Embroidered Taylor logo on chest. Made by Nike. (Charcoal #2705; M-XL, \$49.00; XXL, \$51.00)

### C) Men's Hibiscus T

Heavyweight preshrunk 100% cotton. Green multi-tone Taylor hibiscus design on front; small Taylor round logo on back. Standard fit. (White #1489; S-XL, \$24.00; XXL-XXXL, \$26.00)

### D) Men's Guitar Stamp T

Lightweight, garment-washed 100% cotton jersey with a worn-in look and feel. Fashion fit. Distressed Taylor guitar stamp design on front. (Gray #1478; S-XL, \$28.00; XXL, \$30.00)

### E) Ladies' Burnout Tank

Garment-dyed, pre-shrunk 50/50 cotton/poly blend. "Burnout" fabric treatment is weathered, lightweight and sheer for a soft, vintage look and feel. Slim fit. (Kelly Green #4060; S-XL, \$25.00)

### F) Baseball T

Cotton/poly blend for an ultra soft, worn-in feel. 3/4 raglan sleeve, with Taylor Guitars headstock banner print. (White/Sand #2295; S-XL, \$28.00; XXL, \$30.00)

### G) Men's Logo T

100% pre-shrunk cotton. Standard fit. (Prairie Dust #1700; S-XL, \$20.00; XXL-XXXL, \$22.00)

### H) Men's Vintage Peghead T

100% combed cotton. Fashion fit. (Black #1480; S-XL, \$24.00; XXL-XXXL, \$26.00)

### I) Taylor Work Shirt

Permanent press, stain-resistant poly/cotton blend. Two front pockets. Distressed screen print over left pocket and on back. (Charcoal #3070; M-XL, \$34.00; XXL-XXXL, \$36.00)





**1) Guitar Lessons** by Bob Taylor. (Wiley Publishing, 2011, 230 pages; #75060, \$20.00) **2) TaylorWare Gift Card.** Visit our website for more information. **3) Digital Headstock Tuner.** Clip-on chromatic tuner, back-lit LCD display. (#80920, \$29.00) **4) Taylor Picks.** Marble or solid color. Ten picks per pack by gauge. Thin, medium or heavy. (\$5.00) **5) Suede Guitar Strap.** (pictured Black #62001, not shown, Honey #62000; Chocolate #62003, \$48.00) **6) Taylor Tumbler.** Clear, high-quality acrylic, designed for cold and hot liquids. Holds 16 ounces. Screw-top lid with straw. BPA free. Hand wash only. (#70015; \$12.00)

**7) Taylor Porcelain Cup.** 11-ounce thermal cup, flexible lid, Taylor peghead icon on one side, Taylor logo on the other. (#70008, \$15.00) **8) Taylor Pub Glasses.** Four different designs, in black and gold, put a unique stamp on each 20-oz glass in this set of four. (#70011; \$25.00) **9) Taylor Plush Towel.** Oversized 40 x 70" heavyweight towel. 100% cotton. White body with Taylor hibiscus design in red, orange and gold. (#74000, \$39.00) **10) Men's Wallet.** Genuine leather with embossed Taylor logo. Card slots, I.D. window and bill compartment. By Fossil. (Brown #71302, \$40.00)

**Taylor Bar Stool.** Easy assembly. (#70200, \$99.00) Add an extra \$5.00 shipping for each Taylor Bar Stool ordered. Overnight delivery not available.



great summer gift ideas



Ted from our IT department keeps his cool on the course with the help of our Dri-Fit Polo. See description on page 33.

- A) Tattered Patch Cap**  
Flex fit, two sizes.  
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- B) Military Cap**  
Enzyme-washed 100% cotton chino twill, Velcro closure, one size.  
(Black #00400, Olive #00401, \$22.00)
- C) Driver Cap**  
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(Black #00125, \$25.00)
- D) ES-Go™ Pickup**  
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- E) Loaded Pickguards**  
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(Single HG Humbucker: \$148.00)
- F) Travel Guitar Stand**  
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# Wood&Steel

A Publication of Taylor Guitars

Volume 72 / Summer 2012

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## Fiesta del Sol

Few tonewoods can match the moody drama of cocobolo, a Mexican rosewood whose complexion is a bold vista of blazing hues. No two sets are alike, and on this cutaway Grand Concert, the flatsawn back and sides unleash a swirling feast of variegated tones that appear to descend in a molten flow. The wood's density will yield a bright, responsive tone with sparkling treble notes. Paired with the Grand Concert body, the crisp note definition will match well with fingerstylists and fleet-fingered pickers. For a frontal view of the guitar, see our center spread on pages 18-19.