

Wood & Steel

BTO Bliss

Building guitar dreams

Honduran Harmony

Sustainable social forestry

Coheed and Cambria

**Breaking down a live
acoustic sound**

Ruthie Foster

Soul-stirring blues

Wayne Johnson

Rethinking scales



Letters



New York State of Mind

After reading Jim Kirlin's article, "Freedom of Expression," in your spring issue, I was reminded of the spring of 1971, when I played guitar for a 60-voice touring choir from Concordia College, New York. At the various venues it was always a challenge (if not a nightmare) to amplify my Martin D-35. The tour ended with a concert at Lincoln Center's Alice Tully Hall, where the acoustics were so amazing that my guitar did not have to be amplified. For years I've searched in vain for that pure, natural acoustic guitar sound, but that was a once-in-a-lifetime experience – or so I thought.

Those of us who have been around for a while know that there have been many failed efforts to amp acoustic guitars, from tinny, scratchy setups and gimmicks to sad situations where the instrument was overwhelmed or just made to sound like an electric guitar.

Four years ago, Sound Exchange Music became an official distributor of Taylor Guitars. The owner and the workers at the shop were impressed with the new Taylors and enlightened me with their new find. My wife and I purchased our son an 814ce. He and I use it along with a 312ce in locations from small rooms with low ceilings to large church sanctuaries. The combination of the tonewoods and the Expression System is by far the best natural sound for the performer and the audience. We often say that the guitar does not really sound amplified – it just "emanates." It is virtually impossible to tell where the actual instrumental sound ends and the electronics take over. Additionally, when playing in any sort of group, the Taylors cut through and are heard clearly and naturally.

It has been 40 years since that choir concert in NYC, but every time I hear or play one of the Taylors, it takes me back to that night in Lincoln

Center. Thank you for thinking outside the box and creating the most amazing acoustic/electric guitar that doesn't require a world-class concert hall to sound world-class!

Bob Fischer
Ocala, FL

Harmonically Challenged

I believe there is a mistake on page 27 of *Wood&Steel* ("The Irrational Fretboard," Vol 67/Spring 2011). The final G note in Example 13 should be on the fourth (D) string, fifth fret instead of the third (G) string, fifth fret, which as we know is a C note. Seasoned musicians will clearly know this, but it may confuse [other] readers. On another note, I greatly enjoyed the Tommy Shaw article and the insightful fellow Canadian's letter in "Ask Bob" concerning the converted bookcase/guitar storage cabinet.

Larry Garnett
Ottawa, Canada

Ed. Note: Good catch, Larry. After going to press we discovered that a portion of Shawn Persinger's music notation had dropped out when imported into a different software program. Besides the notation not showing up in the staff, the notes in Ex. 13 are natural harmonics, and the diamond symbols denoting harmonics didn't display in the tablature. So, the fifth fret, third string played as a harmonic is actually a G harmonic. The lesson's complete notation is available in the online version of the issue at taylorguitars.com. Sorry for the confusion.

Happy Hubby

My husband has always wanted a 12-string guitar – more specifically a Taylor 12. In 2006 he found a 355 and fell in love. They have the same birthday, so I bought it for him. What's a little credit card debt compared to a husband's happiness? He played non-stop for about three weeks, and then announced, "This is a great guitar, but if I want to play Leo Kottke tunes, I have to have the Leo Kottke model." I let him explain the whys and wherefores for a year, and bought him an LKSM. He experimented with odd tunings non-stop for about three weeks and then announced, "This is a great guitar, but the 6-string would be nice, too!" I let him try to convince me of the need for the 6-string for another year, and bought the LKSM6. He was the happiest man on earth, or so I thought.

In 2009, we saw Leo Kottke perform, and Mark took his own guitar with him to the concert. Afterward, Mr. Kottke came out on stage to meet his loyal fans. Mark handed him his beloved guitar for an autograph. Leo held it, strummed it, recognized the open E-flat tuning, and sat down on the edge of the stage and played! He and Mark had a conversation about strings, bone nuts, etc., before getting an autograph on the back of the headstock. NOW I have the happiest husband on earth! Or so I thought. There is something new you call an 8-string baritone. Thanks a lot, Bob! I think I'm going to make him wait a year.

Andrea Eckhart

Worthy of Byrd

I purchased the NS24ce a year ago. This guitar is a joy to hold and makes fingerpicking an ease. I usually play jazz and Latin music, and this instrument works fine in these genres. I'm a big fan of the late, great Charlie Byrd, who, along with Stan Getz, exposed the bossa nova and Latin rhythms to the American public. Charlie sometimes complained about just not being able to find "that" sound on his classical back in the late sixties and early seventies. I know if he were alive today he'd have a Taylor [nylon-string] in his hands.

Ed Baran

Acoustic Revival

I just received my 1990 Dan Crary Signature Model guitar back from Ryan McMullen's team in the Service department. I had sent the guitar back for my Revive package. Holy mackerel! It's like having a brand-new guitar with the voice of a well-played friend. I would highly recommend the Revive package to anyone who has a well-played Taylor and is in need of a tune-up. My guitar had experienced some rough humidity changes prior to my ownership, which left the guitar with a cracked and lifted bridge, a dip where the fingerboard meets the body, pretty worn frets, and a need for a new nut and saddle. The guitar came back with every repair expertly provided. It rings like a bell and projects like a cannon – a guitarist's dream. Thank you, Ryan and your team.

Chuck Loker

Blues to Order

It has been two weeks since I received my Taylor BTO 12-Fret. Wow, what a fantastic guitar! It is everything I had imagined and more. I asked you to build me a blues guitar, and that is exactly what you did. The workmanship is nothing short of artistry in wood. I

can't take my eyes off of it, and it plays like a dream. If it is true that guitars sound better with age, I can only imagine how this one will sound as we grow older together. Thanks for a wonderful instrument.

Tom Rusiecki
Port Richey, FL

Cheatin' & Repeatin'

I had been yearning for a T5 ever since they came out, but my wife has steadfastly threatened to leave if I bought one more guitar. After all, she reasoned, six (3 Taylors) are more than enough: "You can only play one at a time."

I demanded, cajoled, wheedled, begged and whined to no avail. Finally I began singing "Your Cheatin' Heart" at 3 a.m., refusing to quit until she agreed to the T5. She finally relented on the 34th rendition, and not only did she agree, she offered to buy it for my birthday if only I would quit singing! We bought it from Randy at Quality Guitars in Spring Hill, Florida. He let me play as many different T5s as he had for as long as I wanted, and worked very hard to make sure I was totally satisfied with my choice. I would highly recommend Quality Guitars to anyone looking to purchase a new guitar. I can't say enough about what a cool guitar the T5 is. It is everything that I hoped it would be and more.

Ben Gilbert

Passion Play

I just wanted to let you know why my Taylor is so important to me. When I was 16, my mom died after a two-year run with brain cancer. I was extremely close to her, and one of the greatest gifts she gave me was passion (and talent) for music. She was a lifelong pianist, guitarist and singer, and she supported my musical efforts to the fullest, buying me just about any instrument I decided I wanted to learn. When she passed, I was still just starting out with guitar, but I took it seriously. When I was 18, I received life insurance money, and after considering where my passion lies, I purchased a Taylor 814ce. As far as the guitar goes, I could not be happier. Its beautifully balanced tone, intonation, and playability are superior. I'm now 22, and I can already hear it opening up even more after obsessively playing it for three years! The cool thing for me, though, is that when I play that guitar – my first real and lifelong guitar – I think of my mom, who essentially enabled me to have it. Though I'll always miss her, she left me with an appreciation for fine instruments and well-made music. Since I bought the

814ce, I've also picked up the NS72ce after watching YouTube videos of Jason Mraz walking around France playing one. That guitar is gorgeous, and it's the perfect complement to the 814ce at shows when I want an alternative to steel strings. Thank you for building fantastic guitars and for being an honest, ground-up company (I'm currently halfway through Bob Taylor's *Guitar Lessons*). Thanks to you, I have a guitar that brings back fond memories of the woman who helped me realize my passion.

Kevin Castillo

Seaworthy Sound

I just returned from 2-1/2 weeks on an expedition-type cruise along the Antarctic Peninsula. Just before leaving, I decided to find a Baby Taylor to take and to play while on the ship. A longtime Taylor player, I envisioned bringing a low-cost, decent-sounding but compact guitar to entertain myself and maybe others if the opportunity arose. I settled on a GS Mini because of its higher-quality sound, even though it's a bit larger than a Baby. The Mini traveled beautifully in its sturdy, soft case and strapped right onto my rolling duffel bag (I luckily avoided having to check it). After crossing the stormy Drake Passage, the seas calmed down and I pulled out the guitar and sang and played that night in the Observation Deck/Bar. Long story short, it was a hit, and I played many evenings throughout the awesome journey. The GS Mini has an amazing volume and a decent tone for such a lightweight guitar. I tend to play a guitar hard to keep a strong beat and use syncopated, percussive sounds, and the Mini took my hard-driving strumming well. Further, I tune down a half step and then use a capo in various positions. Amazingly, there was no string buzz. Bringing the Mini along helped make the trip that much better for me and for many others. Thanks for another great guitar design!

Kelly Rogers

We'd like to hear from you

Send your e-mails to:
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Wood&Steel

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On the Cover

18 BTO Beauties

Our Build to Order program continues to bring your inspiration to life. Here are a few samples of our latest offerings.

*Cover photo:
Cocobolo/Adirondack spruce
GS with aged toner top,
koa binding and armrest,
green heart abalone rosette,
abalone/black oyster/agoya
tree fretboard inlay, and
Florentine cutaway*



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Grammy winner and Road Show troubadour Wayne Johnson will help you escape the oppression of scales, forget your muscle memory, and boost your fretboard creativity.

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We give you the SolidBody Standard in Borrego Red.

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She's earned raves from Al Kooper, props from Jorma Kaukonen, and backed Warren Haynes on vocals. Award-winning blues artist Ruthie Foster traces her roots-rich musical path.



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16 Acoustic Case Study: Coheed and the Crew

Our own Rob Magargal was enlisted to help prog-rockers Coheed and Cambria take their live acoustic tone to the next level. Armed with a few secret weapons, he knew just what to do.

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Ten years of Taylor investment in sustainable forestry in Honduras has helped a model program spread to other communities.

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Kurt's Corner

Collection Notice

With the Internet, it's easy to do research or share information or opinions with others. Many of us spend time on websites dedicated to our hobbies or interests, including on user forums. Some of you probably spend time regularly reading or contributing to guitar forums. Even though I've been around guitars since 1964 and in the business since 1973, I don't spend my spare time on guitar forums; cars are much more of a hobby for me. So the forums I'm usually on are Team-speed, 6 Speed Online, Rennspeed, Ferrari Chat, or recently The Samba and IH8Mud. I've noticed a frequent theme, especially on the sports car forums, centering on the future value or collectability of new models. There's frequently a lot of speculation about a car that's likely to become a future "collectable." I'm sure some of that emotion has to do with the desire to have something unique and special, but probably a lot of it has to do with making a smart purchase, hoping the vehicle will retain or possibly even increase its value.

I think a lot of factors enter in to the future value or collectability of a car or a guitar, such as the popularity of the brand; the quality and uniqueness of the product; whether a car has a racing pedigree or a guitar is used by a popular artist; how many are made and the relative scarcity; whether it broke new ground for the brand; whether it represented the end of an era for the

brand; and so on. However, I think the biggest factor is ultimately what market forces will decide over time, and this is largely unpredictable.

Several of us at Taylor had VW buses when we were younger. They were part of a young person's lifestyle, plus we grew up here in Southern California, where buses were part of the beach culture. They were simple, affordable, fairly reliable, and easy to fix. We sold them when we were a little older and done with them, for maybe a few thousand dollars. Who would have thought then that a clean, respectable pre-1968 bus could be worth as much or more as a brand new vehicle today?

Both Porsche and Ferrari have made very special cars in very limited numbers, and a few of these have done very well value-wise, while the majority of them have depreciated like most models they've produced. A buyer for a car like this should be prepared to buy the car for the pleasure of driving and owning it, but shouldn't justify the purchase by thinking it will hold its value or perhaps even appreciate; it isn't likely to happen. Or, the buyer may get lucky if they keep it for a very long time and the market decides it was one of those rare special cars and bids the value up.

I really don't think the manufacturer can determine which of their products are destined to be a future collectable. The car manufacturers can't do it, and neither can the guitar makers. All the

guitars that have been produced over all the decades have been some combination of creativity and the need to come up with something to make and sell. Occasionally the economic need to invent a guitar model to have something new to sell has resulted in a guitar the market decades later deemed special and collectable. That guitar started its life as likely just another shot at paying the bills and hopefully surviving to be able to continue making guitars. That guitar then got lucky when it was deemed special and unique enough to become collectable and increase in value. The market did that, and it took time, and it took unpredictable changes in social and musical trends to bring this about. Keep this in mind the next time you see guitars (or cars) being marketed as future collectables!

I know I'll lose money on my sports cars, so I just drive them and enjoy them. My buses, on the other hand, have stood the test of time and gained ground in value. But, as they say, past performance is no guarantee of future results.

— Kurt Listug, CEO

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2011 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 our reception desk in the lobby of our main building by 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/factorytour. We look forward to seeing you!

Holiday Closures

Monday, September 5
(Labor Day)

Friday, October 14
(Taylor Guitars Anniversary)

Thursday-Friday, November 24-25
(Thanksgiving Holiday)



Straight from the Source

Lately I've been traveling more, working on wood legality issues and helping to ensure that Taylor Guitars is in good standing when it comes to our practices and the practices of those who cut our wood. In this issue, you can read of my recent trip to Honduras to visit the three communities that cut mahogany for us and to celebrate the 10-year anniversary of the first

stories up that I could no longer hear the TV. I went outside and watched in amazement. I've seen heavy rain before, but not this.

The next day it came down like that again, after we'd driven far into a forested area. While stopped for lunch, we watched from inside a thatched-roof dining room as rain dropped in buckets. My PVC-coated duffel bag,

and this was the *dry* season. In the wet season no work occurs in the forest because, even for the locals, it's just too much.

Life in these areas is hard and not at all what most of us are used to. It is impressive how much work is done to get guitar wood from the forest to the workbench. Sometimes I wish I could take each and every customer to the sources of our wood so they could see for themselves what people do to get it out. Whenever I do that, people always make comments like, "Gosh, I had no idea! I will never complain about a streak in my guitar top again!"

Sometimes we get so far removed from the products we buy: our clothes, our food, our cars, and, yes, our guitars. I can do the same thing when it comes to raw materials. That's why it's always good for me to go visit the places and the people who make the wood possible. I jokingly tell people that "wood doesn't grow on trees," meaning it's not so easy to obtain, and when you go to the source it sure drives that home. I hope the article in this issue gives you a little glimpse of the source for the wood on your guitar, along with the people who toil to make it available to us.

— Bob Taylor, President

Sometimes I wish I could take each and every customer to the sources of our wood so they could see for themselves what people do to get it out.

community, Copen. The article will give you the meaty stuff, about the wood and the elegant way it's extracted, leaving the forest in good shape.

I want to talk about the rain.

The first rain came while I was in my hotel room the first night. This was a two-story, Travelodge-type hotel, with multiple buildings and outside access to each room. I was checked in, waiting to meet for dinner, lying on the bed and listening to the TV when the nightly rain began to fall.

Within minutes it was pouring, and you could hear it outside running off the roof. Then harder, and even harder, until it was so noisy on the tile roof two

with all my clothes and sleeping gear, was in the exposed truck bed. The thought never occurred to me to take my bag out of the back because I think of it as being waterproof. Yeah, right! Southern California waterproof. Let's just say I had to pour water out of it.

By the time a couple more days had passed, I was outside on horseback in the rain, working my way to more remote communities. By then I was like, "Who cares? So I get wet." And I did, and then I got dry, and then wet and then dry. I adapted. You would have, too. It made the whole experience richer. You can see why trees grow there. The daily rain was epic,

Editor's Note

Friends Far and Wide

It's official: Taylor's Facebook community has passed the 75,000-member mark. The growth of the community has been exciting to watch over the past few years, as people from all walks of life and every nook of the world have brought their unique voices to the conversation. From artist recommendations to homespun performance videos to photos and personal stories, people love having a place to talk about music and their guitars, and for those of us who work at Taylor, it's gratifying to be a part of it all. As I've told guests who tour the factory, I feel fortunate to arrive at work each day knowing that we'll be shipping out a fresh batch of guitars that are destined to be instruments of joy, comfort and inspiration to another group of people.

The personal accounts that Taylor owners share underscore how profound an influence music can be in life. We recently posted a question to our Facebook friends soliciting anecdotes from those who have used their Taylors as a tool of music therapy for people with injuries or other disabilities, and the replies were powerful. People wrote of playing for patients with cancer, soldiers suffering with post traumatic stress disorder, autistic and learning-challenged kids, recovering addicts, nursing home residents, and more. What was especially poignant was to read how meaningful these experiences were not just for the listeners but also for the players themselves. We plan to explore this theme in greater detail in future issues.

Facebook is just one example of the value we place on personal connections. This issue, you'll read about the sourcing relationships we've forged directly with remote Honduran communities that supply wood we use for our necks. In Taylor Notes we relay a pair of accounts from our spring season of Road Shows, including an educational event with the general public at the Orlando Science Center and a gathering in Joplin, Missouri only a few weeks after the community was ravaged by a tornado. In Soundings we report on a recent get-together with some of Nashville's leading players to share some new prototypes and elicit their feedback. WorldView spotlights our reinvigorated customer outreach in Europe. Our story on Coheed and Cambria highlights our commitment to working with artists and their sound crews to help them sound their best. And in late July and all of August, we'll be scattering across the U.S. for a series of "Find Your Fit" special events at dealers (see page 30), where we'll be offering one-on-one consultations with people to answer any questions they have about finding the right guitar.

All of these connections may start because of a guitar, but that's often just the beginning of something much more, something that has the power to resonate deeply with many others. Thank you for sharing your stories, and please keep them coming. We promise to do the same.

— Jim Kirlin

Wood&Steel **Online**

Read this and other back issues of *Wood&Steel* at taylorguitars.com under "Resources."

Breaking the Mold

Practicing scales builds muscle memory but can leave you stuck in a rut. Wayne Johnson shows you how to break free to become a more expressive player.

By Wayne Johnson



Ed. Note: We're pleased to welcome Wayne Johnson, a Grammy-winning guitarist and Taylor Road Show product specialist, back to the pages of Wood&Steel as a regular contributor. In addition to writing instructional pieces, Wayne will also be presenting online video lessons, some as W&S companion pieces and others on a new lesson page we've set up on the Taylor website. The lesson page will encourage interaction between Taylor players and Wayne, and allow him to field questions and share additional guitar-playing tips.

If I were to ask you to play me a C major scale, what note would you start on? The logical answer, of course, is C. It's the tonic, the home base, the reason the scale is named C. Now let me ask you this: Can you play me a C scale without starting on C? Or rather, can you play me the notes that belong to the C scale without starting on C? Why is this so difficult?

Well, as you may have read last issue in Shawn Persinger's article, "The Irrational Fretboard," the guitar fretboard is not logical. I can show a four-year-old the C scale on a piano, and within a few minutes he or she could play that scale up, down and randomly. It is completely visual. On a guitar, it would probably take that same four-year-old a couple of weeks to learn a C scale – and that's just in one position. Unlike the piano, all fingering on the guitar changes as you go up the fretboard. Learning the C scale in seven positions (one position for each of the seven scale tones) requires that you learn seven different scale forms.

Because the guitar is so different in this respect, we resort to memorization to learn it. We practice the same thing over and over again until our fingers "get it." The problem with muscle memory is that we play like we practice, and we play *what* we practice. If your entire guitar methodology is muscle memory, then your creative experience will be nil. How many times have you tried to play something that turned out to be much easier if you started somewhere else first? Hence, the C scale is easy, as long as you start on C!

Don't get me wrong – memorization is a useful technique for learning how to play guitar. Because of it, some things are actually easier on guitar, such as transposition. You can take a song in the key of A and easily play it in B by thinking "up two frets" for everything. Try this on the piano! You're not thinking about the harmonic relationships in order to play this song in B. You're using memorization skills. Well, I'm here to tell you that this is all good.

We need to take advantage of the easier elements in learning this instrument to make up for the more difficult ones.

My goal here is to show you a different type of visualization on the guitar, one that will help you learn and recognize shapes, groupings, intervals and symmetry. Through this visualization process and the practicing of scales and passages in a more linear (horizontal) manner, and by concentrating on single-string and random scale-note practice, you'll start to wean yourself off many of the memorization crutches that block your creative expression. This process will not only help train your ear, it will also greatly improve your melodic development.

A couple of notes before we dive in. First, this is a fretboard lesson (left hand for most), so you may use your picking hand in any manner you wish – picks or fingers. Also, I'd like to say a few words about positions and scale forms. Basically, a position number is the fret number where your index (first) finger (on your fretboard hand) rests at any given time. For example, in position 5, your index finger would fall along the fifth fret. Following naturally up the fretboard, your second finger rests on the sixth fret, third finger on the seventh fret and fourth finger on the eighth fret. The only alteration to this formula is that your index finger might reach one fret below its home position fret, and your fourth finger might reach above its home position fret at any time if needed, without it actually signifying a position change. These are just momentary stretches.

Scale form numbers have nothing to do with position numbers. Position numbers tell you what frets you're going to be centered around, whereas scale form numbers tell you what shape you're going to play, *in* that position. There are different methods of learning scale forms. I like the simplicity of using seven scale forms – one for each degree of the scale. This simply means that in scale form 5, for instance, your lowest note or first finger would be starting on the fifth note of the scale. Scale form 3 would start on the third note of the scale...and so on. This will become more obvious as we get into it more. Now, let's get started!

Fig. 1 is the C major scale in open position. It is in open position because it incorporates open (unfretted) strings to complete the scale. In open position, your first finger would be located over the nut, which we'll call fret 0. Fret 0, or open E, is the third note of the C scale, so this will be scale form 3. Notice that the inside one-octave C scale is darkened. The orange notes are extensions of the C scale below and above the inside one-octave scale. The tonic or

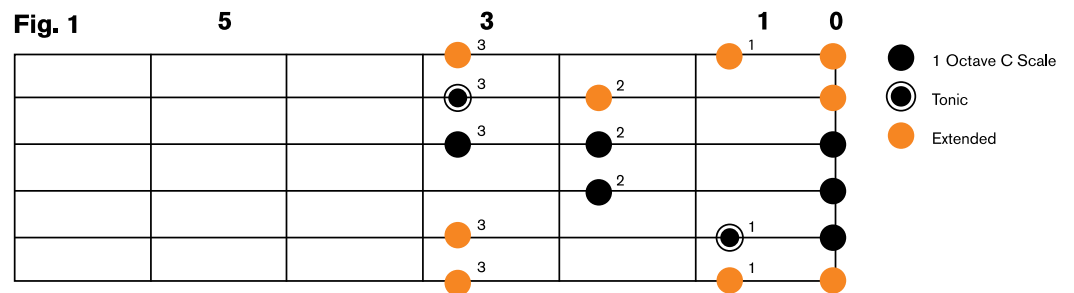
C notes have a circle around them. All of these notes are part of the C major scale. Fig. 1A shows how you probably learned to practice this inside C scale over and over again. Now, using Fig. 1, start from the lowest note (open E, sixth string) and work your way through both the scale extensions and the inside one-octave scale, all the way to the last note of this open position – third finger, third fret, first string. It won't really sound like a C major scale because you are starting on an E, but this is exactly my point. You can start on any of these notes and you will still be playing a C scale. The notes of the C scale do not have to be played in order or even start on the tonic (C) to be considered a C scale.

Now let's look at the visual symmetry within this scale form. First, your sixth string and first string are both E, so you know the notes are going to fall on the same frets. So, on both strings you have notes on frets open (0), 1 and 3. It just so happens that the second string has the exact same fret locations. This makes three identical string-fretting patterns! Strings 4 and 5 have symmetry in that the fret locations are also identical: 0, 2 and 3. This leaves only one string with no symmetrical partner. Can you see how this breaks up the chronological order of practicing? Without even knowing the notes, on strings 1, 2 and 6 you play the same locations: frets 0, 1 and 3. There is no muscle memory involved because you

have now learned the symmetry – the shape. All you have to do is play those identical frets and strings randomly and you are halfway there. Do the same for strings 4 and 5, only on frets 0, 2 and 3. Now you have groupings of three strings and two strings that are symmetrical, with only the third string alone, which you only play open and at the second fret. Once you learn these locations, you can easily play the scale in any order without the limitations of muscle memory.

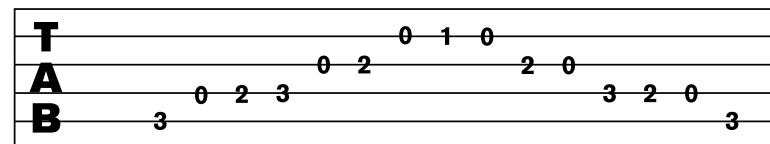
Now let's look at Fig. 2. This is the C scale in position 2. Since your first finger starts on the first fret, which is F, the fourth note of the C scale, it is

continued next page

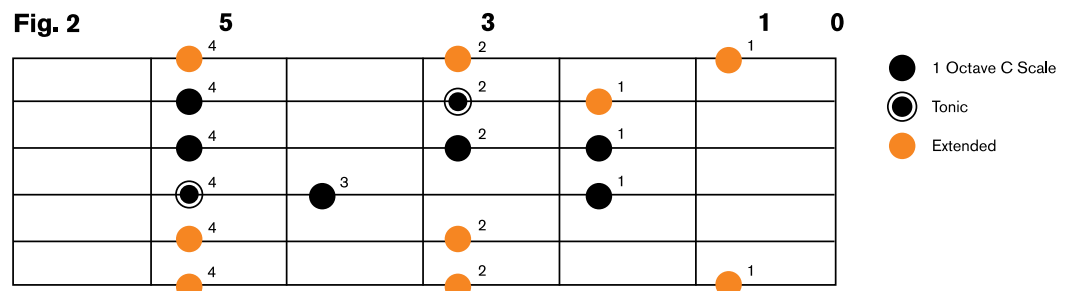


C Major Scale / Open Position / Scale Form 3

Fig. 1A

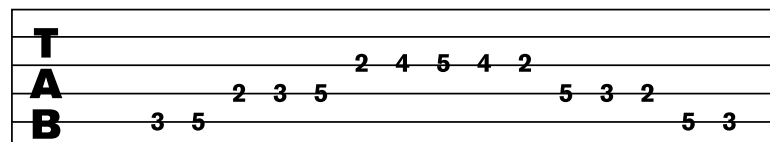


Typical C Major Scale, Open Position, Inside 1 Octave



C Major Scale / 2nd Position / Scale Form 4

Fig. 2A



Typical C Major Scale, 2nd Position, Inside 1 Octave

scale form 4. Notice its shape and how different it is from scale form 3. Also, notice that even though your index finger's home fret is position 2, this scale form starts with a lower fret stretch down to the first fret. The inside one-octave scale here (darkened) starts with your second finger on the fifth string, third fret. This means your index (1) finger is located over the second fret. Fig. 2A is how you would typically learn this C scale position. The orange notes in Fig. 2 are the extension of the inside one-octave scale below and above. Let's start with the lowest note in this position (F) on the sixth string, first fret and work our way up to the top note (A) on the first string, fifth fret. These are all the notes of the C major scale in position 2. Now let's do the same thing we did in Fig. 1. Look for recognizable shapes and symmetry. We have symmetry on strings 1 and 6, while strings 4 and 5 have their own. These two pairs of symmetrical strings will make it easier to visualize in order to learn, just like the open position. In this position, strings 2 and 3 are unique to themselves, so there is no symmetry here. Practice these shapes like you did with the open position. On strings 1 and 6 the shape is frets 1, 3 and 5; on strings 4 and 5 the shape is frets 2, 3 and 5; string 3 is frets 2, 4 and 5; and string 2 is frets 3 and 5. Learn these locations symmetrically and in terms of shapes and you

will start to see patterns that will allow you to learn and play these scale notes in random order.

An interesting exercise for both positions (with no guitar!) is to close your eyes and visualize the symmetrical shapes of these two positions and scale forms. Play air guitar to practice, putting your fingers on imaginary frets. Play the symmetrical string sets and unique string sets just like you would with a guitar, and then practice hitting locations randomly. If you have doubts, open your eyes and check the notation. "Playing" without a guitar is actually a great way to zero in on this learning process without any sonic distraction.

Now let's combine positions open and 2 so that we hit all the C scale notes available up to the fifth fret. Fig. 3 illustrates this. Look at the symmetry with these combined positions. Strings 1, 2 and 6 are identical. Strings 4 and 5 are identical. String 3 is the only one that is unique. In order to practice these two positions combined, you will be moving your hand back and forth between the two. Practice the two groups of symmetrical strings separately until you can play any location randomly. Then combine the two groups. String 3 will be a separate study, but because it is only one string, it will take little time. Do the "eyes closed air guitar drill" with these combined positions. The goal is to develop total freedom in

the playing of all the C scale notes up to the fifth fret.

You can do this "eyes closed" exercise anywhere, anytime. (Well, perhaps not while you're driving!) By visualizing all the shapes and patterns in your mind, you will soon be able to play any combination of these notes with no muscle memory. You'll be able to play the C scale horizontally, vertically, diagonally, randomly and in the typical, chronological scale progression.

This may seem like a lot to think about now, but it really isn't. As with most learning processes, there is a bit of a system involved, but the ultimate goal here is to free you from the thinking process. With practice, eventually you will be able to bypass the interfering mind to engage your creative process and let melody flow from your heart and soul to your fingers.

Of course, you'll probably want to learn many more scales this way, but after you get the process down, it becomes much easier. By the way, in case you didn't realize it, you didn't just learn the C scale only. You just learned seven different scales, one for every chord or *mode* that is built on each of the seven notes of the C scale! Do I sense the glow of a light bulb above your head? We'll attack that subject in a later lesson. For now, just focus on the C scale. And don't feel like you have to replace your entire approach

to the guitar now. Simply add this to your arsenal, and let things happen as they will.

One final thought. Since learning note locations in this manner can be a bit tedious, let me share one more practice example that should prove to be a little more musically fulfilling. In Fig. 4, I use all the same C scale notes and locations from this lesson, but this time I outline the seven basic tonal areas (modes) that exist from the C scale in the form of three-note chords or triads. This is actually being played in a scale-related fashion, but through the intervallic structure of the chords it makes for a melodic and harmonic little journey.

For now, I hope you can see how freeing yourself from typical scale practicing can open a huge door to melodic development and improvisation. One day as you're playing, something unique will fly from your fingers, and you'll say, "Wow, that was cool. How'd I do that? What was that?" That, my friend, is the sound of "breaking the mold." Until next time, have fun. **W&S**

You can watch Wayne's video presentation of this lesson at taylorguitars.com. Wayne will also be posting ongoing video lessons on the website. You can also find him at www.waynejohnsononline.com

More on Practicing the C Scale

As you practice all the C scale notes up to the fifth fret as shown in Fig. 3, you might find yourself questioning the tonality, especially as you start to play more randomly. I find it very useful to occasionally play a C chord to remind your ear of this home base. This way, for instance, after you play a C chord, the low open E will sound like the third of the C scale and not the root of an E home-based harmony.

As you get better at playing scale notes more randomly, you'll find that something interesting happens – you start to train your ear as well. Before long you'll be learning the intervals that you are playing and be able to anticipate the sound of the note you are about to play. This will help you shape your melodic development.

Know Your Notes

Do you know what notes you're playing? It's easy to look at a dot on a fretboard figure and play that note. Tab is very helpful in the same manner. Although you can do this whole lesson without knowing the actual notes, I encourage you to learn what notes you are playing. You don't have to be concerned with reading notation if that's not your thing, but believe me, knowing your notes will help you down the line in so many ways.

As you practice randomly playing different C scale notes, try saying the note out loud as you play it. For extra ear training, try singing the pitch as you say and play the note. Randomly, this can be fun and it's a great workout. At first your vocal may come out a little after you hear the pitch, but as you develop this ability, you'll be able to do it simultaneously. If you have trouble finding the notes in your voice box, play the same random interval two or three times until you hit it. Learning to sing these intervals is invaluable! Playing the notes in chronological order does no good because it's just the first seven letters of our alphabet repeated in the same order.

Get Vertical

There are many approaches to this visualization process. I think that learning the guitar in a linear manner like this is a great way to break up our typical vertical position, muscle memory approach. That said, you can also visualize these positions and find symmetry in a vertical manner. As you look at Fig. 3 again, observe frets 0, 3 and 5. With the exception of the third string, third fret, every one of these notes is played straight up or down vertically. You could use this as well while you're visualizing and come up with some totally unique intervals and exercises to further aid you in "nailing" the C scale.

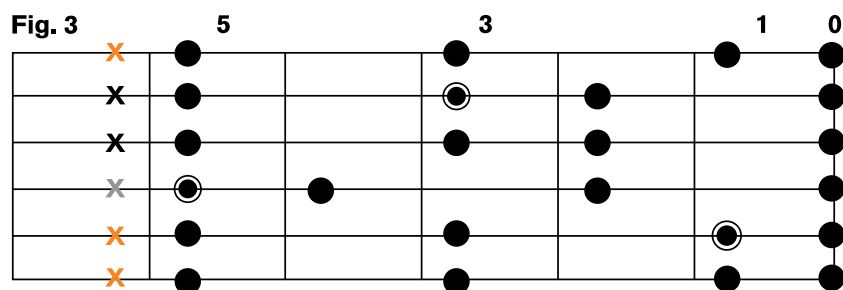


Fig. 3 C Major Scale / Scale Forms 3 & 4

Group 3 or X = Same fret locations (0, 1, 3, 5)
Group 2 or X = Same fret locations (0, 2, 3, 5)
Group 1 or X = Same fret locations (0, 2, 4, 5)

Fig. 4

	C	Dm	Em	F	G	Am	Bm7b5	C	Dm	Em	F
T	5	1				1	3	0	1	3	5
A	5	0	0	2	4	2	3	0	2	4	5
B	3		2	3	5	0	2	3	0	2	3
			0	1	3						

Fig. 4 C Major Scale Triads



Guitar Spotlight: SolidBody Standard

Cutaway: Double

Color: Borrego Red

Pickups: 2 Single Coils/1 Full-size HG Humbucker

Bridge: Tremolo

Pickguard: White Pearloid

Tone Profile: A popular, versatile setup that allows you to switch between the sparkle of our silent single coils and the raw power of a high-gain humbucker.

Build yours with the SolidBody Configurator at taylorguitars.com

Ask Bob

Vapor barriers, finger vs. scarf joints, elusive Engelmann, and guitar smells

Why isn't the inside of a guitar sealed? Wouldn't it help lessen the effect of humidity changes? I assume it has to do with sound, but with modern [developments], it just seems like there should be something that could seal the inside and not hurt, or maybe even improve, the sound. Has much research been done on this?

Travis T

Travis, people ask this question a lot because it seems as though it would be the ultimate solution to the problem. But there's a catch, so I'll play the role of "Mr. Science" for a moment. It's true that sealing wood makes a barrier, and when it's thick, it makes a moisture barrier. But humidity is in the form of vapor, and the finish on a guitar is not a vapor barrier. Vapor, as you know, is the gaseous form of water. Each form has different properties, and one interesting property of vapor is that it moves right through things like paint. As an example, we've all had a door that is painted yet will swell and stick in the humid months, and shrink and not stick in the dry months. So, sealing the inside of the guitar is ineffective, not only theoretically, but in real life. I know, because I've tested it many times in the hope that science was wrong. It wasn't. The finish on the guitar is a nice water (liquid) barrier, but that's not what makes the guitar shrink and swell.

I own a 2010 T5 Classic and a 2006 614ce, which just came back from the factory for an ES upgrade. When it came back, I was reminded about the neck/headstock joint question that came up when I purchased my T5. The T5 (and all newer Taylor models I've looked at) has an almost seamless scarf joint, whereas my 614 has a finger joint. What led to changing from the finger to the scarf joint? What are some of the pros and cons of each design?

John Whirlledge
Greenville, OH

John, here's the simplest explanation. The finger joint was our first joined peghead design. It was strong and very effective. However, some people didn't like the look, so I starting thinking, and eventually I came up with our unique scarf joint. It's a curved joint, so it ends up being very beautiful when you can see it. Some wood leaves it invisible, and others show it off. So, the idea was to design a more beautiful joint than the very utilitarian finger joint. They are both stronger than a solid design.



Scarf joint

I'm looking at your "modify a model" program to take a GA8 acoustic and substitute an Engelmann spruce top and a bone nut and saddle. I'm reading a lot about Engelmann and like what I read, but I can't understand why you do not use it on any straight acoustic models. Am I missing something? Do rosewood and Engelmann not pair well on a GA? I'm looking for a really sweet and mellow sound that will go with a light touch as I round the corner on 60. Advice?

Michael Brink

Michael, it's a straightforward answer. There's simply not enough Engelmann

left to use on a regular model. We did for 20 years, but alas, it's nearly gone. We did just purchase some very old Engelmann tops, several thousand in fact, and are using them on BTO guitars, as we have no idea when the next supply of Engelmann will come our way.

As I search for my next axe (I'm currently enjoying the rich, warm tones of a 514ce), I keep coming back to my two unknowns: How do a cutaway and the Expression System affect the tone and sustain of a guitar? I'm not currently playing live, but I do go high up on the neck. Am I sacrificing acoustic tone due to the extra parts of the Expression System? Am I getting an altered sound with the cutaway versus a non-cutaway?

Austin
Chicago, IL

Austin, I'll give you the simple answer and then the complex, "Bob Sez" answer. First the simple answer. No, it doesn't affect the tone, and you don't sacrifice anything by having a cutaway

"The difference between a cutaway and non-cutaway is so small it becomes academic."

and an ES. The more complex answer contains philosophy and some ambiguity, and goes something like this: Even if there was some difference in the sound between the two, and some people might want to argue that, who's to say the cutaway is automatically worse? To some people it might be better, you know? So, each guitar is an individual and has to be taken on its own merits. It's hard to find a Taylor that isn't a cutaway, so we know how our cutaways sound. If I played on the high frets, I'd want a cutaway and I'd be totally confident that the guitar will sound great. I wouldn't worry about how it might be different than a non-cutaway version. The difference is so small it becomes academic and not practical to debate or worry about. So, get your cutaway. And the ES is non-intrusive. It won't affect the sound in any noticeable way. I hope that helps you be confident in your choice.



Any plans to make the 12-Fret an option on any body shape? I think a 12-fret Dreadnought or a GA would be very cool.

Dave

Yes, I'm sure that'll happen, Dave. We did make a limited run of GA 12-Frets this spring. They were great, but the GC is the one for me!

We just bought our third Taylor guitar, a GS Mini (414ce, NS72ce). The sustain is awesome, and the workmanship is, well, Taylor. I see that you install Elixir mediums on the Mini and I was wondering why. Is it simply to get a bigger sound out of a smaller guitar? My 414ce is equipped with light strings, and it seems that a bigger guitar would handle the tension of the medium strings better. Or is there no difference in the tension?

Dennis Duffy
Hollywood, FL

Well, Dennis, the scale (length of the strings) of the GS Mini is much shorter than the full-sized guitars. Therefore, the strings are tuned down loose to get to the right notes. That makes light gauge strings a little floppy, and mediums feel almost like lights. So, medium is the hot ticket for the Mini.

Any chance you will be making the GS Mini with finer-grade tonewood?
Ray Langenberg

Yes, Ray, there's a chance. Remember in *Dumb and Dumber* when Jim Carrey's character asks what the chances of going out with the girl are, and she says, "Oh, I'd say one in a million." And he thinks for a second and says, "Yes! There's a chance!" Well these chances are better than that. You'll see GS Minis made in LTDs eventually, from all solid wood, with binding, etc. It'll happen.

I recently purchased my first new guitar, a Taylor 210. I'm so excited to learn! The guitar came with a hard bag, as opposed to a hard shell case. Will controlling the humidity be more of a challenge with a more "fabric"-type bag?

Betsy Ercolini
Renton, WA

Not at all, Betsy. I recommend Humidipaks to control your humidity. Just put the guitar away in the hard bag when you're not playing it and keep a couple Humidipaks in there. It'll be just fine.

I have been taking Hawaiian slack key guitar for two years and consider myself a beginner. My instructor tells me if I am serious about music, I should get a good guitar. I agree. What I am looking for is a sweet-sounding guitar that will deliver that Open G or Dropped C tuning for

my Hawaiian music. I noticed that Taylor makes a koa guitar; would that give me the sweet sound? I live in the Pacific Northwest and wonder if I should purchase a guitar in which the woods are adaptable for this area. Moisture is a big problem here. Any suggestions from you or your team would be wonderful.

Judy



K26ce

Judy, all the woods are adaptable to your area. It's how we treated the wood when we made it and how you treat it when you own it that make the difference. With that in mind, you should get a koa guitar. It will respond to slack key very well. Get a large guitar like a GS. You'll sound like a Hawaiian, and it'll be deep and sweet, like a big stalk of sugar cane!

What's your favorite guitar – both Taylor and non-Taylor – and why?

Brent Sprouse
Clovis, NM

Oh gosh, don't make me, Brent, please don't make me. I've seen too many guitars to name a favorite. We have customers who own dozens of guitars. None of us can say which is the favorite. I just can't; it would all be made up if I did. But I will say I love any GS we make, and a non-cutaway 810, and a rosewood/spruce GC 12-Fret. I love Tom Anderson guitars, and Bill

Collings guitars, and Lakewood guitars. I recently played an HD-28 that was a very, very nice guitar. And I love guitars made by Andy Powers. And Paul Reed Smith, too. And Telecasters. Yep, all those and more. Oh yes, I love a Lar-rievie guitar, any of them.

I play fingerstyle guitar in standard and open/altered tunings, and I'm considering either a BTO Grand Concert or an R. Taylor Style 2. As my hands age – just my hands, mind you – I think a short-scale guitar would be great. I currently have two fantastic hand-built Grand Concerts, which sound great but are both long scale. I want a guitar that's very responsive to a light touch with a full but balanced tone. I like a fat, crisp treble that doesn't sound thin in the mix. Knowing guitars like you do, I'm wondering what wood combination you'd recommend on a GC.

Gordon

Gordon, have you played mahogany with a cedar top? If you don't play super hard, it's one of the best wood combinations for what you describe that I can think of. Maybe you could find a 514ce in a store, just to play that



514ce

wood combo. A GC will be smaller, but still, the wood tone-print will transfer. If you want an extra deep sound with the

GC, then I'd also recommend building it with a 12-fret neck. Same amount of frets, mind you, only it joins the body at the 12th fret rather than the 14th. And as your hands age while the rest of you stays young, I'd definitely recommend a short scale – it'll be way better on your hands. In fact, we make all GCs with short-scale necks standard nowadays.

I own a 2003 314ce. Recently I have been tuning the whole guitar down one full step. I enjoy the warm tone I am getting from it. Should I make any other adjustments to the guitar to help it adjust to this new tuning? I was told that it is "wrong" for me to keep my guitar on this tuning, but I really like it there.

Dave G,
Rochester, NY



314ce

Dave, you've committed no crimes here. Tune it down if you want. If it's buzzy, then you're all set. If it's buzz, then you may need to loosen the truss rod because the lesser tension might be pulling less on the neck. But if it's not broken, don't fix it. Just play and enjoy.

I purchased a 2008 GS7, with a cedar top and rosewood back and

sides. The top had darkened to a nice light brown, but what I really loved was the smell every time I opened up the case. I recently purchased a 2010 GS7. The top is much lighter, and the smell is gone entirely except for the "new" smell of the guitar. Will the top darken, and will the smell eventually come out of this GS7 like my last one?

Jerome Littmann
Pittsville, Wisconsin

Jerome, you can expect the top to darken, as all tops do. Your first top might have been a darker piece to start with, as cedar comes in various shades, from light yellow to very dark brown. But yours will darken from its new color. The smell? I doubt it will ever smell more than now. Do I need to add a sniff-inspector to the factory now? Please don't tell me!

Ed. Note: Since Bob has been receiving more and more questions from folks looking for advice as they consider their next Taylor guitar purchase, this is a great place to remind everyone about our "Find Your Fit" guitar events in late July and August, at dealers across the U.S. (see p. 31). We invite you to come and pick the brain of one of our knowledgeable sales staff about your particular preferences as a player and get some great tips for what to consider. Since our sales reps write the specifications for most of the custom and one-off guitars that they bring to Road Shows, they're also a great resource for questions about Build to Order models. Our team looks forward to helping you find a great-fitting guitar.

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.



The *Wood&Steel* Interview

SOUL

Stirrer

Ruthie Foster's rich amalgam of gospel, blues and soul has earned her a passionate following. The multiple award winner talks about building a buzz, blending her influences, and the power of performing with other women.

By Dan Forte

photo: John Carrico

Al Kooper has had a storied career. Besides founding Blood, Sweat & Tears, he's played on albums by B.B. King, Jimi Hendrix, the Who, the Stones, and a couple of Beatles, and played the organ on Dylan's "Like A Rolling Stone." His songs have been recorded by everyone from Donny Hathaway ("I Love You More Than You'll Ever Know") to Gary Lewis & The Playboys ("This Diamond Ring"). And as an A&R man, he signed the Zombies and Lynyrd Skynyrd (producing "Free Bird"). You might say he's got an ear for talent.

So it's nothing to sneeze at when, in his recent "New Music For Old People" column in *The Morton Report*, he wrote of Ruthie Foster's "exquisite singing": "On the sidelines I sit and watch this woman get more and more listeners each year. She truly deserves them. This is timeless blues music done masterfully."

People are still debating how to categorize Foster, but she's amassing awards in the meantime. Her 2009 CD, *The Truth According to Ruthie Foster* (on the Blue Corn Music label) was nominated for a Grammy in the Contemporary Blues category. In 2010, the Blues Music Awards declared her Contemporary Blues Female Artist of the Year, although at this year's BMAs, she won the Koko Taylor Award for *Traditional Blues Female Artist*.

Foster's 2007 offering was titled *The Phenomenal Ruthie Foster*, in part because of the inclusion of Maya Angelou's "Phenomenal Woman." But Foster backed up the superlative with a strong set of originals and material from Eric Bibb ("A Friend Like You") and gospel legend Sister Rosetta Tharpe ("Up Above My Head").

Foster grew up singing in church with her family in a tiny Texas town, but as an adult ricocheted from New York to South Carolina (with a stint in the Navy) and back to Central Texas, where she took the musical cauldron known as Austin by storm – seemingly coming out of nowhere, her style fully formed.

She recorded the *Truth* CD in Memphis, backed by an all-star ensemble that included guitar great Robben Ford and the late Jim Dickinson on keyboards, for one of his last sessions.

Her latest release, though, is her *Live at Antone's* DVD, filmed in Austin with her own band – featuring drummer Samantha Banks, bassist Tanya Richardson, and keyboardist Scottie Miller. One of the impressive set's highlights is a duet with her guitarist, Hadden Sayers, on his original "Back to the Blues" – from his new CD, *Hard Dollar* (also on Blue Corn), which also includes the tandem vocal.

Awards and releases are one thing, but in May Foster and her partner welcomed a baby girl – no doubt Foster's greatest award to date.

There was a definite buzz going around when you moved to Austin. I had just recorded *Runaway Soul* [released in July 2002].

Everybody's "overnight sensation" comes after a whole lot of work, but when you came to Austin, you somehow avoided getting stuck in the "Austin rut," so to speak – of kicking around the club scene and sort of plateauing there.

Yeah, I get that. I rarely get people to talk to me face to face, but I was hearing it from my booking agent at the time – especially when I got on the *Austin City Limits* TV show.

You got on that within about a year.

I did, yeah. And it was weird, because I didn't expect that.

It's not the norm.

No. There are people who've been knocking around this town for years and haven't gotten that show. I got a little bit of backlash for that. It wasn't mean or anything; it was like, "How did that happen?"

I was touring with my friend [percussionist] Cyd Cassone at the time; she and I were a duo. One of the things we sat down and figured out is you don't have to go through the front door all the time when it comes to trying to get into someplace. There's a window or a back door or something. It wasn't a strategic thing, but we looked at what was really important. And for me, it was about really managing how I wanted to get to where I wanted to go. I wanted to play a major festival, so I sought out Kerrville. You know, half of Austin disappears and goes to Kerrville every year. That was one way of just trying to be seen. I didn't have a gig; I just went to go camp. But you go around to different campsites and sing and play.

Did you get to play on the main stage?

They did put me up there the next year. I got invited to do that. I think it was about just figuring out where I wanted to go. A lot of it was PR. I have a degree in broadcasting, and I know that TV and radio – when you work that – people will swear they've seen you somewhere before when they haven't. It's just all about the buzz. When South By Southwest came around, I didn't have much of a showcase, but I did nothing but PR for

two days. What's great about that is you don't have to run yourself into the ground; you just go and play one song on the radio, and people swear they saw you somewhere.

It was also a lot of luck, a lot of experience, because I always showed up and didn't leave anything behind. Also, hooking up with some really great people who helped out – from people who let me on stage to do those open-mic nights to Jimmy LaFave, who let me sit in, to [publicist] Cash Edwards, who gave me great advice – even when I wasn't living in Austin yet. Folks just being really generous with their time, allowing me to get in front of their audiences.

Who are your main influences?

Gospel singers, like Mahalia Jackson – because it's more about a feel and a spirit of what I'm doing. But then in terms of songwriting, Patty Griffin and Lucinda Williams – I just love what they say. I'm trying to tap into that storytelling, which is kind of where I started, then it sort of shifted more into R&B and blues. That's what I cut my teeth on, really. Aretha, Sam Cooke, Johnnie Taylor, Otis Redding – that whole style and feel.

You grew up in Gause, Texas?

Yes. When I was there, there were maybe 500 or 600 people.

Was your family musical?

They all sang, and I had great-uncles who would go around to different churches and sing. My mother's folks were all into church, and I had an uncle who played piano in our church. I was his little organ player. I'd sit at the organ with my little legs swinging and play "Amazing Grace" with him. That was my first song.

It was the Missionary Baptist Church, so it wasn't the Holiness Church, where you can play all these great instruments. I could play the guitar, but piano had to be my first instrument. Which was a great idea; it turned out to be what was best anyway. After a while, I was a really young person traveling around to different churches, playing piano and guitar, singing Dorothy Norwood songs, like "Jesus Is the Answer" – that was my tune I'd play everywhere on guitar – and Andraé Crouch songs.

Do you ever turn to the piano when you're writing songs?

All the time. The piano is what I go to when I really want to go deep. Guitar is good for me too, but it takes me in a different direction. It's great to have both options. On the *Phenomenal* record, "Heal Yourself" was done on

the Wurlitzer – after recording it on guitar on *Full Circle* – because it needed something different.

Do you have a modus operandi when it comes to writing, or does it just have to happen?

These days it's just got to find itself, because my home life is just as busy as my road life. When I'm home I want

few pointers from him on how to relax, because I tend to tense up when I play. And he's so effortless and at ease when he plays.

Even with a rhythm section and electric instruments and soloists, is your rhythm guitar the starting point – sort of the anchor?

Very much so. That's a throwback to

"I loved the big groups, but people who really got my attention were Janis Ian and Phoebe Snow — one woman, one guitar, and just beautiful. That was the reason I wanted a guitar when I was 12."

to try to *be* home. But I have to be in a certain emotional and mental place, as far as my energy goes, for me to write. I haven't really written much lately, because we've been on the road so much. When I'm not traveling with my band, I'll go out and do some singing, like I just did with Warren Haynes. I went on the road with him as his background singer, because I'm all over his CD [*Man In Motion*].

Did you and the rest of the players cut the *Truth* CD together in the studio?

Yeah, it's pretty live. In fact, there are a couple of songs where we just kept the first take. I did my final vocals in L.A., while I was touring, but we kept a lot of the vocals I'd laid down with the band in Memphis, because it was all about the feel with those guys. Robben was great with how to get out of those songs, so we wouldn't have to keep doing them [laughs]. I guess that comes with being in the music business for as long as he has, and being the front person.

I was on tour for a month or so with Robben and Jorma Kaukonen, and I learned so much from these guys. I remember telling Chris [Goldsmith, producer], "Why am I on this again? [laughs]" I guess what I brought to the mix was something really different, because at the time I was not only playing the Taylor, doing a lot of fingerpicking, but I had a resonator guitar, doing slide.

We'd close the show with Dylan's "Don't Think Twice, It's Alright," and Jorma commended my fingerpicking style. Over the years, I've just developed a different way to play. I tried to learn the banjo a few years ago, so my style may be a mix of that and just my own fingerpicking. But I picked up a

the '70s, when rhythm guitar was everything. That was the groove for bands like Chic and Con Funk Shun. That's the way I play when I play rhythm.

How and when did you get your Taylor?

It's a 312ce with the Grand Concert body. Some friends had a music store in downtown Bryan when I was living in College Station, where Texas A&M is. I went in one day to buy some strings, and they told me they were going to be carrying the Taylor brand soon, and I said, "Definitely call me when that happens."

They got them in, and I just fell in love with this model, because it was a small body, and I was ready to go to that, because I had a huge Dreadnought at the time. The Taylor played so beautifully and stayed in tune. That was great, because I played pretty hard during that time. I was playing acoustic over two electric guitars and a horn, and it was really getting lost. But this little sucker was great. I liked the Fishman electronics too.

So this had to be at least a decade ago, before the Expression System. Right. It was prior to that.

What do you look for in a guitar generally?

At the time I was playing more folk music and some R&B kind of riff stuff. So I wanted to keep the full-body acoustic sound – which this guitar has. For being so small, it really does carry quite a bit. I remember seeing Phoebe Snow play when I lived up in New Jersey for a while, and she had a little guitar that had this great sound. I also liked what the lighter strings brought to



it. You have to play light strings on it to keep the neck in shape, and I like the way it cuts through, as far as the tone goes.

What about the feel – the weight and the balance?

The smaller body is a nice plus, to feel comfortable about having something around your neck while you're running around on stage. The way it feels, it's better balanced than the Dreadnought is for me – I'm a small person.

I was thinking about the 414, because I do love that sound, but it's a little bigger, and I need to be able to feel comfortable when I play it or swing it around my back when it's time to just do some real singing. The 312 is made for my body.

Do you have to monkey around much with the electronics, changing from one venue to another?

Not at all, and that's what I love about the Taylors. Besides the fact that they stay in tune no matter what you do to them, with the electronics I have on mine I don't have to play with them at all; it just stays there. Certain places, I'd kick the bottom up a little, just because I like that feel. It being a lighter guitar, I like to feel the bottom, especially with light strings – so I do kick the low-end up a bit.

Do you go through a preamp or equalizer?

I have a Boss EQ that I kick in sometimes. I don't really solo. A solo for me is like going back to the '70s, where

you just do a funky riff – so I'll kick my EQ in for that. I give it a little more gain in the mids and even more in the lows, and it makes it meatier.

For different functions – like writing as opposed to performing, or in a recording situation – do you use specific guitars, or do you mix them up?

I usually stick to one guitar, and the Taylor has served me well. In the studio, it's clean and the electronics aren't noisy at all. As far as writing, it's beautiful to write with because of the action. I've got a great guitar guy here in Austin, who helps keep it in shape for me – Ed Reynolds. We call him "Special Ed" [laughs].

It's not as unusual as it used to be to find female artists who play guitar, but female "sidemen" – like Sarah Brown on bass or Cindy Cashdollar on steel – are still a slightly rare breed. Was it important for you to have women in your band?

Yes, it's important for me now. And these are my "sisters," in so many ways now. We knew each other for years before we started playing together. They had a jazz-fusion band in Houston.

Yeah, it was something I really wanted to do, and I think that comes from my background in TV and all that. I am conscious of it. I'm OK with bringing fellas into my group, and obviously I have a couple of guys when I have my quintet, but I think there's something

really powerful that happens visually when you see us up on stage. I think it's important for both men and women, but really empowering for young women and little girls; just that visual says something. It all came together with the "Phenomenal Woman" song coming out. People really feel it and see that when we perform.

You were nominated for a Grammy in the blues category. So do you feel you have more of an affinity with singer-songwriters like Patty Griffin and Lucinda Williams or with your female blues contemporaries, like Janiva Magness, Candye Kane, and Susan Tedeschi?
I'm comfortable with either one. That's what's kind of fun and comical. The

other day, UPS dropped off a package, and I was trying to remember if I'd forgotten about something I ordered, but it was the Koko Taylor Award that I won while I was away touring with Warren. It was such a whirlwind, I'd totally put it out of my mind. I need to send some thank-yous out! But I started thinking, "Wow! How did I get that?"

I'm comfortable in both, but it can be... not necessarily a curse – that's the wrong word. But, at first, people just didn't know what category to put me in – even my record company, when it comes to entering my name into nominations.

You mentioned folk music and talked about Kerrville. Deep down, blues and soul music seem to be in your arsenal naturally, but you kind of networked yourself towards what was just becoming the "Americana" category – folkie,

singer-songwriter, indie label. Was that a conscious thing?

Yes and no. When I got out of the Navy in 1990, I was living in Charleston,

lot of singer-songwriters in there, but I was the only person doing more Aretha Franklin and Sam Cooke – black soul singers – on acoustic guitar. So I

“We'd close the show with Dylan's 'Don't Think Twice, It's Alright,' and Jorma commended my finger-picking style. I tried to learn the banjo a few years ago, so my style may be a mix of that and just my own fingerpicking.”

South Carolina, and I wanted to sing full-time. There was a little club that used to be a strip club, but it was turned into a folk music club. It was like whiplash for the clientele that used to be there [laughs]. I ended up being the stage manager, and we brought a

brought something different to that, but it was mostly because I just didn't really know much about folk music. But you know, growing up we had a TV show called *The Midnight Special*. I loved the big groups, but people who really got my attention were Janis Ian and Phoebe

Snow – one woman, one guitar, and just beautiful. That was the reason I wanted a guitar when I was 12.

The club owner introduced me to people like Josh White, Jr., and Glenn Yarbrough from the Limeliters. We got to be good friends, because my husband at the time, John Lamb, produced his Christmas album. So I got into this folk world through that. Also, the owner insisted I read the Woody Guthrie book [*Bound For Glory*], so I read that and fell completely in love with folk music. I started looking up all these names on my computer – because I knew about Odetta, but I hadn't really heard a lot of her. Here I was falling in love with this music that the acoustic guitar is built for. I knew about blues singers like Mississippi John Hurt and Lightnin' Hopkins, and what they were doing at the folk festivals, but this opened a whole big world for me.

So I kind of got into it there. And then I had a life, and ended up back

in Texas. So there was this folk festival in Kerrville that I'd heard about when I was going to [McLennan Community College] in Waco. Here was an opportunity to do this stuff, and I'd had time to learn these tunes and learn a different way to write. I had a chance to put it all together *and* still keep my roots with blues and soul, just mix it all together. I kind of ran with that – and I'm still running with it. **W&S** www.ruthiefoster.com

In a career spanning 35 years, Dan Forte has interviewed such legends as George Harrison, Frank Zappa, Eric Clapton, Duane Eddy, Albert King, David Lindley, Stevie Ray Vaughan, Buck Owens, David Grisman, and Carlos Santana for Rolling Stone, Musician, Guitar Player, and Vintage Guitar. He received the ASCAP/Deems Taylor Award for excellence in music journalism.



Sound Advice

Taylor's Rob Magargal spent two days at tour rehearsals with Coheed and Cambria and their live sound crew. It helped them take their amplified acoustic sound to the next level.

By Jim Kirlin

It all started at Winter NAMM. Alt-prog rockers Coheed and Cambria, beloved by fans worldwide for their epic sci-fi concept albums, dynamic acoustic-to-metal musical range, and emotive vocal melodies, were in the house to play an intimate acoustic set on the Taylor stage. Like any of our guest performers, the band was invited to roam the room beforehand and select their stage guitars from the wall-to-wall treasure trove of acoustic goodies that represent the Taylor line and then some. It's one of the pleasures anyone visiting our exhibition space experiences — hands-on access to the full monty.

Taylor's Andy Lund, an in-house product specialist who frequently works with artists, played guitar concierge with singer-guitarist Claudio Sanchez. Although Claudio's longtime stage acoustic has been an 815ce, Andy turned him on to a pair of sonorous beauties that would be a better match for the fingerpicking he would be doing: a mahogany/cedar GC5 and a

rosewood/spruce 12-Fret. Bandmate Travis Stever, whose longtime Taylors are an 814ce and an LKSM, opted for a pair of maples — a GS6 and a 614ce — whose crisp tones would add a nice counterpoint texture.

The choices played out well during the set. As Andy tuned in to the rich acoustic nuances and the unique character of each guitar, it sparked an idea to take things a step further with the band.

"I thought it would be cool to spend time with them before their upcoming tour and recommend different guitars that would be compatible with different songs," he says. It would also give him a chance to hang and talk shop with their live sound crew, including their guitar techs and the front-of-house sound engineer, and to survey their live performance signal chain and see how the Expression System was working for them.

The project had the makings of a compelling acoustic case study. For one, Claudio and Travis tended to tour

with several different Taylor models because they played in a variety of tunings and didn't want to have to retune on stage between songs. This would be an opportunity to showcase how the unique voicings of different models really could translate live. Also, the band and crew had already been using ES-equipped guitars, so it wouldn't be a shock to the system for the sound crew. And it just so happened that they would be opening each show on their upcoming tour with a 35-minute acoustic set. In many respects it was an ideal environment for a little Taylor field study.

The band and their manager were receptive to the idea, so it just came down to scheduling. They had a two-day window in April and would be rehearsing for a show in Kansas City. It turned out that Andy was already committed to a trip to Australia for a string of Taylor Road Shows on those dates, but Taylor's Rob Magargal, another guitar guru and all-around affable guy, was happy to oblige.

Based on Coheed's NAMM set and their playing styles, Andy selected an assortment of models to ship to the Midland Theater in Kansas City, where the band would be rehearsing and opening their tour: a 12-Fret, GS8e, GS6e, 616ce, 716ce, GC5e, Baritone 6, 614ce and NS74ce, along with several K4s and Balanced Breakout Boxes. Rob would spend two days there, accompanied by a videographer to document some of the interaction with the band and sound crew.

A Guitar-Fitting Session

During the first day of rehearsals, Rob spent time with Claudio and Travis as they sampled the guitars that had been sent. Not surprisingly, because of NAMM, Claudio immediately gravitated toward the 12-Fret, and it turned out to be his favorite of the lot. It's a big contrast to his 815ce.

"It's nice to get that 12, certainly for the fingerpicking stuff, which we're doing a lot of in the acoustic set," Claudio tells Rob. "It's just a little more

clear, as opposed to the bigger bodies that kind of darken that stuff up, so I'm really liking that."

Rob explains that with the 12-Fret, you can still get a nice fullness and depth without the issues that a bigger-bodied guitar can pose on stage.

"A lot of times people will go for a guitar [based on] how it sounds sitting in a music store or in their lap, not realizing that [with] the type of music they're playing and what they're going for, they may need a smaller body guitar because you can EQ it better," he says. "It doesn't have the overtones that will get in the way of the EQ. The front-of-house can really make a difference there."

Based on Claudio's preference for the 12-Fret, Rob handed Claudio the GC5 next, which he had also played at NAMM.

"He strummed one chord and it was over," Rob says. "He ended up using that one as well, and tuning it down a half-step and using it with a capo."

Travis had his 814ce and LKSM

with him, but he also liked the GS8 and ended up playing a 614ce. Both he and Claudio were intrigued by the voice of the Baritone 6, and acknowledged that they needed time to acclimate to it, as they both saw it as a songwriting tool they would use.

The ES: Flat is Beautiful

Alex Venturello, aka V-Man, has worked for Coheed as a guitar tech for 2-1/2 years. He was Travis's guitar tech until recently, when he began handling Claudio's gear. He describes their playing techniques as different.

"Travis is a lot heavier with his right hand, whereas Claudio's a lot heavier with his left hand," he says.

Rob and V-Man talked about the band's use of the Expression System and their signal chain. They'd been running things really clean, with no guitar effects, from the guitar into a DI box and then into a tuner, and then into the soundboard. Rob explained how going into the DI box interrupts the Expression System's balanced signal, and suggested Taylor's Balanced Breakout Box, which allows you to go into a tuner and then to a console without compromising the signal.

"As soon as we hooked up the Breakout Box, the sound engineer said, 'That sounds a lot better,'" Rob says.

Rob and V-Man also talked about the way he sets the ES controls on the guitar.

"We try to keep these completely flat," V-Man says to Rob, pointing to the knobs. "We'll use the [front-of-house] desk for what it's for."

an amp and immediately over-EQ," he says. "I'd explain that they should back it down and just leave it flat – let the guitar do what it needs to do, and listen to what it's going to give you instead of over-EQing. You see it a lot with other systems where you have to manipulate too much to try to get a tone, whereas, if you just leave it flat it's beautiful."

V-Man later elaborates on his track record with acoustic electronics.

"Previously, most bands I've worked with have had the clip-on magnetic pickups with a cable traveling out the back of the acoustic, or with the more modern guitars you would have the controls or sliders," he says. "With the Taylors, we keep all our guitars completely flat, and straight out into the desk they sound perfect, whereas before, everything sounded too mechanical; it wasn't raw enough. The Taylor stuff has been the most consistent, crystal-clear out[put] for the acoustics."

Rob makes another point about amplified acoustic tone that relates to playing in a band setting.

"Sometimes cutting the EQ actually helps quite a bit," he says. "Depending on the music you're playing, you may want to cut through that mix and have a little more midrange out of the guitar – not quite so pretty, so lovely. A lot of times you can cut down that bass and treble and boost that volume, and that mid hits you and it's nice."

Another member of the sound crew, Joey Bruckman, has been with the band for about five years, 4-1/2 years as a monitor engineer and tour manager,

says. "The electronics in the ES really hold together and convey the sound of the guitar perfectly. The 12-Fret is one of our favorites. It sounds beefy – when Claudio's picking softly it's still picking up a nice warm tone... round, great... it's the definition of an acoustic guitar."

The K4: Less Noise, More Tone

On the second day of rehearsals, Rob introduced Joey to the Taylor K4 Equalizer as a valuable tool for EQ'ing the acoustic tone at the house console. The center detent on the ES knobs makes it easy to set the ES flat, and then the K4 can be used to color the tone from there. The signal chain in this environment would be: the guitars plugged into a Balanced Breakout Box (with a balanced cable, TRS/XLR); tuners connected to the tuner-out jack; then into a snake that goes to the K4 before the front-of-house board.

"When we hooked up the K4s to the board with Joey, he immediately noticed a difference, without even doing anything," Rob says. "It just blew him away. He was sitting there saying, 'I can't believe this; it's quieter, and it sounds better. I turned it on and it's doing something!' The other sound guy with him says, 'Did you hear that? I'm actually dropping the noise floor by pulling my faders down and using the K4 as volume to give me the signal I want going to the main, and there's no noise added. Listen...all you're getting is the tone.'"

In fact, during rehearsals the K4 ended up in between the mix for the stage monitor *and* the mix for the



Joey Bruckman

pull up the screen, you have your little digital knobs, and you can turn them 'til the cows come home, but you don't hear a change," he elaborates. "You're watching an EQ pattern change on the board and you're listening, and nothing happens. But he told me that when he turns a knob on the K4, it actually does something. Analog is cool!"

We followed up with Joey a few weeks later, before a Coheed show in San Diego, after he'd had a chance to incorporate the K4 into the mix for some shows.

"Flat, out of the box, it sounds great," he says. "We did a couple of pulls in the midrange and bumps in the low end, fattened the tone up a little bit, but it sounded great. We've ended up

with more of a three-dimensional sound altogether."

V-Man was equally complimentary on the overall live sound.

"It's been flawless. I haven't had a single problem with anything. I'm loving the Taylor mute boxes; now everything's balanced. Also with the tuners not really in the signal chain anymore, everything's a little more tidied up, a little clearer. It's kind of hard to fault it, really. There hasn't been a single issue that we've had."

There only seems to be one lingering issue.

"The 12-Fret... that's a good guitar, he says. "At the end of the tour I'll be trying to convince the tour manager to let me take it home." **W&S**



Alex "V-Man" Venturello

"Thank you," Rob says with a smile, happy to hear that V-Man understands it. The ES, he explains, is deceptively simple. The pickup/preamp design does all the sonic heavy lifting to create a great source tone, but if people are used to other pickup systems and EQ controls, he says, things can get off track quickly.

"When I was going to Road Shows, someone would inevitably plug into

and the last 6-8 months as front-of-house and production manager. He says they've had no problems at all with the ES, and that it really helps capture the unique personality of each player and each guitar.

"Both of the guys often go from some soft picking to some hard strummy stuff within the same tune, and it's usually hard to translate through any other sort of pickup or microphone," he

house so the band also could hear the K4-conditioned mix in their in-ear monitors.

One big reason the K4 comes in handy for front-of-house guys, Rob explains, is because they don't always travel with their own mixing console, and depending on the venue, the house system may not be great.

"Even with some of the digital consoles, Joey was saying that you

Videos

Watch video highlights of Rob Magargal's visit with Coheed and Cambria and their sound crew at taylorguitars.com.

TAYLORCODE



COHEED/NAMM

To watch Coheed and Cambria perform "Iron Fist" on the Taylor stage at NAMM, scan the Taylorcode.

BTO Beauties

**With an ever-growing menu, our
BTO program aims to please**

Each year we add more choices to our Build to Order program. Last year we introduced contoured armrest and backstrap options, and broadened the scope of our 12-Fret and Baritone body designs by letting you choose your woods and appointments. For the T5 and T3, we added bindings of maple, koa and ebony, along with an optional abalone-trimmed top.

Often, the fresh designs we dream up for our seasonal limited editions later migrate to the BTO program. This year we added several of our 2010 Fall LTD inlays – the Victorian, Pipeline, and Engraved Twist – and our traditional cherry mahogany stain, used with last year's all-mahogany electrics and this spring's all-mahogany acoustics, can now be applied to any mahogany or sapele guitar.

But enough with the words. We'd much rather show you what we mean.



Left: BTO maple/Sitka spruce Baritone 8-String with ebony binding and rosette, black pickguard, Florentine cutaway, and abalone/Mother-of-Pearl rose headstock inlay (shown above)



Left (top down): Pipeline inlay, Engraved Twist inlay, and traditional cherry mahogany stain; Right: T5 12-string featuring a densely figured master-grade Hawaiian koa top with abalone trim, ebony binding, and Taylor's iconic "Cindy" fretboard inlay

Forest Friends

A decade after a pioneering mahogany harvesting program paired Taylor with a community in Honduras, a model of sustainable social forestry is thriving and spreading

By Jim Kirlin



Bob Taylor (back center) and Greenwood's Scott Landis (third from left) with members of the Copén community

Bob Taylor remembers the bountiful days of buying mahogany direct from a local lumberyard. Huge slabs 20 feet long, four feet wide, and three inches thick would arrive at the shop on a truck.

"We didn't have forklifts back then, so it would take six guys to pick one up," he says. "And with the flatsawn grain you knew that tree was like eight feet in diameter."

Times have changed. The days of endless board feet are gone, replaced by conservation-minded policies and, in Taylor's case, innovative sourcing partnerships forged directly with small Third World communities in Central America.

The latest chapter in our mahogany chronicles returns to the remote tropical rainforest of northern Honduras, where Bob traveled in March to visit the forest-dwelling communities of Copén and Miraveza, which supply Taylor with mahogany for guitar necks. Bob's travel companion was Scott Landis, the founder and executive director of GreenWood (greenwoodglobal.org), a non-profit organization that empowers indigenous forest-based communities to support themselves through sustainable forestry practices that produce high-quality wood products.

The trip's occasion was the 10th anniversary of Taylor's pilot partnership with Copén's forestry cooperative and its collaborating partner, Fundación MaderaVerde, a Honduran counterpart to Landis's organization. MaderaVerde provides Honduran communities with forestry training and business infrastructure, and works as a liaison with the Honduran government's forestry agency and with clients such as Taylor.

The back story of mahogany's vulnerable status in the world, as we've reported in past issues, is that its once-abundant supply was gradually depleted after more than two centuries of overharvesting and global consumption. The wood's listing as a protected species with CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora) led to more stringent regulation of its commercial trade and required sustainable management plans to allow for legal harvesting.

Though Taylor had been legally sourcing the majority of its mahogany for guitar necks from Belize (and continues to do so), Bob felt that Taylor had the responsibility to revisit its sourcing, milling, and manufacturing processes with an eye on the most

sustainable practices. In addition to working with our primary supplier in Belize (see sidebar), Taylor embraced the opportunity to develop innovative partnerships with smaller indigenous Central American communities, especially with the help of GreenWood and MaderaVerde. The rub was that it would realistically be several years before any kind of wood supply would actually materialize, if at all. And the amount of mahogany a community could supply would be but a fraction of Taylor's supply needs.

Nonetheless, Bob felt it was an investment worth making. If it proved successful, Taylor's production volume would provide an economy of scale that could support a stable, eco-friendly business model for other communities in the region.

Meanwhile, on the manufacturing side, Bob retooled his mahogany-cutting specifications for suppliers to make it easier for communities with less sophisticated tools to mill the wood. As we noted in our story on the 10th anniversary of the NT neck (summer 2009), instead of having the wood cut to traditional, rectangular 3x4-inch neck blank dimensions, Bob changed the specifications to 4x4s. The square dimensions meant that the

wood couldn't be cut wrong – if the grain orientation wasn't right on one side, it could be flipped to another side. This cutting modification would enable Taylor to get more usable wood for guitar necks out of each log harvested.

It took four years before Taylor received its first container of wood from Copén, but Bob's extended vision enabled the program to develop, evolve and spread.

A Model of Modern-Primitive Social Forestry

The community of Copén is located in the buffer zone of the Rio Plátano Biosphere Reserve, a UNESCO World Heritage Site and the largest surviving area of virgin tropical rainforest in Honduras. Under a governmental agreement, Copén has the rights to manage and harvest more than 10,000 acres, although it has designated more than half of the area as protected forest, off limits to timber cutting. The remaining forest is considered 90 percent mature, and the community is legally permitted to harvest about 21,000 board feet of mahogany annually, which worked out to nearly 13,500 board feet of exportable neck stock and 4,800 board feet of lumber sold to local markets. All of it is typically

produced from eight to ten mature trees.

Our last in-depth report from Copén came in the summer of 2006 ("Honduran Tree Hows"), as we chronicled Taylor milling department manager Chris Cosgrove's trek into the forest with a team of Copén's sawyers. In the several years since Chris's trip, the Copén community's efforts earned them a nomination by the United Nations Food & Agriculture Organization (FAO) as one of Latin America's "Model Forests," and in 2010, MaderaVerde executive director Melvin Cruz was named "Outstanding Forester of the Year" by the College of Professional Foresters of Honduras. Copén's program is considered a shining example of social forestry, in which forest-dwelling communities learn to sustainably manage the natural resources that surround them, supporting themselves in the process.

"As far as good social forestry goes, I think it's among the best programs I've ever seen in the world," Bob says. "That forest is better off if somebody's doing work in it. For one, there are invaders and interlopers that come into the forest, and the country of Honduras can't really manage this thick, deep, remote forest. But the people who

live there can, especially if they're out working in it, taking some trees each year. They know what's going on, and they can report."

As a guitar company, Taylor is an ideal client for a community like Copén because of the high-dollar value the wood generates for guitars. (Bob estimates that close to 50 percent of Copén's GDP comes from selling guitar wood to Taylor.) Community members have been able to use the proceeds to purchase livestock like pigs, chicken and cattle. During his visit, Bob saw other quality-of-life improvements that have come from doing business with Copén.

"I arrived to the first electric light bulbs they've ever had," Bob says. "They've got solar panels on every house, and for the first time in the whole Valley, the workers have medical, death and disability insurance. They're paying off their mill, and they've got an economy going. It's really textbook-perfect development. They were able to buy a little turbine and put it upstream, and they're bringing in electricity. They have a new stake bed truck that they use to transport wood, and all of this is done on several mahogany trees in a year. It's very primitive, but it's sustainable forever because they have such a huge tract of land."

It's sustainable enough – both environmentally and economically – that two other forest communities at the edge of the Río Plátano Biosphere, Miraveza and Limoncito, subsequently partnered with GreenWood, MaderaVerde and Taylor to implement their own mahogany harvesting programs. Taylor has been receiving wood from Miraveza for about three years and Limoncito for about two years. Together, the three groups supply Taylor with about 30 percent of the mahogany used for guitar necks. Bob envisions partnering with other villages at in the future.

"I received a letter recently from an inspector for UNESCO World Heritage sites," Bob says. "He goes all over the world and looks at these things, and the letter basically said what we're doing is awesome. And that's the type of forestry you want to do – where people come in and go, 'Wow, that's really good!'"

Getting the Wood Out

Each community cooperative consists of about 25 members who are responsible for various facets of the forestry operation. The different roles include forest inventory; scouting for trees and patrolling the boundaries; sawyers who fell trees and chainsaw them into rough cants; mule drivers responsible for transporting the cants

from the source; river drivers who float cants downriver to the mill; sawmill operators; truckers and mechanics; blade sharpeners; wood graders; chain-of-custody bar-coding technicians who document the origin of the wood for legal purposes; and the treasurer/bookkeeper.

Because of the lack of roads deep in the Honduran forest, mules are used to transport lumber from a harvested mahogany tree back to the cooperative's sawing shed. It may take upwards of a month and a half to transport all the wood. It might be an 8-hour round-trip for a mule to retrieve a load in the forest and return. After the tree is cut, an Alaskan chainsaw mill is used to rip slabs and then rough cants. The mules can carry two cants, or the equivalent of about four 4x4s at a time. The Copén cooperative may have access to as many as 30 mules, which translates into about 60 cants, or 120 4x4s a day.

Bob recognizes that the more primitive harvesting approach isn't as efficient as transporting a whole log back to a modern sawmill, but doing so would require building a road and infrastructure that would disrupt the forest ecosystem.

"It's the price we pay to leave the forest in great shape," he says.

In Copén, the rough-cut cants are hauled to the cooperative's sawing shed, which is equipped with a Wood-Mizer portable sawmill that is used to resaw them into clean 4x4 neck blanks and other dimensional lumber. They use their stake bed truck to transport 500 board feet at a time to a storage area that MaderaVerde maintains outside the town and that can be accessed by a tractor trailer. When they've accumulated 5,000 feet, a trailer transports the wood eight hours to the coastal city of San Pedro Sula, the second largest city in Honduras, located in the northwest corner of the country. This is where the kilns are located, and where the wood from all three communities is dried to about 8 percent moisture content before it's shipped to California.

"Our suppliers do a great job of getting us the right pieces of wood," Bob says. "It really is unbelievable the amount of activity that takes place before we even get to start a guitar. If our guitar owners could experience this whole process firsthand, they'd have an even greater appreciation for what goes into their guitars."



Belizean Field Trip



In April, not long after Bob Taylor's trip to Honduras, Taylor Senior purchasing manager Bob Zink and Build to Order program manager Joe Bina flew to Belize for a mahogany mission of their own. Belize remains Taylor's primary source of mahogany for necks (providing about 70 percent of it), and the two spent time with our supplier there, New River Enterprises. The proprietor, Joseph Loskot, owns about 5,000 acres of land south of Orange Walk and sustainably harvests mahogany trees based on CITES regulations and a quota determined by the Belizean government's forestry department. Loskot told Bob and Joe that the operation helps support the local community by offering much better-paying alternatives to working in the sugar cane fields. By training people in woodworking, the employees are able to earn a significantly higher wage and improve their standard of living. Taylor is the company's largest client.

While they were there, Bob and Joe spent time at the main mill and then ventured out on a 3-1/2-hour drive (at 15 mph on some rough dirt roads) to a makeshift logging camp. Out in the forest, they surveyed several mahogany trees that were casualties of last year's hurricane season and are in the process of being harvested. A few had blown down entirely, exposing the root ball, and were a priority.

"They need to get them off the ground quickly or else they'll rot from the outside in," explains Joe. A couple of other trees were effectively standing dead, Bob says, because the branches had been blown off, preventing the trees from being able to photosynthesize. If they aren't harvested, they will begin to rot.

The logging season is a relatively short three-month period due to the heavy rain the region receives the rest of the year. Once a tree is harvested, it'll usually be about six or seven months before the milled and kiln-dried wood will arrive at the Taylor factory.

In addition to surveying the overall operation and talking about wood for guitar necks, Bob and Joe also talked about wood sets that might be usable for bodies.

"That includes figured mahogany, because every once in a while they'll run across a figured tree," Joe says. "We let them know that rather than cut it up into necks, we would take that for sets. So, it was educational for them to find out that we can use some of that stuff that they would normally cut into flooring or use for cabinets."

Joe also spent time discussing other exotic wood species milled there for flooring and cabinets, which might be viable for BTO guitars in the future – woods like ziricote, granadilla, chechem, black cabbage, and billy web, among others. Because New River's customers typically don't want figured wood for cabinets or flooring, they can set some of that aside for Taylor to consider. The plan was for them to ship Joe some samples of these woods, from which we plan to build guitar prototypes and then assess the tonal properties. We'll let you know if any of them make the grade.

Forest Friends

continued

Bob Taylor's itinerary in Honduras began at the airport in La Ceiba with a press conference to celebrate the 10th anniversary of Taylor's investment in sustainable forest management there. After visiting with the staff of MaderaVerde, Bob and Greenwood's Scott Landis traveled to the communities of Copén and Miraveza, then flew to San Pedro Sula, where the milled mahogany is kiln-dried before being shipped to the U.S. A selection of Bob and Scott's photos, featured here, capture some of the sights of their travels.



Welcome to Copén



Bob being interviewed by a local TV station after the press conference in La Ceiba



The home of the mayor of Miraveza



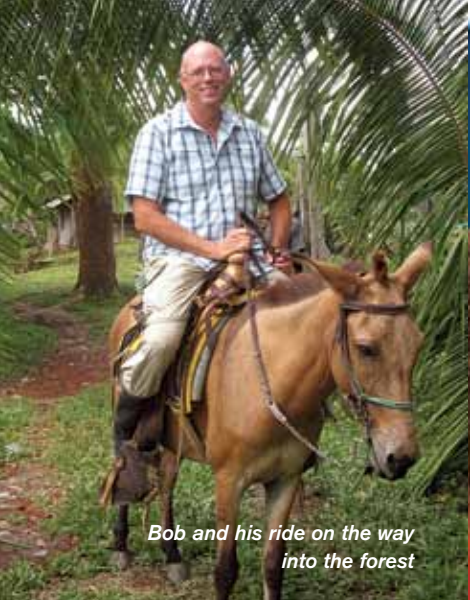
Proceeds from Taylor's wood-purchasing arrangement with Copén have enabled members of the cooperative to purchase livestock.



A young girl in Copén charms Bob



River crossings are a regular part of life in rural Honduras. The "ferries" are rafts mounted on two canoes and propelled with an outboard motor. Here, a Wood-Mizer portable sawmill is moved



Bob and his ride on the way into the forest



GPS-based technology enables foresters to create bar code tags that identify the source coordinates of a tree. A bar-coded clip is implanted into the stump of a harvested tree, while every 4x4 receives a corresponding barcode. The technology provides a supply chain management tracking system to ensure compliance with environmental laws.



Bob shows a group of sawyers in Miraveza photos of ebony being cut in Africa, where he had recently visited. "They were interested in other woods, where they come from, and what those people look like," Bob says.



An Alaskan chainsaw mill is used to rip a slab from a mahogany tree.



In Miraveza, a mahogany cant's dimensions are measured on a Wood-Mizer. The sawyers are also trained to make and sharpen their blades and properly maintain the machine.



A stake bed truck purchased by the community of Copén using proceeds from their arrangement with Taylor



Bob and Scott wait to cross the Paulaya River near Miraveza with members of the community.



Bob with staffers from MaderaVerde at their offices in La Ceiba

Soundings

Fish Tales

Andy Hillstrand, co-captain and deckboss of the crab fishing boat the Time Bandit from the popular Discovery Channel program *Deadliest Catch*, dropped by the Taylor complex in April for a tour with his wife Sabrina. Hillstrand, who owns an **810ce** he says he loves, was initially drawn to Taylor after seeing an online video of Bob Taylor talking about guitar making. During his visit, Hillstrand shared some colorful tales, including a funny account of the dramatic demise of his first guitar, an Esteban, which he used to defend himself in an altercation with another fisherman. He also recounted the perils of battling six-story waves, on-the-job sleep deprivation (his record is 80 hours) and other treacherous working conditions that keep *Deadliest Catch* viewers on the edge of their seats each week.

While making the rounds at the factory, Hillstrand had a chance to spend time with Bob Taylor, who happens to be a longtime fan of the show. The two chatted at length, during which Hillstrand assured Bob that the seventh season, which premiered in April, would feature plenty more gripping drama, including blood and broken bones, along with an epic prank at some point.

Hillstrand also played a pair of tunes he wrote following the death of another skipper on the show, Captain **Phil Harris** (the Cornelia Marie), whose passing factored heavily into the drama at the end of the previous season. Hillstrand downplayed his singing and songwriting skills, but says that after Harris's death on the show, he woke up with the lyrics already formed in his head, and the rest of the songs came quickly. "Ode to Phil" is a poignant ballad that pays tribute to his friend, while the bluesy tune "A Fisherman's Life" is a salty homage to his seafaring trade. Taylor's Andy Powers sat in and played some tasty fills, prompting Hillstrand to half-jokingly try to recruit him as his lead guitarist.

Besides his 810ce, Hillstrand had a pair of **812ce** models on order, which he was planning to take on a string of "Captains' Tour" live events starting in May with his brother, Time Bandit co-captain Johnathan, along with Captain **Sig Hansen** of the boat the Northwestern. The shows mix firsthand storytelling, previously unseen video footage, Hillstrand's songs, and an audience Q&A.

TAYLORCODE



CAPTAIN ANDY

To watch Andy Hillstrand's rendition of "A Fisherman's Life," scan the Taylorcode.

North Face South

You can count **David Murphy** among the happy new **GS Mini** owners out there. A former professional marathoner and now Senior Brand Marketing Manager for outdoor gear manufacturer The North Face, Murphy touched base this spring after returning from a photo and video shoot in Patagonia, Argentina for some running apparel that will be introduced this fall.

The North Face has a built a reputation for top-flight action photography in their marketing campaigns, featuring imagery shot on location in areas and conditions that are authentic environments for testing their respective products. For this shoot, photographer (and world-class mountain climber) **Tim Kemple** suggested the El Chaltén region of Patagonia, where the climate, terrain and light would be ideal, and a crew of about 10 made the trip, including Murphy and his Mini.

"The guitar was a massive hit with the athletes and camera crew," he says. "They really seemed to enjoy hearing me play music out there in the wild, as usually these shoots can get quite tedious with no entertainment. I was playing while some of the shooting was going on, and Tim really enjoyed it. He told me I need to keep bringing it on the shoots with me."

Murphy says he couldn't help but be inspired throughout the trip and was happy to have the Mini to express himself musically.

"Between the landscape and the creativity that's going on around you visually, if you tune into that it's really special. And Patagonia has a unique atmosphere to it; you can really feel that when you're out there."

After the Patagonia shoot, Murphy brought his Mini with him on a shoot in Sedona, Arizona for yoga apparel.

"We were out at Red Rocks, and it was spectacular," he says. "The Mini is so portable – what I notice is you don't get any hassle at airport security; you can carry it right onto the plane, it fits in the racks. And it's just really versatile. I didn't have any hesitation putting it into the car, and then just strap it on your

back and off you go. That's what we need when we're on a trek like that."

Blue Note

We were saddened to learn of the passing of longtime Taylor friend **Steve White** on April 22, at the age of 61, after a long battle with throat cancer. White was a propulsive one-man blues band, a musical dynamo, whose funky, gritty, soulful, churning grooves, wry wit, and generous spirit warmed the hearts and souls of many who encountered him. A true artist and a man of the world, Steve's bohemian spirit lured him far and wide throughout his life, and he channeled his experiences into his sinewy Delta-funk-blues-world-pop-folk, giving his tunes an incredible color and depth.

Steve's self-styled approach to playing was mesmerizing to see in person: the percussive snap and twang of his right hand as he wrung syncopated rhythms out of his tuned-down acoustic; his delectably greasy slide playing; the locomotive chug of notes blown on a braced harmonica; the pounding of his clog-clad foot on an amplified stomp board; and vocals that mingled the darker and lighter sides of life with clever lyrical wordplay. It's no surprise that he was also an accomplished painter; his songs were sonic canvasses that he would masterfully layer with a brilliant collage of sounds.

Though Steve's work largely flew under the mainstream musical radar in the U.S., he developed a strong following in Europe, and he left a lasting impression on nearly everyone who saw him play.

Even after cancer necessitated the removal of his vocal chords in 2009, he continued to perform his regular weekly gig at an outdoor market in his home town of Encinitas, California. For a number of years, Steve's **510c** was his workhorse, and in addition to showcasing for Taylor at events like the Folk Alliance Conference, he played at a number of Taylor gatherings over the years.

If you like roots music and haven't had a chance to sample Steve's work, do yourself a favor and soak up a bit of his music and life at stevewhiteblues.com. You'll be glad you did.

Homegrown Vibe

As a singer-songwriter who typically writes and performs on his own, **Justin Roth (812c)** has learned that making an album in a studio with other players can pose artistic challenges.

"I'm on the clock, and I don't have

the freedom to just experiment with how I hear the music," he says. "I've always hired players who I have so much respect for, so when they'd hear something and play a part, I would defer to them sometimes because they must know better than me. Sometimes I'd think, wow, that's not really how I heard it, but it's really cool. OK, let's go in that direction. All of a sudden it starts turning into something else."

Though Roth insists he's proud of his past records, he decided to go the DIY route for his latest project, **Now You Know**, working out of his home recording studio (a 10x12-foot bedroom). Among his self-imposed limitations were that the sounds on the record would only be what he could play and record himself so the project wouldn't get away from him or sound like a band. Despite – or perhaps because of – the restrictions, he says the experience was priceless.

"You can do so much with mic placement and playing your instrument well," he says. "Does it sound like me? Yes. Does it have a vibe? Yes."

Indeed. Roth's singular vision yields a cohesive batch of songs that feel intimate, personal, and richly melodic. At its core, the album is anchored by his eloquent fingerstyle chops, which strike a nuanced balance between simplicity and sophistication, blending alternate tunings and percussive techniques. The tone of his 15-year-old 812c is warm and sweet, and his expressive voice has a soothing, complementary timbre. When he layers up his vocal harmonies and soaks them in reverb-y effects, they inflate the music with potent emotional ambience. Honorable mention goes to his selection of percussion instruments, which include cardboard box kick drum, three-quart sauce pan, and aluminum gutter.

Roth did enlist some friends for some lyric co-writes on a few tunes, including talented indie artists **Brian Joseph, Emilia Dahlin**, and critically acclaimed singer-songwriter **LJ Booth**, with whom Roth has toured as a percussionist. He also covers a **Darrell Scott** tune, "Love's Not Through With Me Yet." From the atmospheric beauty of the title track like to the instrumental gem "Spaghetti Junction," Roth delivers a lucid record that reveals an artist who's taken his craft to the next level. You can watch newly posted performance videos at www.justinroth.com.

Maine Event

As his band's national profile grows with increased AAA radio exposure, Portland, Maine-rooted singer-songwriter **Jason Spooner (910)** has been a

touring fool this summer in support of his latest release, **Sea Monster**. Fronting a tight, nimble trio that features **Adam Frederick** on bass and **Reed Chambers** on drums and percussion, Spooner and friends continue to dole out tasty portions of rootsy, funky pop that manage to expand their already rangy musical boundaries. Though Spooner's songwriting bedrock remains his acoustic guitar and his brightly glimmering voice, his deft electric work taps into a fresh palette of tones, and this rhythm section is built to groove in every stylistic direction.

Frederick's slick bass work over programmed beats on the opener, "Crashing Down," lets you know that these guys are more than New England folksters, and the scenic ride continues with the wah-wah funk of "Half a Mind," nuanced Reggae vibe of "Time is Running Out," and a soulful, R&B cover of the Terence Trent D'Arby dance-pop hit "Wishing Well." From the gritty pleading on "Let It Go" to the haunting, pedal steel-infused folk of "Fossil," Spooner reels the listener in with his voice, and the band keeps you on the hook with fluid interplay and plenty of pocket goodness. There's a wistfulness in Spooner's voice that gives his lyrics extra resonance and, together with everything else the band does, makes for a great record that gets even better with repeat listens. www.jasonspooner.com.

Crashing Nashville

In June, Taylor artist relations rep **Tim Godwin** flew to Nashville with luthier **Andy Powers** and the Marketing department's **Shane Roeschlein** for a whirlwind trip to make the rounds and meet some old and new friends. Among the events on tap were CMA Fest, the CMT Awards, and a "Guitar Tone" open house event that Taylor hosted for local players.

The day-long Taylor shindig, held at Soundcheck in downtown Nashville, was organized to introduce Andy to the local talent and to share some of his latest guitar prototypes, featuring some new bracing designs. A steady stream of players dropped by throughout the day to hang out and play.

"The talent pool and the high level of musical ability are pretty eye-opening," Andy said afterwards as he reflected on the experience, emphasizing the value he places on interacting with a diverse group of great players.

"I've always found it enlightening to watch and listen to other musicians play an instrument I've made," he



Clockwise from top left:
Justin Roth; Captain Andy Hillstrand at the factory; Steve White (photo by Marshall Harrington, marshallharrington.com); David Murphy entertains the crew in Patagonia (photo by Tim Kemple); the Jason Spooner Trio (photo by Jose Azel)



says. "I like to take note of the way they approach an instrument; the peculiar nuances and individuality of their own unique style of playing; the songs they find in a guitar; their technique and the sounds they produce from an instrument. Hearing a wide variety of immensely talented players helps me figure out what's working and what isn't. Each of these artists is as unique as a fingerprint, so no two players will sound or play the same way on one guitar. When I hear a guitar really work well for one player, then work equally well for the next player who has a vastly different style, the same with a third player, I know I'm onto something good."

By all accounts, he's definitely onto something good. The feedback was overwhelmingly positive, and guitarist **Danny Rader (DN8)** from **Keith Urban's** band ended up borrowing one of the Dreadnought protos to try out and possibly use on tour. Another was left at Soundcheck for more players to sample.

A lot of guitarists in Nashville have an existing perception of what our guitars are, and this event gave them a chance to reconnect with our latest instruments in an organic way and refresh that perspective with new Taylor tones. Among the other players who visited were **Jerry McPherson, George Marinelli, Stu G., Pat Bergeron, Steve Mandile, Andy Childs, Marshall Altman, and Jeff King.**

"I came back full of new music and some fresh thoughts to pour into the instruments, as well as a lot of encouragement and affirmation that these new instruments have a musically rewarding life ahead!" Andy shared after the event.

Another guest, singer-songwriter **Sonia Leigh**, also dropped by to pick up a custom Grand Auditorium she had ordered, along with a K4.

"Andy built me the most beautiful guitar, I was speechless!" she wrote in her blog afterward. "I named it Jackson after one of my favorite writers, Jackson Browne." She performed with it the next night in front of 70,000 people at the CMA Fest with the **Zac Brown Band**, whose Southern Ground label is her musical home.

Tim and Andy also met with producer/composer **Fred Mollin**, and dropped by the studio of guitarist/producer **John D Willis**, who showed off his Dan Crary long neck guitar, one of only three that exist. They also sidled over to the Wildhorse Saloon for CMT's Fan Social, where **Thompson Square** performed and where Andy played Vanna White, giving away a signed Taylor to an audience member. On their last day in town, Tim and Andy

caught up with **Danelle Leverett** and **Susie Brown** from the on-the-rise duo the **JaneDear Girls (410ce, 712ce, 614ce)**. Susie noted that she's planning a series of YouTube videos in which she plays the songs she grew up with on the 712ce.

Acoustic Medley

Andy Innes, the guitarist and musical director for celebrated South African singer-songwriter and musical activist **Johnny Clegg**, visited the factory in May during a tour stop in San Diego. Innes, a longtime Taylor player who's been with Clegg for 19 years, has an **815ce, 414ce** and a recently acquired **Baritone 8-String** he says he loves. While at the factory, he had a chance to play a **12-Fret** that wasted no time seducing him. He says he plans on picking up a Grand Concert in the near future....Singer-songwriter

Christina Perri was recently interviewed for Spin.com and called out her black **614ce**: "This is my favorite instrument and has been with me through everything," she says. "When I'm holding her, I feel better and ready to write a song or play a show." Perri's lead guitarist, **John Anderson**, loves his T3/B....Guitar legend **James Burton** raved about his Taylors during a recent interview with Randy Patterson, editor of Boomerocity.com, calling them "first class quality instruments." "I just think that it's one of the finest guitars made today," he said. "Bob Taylor and Kurt Listug, these guys are my friends. They would not release an instrument unless it was inspected, perfected and ready to go...." Guitarist, songwriter and producer **Buddy Miller**, who's been touring with **Robert Plant's Band of Joy**, has been having fun exploring a **Baritone 6-string**. He told Taylor's **Andy Lund** at Merlefest that he likes it a lot, and that it feels "alive."



Clockwise from top right: Sonia Leigh with "Jackson"; (L-R) Andy Powers, Susie Brown and Danelle Leverett from the JaneDear Girls, and Tim Godwin; Andy listening to Danny Rader sample a prototype at Soundcheck; Christina Perri

Taylor Notes



SolidBody Configurator 2.0

If you've been to the Taylor website in the last month, you're probably aware of the newly relaunched SolidBody Configurator. Our dynamic online tool highlights the flexible ordering options available to you by walking you through the process of building a virtual model. You can choose your body style (Standard or Classic), cutaway (single or double), color, pickups, bridge (stoptail or tremolo), and pickguard color (or direct-mount option). As you make your choice in each category, your virtual model will display that option. It's a great way to explore different combinations of features together to give you an idea of what they would look like. Ultimately, the Configurator gives you a way to create a visual blueprint for the tones and looks you crave. This latest version incorporates all the options currently available for 2011, including the double cutaway and new colors for the Standard. It's also a great tool for experimenting with different Loaded Pickguard options.

Once you've designed your model, you can save the image and your customized specs and have them e-mailed to you. We've even made it easy to connect with a Taylor dealer to get more information about ordering a model. If you haven't built a model yet, give it a try. We hope you like it.

GS Minis for Everyone – Including Lefties

After last year's debut of the GS Mini, the hot demand outpaced our ability to fill the pipeline for a while, but we've been steadily ramping up production, so you should find it much easier to get your hands on one this summer. And lefties, rejoice! Now you can order one too.

MusicWood Documentary

Taylor's efforts to support the sustainable harvesting of Sitka spruce, the most prevalent tonewood for acoustic guitar tops, have been well documented on our pages in recent years. Most of the supply comes from the coastal rainforest region of Southeastern Alaska, on private land that has seen aggressive clear-cutting over the years. You may recall that in 2007, Taylor joined together with several other major guitar manufacturers, including Martin, Fender, and Gibson, to become members of the Greepeace-founded MusicWood Coalition. One of the organization's goals is to raise awareness of the depletion of old-growth spruce and, more specifically, to convince Sealaska, a native-held corporation that owns much of the land where the spruce clear-cutting has been happening, to adopt more

sustainable logging practices before it's too late.

When a pair of music- and guitar-loving documentary filmmakers, Maxine Trump and Josh Granger of Brooklyn, New York-based Helpman Productions (helpmanproductions.org), got wind of the threat to Sitka spruce and the future of acoustic guitars, they felt instantly compelled to make a documentary to amplify the story and support the push for sustainable solutions. They contacted members of the MusicWood Coalition, who welcomed the participation. A film crew eventually joined members of the coalition on a trip to Alaska, and they've continued to work over the past three years to complete the documentary project, titled *Musicwood*, relying on a mix of self-funding and private donations.

When the funding well recently went dry, they turned to kickstarter.com, an online funding platform for creative projects, and were able to raise additional funds to finish filming and pay for post-production editing. In addition to the documentary, the production team has also been filming musical performances from bands that support the cause, including Yo La Tengo and Turin Brakes. To read more about the project and watch a trailer for the film, which includes comments from Bob Taylor, visit musicwoodthefilm.com.

Road Show Review

Our Road Show teams had a blast this spring and early summer as they scattered across North America and Europe – presenting 115 shows – to bring you the latest and greatest ideas and guitar concoctions direct from the Taylor mother ship. Normally we would report about how much the attendees enjoyed these events – which was clearly the case again this time – but it's worth noting how much our Taylor sales managers and product specialists also enjoyed the interaction and passion shared by so many people, including our dealers. Every Road Show is a truly unique event, but a couple of recent shows stood out for unusual and very different reasons. Our sales reps who presented the shows share their accounts below.

The Orlando Science Center Orlando, Florida, June 18, 2011

Aaron Dablow:

What a fun day. I met Angella (Director of Special Exhibits for the Orlando Science Center) last November at a Road Show in Daytona Beach, and she reached out to see if we'd be interested in doing a Road Show with them for a special touring exhibit they would be hosting. The Science Center is huge – four floors of educational experience for all ages (dinosaurs, astronomy, nature, physics, etc.). The exhibit is called "GUITAR: The Instrument that Rocked the World."

I did a meet-and-greet from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. I set up a few guitars in the exhibit and let people know we were going to do a Road Show at 2 p.m. in the auditorium. There was a steady stream of people all morning, and I talked to many people who didn't play guitar or know anything about them. It was fun educating non-players about guitars and how we differentiate ourselves from other manufacturers.

By the time 2 p.m. rolled around, the theater was packed with 250-plus people. We did an exact replica of every Road Show we'd do at a dealer, and it was an amazing experience. Marc Seal and I entertained the crowd, and we did a bit more detail about the design of our guitars to promote the "science" aspect of the event. Many people hung out afterwards to thank us, and we had great interaction with them throughout the day.

That night there was a fashion show event called "Cocktails and Cosmos" in the Science Center's astronomy/planetarium section, and Marc played some of his songs for 45 minutes before the

event. We thought he was going to be background music, but about 50 people actually stood and listened to him play. The fashion show was interesting, as a couple of the models actually used our guitars as props when they walked the catwalk. We were at the Science Center for 14 hours, but it was well worth it.

Ernie Williamson Music Joplin, Missouri, June 15, 2011

JR Robison:

After the tornadoes ripped through Joplin on May 22, I thought the upcoming Road Show would be canceled. After speaking with Mitch, the store manager, he told me there was no way they would cancel. It will be a good escape for everybody, he said. I'd been told for weeks that I wouldn't believe what we'd see when we got to Joplin, and they were right. The pictures can't even come close to showing the pure devastation they've experienced. More than 100 people were killed, and thousands are displaced from their homes and businesses.

Despite what Joplin has been through, we had a great turnout. We modified the presentation a bit. It's not like the Road Shows are pushy sales events, but we didn't want to be even remotely insensitive. We still talked about body shapes and tonewoods, the T5, Baritone and GS Mini, but [product specialist] Michael Lille played more, which was great. We set up a vocal mic, and he even sang a few tunes, much to the delight of those in attendance. We also did a GS Mini giveaway to a customer of the dealer's choice. It went to Justin Nevins, a local worship leader who lost everything – his house, both cars, all his guitars, everything material, but he got out safe with his wife and four children. He thanked us profusely not only for the GS Mini, but also for bringing the Road Show to Joplin.



WorldView

Six months into self-distribution in Europe, Taylor has laid a strong foundation for growth from its new headquarters in Amsterdam

"Wow, it's a real Taylor stand!" beamed Steve Gray from Taylor's biggest UK dealer, Guitarguitar, as he surveyed Taylor's exhibition space at April's Musikmesse trade show in Frankfurt, Germany. The effusive tone seemed to epitomize the prevailing vibe in the Taylor room throughout the show. At the time, Taylor was just three months into handling its own distribution in Europe, and this marked the company's first presence at Europe's equivalent of the U.S. NAMM Show fully representing itself and operating directly with dealers.

While establishing our own European distribution has been logistically demanding, the longterm benefits are considerable. Being able to sell directly to dealers instead of working through an export distributor allows Taylor to streamline its distribution processes and make better connections with both dealers and end customers. It also

gives Taylor a better platform to deliver a complete brand experience, as Musikmesse demonstrated.

Taylor's showcase area was a double feature of sorts, featuring acoustics on one side and a full array of electrics on the other, with a carpeted walk-through area connecting the two. Like Winter NAMM, the acoustics were arranged by body shape, and the electrics showcased the new colors and double cutaway models, which were well received by dealers and players.

"It's fair to say that the way we displayed our guitars served as an inspiration for dealers on how to display guitars in their stores," says Taylor's Director of European Sales, Frank Stevens. "It was also great to see how many people played so many guitars, all day long. At one point, only three guitars were hanging on the wall – all of the others were in the hands of people playing them!"

With VP of Sales & Marketing Brian Swerdfeger on hand, along with Bob Taylor, Kurt Listug, and a new European sales and service team, the overall mood of the booth throughout the show, says Frank, was one of "excellence, positivity and professionalism."

"Our sales team managed to convey the Taylor values to everybody who came to see us at the booth," he explains. "It's that perfect balance of enthusiasm and professionalism that has made this a successful transition period for the dealers all over Europe. Existing Taylor dealers told us they're very happy about our approach and about the new distribution model. And others who'd had a 'wait and see' mindset came by eager to be opened as a Taylor dealer. It was also very interesting how many of our competitors were 'hanging out' at our booth to see what all the fuss is about."



Assorted views of the Taylor exhibition booth at Musikmesse (photos by Katrina Horstman)

Setting Up Shop in AMS

As we noted in the winter issue, Taylor moved into its new European headquarters in Amsterdam in December of 2010, and the ensuing months have been spent fleshing out our warehouse, sales offices, and service and repair center. David Hosler, our VP of Customer Service, had relocated to Amsterdam in 2010 to spearhead the design and logistics of setting up the new venture. He simultaneously began focusing on staffing the service and repair center and developing a network of authorized repair technicians based in other areas of Europe to extend Taylor's service outreach.

Two long-tenured Taylor repair and service managers from the factory in El Cajon, Rob Magargal and Glen Wolff, also were deeply involved in the training processes, and brought aboard two repair techs, Uwe Dierkes and Roy Willems, along with two customer service reps, Sander Van der Sluis and Eri Carrillo, to anchor the Amsterdam-based service center.

The service and repair reps were trained in El Cajon in late 2010, well before the new building in Amsterdam was even ready to house instruments or had phone service. Rob and Glen then spent the month of January abroad to help get the service center established. They returned to Amsterdam in March and April for about three weeks to hire and train a pool of outside repair technicians from other countries in Europe to become Taylor-certified.

In years past, service, repairs and warranty coverage were the responsibility of the distributor. By handling its own distribution, Taylor will be able to give customers in Europe a consistent level of service, including the same kind of repair quality one would find from Taylor's factory service center in the U.S.

"Repair materials and tooling are transferred from El Cajon to Amsterdam with the weekly shipments of guitars," says European Service and Repair Manager Uwe Dierkes. "Every item fits the exact specifications of the repair department in El Cajon, so a technician coming over to help or work will just find him/herself at home. The food is different, but the workplace is the same."

While they were in Amsterdam, Rob and Glen also presented training seminars to some of the dealers in Europe, covering the construction details of a Taylor, like the NT neck, that highlight the serviceability of the guitars. Educating dealers in this way gives them a strong selling point that they can share with customers.

"Even the most sceptical candidate left as one of our best service buddies

to represent our mission at his local store," says Dierkes.

Taylor currently has 130 authorized dealers throughout Europe, with a goal of adding many more by the end of the year.

This spring, Taylor also launched a marketing outreach campaign to re-engage with European Taylor owners. Taylor ads placed in European guitar magazines featured translated reprints of our classic "Play Time" campaign, and encouraged owners to register their guitars with Taylor if they hadn't. An added incentive was an offer of extended warranty coverage and coverage for used Taylors if they register by the end of this year. Amsterdam's repair center is also offering the same array of service packages as in the U.S., including Expression System installation and upgrades.

On the sales side, Taylor's European sales team, like the service and repair staff, were carefully selected to be the best possible ambassadors of the company's culture. The reps all received extensive training at the factory in El Cajon, and this spring each rep was paired with a sales rep in the U.S. as they spent a week out in the field doing Road Shows. After more than a dozen Road Shows in Europe this past spring, a fresh tour is being planned for the fall.

Meanwhile, back in Amsterdam, the interior design of the entire complex is nearing the final stages of completion. Two floors of custom-designed office and lounge space provide a comfortable working environment for Taylor staffers as well as a great place to host visiting artists, service technicians, and dealers. The bottom floor of the complex is a custom-designed Taylor Experience Center that will host a complete display of the Taylor acoustic and electric lines. A virtual tour of the El Cajon factory is also being produced, and will be shown in HD video on a large-screen TV.

"The entire facility was designed to bring a complete Taylor brand experience into the European marketplace, and to serve our dealers and customers as completely and professionally as we do in the U.S.," says David Hosler.

The European Factory Service Center is open Monday through Friday from 09:00 to 17:00. To schedule an appointment for service, European Taylor owners can contact the Customer Service team by visiting the International section of the Taylor website and viewing their country's web page. Here, players will find the toll-free number for their country to arrange for service, along with other basic information in their native language.



Above: Members of the European sales, service and repair team in Amsterdam. L-R: Frederic Mardelle, Paul Chalder, Rob Magargal (El Cajon), Roy Willems, Eri Carrillo, Peter Samuelsson, Sander Van der Sluis, Uwe Dierkes, Stephan Fuchs; **Below left:** Service reps Sander and Eri in a second-floor office; **Below right:** the preferred mode of transportation in the city



FIND YOUR FIT

SALES EVENT

Coming to a Taylor dealer near you.

Come meet a Taylor factory expert for a personal guitar consultation!

Is there anything more inspiring than discovering a Taylor that sings in your hands? The good news: You have more options than ever before. The bad news: You have more options than ever before. We can help.

In late July and all of August, our friendly factory experts will visit 65 dealers across the U.S. for the sole purpose of helping you find the Taylor that's right for you. They'll identify your player profile and tell you which body shape and wood pairings best match your playing style. They'll answer any questions you have. And if you're not sure where to begin, they'll help you understand the basics.

Look for tour dates and dealer locations in the Calendar section to the right. Come see us this summer and find your fit!



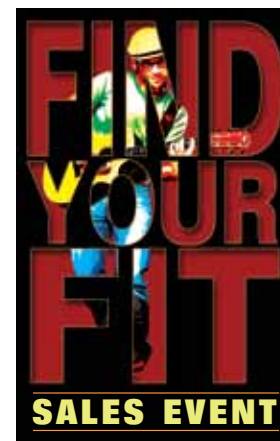
taylorguitars.com

Calendar

We hope you can make it to a dealer near you for a Find Your Fit sales event this summer. All dates are listed below. A fresh Road Show tour will roll out again this fall.

Find Your Fit Sales Events

<p>Sarasota, FL Monday, July 25, 2011 11 a.m. - 6 p.m. Sarasota Guitar Company (941) 924-8321</p>	<p>Panama City, FL Friday, July 29, 2011 11 a.m. - 6 p.m. Leitz Music (850) 769-0111</p>	<p>San Antonio, TX Monday, August 8, 2011 1 p.m. - 7 p.m. Alamo Music (Babcock location) (210) 525-1010</p>	<p>Santa Monica, CA Tuesday, August 16, 2011 12 p.m. - 6 p.m. McCabe's Guitar Shop (310) 828-4497</p>	<p>Renton, WA Saturday, August 20, 2011 10 a.m. - 6 p.m. A Sharp Music (425) 251-5929</p>	<p>New London, CT Wednesday, August 24, 2011 12 p.m. - 7 p.m. Caruso Music (860) 442-9600</p>	<p>Red Bank, NJ Friday, August 26, 2011 2 p.m. - 8 p.m. Monmouth Music (732) 747-8888</p>
<p>Spring Hill, FL Tuesday, July 26, 2011 11 a.m. - 7 p.m. Quality Guitars (352) 442-7817</p>	<p>Columbia, SC Friday, July 29, 2011 12 p.m. - 6 p.m. Sim's Music (803) 772-3966</p>	<p>Birmingham, AL Tuesday, August 9, 2011 11 a.m. - 8 p.m. Bailey Bros. Music (205) 271-7827</p>	<p>Fishers, IN Wednesday, August 17, 2011 10 a.m. - 6 p.m. Reno's Music (317) 849-5744</p>	<p>League City, TX Monday, August 22, 2011 1 p.m. - 7 p.m. Danny D's Guitar Hacienda (281) 338-1830</p>	<p>West Chester, PA Wednesday, August 24, 2011 2 p.m. - 8 p.m. West Chester Music Store (610) 436-8641</p>	<p>Coshocton, OH Saturday, August 27, 2011 12 p.m. - 5 p.m. Wildwood Music (740) 622-4224</p>
<p>Raleigh, NC Tuesday, July 26, 2011 12 p.m. - 7 p.m. Harry's Guitar Shop (919) 828-4888</p>	<p>Highland Park, IL Friday, July 29, 2011 2 p.m. - 8 p.m. The Music Gallery (847) 432-6350</p>	<p>Houston, TX Tuesday, August 9, 2011 2 p.m. - 8 p.m. Great Southern Music (281) 550-4545</p>	<p>Santa Barbara, CA Wednesday, August 17, 2011 12 p.m. - 6 p.m. Instrumental Music (805) 569-5055</p>	<p>Catonsville, MD Monday, August 22, 2011 12 p.m. - 8 p.m. Appalachian Bluegrass Shoppe (410) 744-1144</p>	<p>Olympia, WA Wednesday, August 24, 2011 10 a.m. - 7 p.m. Music 6000 (360) 786-6000</p>	<p>Potomac Falls, VA Saturday, August 27, 2011 11 a.m. - 6 p.m. Melodee Music (703) 450-4667</p>
<p>Minneapolis, MN Tuesday, July 26, 2011 10 a.m. - 6 p.m. The Podium (612) 331-8893</p>	<p>New Berlin, WI Saturday, July 30, 2011 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. Cascio Interstate Music (262) 789-7600</p>	<p>Huntsville, AL Wednesday, August 10, 2011 11 a.m. - 8 p.m. The Fret Shop (256) 430-4729</p>	<p>Galesburg, IL Thursday, August 18, 2011 12 p.m. - 6 p.m. Music Makers (309) 342-0176</p>	<p>Seattle, WA Monday, August 22, 2011 10 a.m. - 6 p.m. Dusty Strings (206) 634-1662</p>	<p>Lexington, KY Thursday, August 25, 2011 12 p.m. - 7 p.m. Willcutt Guitar Shoppe (859) 276-2713</p>	
<p>Daytona, FL Wednesday, July 27, 2011 11 a.m. - 7 p.m. Total Entertainment (386) 254-8727</p>	<p>Cornish, ME Tuesday, August 2, 2011 12 p.m. - 6 p.m. Friendly River Music (207) 625-8639</p>	<p>Chattanooga, TN Thursday, August 11, 2011 11 a.m. - 6 p.m. Guitar Galleria (800) 304-3111</p>	<p>San Jose, CA Thursday, August 18, 2011 12 p.m. - 6 p.m. Guitar Showcase (408) 377-5864</p>	<p>Memphis, TN Tuesday, August 23, 2011 12 p.m. - 6:30 p.m. Martin Music (901) 729-2466</p>	<p>Weatherford, TX Thursday, August 25, 2011 12 p.m. - 6 p.m. Craig's Music (817) 599-8021</p>	
<p>Wilmington, NC Wednesday, July 27, 2011 12 p.m. - 7 p.m. The Music Loft (910) 799-9310</p>	<p>Littleton, NH Wednesday, August 3, 2011 11 a.m. - 5 p.m. Northern Lights Music (603) 444-7776</p>	<p>Austin, TX Thursday, August 11, 2011 12 p.m. - 5 p.m. Austin Bazaar (512) 300-0487</p>	<p>Crystal Lake, IL Friday, August 19, 2011 11 a.m. - 8 p.m. The Player's Bench (815) 459-8614</p>	<p>Hawkins, TX Tuesday, August 23, 2011 1 p.m. - 7 p.m. Action Sound (903) 769-5262</p>	<p>New York, NY Thursday, August 25, 2011 11 a.m. - 7 p.m. J&R Music World (212) 238-9000</p>	
<p>La Crosse, WI Wednesday, July 27, 2011 11 a.m. - 6 p.m. Dave's Guitar Shop (608) 785-7704</p>	<p>Manchester, NH Thursday, August 4, 2011 12 p.m. - 7 p.m. Manchester Music Mill (603) 623-8022</p>	<p>Atlanta, GA Friday, August 12, 2011 11 a.m. - 6 p.m. Maple Street Guitars (404) 231-5214</p>	<p>Santa Rosa, CA Friday, August 19, 2011 12 p.m. - 6 p.m. Bananas at Large (707) 542-5588</p>	<p>Trenton, NJ Tuesday, August 23, 2011 2 p.m. - 8 p.m. Russo Music Center (609) 888-0620</p>	<p>Phillipsburg, NJ Thursday, August 25, 2011 2 p.m. - 8 p.m. Dave Phillips Music & Sound (908) 454-3313</p>	<p>Roanoke, VA Monday, August 29, 2011 11 a.m. - 7 p.m. Fret Mill Music (540) 982-6686</p>
<p>Ocala, FL Thursday, July 28, 2011 11 a.m. - 6 p.m. Sound Exchange Music (352) 694-7290</p>	<p>Lexington, MA Saturday, August 6, 2011 11 a.m. - 5 p.m. The Music Emporium (781) 860-0049</p>	<p>San Diego, CA Saturday, August 13, 2011 12 p.m. - 6 p.m. Guitar Trader (619) 583-9751</p>	<p>Roslyn, NY Saturday, August 20, 2011 11 a.m. - 4 p.m. The Music Zoo (781) 631-9292</p>	<p>Bellevue, WA Tuesday, August 23, 2011 10 a.m. - 7 p.m. Bellevue American Music (425) 641-5005</p>	<p>Corvallis, OR Thursday, August 25, 2011 11 a.m. - 6 p.m. Gracewinds Music (541) 754-6098</p>	<p>Pittsburgh, PA Wednesday, August 31, 2011 12 p.m. - 8 p.m. Empire Music (412) 343-5299</p>
<p>Greenville, SC Thursday, July 28, 2011 12 p.m. - 6 p.m. Fifth String Music (864) 242-5428</p>	<p>Corpus Christi, TX Sunday, August 7, 2011 12 p.m. - 5 p.m. Sound Vibrations (361) 884-8981</p>	<p>Tustin, CA Monday, August 15, 2011 12 p.m. - 6 p.m. Jim's Music Center (714) 669-3600</p>	<p>Virginia Beach, VA Saturday, August 20, 2011 11 a.m. - 6 p.m. Alpha Music (757) 486-2001</p>	<p>Sevierville, TN Wednesday, August 24, 2011 12 p.m. - 6 p.m. Music Outlet (865) 453-1031</p>	<p>Cincinnati, OH Friday, August 26, 2011 12 p.m. - 6 p.m. Buddy Roger's Music (513) 247-0022</p>	
<p>Rockford, IL Thursday, July 28, 2011 11 a.m. - 7 p.m. Randee's Music Center (815) 399-1500</p>	<p>Montgomery, AL Monday, August 8, 2011 11 a.m. - 6 p.m. Elite Music Sales (334) 215-0215</p>	<p>Lansing, MI Tuesday, August 16, 2011 12 p.m. - 8 p.m. Marshall Music (517) 337-9700</p>	<p>Sacramento, CA Saturday, August 20, 2011 12 p.m. - 6 p.m. Skip's Music (916) 484-7575</p>	<p>Grapevine, TX Wednesday, August 24, 2011 12 p.m. - 6 p.m. Grapevine Guitar Works (817) 909-2427</p>	<p>Plainview, NY Friday, August 26, 2011 12 p.m. - 7 p.m. All Music Inc. (516) 433-6969</p>	



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summer 2011

Jarrett (left) and Troy build cool things around the factory and help fabricate our NAMM Show room each year.



men's t-shirts



A



B

New



C



D



E

New



F



G

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H

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I

New

- A) Taylor Stack Guitar T**
100% cotton, slim fit, round logo on the back. (Brown #1465; S-XL, \$24.00; XXL-XXXL, \$26.00)
- B) Guitar Hammock T**
100% preshrunk cotton, generous fit. (White #1600; M-XL, \$24.00; XXL, \$26.00)
- C) Headstock T**
100% cotton. (Deep Heather #1474; S-XL, \$24.00; XXL, \$26.00)
- D) Lone Guitar T**
100% preshrunk cotton. (Camel #1479; M-XL, \$24.00; XXL, \$26.00)
- E) Taylor Logo Stamp T**
100% combed cotton. Logo stamp design with reverse silhouette guitar neck. (Silver #1200; S-XL, \$24.00; XXL, \$26.00)
- F) Vintage Peghead T**
100% combed cotton. (Black #1480; S-XL, \$24.00; XXL-XXXL, \$26.00)
- G-H) Logo T**
Preshrunk 100% cotton, generous fit. (Heather Cardinal Red #1900, Light Blue #1800; S-XL, \$20.00; XXL-XXXL, \$22.00)
- I) Case Label T**
100% cotton, fashion fit. Small guitar on front, large case label design on back. (Black #1000; S-XL, \$24.00; XXL, \$26.00)

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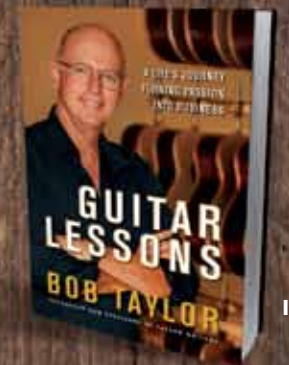
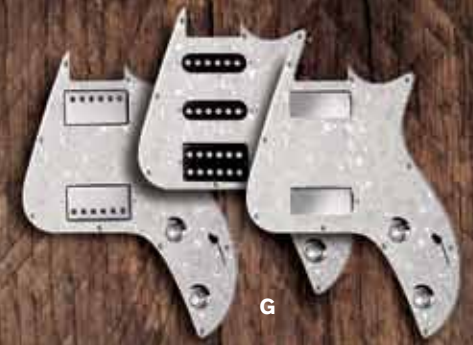


- A) Taylor Pub Glasses. 20-oz glass, set of four. (#70011, \$25.00) B) Taylor Porcelain Cup. 11-oz thermal cup, flexible silicone sipping lid. (#70008, \$15.00) C) Taylor Water Bottle. 24-oz, stainless steel, threaded loop cap. (Black #70014, \$15.00) D) Taylor Coffee Mug. Black with white logo, 13 oz. (#70009, \$10.00) E) Taylor Silver Dial Watch. By Fossil, stainless steel, Taylor-branded tin gift box included. (#71025, \$99.00) F) Front Pocket Wallet. By Fossil, three card slots, two slip pockets, money clip. Fossil tin included. (Brown #71300, \$35.00) G) Web Guitar Strap. (Black #65000, Brown #65010, Camouflage #65030, \$24.00) H) Suede Guitar Strap. (Black #62001, Honey #62000, Chocolate #62003, \$35.00) I) Leather Guitar Strap. (Burgundy #64000, Black #64010, Red #64020, Brown #64030, \$70.00)

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A) Tattered Patch Cap. Flex fit, two sizes. (Brown, S/M #00150, L/XL #00151, \$25.00) **B) Military Cap.** Enzyme-washed 100% cotton chino twill, Velcro closure, one size. (Black #00400, Olive #00401, \$22.00) **C) Trucker Cap.** Organic cotton twill front with Taylor patch; mesh sides/back. Structured, mid-profile, six panel, precurved visor. Plastic tab adjust. (Black/Crème #00387, one size, \$25.00) **D) Ladies' Short-Sleeve Floral Guitar T.** 100% organic pima cotton, regular fit. (Ocean Blue #4088; S-XL, \$25.00) **E) Tri Blend Polo.** cotton/poly/rayon polo, slim fit. (Tri Black #2703; S-XL, \$39.00) **F) Taylor Sketch T.** 100% combed cotton. (Navy #1419; S-XL, \$24.00; XXL, \$26.00) **G) Loaded Pickguards.** Swappable pickup/pickguard unit for your SolidBody. For a complete list of ordering options, go to taylorguitars.com/taylorware. \$195.00 (Single HG Humbucker: \$148.00) **H) Taylor V-Cable.**™ Volume control cable, 250K. *Note: The V-Cable is not intended for use on a passive piezo pickup.* (\$62.00-\$74.00) **I) Guitar Lessons** by Bob Taylor. (Wiley Publishing, 2011, 230 pages; #75060, \$20.00) **J) ES-Go™ Pickup.** exclusively for the GS Mini. (#84022 \$98.00)

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Star Power

This BTO GS6-12 was made for guitarist and songwriter Brian Ray, who has worked with Etta James and Smokey Robinson, and is a member of Paul McCartney's touring band. Ray already owns a pair of Taylor maple 12-string Jumbos that have logged a lot of touring miles over the years. This time around, he chose a GS body and an Adirondack spruce top for an even bolder, richer voice, and opted for the clean vintage look of a tobacco sunburst, ivoroid binding, and a mother-of-pearl star inlay pattern. Ray's latest solo release is *This Way Up*.
www.brianray.com

