

# Wood & Steel

## **Ebony's Wild Side**

**600 Series  
Spring LTDs**

**Granadillo 400s**

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**All-Koa Grand Orchestra  
First Edition K28e**

**NAMM Highlights**

**Progress in  
Cameroon**

**BTO Gallery**





# Letters



## GO-Getter

A few weeks ago, I bought another Taylor guitar, the simply superb 918e Grand Orchestra First Edition, number 53 of 100, from my local music store, Rande's Music Center, in Rockford, Illinois. Yesterday a package arrived from Taylor containing the certificate, book and special strap, which goes exclusively with this model. Thank you for making, marketing and following through with such a great U.S.-made guitar. The tone, volume, clarity and response from all six strings are amazing. I am an older guy in his 70s and have played a lot of different makes and models since I first started back in 1956. I bought a 914ce in 2007, which I have been very happy with, but this 918e is even better.

Dave Copnall

## Going the Extra Mile Kilometer

I have been a very happy owner of a 614ce for many years and recently sent it back to your service centre in Amsterdam for an ES upgrade following some problems I had with the older ES system that was originally installed. I just got it back yesterday and wanted to say thanks for such an excellent job with this work. Laure Saint Remy in your Amsterdam service centre went the extra mile to make sure that my guitar came back better than ever, and the quality of the work was amazing. My guitar has never played so well, or sounded so good. Thanks again.

Jamie Allan  
Aberdeen, UK

## Mini Migration

Being a songwriter and piano player, I would get frustrated sometimes when our local songwriting guild

got together and I had no instrument to play unless I wanted to bring my keyboard and PA so all could hear it! I felt envious of the others who could carry their instrument on their backs, open the case, and begin to play. So, about 1-1/2 years ago I purchased a GS Mini to learn to play guitar. Within three months, two more members of our guild came to a meeting with a new GS Mini! Before long, a third member showed up with a GS Mini. Like me, one of the members is learning to play guitar, and it's her first guitar. The others added a Mini to their collection.

The members in our group who lack a Mini now want us to pass around the guitars! Although I am still a rookie player, I love the size *and* that the size does not compromise the sound at all. I played nearly 50 guitars when I decided that I wanted my own. This one sounds so beautiful and fits me just right. As a songwriter, I have found that I am inspired differently with a guitar than with a piano; it lends another layer to creating music.

Thanks, Taylor, from me and the rest of the Sandhills/Cape Fear Songwriters Guild!

Kerstin Hanson

## Factory Friends

Being relatively new owners of Taylor guitars, my brother and I took your factory tour today. This was absolutely fantastic to see the workings and the pride in building your products. Everybody was friendly, the guide, of course, was quite knowledgeable, and even the workers who were being interrupted by the tour were friendly and showed no annoyance from being disturbed. Yes, I'm sure they're used to the daily tours, but even so, very friendly. I know of no other factory that would open their doors so widely to the public. Well done and thanks.

Peter Chiavetta

## Bringing Up Baby

When my youngest daughter was 9 years old, she expressed interest in playing guitar. That Christmas she received a starter guitar (another brand) as a gift. After the initial excitement, I realized the guitar was almost impossible to keep in tune. I'd heard about Taylors, although at that point I didn't have one of my own. One afternoon my daughter and I went shopping and came home with a Baby

Taylor. That guitar transformed her interest in playing guitar. She played it non-stop for about five years [until] she needed a larger guitar. A young teacher at our church purchased the Baby Taylor, then promptly gave it away to a young student who couldn't afford an instrument.

I've since had the good fortune to acquire a number of beautiful Taylors, but I do wonder about the young child who received the gift of a Taylor from his teacher. I hope he took that wonderful gift and made guitar playing a lifelong passion. Mandy now plays a 314ce, and my favorite is a custom maple GS, but we'll always remember that it started with the guitar we called Baby.

Andy Wachtel

## Choir Director

I just purchased my first Taylor acoustic, and I could not be more impressed. I thought it was a great guitar while I was trying it out, but after I got home and really sat down with it I realized I had a gem! I have been playing [other brands] for years, and this Taylor has given me 100 percent more confidence in my playing. I was describing the sound to a friend of mine, and all I could say was that it sounds like there is a choir singing inside. I have heard Rico Estrada from [the band] Ease Up absolutely kill his Taylor many times, so I had to see what it was all about! You truly make amazing instruments, and you have a new customer for life! Thanks, guys. I look forward to coming out to the shop the next time I am in San Diego!

Rob Edge

## Surf Lines

I am a 66-year-old professional musician who still gigs weekly, and my new Taylor 412ce-FLTD is the third Taylor I've owned in my life. I am completely wowed by it! I have not had a Taylor since I gave my 312ce to my son about five years ago. I'd forgotten how fast and buttery the neck is for such an old-school electric lead guitarist as myself (I still play all my full band gigs with my original 1965 Ventures Mosrite, no pedals, straight into my Fender Princeton Reverb). Until I got about Taylors, I was doing all acoustic/electric gigs with my [other acoustic brand], but now it will always be this Taylor. The short scale, amazing wood

combination [Ed. Note: *blackwood/cedar*], and scratch-and-dent price is what brought me back. Compared to this guitar's wide spectrum of rich, full tone, the [other brand] sounds weak and thin. Other than performing as the solo guitar, I normally play upper position chords – mostly 4- or 3-string melody chords (so as not to duplicate the rhythm guitar) combined with 1- or 2-string leads and solos using a pick and finger and/or just pick style – and this guitar is perfectly suited for my style of playing. All open chords and harmonics are equally impressive, too. And yes, you can play '60s surf lead guitar on this Taylor (even though it doesn't have a whammy bar).

Jeff Scarborough

## Smooth Service

My 30th anniversary XXX-MC had binding problems, which no one in Alabama wanted to deal with, given Taylor's special [finish]. Time to call the factory.

Ryan answered, and I don't think I've ever been treated so well. He walked me through the repair process, seemed happy to help, and was clear as glass. So I sent the guitar off. I got another call (Chris, I think). Same thing. He told me the guitar was in the shop and described what they'd do. He didn't have to do that, but he did. A week later, another call. The guitar was ready. Once again, extraordinary service! Then the guitar arrived – fixed, polished, new strings in the right gauge. Wow. You have some wonderful people working for you. Thanks.

John Mayfield

## Aging Gracefully

In September of 2010, I won a 1995 410 in an eBay auction. The guitar appeared to be in good condition, so I paid, and it took a while, as the woman who sold me the instrument said her father had to send it from Kentucky. Two weeks later I got the guitar, but it was sent without any protective shipping materials at all! There was only some dime-store shipping tape wrapped around the buckles of the original Taylor case, and a FedEx tag hung from the handle. I thought for sure this guitar was going to be a pile of kindling wood! I pulled the tape off, opened the case, and by some miracle, the guitar was intact. However, the instrument clearly had not been played in years, the action was very high,

and the strings were ancient. It was almost like the scene in *The Wizard of Oz* where the Tin Man whispers, "Oil can," except the 410 was whispering, "Water...please, water..."

I brought it to my guitar guy, who humidified it, did a set-up, and removed a buzz. I was thrilled to discover that this guitar had not only come back to life, but it had beautiful tone and intonation – and somehow has even improved over the past 2-1/2 years that I've owned it. I record with it, and it has this wonderful, clear voice unlike any other. I will likely never sell this guitar; it just gets better with age as it approaches 20. I have since bought a GS Mini. Thanks, Taylor!

Edward Monette  
Manhattan

## Fine Artistry

I have been a proud owner of a 110 since college. I had been wanting to upgrade for a couple of years, and finally purchased the 814ce. I am blown away by the beauty, playability and sound. This is hands-down the finest instrument I have ever held and is rivaled by none. I will be a Taylor customer until the day I die. I just wanted to pass along my gratitude to everyone at Taylor for the attention to detail and artistry that is now sitting in my living room.

Ethan Renfro

*Correction: In last issue's Guitar Guide, the Grand Orchestra's body depth was listed as 4-13/16 inches. While that measurement correctly relates to the tail end of the body, our official body depth dimension measures to the body's deepest point, which is 5 inches.*

We'd like to hear from you

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

# Wood&Steel

Volume 75  
Spring 2013



## On the Cover

### 16 The 2013 Spring Limiteds

Wild-hued ebony and bell-toned granadillo freshen Taylor's acoustic palette for spring.

Cover photo: Sapwood-rich ebony creates a dramatic presence on a 616ce-LTD



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## Features

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Shawn Persinger helps you fine-tune your musical goals and streamline your progress.

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You don't need to surf to catch a big wave on a koa board. The tone of our all-koa K28e rolls in smooth and delivers a long, sweet ride.



### 12 Profile: Bob Zink

He joined Taylor when it was a shop and became a department of one. Nearly 30 years later, our longtime purchasing manager leaves behind a legacy of strong supplier relationships.

### 20 Taylor at NAMM

The Grand Orchestra had its coming-out party, and some talented friends turned our exhibition space into a music hall.

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Our Build to Order wall at NAMM was decked out in its trade show finest.

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Taylor luthier Andy Powers kicks off his new column, The Craft, by relating his guitar-making yearnings to the essence of musical sounds.

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Steady progress is being made at the Crelicam mill in Cameroon, as we work to improve every step in the supply process.

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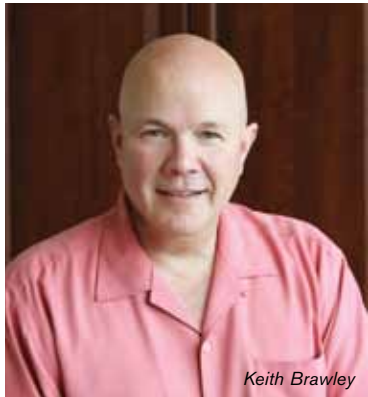
# Kurt's Corner

## Shared Paths

For years we've been telling the story about how I was 21 and Bob was 19 when we bought the American Dream from Sam Radding and started Taylor Guitars. Well, Bob just had his 58th birthday, and next year will mark 40 years for the company. We've gone from the age when you start a career to the age when you consider winding down your career. Not us. Neither Bob nor I are thinking about retiring, but we've started to have a few employees retire who've been with us for many years, like machinist Pete Davies and tool designer Matt Guzzetta. Now it's Bob Zink, who is profiled in this issue. Interestingly, these three gents have waited until they're closer to the age of 70 than 60 to make the change.

Bob Zink joined us in 1984. Incredibly, we did \$288,000 worth of business that entire year! It was a struggle to do even that. Those were tough times, and we had to have faith to keep going. It's amazing to look back on those times. I'm grateful to Bob and others who have stayed with us through the good times and the growth, and the bumps in the road along the way. Like they say, it's all about the journey rather than the destination. Thanks for all your years of service, Bob, and for helping me and Bob Taylor pursue our dream.

It's been really rewarding to spend so much of my life working together with friends, growing the business, sharing the triumphs and the failures. I really love that about this business.



Keith Brawley

I've known and worked with Keith since he was a VP at Guitar Center, and we stayed in touch through his time with Musician's Friend and then Gibson. Prior to this, Keith spent many years with Fender, and even had his own guitar company, Brawley Guitars. Keith loves guitars, has extensive indus-



Tim O'Brien

Wherever you are, whatever you do, and wherever your path takes you, I wish you a journey filled with good friends, guitars and music.

— Kurt Listug, CEO

try experience, is devoted to the guitar business, and is a seasoned business-man.

Tim was most recently with LG Mobile Communications, where he was VP of Marketing for North America. I heard about Tim from John Vitro of VITRO, our ad agency for the past 20 years. Prior to his work with LG, Tim was a brand manager with Mars Pet Food Division, a brand manager with Proctor and Gamble, and served a stint with Microsoft. Tim also plays guitar. Both Keith and Tim are smart, savvy guys, and I'm excited to be working with them.

Wood&Steel

Volume 75  
Spring 2013

**Publisher** Taylor-Listug, Inc.

**Produced by the Taylor Guitars Marketing Department**  
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**Circulation** Katrina Horstman  
**Printing / Distribution** Courier Graphics / CEREUS - Phoenix

**Translation** Veritas Language Solutions  
**Translation Coordination** Angie Stamos-Guerra

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**2013 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!

**Factory Closures**  
**Monday, May 27**  
(Memorial Day)  
  
**Monday-Friday, July 1-5**  
(Independence Day/  
Company Vacation)  
  
**Monday, September 2**  
(Labor Day)

# BobSpeak

## With a Little Help From My Friends

I have a lot of friends in this industry. I decided a long time ago that some of my best potential for lifelong friendships would be among my competitors and suppliers, and so I've shared time, knowledge and fun with them. We've had lots of fun, and even lived through some sad times together. The last few days have reminded me of this.

I have our ebony sawmill in Cameroon on my mind full-time these days. If I'd known what was in store for us before we started this ebony business, it would have scared me half to death. It's not easy. But with each month we learn more, risk more, invest more, and solve more. We are aligning with clients who have similar goals for the stressed forests and their timbers of the world. And I have friends who are willing to help.

The last couple of days I've been in the Seattle, Washington, area absorbing help. First, with Steve McMinn, our incredible supplier of spruce. What an operation he's built: so clean, precise, thoughtful and ever-improving. Because we're cutting wood in Africa now, he's helping me test methods, even giving his time to go there with me and lend his thoughtful eye. We are thinking, planning and pursuing methods to set new levels of recovery and good stewardship of the trees. We know we can make more from fewer trees. Thanks, Steve, for the years of collaboration. Thank you.

Then, while in the area, I visited Michael Gurian. We've been friends for 35 years. Michael is a great guitar builder and had one of the early independent companies back in the day. A fire that burned his factory down and a perfect storm of other things caused him to leave that behind and use his brilliance to make guitar parts. Look at the wooden bridge pins or binding on your guitar and you'll see Michael's work. Inlays, parts, pieces... there are so many things he makes, and his knowledge is venerable. I want to know how to make violin pegs and ebony dowels. Who do I call? Michael, of course.

He lives and works on a barge on the docks of Seattle. Yep, you heard me right. A beautiful 10,000-square-foot floating factory, office and home. He doesn't fear earthquakes or city codes. He's on the water. I told you, he's brilliant! Last night we sat around the kitchen table chatting, and I learned things from him. I learned a lot about things I didn't need to know about before now. We lifted a glass to our long friendship, because after all is said and done, we appreciate that the most. Michael turned 70 years old last month, and still has a lot to give. But he, in particular, is narrowing his focus down to the friends he calls family. I'm happy he includes me.

I'm flying home from this trip with ideas of how to take the next steps of

improvement in Cameroon, and these are the things that are on my mind, besides the woodcutting. I'm happy for these relationships. Michael answered questions I had about what makes band saw blades work better or worse, and then gave us books that outline feeds, speeds and tooth configurations for different materials. It's time to learn that. Wayne Brinkley, a tooling engineer from our product development group, is next to me reading all that, and I'm glad he likes that reading more than I do. I'll read it anyway, from the middle to both ends, not front to back, because I'm just trying to find the answer to my question. Thanks to the help of great friends, I know I will.

— Bob Taylor, President

## Editor's Note

### Creative Drive

As our own Andy Powers observes in his inaugural column for *Wood&Steel* this issue, the creative journey is rarely a straight and clear path. For every inspired idea, an obstacle (or many) stands in the way of its execution. Without the ability to navigate unexpected twists and surmount inevitable obstructions, success can be elusive.

That tandem theme of passion and perseverance is a cultural cornerstone here at Taylor. It enabled Bob and Kurt to sustain their business during Taylor's difficult early years. Over time their company has been built on the solid foundation of that philosophy, attracting other like-minded people who support their vision and strive to make the world a better place with the help of our instruments.

Evidence of that mindset bubbles to the surface in several places within this issue. Andy unfurls his new column, The Craft, by reflecting on the underpinnings of the creative process that has guided his development as a guitar maker. In our fond farewell to longtime employee Bob Zink, we salute a craftsman whose level of commitment was instrumental in Taylor's evolution beyond a small shop. And as we share in our report on ebony processing in Cameroon, we continue to make measurable progress thanks to the creative thinking and resolute efforts of our management team and employees, despite an array of constant challenges.

One thing we know: There will always be obstacles in our path. But when the destination is a world filled with inspired guitar players, we'll always find a way to get there.

We hope to see you out at a Road Show this year.

— Jim Kirlin

## 0% Financing on Taylor Purchases Through June 30, 2013

We're pleased to re-introduce our GE Money Consumer Financing program. From now through June 30, you can get 0% interest on select Taylor purchases if they're paid in full within 12 months. Monthly payments are required, and purchases must be made in the U.S. This year we've expanded the range of the program to cover 300 and 400 Series models. Eligible Taylor models include:

- **300 Series and up, including Limited Editions**
- **T5 Standard and T5 Custom**
- **All SolidBody models**

## Wood&Steel Online

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





# HIT YOUR MARK

Honing your guitar-playing goals into precise objectives will help you reach them faster

By Shawn Persinger

In some ways Don was like many of my students. He was fifty-something years old and had never played guitar before. But one characteristic set him apart: He had a radically specific goal, and he had to reach it in six weeks.

Now, you, too, might have a musical goal: to get better at playing guitar, or to write original songs, or to make music with others, but none of those goals is specific. How “good” is good enough? To write songs you could simply write lyrics and sing them, since songwriting isn’t bound to playing guitar. And what kind of music do you want to make with others: jazz, rock, folk, funk, experimental? Again, you don’t really need a guitar for any of those. So, while I genuinely empathize with those personal desires, the details are vague at best.

So, what was Don’s precise goal? He wanted to play and sing the Everly Brothers’ version of “Let It Be Me” to his wife on her birthday. Once again, many of you might be saying to yourselves, “I’ve always wanted to play (insert favorite song here),” but let me reiterate, that is not detailed enough. Wanting to play a song is a fine plan

(and a good way to get better), but *needing* to play a song, a specific song, for a specific occasion, with a specific deadline, *that* is a specific goal.

And what happened with Don? Something I had never seen from an adult student before. In one week, at his second lesson, he was able to finger the chords and switch between them quickly enough to have performed the song that day!

OK, here are the disclaimers:

- Don could sing the melody. The benefit of this is almost incalculable. The melody and words are what actualize the song – the guitar playing is almost secondary.
- Because he could sing the melody, all he had to do was strum each chord one time and let it ring for four beats before switching (Example 1). But he soon progressed to four strums per measure.
- Don is self-employed, and he kept his guitar near his desk at work so he could pick it up for a few minutes every hour or so. As a result he was able to squeeze in almost two hours of practice a day! This is very rare for most adults. Personally, I don’t know that I

would have the patience to play the same song over and over again, two hours a day, for seven days.

So, those are the pluses Don had going for him – in addition to the fact that he had a *specific* goal. Including those advantages, there were a few other techniques we used to get Don to his objective so quickly. These are actions that all players, specific goals or not, can start implementing to improve their playing right now.

## Learn to Sing

I know what many of you are thinking: I can’t sing. I’ve heard this a thousand times. It’s not true. Everyone who can talk can sing. What is much more likely is one of the following:

- You don’t know how to use your singing voice.
- You don’t like the sound of your voice.
- Someone told you that you can’t sing, and now you are self-conscious when you even think about it.
- You try singing every now and then but give up after a meager five-minute attempt.

While I can’t promise to turn you into Pavarotti, Sting or Hank Williams, I

can give you some pointers to get you singing on pitch and in key.

Have you ever tried to sing something simple like “Happy Birthday,” only to have it sound awful? Well, for starters, “Happy Birthday” is *not* easy to sing! It has a one-octave leap in it, which means if you begin on a note that is already relatively high, then that last “happy *birth*...” will be so high it would make anyone sound bad. So, make sure you actually start with something simple.

While there are many pop, rock and country songs that are easy to sing, I recommend trying a children’s song first. “Mary Had a Little Lamb” is particularly good because it has only four different notes and, for the most part, uses “stepwise” movement, meaning most notes are right next to each other in the scale. Example 2a shows how to play the song using only the high E string; Example 2b shows it on the A string. The reason I’m showing you this is because you now have various key options in which to sing. Using this process of playing on one string at a time, you can choose from five different keys: E, B, G, D and A. Chances are if you can’t sing the melody in E (first

string), then the key of A (fifth string) might work for you. You have to experiment with this. And don’t give up after five minutes. A little bit of effort can change your musical life forever. (Note: If you put a capo on the first fret, you now have 10 options for keys!)

## Memorize the Chords

Memorizing the chord shapes and chord progression of a song makes it much easier to play. This might sound obvious, but I’ve seen many beginners struggle to read a piece of sheet music, finger a chord shape they are discerning on another piece of paper, look back to their fingers, and glance at the lyrics...all the while nervous that the pick will fly out of their hand when they strum. If you can memorize any one of these three things (chord shapes, progression or lyrics) it will make your job exponentially easier.

When it comes to memorizing a chord progression, I once again recommend starting with something easy, but make sure it’s truly easy. Many Bob Dylan songs are considered to be easy because they use only three or four chords, but his progressions tend to be quite lengthy and without a readily

recognizable pattern. Dylan might play 12 measures before repeating a pattern; you don’t want a song like this. If you insist on Dylan, try “Knockin’ on Heaven’s Door.” Additional tunes that are easy to memorize are: “Love Me Do,” “Bad, Bad Leroy Brown,” and “Stand By Me.”

One last comment regarding chord shapes: As you can see in Example 1, I have used a very simple two-finger G chord. It is likely that many readers are more familiar with a three- or four-finger G chord, and you should be. Whenever I give the two-finger G, I always inform students that this is not the G chord they will eventually make the most use of, and then I show them the additional options.

## Create a Specific Goal

While I was able to guide Don through the subtler points of guitar playing, fine-tune his vocals, and share supplemental techniques, I still believe it was his specific goal that made him a guitar player in a matter of weeks. The problem so many people struggle with isn’t the desire to do something great, it’s the lack of thought we put into figuring out what that particular thing is.

Now it’s your turn. Set a goal and make it detailed. I suggest a three-point plan: 1) a specific song or musical concept; 2) a specific arrangement (yours or someone else’s); 3) a specific deadline. Aim to learn a bluegrass standard (Ex. 3, “Cripple Creek”) and play it at a couple of bluegrass jams this summer. Plan on writing your first song (vocal or instrumental) in the style of Gordon Lightfoot, Green Day or Leo Kottke, and play it at your local open mic in eight weeks. Or how about playing and singing one Beatles song in the key best-suited to your voice (experiment with capo and transposition) every day for the next year? Having a specific goal will help you achieve much more than lackadaisically wishing you were better at the guitar.

Oh, and how was Don’s debut performance received by his wife? With shock and delight, hugs and kisses, and tears of joy. Mission accomplished. **W&S**

*Shawn Persinger, a.k.a. Prester John, owns a Taylor 410, two 310s and a 214ce-N. His music has been described as a myriad of delightful musical paradoxes: complex but catchy; virtuosic yet affable; smart and whimsical. His book The 50 Greatest Guitar Books is being hailed as a monumental achievement by readers and critics. (www.GreatestGuitar-Books.com)*

## Hit Your Mark

By Shawn Persinger

Ex. 1

Chord diagrams: G, D, Em, D, C, G, C, G

Musical notation: Treble clef, key of G major, 4/4 time. Chords are indicated by diamond symbols on the staff.

TAB: 3 0 0 0 2 3 0 0 0 2 0 0 0 2 0 0 0 3

Ex. 2a

Chord diagrams: E, B7, E, B7, E

Musical notation: Treble clef, key of E major, 4/4 time. Notes are indicated by dots on the staff.

TAB: 4 2 0 2 4 4 4 2 2 2 4 7 7 4 2 0 2 4 4 4 2 2 4 2 0

Ex. 2b

Chord diagrams: A, E7, A, E7, A

Musical notation: Treble clef, key of A major, 4/4 time. Notes are indicated by dots on the staff.

TAB: 4 2 0 2 4 4 4 2 2 2 4 7 7 4 2 0 2 4 4 4 4 2 2 4 2

Ex. 3

Chord diagrams: G, C, G, G, D, G

Musical notation: Treble clef, key of G major, 4/4 time. Notes are indicated by dots on the staff.

TAB: 3 3 0 3 0 1 0 3 0 0 0 2 0 0 2 0

B

Chord diagrams: G, G, G, D, G

Musical notation: Treble clef, key of G major, 4/4 time. Notes are indicated by dots on the staff.

TAB: 0 0 0 2 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 2 0 0 2 0



# BIG ISLAND WAVES

**Our Hawaiian koa First Edition Grand Orchestra  
is sneaky-strong and promises a sweet ride**

One of the unique strengths of the new Grand Orchestra has been its ability to coax greater complexity from the tonewoods that take its shape. Between its ample real estate, deeper body and innovative bracing, the guitar form seems to unlock hidden tonal colors in woods — a surprisingly warm low-end response from maple, or richer lows and highs from mahogany, for example. Credit the efficiency of the overall design, which tames the sonic chaos and enables more tonal detail to emerge in a clear, uniform way.

That same design sensibility helps extend the voice of our newest First Edition koa offering, the all-koa K28e, to greater heights and depths.

“You get that traditional sound of koa back and sides, which is similar to mahogany in that it has a pretty strong fundamental, but with a little more of the sparkle of rosewood,” says Taylor master luthier Andy

Powers. “And with the koa top, you also get a unique sweetness in the attack that’s fun with the Grand Orchestra because of its powerful volume and dynamic capability.”

As a top wood, koa produces a unique compression, so it typically doesn’t pack as potent an attack as a spruce top. Instead, the tone tends to ring out at the same volume for an extended stretch, maintaining an even balance and sustain.

“It’s not so much a strong initial attack followed by decay before the note releases,” Andy elaborates. “It’s more like the note sneaks up on your ears and then stays there — it lets itself in the front door, hangs around for a while, and then leaves.”

Because the koa soundboard is stronger and heavier than spruce, it will benefit from having some time to break in.

“It has less stiffness but more weight,” Andy says. “That’s what contributes to the roll-in effect on

the attack. Like any other guitar, it’ll get consistently riper, sweeter and quicker to respond as it ages.”

Among the premium touches on these First Edition GO models are AA-grade koa, a shaded edgeburst on the top, back, sides and neck, and Adirondack spruce bracing, which boosts the headroom, giving players extra dynamic range.

A total of 100 K28e First Edition models will be made. Like Taylor’s other First Edition models, these feature a custom label and case plate. Once the guitar is registered, the owner will receive a custom GO First Edition guitar strap, a numbered certificate of authenticity, and a special commemorative booklet. The K28e will eventually become a standard model within the Koa Series.





# Ask Bob

## Spanish cedar, 12-string tension, and X-bracing evolution

I keep reading about the use of Spanish cedar in making guitars – specifically for guitar necks. What is it exactly, and has Taylor Guitars ever considered using this wood?

Bob Slezak

Well, Bob, the funny thing is it's actually neither cedar nor Spanish. Imagine that. It's from the mahogany family and grows in Central and South America. Some has been naturalized in Africa as well. Martin uses it for their kerfing (the lining on the inside of the guitar body), as do many other makers. We use mahogany. Classical guitar builders, especially in Spain, like it for necks because it's very lightweight. It's used to make cigar boxes, as it is highly fragrant, like a lot of cedars are. Maybe that's where the "Cedrela" genus name came from. There are a couple dozen sub-species of Cedrela. Spanish cedar is a common name, not a scientific name.

We have used it for necks, but there's not an advantage of using it over mahogany. Both tree species have been heavily harvested for a couple hundred years, and both are stressed. We focus on good husbandry of mahogany, and we prefer it to Spanish cedar for necks on steel-strings. It's actually been more difficult to find good Spanish cedar than good mahogany in my experience. When we make classical guitars in the future, we just might use it. But I might prefer to weigh our mahogany and choose the lighter pieces for those guitars.

I just bought a Taylor 12-string 856ce. Love the guitar! In the guitar shop where I bought it, the guitar was tuned a half step down from standard pitch, and the salesman told me that I may want to consider keeping it tuned a half step down, I think for ease of play. Is it risky to tune this guitar to standard pitch because of too much pull on the neck with 12 strings?

Dave

You can tune your 12-string up to pitch, Dave. It's quite versatile, really, as you can also put a set of medium strings on

it and tune it down two steps, which is a whole new experience in tone. Many players feel that a 12-string should be tuned low for purposes of sound. They really do sound cool down there, but if you do that, be sure to put a slightly heavier set of strings on it. Otherwise, bring it up to standard pitch.

I've purchased four Taylors: a 314ce, a Baritone, and one of the Builder's Reserve IV koa GS/tenor uke pairs. Each new guitar had more and more detail, leading up to Andy Powers' amazing fretboard design on the Builder's Reserve set. An article in *Woods&Steel* referred to it as the "wood-lover's" pair, and I agree. But I'm not just a wood lover. I was recently introduced to lapis lazuli, a beautiful stone of royal blue hue. I haven't done much research, but I'm curious if guitar makers ever incorporate stone into their guitars. The next Taylor in my sights is a BTO nylon-string guitar. Would it be possible to add an inlay design, say on the peg-head or bridge of the guitar, made from stone, such as the lapis lazuli?

John Phillips

John, I have a watch that has the phases of the moon on the face, and the starry background is lapis lazuli. You're right, it's gorgeous material. I guess I'll answer your question two ways. One is that yes, it's possible to put stone on a guitar, but no, we don't do it. The reason is also twofold. One, we don't have the expertise, and two, the cost for work like this is so expensive, and allows for so few customers, that we couldn't maintain the talent (for lack of sales) even if we did do this type of work. In the end it's a practical matter.

I've owned my first Taylor for a few months now – a beautiful GS Mini maple LTD. I was thinking about changing the strings for the first time and it got me looking at the bridge pins. I know I could pick up some ebony or brass pins for a reasonable cost and fit them when I change out

the strings. In your experience, would [one] benefit the tone, or would it just be a cosmetic change?

Andrew Hodgson  
Birmingham, England

Andrew, the ebony pins won't change the tone, but the brass might...a little. But basically they both would be a cosmetic change, and there's nothing wrong with that. *[Ed. Note: Keep in mind, Andrew, that our ebony bridge pins have a slightly larger diameter than the plastic pins we use with the GS Mini. Consequently, the bridge pin holes for the ebony pins need to be slightly larger, so our ebony pins won't fit properly on your Mini unless you sand them down. Feel free to contact our Customer Service department for more information.]*

Is there any reason Brazilian rosewood could not be grown on U.S. soil? I know the timber industry in the U.S. has learned to replant areas for the future. The harvesting of these trees would be beyond our lifetimes, but these trees could surely be planted somewhere in this country. Are there any laws that prevent this from happening?

Dave Henry  
Las Vegas, NV

Good question, Dave, and the answer is complex, so here goes. I'm sure the tree will grow here, when you consider Hawaii and Puerto Rico, or even Florida, as a growing site. That said, even if the tree grew, it would be a challenge to grow legitimate guitar wood, because differences in the growing conditions will affect the tree's wood, and we already know that not every Brazilian rosewood tree is of guitar quality. Still, I'm putting a lot of thought into that for future generations. It's not illegal to plant a tree, but we need to put them somewhere where they'll still be around a hundred years from now. And we won't be alive to find out, so anything that we did wrong may take another century to correct, by a group of people dedicated to spend money and leave it behind.



Being a novice guitarist and an avid woodworker, I find myself interested in the wood selection on all of your guitars as much as learning a new chord. Do you do any woodworking (besides luthier work)? I couldn't help but notice the nifty storage bins in the back of your Land Cruiser! *[Ed. Note: See Bob's BobSpeak photo on page 5.]*

Dave

Yes, Dave, I'm a woodworker, and I make lots of furniture. I'm making a cool table right now. My house is full of furniture I've made. Maybe we should do an article someday that shows some of the stuff I've made. My mom might be proud. By the way, I don't want to brag, but you should see my personal wood-shop! It's embarrassingly good.

I recently shared your YouTube factory tour with my guitar class. They loved it, and I was amazed at the forethought that you put into innovation. My question is about bracing. It seems to me that, although each guitar manufacturer has a twist on the X-bracing pattern, most haven't changed much about it recently. As I was watching your factory tour, I thought it strange that even though sound wave forms are symmetrical, the X-bracing pattern isn't. As the top of a guitar resonates, are there

parts of it that want to vibrate more aggressively, and if so, wouldn't it make sense to develop a bracing pattern that reflects this?

Joe Ferguson

Good question, Joe. This would be a great question for Andy Powers, whose first column appears in this issue. But Jim Kirlin, our editor, and Maaren, Andy's wife, both told him he's too geeky for us normal people, so I'll take a stab at it. Really, Andy knows more about it than me, but I'm older and can

poke fun at him. He reads Tesla at bedtime. (So do I, though.)

I'll try to answer without writing an entire article. Everything you say is right. But you can't just go for sound. You also have to make the guitar hold together. Make sense? It's all a compromise. The "X" is a way of bracing around a soundhole. And, yes, sound waves are symmetrical, and some people use symmetrical bracing, like my friend Jean Larrivée. But in the end, symmetrical braces are a small part of the design and can't be heard that much. Most of us look at the top as having a treble and a bass side. We may be wrong, and Jean thinks we are, but, gosh, the guitars work. Now, opening and closing spaces between braces and changing their shape make a huge difference. So, it might look strange, almost thoughtless, but it's something that has evolved. Many a luthier has tried to improve on it, but so many find their way right back to a pattern that is basically like this for steel-string guitars. A side note: Many classical guitars have symmetrical bracing. Go figure, right?

I'm looking for a Taylor acoustic/ electric cutaway guitar that plays and feels more like an electric guitar. Mainly to be used for strumming and lead work, with little to no fingerpicking. I prefer a fatter, warmer tone with mids that will cut through the mix in a live setting. Which model do you suggest?

Jerry

A 616ce. That's the answer, Jerry.

Your latest endeavors on sustainability and conservation are admirable and dare I say noble. One of the decisions you've made that I appreciated perhaps the most was around your discovery of how much harvested but discarded ebony there is and the subsequent decision to change demand by using all of it, not just the one in 10 trees deemed acceptable before. There were prominent, beautiful glamour shots of some early builds using the "new standard" ebony in an earlier edition of *Wood&Steel*, yet when I look at the 2013 Guitar Guide (Winter 2013) issue, there is not one single guitar pictured that has anything but the darkest ebony. Was this an editorial oversight, or are you still looking at 2014 and beyond for this wood to "hit production"?

Brian F.

Cary, NC

Great question, Brian. And here the plot thickens. Here's the scoop. For 30 years, Taylor has used primarily the streaked, striped wood that I talk about. And the ironic thing is that when we sand and oil the wood, it all goes basically black. I promise you this is true. So, much of my commentary is for the benefit of other manufacturers in both the guitar and the bowed instrument business (who are now ebony-buying clients of ours) to encourage them to stop fearing the variegated wood. Not only are Taylor customers now looking for brown beauty in their ebony, but so are customers of other brands. And this emboldens other manufacturers to not reject the wood we send them. I have personally visited dozens of factories and showed them my experience in using the wood with color. They find it hard to believe because, as you've observed, our guitars have dark fingerboards, and even if they're not black, they are very dark. My answer is that other companies have made their decisions about the wood way too early in the process, and in the end all that wood will look great. So, now that I've opened my big mouth, we have to seriously look for really heavily variegated wood to show up in a photo like those you cite. Sounds almost like hype, but I couldn't make this up!

People are slow to change – not only consumers and manufacturers, but even the cutters of the trees. Even though they want to bring in more wood of color, it goes against their years of training. So, it's all a work in progress, and you'll see more color as time unfolds. We are also training cutters to use augers to test trees before cutting. That way they don't cut one down just to see it, as some trees are full of rot and aren't good anyway. Others have so little heartwood that they shouldn't be cut. The auger takes a safe sample, the small wound can be patched, and the tree lives out its lifetime happy.

Since when did you make a double-neck acoustic? I saw it being played by Richie Sambora on the 12/12/12 Concert for Sandy. Obviously a special order!

Michael Miller

Since the day Richie asked us, and he happened to ask on the right day. I seriously doubt that day will happen again. But it's a cool guitar, and we actually made two at once, thinking we'd halve the pain, but I think maybe we doubled it! I'm kidding, of course, about the tribulation of making such a guitar, because it was fun. But in our shop, we really can't make a good business model

of that. By the way, the other guitar remains in our possession, and we loan it to Richie on occasion when his guitar needs some work.

I am the proud owner of a 110e, and I get endless compliments on the beautifully subtle quilting of the spruce top. As I cannot make a proper comparison myself, what is the tonal variation between your varnish and your gloss [finish] coats?

Nick Kravatz

Nick, to be frank, less finish sounds better. A 110 has less finish, and that's good for sound. That said, we are always trying to help the guitar player have both a good musical experience and a guitar that lasts. So, the gloss finish on the tops of the better guitars, even though it's a smidge thicker, helps the guitar last a lifetime, and you must admit that they sound good, right?

I am asked every day how something affects the sound. That's because many players are really interested in the technology of guitar making. I understand, because I am, too. But they are also concerned about making a good decision. The underlying answer, when there are a lot of guitars to choose from, is that the proof of the pudding is in the tasting. A guitar sounds like it sounds. And if it sounds good, plays well, and makes good music, then it doesn't matter, really, if it "could" sound different. I hope that makes sense.

I love my Grand Symphony and SolidBody Custom. I was wondering if mahogany varies greatly in its weight, and if so, why? I have seen examples of identical model solid-body guitars, where one weighs 8.5 pounds and the other closer to 10.5 pounds. Someone in a discussion group thought it was due to silicates absorbed during the trees' growth that caused equal size chunks of mahogany to vary greatly in their density and weight. It seems like that ultimately would have some effect on the resonance and resulting tone of a guitar. Since you now have a few years of making solidbodies out of mahogany under your belt and are the tonewood guru, thought I would ask the expert.

Jim Hintz

Buffalo Grove, IL

I'm the tonewood guru? Wow! Is there a certificate for that? You know, Jim, wood just varies in weight from tree to tree. Some are denser than others. I

haven't tried to figure that out. Did you notice in the question about Spanish cedar that I mentioned weighing the mahogany to pick the lightweight wood for classical guitar necks? Depending on the age of your SolidBody Custom, it might be made from sapele, which is like mahogany but heavier. It does affect tone, but like I say in another question, each guitar sounds like it sounds, and that's one of the great things about guitars. I know this is sort of a non-answer, but it is the answer. Heavy electric guitars have come and gone and then come and gone in popularity over the years. Now, we're in a time when people seem to like lighter-weight guitars. But that's likely to change.

I decided to store my guitars in the finished half of my basement, where I have a Honeywell humidifier and an energy-efficient electric oil-filled radiator. Consequently, I'm able to maintain a constant humidity level of 46 to 50 percent and a temperature of 70-74 degrees. I keep a bunch of guitars in their cases and was wondering if that's OK with the relative humidity always within acceptable limits. My brother tells me that, despite my humidity and temperature control, I'd better put a humidifier in each guitar case or else! I have several guitars, including a few Taylors (and I'm about to get more), so I can't spend all my time filling guitar case humidifiers! Is my current basement/humidifier/guitars-in-cases setup OK for the health of my instruments? I don't want to worry myself sick about this!

Denis Moreau

Ottawa, Ontario

Um, your brother is wrong about that, Denis. Sorry, brother. If your room is controlled like you said, then you're done! Keep the guitars in that room and you're good to go. That's how our factory works. We climate-control the space and work in it. Your guitars can lie around naked in that room, like they're in a spa. Do me a favor, though. Put two humidity gauges in the room. That way, if there is a gross discrepancy, it will cause you to look into which one is right. Does that sound like a plan?

I love Taylors! I own three – a Baby Taylor for my son, a 210e and a GA8e. I am a worship leader/youth minister, and my guitars get a lot of use. It seems as though my 210 is

an absolute cannon. On the other hand, my Taylor GA8e, which is a nice guitar, is very quiet comparatively. I bought the GA8e one year ago. I play with a very small group and often play solo, and the GA8e just doesn't seem to get the job done – the more I dig in, the less sound/power I get in return. I am an aggressive strummer and think I should have gotten a Dreadnought. Can you give me some help/advice? I love the old school Gibsons and Martins with the mahogany back and sides, but I really love Taylors. I am considering selling [the GA8e] and getting something else. Any thoughts on what you think I should do?

Josh Corbett

Rosemount, MN

Josh, it definitely sounds like you're a Dreadnought guy. You want a cannon? Try out our new Grand Orchestra (GO), which Andy Powers just designed. I'd say go to any other higher-end Dreadnought as well. The Grand Auditorium, like your GA8e, is definitely a subtler guitar.

I am enjoying my 2012 cocobolo/Sinker redwood BTO with Adirondack spruce braces. Do Adirondack braces make a guitar heavier than Sitka braces?

Tina

Wisconsin

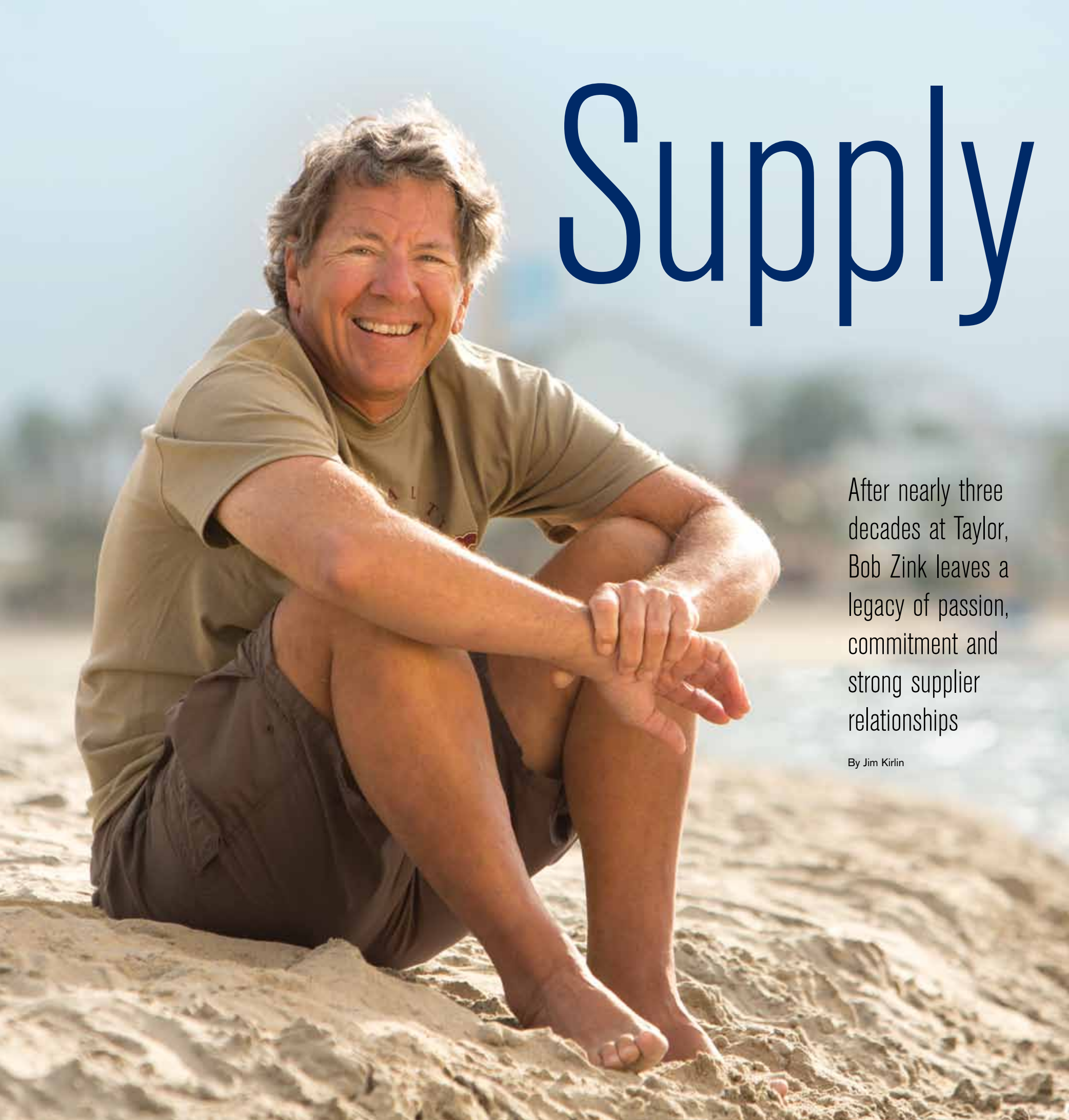
Yes, Tina, by a few grams. And they sound really good.

### Got a question for Bob Taylor?

Shoot him an e-mail:  
askbob@taylorguitars.com

If you have a specific repair or service concern, please call our Customer Service department at (800) 943-6782, and we'll take care of you.





# Supply Guy

After nearly three decades at Taylor, Bob Zink leaves a legacy of passion, commitment and strong supplier relationships

By Jim Kirlin

## The cordoned-off vacuum cleaner on display

in the Taylor room was equal parts inside joke and heartfelt tribute. It was the final day of the Winter NAMM Show, and the feverish flow of trade show traffic was beginning to taper off. Bob Zink, Taylor elder statesman and the company's first and longtime purchasing manager, had long since left the building. It would be his final NAMM Show before retiring in March. But at 6 a.m., before leaving, he had cleaned the room like he's done every day of the show for years.

Despite being a nearly 30-year veteran of the company – at one time he was the one-man Body and Shipping departments – it was just one of those things Zink did. Back in Taylor's early days he and Bob Taylor would build and install the display cabinets for the company's NAMM booth. Even now, at age 69, with a full trade show team dedicated to transforming the room, Zink took pride in helping to set up and maintain the space. He could have gone home Saturday night, since he didn't have meetings with suppliers on Sunday. But like most activities he pursued, he was fully committed.

After finishing, he attached a note to the vacuum: "Goodbye all. Fantastic ride!" When Taylor's staff arrived later, they elected to keep the vacuum there in the room all day in his honor. They surrounded it with protective stanchions and displayed it like a rare, precious guitar. People had their photos taken with it. It was a fitting if tongue-in-cheek nod to Bob's dedication to the company.

Long before Taylor had any kind of brand identity, when the company was a

grimy shop of scruffy instrument makers struggling to hone their craft and keep their business afloat, Bob Zink signed on, bringing Taylor's employee count to six. It was 1984. He'd been working at a hybrid music instruction and instrument shop called The New Expression, which he'd established in San Diego with his friend, folk and bluegrass music instructor Walt Richards.

"Walt kind of changed my life," Zink shares. "He was the head of a folk group at a church that my wife was going to, and I had been playing guitar since I discovered the Kingston Trio. I joined Walt's group, and he and I formed an immediate bond."

Zink had been working for a civil engineer for a few years after graduating from college, while Richards was teaching banjo and guitar at a music store called Grayson Music. Zink decided his passions lay in the music world, and he'd become enthralled with banjos, so he quit his job and started making and selling them at Grayson.

"I put one hand on a rock and one hand to the sky and said, 'I am a banjo maker!'" he intones as he strikes an epic pose. "And at that time Walt was pulling away from Grayson Music and wanted to start a store on his own. He asked me to come in with him."

They established The New Expression in 1972. Zink made reproductions of early 20th century Vega banjos, repaired guitars, and handled an assortment of other duties, while Richards and others gave lessons for an array of folk instruments. Zink spent about 10 years there, and on the side played in a couple

of music groups, including an old-time string band called the Sawyers. Along the way, he met a young banjo and guitar maker named Bob Taylor, who was taking banjo lessons there.

"Everyone knew everyone in the building world," Zink says. "Greg Deering [co-founder of Deering Banjos] and I had become friends in the early 1970s. Greg's shop was right next to Bob's in Lemon Grove, and I had the keys to Greg's shop because Greg had a lathe that I used to make banjos because I couldn't afford one."

Kurt Listug was a frequent visitor to The New Expression during Taylor's early period, and eventually the local store started carrying Taylors.

Both Bobs had lunch one day, and as Bob Taylor talked about his shop, Zink casually mentioned that if Taylor ever needed anyone he'd think about it. An offer soon followed.

"I said, 'OK, but I can't walk out on my partners,'" Zink recalls. "So I gave them 6-months' notice. I came to work at Taylor at 4 a.m. and worked until 11, then I went over to the store and worked from 11:30 to 7. I did that for six months."

Although Southern California is renowned for its sunny skies and warm, temperate weather, Taylor's Lemon Grove shop, located in San Diego's more desert-like microclimate of East County, sometimes made for less pleasant working conditions.

"There was a south-facing wall that wasn't insulated," Zink recalls. "In the winter it was so cold we had space heaters and worked in jackets and gloves with just the fingertips cut off. In the summer, if you had to wet-sand something, you didn't need water; you could just lean over and drip sweat onto the wood."

Bob Taylor remembers it all too well.

"That shop was hot and nasty," he says. "You learned how to work at a pace where it was just enough to keep the sweat from running off you, because at that point you'd never cool off."

Zink came aboard a year after builders Larry Breedlove and Tim Luranc, both of whom still work at Taylor. Zink was able to get in on the "surf clause" that the two had negotiated into their work schedules, affording them the flexibility to surf in the mornings as long as they got their work done.

"If there was surf, we would be dawn patrol," Zink says, "so we'd be at the beach before the sun was up and paddling into the break just as the sun was rising."

In those days, Breedlove was the Neck department, Zink was the Body Department, another employee, Steve Baldwin (also still at Taylor), was the Finish department, and Luranc was the

Final Assembly department. Those were lean times, not only because the shop was trying to figure out how to build and sell instruments, but because the '80s had ushered in an era of new wave synthesizers and electric-guitar-centric glam metal. The whole acoustic guitar industry was hurting. As a small shop, Taylor managed to weather the storm, adapting in part by developing the small-body Grand Concert in 1984 to appeal to a new breed of experimental finger-style players, and by embracing features that appealed to modern-era players, like cutaways, onboard electronics, and stage-friendly colors that added rock 'n' roll flair to the MTV era.

By 1987, Taylor had begun to grow; the shop was making five guitars a day. That year the company moved into a bigger plant in nearby Santee, California, and by 1989, with production steadily increasing (nine guitars a day; 35-40 employees), Bob Taylor decided to take his first extended vacation after 15 years in business. While he was gone, Kurt gave the employees a questionnaire asking them, among other things, what they saw themselves doing at Taylor in five years.

"I was already buying some sandpaper for Bob," says Zink, "so I wrote that I could see myself buying stuff. That was on a Friday, and on Monday I became the purchasing manager. Even though I had no formal experience in purchasing, Kurt said he'd rather have someone who knows all the parts than bring someone in who didn't."

At the time, Taylor's purchasing process was pretty straightforward.

"We bought stuff from the same suppliers where you could for your home shop," says Bob Taylor. "We worked with people like Stewart-MacDonald or Allied Lutherie. We would buy lumber from lumber companies."

There were also other small suppliers who, like Taylor, were looking to establish a foothold in the industry. Pacific Rim Tonewoods, now an industry-leading supplier of spruce to companies including Taylor, Martin, Gibson and Fender, started as a one-man operation by former state park service employee Steve McMinn.

"We bought wood from Steve the very first time in Santee when he drove down with some spruce in the trunk of his car and said, 'If I cut some spruce like this, would you buy some?' Bob Taylor remembers. "He had a little band saw. He was cutting some forest fall-down with a chain saw and cutting a hundred tops out of it."

Taylor's current rosewood supplier, Gemwood, is now a second-generation family-owned company with 80 employees, but when Taylor first started buying wood from the founder, M. Gopalakrish-

nan (through a broker), he was one man cutting wood by himself, and his sole client was Taylor.

In the pre-Internet days of the late 1980s, the phone was an essential business tool for making purchases, which was one reason why Bob Taylor was happy to pass on his purchasing duties to Bob Zink.

"I've never been a guy who likes calling people on the phone," Taylor says. "Bob had no problem doing that. And in the process he developed relationships with our tiny suppliers. As our industry and our company grew, so did those relationships."

## Hollywood Beginnings

As many Taylor employees can attest, one of the pleasures of getting to know Bob Zink is soaking up his colorful stories of growing up in Southern California. One staple is his account of the time he "shunned" Elvis. Zink's father, Russ, was a Hollywood character actor (his stage name was Russ Conway; look up his complete filmography on IMDb.com), and in 1955 he had secured a part as Sheriff Ed Galt in Elvis Presley's film debut, *Love Me Tender*. They were shooting not far from the Zink home, and during a break one day, Russ invited the 20-year-old Presley to the house for a home-cooked meal. Bob was 10 years old, and his religious grandmother, an influential presence in his life at that time, was also at the house. She didn't approve at all of Elvis's provocative rock 'n' roll ways, insisting that he played "the devil's music" and making it clear she wasn't happy that he was coming. As a result, Bob kept his distance from Presley during the entire meal.

"I loved my grandmother more than Elvis," he says with a wry smile. "And Elvis wasn't 'The King' yet. So I shunned him."

While growing up in the aura of Hollywood's film industry sounds fascinating for a kid, Zink says it was largely a pretty normal experience. His dad and fellow actor Lloyd Bridges were good friends – the two had both gotten their master's degrees in theater arts from UCLA together – so young Bob's playmates included Bridges brothers Beau and Jeff. He was also friends with Nancy and Frank Sinatra, Jr. ("I still have a scar from where Nancy kicked me in the leg," he boasts, "although it was before she had her famous 'boots.'")

"My friends lived in mansions in Westwood; our family lived in a three-room house in Beverly Glen Canyon," Zink recalled in a 1998 *Wood&Steel* profile. "I would have dinner and hobnob at my friends' fancy homes, with all these movie stars around. But my

*continued on next page*



friends preferred to come to *our* place because we lived in a ‘mountainous’ area where my dad could take us hiking.”

He says he never thought seriously about becoming an actor, although as a kid he read for a role in Alfred Hitchcock’s *The Man Who Knew Too Much*.

“I remember rehearsing and rehearsing at home, but all I wanted to do was go out and play Cowboys and Indians,” he says. “I almost got the role, but then the character was going to be in it too much, so they got twins so they could work them each half-time. But that’s the closest I got. After that, I wasn’t interested. I went with my dad to a couple of sets, and learned that you just sit and sit and sit, then do your two minutes and then sit and sit...Other than meeting the stars it was no big thing, and the stars were just regular people.”

The Zink family later moved to Malibu as Bob’s dad began to land more acting roles in films (including *Our Man Flint*, *The War of the Worlds*, and *Twelve O’Clock High*.) and numerous TV shows (including *The Lone Ranger*, *Sea Hunt* and Disney’s *The Hardy Boys*, in which he played the boys’ father, Fenton Hardy). Living in Malibu, Bob fell in love with the ocean. He and his friends often surfed at Malibu Pier and Point Dume, and he worked as a lifeguard at Zuma Beach for nine years. He remembers witnessing firsthand the way the music of the Beach Boys sparked a surfing revolution, as more and more boards started appearing in the water.

In terms of musical interests, it was folk rather than rock ‘n’ roll that grabbed Zink’s ear as a teenager. Hearing an album by the Kingston Trio ignited his musical passions, and in high school he started playing folk guitar, learning their songs along with those of artists like Peter, Paul and Mary and the Limelites.

In 1961 Zink enrolled at San Diego State College (now University), where he was happy to discover that the school hosted some of the best folk festivals in the country.

“You got to see all the real grass-roots folkies, and got to know them and their songs,” he says.

Unfortunately, during his freshman year, a serious head injury would not only interrupt college but threaten his life. He suffered a concussion while playing beach volleyball, then two weeks later suffered another one in the same spot on his head.

“I kept getting headaches, and they didn’t have MRIs back then, so I spent 2-3 weeks with people telling me it was just nerves since I was a freshman,” he says. “Finally they did an angiogram, and it showed that I had this massive blood clot in my brain. They had to saw part of my skull bone out, and the pressure actually blew the speech center of my

brain across the room and against the wall.”

The procedure left him paralyzed on one side of his body and unable to talk.

“I couldn’t do anything for six months,” he says. “I had to learn to walk, talk, read and write all over again at age 18. Then I had complications, so I had 13 craniotomies over a two-year period. Today if you had a blood clot they could do a routine procedure and you’d be done.”

With part of his brain literally gone, Bob had to learn to transfer certain patterns to the other side of his brain. He never regained the feeling in his face, to this day his fingertips are usually numb, and he still suffers from aphasia.

“Sometimes I’ll have a word in my brain but I can’t get it out in time,” he says. “I’m lucky I have all my hair because my head would look like a 3D road map with mountains and valleys and dales, with big old scars.”

Two years after the accident he was able to go back to school, albeit at a decelerated pace. Eventually he graduated, nine years after first enrolling.

“A big part of Bob’s story is his tenacity,” says Bob Taylor. “His ability to come back from all that.”

“It’s just a total testament to his will what he’s become and what he’s done,” says Larry Breedlove, who’s been a close friend for years. “He gets up at 4:30 every morning. Years ago he and I kind of had this unspoken competition in terms of who would get to work first. And then it became, OK, who’ll be the last one to leave. BZ just carries that level of commitment.”

Zink applied that same resolve to physical fitness, rekindling his love of the ocean as a swimmer and surfer, becoming an expert windsurfer and knee boarder, and taking up running and triathlons, all with a level of discipline a world-class athlete would respect. Even as he approaches the age of 70, if there’s a breeze on the weekends, chances are you’ll find him on his windsurfing board in San Diego’s Mission Bay.

### Growing with the Job

Though Taylor eventually grew to a point where the surf clause had to be retired, Zink would still arrive at work by 5:30 a.m. every morning. One practical reason was to handle business with suppliers located in different time zones in Europe or Asia.

As Taylor continued to increase its production, Zink had to learn to evolve and manage greater purchasing complexities. And there were many: an increasing array of tonewoods and sourcing issues; a multitude of different guitar parts; a mix of suppliers in different parts of the world; the ongoing oversight of quality standards that matched Taylor’s; forecasting and scheduling; and the

development of contingency plans when a shipment was suddenly delayed due to events like a strike from trucker or dock worker unions. Inventory control evolved from manual systems when Taylor was a small shop to creating custom spreadsheets and maintaining databases associated with the hundreds of parts Taylor uses. But Zink’s fundamental knowledge as an instrument maker also remained important, as Bob Taylor explains.

“A lot of what we buy are natural materials, and you have to be a craftsman and a judge to be able to discern,” Bob says. “A guy like BZ understands that. What’s interesting is that Bob navigated that transition from the small workshop to a full-blown manufacturer, and he had to learn that. He’s not necessarily the guy who could come in and put in a system at a corporation, but he did have a hands-on, relational history. He was really kind of a perfect guy for that time because he’s a purchasing guy who didn’t come with a purchasing degree. He learned it from the shop floor in a blossoming business.”

One of the core tenets of Taylor’s business philosophy has been to build strong relationships with suppliers. It started with Bob and Kurt and flourished through Bob Zink.

“Especially in our industry, I think it’s one of the most important things we can do,” Zink emphasizes. “You can’t operate strictly with a widget mentality. It’s not all about price. You can’t nickel-and-dime suppliers to death because there may only be two or three of them for something. You need to understand, for example, that loggers can only get mahogany out of the forest maybe four months of the year because it’s too rainy to get in there the rest of the year.”

Charlie Redden, Taylor’s supply chain manager for our Materials Management department, and currently on special assignment in Cameroon, joined the company seven years ago to help manage the growing intricacies of purchasing. While he brought experience from other large companies, including Amazon, he also realized the importance of absorbing the lessons of the industry from Zink.

“Bob explained that this industry is different,” he says. “That we need to cultivate relationships for the long-term because many of these suppliers are the only people out there who do it. Most don’t even make much money – they do it for love of the industry – so if you want to keep the business running, worry about your relationship more than the price.”

That guidance, Redden says, prevented him from making grave mistakes with some of Taylor’s longstanding suppliers.

“I started looking at everything dif-

ferently – how we’re treated as a customer, how others in our industry treat their suppliers. Now that we’re working directly with the forests in Cameroon, it’s even more evident that relationships in this business matter most.”

Although the supplier relationships that Zink has cultivated have in many cases also developed into personal friendships, they start with an underlying desire to do good, healthy business together. Steve McMinn from Pacific Rim Tonewoods understands.

“It’s always been a win-win relationship with Taylor,” Steve says. “Bob Zink has been really good about listening to our needs and about clearly stating yours, so that makes it easy. We take care of your special needs and try to do it promptly, and at times you’ve taken care of our special needs. When you care about each other’s ability to prosper, it creates a different type of relationship – we’re more likely to get a new type of machine or try something new because it’s mutually beneficial.”

That solid foundation of business has allowed for personal bonding between the employees of PRT and Taylor. In fact, what started as a visit to PRT’s headquarters in Concrete, Washington, 14 years ago grew into an annual tradition that became known as Bob Zink Day.

“That started because we feel it’s important to pay mutual visits to see ways we can help each other,” McMinn says. “So I said to Bob, ‘What would it take to get you up here? Should we have a special day, where maybe we dropped everything and went for a hike?’ And he did that. After that, in successive years we started doing different things where it escalated a bit; Bob Taylor and more people started coming.”

Over the years, BZD outings have included whitewater rafting in Canada, salmon fishing, and kayaking around the San Juan Islands.

“These have been great opportunities to get together, hang out, look at where we’ve been, and think about where we were going and how to do it together,” McMinn adds.

In recent years, as Taylor’s purchasing department has grown into a robust and sophisticated materials management team, both Zink and the team have benefitted from each other’s expertise. Zink has embraced new inventory management software and spent a lot of time imparting his knowledge of the industry, our suppliers and the company culture to the next generation of purchasers.

“It’s important for them to know what we old-timers know,” Zink says. “That context ensures that the company is run with the same philosophy.”

Reflecting on his career at Taylor,

Zink says he feels like he won the lottery the first day he walked through the door in Lemon Grove. In hindsight it seems clear that he was the right type of person to join the Taylor team at that time: someone whose shared passion and grit and resolve in the face of constant challenges helped strengthen the nucleus of a young company. Nonetheless, he’s quick to cite the leadership of Bob and Kurt.

“All that vision on the production side can be attributed to Bob,” he says, “and on the financial/marketing side, Kurt has been the genius behind our growth.”

Zink admits that when he joined the company he never imagined that Taylor would go on to enjoy the success it has.

“I just thought I would be trading banjo building for guitar building, because Taylor had no name,” he says. “What a meteoric rise we had, and to know that we produced these guitars rather than widgets or something like that. It’s something to hang your hat on.”

At a company luncheon in late February, colleagues, friends and Zink’s family gathered to celebrate his career at Taylor. Bob, Kurt, Larry Breedlove and David Hosler were among the many who recounted both funny and poignant stories, sharing their appreciation for Bob’s work ethic and contributions to Taylor’s success. Others spoke personally of his commitment as a friend.

“Once you become Bob’s friend he’s like a Labrador Retriever in your life,” says Larry Breedlove. “It’s his desire to be a good friend and be there for you no matter what.”

Rob Magargal, a Taylor employee since 1991 and a close friend of Zink’s, was in Australia and unable to attend, but he sent his own heartfelt remarks, noting that he, Zink and David Hosler have eaten lunch outside on the back lawn together under the same tree for more than 15 years.

“When we started eating there the tree wasn’t much more than a wimpy little twig,” he laughs. “We’ve watched it grow, and now it brings us shade on those blazing days of summer. We laugh about all the conversations it has heard. I can’t say enough about him as a friend and a person.”

Greg Deering from Deering Banjos recounted giving Zink a key to his shop to use his tools when Zink was making banjos in the ‘70s, and ceremoniously presented him with a new key to the Deering plant and an open invitation to make a banjo. Zink says he’ll make use of it.

“In my 10 years of making banjos, I never kept one for myself,” he admits. “Now I’ll have the time to build myself one.” **W&S**



**Top row (L-R):** Bob with one of his banjos at the New Expression shop in the early ‘80s; **L-R:** Rob Magargal, David Hosler and Bob in their lunch spot on the Taylor campus; Bob’s dad, actor Russ Conway; **Middle row (L-R):** A sign commemorating Bob Zink Day at Pacific Rim Tonewoods; A newspaper clipping showing Bob and his New Expression co-owners and bandmates; all smiles on his windsurfing board; **Bottom row:** Bob (in window) with his old-time string band the Sawyers; his goodbye note from NAMM; working in Taylor’s Lemon Grove shop in 1984





# Putting the Ring in SPRING

## Exotic ebony and granadillo bring good chimes to this year's spring collection

Around the Taylor factory complex, one sure sign of spring is our design group's delivery of our Spring Limited Editions. Each year we take pride in treating guitar lovers to something special, blending inspiring woods with inspired Taylor craftsmanship. This year's collection spotlights a pair of evocative tone-woods: sapwood-infused African ebony and Central American granadillo. Each found its way to us through different circumstances, but both share an affinity for bell-like overtones. If you like to savor your tone, these models promise to bring your music into full bloom. You'll find them at them at authorized Taylor dealers starting in mid-April. For complete specifications, visit [taylorguitars.com](http://taylorguitars.com).

### 600 Series LTDs

**Back/Sides:** Ebony  
**Top:** European Spruce

### Models

614ce-LTD, 616ce-LTD

Taylor's ownership stake in an ebony mill in Cameroon has made the African wood a hot topic this past year. While most of the conversation has centered on sourcing and processing ebony for fretboards, bridges and other instrument parts, our mill co-owner, Madinter, recently managed to procure a sapwood-rich ebony tree that was big enough to be cut into back and side sets. The moment we saw them, we knew they would make a striking limited edition series. Visually, wide swaths of sapwood conjure a yin-yang effect of darkness and light, while fluid edge lines bend the book-matched symmetry into captivating abstract art. Of the 300 sets that were available, each is beautifully unique.

The tree came from Congo, a country that shares a border with Cameroon. While the country typically isn't a viable source point for sustainable ebony, this particular tree was legally harvested from a managed forest and certified by the FSC (Forest Stewardship Council) and SGS, an international inspection, verification, testing and certification company.

Compared to the Macassar ebony we've used in recent years for guitar backs and sides, this species — the same African ebony we use for fretboards and bridges — has a higher density, which translates into subtle tonal differences.

"Tonally, it shares a little of Macassar's low-end damping factor," says Taylor master luthier Andy Powers. "Macassar has a pretty clear sound, while also being fairly overtone-heavy. This African ebony has a really rich, ringing character with a linear quality across

the tonal spectrum — no particular frequencies are accentuated over others."

To match the ebony's sonic characteristics, Taylor's design team chose European spruce tops with Adirondack spruce bracing.

"We wanted to make these guitars sound really luxurious and rich," Andy says. "Instead of trying to balance or neutralize the character of the ebony, we decided to play it up, which is why we chose a top wood that shares many of the same characteristics. European spruce has a strong attack with big headroom, but also with rich overtones. It produces thick, wide notes. Paired with the ebony, which also generates essentially the same effect, you'll hear really rich, saturated notes."

The response might actually be too rich for the guitarist who plays fast or hard, Andy says. But someone who plays more slowly or softly will likely appreciate the way the response wraps the fundamental in a whole layer of overtones.

These sonic attributes helped guide the choice of two guitar shapes for this series: Grand Auditorium and Grand Symphony.

"We enjoy the warm low-end response from the middle class shapes," Andy explains. "And we definitely felt like this wood pairing would be a favorite with fingerstyle players because of that note-wrapping effect. It might better complement someone who likes to play full fingerstyle arrangements or even some classical music, rather than a machine gun country picker. It can be great for that, too, but it won't have the snappiness of a bright wood. This is a sipping wood. You play the notes, and you savor how they fade away."

Given the dramatic caramel/chocolate color contrast of the ebony, Andy wanted to keep the other visual elements cleaner rather than competing with it.

"That ebony has a lot of movement visually, so we wanted to support it with something that essentially acted like a picture frame to let it live in a sharp, modern-looking environment," he explains.

For similar reasons, the design team opted against using mottled ebony for the fretboard. Instead, Andy designed a new Spiked Ovals fretboard inlay, featuring koa ovals engraved with an inner ring floating over pointed ivory wings. The koa/ivoroid pairing continues on the body with ivory binding and curly koa top edge trim, along with an ivory/curly koa rosette. Gold Gotoh 510 tuners add a premium touch to match the elevated aesthetic. Both models feature full-body gloss finish, a Venetian cutaway, and Expression System® electronics.

*L-R: 616ce-LTD featuring a European spruce top and koa/ivoroid Spiked Ovals fretboard inlay; a sapwood-infused ebony back on a 614ce-LTD*

*continued on next page*





L-R: 414ce-LTD featuring a Sitka spruce top, granadillo bridge and peghead overlay, and rock maple Progressive Dot fretboard inlays; granadillo back on a 412ce-LTD

THE 2013 SPRING LIMITED EDITIONS

continued

400 Series LTDs

Back/Sides: Granadillo

Top: Sitka Spruce

Models

410ce-LTD, 412ce-LTD

414ce-LTD, 416ce-LTD

The star ingredient of this series is granadillo, a Central American tonewood that boasts a rich musical heritage. Historically sourced from Mexico’s Yucatán Peninsula region, it’s considered a type of rosewood, although the species we procured technically doesn’t bear rosewood’s *Dalbergia* family name. The wood has been the object of our desire for some time, but it hadn’t been available in any quantity with proper legal documentation until fate dropped a batch into the lap of our wood buyer, Chris Cosgrove. Not only was it fully documented back to the source, but the quantity enabled us to make a run of about 1,000 guitars from it, while a reasonable price allowed us to offer it in our 400 Series price range. There’s no telling when we’ll have this opportunity again.

Sonically, granadillo is comparable to Indian rosewood, but it’s harder and denser, yielding an additional bell-like ring. The wood traditionally has been used for marimba bars because of its clear, chimey tone. Classical guitar makers later borrowed it and have been using it for at least 50 years. In fact, Andy Powers has been experimenting with it in conjunction with Taylor’s ongoing classical guitar development project.

Visually, this granadillo displays hues that vary from set to set, ranging from pomegranate reds to copper browns, in some cases with more variegation and wilder grain than Indian rosewood. For this series, Andy also chose to incorporate the granadillo on the front of the guitar, using it for the bridge (with rosewood bridge pins) and headstock overlay. Beyond the aesthetic cohesion, the bridge takes a page from classical builders.

“Traditionally on a classical guitar, an ebony bridge weighs a little too much,” he explains. “You’d typically see some sort of rosewood bridge because it doesn’t absorb as much sound, and the sound can move through it more quickly.”

Pairing granadillo with a Sitka spruce top, Andy says, will yield clear, ringing, long-sustaining notes.

The appointment package also borrows from the wood-centric design aesthetic of the classical world, featuring rock maple for the binding, rosette and Progressive Dot fretboard inlays. Four body styles are available, and all models feature satin-finish back and sides with a gloss finish top, a Venetian cutaway, and Expression System electronics. **W&S**





# WINTER NAMM 2013

ANAHEIM, CALIFORNIA  
JANUARY 24-27

Above (clockwise from top left): Phil Brown, The Farm, Raining Jane, Miyavi, Allen Stone, David Mayfield, Yuna; **Opposite page (top):** Pat Simmons plays to a packed Taylor room; **Bottom (L-R):** Bob Taylor and Andy Powers introduce the new Grand Orchestra; Pat Simmons on stage



## Grand Entrance: The GO Makes a Big Impression

It was a dream scene for any Taylor lover: a showcase room richly stocked with wall-to-wall Taylor guitars, an open invitation to play them, and a clutch of knowledgeable factory staff on hand to talk shop. Anyone who's been to our exhibition room at NAMM knows that we transform a generic convention center space into a living, breathing Taylor Guitars venue where everyone is welcome to hang out and play guitars. Our friendly vibe means a lot to people, whether they may be a dealer, artist, vendor, guitar owner, fellow manufacturer, member of the media, or random drop-in. *Especially* at a huge trade show like NAMM, where the sheer volume of manufacturers and the clashing din of instruments on the main exhibition floor below can quickly swell into a thick haze of sensory overload.

This year's show opened on a sweet note for Taylor, as Vinny Testa, publisher of *The Music & Sound Retailer* magazine, presented Bob Taylor with a

Lifetime Achievement Award. "I'm really honored to have it, and I accept it on behalf of myself and my partner, Kurt, of 38 years," Bob said. "We built this company together." The company was also in the running for several other of the publication's annual Music & Sound Awards: the 714ce, which enjoyed an aesthetic makeover in 2012, for Best New Acoustic Guitar; the SolidBody Standard Double Cutaway for Best New Electric Guitar; and Taylor's public outreach efforts, which earned a nomination for Outstanding Community Service Award. The nomination recognized our guitar contributions to organizations including the Wounded Warrior Project, the Red Cross, and the March of Dimes, along with ongoing guitar donations to music education programs through our Taylor Guitars for Schools initiative.

From a new product perspective at NAMM, our big story was the debut of the Grand Orchestra (GO). Early impressions matched our excitement

about the guitar and confirmed that it brings a fresh, inspiring voice to the Taylor line. Taylor communications manager Chalise Zolezzi and the GO's designer, Andy Powers, introduced the new body design during a special media event the day before the show opened, giving Andy an opportunity to explain and demonstrate the guitar. Numerous interviews with Andy and our product specialists followed throughout the show, helping to give the GO a nice blast of initial exposure. The GO also made a favorable splash among the Taylor dealers who attended the show.

"They commented about how it was truly a stand-out guitar and 'was different yet familiar,'" shared Taylor's Director of Sales, Monte Montefusco. Bryan Rankins, the sales manager at Fazio's Frets and Friends, a Taylor dealer located in Ellisville, Missouri, wasn't expecting to be impressed by the Grand Orchestra because big guitars typically don't respond well to his light touch as a player. But he was pleasantly

surprised. "Taylor managed to take all the things I dislike about big guitars and make them disappear, turning the GO into a big guitar so versatile that even a finesse-style player like me can love it," he said after the show. "This is the type of guitar that will inspire players and bring out things that one could never do on a small guitar."

On Thursday and Friday mornings, before the show officially opened for the day, Bob Taylor and Andy Powers presented a dealers-only preview of the 2013 line, sharing the development story behind the Grand Orchestra. Bob emphasized Taylor's ongoing commitment to designing great guitars and noted that Taylor's product development team was in great hands with Andy driving guitar designs such as the GO. By the end of the show, an independent panel of retailers at NAMM had chosen the GO as one of its "Best in Show" products.

"The Grand Orchestra blew me away with its versatility," said Donovan

Bankhead, Vice President of Springfield Music in Springfield, Missouri, and a member of NAMM's retail panel. "Most Jumbos are a one-trick pony, but the new Taylor Grand Orchestra proved to have more dynamic versatility and superb ergonomics, while still retaining the power and volume of a traditional Jumbo."

Another development for 2013 that was showcased abundantly throughout our room was the integration of non-cutaway acoustic models into the standard line. Of the orders placed by independent dealers at the show, more than half were non-cutaway models. Elsewhere in the room, our spectacular Build to Order wall was never lonely, attracting waves of admirers who were eager to indulge our latest batch of tantalizing custom acoustic configurations. (For a closer look at a few, turn the page.) At another nearby wall, headphones-clad players noodled blissfully on our electrics with the help of several listening stations.

## Showtime

The artist performances we host in the afternoons at NAMM have become another signature component of the Taylor NAMM experience. Artists like playing our room for many reasons, among them the fact that they feel like members of the Taylor family, they have an amazing selection of models from which to choose, and because our sound crew — led once again this year by Nashville sound engineer Gary Hedden — does a wonderful job. This year's eclectic lineup featured acts from across the U.S. and around the world.

Thursday's first set featured Nashville-based guitarist/singer-songwriter **Phil Brown**, who was joined by steel guitar icon **Al Perkins** for a pair of songs, including the Peter Green instrumental "Albatross." Brown's warm, weathered vocals added vintage character that suited the relaxed tempo of his tunes, including a laid-back Jimi Hendrix medley that sampled his record *The Jimi Project*, a reinterpretation of the songs of the legendary guitar-

ist. Brown also covered tunes from Mose Allison and Burt Bacharach and alternated between playing a T3, 618e and rosewood baritone 8-string. Next up was rising Nashville act **The Farm**, whose dynamic country-pop showcased tightly wound harmonies and foot-tapping melodies. Their set featured their hit singles "Be Grateful" and "Home Sweet Home."

On Friday, Americana showman **David Mayfield**, whose musical antics were a highlight of last year's NAMM performances, stopped by the Taylor room, and after chatting with Andy Powers about the Grand Orchestra, was coaxed into taking the stage and playing a few songs on a 918e. After covering the folk chestnut "Old Joe Clark," Mayfield invited Andy to join him, introducing him as "Andy the janitor...I think he mops the floors at Taylor." Andy obliged on a 618e, and the two kicked up some dust with some freewheeling bluegrass jamming. Backstage Mayfield hammed up his endorsement of the

GO like an old-time huckster: "They're made out of 100% more guitar than the average brands," he deadpanned to a video crew.

Next on the bill was **Pat Simmons** from the Doobie Brothers, who sprinkled wry humor into a rare solo acoustic set played on an 812e. "They told me nobody'd be here," he quipped as he took the stage in front of a packed room. Simmons, who has lived in Maui for the past 16 years, channeled the sounds of the Hawaiian Islands on his slack-key-flavored tune "Five Corners." He also laid down some ragtime picking and unearthed an old Doobies tune, "Slippery St. Paul." Other highlights included a sweet rendition of the Doobies' ballad "South City Midnight Lady" and a couple of cuts from the band's 2010 release, *World Gone Crazy*: "Far From Home" (co-written with producer Ted Templeman) and "I Know We Won," penned with Willie Nelson. Simmons enlisted David Mayfield and Andy Powers as his wingmen on a couple

of crowd-pleasing hits to end the set: "Black Water" and "Long Train Running," the latter featuring some zesty jamming from both. Closing out the day was Malaysian chanteuse **Yuna**, whose ethereal vocals infused her electro-pop set with a melodic glow. She alternated between a red T3 and a Taylor uke on groove-rich tunes, including "Island," "Decorate," "I Wanna Go," and "Live Your Life."

On Saturday, the all-female indie-rock-folk quartet **Raining Jane**, from Los Angeles, brought strong harmonies and upbeat energy to their set, inviting Andy Powers to sit in on a couple of songs. Night Ranger guitarists **Joel Hoekstra** and **Brad Gillis** dropped by for a visit that afternoon, and though they weren't slated to perform, were happy to play a song between scheduled sets, treating the unsuspecting crowd to a blazing acoustic instrumental ("L.A. No Name") that the two co-wrote. Next, up-and-coming soul revivalist **Allen Stone** slayed the crowd with

his vintage Stevie Wonder-inspired vocals, blending raw power with a sky-high falsetto during a stripped-down set of R&B originals, plus a deliciously deconstructed cover of Bob Marley's "Is This Love?" The day's final act, envelope-pushing Japanese guitarist/singer **Miyavi**, uncorked an electrifying torrent of techno-funk-rock, fueled by his percussive bass-slapping attack and blistering riffs on the T5, his main performing guitar. Using his on-stage looper, he amassed a wall of sound with the help of his drummer, **Bobo**, leaving the crowd pleasantly stunned. Miyavi graciously thanked Taylor for making inspiring instruments and professed that he loved his guitars, even though he wasn't sure if Bob Taylor would like his music.

You can watch an array of Taylor's NAMM performance videos at [taylorguitars.com/media](http://taylorguitars.com/media). **W&S**



# SUPER MODELS

One of the pleasures of planning our guitar showcase at Winter NAMM is cooking up an assortment of seductive custom guitars for our Build to Order wall. Here's a closer look at a few from this year's exhibition. For more information about designing your Build to Order guitar, contact your local Taylor dealer and they'll be happy to help.



*Above: Grand Auditorium with a premium Engelmann spruce top, AA flamed maple back and sides, ebony rosette, binding and armrest, abalone tree fretboard inlay, and a short-scale, slim-carve neck*



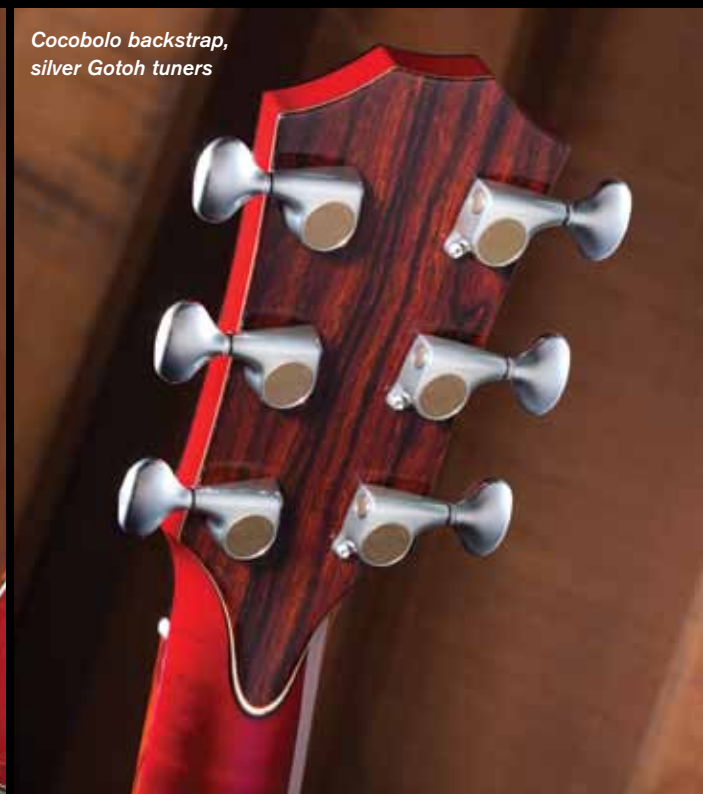
*Front and back of a 12-string Grand Auditorium with a Sitka spruce top, cocobolo back and sides, figured koa back mini wedge, heel cap, binding and armrest, Cindy inlays, abalone rosette and top trim, and cocobolo headstock overlay with gold Gotoh tuners (shown below left)*



*Abalone parrot fretboard inlay*



*Cocobolo backstrap, silver Gotoh tuners*





# Soundings

## 50 Shades of Play

If you're craving a good guitar instruction book but find yourself daunted by the glut of available options (not to mention online videos and DVDs), frequent *Wood&Steel* contributor **Shawn Persinger** offers an excellent guide with his new tome, *The 50 Greatest Guitar Books*. Exhaustively researched and curated, the thoughtful compendium offers something for everyone in terms of genre diversity, skill level, and instructional style. A musical omnivore, Persinger leveraged his multifaceted background as player, composer and instructor for the project. He half-joked with us that he'd been doing research for the past 23 years, ever since buying his first guitar book (the jazz guitar technique primer *Super Chops*) at age 18. His personal music instruction library boasts more than 1,000 books, he researched another thousand for the project, and then he consulted a healthy mix of notable players, teachers, writers, publishers and others to compile a diversified base of informed tastes from which to distill his choices.

The book is divided into five sections: must-have books for all levels; beginner, intermediate and advanced categories; and artist portfolios, which cover the work of some of the most influential guitarists in 10 different genres. Each book he profiles features its own chapter, structured into "The What," which offers an overview of the author and book; "The How," which considers the instructional style/format; and "The Why," which provides an insightful personal commentary on the book's merits and benefits for the reader. Clear, informative and refreshingly conversational, Persinger's writing sparkles with a clear point-of-view that's both technically informed and personally empathetic. He understands the obstacles players face on their guitar-playing journeys, and the way a sound instructional approach can unlock doors to greater progress and enjoyment.

Each chapter also features notated music examples that are inspired by the book depicted, which Persinger recorded himself as audio samples for readers to hear. They can be downloaded as a bundle of more than 100 mp3s for free from the book's website, [www.GreatestGuitarBooks.com](http://www.GreatestGuitarBooks.com). As he points out, these "In the Style of" mini

"Travelin' Man," and "Garden Party," sweetly infused with their pristine sibling harmonies. The show was a lean but polished production, featuring just Matthew and Gunnar on stage, backed by a video screen used to present photos and video segments to help chronicle their father's life. The Nelsons shared fond childhood memories of growing up surrounded by their dad's well-known musician friends — having Mama Cass Elliott as their babysitter, knowing Bob Dylan as "the man with the crazy hair," and their one-time next-door-neighbor, George Harrison, coming over to hang out and steal guitar licks from James Burton, Nelson's longtime lead guitarist.

Both Matthew and Gunnar have been incorporating their matching maple-top T5s into the show, and love the versatility that allows them to keep the production streamlined. Matthew says the acoustic tone he gets from the neck pickup setting serves him well, and that the tone control is great.

"It's nice not to need an external preamp for tone shaping," he says. "The onboard bass and treble boost/cut knobs work nicely. Plugging straight into a direct box does the trick, which eliminates the potential hassle of something going wrong onstage."

Both brothers are longtime Taylor acoustic players, and currently play, write and record with a **612**, a **Leo Kottke 12-string**, and a custom Brazilian rosewood **914** with Cindy inlays. Matthew says he constantly meets Taylor players after shows.

"They love checking out my Taylor and talking about their guitars," he shares. "Taylor owners and fans are a brotherhood."

## Taylor at SXSW

The South By Southwest conference in Austin, Texas, is a world-renowned hotbed of interactive, film and music creativity. In mid-March, after a couple of staffers from our Marketing department soaked up the interactive festival, another subset of the department rolled in for the music portion of the conference to showcase our latest guitar designs, including the new Grand Orchestra, and to connect with bands from all over the world. In a cool twist, artists were given "check-out" privileges, enabling them to sign out any guitar, gig with it, and then return it to our booth when they were done. A few blocks from the convention center in an area called SoCo (South Congress), a different kind of artist interaction was transpiring with Taylors: Pairs of artists, unknown to each other, were getting together to create a song

in one three-hour session. The collaborative challenge was based on the popular web series **SongCraft Presents**, produced by **Dubway Studios** in New York City, and was presented in partnership with **Acoustic Café**, an independent syndicated radio network program.

From developing the song's concept and lyrics to its actual composition, arrangement and performance, the pressure was on to produce something great. Luckily, with talented performers including folk hero and multiple Taylor owner **Steve Poltz**, singer-songwriter **Erin McKeown**, gravelly-voiced acoustic rocker **Sean Rowe**, cello maestro **Ben Sollee**, and prog rock band **Bend Sinister**, great things were bound to happen.

A video team was there to capture each step of the process. Dubway Studios producer and engineer **Mike Crehore** and artist **Ben Arthur** helped foster the song development, while Acoustic Café's **Rob Reinhart** interviewed the artists as the process unfolded. We provided several Taylor models for the songwriters, including a **618e** and **918e**. The sessions were still in progress as we wrote this, but videos of the performances should be accessible via the Taylor website soon.

## Hawking Taylors

We've been having fun experimenting with graphic application techniques on guitar tops the last couple of years. It's given us a creative platform in which the soundboard becomes an artistic canvas, enabling us to provide vividly customized guitars for events and promotions. It might be a guitar that incorporates the artwork of a prominent Taylor artist's latest music release as part of a giveaway package, or an auction item to help raise money for a good cause.

Case in point: We recently partnered with the Tony Hawk Foundation to create a special series of eye-catching custom axes inspired by several iconic graphics used on Hawk skateboard decks throughout the skating legend's long and storied career. They were showcased as auction items at the 9th annual Tony Hawk Pro Skater HD Presents Stand Up for Skateparks fundraiser, held last October in Beverly Hills, California. The foundation supports youth recreational programs and provides funding to build public skate parks in low-income communities throughout the United States.

The event began with a VIP reception featuring a display of paraphernalia signed by athletes and celebrities. Actor and former professional skater

**Jason Lee** took the stage with actor/director **Jon Favreau** to discuss their ongoing support of the foundation. Among the attendees were snowboard and skateboard icon **Shaun White**, former UFC champion **Chuck Liddell**, musicians **Lenny Kravitz** and Metallica bassist **Robert Trujillo**, actors **David Spade** and **Michael Rapaport**, and former NBA greats **Bill Walton** and **A.C. Green**.

Four of the Taylor auction guitars were **214ce** models, each featuring a different deck graphic that was redesigned for the guitar top and custom-printed using a flatbed digital imaging process. A fifth custom guitar for the series was a **GS Mini** with rosewood laminate back and sides, which blended well with the caramel, black and gold color of the "Crowned" Hawk top design. Another featured Taylor design in the auction was a pair of uniquely customized and signed **Katy Perry** guitars originally made for Perry's documentary concert film *Part of Me*. The Hawk-ified Taylors and Katy Perry guitars together netted almost \$25,000 for the foundation. Altogether the event raised nearly \$1 million, with \$27,000 of that earmarked for the construction of a skatepark for the Los Angeles community of San Pedro.

Another interesting custom design was spawned through a partnership with our friends at Copper Mountain Resort in Summit County, Colorado, who enlisted us to provide guitars as trophies for the winners of the Sprint U.S. Grand Prix ski and snowboard competition. The event took place at Copper Mountain January 9-10, attracting some of the top freeskiers and snowboarders from around the globe.

Given the high caliber of competition, we wanted to create something unique to celebrate the winners and the event, so we designed a custom graphic treatment that was printed on sets of three **GS Mini** guitars. The first, second and third place guitars were distinguished by a gold numeral "1," silver "2," and bronze "3," with other customized graphic elements and logos to co-brand the event. The guitars provided this year's champs with both an eye-catching trophy and a trusty travel guitar that they can take wherever they go this season.

After the awards ceremony, many of the athletes shared on Instagram and Twitter how blown away they were by the guitars, including **Mike Riddle**, the winner of the freeskiing event, who said it was "maybe the coolest trophy I've ever gotten."

*continued on page 26*

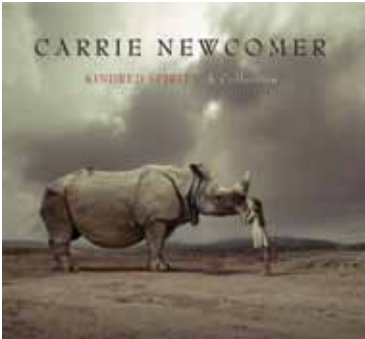


Clockwise from top left: Sean Rowe at SXSW (photo by Ben Arthur); Shawn Persinger's new book; a quartet of custom 214ce models inspired by Tony Hawk skateboard deck graphics; GS Mini and matching deck; winners of the U.S. Grand Prix Women's Snowboard Slopestyle event with their Taylor trophies (L-R): Isabel Derungs (SUI), Jamie Anderson (USA), Kjersti Buaas (NOR) (photo by Tripp Fay); Matthew Nelson with his tobacco sunburst T5-S1 (photo by Joëlle Doye)



### Good Spirits

Fans of contemporary folk singer-songwriter **Carrie Newcomer (914ce, 814ce, 512, Baby Taylor)** recognize her as a truth seeker of the highest order. At the heart of Newcomer's critically acclaimed work is a sophisticated artistic voice that thoughtfully explores the idea of finding spiritual meaning in everyday life. Her recent album retrospective, *Kindred Spirits: A Collection*, presents a compelling cross section of those musical explorations, culling from her 12-record catalog on Rounder Records, and sweetens the compilation with a pair of new songs, a couple of previously unreleased tracks, and two live recordings.



One of the new tunes and the album's opening track, "The Speed of Soul," establishes a thematic through-line for the collection, as Newcomer ponders whether one's soul gets displaced in the wake of communication technology's time-compressed, distraction-laced pull on our attention. The song, like much of Newcomer's work, is deliberately paced, smoothly distilled, and infused with her mellow, velvety-rich voice.

Newcomer's spiritually centered folk songs honor the genre's storytelling heritage, tapping into universal themes of struggle, hope, regret and love through the experiences of her characters. Her finely calibrated songs resonate with a writer's narrative sensibility, so it comes as no surprise that she teaches both songwriting and creative writing workshops about writing mindfully – "exploring the big ideas through the power of the small details and personal story," as her workshop overview explains.

On her website, Newcomer reveals more about her songwriting process in a note about her track "Geodes," another cut from *Kindred Spirits*. "Often my songs originate in an essay or poem I've written about a topic," she says. "It's like the essay or poem circles around an idea, then the song condenses and hones in on the thought!"

That same distillation process informs her musical arrangements, giving them a clarity and spaciousness that invite the listener in. From there, her melodies and lyrics reveal a greater depth of meaning. Among the musical friends who lend

vocal support on the compilation are the dulcet-voiced **Alison Krauss, Mary Chapin Carpenter**, and **Krista Detor**. Two additional tracks are the product of a musical collaboration between Newcomer and Indian classical sarod masters **Amjad Ali Khan** and **Ayaan and Amaan Ali Khan**. The music was inspired by Newcomer's experiences in India in 2009 and 2011 as a cultural ambassador for the American Embassy. The songs, "I Believe" and "Breathe In Breathe Out," marry elements of Western folk and Indian classical idioms and celebrate the universal human experiences that transcend cultural differences. (An entire album of material from their collaboration, *Everything is Everywhere*, was released as a benefit album for the Interfaith Hunger Initiative.)

In the end, the simple act of sitting down and opening up to the songs on *Kindred Spirits* eloquently reminds us that, rather than being swept along in the forceful current of an ever-accelerating world, choosing to slow down and be more present – to Newcomer's music, and to the moments that make up our day-to-day lives – can help us make more meaningful connections to the world around us. [www.carrienewcomer.com](http://www.carrienewcomer.com)

### Friends at the Factory

In late January, singer-songwriter **Vicci Martinez**, the runner-up on the first season of NBC's *The Voice*, stopped by the Taylor factory. Fresh from a series of shows in the Southwest, Martinez (**510ce, 114ce**) was thrilled to finally make it to the complex and shared that it was a trip she'd been planning since she first appeared on the program, as she has a natural affinity for building things. After a tour she enjoyed some playtime with a few different models and had a chance to sample the **T5**. Martinez was planning to resume her tour with multiple dates scheduled through the spring.

In early March, U.S. Marine Corps Lieutenant Colonel **Mike Corrado** visited with VIP guests comprised of a group of Wounded Warriors from Camp Pendleton, located in Oceanside, California, and staffers from Resounding Joy, a California-based music therapy program. Corrado, a rock musician and multiple Taylor owner, currently serves as the Executive Officer of the Marine Corps' Wounded Warrior Regiment in Quantico, VA. The group toured the factory and shared with the Taylor team their first-hand experiences of how music instruction, especially playing guitar, aides in their recovery by providing a sense of peace and community.

### Music City Meet-ups

In early March, Taylor's Director of Artist and Entertainment Relations, Tim Godwin, enjoyed a productive week in Nashville, making the rounds with a couple of new Grand Orchestra models and spending time with artists and other friends from the music industry there. Among his stops were the Soundcheck and SIR (Studio Instrument Rentals) facilities, both of which provide backline gear rentals, production stages, and rehearsal studios for many of music's top acts. The production staff at SIR loved how big and clear the GO sounded.

Godwin also visited with guitarist **Keifer Thompson**, half of the husband-wife duo **Thompson Square**. The two have been talking about acoustic pickups throughout the past year, and Godwin dropped off a **918e** fitted with a new pickup prototype that our product development group has been experimenting with. Thompson called later to say that he loved it and planned to use the guitar on the band's summer tour dates opening for Blake Shelton.

Another stop was the shop of influential guitar repair guru **Joe Glaser**, who has had a **518e** and **618e** there for players to check out. Glaser noted that the GO could be a game changer in Nashville. The guitar scored another thumbs-up from well-known producer and mixer **David Huff**, who often works with his prolific musician/producer brother **Dann Huff**. David loved the sound of the 518e, especially the lows and mids, and said the guitar would be great in the studio.

Godwin also hung out with **Taylor Swift's** guitar tech, **Andrew Jones**, and her two side guitarists, **Paul Sidoti** and **Mike Meadows**, as they prepared for Swift's *Red* tour. It turns out that Swift and the band have an assortment of Taylors equipped with several different types of pickup systems, so Godwin talked about spending time with the band at a future sound check to study how the pickups sound through their in-ear monitors and to explore ways to optimize the sound.

Additional time was spent with session bass player **Dave Pomeroy**, who is also president of the Nashville Musicians Association; **Nick Hoffman**, guitarist and fiddle player from band **The Farm**; and **Danny Rowe**, the prop master for the ABC television show *Nashville*, which is produced there. (Godwin left a **518e** with him.) Godwin hopes to return to Nashville soon with Taylor's Andy Powers to spend more time with players.



**Top down:** Vicci Martinez jams on a koa-top T5-C2; Wounded Warriors and staff from Resounding Joy in the Taylor Visitor Center; Carrie Newcomer with her 914ce (photo by Jim McGuire)



### Back to the Beginning

Andy Powers reflects on the source of his guitar-making passion and the essence of musical sounds

*Editor's Note: We're pleased to introduce a new column by Taylor luthier Andy Powers. Each issue he'll be sharing ideas that have inspired Taylor's latest guitar designs.*

**B**eginnings are complicated for me. The concept of a starting point encompasses more than a physical location, the inception of a thought, the first chord of a song. In a way, it marks the birth of a lifecycle. The first word, musical note, paintbrush stroke or saw cut implies a certain commitment. It sets a foundation for what follows. It establishes a landmark of sorts.

The ensuing creative journey is rarely a perfectly straight path. Typically, it meanders through uncharted territory, shifting course as it navigates unexpected obstacles that block

forward motion like tree branches obstructing a trail through a woodlot. When that happens, mentally I climb to the top of the nearest hill to look for the fixed landmark at the starting point. This helps me gain perspective on the best direction to go.

As an instrument maker, the beginning of a guitar seems simple enough to identify: the first cut of wood, or possibly the first pencil line of a drawing. But for me, the landmark actually stands farther back as a response to a fundamental question: "Why do I want to build an instrument in the first place?" The conclusion I've

arrived at is so I can play and hear others make great music.

My life as a guitar maker didn't begin with this revelation. There were other motivations. When I was younger, the pleasure of making something from wood was enough. As a small boy, I loved cutting, shaping and gluing wood. I took enormous satisfaction from even peripheral chores like sharpening tools. I still like sharpening tools, and usually sport a bald spot on my left arm where I've recently tested a keen edge. As a kid, I also loved to hold and play guitars. I adored their shapes and the feel of the strings under my fingertips.

When I got my hands on a piece of wood big enough to make a guitar, the fuse was lit. Mixing the two loves was such an enrapturing experience it didn't even matter that my first guitar was an utter failure. The enjoyment from the process was enough of a reward. (The fact that the guitar imploded in dramatic fashion, sending splinters flying, when I tried to tune it was also pretty exciting as a boy.) In my case, building guitars began as a curiosity and became a habit that I couldn't quit.

After building enough guitars to become familiar with the process and keep them from collapsing, I slowly began to expand my efforts in pursuit of a foundation stronger than the pleasure of making shavings pile up on my workbench. The heaps of sawdust I'd been busy creating were beginning to choke my forward path. Climbing up my mental hill and looking back as far as I could, I saw a conceptual mountain towering in the distance. My introspection led me to the conclusion that I liked music, and to make musical sounds one needs instruments. This wasn't a revelatory flash like a light switch flipping on; it felt more like a slow expansion into being, like the sun rising on a new personal dawn.

An instrument that makes a musical sound is the start and the end goal. I slowly formed opinions of what a "musical" sound is from my own observations, but I was floored much later by the precise clarity of a definition offered by the scientist Hermann von Helmholtz. He noted over a hundred years ago that on a foundational level, a musical sound is one of order. The natural world will offer two varieties of sound wave: chaotic ones and orderly ones. Our ears are uniquely equipped to interpret orderly, repetitive sound waves as musical. Sounds without regular form or consistency are heard as noise.

Some musicians will quickly defend the complicated sounds they make and claim the line is blurred. But in reality, even those musicians who experiment with sounds first appearing as noise are bringing order to complex forms and discovering consistency and regularity. Musicians can train their ears and minds to hear order in complicated forms. Lots of casual listeners will hear an abstract jazz tune and scoff it away as a bunch of noise because they haven't learned the architecture of the piece. The first time I heard classical Indian music, it seemed completely arrhythmic to me, because I didn't know how or when to count the beats. Even with these complex musical forms, at the core level, a musical sound is one with order. With this identity of musical sound in mind, the goal of a guitar

maker is to create an instrument that offers orderly and consistent sound in order to make music.

This is a principal that guided the development of our new Grand Orchestra guitar. Lots of large-body guitars have extra, uncontrolled sounds being formed when they vibrate in addition to the notes played. That is a recipe for a rough and stormy sonic seascape. It creates a setting in which some notes will roll through the turbulent waters, while others clash with conflicting vibration and are swallowed up. The results of the Grand Orchestra's design are notes that consistently speak out with clear purpose.

From my philosophical perch atop a desire for great music, the complexities encountered during a guitar's creation are less intimidating. Decisions of design, material choices, and even working methods can be answered in a way that enhances and benefits the core value of the guitar. Considerations such as the shape of an instrument or whether it has a cutaway can be answered by weighing what will result in the best music.

I've found that this guiding desire for great music shines its influencing light past obvious structural decisions. When a guitar is powerfully evocative aesthetically, the emotions and associations a player senses from an instrument can have a noticeable effect on the music they perform. Seemingly minor considerations, such as an inlay or a trim detail, can convey musicality. A regal-looking guitar may very well make for a more regal-sounding performance because it coaxes from the player qualities they may not have discovered in another instrument.

At a fundamental level, what I personally strive for, and what we all seek here at Taylor Guitars, is great music. We arrive at that finish line by starting with this intent and guiding our efforts until we deliver an instrument that gives an expressive voice to a player's music. As a guitar builder and player, I'm fortunate to partake in this creative process every day and savor the endeavor. I still love to sharpen my tools and watch shavings and sawdust pile up on my workbench. I still adore the shape of a beautiful guitar and the feel of new strings under my fingers. But now, these are the icing on the cake. We get to help create great music. That's why we do what we do.





# Progress in Cameroon

**Increasing yield, reducing waste, better tools and employee training are beginning to make a difference**

By Chalise Zolezzi

*Ed. Note: Taylor assumed an ownership stake in Crelicam, an African ebony mill in Cameroon, in late 2011. Since then, we have been working with our partner, Madinter Trade, to improve the processes of harvesting and processing ebony to reduce waste and build a more ethical, sustainable sourcing operation. Our periodic reports will share our latest developments there.*

The complexities of doing business in Cameroon are many, especially when it involves introducing change. But the big-picture benefits of responsible forestry, namely a sustainable future for the natural resources and people of Cameroon, far outweigh the daily challenges.

One of Taylor's key initiatives for Crelicam's ebony operation has been to increase the yield from each harvested ebony tree. Typically, when an ebony tree is felled in the forest, it must be cut into smaller billets in order to be carried out by hand. The billets are then delivered to surrounding villages, where they are covered in palm leaves as they await transport to the mill, sometimes for months. The extended exposure to the elements often damages the wood, leaving only a small portion acceptable for milling. Inferior machinery and flawed cutting techniques at the mill have also contributed to a reduction in the potential yield.

To help develop working solutions for these and other issues, Taylor's Supply Chain Manager, Charlie Redden, recently accepted an interim

assignment as Crelicam's acting Directeur Générale (general manager) and relocated to Cameroon. He has been working closely with Anne Middleton, our Environment and Community Relations Manager there, and with Chris Cosgrove, Taylor's globetrotting wood and milling expert, who has made periodic trips to Cameroon to serve as an advisor in the forest and at the mill.

During the first quarter of 2013, the three spent time with local communities, exploring ways to develop a network of depots in the forest and in select villages, which ideally will be equipped with basic but vital equipment to preserve the integrity of each billet. Chris has also spent time in the forest with local ebony cutters to provide training that will help them better cut and protect wood. The longterm vision for improvement includes introducing basic tools such as chain saws for more efficient harvesting, tarps to shelter the wood, wood sealer to prevent billets from splitting at the ends, and trucks to improve the timetable for transporting wood to the mill.

Improvements have also been made

in the milling operation. Chris has been training Crelicam's sawyers to adjust their cutting specifications and techniques in order to maximize yield and reduce waste. In addition, Taylor machine fabricator Jesus Jurado has made several trips to Cameroon to upgrade the mill's machinery, introduce better tooling, and provide training for employees. At press time, a deployment of machinery, parts and other vital equipment was scheduled for shipment to Cameroon. This will enable the mill to refine its processes and help build an inventory of replacement machine parts, electrical parts and other tools, which will reduce down-time when something breaks.

A project to clear out many accumulated bags of scrap ebony at the mill is also underway, and already has yielded positive dividends. The ebony was offered for free to local artisans and nearby communities, and the response was high. The artisans in turn will rework the wood pieces into products that can be sold, expanding the sphere of reinvestment in the local economy. Meanwhile, the reduced clutter around

the mill has enabled better organization for processes such as receiving, sorting and weighing wood. It also creates the space to build additional structures for wood processing and storage. And because of the improved cutting techniques, moving forward, the mill will generate less waste in the first place.

Investing in our employees and key partners remains another essential focus for the company. Earlier this year, Crelicam celebrated the 10-year anniversary of eight employees. As is the custom with local labor laws, the gathering featured a presentation by the Minister of Labor, Grégoire Owona, followed by a party at the mill for employees and their families. Other recent provisions for employees included updated safety wear and new TaylorWare for all.

On the national level, Crelicam recently celebrated its one-year anniversary under new ownership with a special guitar dedication and presentation to key representatives. Held at the home of the U.S. Ambassador to Cameroon, Robert Jackson, the gathering featured a group of notable artists,

media and diplomatic figures, who listened to a briefing from Bob Taylor and Crelicam co-owner Vidal de Teresa Paredes. The two reported on recent improvements at the mill and reaffirmed the company's continued commitment to reducing unnecessary logging waste by using each viable tree. While there, several specially branded 314ce guitars were presented and accepted on behalf of the people of Cameroon. The 314ce carried special significance, as the sapele used for the back and sides is native to Cameroon, while the ebony bridge and fretboard come from Crelicam. A dedication message to the people of Cameroon was laser-etched on each guitar. Attendees were treated to a song from Ndedi "Prince" Eyango, who performed using one of the 314ce guitars. Minister of Arts and Culture Ama Tutu Muna announced that she would place her ministry's guitar on display at the National Museum, which is expected to reopen this year. **W&S**



**Clockwise from top left:** A felled ebony tree in the forest; Crelicam employees with new safety gear; U.S. Ambassador to Cameroon Robert Jackson addresses the crowd flanked by his wife and Bob Taylor; Minister of Arts and Culture Ama Tutu Muna accepts a Crelicam guitar from partners Vidal de Teresa Paredes (left) and Bob Taylor; Bob with members of the Crelicam staff; Ndedi "Prince" Eyango performs at the reception; Bob grades mottled ebony blanks; **Opposite page (L-R):** Taylor's Charlie Redden and Anne Middleton examine the stump of an ebony tree in the forest





# Calendar

For all the latest Taylor event listings, visit [taylorguitars.com/events](http://taylorguitars.com/events)



Taylor product specialist Marc Seal (left) and district sales manager Billy Gill on stage during a Road Show at Jim's Music in Tustin, California

Taylor’s Road Show teams are in high gear this spring, as we roll out to communities across North America and Europe. Nearly 200 events are booked for spring alone, with 350-400 planned worldwide in 2013, including Find Your Fit events. This year our demonstration of body shapes includes the new Grand Orchestra, so if you haven't yet sampled it at your local dealer, we hope you'll come check it out. Our guitar experts will also be armed with a fresh mix of custom Taylors, so if you're looking for something extra special, you won't be disappointed.

One of the most rewarding aspects of presenting Road Shows for us is the opportunity to spend time with fellow guitar lovers. As much as we enjoy sharing the latest ideas and developments from the Taylor factory, we also love answering your questions and hearing your Taylor stories. We encourage you to use the Road Show

as an opportunity to get to know the staff at your local music store, and to talk with other Taylor players from your community. Who knows, it may spawn the formation of a Taylor supergroup!

The Road Shows listed below are arranged alphabetically by state to make it easier to find one near you. We've also scheduled more of our Find Your Fit sales events, which offer you a personal consultation with one of our guitar experts to help you find the Taylor model that's right for you. For the most up-to-date listings, visit us online at [taylorguitars.com/events](http://taylorguitars.com/events). From the Road Show page you can also enter our sweepstakes for a chance to win a custom Taylor guitar. And we invite you to join the Taylor Road Show conversation through our social media outlets on Instagram ([#roadshow](https://www.instagram.com/taylorguitars)), Twitter ([@taylorguitars](https://twitter.com/taylorguitars)) and Facebook. We hope to see you!

**Red Deer, AB Canada**  
Monday, May 13, 7:00 p.m.  
53rd Street Music  
(403) 346-4000

**Edmonton, AB Canada**  
Tuesday, May 14, 7:00 p.m.  
Avenue Guitars  
(780) 448-4827

**Edmonton, AB Canada**  
Wednesday, May 15, 7:00 p.m.  
Long and McQuade  
(780) 432-0102

**Calgary, AB Canada**  
Thursday, May 16, 7:00 p.m.  
Guitarworks  
(403) 216-8525

**Canmore, AB Canada**  
Friday, May 17, 7:00 p.m.  
Harvest Moon Acoustics  
(403) 678-0023

**Montgomery, AL**  
Thursday, May 2, 7:00 p.m.  
Elite Music Sales  
(334) 215-0215

**Little Rock, AR**  
Tuesday, April 16, 6:30 p.m.  
Guitar Center - Little Rock  
(501) 225-3700

**Chico, CA**  
Monday, April 29, 7:00 p.m.  
Herreid Music  
(530) 894-7777

**Elk Grove, CA**  
Tuesday, April 30, 6:00 p.m.  
Skip's Music  
(916) 686-5666

**Santa Rosa, CA**  
Wednesday, May 1, 6:00 p.m.  
Bananas At Large  
(707) 542-5588

**Dublin, CA**  
Thursday, May 2, 6:00 p.m.  
JAMS Music  
(925) 828-5267

**Carlsbad, CA**  
Monday, June 24, 7:00 p.m.  
Buffalo Brothers  
(760) 434-4567

**Pasadena, CA**  
Tuesday, June 25, 7:00 p.m.  
Red Zone Guitar Works  
(626) 325-8210

**Arroyo Grande, CA**  
Wednesday, June 26, 7:00 p.m.  
Lightning Joe's Guitar Heaven  
(805) 481-2226

**Hamden, CT**  
Wednesday, April 10, 7:00 p.m.  
Brian's Guitars  
1-877-726-0756

**West Palm Beach, FL**  
Monday, April 22, 6:30 p.m.  
George's Music  
(561) 242-0345

**Orlando, FL**  
Tuesday, April 23, 6:30 p.m.  
George's Music  
(407) 352-8000

**Jacksonville, FL**  
Wednesday, April 24, 6:30 p.m.  
George's Music  
(904) 777-9393

**Jacksonville Beach, FL**  
Thursday, April 25, 6:30 p.m.  
George's Music - Orange Park  
(904) 270-2220

**Miami, FL**  
Tuesday, June 4, 7:00 p.m.  
Sam Ash - Dolphin Mall  
(786) 331-9688

**Tampa, FL**  
Thursday, June 6, 7:00 p.m.  
Sam Ash  
(813) 888-7876

**Orlando, FL**  
Friday, June 7, 7:00 p.m.  
Sam Ash  
(407) 896-5508

**Melbourne, FL**  
Monday, June 24, 7:00 p.m.  
Florida Discount Music  
(321) 254-5645

**Stuart, FL**  
Tuesday, June 25, 7:00 p.m.  
Schumacher Music  
(772) 286-7474

**Dania Beach, FL**  
Wednesday, June 26, 7:00 p.m.  
A1A Guitars & Art  
(954) 925-7190

**South Miami, FL**  
Thursday, June 27, 7:00 p.m.  
Music Depot  
(305) 663-9894

**Atlanta, GA**  
Tuesday, April 16, 7:00 p.m.  
Sam Ash  
(770) 818-0042

**Cumming, GA**  
Wednesday, May 1, 7:00 p.m.  
Music Authority  
(770) 886-9066

**Marietta, GA**  
Wednesday, June 5, 7:00 p.m.  
Ken Stanton Music  
(770) 427-2491

**Macon, GA**  
Monday, June 10, 6:30 p.m.  
Guitar Center - Macon  
1-866-498-7882

**Atlanta, GA**  
Tuesday, June 11, 6:30 p.m.  
Guitar Center - Atlanta  
(404) 320-7253

**Crystal Lake, IL**  
Tuesday, April 16, 7:00 p.m.  
Player's Bench Music Store  
(815) 459-8614

**Chicago, IL**  
Wednesday, April 17, 7:00 p.m.  
Chicago Music Exchange  
(773) 525-7773

**Lawrence, KS**  
Monday, April 22, 7:00 p.m.  
Mass Street Music  
(785) 843-3535

**Arkansas City, KS**  
Wednesday, April 24, 7:00 p.m.  
Sparks Music  
(620) 442-5030

**Shreveport, LA**  
Monday, April 22, 6:00 p.m.  
Shreveport Music  
(318) 798-6000

**Lafayette, LA**  
Tuesday, April 23, 6:00 p.m.  
C&M Music Center  
(337) 989-2838

**Houma, LA**  
Wednesday, April 24, 6:00 p.m.  
C&M Music Center  
(985) 876-9711

**Mandeville, LA**  
Thursday, April 25, 6:00 p.m.  
C&M Music Center  
(985) 626-3920

**Kingston, MA**  
Thursday, April 11, 7:00 p.m.  
Music Unlimited  
(781) 585-2242

**Littleton, MA**  
Thursday, May 9, 7:00 p.m.  
The Minor Chord  
(978) 486-0112

**Bangor, ME**  
Monday, May 6, 7:00 p.m.  
Northern Kingdom Music  
(207) 947-6450

**Cornish, ME**  
Tuesday, May 7, 6:30 p.m.  
Friendly River Music  
(207) 625-8639

**Lansing, MI**  
Monday, April 15, 7:00 p.m.  
Marshall Music  
(517) 337-9700

**Kentwood, MI**  
Monday, May 13, 6:30 p.m.  
Guitar Center - Grand Rapids  
(616) 464-0000

**Lansing, MI**  
Tuesday, May 14, 6:30 p.m.  
Guitar Center - Lansing  
(517) 333-6627

**Southfield, MI**  
Thursday, May 16, 6:30 p.m.  
Guitar Center - Southfield  
(248) 354-8075

**Charlotte, NC**  
Thursday, April 18, 7:00 p.m.  
Sam Ash  
(704) 522-9253

**Raleigh, NC**  
Friday, April 19, 7:00 p.m.  
Sam Ash  
(919) 855-9581

**Raleigh, NC**  
Monday, April 29, 7:00 p.m.  
Harry's Guitar Shop  
(919) 828-4888

**Lincoln, NE**  
Friday, April 19, 7:00 p.m.  
Dietze Music - Briarhurst  
(402) 434-7454

**Omaha, NE**  
Saturday, April 20, 3:00 p.m.  
Dietze Music - Omaha  
(402) 333-1535

**Dover, NH**  
Wednesday, May 8, 7:00 p.m.  
Ear Craft Music  
(603) 749-3138

**Flemington, NJ**  
Tuesday, June 18, 7:00 p.m.  
Dave Phillips Music & Sound  
(908) 782-2824

**Asbury Park, NJ**  
Thursday, June 20, 7:00 p.m.  
Russo Music Center  
(732) 455-8397

**New York, NY**  
Monday, April 8, 7:00 p.m.  
Rudy's Music Soho  
(212) 625-2557

**N. Bellmore, NY**  
Tuesday, April 9, 7:00 p.m.  
Music Emporium  
(516) 221-4888

**Tulsa, OK**  
Wednesday, April 17, 6:30 p.m.  
Guitar Center - Tulsa  
(918) 307-0943

**Oklahoma City, OK**  
Thursday, April 18, 6:30 p.m.  
Guitar Center - Oklahoma City  
(405) 810-9191

**Corvallis, OR**  
Monday, May 20, 7:00 p.m.  
Gracewinds Music  
(541) 754-6098

**Dickson City, PA**  
Monday, June 17, 7:00 p.m.  
Northeast Music Center  
(570) 909-9216

**North Wales, PA**  
Wednesday, June 19, 6:30 p.m.  
George's Music  
(215) 412-4400

**Springfield, PA**  
Friday, June 21, 6:30 p.m.  
George's Music  
(610) 543-4050

**Columbia, SC**  
Tuesday, April 30, 7:00 p.m.  
Sims Music  
(803) 772-1185

**Bartlett, TN**  
Monday, April 15, 6:30 p.m.  
Guitar Center - Memphis  
(901) 387-0600

**Madison, TN**  
Monday, April 15, 7:00 p.m.  
Sam Ash  
(615) 860-7475

**Nashville, TN**  
Monday, June 3, 7:00 p.m.  
World Music Nashville  
(615) 425-0256

**Knoxville, TN**  
Tuesday, June 4, 6:00 p.m.  
Pick N Grin  
(865) 588-5361

**Murfreesboro, TN**  
Thursday, June 6, 7:00 p.m.  
Music World  
(615) 893-4242

**Chattanooga, TN**  
Thursday, June 13, 6:30 p.m.  
Guitar Center - Chattanooga  
(423) 893-0745

**Huntsville, TX**  
Tuesday, June 25, 7:00 p.m.  
One Music Square  
(936) 295-3819

**Houston, TX**  
Wednesday, June 26, 7:00 p.m.  
Great Southern Music  
(281) 550-4545

**League City, TX**  
Thursday, June 27, 7:00 p.m.  
Danny D's Guitar Hacienda  
(281) 338-1830

**Vancouver, WA**  
Tuesday, May 21, 6:00 p.m.  
Beacock Music  
(360) 694-7134

**Tacoma, WA**  
Wednesday, May 22, 6:00 p.m.  
Ted Brown Music  
(253) 272-3211

**Burlington, WA**  
Thursday, May 23, 7:00 p.m.  
Hugo Helmer  
(360) 757-0270

**Bellingham, WA**  
Friday, May 24, 7:00 p.m.  
Mojo Music  
(360) 671-0614



**Wichita, KS**  
Tuesday, April 23, 11:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.  
Senseney Music  
(316) 262-1487

**Lexington, MA**  
Friday, May 10, 12:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.  
Music Emporium  
(781) 860-0049

**Lincoln, NE**  
Friday, April 19, 11:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.  
Dietze Music - Briarhurst  
(402) 434-7454

**Omaha, NE**  
Saturday, April 20, 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.  
Dietze Music - Omaha  
(402) 333-1535

**Portland, OR**  
Saturday, May 18, 11:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.  
Portland Music Co. - on Broadway  
(503) 228-8437

**Houston, TX**  
Saturday, June 22, 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.  
Fuller's Vintage Guitar  
(713) 880-2188



# TaylorWare®

CLOTHING / GEAR / PARTS / GIFTS

Michelle, a supply chain analyst on our Materials Management team, kicks back in our new Two-Tone Guitar T.

Nate from our Sales team and Grace, a web designer in our Marketing department, sport the men's and ladies' versions of our new California T-shirt.



## Antique Logo T

100% cotton. Fashion fit.  
(White #1456; S-XL, \$22.00;  
XXL, \$24.00)

## Logo T

100% preshrunk cotton. Standard fit.  
(Tan #1750; S-XL, \$20.00;  
XXL-XXXL, \$22.00)

## Ladies' Burnout Tank

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

## 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; M-XL, \$28.00; XXL, \$30.00)

## NEW Men's California T

100% combed cotton. Taylor logo on left chest, with large type treatment on back. Crew neck. Fashion fit. (Black #1441; S-XL, \$25.00; XXL-XXXL, \$27.00)

## NEW Ladies' V-Neck California T

100% cotton with satin wash for a luxuriously soft feel. Mitered V-neck. Features Taylor logo on left chest, with large type treatment on back. Slim fit. (Black #4441; S-XL, \$25.00)

(opposite page)

## NEW Ladies' Two-Tone Guitar T

100% combed cotton, featuring gradient guitar design on front. Slim fit. (Warm gray #4560; S-XXL, \$25.00)



**NEW Authentic Taylor T**  
100% preshrunk ringspun cotton. Pigment-dyed for a soft, comfortably weathered look and feel. Distressed graphic treatment on front with Taylor logo on back. Generously cut. (Khaki Green #1430; S-XL, \$25.00; XXL \$27.00)



**Uttem Picks**  
Ten picks per bag; one gauge per bag. Thin (.50 mm), Medium (.80 mm) or Heavy (1 mm). (Translucent gold with brown Taylor round logo, #8077; \$6.00)



**NEW Men's Lightweight Hoodie**  
Cotton/poly blend featuring zip front and kangaroo pocket, with Taylor treatment on left chest and right sleeve. Slim fit. (Heather Navy #2810; S-XL, \$42.00; XXL, \$44.00)

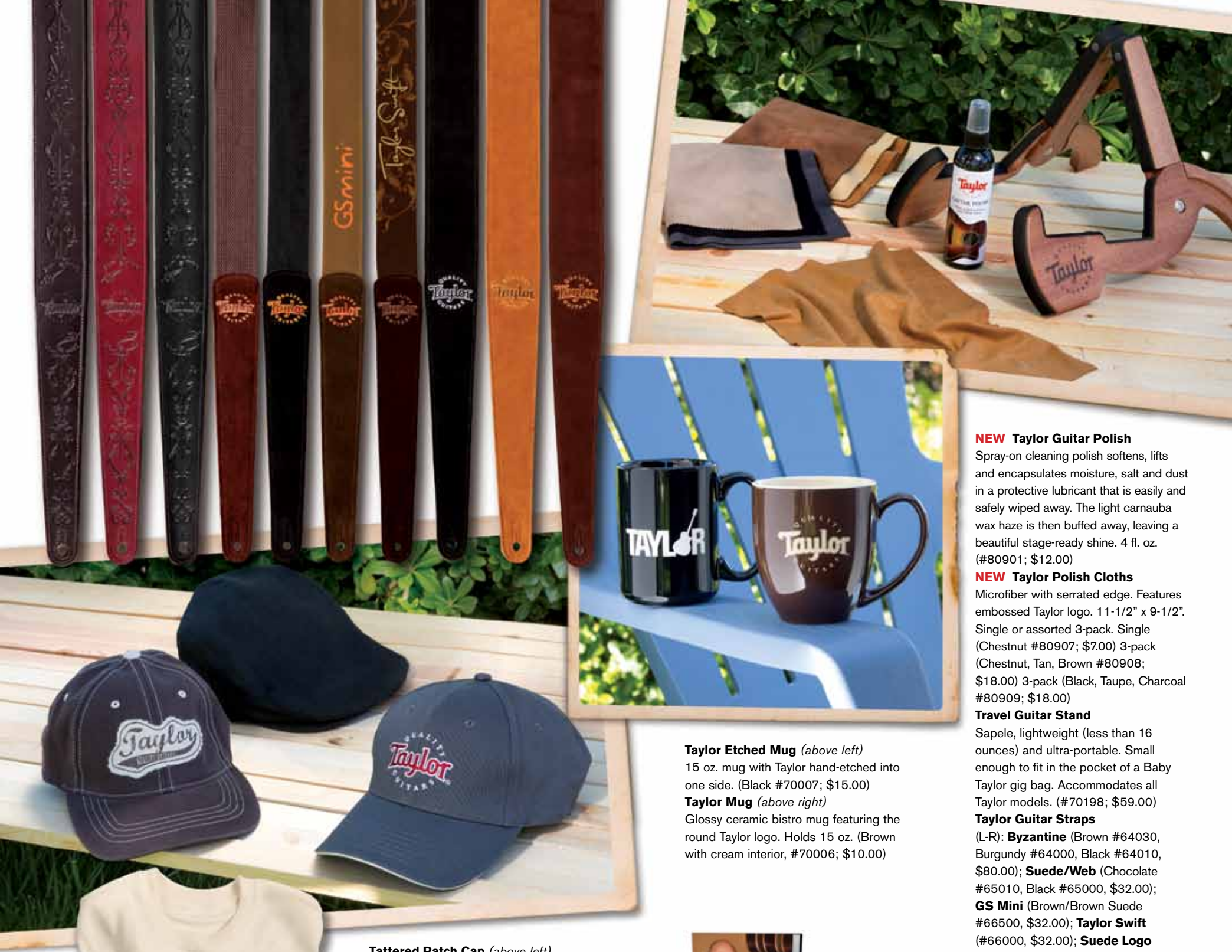
**Taylor Work Shirt**  
Permanent press, stain-resistant poly/cotton blend. Two front pockets. Distressed screen print over left pocket and on back. (Charcoal #3070; M-XL, \$34.00; XXL-XXXL, \$36.00)

Visit [taylorguitars.com/taylorware](http://taylorguitars.com/taylorware) to see the full line.

*Daniel, a nine-year Taylor veteran, works in our Body department and knows our guitars inside and out. No matter what he's working on, he'll always be comfortable in our new Authentic Taylor T.*



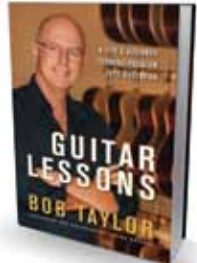
**Guitar Hoody Sweatshirt**  
50/50 cotton/polyester blend, drawstring hood, front pouch pocket. (#2898, S-XL, \$39.00, XXL, \$42.00)



**Taylor Etched Mug** (above left)  
15 oz. mug with Taylor hand-etched into one side. (Black #70007; \$15.00)  
**Taylor Mug** (above right)  
Glossy ceramic bistro mug featuring the round Taylor logo. Holds 15 oz. (Brown with cream interior, #70006; \$10.00)

**Tattered Patch Cap** (above left)  
Flex fit, two sizes. (Brown, S/M #00150, L/XL #00151, \$25.00)  
**Driver Cap** (above middle)  
Wool blend, sweat band for added comfort. Label on back. One size fits most. (Black #00125, \$25.00)  
**Men's Cap** (above right)  
Pro style cap. Structured Chino twill with Taylor round logo in burgundy and white on front. Adjustable fabric strap with custom embossed peghead clip buckle closure on back. One size fits most. (Charcoal #00375; \$25.00)

**NEW Men's Two Color Embroidery T**  
100% preshrunk cotton. Burgundy and gold embroidered logo on left chest. Standard fit. (Natural #1205; M-XL, \$24.00; XXL, \$26.00)



**Guitar Lessons by Bob Taylor.**  
(Wiley Publishing, 2011, 230 pages; #75060, \$20.00)

**NEW Taylor Guitar Polish**  
Spray-on cleaning polish softens, lifts and encapsulates moisture, salt and dust in a protective lubricant that is easily and safely wiped away. The light carnauba wax haze is then buffed away, leaving a beautiful stage-ready shine. 4 fl. oz. (#80901; \$12.00)

**NEW Taylor Polish Cloths**  
Microfiber with serrated edge. Features embossed Taylor logo. 11-1/2" x 9-1/2". Single or assorted 3-pack. Single (Chestnut #80907; \$7.00) 3-pack (Chestnut, Tan, Brown #80908; \$18.00) 3-pack (Black, Taupe, Charcoal #80909; \$18.00)

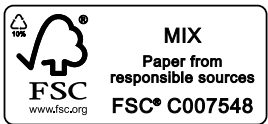
**Travel Guitar Stand**  
Sapele, lightweight (less than 16 ounces) and ultra-portable. Small enough to fit in the pocket of a Baby Taylor gig bag. Accommodates all Taylor models. (#70198; \$59.00)  
**Taylor Guitar Straps**  
(L-R): **Byzantine** (Brown #64030, Burgundy #64000, Black #64010, \$80.00); **Suede/Web** (Chocolate #65010, Black #65000, \$32.00); **GS Mini** (Brown/Brown Suede #66500, \$32.00); **Taylor Swift** (#66000, \$32.00); **Suede Logo** (Black #62001, Honey #62000, Chocolate #62003, \$48.00)

**TaylorWare**  
CLOTHING / GEAR / PARTS / GIFTS

1 - 8 0 0 - 4 9 4 - 9 6 0 0

Visit [taylorguitars.com/taylorware](http://taylorguitars.com/taylorware) to see the full line.





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# Wood&Steel

A Publication of Taylor Guitars

Volume 75 / Spring 2013

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## Blood Lines

This custom nylon-string Grand Concert was one of many enticing Build to Order models on display in the Taylor room at the Winter NAMM Show. The back and sides are flamed AA-grade Hawaiian koa, lightly toasted with a shaded edgeburst to heighten the visual drama of the figure. A bloodwood mini wedge and binding, trimmed with black, white and blue purfling, add a striking visual counterpoint and highlight the Florentine cutaway. Topped with a Western Red cedar soundboard, this guitar will yield warm, sweet tone with dry, woody articulation. For a glimpse of other beautiful custom models from NAMM, see our BTO photo gallery in this issue.