

# Wood & Steel

## **Figured Find**

Rare Curly Mahogany Inspires the Fall LTDs  
Rosewood/Cedar 400s  
Pro Performance 200s

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## **Premium GS Minis**

Exotic Woods / ES-T Pickup

## **Alton Brown's Savory Songs**

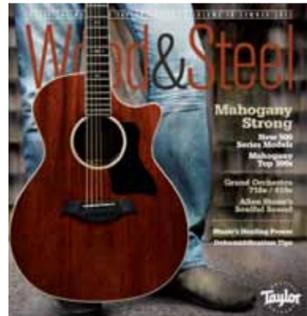
## **Ed Robertson**

25 Years with Barenaked Ladies

## **John 5's Acoustic Tricks**



# Letters



## Playing a Similar Tune

I was anxious to dig into my second *Wood&Steel* [Vol. 76 / Summer 2013]. The first thing I read was "Kurt's Corner." My story is really similar to Barbara [Wight]'s. I, too, grew up with a good friend who passionately played guitar. I got a cheap acoustic but never "got" it — no lessons nor could [the guitar] stay in tune. I gave up the idea, but never gave up on music.

Now I'm 57 years old. I started a new job after 17 years of working for a large corporation. As I was driving to work, I was listening to Deep Tracks on Sirius radio. I'm not sure if it was Savoy Brown or Mason Proffit, but I decided it was time to learn to play acoustic guitar. I thought it would also be good for my brain, hands and soul. I first found a teacher and then, with his recommendations, started shopping around for a guitar. When I heard the GS Mini, my search was over.

My repertoire is expanding, and I have mastered F major, although as a full barre. So it appears that we're both on the same journey! Thanks for a fantastic instrument. I'm certain there will be another coming!

**Charlie Francisco, DVM**

## Koa Coincidence

I recently purchased one of the First Edition Koa Grand Orchestras. I consider myself incredibly fortunate to have been in the right place at the right time. I was working from home that day when Volume 75 of *Wood&Steel* showed up in my mailbox. I saw the article and thought, this is a seriously gorgeous guitar; I wonder how it plays? On a whim I called my local dealer and asked if they might be able to order one of these. They said, "Even better, we have two here in the store right now." I headed over

to have a look and play. As I made my purchase decision, the store received an order for the other one. What an incredible instrument you have created. I look forward to hearing how the tone improves over the coming years.

**Dave Sluiter**

## Reinspired

After 30 years as a professional/semiprofessional musician with little to show for it but frustration, I had given up on music and focused on my second master's degree, this one in computer science. Several years passed, and I completed the degree, at which time my wife dragged me to Guitar Center, saying, "That's it, you need to get back to music." I spent that afternoon trying different guitars (I predominantly play fingerstyle sans picks). Then I picked up a 710ce. The instant I picked it up, my fingering hand said, "Home." The sound was delicious, and it played so easily that nothing else I tried compared to it. We looked at the price tag, which was much more than my wife had planned to spend on a graduation present.

We walked away and for a week tried other guitars and other stores, but none of them felt like that 710ce. We went back to the first store and found it still on the wall. I played it again, and my wife and I agreed that I played cleaner and more naturally on it than anything else I had picked up. We agreed to split the cost and bought it.

On the way home, I spotted an abandoned gas station that inspired the first song I'd written in decades. By the time I got home, I knew how it should sound. I whipped out that new 710ce and went to work.

I have written some 53 songs since bringing home that Taylor. I finished my first CD, *Sid's Gaseteria*, in 2007 and am preparing to record another. I

now have three Taylor guitars: an 816 I keep in standard tuning; that trusty, wonderful 710 that I keep tuned in DADGAD; and a 514 I keep in open G. Every time I pick one up, it inspires me to create. I love them all. I'm a full-time performing singer-songwriter now and look back fondly on that first time I picked up a Taylor guitar.

**Gary Paul Hermus**

## More Than a Guitar

I have never picked up, nevermind played, a guitar in my life, but I feel compelled to write and tell you how much one particular Taylor guitar means to me. After decades of playing full-body guitars, my husband started complaining of arthritis in his hands and fingers. He began to play less and less because of the pain. As a surprise, five years ago I bought him a Baby Taylor, which he had been pining for. He started playing again daily. It is stress relief, his meditation. He is a beautiful fingerpicker, so he's beautiful to listen to. While I have always appreciated the importance of guitar playing in his life, this past year I have been in cancer treatment and am ever so grateful for the Baby and the joy and relaxation it brings him (and me!) during this very stressful time.

By the way, our 14-year-old daughter is now also a regular on the Baby!

**Barbara Leavitt  
St. Marys, Ontario, Canada**

## Worldwide Woodwork

I'd like to express my appreciation and sincere gratitude to Taylor Guitars for being the trailblazer when it comes harvesting and milling the precious tonewoods used in your wonderful guitars. When I speak of my Taylor guitars (420, 814c, 555), I never fail to mention how Bob Taylor and his worldwide team are truly dedicated to making sure, whatever the locale, that they teach and support the people who work very hard to provide us musicians with the finest quality woods on the planet. I look forward to every article about this subject in *Wood&Steel*.

**Dennis Logan  
Round Rock, TX**

## Mahogany Motivation

I have been playing guitar for almost six months. I am 70 years old, and before I purchased my first

guitar in January, [another brand], I had no experience with music at all. I had never played an instrument of any kind. A few weeks after I bought the guitar, I saw a beautiful Taylor custom all-mahogany 12-Fret at the dealership. I was amazed with the quality of workmanship and the beautiful voice. I bought the guitar on the spot. Even though I cannot yet justify the purchase in terms of my playing abilities, I find that just knowing that it's there waiting for me gives me the inspiration to continue. I practice with it occasionally, but I mostly it serves as a reminder of what will be available to me if I don't quit. No amount of money could replace the motivation I get from that beautiful instrument! When I get discouraged because I can't change chords fast enough to make music, I grab that guitar and strum a few notes. That guitar and I will be playing finger-style someday!

**Scott Bigler**

## Pick Trick

Last week I purchased a GS Mini, my first Taylor guitar. My job entails quite a bit of travel, and it has been a real blessing to have the availability of such a small instrument with a much bigger sound than it looks as though it should have.

I had the opportunity to record in a studio in Columbus, Ohio, this evening. The GS recorded wonderfully. What an unexpected benefit from such a small package. Thank you for the wonderful instrument with an unexpected trick in its bag. Great work!

**Jon Renkel**

## Smile-inducing Sound

Yesterday I drove over an hour to buy a good quality guitar. I went to purchase one that I had been looking at online for some time and that I had been saving for. I had never played a quality guitar, so I was shocked to see so many at one place. I played the one I had been waiting so long to try. It was not a Taylor, but it sounded OK. With my heart set on the one that was supposed to be the best, I reluctantly tried several more. Then I picked up the 314ce. The sound of this guitar blew me away. My daughter was with me, and she instantly looked at me with a smile. This is by far the most I have ever paid for a guitar, and this is by far the best-sounding thing I have

ever owned. I look forward to becoming a much better player. Thanks for a great guitar, and keep up the excellent craftsmanship.

**Lane Crawford**

## Like a New Neck

I'm the proud owner of two Taylor acoustics, a GC4 and a DCSM [Dan Cray] Signature Model with beautiful rosewood that I've had since 1992. After years of playing, it began to show some pretty good fret wear, and I knew the neck was a little out of spec. I called the Taylor Customer Service department and talked to a nice guy named Mike [Tobin]. He informed me about the various Service Package options at Taylor in El Cajon, which were pretty impressive. When I informed him that I really just wanted to get the frets replaced, Mike offered me several local options of Taylor factory-certified technicians. I settled on Dick Dubois in Austin, near where I live. He was great. He not only replaced the frets, but also reset the neck to factory specs and cleaned up my guitar like new. It plays great! I just wanted to compliment you all on great customer service.

**P. Elliott**

## Ten Years After

I recently started playing guitar again after a 10-year hiatus (marriage, kids, new business, priorities, life in general). All were valid but poor excuses to not continue to do something you love. I recently started playing again — with a passion. I became interested in Taylor guitars after playing a few at my local music store. A few months later I could not resist, and just this week purchased a new 414ce. This guitar is amazing. It makes me want to play even more. [It's] truly a work of art to look at, to hear, and to play. Way to go, Taylor!

**Matthew Glaze**

# Wood&Steel

Volume 77  
Fall 2013

## ON THE COVER / 18 THE 2013 FALL LIMITEDS

Exquisite curly mahogany meets European spruce, rosewood and cedar visit the 400 Series, and our 200 Series shows off stage-friendly upgrades.

## FEATURES

### 6 TAKE FIVE

Committing to five minutes of practice a day might not seem like much, but you'll be surprised at the progress you can make.

### 8 BACKSTAGE PASS: ED ROBERTSON

The Barenaked Ladies tunesmith riffs on using humor as a songwriting tool, his affinity for Taylor Dreadnoughts, and a pair of cosmic creative partnerships.

### 12 MINI MATES

The runaway success of the GS Mini has spurred a limited release of premium models sporting upgraded woods and electronics.

### 14 THE WOOD&STEEL INTERVIEW: ALTON BROWN

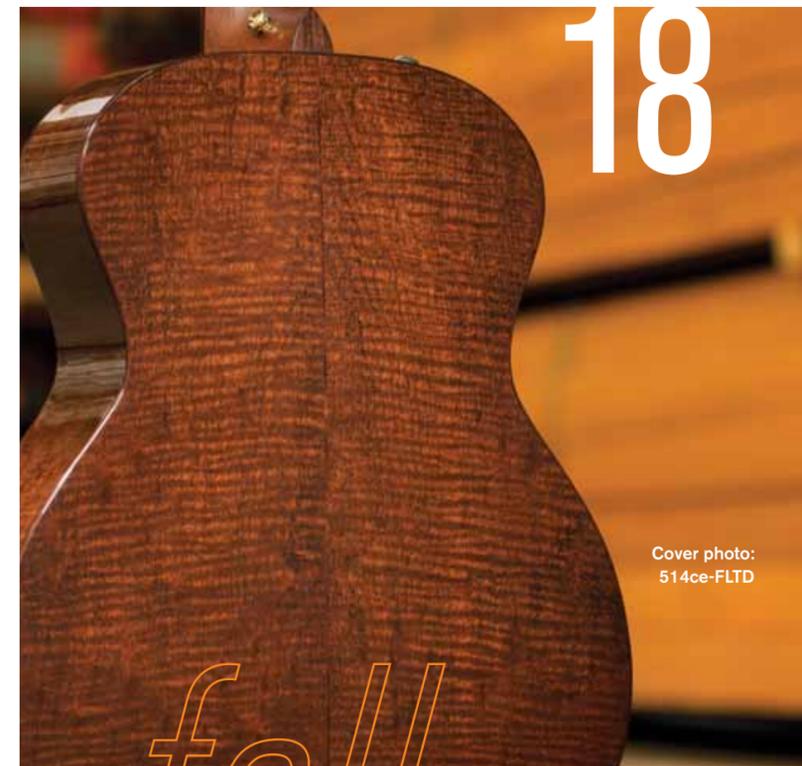
Television's visionary food guru has made cooking shows more fun to digest. The Food Network star reveals why his Taylor is a staple of his daily diet and explains the pairing of food and music on his fall tour.

### 28 PUSHING FORWARD IN CAMEROON

Though rain and mud can slow the transport of ebony, Crelicam is poised to expand its milling operation with new tools and construction.



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Cover photo:  
514ce-FLTD

fall

2 LETTERS

4 KURT'S CORNER

5 BOBSPEAK

10 ASK BOB

24 SOUNDINGS

27 THE CRAFT

29 EVENTS

30 CALENDAR

32 TAYLORWARE

## DEPARTMENTS





## Kurt's Corner

### Success and Succession

I read an article recently in *The Wall Street Journal* about Oreck, the company that makes vacuum cleaners. I remember many years ago seeing the TV commercials with David Oreck's product demonstrations. The article was about how Mr. Oreck and his family were trying to buy back their name-sake company at a bankruptcy auction.

Mr. Oreck had founded the company in 1963, when he invented a lightweight, sturdy vacuum cleaner and found a market selling to hotels. He later began to target the residential market and felt the best way to directly access these customers and deliver superior service was through Oreck's own stores.

"He assembled his products in America. He believed things should be guaranteed to last. He shunned big-box retailers. He believed the value of a product wasn't determined by its price, but by its quality and the service behind it. He believed customers should be treated as if they held the future of the company in the palms of their hands, because, well, they do," wrote Al Lewis in the article ("Sucking a Business Dry," May 18, 2013).

Mr. Oreck sold his company in 2003, at the age of 80, to a private equity firm, American Securities Capital Partners. Apparently, this firm put debt on the company in order to pay themselves dividends, and through the process lost majority control when a company called GSC Group bought up the debt. GSC then went bankrupt

in 2010. GSC's assets, which included ownership in Oreck, were then purchased out of bankruptcy by Black Diamond Capital Management in 2011.

During this period of uncertain ownership, Oreck struggled to compete, and management decided that Oreck needed to transition from selling directly to consumers through their own stores to selling through large retailers like Sears and Costco. The process took longer than expected, and on May 6 of this year, company executives put Oreck into bankruptcy, saying that in addition to a decline in sales since 2010, the transition in distribution took longer than expected. Black Diamond said in a statement that "Oreck was burning cash and losing money," and they had lost "confidence in the leadership of the company."

For his part, David Oreck wrote about his experiences in his recently published book, *From Dust to Diamonds*. It sounds really interesting — I'm looking forward to picking up a copy and reading his story.

In the meantime, I have some opinions based on what transpired.

Businesses eventually need to get sold, and it's incumbent on the seller to find a buyer who is not only a good match for the business, but who is passionate about the company's products and industry, shares its values and ideals, will be dedicated to the employees, customers, vendors and shareholders, and believes in doing good, honest, ethical business. Even then, the buyer

also has to have the courage, skill and financial wherewithal to "walk the walk." It's easy to make promises; it's tougher to deliver on them.

From the article, it sounds like American Securities Capital Partners wasn't a good match for Mr. Oreck's values and purposes. Of course, once they owned the company, it was theirs to do with as they pleased.

From my perspective, I think it's strange to want to buy a company, build it and improve it (or load it with debt and milk it), and then sell it for a profit several years later. Maybe it's just a strange plan for a strong, healthy and profitable company. I can definitely see that approach with a company that is weak, struggling or lacking leadership. Companies need strong ownership and leadership. If that can be brought to a company, and it can be improved and made healthier, then that would be better for everyone involved with the company.

I also think that ownership that is motivated more by money than by a company's products, people and culture is unlikely to make the best decisions for the longevity of the company. What was the real problem behind Oreck's weak sales, which led to the decision to move away from company stores to big-box retailers? Was it really a distribution problem? Was it a product problem? I certainly don't presume

*continued on page 5*

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## BobSpeak

### Creative Resolve

I like surfing documentaries. Not that I'm a surfer, because I'm not really an athlete, and there's the whole getting-wet part, which I'm not a fan of. But I love watching stories of people who surf. This weekend I watched a short documentary called *Zero to 100* about Lakey Peterson. She's a 19-year-old California girl who is currently ranked third in North America and seventh in the world.

She was born with natural talent, which the documentary chronicles. But what I liked about the story was that it showed defeat after defeat as the other more experienced and, yes, better surfers constantly schooled her in what it takes to win. She kept going because she's learned that being talented doesn't make you the best. You have to earn it through hard work and experience, and probably being clever as well. That's my takeaway from this movie.

I'm thrilled to see the interview with Alton Brown in this issue. When Alton pioneered a new type of cooking show, *Good Eats*, back in the 1990s as Food Network was just getting started, I was hooked, and tuned in to nearly every episode. He showed what was actually happening in the physical world when you cook; why one method works and another doesn't. It's easy to call it science, but maybe it's more nature. The fact is, stuff happens when you cook, and he tells the story and explains it well.

But that's not the truly impressive part for me. What's impressive is that

Alton conceived this show, and then went to culinary school to become a chef, in order to be legit. Really? Who does that? Then he wrote, produced and starred in the show and sold it to the network. I knew I liked that guy. He works at it and he had goals and requirements to get there.

I feel like I felt when I learned what Francis Ford Coppola did in order to create films that he wanted to make, not just films that financiers would allow. He

I'm driving a Tesla electric car now, and I can give the same props to Elon Musk, who has built his company to make this car because he believes in it, not because there was a demand for it. Well, guess what? There turns out to be a demand for it because of how he approaches it. Contrast that to some of the electric cars that have been made by big car companies, who arguably don't believe in them in the first place. They just do it as if their mom is making

**Some of our greatest products come from people who do it because they want to do it, not because someone wants to buy it. That's how invention works, at its core.**

went into the wine business, and did it well, just so he could finance his own movies. Most people think that he made money from movies and didn't know what to do with it, so he spent it on a winery. Not so! He worked hard to make his dreams become real.

The common thread for me here is that so many great things come from people passionately wanting to do something. I believe that some of our greatest products, whether real, tangible items or entertainment, come from people who do it because they want to do it, not because someone wants to buy it. And that's how invention works, at its core.

to other thoughts that we haven't conceived of yet. In this way we can restart the game, and push for growth and advancement of the guitar as we know it. It's fun for us and also for you.

You might think that we should simply ask our customers what they want. I read and hear this all the time. Someone is interviewed, and they wear this answer like a badge of honor: "We simply asked our customers how we could serve them best. They told us, and we listened."

That's a legitimate approach in some services and industries, but we like to listen to our customers in a different way, just by being involved in their pursuit of music, and then anticipating what might be good for them in the future. It allows us to be creative and make advancements that help

guitars get better, and help people play better music. I guess we have to rely on our own resolve to approach it like Lakey, Alton, Francis and Elon.

We do rely on that resolve. It's our culture, and we work each day to keep it that way, even though we're now a large business making and selling a huge number of guitars. Because of that size, we could easily dilute the sales side of the business. But I promise you that we don't, and that inside our walls we keep that spirit of invention and expertise alive.

— Bob Taylor, President

**Kurt's Corner** continued

to know, but I do know that if you're not 100 percent invested in the success of the company and its products, you're not likely to clearly see what the real problems are and craft a strategy to increased prosperity.

I realize that I'm opinionated here, but my beliefs are based on my nearly 40 years of owning and managing this guitar business with Bob. We've been through a lot of great times and success together, and also some very difficult business situations. It really pains me to read of a company like Oreck going bankrupt and jeopardizing the livelihoods of hundreds of employ-

ees and suppliers, and disappointing customers, not to mention losing shareholders' investment. Succession is a critical issue in a company, and Bob and I take our ownership responsibilities very seriously. One of the best examples of succession in the guitar industry is C.F. Martin & Co., who after 180 years is still family-owned. What a fabulous example, and the Martin family has my utmost respect for accomplishing this.

— Kurt Listug, CEO

### 2013 Taylor Factory Tours & Vacation Dates

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

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

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

### Factory Closures

**Monday, October 14**  
(Taylor Guitars Anniversary)

**Thursday - Friday,  
November 28-29**  
(Thanksgiving Holiday)

**Monday, December 23**  
**through Friday, January 3**  
(Company Vacation)

(Thanksgiving Holiday)

(Thanksgiving Holiday)

(Thanksgiving Holiday)

(Thanksgiving Holiday)



## THE ART OF

## Levity

**Barenaked Ladies frontman Ed Robertson talks about the merits of humor-infused music, his Dreadnoughts, and a very remote performance with an astronaut**

By Corey Witt



Ed Robertson on stage with Barenaked Ladies at The Mountain Winery in Saratoga, California, in July. Photo by Jay Blakesberg

Pretty much everything I needed to know about Ed Robertson was revealed in the first 15 seconds of our conversation. First, details are important. Secondly, his razor-sharp wit is an uncontrollable reflex. Thirdly, his heart beats to the rhythm of pop music, past, present and future.

Lastly, his personality and music are easily consumable, yet also reveal a depth and complexity, which probably explains the multiplatinum, award-winning success of his band, Barenaked Ladies. I caught up with Ed by phone before a show during the band's "Last Summer on Earth" tour in late July. Our chat touched upon the band's ability to renew their musical identity in the wake of a lineup change, his affinity for Taylor Dreadnoughts, the pros and cons of writing for TV, and his long-distance duet with astronaut-friend Chris Hadfield.

**So you're in Atlanta tonight, correct?** Yes, indeed. Alpharetta, Georgia, to be more specific. "Alpharettabet Street" was one of my favorite Prince songs. One of his several hits featuring no bass guitar.

**Really?** Yeah. "When Doves Cry" and "Alphabet Street" — no bass.

**It sounds like you are a true student of pop music.** Yes, indeed. I'm a student of all things, but my line of work is pop music, so I'm particularly versed in that.

**I want to hit on the band's latest album, *Gripping Streak*, first. This is your second record since the departure of [founding member] Steven Page. It sounds like this record is rehab of sorts.** Yeah, the last record was just about getting ourselves back on our feet and kind of dusting ourselves off. I think this record saw us firing on all cylinders. We really hit the ground running when we hit the studio; we made the record really fast. With the last record, just as everybody was second-guessing what we were capable of, we were second-guessing ourselves and trying to figure out how to do it. Now we're a couple hundred shows later with that whole experience under our belts. I think we had a renewed confidence and knew who we were again.

**It must have been a tough stretch for you, and yet you haven't lost the levity and playful spirit that defines Barenaked Ladies.** It's intrinsic to the way we communicate with each other and with our fans. It's always been a device that I've used to communicate through even the darkest times in my life. I think humor breaks the tension and relieves the stress. I don't think it belittles the message; I just think it makes it more palatable sometimes.

**Well said. You're good with the words, Ed Robertson!** [Laughs.] Well thank you, Corey Witt!

**Let's talk about your Taylors. It looks like almost everything you have is a Dreadnought, correct?** Yeah, it's my shape of choice. I generally don't even like the cutaways too much. I'm a traditionalist when it comes to guitar shape.

**Where did that come from?** I grew up on a lot of Country and Western music. My dad had an old Epiphone Dreadnought at home, which is what I learned to play on. I've just always been comfortable on that body style. I like the deeper resonance. When I'm messing around in a dressing room and on the bus it's nice to have a smaller parlor guitar, but when I'm onstage or writing, it's always on a Dreadnought.

**The Dreadnought is such a traditional shape, yet your personality is fairly forward-thinking. I like the way those two marry.** To me, that's what Taylor does really well, is embrace the traditional strengths of different body shapes and building techniques but marry [them with] the modern precision that's possible through laser-cutting and technology to get those kinds of tolerances. It's super exact, so it's the best of both worlds for me.

**The one we see you with the most is a walnut-topped W10. Is that more for the sound or for the**

**looks? Is it just because it's prettier onstage?** It's totally for the look. The bulk of my live sound is primarily coming from a Fishman Natural saddle pickup under the bridge, so the sound across different guitars is pretty even. It sounds identical to my spruce-topped ones on a live stage. It wouldn't be my go-to guitar in a recording situation, but it looks cool for TV and live shows.

**Do you mind expanding on that?** I used a bunch of old Larrivées as my primary recording guitars for years, and then I got this beautiful Presentation Series Taylor with a vintage burst finish, and it has been my primary recording guitar for the last couple of records. It's so even and strong and tight in the bottom. Some of the larger guitar bodies can get a little boomy in the lower mids and the bottoms, but this guitar is just really balanced and really true. So it's been my primary, go-to recording acoustic.

**I'd be dropping the ball if I didn't ask how life has changed since you wrote the theme for [the TV show] *The Big Bang Theory*.** It's been a huge deal for us, and the best part about is that it was a total pleasure to do. Those guys were great to work with, and they've been great with the band ever since. Bill Prady

they want is a catchy song, but they don't know how to express it. Chuck and Bill were totally different because they're really funny, really smart guys, and Chuck is a musician, so it was a totally collaborative process. It was funny, actually, because I'd come off of a few [bad] experiences being commissioned to write for film and television, and when they called, I kind of had my back up. I said, "Look, I'm on holidays right now, so if you've asked 30 other bands to write this song, then I'm not going to waste my time on it, because I can give you exactly what you want, if you could tell me what you want. But don't ask me to write something, and then I write *exactly that*, and then you just pick the Counting Crows song, which has nothing to do with what you told me you wanted" [laughs]. And there was a silence on the phone, and then Chuck said, "Uh...we really like your band and we haven't asked anyone else to write it. We really like you guys."

**And then you say, "Oh, in that case, what can I do for you?"** Exactly! [laughs]

**So, did that give way to the International Space Station duet ["I.S.S. (Is Somebody Singing)"] with [astronaut] Chris Hadfield, or would that have happened regardless?** Yeah, that would've happened regard-

**"This beautiful Presentation Series [Dreadnought] has been my primary recording guitar for the last couple of records. It's so even and strong and tight in the bottom. Some of the larger guitar bodies can get a little boomy in the lower mids and the bottoms, but this guitar is really balanced and true."**

[co-creator of the show] just came out to our last run through L.A. and we went to Comic-Con with them a few years ago and performed the song to open up the Comic-Con panel. They had us in the studio for their hundredth episode taping, and we performed live for the audience there. It's been a great relationship. It was a total pleasure writing the song because Chuck Lorre, one of the show's creators, is a songwriter himself and is a great player. He knew exactly what he was asking for. You know, oftentimes when you work with TV or movie people, they don't really understand the language of music. What

less, actually. Chris and I have been pals for over 10 years. He reached out to the band when we were coming through Houston ages ago, and said, "Hey, I'm a big fan and would love to give you guys a behind-the-scenes tour of Mission Control," which we did. We went in, and the guy was amazing — he brought his family out to the show later that night, and we just kept in touch. When he asked me to write that song, honestly, I thought I was doing him a huge favor. I had a lot of plates spinning at the time, and I was like, "Oh, this'll be fun. Chris is going up to the ISS again, and Chris is going to record

a little demo up there." I didn't think anyone would ever hear it. And then he became a super social-networked, incredible spokesperson for science and the space agency. It was just a total pleasure to be involved with that.

**It's one of those once-in-a-lifetime opportunities.** Yeah, I think karma has been on our side the last couple of years. Our fans have really come along with us. We put good energy out there, and it seems to come back to us. I think these tours we've done in the last three to four years are a testament to that. We just focused on being as good as we can be as a band and putting on as good a show as we can, and that has resulted in creators of big TV shows seeing our shows in L.A. and asking us to write songs, and collaborations with [Chris] Hadfield, and all this cool synergy we have with our bandmates. It doesn't happen...randomly.

## Ed's Taylors

W10 (2)  
PS10  
510  
DN8e (2)  
710 (2)  
716ce  
GS Mini  
NS72ce

## What's next?

We talked a lot last year about what we would do this year because it's the 25th anniversary of Barenaked Ladies. We thought about doing retrospectives, and we thought about doing tours where we focused on the back catalog. Eventually we said, "You know what? Let's make new records and hit the road and do a bunch of great shows." *That* has been the best way to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the band: just moving forward. This tour is wrapping up in another week, but we are already planning another US run and a UK run in the fall, and then a run through Canada early in the new year. Lots more touring to come and some other exciting collaborations in the wings as well. **W&S**

For the latest on the band, visit [barenakedladies.com](http://barenakedladies.com). You can watch a video of Ed's duet with astronaut Chris Hadfield on [YouTube.com](http://YouTube.com).

# Ask Bob

## Sourcing koa, tuning stability, and aging finish

Over the years I've noticed Taylor using and praising the beauty and sonic properties of koa. But just yesterday I thought, why would such a conscientious company go anywhere near a wood species that only grows on a small group of islands and has been decimated by logging and clearing space for grazing cattle? I concluded that you have to be sourcing your koa responsibly, acquiring only dead or dying trees. I hope I'm right.

Bill O'Grady  
Seattle, WA

Thanks for the concern, Bill, and I'm happy to explain. Yes, koa, as Hawaii once knew it, was decimated by cattle. Briefly told, that started in 1793 when British Captain George Vancouver gifted several cattle to King Kamehameha, who put virtual protection around them as being his sacred property. Within years the herd had grown to an immense size and taken over forested land for grazing. John Parker arrived on the scene in the early 1800s, after years

of cattle protection, and befriended the king. He ended up becoming part of the family, and to make a long story short, Parker Ranch became the largest cattle ranch in America for decades upon decades. It no longer is.

At the same time, koa had always been a sacred wood to the Hawaiians, along with their prized sandalwood. But both species were very hard to work, and Hawaiians traded with the Chinese during all these years – their koa wood for fir and pine from China – in order to have a timber that they could actually work with and build houses, buildings and fences. So, in effect, koa was displaced before the 1900s. Still, there was a brisk logging of the timber until the 1980s, when Hawaii made it illegal to cut koa from state public lands. Because about 80 percent of all koa exists on public lands, that means that from 1985 or so, we commercial users have survived solely on the 20 percent of koa that exists on private land.

Private land owners are not having an impact on koa as a species, or even the decimation of forests, really. That's because koa is very valuable, so it's extracted carefully from their own private property. So, while koa is rare and expensive, it is anything but endangered. Just remember that 80 percent of the koa trees are not in danger and are not being harvested in any way. So, I feel good about using koa because, out of all the

rare species, it is one that has a huge natural and thriving ecosystem that is protected very well.

My loving wife bought me a 414ce for our 20-year anniversary, and I just love it. I also have a fall 2011 NS24ce-LTD and love the different sound of the nylon strings and cedar top. Is there a difference in age between the spruce and cedar trees used for tops, or does it just depend upon the wood you acquire from cutters?

David Guder  
Newport Beach, CA

David, I'll answer your question two ways because I don't know what you mean by age, believe it or not. If you mean how old the tree was, that can vary quite a bit. They are all old, for sure, with the youngest of almost any spruce or cedar tree used for guitars being nearly 400 years old. But some could easily be 700 years old or more. If you are asking if we "age" the wood longer in the factory for one species versus the other, then the answer is that we dry and age the woods for exactly the same amount of time. If one is older, it's just by chance.

I've been playing my Grand Symphony a lot lately with a capo on the third fret, which is where I'm comfortable singing. I keep forgetting to take the capo off when I'm done playing and just put the guitar in its stand with the thing still clamped down. Should I be more vigilant about taking the capo off? Is it hurting anything by being attached for an extended period, or does it not matter? Matt Hohmann

Matt, the only thing that might be a problem is if it wore a mark in the back of the neck from being on there all the time. Otherwise, no problem. I



Our son will be heading off to college soon in a much dryer climate. Would it be best for him to take a solid wood guitar from sea level to high altitude (with humidification), or buy a laminate model (100/200 Series) and have a little less maintenance? Or would there really be a difference?

David

That's a really good question, David. Buy a new guitar! Ha-ha, I'm kidding. Well, don't let me stop you. Really, it's going to be the same, because only the back and sides are laminate, and it's the spruce top and the fretboard that always suffer the most from dry climates. So, if he already has a nice guitar, just take that one, store it in the case when it's not being played, and buy the Humidipak system from Planet Waves to keep it in good shape. It's easy and worth the effort.

do worry that your guitar is living on a stand rather than in its case. I hope you live in an area that isn't dry, or seasonally dry.

I finally got around to reading [your book] *Guitar Lessons*. It was an inspirational read and makes me admire your company even more, and although I own a 955 12-string, an LKSM 12-string, and an 8-string baritone, it was all I could do to

not drop everything and dash to the nearest store to buy another Taylor! I have talked in the past with the great staff at my favorite guitar store, Dusty Strings in Seattle, about my ideas for a Taylor BTO. I would like something for solo fingerstyle with a sonorous, deep bass but clear midtones and sparkling bright highs, and have leaned towards a cocobolo back and sides with an Engelmann top. Reading about the new Grand Orchestra shape has me intrigued. Would

cocobolo be too dense and heavy a wood for back and sides with the large GO body, and would Engelmann be too light for a top? Would you do Adirondack bracing on a GO? Would it change your answer if it were built as a 9-string?

Bill Wicheta, MD  
Wenatchee, WA

This is a tough answer, Bill, because we're talking about a guitar with words on a page, when the best approach is to listen to a guitar. Have you had the opportunity to hear cocobolo? If so, then you know how it sounds. Its sound will transfer to Engelmann, Sitka, or Adirondack. They, of course, will flavor it, but the cocobolo characteristics will remain. Cocobolo would actually work better on a large guitar like a GO than on smaller guitars because of its density. I think you can get the sound you want with cocobolo in a large body, but I'd feel better if you already know you like the sound of this wood. That's the most important ingredient. If you make it a 9-string I probably wouldn't change my mind. By the list of guitars you own, I can see you like to double up your strings. You're a guy who knows what you like! I like that. Oh, yes, I forgot to say that Engelmann would be a fine choice for a top. Get it while we have it... it's been harder to come by for some time now.

Why do Taylors stay in tune so well? I've had three Taylors, and they have always been in tune no matter how long between playing. I have a guitar that I built, and I have to tune it almost every day.

Harold Hensley  
Clarksville, TN

Harold, it's nice to know your guitars are staying in tune. The answer is simply that our design and production methods make a stable guitar. The design itself is in harmony with all the forces. Nothing is pulling in an awkward way. Then, the wood is dried, cured and treated properly before we build. We build under strict climate control rules. Our NT design, both for our neck and our body, is very stable. So in the end, it's a lot of little things that add up to consistency. I must say that out of all the guitars made, ours are the most consistent and stable. I won't argue sound, because there are lots of good-sounding guitars, but in this area of stability, consistency and playability, we really have done a good job.

As I was thumbing through a copy of the April 2013 *National Geographic*, I saw an article titled "Strings Theory," which was about tree pathologist Francis Schwarze, who had devised a way to improve the sound of certain violins. The process involved the application of two arboreal fungi, *Physisporinus vitreus* and *Xylaria longipes*, to spruce and maple, which enhanced the resonance of the wood by thinning the cell walls. Apparently this also augmented the woods' ability to dampen some of the more strident higher frequencies – some natural EQ'ing, I guess. Can you foresee this practice having any practical application to guitar-making?

Mike Tipton  
Newton, NH

Thanks, Mike. Boy, these violin scientists are relentless. They're all looking to crack the code. And they're all trying to make a new violin that sounds like a 300-year old violin, and then sometimes say that this must be what the boys did 300 years ago, even if they did it accidentally. Don't get me wrong, I'm not being critical, because I love what they do, but it usually involves one or two instruments, and, well...I sound like Bill Murray on the old *Saturday Night Live* show when he'd review movies that he never watched! And no, I haven't seen this article, even though I sound like I think I know what I'm talking about.

So, now that we set the ground rules, which are that I don't know what I'm talking about enough to argue or corroborate a scientist's work, I'll say that for a thing like this to make its way into guitar production like ours, it must clearly, undeniably make a difference, and be able to be done in a wholesale, non-toxic way, and safely and economically. And, I may add, it must not be something that happens quickly and naturally on its own, anyway. We mess around with heating spruce. It's called torrefied wood: wood that's been baked, essentially, in an oxygen-controlled vacuum chamber. It's done on a commercial scale to some species to stabilize the wood and to darken it. We and other makers have had some success with this, making spruce that acts like very old spruce, or more accurately, acts like a very old guitar.

But in the end, there are other much more approachable contributors to improving a guitar's sound, including the bracing, the finish thickness, the wood thickness, the glue, and, of course, the design. Really good guitar-making tends to trump wood

treatment. It always has and probably always will. Usually, ideas like these make for good research, rather than something practical. In a day when everyone runs out their front door and calls a man in a space suit to remediate the mold in the corner of their house, I'm not sure we'd be allowed to import fungi into a factory, ya know?

If I sound sarcastic, I'm not trying to be, because I love this research, I've just never seen a way to actually use it. I can tell you this: Stradivari didn't use it.

My Taylor 814ce is the best guitar I have ever owned. It lives on a stand in a humidity-controlled room. As 90 percent of the time I played plugged in to a PA system, I always leave a rubber feedback buster in the soundhole. Am I substantially hampering the guitar's ability to soak up moisture? If so, should I keep my room at a higher humidity level to compensate, or should I stop being lazy and take the feedback buster out when I am done playing?

Rob  
Blairsville, GA

Rob, if your room is climate-controlled all the time, you can leave the feedback buster in and it won't hamper anything. Think about it. Even if it slowed down the process of absorbing moisture, it would also slow down the guitar's desire to get dry, right? But why would the guitar have a desire to get dry if the room isn't dry?

I was recently at a high-end acoustic shop comparing a Taylor 914ce to a Martin 000-28ec and a Collings OH2. The Taylor held its own very well. When I asked the salesman how the tone of the three guitars would evolve over time he said the Taylor would not change very much because of the finish. He told me the other two had an organic finish that changes dramatically over time, whereas Taylor uses a synthetic finish that doesn't allow for a change of tone. I found his explanation hard to believe. Is it true? Are there differences in the finishes used for these brands that alter the way they sound over time?

Jeffrey

Jeffrey, the Martin and Collings are both fine guitars, and I'd own one in a heartbeat. I'm not kidding. They both use nitrocellulose lacquer finishes, but I believe that the Collings uses

the same UV filler and maybe a base coat that is exactly the same material as we use on our guitars. I believe the Martin is oil-based paste filler and then lacquer. Ours is UV polyester, of our design and specs.

I've answered this question in many different ways. And it's been asked in many different ways. First, the thickness makes the biggest difference in sound, so if the finish is thin, be it poly or nitro, it's going to sound good. Any gloss-finished guitar, of either material, requires more finish than a satin guitar, or a hand-rubbed low-gloss guitar. Thinner is better, all the time, every single time. Ours is thin, as thin as theirs, gloss vs. gloss, satin vs. satin.

I guess one could argue, and I'll let that argument stand, that a nitro finish might age better than a polyester finish like ours. Maybe it does. But then, I'd have to admit that only the finish "ages" and not the rest of the guitar. And I'd have to see a 15-year-old Taylor that hasn't aged well, because we've been using this finish for a very long time. And the facts are, an older Taylor with our UV coatings ages beautifully; just ask anyone who has one. I have many, and they sound better and better all the time. So I conclude that the finish we use isn't standing in the way of aging well.

It's easy to say that a poly finish like Taylor uses isn't organic like a nitro finish, and therefore it won't age. People say it all the time. I just haven't found that to be true as the guitars age.

I often hear that fingerboards will dry out and possibly crack if not conditioned, and that some sort of finish should be applied to the fingerboard about once a year or so to prevent this. This seems to be in contrast to research that shows that finishes, such as those commonly used in guitar making, do not prevent but only slow the rate of water vapor exchange into or out of the wood. I even see claims that applying a finish "nourishes" or "hydrates" the wood.

Linseed or other similar drying oil or mineral oil which never dries seems to be the primary component in most available fingerboard "conditioners," and the information that I could find indicates that both of these finishes offer virtually no resistance to water vapor exchange or water protection, although they do make the fingerboard look darker and richer in appearance, which is nice.

So if this is correct, then applying linseed oil or mineral oil to a

fingerboard would provide virtually no benefit, as the fingerboard would continue to dry and react to the environment basically as if the linseed oil or mineral oil was not applied. Besides darkening the fingerboard, what does it do?

Vincent Aleo

Vincent, you are completely right about everything you said. And the oil does serve a benefit, because there is a second level of moisture, or sealing, that it can provide. This might be a bad analogy, but let's say you put emollients on your skin. Well, they enhance your skin's softness and pliability, but not to a fraction of the effect that drinking water does, right? But it still does something. So, yes, a dry ebony fretboard will still crack with or without linseed oil or mineral oil. But it feels better and looks better with the oil on it. Just don't think that you can now expose it to low humidity. By the way, boiled linseed oil will polymerize on the wood, leaving a resin behind, and after only three or four years of putting it on only once a year, you're pretty much done, and shouldn't use any more. You'll have filled the pores permanently with the resins left behind. Mineral oil does not do this. It evaporates and leaves dry wood behind, so it can be put on over and over, across the years, and needs to be put on as well, because it does evaporate.

## 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.

# mini mates



## The popular GS Mini spawns a limited run of handsome and stage-friendly spinoffs

A sure sign of a great guitar is when it naturally takes on a life of its own. In the three years since the GS Mini made its debut, it has done just that, defying the traditional tonal boundaries of a "travel" guitar, earning legitimacy as a guitar worthy of pro players, yet all the while projecting a fun, "play-me" persona that makes players at every

level want to have one within arm's reach wherever they may be. More than 50,000 GS Mini models now populate the world, and the demand remains as high as ever.

Taylor luthier Andy Powers has enjoyed watching the myriad ways that players have gravitated toward the Mini and incorporated it into their lives.

"It started as a guitar you can play around the house or go camping with, and now players are using it as a full-blown stage instrument," he says. "Some use it as a Nashville high-strung guitar or keep it in other tunings during shows."

Beyond live performance applications, the popularity of the

Mini has also spurred a desire for additional wood options with enhanced aesthetic appeal.

With both scenarios in mind, this fall we're happy to roll out six premium offshoots of the GS Mini, featuring alternative wood options and an upgrade to the ES-T pickup currently used on our 100 and 200 Series, including our three tone

control knobs. Wood choices include veneered Hawaiian koa, quilted sapele, or Indian rosewood back and sides, all with a solid Sitka spruce top and featuring the Taylor ES-T pickup. The koa and rosewood models are also available without a pickup. One other offering is a version of the GS Mini Mahogany equipped with the ES-T.

Each GS Mini will be offered in a limited quantity, and availability will vary by region. All guitars ship in a GS Mini hard bag. For model availability in your area, contact your local authorized Taylor dealer.

### Premium GS Mini Models

- GS Mini Koa
- GS Mini-e Koa
- GS Mini RW
- GS Mini-e RW
- GS Mini-e QS
- GS Mini-e Mahogany

L-R: GS Mini-e RW (front shown), GS Mini Koa, quilted sapele GS Mini-e QS, rosewood GS Mini-e RW

## GUITAR

## CHOPS

America's favorite food savant, Alton Brown, shares his creative philosophy, reveals why recipes are overrated, and explains how playing his Taylor makes life better

By Jim Kirlin

Chances are, if you or someone in your family watches "food TV" with any regularity, you've seen charismatic food personality/educator Alton Brown. Brown's prolific presence on cable television's Food Network over the past 14 years has coincided with a revolution in food and cooking programs, one that has turned celebrity chefs, for better or worse, into rock stars and brands. Brown first carved out a niche for himself with his popular food-science program *Good Eats*, which he wrote, produced and starred in on Food Network from 1999 to 2012. The show was a bona fide game-changer, helping to transform the landscape of cooking programs from dry, often snoozy instructional affairs into vibrantly offbeat culinary "edutainment." Brown's creative blueprint blended nerdy food science, problem-solving techniques, food history, and quirky, cleverly subversive

humor to make cooking a fun and accessible pursuit.

Brown first conceived of the show while working as a cinematographer and commercial video director who would watch cooking shows in his spare time. Finding them boring, he envisioned a much different type of program, and one fateful day in 1992 jotted down the words "Julia Child, Mr. Wizard, Monty Python" as inspirational guideposts. He eventually left his job to attend culinary school in Vermont in order to fortify his cooking skills, ultimately arming himself with the expertise that would anchor the program.

Brown's unique vision proved to be a winning recipe that netted a much broader audience than cooking shows had traditionally drawn. His goofball skits, characters, costumes, props, food trivia, and fun camera angles – from inside a refrigerator or oven, for example – added to the show's playful

look and feel. But in the middle of it all, Brown's gift was helping people understand not just the "how-to's" of cooking, but also the "why's." *Good Eats* would become the first food program since Julia Child's to win a prestigious Peabody Award (2006) for excellence in electronic media, and Brown would go on to rack up a heap of other critical accolades, including the James Beard Award for Best TV Food Personality in 2011. He's also a bestselling author, whose award-winning cookbooks have similarly focused on helping people understand the properties of food.

That sensibility has translated to his warp-speed expert commentary on *Iron Chef America* over the past 11 seasons, as he has enlightened viewers with culinary play-by-play while some of the world's finest chefs face off in a "Kitchen Stadium" showdown featuring a secret ingredient. He is

also the host of *The Next Iron Chef*, and a mentor on *Food Network Star*. His latest program, *Cutthroat Kitchen*, applies a knife-twist to traditional cooking competition shows by introducing an element of culinary sabotage, in which contestants are given access to resources to help themselves or undermine their opponents, with Brown as the host-provocateur.

We first connected with Brown after he tweeted a drawing of his 214ce-SB with a thank-you note to Taylor. We caught up with him by phone in mid-July, during an exceptionally busy year that has seen him juggling multiple projects, including the development of his ambitious live "Edible Inevitable" tour this fall. The shows will bring him to venues across America to share his own unique blend of food-science demonstrations, including some food-themed songs that he'll be playing on his Taylor acoustic, and

very possibly, a white SolidBody Classic with single coils that had recently cast a spell on him.

In conversation, Brown is exactly what one who knows his TV persona might expect: lucid, ebullient and sharp-witted. It turns out that there is a mutual admiration between Bob Taylor and Brown (see "BobSpeak" this issue). Their kinship reflects clear parallels in the way each has pursued his craft. Both are forward thinkers who have had a pioneering influence within their respective fields. And they both love quality food and guitars. Brown was hoping to make time to visit the Taylor factory when his tour came to San Diego in late October. We'll be sure to keep you abreast of any food/tonewood pairings that ensue.

### How has your summer been?

It's been busy. A little more hectic than what I would call normal.

### Because of *Cutthroat Kitchen*?

Yeah, *Cutthroat Kitchen* was this "maybe we're gonna do this" kind of project that came up back in the winter. I was making a show called *Food Network Star* at the time, and I thought, let's make a little not-for-air pilot demo of this, just for the hell of it. So we made one, and it was a lot of fun – a little too much fun, probably – and I forgot about it, and then two weeks later I got a call that Food Network had seen the first act of a rough cut and ordered 13 of them, to go into production immediately. So I was a bit taken aback. So I spent most of my June in Los Angeles working on that, which I just wouldn't have done ordinarily. And I'm getting ready for my big national tour starting in October, and Sunday I will trundle off to New York to make another season of *Iron Chef America*. And I'm developing a four-part documentary series called *Food That Made America*. And we launch our podcast this month. So I've got enough for right now. It has been a year of surprises and complexities.

### You've done lectures and other presentations before. Is this the first time you've strung together a full-fledged tour?

Yes. And it's the first time that we will have put together the kinds of elements that we have. I've done large-scale kind of weird demos, but this will be a combination. Food-wise there will be some things that people have never seen before – or hope to ever see again – the invention of some very large-scale culinary "things" that will remain a secret, that are being built and housed.

### I read that ponchos will be available to some of the audience.

Actually we've had to add some stuff to that kit. For the first three rows there will also be disposable sunglasses because of some other issues. And the one that a lot of folks are talking about is that I'm finally breaking down and performing some of my food songs. So I guess it's sort of a food-centric variety show with a lot of moving pieces and music.

### Will you have much of a crew?

As little as possible. The more people you take, the less money you make [laughs]. I keep trying to pare it down. My personal assistant should never have let me know that he's a drummer because now he's also playing drums in the show, so it's one of those deals where you try to maximize everybody's skill set.

### That's one of the fun things about you in terms of your creativity, especially with *Good Eats* – it seemed like everyone who was a member of the crew was also a cast member.

Oh, absolutely. In fact, the gentleman I'm talking about played one of my attorneys in over 20 episodes. He'll actually be reprising that role also on stage as well as running my part of the tour – and playing drums.

### Considering today's well-developed landscape of cooking and food shows on TV and comparing that to when you first started doing *Good Eats*, looking back, do you think of yourself as a pioneer?

I never look back. I mean, I'm a student of history only to a point of other peoples'. I find that if I look back, I get caught in what I call a regret loop. When I look back I see bad things. I see mistakes, I see things I should have

done differently now that I'm older and have a little bit more mileage from which to glean my experience, so I just don't do it. In fact, I was working on *Cutthroat Kitchen*, which involves having judges on, and there's a young Thai chef named Jet Tila out in L.A. – great guy. We worked together for about six days, and he turned to me at one point and said, "Do you have any idea how many people you've influenced culinarily?" No one had ever said that to me

before. And I looked at him and absolutely, positively had no idea what to say because I've done what I've done for 100 percent selfish reasons. *Good Eats* was what I wanted to do, and I was lucky enough to find a network that would let me do it, and so I've never thought about what you're saying about influencing people or the business.

Truthfully, I look at myself as somebody who's just trying to survive the business [laughs] because everything changes very quickly, and I'm not super happy with where food media is right now, and yet I'm part of it, and so I'm constantly trying to steer a boat that's way too big for me. I think all you can do in an industry like this, and I guess I'm in a few different industries – entertainment, television, food – is do what I can do where I can do it. I had the opportunity to do something that was very, very different when I made *Good Eats*, so what I look for in projects is originality above all. Or I look for something that plays so much into my strengths. When I took on doing *Iron Chef America* 11 seasons ago, I did it because it was a challenge. It was every day having to deal with food that I wasn't familiar with and processes that were over my head in a lot of ways, so it was like going to culinary school, but it also played into one of my strengths, which is to talk nonstop without breathing. I took on *Cutthroat Kitchen* because it played to certain characteristics that I have, which is to be devilishly playful, but it also was a completely new territory of running a game show. So I'm always trying to steer my skill set toward something I haven't done before.

### Let's talk about your food and music background. On the food side, your mom and grandma inspired you –

Nah, that's crap; you read an old bio. There's a new one, which confesses to the truth: I learned about cooking in college to date girls. That whole mom/grandmom thing, somebody along the way made that up. Yeah, I did some cooking with my mom and grandma, but it's not like they set me on the path. What set me on the path was trying to get girls, and then realizing that once you got dumped enough while cooking, which actually happened to me, that cooking's actually pretty fun by itself; you don't need the girl. That kind of launched me into a whole different hobby.

### Did you grow up in a musical household?

I grew up in an extremely musical environment. My mom and my dad owned a radio station in a small town

in North Georgia. I was actually born in Los Angeles. My parents were kind of like the cool couple that escaped a small Georgia town, went to California for their honeymoon and stayed for 10 years, had me, exposed me to all kinds of cool culture, and then moved back to another little town in Georgia because my dad had always wanted to own a radio station. My dad was a

## “I WOULD EQUATE THIS GUITAR WITH MY FAVORITE CHEF’S KNIFE.”

cellist and a trumpet player, and my mom was a pianist, so I was exposed to everything very early. My dad would bring demo records and promotional albums home to me from the radio station. I had a little record player in my room, and he might bring home Miles Davis one day, and then I very strongly remember the day that he just walked in and without saying a word handed me this funky looking record called *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*. I knew who the Beatles were, but I didn't come out of my room for three months. So that was big. Then, when I was in the 5th grade my dad came home with this funky looking case that he'd gotten from a second-hand store, and there was an alto sax in it. I didn't put down the sax for 20 years. I played in big bands in high school and college and jazz combos. It was hard to get work in combo bands because it was the age of rock & roll, so that's when I initially learned how to play guitar – if I wanted to play horn in a band I usually had to play rhythm guitar or keyboards. I had been trained on piano from a very young age, so that had always been my number one, but I had to pick up guitar along the way. But I was never really any good.

### How are you now?

I gave it up for years, and then I decided last year that I wanted to get back into music because I found as I approached middle age that there were some things lacking in me. It's funny, I wanted to find ways to slow time down. I'm watching my daughter, who's 13 now, and I feel like this is all happening too quickly for me. I had always remembered the way that time changes when you're playing a musical instrument. So I started playing saxophone again, but I travel so much that I thought, I'll start playing guitar again, and I bought this terrible little travel guitar and started dragging it around. And then I started writing songs on guitar, which I'd never done before. And then I decided that I liked some of these songs and that I might

want to do some of them in the tour the next year. Two of the songs I'd written badly needed to be played on acoustic guitar, and I started going to music stores. I remember the first day that I ran into the guitar that's actually in my left hand right now [214ce-SB]. It was love at first strum. Now it's making me a better guitarist, but the nice thing is that it makes me sound so much better

there is sort of this inexorable quality of craftsmanship. I would equate this guitar with my favorite chef's knife, which is made by a company called Cut Brooklyn, which is this exquisitely machined, simple device. I also have a thing for old typewriters. I type, and I have this beautiful old Hermes Rocket typewriter. Everything about it is form and function, and it works so beautifully

to be able to make the food their own. That's why I don't concentrate on recipes. Recipes are only proofs for larger concepts. And it sounds like one of the things that [Taylor] wants to do is to make people understand what's going on with the instrument and enhance the playing experience through that, which just empowers people, which is the same thing.

goes on in my professional life is greatly enhanced by playing, not just daily, but several times a day. I play a lot. That doesn't necessarily mean I'm getting a whole lot better [laughs]. Well, I am getting better.

### Tell me about the musical component of your touring show.

When I first walk out on stage, the

than I have any right to be. That's my insurance policy. One of the reasons I want one of your electric guitars is that I need something to float me there as well. [Ed. Note: *We later loaned Alton a SolidBody Classic with single coil pickups. Within a few hours of playing it he arranged to purchase it. "I don't know what kind of voodoo you put into this thing, but it's spectacular," he said via e-mail. "The tone, the action and pickups [are] just fantastic."*]

### What did you like about the 214?

First and foremost, this thing was just beautiful. The sunburst, I looked at it, and thought, wow, everything about that is pretty. But then you pick it up and realize that everything about this is meant to be played. The neck structure, the fretboard, everything. And without having to put out vast amounts of sound, the tone quality was so full that it was different from any other guitar that I had played. I realize now, having played other Taylors, that that's the sound of a Taylor acoustic guitar. You could use words like rich, buttery... it's not an issue of loud; it's almost like signal-to-noise ratio. There's just more signal in the guitar. And then I plugged into an amplifier, and it was like, oh, this actually sounds just like it does when it's being played acoustically. That really, really hooked me, because that's really rare in the guitar world, for a guitar to actually sound the same both ways. I don't understand how the whole ES-T works; maybe there's a genie in there.

### We've been on working on some new pickup prototypes that I think you'd also really like. I'm curious, have you played the T5?

I've played *with* it [laughs]. I loved it. I'll be honest: I haven't touched much of your stuff that I haven't really liked because everything is so easy to play and all the materials are all so well thought out. I think about the objects in my life that I really love to work with and love to be around, and I find that

as a tool. I find that everything about this guitar, and your stuff in general, is so well shopped. The ingredients are all what should be there. Everything is thought out from a material standpoint in a way that I identify with and I find very appealing. You probably hear that a lot.

### We do. It comes from Bob's philosophy as a builder. He wasn't beholden to the past, and he embraced technology as a modern platform for precision craftsmanship. Of course, there's an end to that – to create a consistently great playing experience for people, to take the obstacles out of the way for someone when they pick up a guitar.

Well, yeah, look at it this way: He's put a guitar that is better than I deserve to have in my hands. What does that do to me? It [makes me] want another Taylor guitar.

“THE CREATIVE PROCESS THAT GOES ON IN MY PROFESSIONAL LIFE IS GREATLY ENHANCED BY PLAYING, NOT JUST DAILY, BUT SEVERAL TIMES A DAY.”

### As a company we also love helping people understand and appreciate tone. We want guitar-playing to be an accessible experience and not have it be something that's just for the experts. I think it's somewhat analogous to what you've done in the food world with cooking.

It's interesting that you bring that up because I do believe – as my philosophy and what I do as far as food educating goes – that you empower people when you give them the answers to "why." You've got to inform them. The more they can understand about the technique, the more they're going

### Not to be self-serving, but we do Road Show events, where we go out to stores and talk about how shapes have sounds and tone-woods have unique flavors that season your sound.

I love that analogy.

### It's a fairly simple concept, and people get it. We also present guitar demos and work with people to help them find a guitar that fits their playing style and musical needs. It's gratifying because we know that an inspiring guitar can bring joy and comfort into people's lives.

Have you read *Guitar Zero*?

### I've heard of it but I haven't read it.

You should read it because one of the things that's being written about a lot these days is the use of music to preserve your brain function as you get older, and that the brains of musicians

first thing I'm doing is playing a song by myself. It'll be nothing but me and the Taylor. The show ends with this big anthem called "TV Chef," which is a searing satire about the world of celebrity chefdom. We're doing a country number called "Airport Shrimp," which is about a love affair with airport shrimp cocktail that goes bad – it's a ballad about food poisoning; what can I say? We've got "Cooking Lesson Lullabye," which is a song that started as a song trying to teach my young daughter to cook, and how easy it is, but the real thrust of the song is that cooking is absolutely, incredibly complex. So a simple lullabye becomes this big, rambling diatribe on sauce construction. We've got a song called "Pork Chop Blues," and then we've got kind of a grunge/punk number called "Easy Bake," which is about my affair with Easy Bake ovens when I was a kid that leads into one of the weirdest food demos I think anybody will have ever seen – and the reason we have to have sunglasses. There's a good bit of acoustic and a bit of electric.

### Do any other Iron Chefs or Food Network personalities play guitar?

I don't know. It's funny because another friend of mine said, "You guys ought to get together and see if you've got enough people for a band." I'm heading there Sunday to start a new round of shows, so I'll ask. I do know that there are a lot of chefs who are musicians. Those things seem to go well together.

### You might have to be the ringleader for some culinary super group.

Or souper group – s-o-u-p. **W&S**

*For more on Alton Brown, visit [altonbrown.com](http://altonbrown.com). For information on his tour, visit [altonbrowntour.com](http://altonbrowntour.com)*



# FULL FIGURED

**Rare curly mahogany inspires a fresh look for fall, rosewood and cedar rekindle their chemistry, and our 200 Series goes pro**

## THE CREATIVE

wellspring of ideas that inspires Taylor's annual Fall Limited Editions is actually more like a series of separate tributary streams. We liken it to the many different ways we find inspiration as players. Sometimes it arrives in a spontaneous spark of blind discovery. Sometimes it comes from jamming with a friend whose musical sensibilities naturally complement one's own. Other times it starts with a fundamental concept — say a familiar chord progression — which is thoughtfully refined into a more sophisticated form.

That pretty well sums up the ways in which this year's fall collection came to life. The shimmering figured mahogany you see alongside these words came to us out of the blue and catalyzed the design of our beautiful 500 Series LTDs. Rosewood and cedar, which meet on a pair of 400 Series LTDs, are like a couple of longtime picking pals whose styles comfortably mesh with each other. Our upgraded 200 Series LTDs build upon the basic idea of a reliable gigging guitar, elevating it to the performance standards of a professional player.

We hope you get a chance to sample this year's seasonal treats at your local Taylor dealer. Read on for more details, and look for complete specifications at [taylorguitars.com](http://taylorguitars.com).

## 500 Series Fall LTDs

### Woods

**Back/Sides:** Curly mahogany

**Top:** European spruce

### Models

Grand Auditorium 514e-FLTD, Grand Symphony 516e-FLTD

## ONE OF THE PURE

pleasures of our wood sourcing efforts is the occasional, random discovery of something truly special. Such was the case when the supplier who had sold us the rare and beautiful quilted sapele used for one of last year's fall limited edition offerings once again reached out to Taylor master luthier Andy Powers. This time, the supplier, who sources mahogany in Central America, had opened up a harvested mahogany tree to find spectacular curly figure.

Based on his earlier experience with us, he immediately knew whom to contact. He snapped a few photos as the first, huge slabs were being sliced from the tree and e-mailed them to Andy and Bob Taylor. The images made a strong first impression, as Andy recalls.

"We both found ourselves staring at the photos going, 'Whoa, seriously?'

he says. "We thought, if that's real mahogany with that kind of figure, we're very interested."

*continued on page 20*



L-R: Back of a 514e-FLTD, front of a 516e-FLTD

Though the curly figure didn't span the entire tree, it did occupy a lot of it. The fact that it existed at all was a rarity because that sort of figure in mahogany is a genetic anomaly.

"Mahogany grows really straight," Andy explains. "That's one of the reasons we love it so much — the tree grows large, straight and very predictably, so you can get a lot of yield for necks out of it. In this case it turned out to be really special."

Once the wood had arrived and Andy and Bob had the opportunity to see it, Andy knew it would make a wonderful limited edition series. To create the right tonal complement, he chose soundboards of European spruce, the same wood we paired with the quilted sapele last year, to be fortified with Adirondack spruce CV bracing.

"European spruce is one of the most traditional top woods to use for stringed instruments," Andy explains. "It has the clear headroom of Adirondack spruce, but with a bit of extra warmth and tonal flavor, giving it a little more sonic color right out of the box. Some of these sets also have hints of bear claw, occasionally with a little color variation. So you've got this really

flamboyant mahogany, paired with this spruce that's relatively austere yet also tells a bit of its life story with the colors and bear claw. Together they make a warm, elegant take on a classic mahogany/Adirondack spruce combo.

### A Refined Organic Design Aesthetic

With the wood pairing established, Andy began to envision the design elements that would help articulate the distinctive personality of the woods.

"Looking at the uniqueness of the mahogany and the color and movement of the European spruce, I wanted to do something a bit more organic," he says.

He found some inspiration during a trip to New York City. While visiting the Metropolitan Museum of Art, he saw a classical guitar that had belonged to the late classical guitar virtuoso Andrés Segovia, made by Hermann Hauser in 1937.

"I was just admiring the guitar for a long time," he says. "The top finish is yellowed with age and cigarette smoke, but even that couldn't cover the shimmer of the wildly bear-clawed top [see bear claw sidebar at right]. I thought, I want to build something that's really

organic like this, something with all-wood appointments, almost classical guitar-ish."

The rosette Andy designed features a segmented pattern that incorporates some of the curly mahogany. To provide a visual counterpoint, he chose boxwood, an extremely dense, nearly texture-free wood that has traditionally been used for fine appointments like violin tailpieces, chin rests, and, occasionally, knobs.

"I wanted it to be somewhat modern but elegant in an almost classical kind of setting," he says.

The all-wood treatment continues with Indian rosewood binding (body, soundhole, fretboard and peghead), along with figured mahogany top trim.

Andy also designed a new fretboard inlay, dubbed "Avian," whose name reflects the bird-like appearance of his abstract shapes. Seeing some of M.C. Escher's artwork at the Met in New York had influenced his thinking as he refined his sketches.

"The inlay took on this form that I really like, a real gradual metamorphosis," he explains. "But if you look at it closely, it's not just the same form graduated. Each one is a little different;



*Spruce top with heavy bear claw*



*Spruce top with light bear claw on a 514ce-FLTD*

### What is Bear Claw?

It's a rippling effect in the fibers of wood. In the guitar world, it's often associated with spruce tops, particularly European and Sitka. Because spruce tends to be very straight-grained, any deviation in growth orientation is visually noticeable. We asked Andy Powers to expound on what causes bear claw and whether it influences the tonal properties of the wood it inhabits.

"Bear claw, or *hazelficte*, as it is also known, is a small striation not unlike a single curl in maple. However, it typically is a far smaller grain variation. It usually is only seen in the oldest and densest of spruce trees. The general consensus among wood enthusiasts is that the small, irregular movement is caused by genetics, but it may also be caused by stressful factors in slow-growing conditions, much like worries adding wrinkles to our foreheads. One thing that many guitar makers including myself agree on — whether the grain movement itself is the culprit (which I believe to be the case), or simply that trees exhibiting bear claw also happen to be older, strong trees — is that, by and large, the tops with bear claw sound really good. These tops, nearly without exception, exhibit extra stiffness along and across the grain lines. This is a great recipe for a strong and sonorous top.

"These grain movements don't always show definite lines or stripes, but when perfectly aligned with the plane of a top, they reveal themselves as a shimmering three-dimensional look, almost like a slightly ruffled piece of aluminum foil. Many makers of both classical and steel-string guitars love these tops for their superb strength characteristics. Visually, this tends to be a cosmetic character trait that is subject to personal interpretation. Some players see it as an aesthetic shortcoming, while others love the unique visual character it gives a guitar."



*"Avian" fretboard inlay in boxwood*

it's not just the size but also the form of each one that slowly changes. The little 'wings' off the center slowly detach and change their shape."

Tonally, players can expect a dynamic voice that's both powerful and sophisticated, blending the strong fundamental emphasis of mahogany with the strength and warmth of the European spruce.

"In a way it's like a refined, almost classical take on a bluegrass guitar," Andy suggests. "It's sort of a European version of a mahogany/Adirondack

spruce Dreadnought, although in this case we put them into two more modern Taylor shapes, our Grand Symphony and Grand Auditorium, and dressed them really elegantly."

One other design twist that distinguishes this limited edition series is a new version of Taylor's Expression System™ pickup. While it won't formally be introduced until next year, the new design integrates everything we've learned about the way the components of an acoustic guitar move in concert with each other to create tone. Like our

current Expression System, the pickup incorporates a studio-grade preamp and the same elegant roller-style knobs for refined EQ control.

Additional premium features on the 500 Series models include Gotoh gold tuners and a boxwood Taylor logo inlay in the headstock. Both models are offered without a cutaway, come with a 2013 Fall Limited Edition label inside the guitar, and ship in a Taylor deluxe hardshell case.

*continued on next page*



*Flamed maple*



*Quilted maple*

### Understanding Figure: Curl, Flame and Quilt

Figured wood is a beautiful sight to behold, and you don't have to be a guitar enthusiast to appreciate its striking, three-dimensional visual effect. At Taylor, we showcase it most prominently on our maple 600 Series and Koa Series guitars, but it occasionally occurs in other woods, such as the curly mahogany used on our 500 Series LTDs. While "figure" is the broader descriptive term, we often qualify figured woods through more specific types of visual patterns, referring to it as flamed, curly and quilted. Here are some distinctions:

"Curly" and "flamed" are essentially the same. Curl or flame appears like an unbroken band; other terms used to describe it are "fiddleback" and "tiger-striped." The effect is the result of a tree's fibers growing in more of a back-and-forth, zig-zag way instead of growing straight.

When a straight board is cut from such a tree, the wood fibers are essentially severed across the grain. This highlights the undulation visually due to the way the light reflects off the different directions of the grain, creating an iridescent effect. Sonically you won't hear much difference, although one could make the argument that it will be a little looser and therefore a little warmer because it's a slightly less stiff piece of wood. But really, the difference is negligible.

"Quilt" is essentially considered the same occurrence as curl, but it tends to look less like a rolling, linear wave, as Andy Powers explains.

"The growth is more irregular, appearing like undulating, boiling, rolling liquid, and there are more limitations in terms of where and how it appears," he says. "That's partly because it is only visible in a flatsawn cut; when a quilt-figured piece of wood is quartersawn, the figure appears as wide bands of flame. Also, it is often more present in slightly less dense specimens of a particular species. These last two characteristics usually mean that a quilted piece of wood has the potential to sound slightly warmer and low-frequency-biased than a non-quilted piece of the same wood."



*Boxwood/figured mahogany rosette with a rosewood-bound soundhole*

## 400 Series Fall LTDs

### Woods

**Back/Sides:** Indian rosewood

**Top:** Cedar (6-string) or Sitka spruce (12-string)

### Models

Grand Auditorium 414ce-FLTD, Grand Symphony 416ce-FLTD

12-string Grand Symphony 456ce-FLTD

## FANS OF THE RICH.

warm voicing of rosewood with cedar, especially fingerstyle players, will be eager to reach for one of our 400 Series limiteds. In years past, our 700 and Acoustic 7 Series have included

cedar-top rosewood models, but because our current lineup exclusively features spruce tops (though an optional cedar top is available as a standard model option), we wanted

to reunite the two woods due to their undeniable sonic chemistry together. We've sweetened the appeal even more by bringing them into the realm of our 400 Series price range, in two body styles: the Grand Auditorium 414ce-FLTD and the Grand Symphony 416ce-FLTD.

The wood pairing especially rewards players with a lighter touch. One of the qualities fingerstyle players will love is that the overall tone is rich and dynamic right out of the case, without requiring the longer play-in time a spruce-top guitar typically needs.

Rosewood's broad tonal spectrum and clear, high-fidelity sound match nicely with cedar's strong overtones,

yielding a voice that's sparkly, woody and complex.

"Cedar has all these midrange-heavy overtones that are super audible, and because rosewood is going to accentuate all of those overtones, you can hear everything really clearly," Andy notes. "Especially when you approach it more softly like a fingerstyle player would. The voice is really accessible. You don't have to hit it hard with a pick."

We've also crafted the 12-string Grand Symphony 456ce-FLTD, which features a Sitka spruce top instead of cedar because its stiffness responds better to the extra string tension (as a softer wood, cedar can start to get slightly distorted). With a Sitka top, a

rosewood 12-string unleashes a lush tapestry of tone.

"If you're looking for the sheer thickness of sound that comes from a 12-string, this has a lot of it," Andy says. "If you want to play that one chord and hear the kind of massive sound that comes from all these octaves and double courses, you won't be disappointed. Tune it down and it's got a serious rumble to it."

All three 400 Series models come with a Venetian cutaway and Taylor Expression System electronics, feature a 2013 Fall Limited Edition label inside the guitar, and ship in a Taylor standard hardshell case.



L-R: 414ce-FLTD,  
416ce-FLTD (back shown),  
12-string 456ce-FLTD



## 200 Series Fall LTDs

### Woods

**Back/Sides:** Indian rosewood laminate

**Top:** Sitka spruce

### Models

Dreadnought 210ce-FLTD, Grand Auditorium 214ce-FLTD

Above (L-R): 210ce-FLTD (back shown), 214ce-FLTD, and black hardshell case that comes with the guitars

## WE LOVE TO ARM PLAYERS

with great tools for gigging. We also know that some Taylor owners might prefer to spare their favorite guitars from the bump-and-grind of bar gigs and other real-world goings-on. That's where our performance-ready 200 Series guitars come in. We configured a guitar that players at any level can rely on as a strong stage accomplice — one that will sound great, look great, and hold up along the way.

We started by upgrading our ES-T pickup to our Expression System for a

full-voiced amplified acoustic sound. We swapped the satin finish typically used on our 200 Series backs and sides for a full-gloss body to add spotlight-worthy luster and bring out rosewood's beautiful variegation. We also replaced the hard gig bag that normally comes standard with a black hardshell case to better protect it in transit. The end result is a guitar that hits the sweet spot for players at every level. Working musicians will have a reliable axe that can serve as a workhorse or second

guitar. Recreational Taylor players looking to play a few gigs, parties or open mics can leave their other precious Taylor(s) at home. And budget-minded up-and-comers looking to invest in their first real guitar with aspirations of playing out can rest assured that they'll have a guitar that feels, sounds and looks worthy of a pro. **W&S**

# Soundings

## Scoring Points

Earlier this summer, Taylor Director of Artist Relations Tim Godwin spent time with fleet-fingered guitarist **John 5**, who was in Los Angeles rehearsing with shock rocker Rob Zombie for the band's headlining slot on the Mayhem Festival tour. Known as one of the hottest shredders around, John 5 (formerly John Lowery) has played alongside an all-star cast of hard rock stars over the years, including Marilyn Manson, David Lee Roth and Rob Halford (Judas Priest), and his services as a session player are always in demand. Behind the macabre makeup and horror-laced stage theatrics, he's an articulate musical omnivore who loves country music (he was first inspired to play by watching the TV variety show *Hee-Haw* as a kid) and can lay down some sizzling chicken pickin'.

A black **614ce** has been John's acoustic of choice lately, but he's also partial to his **912ce**, which he received as a gift from country singer k.d. lang back in the mid-'90s when he was a member of her touring band.

"I just fell in love with it," he told Godwin. "It's what I use on all the records and everything I've done ever since. You can see it on her concert video, *Live in Sydney*."

John said he was planning to play one of his Taylors on a solo acoustic interlude during the Rob Zombie shows, and that he recently put both Taylor acoustics to creative use while scoring the music for another Zombie project, the horror film *The Lords of Salem*, which was released this year.

"Ninety percent of it was done on acoustic guitar," he relayed. "When you're doing a movie score, you want violins and cellos and violas and things like that, so what I did with another guy, Griffin Boice, which we thought was cool and revolutionary, was tune the guitar up to something like a Nashville tuning, and I would use an EBow, which works great on an acoustic guitar. I would just give it a nice vibrato to sound like you're bowing. It sounds identical to violins. Then I would tune it to a regular guitar [pitch], and that would be my viola, and then we put these really heavy strings on it; we really filed the nut to make space for these big strings, and that was our cello. And we just did everything with the EBow."

John has also released six solo instrumental albums over the last

decade, and his stylistic range is well showcased. About half of his most recent solo release, *God Told Me To*, is acoustic, and he told Godwin that his next effort also will have a strong acoustic component.

"I plan to do some Jerry Reed stuff, and then I'll change it up with crazy guitar playing, so it'll be a nice diverse record as I usually do," he shared, before ripping into a slick-picked rendition of "Jerry's Breakdown" on the 614ce. "I love that kind of stuff!"

John-5.com

## Barber's Cuts

Grammy-nominated children's musician **Zak Morgan (612ce, 812ce)** dropped us a line in August during a busy summer of shows around his home base in Cincinnati and beyond. Morgan's recent set lists have drawn from the melodic story-songs of his latest release, *The Barber of the Beasts*, a sharp-witted, family-friendly collection. Morgan delights in conjuring outlandish tales using nimble wordplay, and this album finds him adding splashes of chamber-pop instrumentation in with the country, bluesy and jazzy flavors of his tunes. As a children's artist, Morgan embraces the freedom to be boundlessly playful with language through his lyrics, engaging youngsters in a way that encourages them to stretch their powerful imaginations. On the new record, Morgan also turns his lyrics into vocabulary lessons, highlighting words in the disc's lyric booklet (also downloadable on his website) and providing definitions at the end. Whether it's an explanation of "surly" or "brawny" or the meaning behind idiomatic expressions like "through thick and thin" and "up the creek," Morgan gives kids and their parents a cool vehicle to explore language – and music – together.

Morgan teamed up with producer/guitarist Rick Hordinski, with whom he has collaborated on previous projects, and tapped other talented friends to help out, including mercurial alt-country renegade Robbie Fulks, bassist Byron House (Robert Plant), singer Karen Bergquist (Over the Rhine), and funk legend and fellow Cincinnati resident Bootsy Collins, who guests on the playfully ghoulish ditty "The Case of the Dry Markers."

"Bootsy is a great guy," says Morgan. "Cincinnati is a small town, and I simply asked him to be a part of it and he said yes. He wrote all of his own narration lines. His grandson Vincent is in the video, too. And so is my 95-year old Grandma Lucille."

Morgan used his 812ce throughout the recording of the album. He says it's been a great tool both in the studio and in the nearly 200 shows he plays each year.

"It's a very comfortable instrument to play," he says. "I love the feel of the



thinner body, and the tone of the guitar is very rich and warm. The thing I love about all of my Taylors, and something I don't often hear mentioned, is the fact that these instruments are easy to tune and easy to *keep* in tune. And they play in tune consistently up and down the fretboard. Before I started playing Taylors I owned more than one expensive guitar where tuning was a constant issue and distraction. Taylor is a great company with amazing customer service, a kind and knowledgeable staff, awesome quality control and true innovation, and I love feeling like I'm part of the family!"

Zakmorgan.com

## Whale of a Sound

It's a thrilling sensation to discover a guitar that unlocks a door to new inspiration. Such was the case a few years back when Taylor pickup developer and man of many hats David Hosler was in the UK to present a guitar workshop and introduced guitarist **Steve Downs** to our **Baritone 8-String**. Downs is one-third of the popular acoustic instrumental folk-rock trio **Whalebone**, whose genre-meshing music with partners Charlotte Watson (guitar) and Sarah Ibberson (fiddle) taps Celtic folk and blues-based classic rock and infuses it with fresh arrangements and original compositions to form a signature acoustic brew. Downs instantly fell in love with the Bari 8 and bought it on the spot, succumbing to a hypnotic musical courtship in which the guitar slowly revealed its complexities and expressive tonal depth. It has since become an integral part of the band's songwriting palette and live shows.

"I perform regularly with it on Whalebone gigs and it creates an amazing amount of interest both amongst guitarists and non-players," Downs shared. "We even had a comment from a deaf lady who said she liked it because she could feel the vibrations from the bass notes!"

The guitar is featured prominently on the trio's latest studio release, *Runes*, along with Downs's well-seasoned **314ce** and his **GS Mini Mahogany**, playfully nicknamed "Mog." The band has noted that playing as an acoustic trio without a singer leaves more room for the full tonality of each instrument to shine. Their instrumental dynamic is well calibrated for their tastes, giving them, as they put it, "exactly the right combination of both support and space, intimacy and richness."

It certainly gives the baritone ample room to shine, starting with the opening track on *Runes*, "Origins," anchored by the earthy beat of a bodhran.

"Right from the moment we first heard the instrument, the baritone evoked for us a sense of connection to something ancient and mysterious," Downs commented on the tune. The two-part track "Justify," composed by Downs after 18 months of living with the baritone, slowly emerges from boggy depths before giving way to an up-tempo second passage inspired by Zeppelin's "Bron-Y-Aur Stomp." On the traditional tune "Tamlin," the baritone is married with DADGAD-tuned rhythm guitar and fiddle to evoke a surging, hypnotic urgency.

The GS Mini helped spawn "Mog's Reel," supplying a dusky undercurrent topped with Ibberson's fiddle and Downs's nimble mandolin lines.

Other highlights include Downs's fluid soloing on his 314ce as he lets loose on the foot-tapping "Severn Sins," the poignantly beautiful "The Birds Are Still Singing," and a few reinvented classic rock concoctions: a version of the Stones' "Paint it Black" coupled with the trad tune "Devil in the Kitchen" (with an inspirational nod to rabble-raising Canadian fiddler Ashley Mclsaac's punked-up rendition); a richly textured rendition of "Layla" that brings all three of Downs's Taylors together with mandolin icing the cake; and the album-closing cover of Aerosmith's "Dream On," which feels both intimate and orchestral.

It's always fun to listen to accomplished musicians with great chemistry and sensitivity to each other. Whalebone honors their influences yet remains hungry to build on them in their own organic way, and the result is a lively and evocative acoustic soundscape that feels richly alive and true.

Whalebone-music.com

## Island Inspiration

A near-death experience has a way of providing a clarifying jolt of life perspective. Singer-songwriter **Justin James (612ce, 412ce, GS Mini, NS24e, T5-S)** was traveling the world as a pro windsurfer, and while out skimming the ocean off the coast of South America with a windsurfing buddy one day, a tiger shark attacked him, severing major arteries in one of his legs and nearly claiming his foot. His friend managed to get him to shore and help save his life, though James required multiple blood transfusions and 250 stitches. The experience left him with a permanent limp but also a renewed appreciation for life.

James had always loved to sing and had performed in cover bands, so during his recuperation he dedicated himself to bolstering his guitar chops and writing songs with a goal of supporting himself as a full-time musician. His perseverance eventually paid off, landing him a record deal, although he later opted out to form his own label. With a few albums, several songwriting award nominations, and song placement on television shows to his credit, he's managed to cultivate a steadily progressing career as an independent artist. His former life as a globetrotting windsurfer proved to be the perfect warmup for being a gigging musician, and he's toured all over the world over the last decade. These days his home base is in the Dominican Republic, where he loves soaking up the Caribbean lifestyle, and that chill, sun-soaked vibe warms his latest studio release, *Islands*. The centerpiece of James's breezy island pop is his melodic, husky-sweet voice, and his wistful yearnings on tunes like "All That's Left (Is Love)," "Mexico," and "Boy Overboard" add extra resonance to the otherwise cloudless mood of his tunes. Producer Andrew Williams (Five For Fighting, Old 97s, Alice Peacock) does a fine job of fleshing out James's natural melodicism and diversifying the flavors of the record, creating a funky R&B feel on "Big Bright Sunny Day," adding horns to groove up "More" and "Saturday Night," and blending light string embellishments into the radio-friendly "Boy Overboard." You won't find much angst on this record – just the smooth sounds of an artist who genuinely appreciates the importance of living life to the fullest.

Justinjamesmusic.com

## Rocking Vegas

Veteran rocker **Paul Shortino** (Rough Cutt, Quiet Riot) e-mailed us from Las Vegas to say his 12-string

*continued on page 26*

www.taylorguitars.com



**Clockwise from top left:** John 5 with his 614ce; members of Lawson, including Andy Brown and his 814ce; Zak Morgan with his 812ce (photo by Michael Wilson); Whalebone's Steve Downs with his 314ce; Justin James and his GS Mini; Paul Shortino and his 655ce



**655e** has been playing and sounding great on stage in "Raiding the Rock Vault," a classic rock concert experience that began a year-long run at the Las Vegas Hotel and Casino back in March. The production chronicles 40 years of rock & roll history through the late 1980s, and features classic rock hits from the likes of The Rolling Stones, The Who, Jimi Hendrix, Led Zeppelin, Queen, Van Halen and plenty more. Written by Grammy-winning record producer David Kershenbaum (Joe Jackson, Tracy Chapman, Supertramp) and musician, producer and vocalist John Payne (Asia), the show's storyline incorporates historical footage and live performances from an all-star band that includes guitarists Howard Leese (Heart, Bad Company) and Tracii Guns (LA Guns, Guns n' Roses), along with an array of vocalists including Payne, Shortino and Robin McAuley (MSG, Survivor). Raidthetockvault.com

## Going Everywhere They Go

Taylor's marketing manager for Europe, Dan Boreham, has been working with guitarist **Andy Brown** from the popular UK act **Lawson**, who says his tobacco sunburst **814ce** has been heavily featured in the band's live set on their current "Everywhere We Go" tour. The band has shared the stage with some big names lately, including Bruce Springsteen, The Script, Mumford and Sons and Kings of Leon. At our press deadline, the band had embarked on their first tour of the U.S., to be followed by a string of dates in the UK in October. Brown says the guitar also has toured Southeast Asia, coming in handy at radio station performances around Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand and the Philippines. It's also been used on the band's recent recordings, including their hit "Brokenhearted."

"It is a fantastic recording guitar," he noted, adding that he wanted to pick up a **GS Mini** for traveling and radio station acoustic sets during their tour. Lawsonofficial.com

## Encore Performance

For singer-songwriter **Josh Doyle** (**814ce**, **GS Mini**), performing at the Glastonbury Festival as a solo artist with a backing band proved to be a full-circle, déjà-vu experience. The former frontman for the UK guitar-pop hitmakers The Dum Dums (who broke up in 2001) not only found himself back at the legendary festival but receiving numerous accolades as well. You may remember Doyle as the winner of the Taylor-sponsored Guitar Center Singer/Songwriter con-

test in 2012. Doyle dazzled the judges, including legendary producer **John Shanks** (Bon Jovi, Van Halen), with his gutty, heartfelt vocals. Since the release of his full-length self-titled debut album with producer Shanks in late 2012, Doyle has been busy ping-ponging from his current home base in Nashville to his native country of England to perform at great events like Glastonbury, Hard Rock Calling and more, all with his trusty **814ce** in hand. *Billboard* magazine recently described Doyle as an artist who "may well be the Next Big Thing on an international level." Joshdoyle.com

## American Played

If you're compiling a road-trip playlist featuring mellow-vibed '70s-era folk-rock, it wouldn't be complete without a honey-harmonied cut from the group **America**. Although bandmates **Gerry Beckley** and **Dewey Bunnell** didn't discover Bob Taylor's handiwork until later in their careers (they bought their first maple Jumbos in 1990), their many Taylors over the years have been staples of their live tours and later recordings. In fact, Beckley and Bunnell can stake an interesting claim in the timeline of Taylor history: Not only were they early adopters of our Grand Auditorium upon its initial release in the mid-'90s, but they spurred the creation of our first 12-string version of it. Beckley reminded us of this during a phone call in July, during a brief break in the band's summer tour.

"When I first requested it, I was kind of told, 'It won't work; it'll be out of balance,'" he recalls, "so I had to approach it from the point of view of, please humor me."

Although the Jumbos (both 6- and 12-string) had served the band well up to that point, the mid-size GA proved to be a better stage guitar for their set-up. And it had to be maple.

"One thing that's pretty well agreed upon is that maple, because it's harder, is brighter, and even with, *particularly* with, the Jumbos, so much of the low end is rolled off," he says. "And I don't mean this disrespectfully, but so much of the full sound of a really fine acoustic is the first thing the sound guy is hacking out of there. It's one of the reasons they cover the holes of stage acoustics. That booming lower mid might be ideal if you're in a coffee shop, just you and your guitar, but the minute you have bass and Wuritzer and Rhodes and a lot of other things that are on that same frequency, it's just really in the way. If you look at any kind of preset acoustic [EQ] curve, right away it hacks away a huge part up to the midrange and boosts the higher-end stuff. So I always

felt that with maple we were already halfway there. Especially when you play with a band and you have bass and drums and other stuff behind you. It's just brighter; it cuts through."

Having toured with his custom **GA 6- and 12-strings** since 1995, Beckley recently decided it was time to retire his workhorses from the road.

"I know there are acts that play more than us, but we've been playing about 100 shows a year for the last 30 years or so, and [our] guitars really get a workout," he says. "Also, as much as I have my own personal collection of guitars, and most guitarists do, we don't mess around with what's on stage; we don't like to throw the sound guy too many curveballs, so these particular instruments *are* the instruments. If you go see someone like Jackson [Browne] or Lindsey Buckingham, even if it's a solo show, they might show up with 20 or 30 guitars, and each one is almost for a different song, but in our case, I play 6 and 12, and acoustic and electric, so before I've even got any spares I'm carrying four guitars."

Another factor that contributed to the roadworn look of Beckley's guitars was having them built without pickguards, partly because he felt like they slightly dampened the tonal output.

"As a result, those two Grand Auditoriums are almost Willie Nelsoned through on the top," he says. "I'm a pretty heavy picker, and I've gone through to almost seeing light through the tops."

Beckley recently ordered a pair of replacement Taylors — a 6-string maple GA (AA flame) with transparent black finish, and a maple 12-string GA with a natural finish. Each is essentially a replica of his original custom guitars, with abalone top trim, star inlays, and Beckley's name inlaid within a scroll at the 15th fret. Although Bunnell's guitars feature the Expression System pickup, Beckley had grown accustomed to the Fishman system that was originally installed, so he also had that added to the new models. The new guitars are making their maiden voyage on tour this year.

"They're new, so they're still a little tight, but I'm happy," he says. "We do a zillion shows a year; I'm sure they'll warm up quickly."

Beckley says the 12-string gets a lot of use during shows.

"I use it on 'Sister Golden Hair,' sometimes on 'Horse With No Name,' 'Sandman,' and 'Don't Cross the River,'" he says. "Twelve-string was always a pretty signature part of our sound, even if it wasn't the main guitar. Even on 'Horse,' the main guitar that Dewey plays is detuned, but within the first few bars you can really hear the 12 come in."

The band's 2013 tour included a



**Above:** Gerry Beckley performs with his black custom maple Grand Auditorium, which he recently retired from the road (photo by Steve Parr); **Below:** Beckley's new 12-string maple GA



week of shows in Italy in September, and was scheduled to continue in the U.S. through the end of November. For dates, visit [Venturahighway.com](http://Venturahighway.com).

## Quick Licks

Denver Broncos wide receiver **Eric Decker** and his wife, pop singer **Jessie James**, were shown playing their Taylor guitars in a preview of the E! Network reality television show *Eric & Jessie: Game On*, which tracks their lives leading up to their recent wedding. James

can be seen playing her **GC5e**, while Decker has a lefty **114ce**... Congratulations to **Phillip Phillips** (**GS7**), whose debut album, *The World from the Side of the Moon*, became a certified platinum seller over the summer...In August the **GS Mini** was named the "Best Budget Acoustic Guitar in the World" by the gear review and artist news website MusicRadar.com...Guitarist **Neil Giraldo** (Pat Benatar) recently purchased an **814ce**...Singer-songwriter **Christopher Cross** added a cedar-top **810c** to his Taylor arsenal.



## Honoring the Life Stories of Wood

Trees reveal their individual character in unique ways with each new guitar

A guitar can be made from materials other than wood. As natural resources such as timber slowly have become stressed by demand over time, talk of alternative materials has grown increasingly common. In the marketplace, players can find instruments made partly or entirely of plastic laminates, carbon fiber, and a host of other reconstituted or man-made materials. So why continue using wood? Simply because it has been used in the past?

The more I learn about woodworking and instruments from preceding generations, the more I marvel at the deep understanding craftsmen had of their materials. I'm amazed, though not surprised, when I learn of present-day scientists quantifying some age-old practice and validating observations made long ago by craftsmen. Builders from the past developed a close relationship with the woods they used. They knew how to work in harmony with the different attributes of woods to accomplish their goals.

So what separates wood from other instrument materials? A person could correctly cite favorable strength and weight numbers, durability or working characteristics, and other properties that enable some woods to make excellent instrument parts. Yet, to me, there

is something even more, although it tends to be more difficult to quantify. Wood embodies the uniqueness of a life lived, and as any living thing, each tree is as individual as a fingerprint. It used to be that I considered a piece of wood strictly for its functional value. It was simply a material to be used. It would have been of some dimensions, big or small, and its surface might have shown telltale marks of the tool which cut it to those dimensions. It was just wood in an elementary form: boards cut from a tree. They might be darker or lighter, harder or softer, but all wood.

Since then, I've learned more about wood and trees. And the more I discover, the more humbled and grateful I become.

In a way, trees are like people. All people are part of a great collective whole we call mankind, just as we might say that all trees are part of a "tree family." There are different "races" of tree based on likeness of kind, often linked geographically where the tree grew or where the species originated. But on a smaller level, each tree is a unique individual, infused with its own personality based on the life it has lived. Circumstance and place certainly play into the life of a particular tree, as do the trees living near it, which influ-

ence its growth just as the people with whom we interact during our lives help shape who we become.

Over the course of a tree's life, beyond the concentric rings that literally mark the passage of each year, there are seasons within larger cycles.



There may be periods of plenty, when conditions are optimal and a tree will make unimpeded growth, gaining size and stature quickly. There may be periods of compromise, when growth is hampered, perhaps by a lack of rain or by illness. Competition for natural resources may come from neighboring trees that each strive to grow and thrive from the same shared pool of necessities, such as sunlight and rain, which can slow the momentum of growth for all.

Some trees will vacillate from one extreme to the other, experiencing periods of aggressive growth followed by periods of near-dormancy. The aging of others will ebb and flow like the tide or a boat slowly changing course in a gently rolling sea. A few will grow quietly and consistently, never experiencing a great abundance or a great deficit, steadily maturing and reaching upward with graceful dignity.

There will be unexpected intrusions: a limb that breaks away in a passing storm; a nail or hook driven in by a person wanting to hang clothes to dry, or perhaps anchor a hammock. Every event and experience will leave its evidence, even if only in some small way. A streak of color, a curve in the grain lines, a scar to be grown over: Each detail is a page of the story.

At a certain time, a tree will fall, and once that occurs, the episodes of its life are made plain: the easy growing of summer, the stout resilience amid winter's cold, the decades of slow, deliberate progress, the sudden windfalls of heavy rain.

For me, at that moment of felling, the tree transitions into wood, gener-

ously allowing itself to be used for the benefit of many. For a select few, a life of music will be in order. Many woods won't be suitable for the needs of fine instruments. Some parts, like a fingerboard, need dense durability to withstand continuous contact, as well as great strength. Others need a perfect mix of strength and softness, allowing sonorous singing to resonate forth. Still others need simple stability; loyalty to their dimensions.

Even of the lumber that is selected, there are the little bits that don't make the cut. I often look at the shavings on my workbench and realize how close they came to being part of a guitar. But in the final pruning, those last slivers of wood just were not in the right place at the right time.

The wood of an instrument strikes me as nothing less than profound. I recognize the balance between the often centuries-long life experienced by these trees and the wood's second life as an instrument capable of singing for an equivalent amount of time. I also deeply appreciate the absolute necessity of many different types and personalities of wood to properly fit together in order for an instrument to live this second life, each part relying on the suitability of the others in order to function. Without the entire community of wood components playing their role, each joined with others in a grand drama, none would be able to on its own.

This collective uniqueness is the personality I see and hear in a guitar as I build and play. If ten instruments of the same design and species of woods are arranged in a row, no two will be exactly alike. They can all be wonderful instruments, but they will certainly present ten different stories. For this, I could not be more pleased.

With this consideration of trees, their life, and their transformation, I am reminded of an old Latin proverb whose translation declares, "In life I am silent; in death I sing."

This fall, we're especially pleased to offer our latest collection of limited edition guitars. These models feature fantastic tonewoods, crafted with elegantly modest trimmings to be enjoyed by many. There is also a display of the genuinely rare. When a single tree, such as the figured Honduras mahogany specimen we've transformed into an exquisite offering, reveals such an extravagant and colorful life story, it becomes an extra special event to witness and savor as a guitar maker — and as a player.

## SUSTAINABILITY

# Perseverance and Progress

Despite the challenges of Cameroon's rainy season, Crelicam has been laying the groundwork for expansion

By Anne Middleton

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

Taylor's investment in Cameroon is slowly becoming more visible to the untrained eye. In the most remote villages of Cameroon, people can now be seen sporting Taylor Guitars T-shirts and reading about guitar manufacturing in faraway places like California.

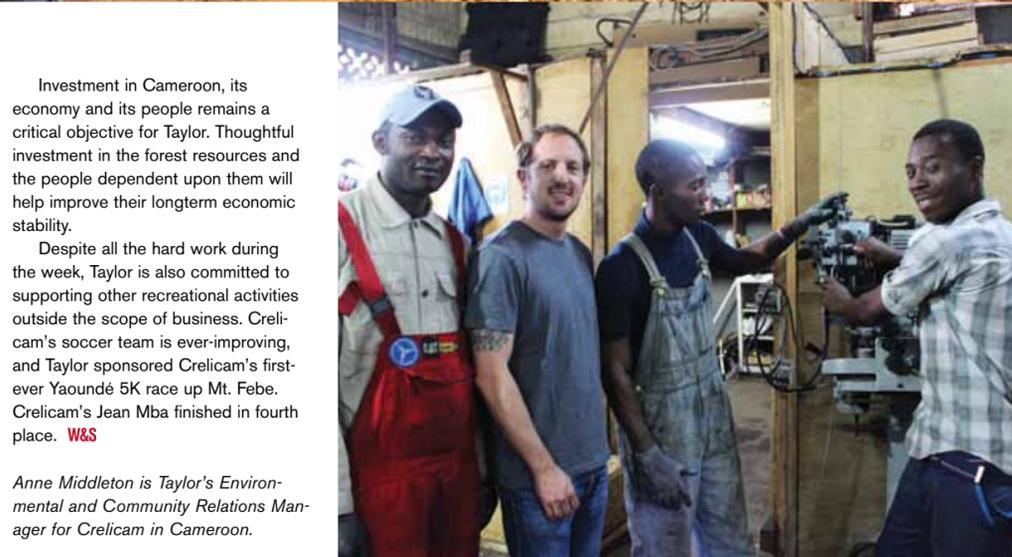
As part of Taylor's ongoing investment within the communities that provide us with ebony, Crelicam's wood buyers have been getting dirty – literally. As we first noted in last issue's update, out in the bush, a small but well-trained group of suppliers is now equipped to seal and store the raw material in order to maximize wood yield in the factory. Once cut into billets, the wood can be protected from the sun's harmful rays to ensure the structural integrity of the wood. The suppliers also have been outfitted with GPS units in order to mark the location of the ebony trees that are felled. This allows us to better track the complete chain of custody.

One factor that can complicate the harvesting and transporting of the wood from the forest is Cameroon's rainy season, which typically runs from April through November. In fact, our procure-

ment teams often emerge having spent more time in the mud than walking through it! Everything, and everyone, arrives covered in mud. But Cameroonians are known for their perseverance and strength, and those important qualities have helped build Crelicam into the operation it is today. Two-hour hikes to reach trees turn into four- or five-hour treks through the dense forest during the rainy season. Trucks get stuck, and shipments can be delayed. Yet the wood always makes it to the factory.

In addition to spending more time in the bush, employees have been busy at the factory, too, as visitors from our Tecate, Mexico, and El Cajon, California, production complexes recently made another trip to Yaoundé to help Crelicam prepare for its biggest endeavor so far: expansion. A new generator and air compressor were purchased, and a new sharpening room was built. Plans for a new warehouse and receiving area have been drafted, and within the next few months, employees will eat in a brand-new kitchen. This expansion has been made possible by a new member of the Taylor/Crelicam team: Matthew Slaughter. Matt hails from San Diego and brings his construction expertise to our team here. In order for Crelicam to move forward with its plans to dry and plane wood in Cameroon, a new facility is needed.

"By investing in more equipment and buildings in Cameroon, we can use more of the tree," says Charlie Redden, Crelicam's General Manager. "Improving our yield and sustainability allows us to keep more value from the finished product here in Cameroon."



**Top down:** A truck containing ebony navigates a muddy road; L-R: Marcelin Kono, Charlie Redden, Samson Olo'o and Marcel Geoges Emini with the mill's new blade sharpener; New addition Matt Slaughter (standing, center) with the team in the new sharpening room

Investment in Cameroon, its economy and its people remains a critical objective for Taylor. Thoughtful investment in the forest resources and the people dependent upon them will help improve their longterm economic stability.

Despite all the hard work during the week, Taylor is also committed to supporting other recreational activities outside the scope of business. Crelicam's soccer team is ever-improving, and Taylor sponsored Crelicam's first-ever Yaoundé 5K race up Mt. Febe. Crelicam's Jean Mba finished in fourth place. **W&S**

Anne Middleton is Taylor's Environmental and Community Relations Manager for Crelicam in Cameroon.

## Events

### US Open of Surfing Huntington Beach, CA July 20-28

Given Taylor's Southern California home base, surfing has always been comfortably enmeshed with our history and culture. In the earliest days of the company, some of our crew enjoyed a flexible "surf clause" in their work schedules, enabling them to surf in the early mornings as long as they got their work done. While things are a bit different these days, the surfing lifestyle still influences our work. Case in point: Andy Powers drawing inspiration for the design of the new Grand Orchestra from his favorite surf break.

With this in mind, it was a no-brainer to fill up the company Yukon with a cool mix of guitars and drive the 105 miles from El Cajon to Surf City USA – Huntington Beach – for the US Open of Surfing in July.

Setting up a booth directly on the sand provided us with an incredible oceanfront view. To navigate one of the most amazing beaches in Southern California, our staff worked in bare feet, as the depth of the sand presented its own unique set of challenges – especially in keeping our display tables level. Once the booth was set up, the shady canopy and constant ocean breeze kept it cool, the overcast sky predictably burned off by early afternoon, and the surf was mostly cooperative for contestants.

Our location was along the main corridor of exhibition booths, and our neighbors on both sides were local skateboard and surfboard companies. With 500,000 in attendance, the Open appeals to a cross-section of fans of surf, BMX and skate cultures. Thanks to a huge amount of crossover interest between fans of extreme sports and fans of guitars and music, there was never a shortage of players wanting to strum in the sand. This was our first year as an exhibitor, and it was a pleasant surprise for many attendees to discover our booth. "Taylor?! Wow, what are you doing here?" was a common refrain.

Among the mix of beautiful guitars on display, a strong-voiced mahogany 12-Fret was a favorite, as was a breathtaking K24ce. More than one person remarked that the deeply figured koa produced a 3D visual effect that reminded them of ripples of surf that lay tantalizingly close.



### Summer NAMM Nashville, TN July 11-13

There was a fresh buzz – and new convention hall smell – in the air as the Summer NAMM Show moved into its brand-new digs at Nashville's Music City Center, from July 11-13. The state-of-the-art facility offers expanded exhibition space, which came in handy as this year's event saw a 25 percent increase in exhibiting square footage and a 12 percent boost in brands represented, according to organization officials. As in years past, Taylor's showcase room was removed from the main exhibition hall floor, enabling guests to savor the tonal nuances of different Taylor models. This year's lineup boasted an early preview of our Fall Limiteds for dealers, showcased our new all-mahogany 500 Series and mahogany-top 300s, and assembled all of the Grand Orchestra models that have been introduced this year, including our rosewood/Sitka spruce 718e and 818e.

After the show, Taylor's Tim Godwin (Artist Relations) and luthier Andy Powers lingered in Nashville for a couple of days to catch up with some local players and other industry friends. Andy was armed with a cool guitar prototype – a Brazilian rosewood Dreadnought featuring revoiced bracing and additional tone-enhancing features – and enjoyed handing it out

for a test-drive. The folks at Nashville's Soundcheck rehearsal studios were suitably impressed, as were guitarist and Keith Urban sideman Danny Rader and all-star repair technician Joe Glaser. The guitar even scored a thumbs-up from flatpicking legend Norman Blake, who happened to be at Gruhn Guitars when Andy and Tim stopped in to show George Gruhn and his staff, and Blake had a chance to sample it.



**Top down:** Strumming on the sand in Huntington Beach; L-R: Flatpicking great Norman Blake and Andy Powers at Gruhn Guitars in Nashville; The Taylor showcase room at the Summer NAMM Show in Nashville

# Calendar

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

A new season of Taylor Road Shows and Find Your Fit events is already underway, with more than 150 scheduled across North America and Europe this fall. Our friendly guitar experts look forward to sharing Taylor's latest developments, including the new Grand Orchestra, plus a fresh array of beautiful custom guitars. Bring your friends, bring your questions, and bring a pick to sample some guitars!



## North America Road Shows

### Fort McMurray, AB

Sunday, October 6, 2 p.m.  
Campbell's Music  
(780) 743-8614

### Huntsville, AL

Wednesday, October 9, 7 p.m.  
The Fret Shop  
(256) 430-4729

### Waverly, AL

Wednesday, November 13, 7 p.m.  
Spicer's Music  
(334) 329-7529

### Phoenix, AZ

Monday, October 7, 6 p.m.  
Bizarre Guitars  
(602) 248-9297

### Flagstaff, AZ

Tuesday, October 8, 7 p.m.  
Arizona Music Pro  
(928) 556-9054

### Los Angeles, CA

Monday, October 7, 7 p.m.  
Sam Ash Music  
(323) 850-1050

### Cerritos, CA

Tuesday, October 8, 7 p.m.  
Sam Ash Music  
(562) 468-1107

### Ontario, CA

Thursday, October 10, 7 p.m.  
Sam Ash Music  
(909) 484-3550

### Santa Monica, CA

Monday, October 28, 7 p.m.  
McCabe's Guitar Shop  
(310) 828-4497

### Santa Barbara, CA

Tuesday, October 29, 7 p.m.  
Santa Barbara Guitar Bar  
(805) 770-7242

### Grand Junction, CO

Wednesday, October 9, 7 p.m.  
Back Porch Music  
(970) 243-9711

### Longmont, CO

Thursday, October 10, 7 p.m.  
Guitars Etc.  
(303) 776-8388

### Westminster, CO

Friday, October 11, 7 p.m.  
Musician's Superstore  
(303) 412-9060

### Fort Walton Beach, FL

Monday, November 11, 7 p.m.  
Playground Music  
(850) 243-2514

### Tallahassee, FL

Tuesday, November 12, 6 p.m.  
Music Masters  
(850) 224-6158

### Pensacola, FL

Thursday, November 14, 7 p.m.  
Blues Angel Music  
(850) 457-7557

### Statesboro, GA

Monday, October 7, 7 p.m.  
DeLoach's Music  
(912) 764-2527

### Buford, GA

Tuesday, October 8, 7 p.m.  
Jackson's Music  
(770) 904-2535

### Makawao, HI

Sunday, November 10, 2 p.m.  
Bounty Music  
(808) 871-1141

### Hilo, HI

Wednesday, November 13, 7 p.m.  
Hilo Guitars  
(808) 935-4282

### Honolulu, HI

Thursday, November 14, 7 p.m.  
Island Guitars  
(808) 591-2110

### Champaign, IL

Thursday, October 24, 7 p.m.  
CV Lloydde  
(217) 352-7031

### Downers Grove, IL

Friday, October 25, 7 p.m.  
Tobias Music  
(630) 962-2455

### Fishers, IN

Tuesday, October 22, 7 p.m.  
Reno's Music  
(317) 849-5744

### Avon, IN

Wednesday, October 23, 7 p.m.  
IRC Music  
(317) 849-7965

### Monroe, LA

Monday, October 28, 6:30 p.m.  
Matt's Music  
(318) 387-3628

### Alexandria, LA

Monday, October 31, 7 p.m.  
Red River Music  
(318) 443-6365

### Worcester, MA

Thursday, October 24, 7 p.m.  
Union Music  
(508) 753-3702

### Winnipeg, MB

Thursday, October 10, 7 p.m.  
Quest Musique  
(204) 233-4151

### Frederick, MD

Wednesday, October 23, 7 p.m.  
Make N Music  
(301) 662-8822

### Fraser, MI

Monday, November 18, 7 p.m.  
Huber Breese Music  
(586) 294-3950

### Lansing, MI

Tuesday, November 19, 6 p.m.  
Elderly Instruments  
1-888-473-5810

### Grand Rapids, MI

Wednesday, November 20, 7:30 p.m.  
Rainbow Music  
(616) 774-0565

### Traverse City, MI

Thursday, November 21, 7 p.m.  
Marshall Music  
(231) 922-9503

### Meridian, MS

Tuesday, October 29, 6:30 p.m.  
Mississippi Music - Meridian  
(601) 693-6317

### Hattiesburg, MS

Tuesday, October 30, 6:30 p.m.  
C&M Music - Hattiesburg  
(601) 545-2565

### Asheville, NC

Tuesday, October 22, 7 p.m.  
Musician's Workshop  
(828) 252-1249

### Las Vegas, NV

Friday, October 11, 7 p.m.  
Sam Ash Music  
(702) 734-0007

### Horseheads, NY

Monday, October 21, 7 p.m.  
Robert M Sides  
(607) 739-1559

### Watertown, NY

Monday, October 21, 6:30 p.m.  
Dr. Guitar  
(315) 782-3604

### Clifton Park, NY

Wednesday, October 23, 6:30 p.m.  
Parkway Music  
(518) 383-0300

### Heath, OH

Wednesday, November 13, 7 p.m.  
Guitar Guys  
(740) 522-0277

### Cincinnati, OH

Thursday, November 14, 7 p.m.  
Buddy Rogers Music  
(513) 232-0777

### Keizer, OR

Monday, October 28, 7 p.m.  
Uptown Music  
(503) 393-4437

### Portland, OR

Tuesday, October 29, 7 p.m.  
Portland Music Company  
(503) 226-3719

### Clackamas, OR

Wednesday, November 13, 6:30 p.m.  
Guitar Center - Clackamas  
(503) 654-0100

### Keizer, OR

Thursday, November 14, 6:30 p.m.  
Guitar Center - Salem  
(503) 304-0923

### Carlisle, PA

Tuesday, October 22, 7 p.m.  
JW Music  
(717) 258-6765

### Pittsburgh, PA

Thursday, October 24, 7 p.m.  
Empire Music  
(412) 343-5299

### Spartanburg, SC

Wednesday, October 23, 7 p.m.  
Roper Music  
(864) 542-2263

### Myrtle Beach, SC

Tuesday, October 24, 6 p.m.  
Andy Owings Music Center  
(843) 448-1508

### Saskatoon, SK

Tuesday, October 8, 7 p.m.  
Long & McQuade  
(306) 664-1966

### Regina, SK

Wednesday, October 9, 7 p.m.  
Long & McQuade  
(306) 569-8501

### Nashville, TN

Thursday, October 10, 6 p.m.  
Gruhn Guitars  
(615) 256-2033

### Sevierville, TN

Monday, October 21, 7 p.m.  
Music Outlet  
(865) 453-1031

### Waco, TX

Monday, October 21, 6:30 p.m.  
Guitar Center - Mesquite  
(254) 751-1312

### Farmers Branch, TX

Tuesday, October 22, 6:30 p.m.  
Guitar Center - North Dallas  
(972) 960-0011

### Austin, TX

Wednesday, October 23, 6:30 p.m.  
Guitar Center - Austin  
(512) 419-1717

### Houston, TX

Thursday, October 24, 6:30 p.m.  
Guitar Center - Houston  
(713) 952-9070

### Corpus Christi, TX

Monday, November 18, 6:30 p.m.  
Sound Vibrations  
(361) 884-8981

### San Antonio, TX

Tuesday, November 19, 6:30 p.m.  
Alamo Music Center  
(210) 224-1010

### Boerne, TX

Wednesday, November 20, 6 p.m.  
Hearts' Home Acoustics  
(830) 331-9840

### Austin, TX

Thursday, November 21, 7 p.m.  
Strait Music  
(512) 476-6927

### Sterling, VA

Monday, November 11, 7 p.m.  
Melodee Music  
(703) 450-4667

### Burlington, VT

Tuesday, October 22, 6:30 p.m.  
Advance Music Center  
(802) 863-8652

### Olympia, WA

Wednesday, October 30, 7 p.m.  
Music 6000  
(360) 786-6000

### Seattle, WA

Friday, November 1, 7 p.m.  
Dusty Strings  
(206) 634-1662

### Bellingham, WA

Monday, November 11, 6:30 p.m.  
Guitar Center - Bellingham  
(360) 733-3088

### Kirkland, WA

Tuesday, November 12, 6:30 p.m.  
Guitar Center - Kirkland  
(425) 814-9640

### Neenah, WI

Tuesday, October 8, 7 p.m.  
Island Music  
(920) 725-9000

### Wausau, WI

Wednesday, October 9, 7 p.m.  
Jerry's Music  
(715) 842-3272

### Madison, WI

Thursday, October 10, 7 p.m.  
Madison Music  
(608) 257-5877

### Barboursville, WV

Tuesday, November 12, 7 p.m.  
Route 60 Music  
(304) 736-7466



## North America FYF Sales Events

### Tucson, AZ

Saturday, October 5, 10:30 a.m. - 5 p.m.  
Rainbow Guitars  
(520) 325-3376

### Santa Barbara, CA

Wednesday, October 30, 12 p.m. - 6 p.m.  
Santa Barbara Guitar Bar  
(805) 770-7241

### Pasadena, CA

Friday, November 1, 12 p.m. - 6 p.m.  
Red Zone Guitar Works  
(626) 325-8210

### Denver, CO

Saturday, October 12, 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.  
Denver Folklore Center  
(303) 777-4786

### West Palm Beach, FL

Monday, October 7, 3 p.m. - 7 p.m.  
George's Music  
(561) 242-0345

### Orlando, FL

Tuesday, October 8, 3 p.m. - 7 p.m.  
George's Music  
(407) 352-8000

### Orange Park, FL

Wednesday, October 9, 3 p.m. - 7 p.m.  
George's Music  
(904) 777-9393

### Jacksonville Beach, FL

Thursday, October 10, 3 p.m. - 7 p.m.  
George's Music  
(904) 270-2220

### Bogart, GA

Saturday, October 19, 12 p.m. - 6 p.m.  
Musician's Warehouse  
(706) 548-7233

### Kalaheo, HI

Tuesday, November 12, 3 p.m. - 7 p.m.  
Scotty's Music  
(808) 332-0090

### Honolulu, HI

Friday, November 15, 12 p.m. - 6 p.m.  
Island Guitars  
(808) 591-2910

### Alpharetta, GA

Saturday, October 5, 10 a.m. - 6 p.m.  
Ken Stanton Music  
(770) 670-4424

### Boise, ID

Tuesday, November 12, 11 a.m. - 6 p.m.  
Dorsey Music  
(208) 853-4141

### Idaho Falls, ID

Wednesday, November 13, 10 a.m. - 6 p.m.  
Chesbro Music  
(208) 522-8691

### Downers Grove, IL

Saturday, October 26, 10 a.m. - 6 p.m.  
Tobias Music  
(630) 962-2456

### Dover, NH

Friday, October 25, 1 p.m. - 7 p.m.  
Ear Craft Music  
(603) 749-3138

### Rockaway, NJ

Saturday, October 19, 11 a.m. - 5 p.m.  
Ritchie's Music Center  
(973) 625-2500

### Cincinnati, OH

Saturday, November 16, 11 a.m. - 4 p.m.  
Buddy Rogers Music  
(513) 232-0777

### Eugene, OR

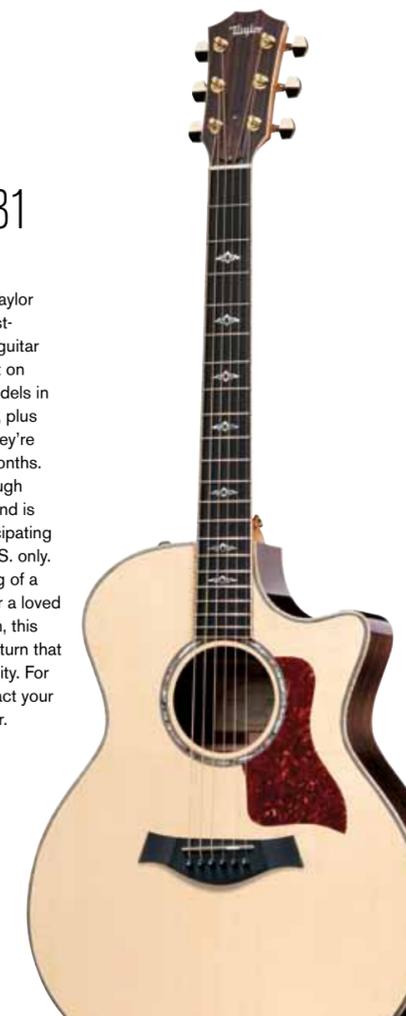
Saturday, October 26, 11 a.m. - 5 p.m.  
McKenzie River Music  
(541) 343-9482

### Portland, OR

Saturday, November 2, 10:30 a.m. - 6 p.m.  
Portland Music Company  
(503) 228-8438

18-Month,  
No-Interest  
Financing  
Through  
December 31

We're thrilled to offer Taylor customers our sweetest-ever financing deal on guitar purchases: 0% interest on purchases of Taylor models in our 300 Series and up, plus all electric models, if they're paid in full within 18 months. The program runs through December 31, 2013, and is available through participating Taylor dealers in the U.S. only. Whether you're thinking of a Taylor for yourself or for a loved one this holiday season, this deal makes it easier to turn that dream guitar into a reality. For complete details, contact your authorized Taylor dealer.



# TaylorWare®

CLOTHING / GEAR / PARTS / GIFTS



*Matt and Angela apply expert finishing touches to our guitars in Final Assembly. Matt, who works the night shift, rocks our two-toned Color Block Zip Hoodie, while Angela, a day shift employee, shows off our ornate Presentation Series inlay on the Ladies' Long Sleeve Nouveau T.*

*Ernesto, an 18-year Taylor veteran and one of our expert repair technicians, was playfully nicknamed "Cobra" by his peers for his agility in attacking any repairs in his vicinity. He wears our softly weathered Inlay Logo T.*



**Icon T**  
Fashion fit - a slimmer silhouette than the standard fit T. 100% combed cotton. Medium weight. (Navy #1423; M-XL, \$22.00; XXL, \$24.00)

**Logo T**  
Standard fit - traditional fit, heavyweight T. Short sleeve. 100% preshrunk cotton. (Tan #1750; S-XL, \$20.00; XXL-XXXL, \$22.00)

**Taylor Men's Fleece Jacket**  
Features cuffs with thumbholes, front pockets, and a media pocket with an interior hole for headphones. Charcoal with plush black lining. (#2891; S-XL, \$65.00; XXL, \$67.00)

**NEW Inlay Logo T**  
Authentic pigment dyeing process creates a naturally weathered look. 100% preshrunk cotton. Short sleeve. Generously cut. (Smoke #1432; S-XL, \$25.00; XXL, \$27.00)

*Opposite Page*  
**NEW Color Block Zip Hoodie**  
Soft, comfy eco-friendly fleece featuring contrasting hood and sleeves, with drawstring ties and kangaroo front pockets. Taylor logo/banner design on left chest; "74" design on right sleeve. Slim fit. (Gray/Red #2815; S-XL, \$44.00; XXL, \$46.00)

**NEW Ladies' Long Sleeve Nouveau T**  
100% combed cotton. Presentation Series inlay motif on front; small inlay element on back below neck. Slim fit. (Asphalt #4610; S-XL, \$30.00)





# Wood&Steel

A Publication of Taylor Guitars

Volume 77 / Fall 2013

Taylor Guitars | 1980 Gillespie Way | El Cajon, CA 92020-1096 | taylorguitars.com

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*The paper we used is certified to Forest Stewardship Council® standards. The FSC is a non-profit organization that supports environmentally friendly, socially responsible and economically viable management of the world's forests.*

## Walnut Wedding

Grafted walnut's unique visual character embodies a fusion of two different walnut species — black and English — resulting in a tree with a disease-resistant root system and flavorful nuts. That marriage is dramatically showcased on the back of this Build to Order Grand Orchestra, in the form of a visible graft line where the guitar's upper bout tapers into the waist. A figured maple mini wedge and binding frame the bookmatched symmetry of the back. The walnut has been paired with an Adirondack spruce top featuring Adirondack spruce bracing, promising to produce a rich acoustic voice with tremendous sonic horsepower, warm overtones, and a broad frequency range.

