

Wood & Stool

IRON & WINE'S

SAM
BEAM

FALL LIMITED
EDITIONS

Walnut & Torrefied Spruce
Koa 12-Fret Grand Auditorium
Cocobolo 914ce
8-String Baritone

New Models:
12-String 352ce & 362ce

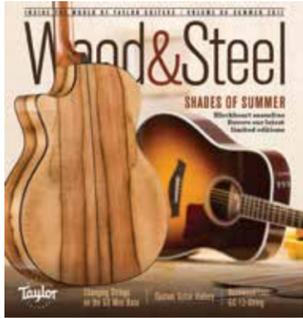
Bob Taylor's
World Forestry Tour

QUALITY
Taylor
GUITARS

Letters

Drop us a line.

Email us: pr@taylorguitars.com



I was skeptical because of that immature aversion that I had to the name on the headstock. Nevertheless, I walked over and decided to play it. I could not believe it. It was everything I wanted in a guitar — sound, feel and look. I walked out with that guitar that day and have not doubted my decision since purchasing it. In all my years of playing, I have not played a guitar as amazing as this Taylor. I am proud to be an owner of a Taylor guitar, and I am especially happy to inform you that a new “Gold Standard” has been set for acoustic guitars. Thank you for what you do.

Hunter McGuary

Good as Gold

I recently purchased a new Taylor guitar. Throughout the many years I have been playing, I have had some unwarranted aversion to Taylor Guitars. There was no reason for it — just immature speculation.

My grandfather has a dreadnought that he purchased back in the '60s or '70s, and whenever we would pick together, he would let me play that guitar. He still has that guitar, and I have always considered it to be the “Gold Standard” that all acoustic guitars should be.

Several months ago, I had my own acoustic stolen from me. It wasn't nearly as nice as my grandfather's dreadnought or my new acoustic guitar, but it was sentimental to me because it was passed down to me from a family member. Until recently, I had never purchased an acoustic guitar; I have always received them as family heirlooms. I am a regularly gigging, professional musician, so another acoustic was a necessity. I searched for months, playing countless guitars, but never found anything that truly spoke to me, and it didn't help that I was comparing each to the “Gold Standard.” It was almost unfair to the other guitars.

One day, I went into a store to buy another maker's acoustic guitar, but I still felt like I was settling for a guitar instead of getting what I truly wanted. I hated that feeling because music is my livelihood, and I want to make sure I have the best tools for the job. Before purchasing the other guitar, I saw a beautiful guitar hanging on the wall — it was a Taylor 214ce DLX. It looked like the guitar of my dreams, but

be beneficial with a little humidification. Would this 114ce sound as good as the Taylor 114e from the wall hanger? Better! Sold!

After many comments of how beautiful it looks, it now sits in a respected place in our living room for all to see. I can only say thank you, Taylor, for a beautiful instrument from builders that gave it TLC. I cannot know who built the guitar I hold, and yet I wish them all the credit and appreciation they deserve. Also, thanks to Bob Taylor and Kurt Listug for having kept their dream alive. I know other owners will feel the same way.

**Gary Hart
Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada**

Doc Approved

I love guitars that project sound because I'm a fingerstyle player, so I like the maple 600 Series and the satin-wood body of my Jewel signature model. [The Jewel model] is the best-sounding guitar I've ever played in 51 years, and I've owned or played many. I bought the first one in 2000 when they were first introduced and have owned three. I was at a bluegrass event in Maine and met Doc Watson, who signed it and played it for a half an hour behind the stage that day and said, “That's a fine box you have, son.” Thank you for making my acoustic guitar world what it is today.

**Bryan Provost
Skowhegan, ME**

Taylor Pedigree

I have owned my Taylor 410 for about 18 years now. It is without a doubt the best acoustic guitar I have ever owned. It's beat up and worn, it's been through bars and churches, it's seen me through some great and difficult times, and it has never let me down. It's been there to put to music the thoughts and feelings I have no words for.

When my wife and I were expecting our first child back in August of 2000, we were looking at names. “Katherine” was in the running for quite some time. Then one night while playing my Taylor in our living room I said, “What about ‘Taylor’?” On August 20, 2000, Taylor Olivia Reynolds was welcomed into the world.

She is now also a big fan of Taylor Guitars. We recently went to a Taylor Road Show, and she fell in love with the 714. So she has a goal in mind. Of course, one day I plan on passing down the 410 to her. It is without a doubt my most prized and cherished acoustic.

Randy Reynolds

The Toneshifting T5z

I got [the T5z Custom Pro] a couple years ago and only recently did I learn about its amazing capabilities. As an avid Taylor owner of an 812[ce] 12-Fret DLX, 562ce, and a 2014 Fall LTD GS Mini Koa, this is the one Taylor I had not really explored enough. While acoustics are pretty straightforward with their voices, this beast has the ability to be omnipresent in many contexts. It took a number of YouTube videos to finally understand how to dial it in. After getting more acquainted with its capabilities and how to select pickups better, I went to my band practice last night with this one guitar, versus taking my Tele, Strat or Les Paul. With this new knowledge, my bandmates, for the first time EVER, heaped praise on my playing (which is normally average). I think the T5z Custom Pro had a lot to do with it — sounding like an acoustic Taylor, a thinner Strat-like tone, or even a thicker Les Paul sound. A big virtual high-five on this design!

JP (Pierre) Moatti

El Cajon Connection

In 1975 I was 19 and had been playing guitar for 10 years. I had a cheap acoustic guitar and was ready to make the leap up to a quality instrument. While visiting a friend in San Diego, I thumbed through the Yellow Pages and discovered a music store in a strip mall in El Cajon that sold acoustic guitars. On a chilly December day I walked in and found a nice Guild D-50 in almost new condition. My parents wired me \$500, and I bought it the next day. Over the past 41 years I played every kind of music on that guitar, from bluegrass to rock to reggae. The wear-and-tear on it was considerable, though, so I recently decided to trade it in for something new. At Sam Ash in New York City I found a great, reasonably priced, brand-new Taylor 12-string that captured my heart...

and ear. I swapped the Guild for the Taylor and I have been quite happy with it. A few weeks later I decided to buy a second Taylor, and picked up a beautiful new 814ce at Rudy's in New York City, which I am delighted with. [It's been] a long, strange trip that started and ended — at least guitar-wise — in El Cajon.

**Andy Karp
Croton-on-Hudson, NY**

social circles

Join the Taylor community

Facebook: @taylorguitars

Instagram: @taylorguitars

Twitter: @taylorguitars

Youtube: taylorguitars

Google+: taylorguitars

Music Aficionado: taylorguitars



On the Cover

12 The Wood&Steel Interview: Sam Beam

Envelope-pushing acoustic auteur Sam Beam of Iron & Wine reveals how his ever-evolving creative process shaped his latest release, *Beast Epic*.

COVER PHOTO (JOSH WOOL): SAM BEAM WITH HIS 714CE



Features

6 The Art of Acoustic Interplay

Learning to blend different guitar voices and playing styles in a complementary way will make your jam sessions more rewarding.

8 Model Spotlight: The New 352ce/362ce

Two new Grand Concert 12-string voices join our 300 Series. Choose from sapele and spruce or blackwood and mahogany.

16 Fall Limited Editions

This year's fall collection is loaded with appetizing musical flavors: walnut paired with torrefied spruce, koa Grand Auditorium 12-frets, the return of cocobolo, a bold 8-string baritone, plus a tricolor twist on our T5z Classic Deluxe.



22 Backstage Pass: Daria Musk

The social media-savvy singer-songwriter and “artistpreneur” is redefining how artists engage with audiences online.

26 Forestry for the Future

Bob Taylor returned from his recent World Forestry Tour more inspired than ever to pursue innovative forest restoration projects.

Columns

4 Kurt's Corner

Taylor Guitars might not exist without the nurturing guidance and support of Kurt and Bob's parents.

5 BobSpeak

Lessons learned from Bob and Kurt's dads, and props for Taylor tooling guru Wayne Brinkley.

33 The Craft

An appreciation for Bill Collings and the art of fresh interpretation.

Departments

10 Ask Bob

Braceless backs, the future of spruce, acoustic curves, and factory-made vs. handmade.

30 Soundings

Remembering folk troubadour Jimmy LaFave, a portrait of Pat Simmons, the Vancouver International Guitar Festival, notes from Summer NAMM, and more.

32 Calendar

Fall Road Show listings.

34 Seasonal Tips

A humidification refresher, plus two new products that help humidify the entire guitar.

35 TaylorWare

Taylor apparel, guitar accessories and more.



KURT'S CORNER

Layers of Learning

We're all influenced by other people, but perhaps none more so than our parents. While we each become unique individuals, our parents play an important role in shaping our character, teaching us morals and ethics, and showing us how to relate to other people. Ideally they also recognize our talents and interests, and help us develop them to become the people we want to be. My father, George Listug, passed away recently, and Bob's father, Dick Taylor, passed away earlier in the year. We wouldn't be the people we are, and Taylor Guitars wouldn't exist, without their influence and help.

When I wanted to start a guitar company at age 21, it was my dad who pointed out that I would need a partner who was a good guitar maker. He not only did the books for us in our early years, he taught me accounting. He and my mom helped me financially several times, to start the business and then to get through difficult times in the early years. He was only too happy to help, and was always incredibly proud of the business that Bob and I built.

Bob's dad taught him how to make things, and how to be incredibly resourceful. I remember the story of how Dick showed Bob how to build a patio entirely out of scrap wood others had discarded. When Bob decided to build his first guitar in high school, it was a natural progression for him, building upon the skills and encouragement he'd

When I wanted to start a guitar company at age 21, my dad pointed out that I would need a partner who was a good guitar maker.

gotten from his dad. Bob is the most pragmatic person I've ever known, and I've often wondered if he got that from his dad.

Now both George and Dick are gone, and we're both incredibly grateful to have had such wonderful, supportive fathers.

When Bob and I started, we knew a little bit about making guitars, and not much else. But we had a goal, a dream, to build a guitar company. So we took a step forward, then we took the next step, and so on. With each step, we learned. It's impossible to know in advance everything you don't know...that just doesn't work. There are no shortcuts, and you can't skip steps. You need courage to take each next step, because to a degree you're heading into the unknown, and you're creating your future. It's a path of continual learning, and you're building layers upon layers upon layers. And

at some point when you look back, hopefully you're amazed by what you've learned and all the progress you've made forging the future.

After 43 years of learning, Taylor has reached an exciting launching point for new guitar development, new production methodology, new business opportunities, and new growth potential. We look forward to sharing some of what we've learned in our next issue of *Wood&Steel*.

— Kurt Listug, CEO

Wood&Steel

Volume 89
Fall 2017



Produced by the Taylor Guitars Marketing Department

Publisher Taylor-Listug, Inc.
Vice President Tim O'Brien
Editorial Director Jim Kirlin
Art Director Cory Sheehan
Photo Manager / Designer Rita Funk-Hoffman
Photographer Tim Whitehouse

Contributors
Jonah Bayer / Colin Griffith / Kurt Listug / Shawn Persinger
Andy Powers / Bob Taylor / Glen Wolff

Technical Advisors
Ed Granero / Gerry Kowalski / Crystal Lawrence / Andy Lund
Rob Magargal / Monte Montefusco / Andy Powers / Bob Taylor
Chris Wellons / Glen Wolff

Printing / Distribution
Courier Graphics / CEREUS (Phoenix, AZ)

Translation
Lingua Translations (Swansea, Wales, UK)

Wood&Steel is distributed to registered Taylor guitar owners and Authorized Taylor Dealers as a complimentary service.

Manage Your Subscription

Subscribe
To receive a subscription, please register your Taylor guitar at taylorguitars.com/registration.

Unsubscribe
To unsubscribe from *Wood&Steel*, please email support@taylorguitars.com. Please include your name and mailing address as they appear on this issue, plus the subscription number located directly above your name.

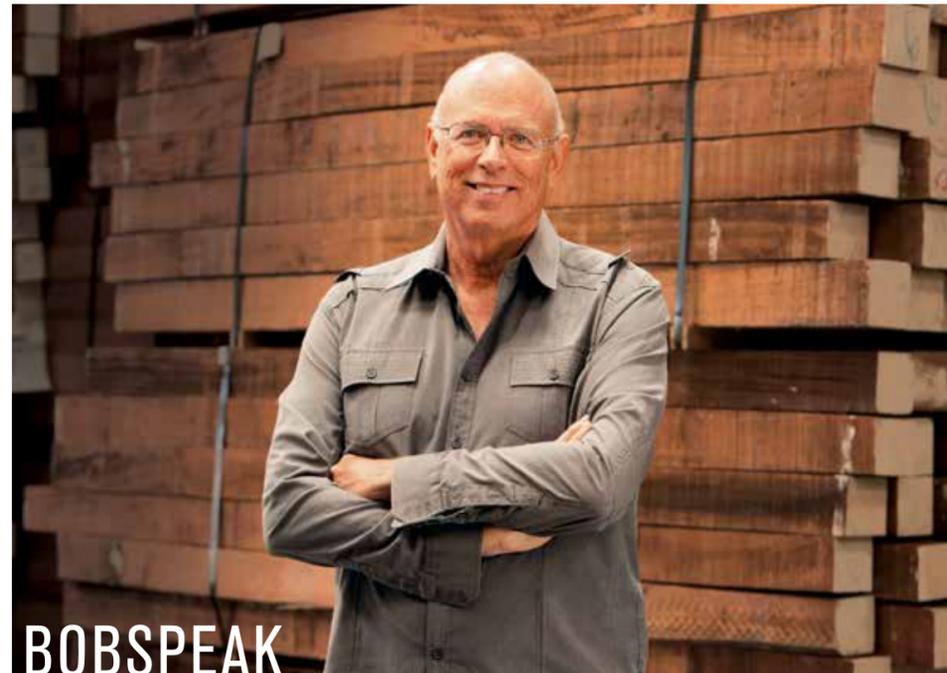
Change of address
To change your mailing address, please visit taylorguitars.com/contact

Online
Read this and other back issues of *Wood&Steel* at taylorguitars.com/wood-and-steel

©2017 Taylor-Listug, Inc. All Rights reserved. TAYLOR, TAYLOR (Stylized); TAYLOR GUITARS, TAYLOR QUALITY GUITARS and Design ; BABY TAYLOR; BIG BABY; Peghead Design; Bridge Design; Pickguard Design; 100 SERIES; 200 SERIES; 300 SERIES; 400 SERIES; 500 SERIES; 600 SERIES; 700 SERIES; 800 SERIES; 900 SERIES; PRESENTATION SERIES; GALLERY; QUALITY TAYLOR GUITARS, GUITARS AND CASES and Design; WOOD&STEEL; ROBERT TAYLOR (Stylized); TAYLOR EXPRESSION SYSTEM; EXPRESSION SYSTEM; TAYLORWARE; TAYLOR GUITARS K4; K4, TAYLOR K4; TAYLOR ES; DYNAMIC BODY SENSOR; T5; T5 (Stylized); BALANCED BREAKOUT; R. TAYLOR; R. TAYLOR (Stylized); AMERICAN DREAM; TAYLOR SOLIDBODY; T3; GRAND SYMPHONY; WAVE COMPENSATED; GS; GS MINI; ES-GO; V-CABLE; FIND YOUR FIT; and GA are registered trademarks of Taylor-Listug, Inc. NYLON SERIES; KOA SERIES; GRAND AUDITORIUM; GRAND CONCERT; TAYLOR SWIFT BABY TAYLOR; LEO KOTIKE SIGNATURE MODEL; DYNAMIC STRING SENSOR; GRAND ORCHESTRA; GO; TAYLOR ROAD SHOW; JASON MRAZ SIGNATURE MODEL; NOUVEAU; ISLAND VINE; CINDY; HERITAGE DIAMONDS; TWISTED OVALS; DECO DIAMONDS; and SPIRES are trademarks of Taylor-Listug, Inc.

ELIXIR and NANOWEB are registered trademarks of W.L. Gore & Associates, Inc. D'ADDARIO PRO-ARTE is a registered trademark of J. D'Addario & Co., Inc. NUBONE is a registered trademark of David Dunwoodie.

Prices, specifications and availability are subject to change without notice.



BOBSPEAK

Family and Friends

Curiously, both Kurt and I lost our dads this year. We miss them a lot and will remember them always. We each had great fathers, and our business owes a lot of its success to who we each are because of them. My dad, Dick Taylor, did many things for me, but I'd like to mention just a few. He taught me, by example, that I can make things if I want. I was used to him being able to tackle building furniture, household things, fixing cars, and just figuring things out. That was in my bones by the time I was old enough to take a wrench to my bicycle. He also taught me delayed gratification and steadfastness — the ability to work on a project for a long time before seeing the reward. And he taught me how to be generous and to think of others.

Kurt's dad, George Listug, taught Kurt how to be an accountant, how to tell if we're financially healthy or not. He did it at the kitchen table after dinner in the early years, going over all the accounting of our little business and teaching Kurt how to read the story that the numbers told. He was always at our events, from NAMM shows to company parties to award ceremonies. He was a true fan of Taylor Guitars and super proud of us all the way until we were in our 60s and he in his 90s. We owe a lot to them both. Now we each have our moms to love.

Another passing this year was my wonderful friend Bill Collings. Bill was

a better guitar maker than me, but we shared ideas for years, each being able to help the other and learn from one another. I'll never forget Bill Collings, and I am happy to have so many great memories of him.

Now on to those of us who are alive. I want to give a special mention this issue to a person at Taylor Guitars without whom I really don't know what I'd do: Wayne Brinkley. Wayne heads our tooling department. What's great about Wayne is that he's incredibly smart about how to make things, plus he's dedicated. He doesn't know a time of day that isn't available for him to help, worry, or spearhead a solution. He doesn't know a place on earth where he isn't willing to go to make something happen. If there's a problem in our production in Tecate, he goes. If it happens in Cameroon, he goes. I don't have to ask. It's amazing, really. He's not tireless; sometimes he's dead on his feet, but no great company can exist without some people like Wayne. Wayne has come with me to Cameroon on nearly every single trip there that I've made, and some that I haven't. We wouldn't have an ebony mill without Wayne. Or, at least not the ebony mill that we currently brag about. Along with our friend and colleague Jesus Jurado, and our retired colleague Richard Berry, we travel to Baja California each year in October in our Land Cruisers to wear out our tires from driving and to camp.

For two weeks there, we are allergic to pavement and people, so we find the most lonely, beautiful places to be and just breathe in fresh air, fish, nap, and sometimes talk about a machine we want to make. Thank you, Wayne, for your skill, attention, and dedication to our dream of Taylor Guitars.

Our lives are about the living of it, and helping others to live, and I'm reminded this year that it doesn't last forever. We're thankful that we found guitar building as a way to spend the career portions of our lives, here in El Cajon, and in Tecate, Amsterdam, and Cameroon. We've loved guitars from the beginning and love them even more today, and are happy to see our work affect others positively, from our proud dads to our colleagues and dealers to those of you who play. We're happy that we enjoy our work and those we work with.

Never forgetting about the guitars for a minute, we've been working on some new advancements in guitar design, as usual, and with Andy Powers heading that up, there's a lot to talk about, which will continually unfold. I'm amazed at how his mind works and what he's able to dream up. I've learned so much about guitar design from Andy in the past five years, and I feel really lucky to have a ringside seat, watching what he does. And I must say that I really love helping to build the factory and methods to build those

designs of his. It's a pleasure, and I'm thankful for it.

Who knows what you may think when you buy a Taylor, or play your Taylor. But I hope that somehow, in some way, a little bit of Kurt's dad and

my dad come through, and some of us as well, even a little Bill Collings if the whole truth were told, and some Wayne, Jesus, Richard and Andy.

— Bob Taylor, President

2017 Taylor Factory Tours & Vacation Dates

A free, guided tour of the 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.

We look forward to seeing you!



Factory Closures

Friday, October 13
(Taylor Guitars Anniversary)

November 23-24
(Thanksgiving Holiday)

Monday, December 25 through Friday, January 5
(Company Vacation)

acoustic instrument

Learning to blend different guitar voices can open the door to a rich and expressive tapestry of sound

By Shawn Persinger

Forgive me, readers, if I presume too much, but I suspect that many of you own more than one Taylor guitar. If so, I hope each offers you different sonic and performance possibilities. Have you explored using these guitars in conjunction with each other to both highlight their differences and create an altogether new aural environment? Perhaps a forest soundscape painted with crisp maple melodies, warm rosewood counterpoint, lush koa harmonies, and shapely spruce dynamics. Or maybe you've discovered the rich interplay between different body styles.

Even if you have just one guitar, it simply takes a gathering with other guitar-playing friends to access a diverse palette of musical colors. An untapped world of possibilities awaits your various instruments. All you need is to come together and, in the incorrect grammar of a highly successful computer campaign, "think different."

Listening With Intention

Here's what I'd suggest for your first experiment mixing and matching Taylors: Get together with at least one other player (three would be ideal) and warm up by playing music you're

comfortable with. Fall into the everyday roles of lead and rhythm, strumming or soloing over cowboy chords that you've known for years. Beginning with something simple and familiar will allow you to relax and let your mind take on the additional task of listening, truly listening, to what you're playing and how it interacts with and complements the playing of others. How the various chords provide a canvas of shifting color for figurative lead lines. How the characteristic tone of each instrument is analogous to spoken accents. How the sonic properties of a guitar facing you is different — in volume, tone,

decay, reverberation, etc. — than the one facing away from you. It's stunning, actually, that once you *listen with intention*, rather than out of habit, you start to hear a complex, previously unnoticed world of music lying beneath the superficiality of cliché licks and predictable patterns.

Now that you're listening with intention, it's time to diverge from the obviousness of soloist and accompanist and start performing and overlaying complementary melodies. For my money, you can't do better than the two- and three-part inventions of J.S. Bach (though originally conceived for solo keyboard, they transpose quite effectively to guitars), which are not only melodically rich and tuneful, but are also relatively short and rhythmically easy. If Bach isn't your cup of tea, try playing some bluegrass flatpicking tunes harmonized in thirds (check out Doc Watson's version of "June Apple," which includes two fiddles harmonizing). Or, if you and your friends are fingerpickers, learn some of the classic duet arrangements by Chet Atkins

and Jerry Reed ("Jerry's Breakdown"), Stefan Grossman and John Renbourn ("Round Midnight"), or Jim Croce and Maury Muehleisen ("Time in a Bottle"). Though this more intricate music might be more challenging to perform and thus require you focus more of your attention on your own technique, do not forget the objectives: listening with intention, noticing degrees of distinction, and blending them. Don't become two voices talking at once. Become two voicings speaking as one.

Lastly, a Grand Orchestra can take on the responsibility of providing the bottom end found in Part IV. Though it only contains one note per measure, this part is essential to the nuanced harmonic movement of the quartet. The notes should ring out with power and sustain worthy of emulating a cello, which the part was originally scored for.

This proposed mix of "Grand" guitars is only one possibility available to players looking to both blend and highlight guitar tones in an ensemble situation. With models ranging from a high-strung Baby Taylor to traditional dreadnoughts to the unique Taylor 8-string baritone, the combinations are practically endless! As such, I offer my own humble contribution to the guitar quartet canon. Fig. 2 is an excerpt from my piece "The Ninth Day of the Ninth Month," featured in the *Halloween Baptizm* suite, a new guitar quartet that I recently recorded using an idiosyncratic alliance of Taylor guitars: 6-string steel, 12-string, nylon-string, and the new GS Mini Bass.

This is a pensive and delicate piece in which the unique arrangement of tones and timbres is dramatically accentuated. Parts I and II play very similar melodies, but they split apart, harmonize, and play in counterpoint in unexpected ways. Additionally, the nylon-string distinguishes itself further

Don't become two voices talking at once. Become two voicings speaking as one.

and Jerry Reed ("Jerry's Breakdown"), Stefan Grossman and John Renbourn ("Round Midnight"), or Jim Croce and Maury Muehleisen ("Time in a Bottle"). Though this more intricate music might be more challenging to perform and thus require you focus more of your attention on your own technique, do not forget the objectives: listening with intention, noticing degrees of distinction, and blending them. Don't become two voices talking at once. Become two voicings speaking as one.

Guitar Quartets

Now we've come to the apex of this grand experiment: The simultaneous performance of four guitars, playing individual lines that interact with, stand apart from, and complement each other. Unfortunately, there is a shortage of quartet music for guitar that is either accessible to the average player (i.e., not a professionally trained classical guitarist) or available in tablature. But there is hope! For starters, in Fig. 1, I have transcribed six measures (measures 32-37) of the first movement of Beethoven's String Quartet in D Major Op. 18 No. 3. (By most accounts, Beethoven's string quartets are the epitome of the format.) In this example we can see that each instrument has a specific and symbiotic role to play. With more single-note playing, or arpeg-

Fig. 1 Allegro

Fig. 2 $\text{♩} = 80$

with the articulation *sul ponticello*, which indicates you should pick close to the bridge in an attempt to emulate a Japanese koto or Chinese guzheng. Part III spotlights the octave strings of the 12-string, keeping its fingerings entirely in the middle pairs of strings. And Part IV performs the traditional role of the bass, providing low end and harmonic stability. The GS Mini Bass, for all its "mini-ness," sounds huge when performing this part — I find it to be a revolutionary new instrument that, in addition to being a joy to play on its own, implores guitarists to work together. That said, for practical reasons, as well as out of artistic compulsion, I recorded all of the parts on *Halloween Baptizm* myself. So guitarists who don't have fellow musicians to jam with

should consider multi-tracking as a viable, if simulated, ensemble option. Through, frankly, I did miss having a team that could have generated ideas and encouragement, both of which have benefits far beyond the artistic.

New Directions

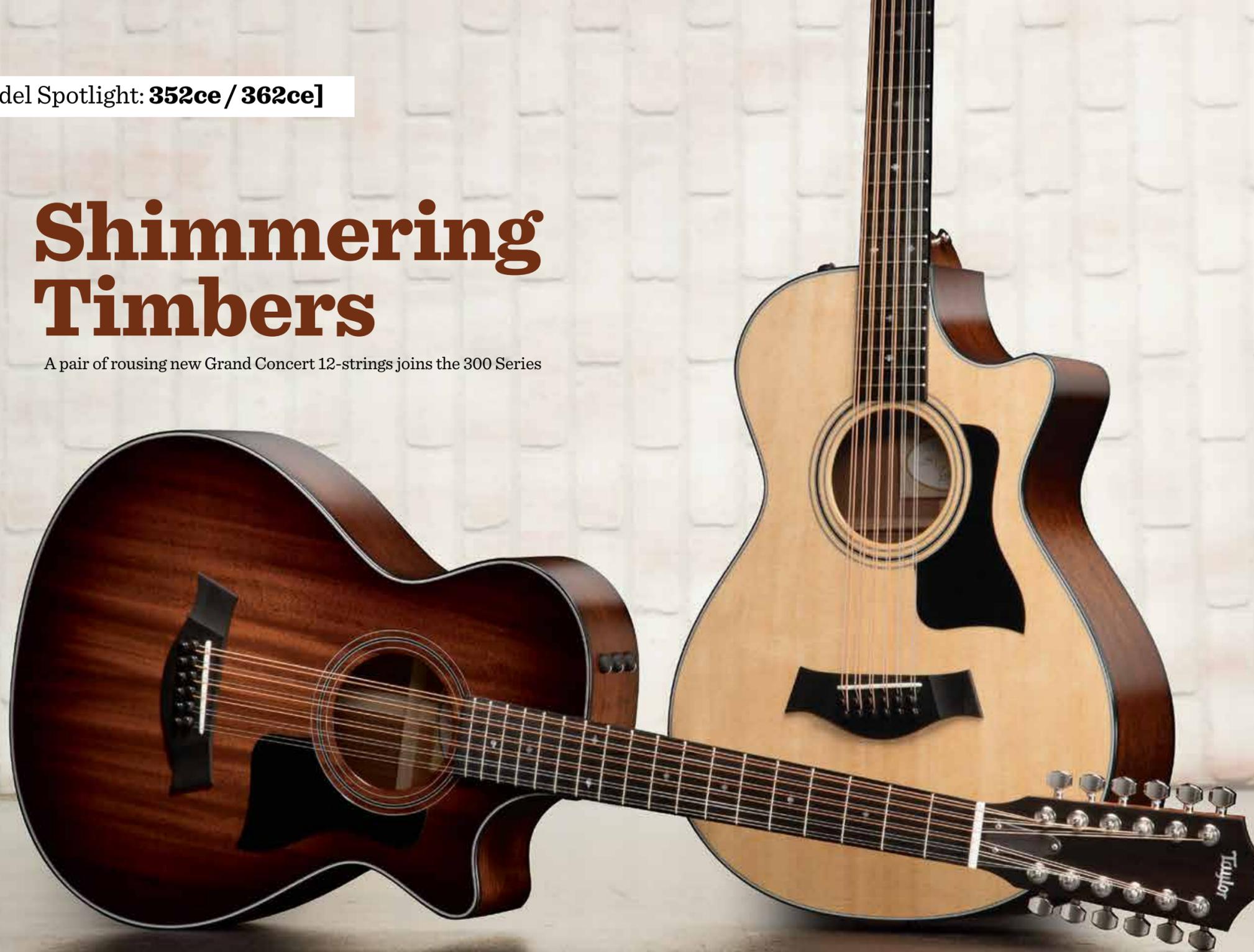
I hope that the idea of a guitar duo, trio, quartet or more will inspire you to play together with other guitarists (and compose) in a new way. Ensemble playing can lead you and your musical companions in new directions that foster listening with intention along with attention to detail, nuance, dynamics, articulation and timbre — and above all, camaraderie. **W&S**

Shawn Persinger, a.k.a. Prester John, owns a Taylor 410, two 310s, a 214ce-N, an 8-string Baritone, and a GS Mini Bass. His music has been described as a myriad of delightful musical paradoxes: complex but catchy; virtuosic yet affable; smart and whimsical. His book The 50 Greatest Guitar Books has been hailed as a monumental achievement by readers and critics. (www.GreatestGuitarBooks.com)

[Model Spotlight: **352ce / 362ce**]

Shimmering Timbers

A pair of rousing new Grand Concert 12-strings joins the 300 Series



We know a 12-string won't be the primary axe for most players. But its shimmering voice serves up an earful of acoustic flavor that can help you enrich your musical repertoire in exciting ways.

And in our humble opinion, more people would add one to their guitar quiver if they had a chance to wrap their arms around one of our player-friendly Grand Concert models.

That's why this fall we're offering players two more compelling reasons to pick one up. We're thrilled to introduce the new 12-string/12-fret Grand Concert 362ce, featuring blackwood back and sides with a mahogany top, and the 352ce, which pairs sapele with a Sitka spruce top.

The two models follow last year's successful debut of the all-mahogany 562ce and mahogany/cedar 552ce, a pair of game-changing small-body beauties that married the comfortably compact Grand Concert form with our 12-fret neck design. The release marked another step forward in our tradition of crafting easy-playing 12-strings, earning plaudits from critics and players alike.

Resident design guru Andy Powers had taken note of the lingering barriers that had kept traditional 12-string guitars out of the hands of many players, among them the larger body size typically used for them and the tendency of a 12-string's big, rich strumming voice to drown out other instruments in a mix. So he downsized the body style to our lap-happy Grand Concert.

It turns out that the smaller chassis allows for a more efficient 12-string design — the compact body is inherently

stronger, which enables it to be braced more lightly. This makes it easier to set those strings in motion.

Sonically, it also yields a whole new 12-string flavor: a clear, well-defined shimmer that plays well with others instead of over-resonating. If you do any recording and want to add some nice octave texture to a part — maybe doubling a chord progression to add shimmer — a Grand Concert 12-string will become your new secret weapon.

"As a player I'll normally use a 12-string in the studio to layer a part," Andy explains. "In the past I'd end up EQ-ing out everything from the low end because all you want is the shimmering quality. That's where a Grand Concert 12-string really excels."

And the playing comfort isn't just in the lighter, more compact body or our signature sleek neck profile — it's also the shorter 12-fret neck-to-body relationship. Shifting the neck closer to the body creates a nicely balanced weight distribution, and together with the 24-7/8-inch scale length, delivers the most comfortable handfeel you'll find on any 12-string guitar out there.

The shifted bridge placement with the 12-fret design (closer to the center of the lower bout) also gives both guitars impressive projection for a small-body acoustic, without requiring a strong attack to set the strings in motion.

Since a 12-string for most players would be a secondary instrument, having access to a pair of models within our 300 Series now makes the notion of owning a small-body Taylor 12-string a more budget-friendly proposition, while still preserving all the tonal goodness of an all-solid-wood acoustic.

The two different wood pairings also present two distinctive sonic personalities, allowing you to find the right match for your playing applications.

The 362ce's hardwood mahogany top lends some natural compression to the tonal response, helping to create a clear and balanced output across the frequency spectrum, including the octave courses, with smooth note decay.

"If I were playing one of these guitars mostly amplified, I would choose the hardwood-top version because that compressed effect will translate through the pickup really well," Andy says. "The string-to-string balance, the response from the smaller body, the natural compression effect — all these qualities make it exceptionally good for the stage."

The spruce-top 352ce, by comparison, will yield a slightly more immediate response, with a bit more top-end brightness and a crisp, dynamic voice.

"If you're playing as a solo artist and want more initial dynamic range, the spruce-top version will put that attack back in there," Andy says. "If you're playing more fingerstyle or doing more songwriting, or if you're playing in a smaller group, try the spruce."

Visually, if you like a darker vintage aesthetic, you'll probably gravitate toward the 362ce's shaded edgeburst mahogany top and the all-satin body, while the 352ce sports a clean, contemporary look with the glossy spruce top. Whichever way you lean, one thing is certain: Bring this to a jam session and your friends will be fighting over who gets to play it next.

Ask Bob

Braceless backs, the future of spruce, and factory-made vs. handmade

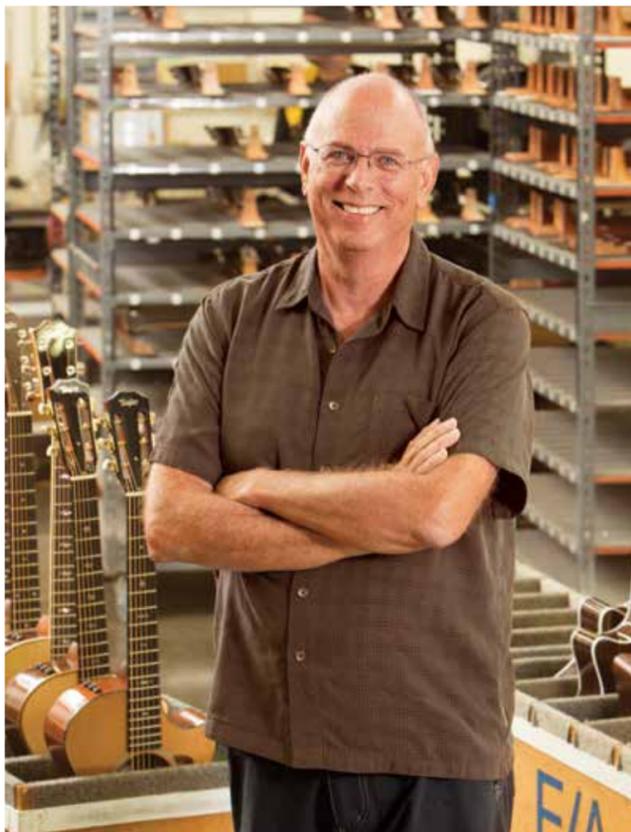
I have been buying acoustic guitars for many years and always love looking inside the soundhole at the bracing inside the back of the guitar. I love the new style on my 800 Series, with the back bracing on an angle, which I am sure was something design guru Andy Powers thought of to create a better sound. And boy does it!

The other day I went into my local music store and tried out some 200 Series guitars. I picked up a dreadnought that rang true on every fret of the guitar. When I looked in the soundhole [I saw that] there was no back bracing on the guitar. When did this new design feature start and why is it being done? This guitar sounded so great I played it all week in the acoustic room of my music store. Finally, I couldn't stand it anymore — I came back and traded two guitars so I could have this sunburst beauty.

Steve Kane

Steve, our 200 Series guitars, like all the layered models we make, are built to help deliver a fine guitar at a more modest price. With the back we do a couple of things to help the cause. One is to use layered wood, which extends the amount of wood you can cut from a tree. At the same time, when we glue it into layers we build an arch into it, which inherently becomes very strong and self-supporting when the pressing is complete. By doing this we don't need braces glued to the back. This eliminates many steps and some cost and still makes a good guitar. We've been doing this on every layered guitar since we introduced the Baby Taylor about 20 years ago, when I was still a relatively young man and had more hair on my head, where hair is actually supposed to be!

I just bought a 562ce and really like how it feels in my arthritic hands. I'm thinking about adding the 552 or 522 12-Fret for the same reason. To simulate the feel on my 714ce, I have been placing a capo on the second fret. If I kept doing this instead of buying a 6-string 12-fret model, what



would I be missing as a result of the bridge placement on the 12-fret versus the 14-fret?

Romulo Salazar
Fort Worth, TX

Romulo, let me clarify a misunderstanding. By putting a capo on the guitar you shorten the string length, which is not a simulation of a 12-fret. A 12-fret guitar just moves the neck and bridge closer to the tail block of the guitar. This shortens the reach you need to make with your left hand and changes the tone to something I'd describe as warmer by moving the bridge more into the center of the top. Playing a guitar with a capo in effect shortens the string length and raises the pitch. Those are two different things. I hope that makes sense to you.

I am always interested in your pursuits to manage the forests and responsibly harvest and plant new trees. I have heard about the efforts to replant ebony, koa, maple, etc., but what about Sitka spruce (and Lutz and Engelmann spruce)? I would think that this wood is what you use the most. Is there an active replanting plan with spruce as well? Thanks for all your efforts.

Bob

Bob, first I must clarify that Taylor is not planting maple; our supplier and close friends at Pacific Rim Tonewoods are. We are doing koa in partnership with them, and ebony in Cameroon in partnership with Madinter, another wood supplier. Now on to Sitka spruce. The answer is that we are not replanting

I love *Wood&Steel*. It's a pleasant surprise when it arrives in the mail and I can see what you've been up to. I'm a long-time Taylor owner, having a '96 110 as well as an '09 LKSM-12 (coolest 12-string ever). Reading the buffing article last issue made me wonder: during training or by request, do employee builders ever follow a batch of guitars from start to finish? I'm sure it's impractical, but perhaps it allows them to learn more about lutherie and see the forest for the trees (sorry couldn't resist!)

Matthew S. Partrick, M.D.
Key West, FL

Matthew, I understand your question. The answer is that very few people have the opportunity or ability to do this. We do have very small teams that work together to see a guitar from beginning to end, and in effect those teams are often smaller than the teams in a smaller factory of guitars. On the other hand, we don't subscribe to the idea of a person doing, say, nothing but sanding a guitar. They do much more than that, moving from beginning to end within a department. In fact, when Taylor first started, we had three people, and we specialized in the work, so even when I was 19 we didn't have one person build a guitar from beginning to end. But these days we do have employees who have mastered many of the departments.

Sitka. We have no way to effectively do that. One day perhaps, but in those areas of the world many people who own and operate wood lots that have Sitka are either replanting or allowing natural regrowth through their own programs or with FSC certification. On my world forestry tour, which you can see on YouTube, we stopped in Ireland to see that they're planting Sitka spruce there in a huge way, and have been doing this for decades. The impressive thing is that 100 years ago Ireland only had 1 percent forest coverage in the country, and now it has 11 percent and is striving for the next goal of 17 percent. Nearly all of that is Sitka spruce. The lesson is that Taylor Guitars can't replant the world. We can do our part where it makes sense and where we are able to, but fortunately there are

many others around the world doing reforestry for their own reasons, which pleases me to no end.

What do you do with your leftover wood — ends and other pieces, or boards that don't quite meet the quality specs for building guitars? How about if Taylor considers making cajons? You know, beat boxes for hand drumming. After all, it seems only right given the name of your company's home town!

Diana Jurss
Sylva, NC

Diana, I think about cajons now and then, and even more lately. But there's only so much time in a day, and currently

we can't even fulfill the demand for our guitars. Cajons aren't made from the wood we have as scraps, they're essentially made of plywood. There's some wood that can be repurposed for a cajon, but not much. To answer the other part of your question, I'm focusing a lot lately on finding items to make from the ebony we cut in Cameroon that cannot be used to make guitars, and the goal would be to make those items there in Cameroon to allow the employees there to have a better business model by adding more value. We are developing those now, and a lot of them won't be for music. Probably things like very cool pepper grinders, wall tiles, chopsticks, buttons, cabinet knobs and pulls, etc. There's enough wood there to create jobs in Cameroon and for people like you to enjoy owning something from it. We do have one cool guitar product coming soon for guitars, and I think it'll be great.

where is good for us all. And I'll bet there are tree planting programs in your community. If you participate in that, you're doing as much as I am. It may not be a guitar tree, but it helps the earth in the same way.

I have three Taylor guitars — from a GS Mini to a Dreadnought — and I admire them each for their distinctive voicing. The difference in body shapes seems so slight, but their sounds are so different. My frivolous question is: Given their subtle distinctions, what would a rectangular guitar sound like? As an unabashed novice, I would not hesitate to ask Antonio Stradivari the same question. Bill Burlingham Skokie, IL

Well, Bill, a square guitar would break Andy Powers' cardinal rule, which says "there shall be no straight lines in a guitar." He's including not only the shape of braces but also the shape of box. There are lots of acoustic mistakes that happen inside a cube or rectangle. Think of going to a good theater and listening to a concert. The rooms are not square or straight. Acoustic engineers toil to get the right curves. An amphitheater is always round and slanted. A deep acoustical answer is probably out of my wheelhouse and would perhaps be too in depth for readers even if I were qualified to explain the science, but curves work well for musical instruments including guitars. A square guitar would have weak sides that flap in the breeze; bending them cures that. The sound-waves would misbehave inside, the top wouldn't have a main belly to vibrate, etc. If you made one, it would play notes and chords, but the quality of those notes would be poor and not compare favorably to a shaped guitar.

I bought a Taylor 414ce a few months ago. I went into a Guitar Center with an open mind just wanting to try out some different things. I played all the good guitars they had. I had originally wanted to try a 416ce and thought that with the larger body it would better fit my percussive fingerstyle playing. They didn't have an 800 Series model for me to try, but [they had] the Sitka/ovangkol 414ce and 416ce. The 414ce really seemed to have something that every other guitar lacked: great output, excellent response, and great balance. I also loved the clarity.

I've heard custom hand luthiers say that the factory disadvantage is

that wood is an inconsistent material. Even the same kind and grade of wood will vary in stiffness, density and resonance. The hand builders say the perfect guitar needs to be worked individually to compensate for the individual characteristics of the piece of wood. It got me thinking: Does Taylor test each piece of wood for stiffness? Does Taylor do any custom voicing on tops, like finished plate thickness or shaving any of the braces differently? I'm thinking at the high production numbers you do the



answer would be no. If so, has anyone at Taylor ever tested a bunch of finished guitars of the same model and wood combinations for consistency? Do they all sound exactly the same? Are the tap tones all exactly the same? I feel like the 414ce I bought may have been one where the stiffness of the woods just happened to perfectly fit the design and make it a notch better. But maybe that's how all of those models sound. Are all Taylor guitars of the same model and woods exactly the same, at least to the tolerance that is audible to the human ear? And are factory-made guitars really as good

as the ones built by a single experienced luthier costing two to three times as much? I obviously have a real guitar obsession and love the Taylor I have; I just wanted to get your take on this.

Colby

Colby, I've been answering this question for years. It never gets easier or shorter, so here are some thoughts. First, the best-sounding guitar is usually the one you like the best, which is subjective, especially when two guitars are similar. We usually look to change the design to improve the guitar in a repeatable fashion because design matters the most.

A luthier can do some individual alterations to a guitar, but only if the luthier knows how. Most don't know how when they start, and if they're skilled they get better over years, producing very few guitars along the way with a lot of time in between each guitar. And if they make different styles, they may never become remarkable at one of the styles. So, which luthier do you choose? That said, there are some who make incredible guitars. Another thought: Nearly every vintage guitar that a person can name that is sought after for its amazing tone was made in a factory, proving again that factories can make great guitars.

Now, on to the idea that the pieces of wood from one to another are not exactly the same. This is true in the real sense, but the differences can be so slight that it would take a very fine luthier to know what to do about it, and that rules out most luthiers, I'm sorry to say. We create a design, and we follow that. Each wood species has a different weight, stiffness, ability to resonate, coloration, etc., and we design around those differences and then produce that design with accuracy. In my way of thinking, and coupled with my experience, that's a very legitimate way to produce a guitar. If one person

likes one guitar better, and makes one comment about one feature, then that doesn't make a new overall truth. In the end, good luthiers make good guitars in their way, and good factories make good guitars in their way. I believe in both. They both have merit. To answer the question of whether they all sound exactly the same, no, they don't. The word you use, "exactly," is the deal killer. But neither do two guitars made from a good luthier. This is the spice of life, and in the end, you're free to find a guitar you like. Then, by all means, don't let that guitar get away.

In a recent issue I saw that boiled linseed oil was recommended for fretboard [conditioning]. I usually use lemon oil. Is that sufficient? Any known issues using lemon oil?

Art

Art, there's no problem at all using lemon oil. It eventually evaporates and leaves nothing behind. Boiled linseed oil will polymerize, almost like varnish, leaving a real sealer behind. For this reason I like it, but I also recommend that it only needs to be done three or four times on a fingerboard, and then you have something that stays and doesn't need repeating. If you put linseed oil on once a month forever, you'd end up with a real mess. Lemon oil evaporates, as I said, and doesn't build up. My preference is linseed oil every once in a while, until it's been done three or four times, and then stop. Do it again after 10 more years.

Ed. Note: Art, another great option, recommended by Taylor Customer Service Manager Glen Wolff, is the Taylor Fretboard Oil we offer through TaylorWare (made by Music Nomad). It's a blend of ultra-refined tree and seed oils. It isn't as thick as linseed oil and won't evaporate quickly. It's great for occasional conditioning.

Got a question for Bob Taylor?

Shoot him an email: 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.

feeding the
BEAST

**SAM BEAM OF IRON & WINE
REFLECTS ON THE CREATIVE
APPROACH THAT SHAPED HIS
LATEST OPUS, *BEAST EPIC***

BY JONAH BAYER
PHOTO: JOSH WOOL

Sam Beam has been busy. Among other things, the lavishly bearded singer-songwriter — better known by his musical stage name Iron & Wine — and his wife have been raising their five children in South Carolina, where Beam grew up. Between that, releasing covers, and collaborating with other artists — including last year's *Love Letter for Fire*, a collection of duets recorded with singer-songwriter Jesca Hoop — Beam has also found time to write, record and self-produce Iron & Wine's sixth album, *Beast Epic*, his first collection of new material in four years.

For those who don't know his work, Beam has carved out a successful career as something of a modern folk pioneer, amassing a devoted following along the way. He famously began as a solitary do-it-yourselfer who wrote and recorded his music in his home studio, so he's no stranger to navigating the complexities of the creative process on his own. In fact, the music of Iron & Wine thrives within that complexity, as Beam navigates the tension between the patience of creation and the urgency of emotion.



Beam is a talented multi-instrumentalist, but his heart often gravitates toward acoustic guitars. His best work leans heavily on them, and it's clear from even a cursory listen that he knows his way around the instrument. Flavored with carefully plucked guitar lines, rich acoustic textures, and intimate vocals, Iron & Wine's music has drawn comparisons to the acoustic work of Neil Young, Nick Drake, and Simon & Garfunkel, yet Beam pushes forward into more ethereal, experimental territory. His music is often described as having a cinematic quality — no doubt impacted by his art school/filmmaking background — as his songs paint sonic pictures that blend melodic textures with evocative lyricism. A Taylor player for years now, his acoustic arsenal features several Grand Auditorium models, including a 714ce he's owned since 2003.

In many ways *Beast Epic* is a full-circle moment for Beam — it finds him reuniting with Sub Pop Records, where he made his first three records, including his 2002 debut *The Creek Drank the Cradle* — and eschewing the more elaborate production approach of his later releases in favor of a process that resembles the way many of his early recordings were conceptualized. Similarly, *Beast Epic* was also self-produced and finds him embracing the inherent imperfections of the process.

I caught up with Beam prior to the August release of his record. He talked about his evolving creative approach at this stage of his life, the importance of preserving the “human qualities” in his music, his love of nylon-string guitars, and how the sense that his career is a fluke has liberated him artistically.

Wood&Steel: Do you mainly write on acoustic guitar?

Sam Beam: Yeah, it's usually an acoustic guitar or piano, and I have a nylon-string I sometimes bang around on. It's always sitting out close to my hands.

W&S: What's your creative process like when it comes to writing?

SB: I used to be a lot more disciplined about it and made it feel like a job. I would take the kids to school and then come home and work until three or four in the afternoon. Now I've become a lot less disciplined [*laughs*]. I think it's because when my kids were younger they needed a lot more hand-holding, but now I have a bit more free time and I guess I'm a little more relaxed. I feel like I'm writing just as much [now as I was then]; it's just not as structured. It'll go in waves — some times will be more productive than others. I used to just sort of trudge through the unproductive times and try to make something work, whereas now I'll wait and use that time for something else.



Photo: Wylde Photography

W&S: A lot of *Beast Epic* was recorded live without overdubbing. Was that a conscious decision?

SB: Yeah, it's a way of working that I've been pursuing for a little while. The first couple of records were just me, and I did a lot of overdubbing, but it wasn't to a click or anything like that. Then as I got into it and kept making records, some of them were created in ProTools. It was all overdubs, but that was the type of music I was interested in making at the time, in the sense of using the studio as an instrument on the record. It was really interesting and I learned a lot, but it wasn't as satisfying as just playing with other people. It was more about the process of making the record than it was performing and making something together. That has a lot of benefits, but at the same time, I missed the sound that you get [from playing live]. Some of my favorite records have strange microphone bleed and sonic spaces that are unique to the recording sessions. So the last couple of collaborative records that I've been doing, I've been making them that way: using ProTools, but not to hide your mistakes; just to make it easier to work

quickly. It was definitely a conscious thing. I just love the spontaneity of it. Also, earlier on, I feel like I was trying to polish some of the humanity out. I mean, I wouldn't have called it “human-



ity” then, but I wanted it to sound right. Now, I'm not sure if “right” means “perfect.” I like the more human qualities and letting all of the imperfections remain.

W&S: You've said that *Beast Epic* is a “transitional record” for you. That feels very relatable in the sense that it's a

sentiment that seems to resonate with a lot of people right now.

SB: It depends on what you are talking about. If you're talking about social or political problems, then yeah, in the sense that people are in transition and they don't know what to expect. I think that makes you look inward. I do think that this record — although not really about those issues — resonates with people who are on that kind of an inward journey. It's an introspective record. That said, I also feel a lot of friends my age are in a strange transition, and it's a different one than when we were 20 or 30, but at the same time it's just as powerful and disturbing and rewarding.

W&S: What's the dynamic with the other players on this record?

SB: I've always written all the material and then brought it to different folks — and it's always been different groups of people — to help me realize it sonically, just because I like to be surprised. I like playing with people who know how to improvise and bring something to the table that I can't by myself. This was no different. It was a great group of people,

“I like playing with people who know how to improvise and bring something to the table that I can't by myself.”

although the touring group might be a little different. [*Ed. Note: The album's session musicians include longtime Iron & Wine collaborators Rob Burger (keys), Joe Adamik (percussion, drums), and Jim Becker (guitar, banjo, violin, mandolin), along with bassist Sebastian Steinberg (Soul Coughing and Fiona Apple), and Teddy Rankin Parker (cello).*] I like the idea of knowing the record as a snapshot of what we were doing at the moment and using it as an arrow that points you to what it can be, but not a blueprint that has to be followed. That approach has been helpful for me because when I was really young I got tired of trying to regurgitate the sound of the very early records onstage. It became sort of impossible because it's the product of the recording process. So it's been really helpful and inspiring to keep the record as something that's more of a document than a list of rules.

W&S: I know you have a bunch of Taylor guitars. How do you decide which one to use?

SB: It just kind of depends. I'm not really terribly precious about guitars.

Basically, I pick one up and try to adjust what I'm doing based on the sound that I'm getting. Over the years I've definitely found ones that tend to fit the type of music that I play more than others. At the same time, I've never written it down, so I'm always remembering as I go. I've collected a bunch of guitars over the years that I use as different colors on a palette in order to make new things, but I end up using a lot of the same colors just because I like them. I love the Taylors, the Expression System and the way it works with the PA — I haven't had anything else that works like that and sounds as good in a live setting.

W&S: Taylor is also making you a 714ce. Are you planning to customize it at all?

SB: I love the sexy looking ones [*laughs*]. I've got a couple different ones from Taylor. I've been doing a lot of detuning and alternate tuning; I have a little army of guitars onstage so I don't have to keep retuning between songs. I have a couple that are steel-stringed, and I had a couple of the nylon-string ones made. Like we were talking about before, I'm always com-

posing with the nylon-string guitar; one of my earliest guitars was a nylon-string. It just seems so essential to the sound that I make and hear when I'm making music at home, but for some reason I never used it onstage. I've never found one that I liked the sound of onstage, so I'm hoping one of these days Taylor is gonna help me out. [*Ed. Note: We've since sent him a pair of 714ce-N guitars featuring Western Sunburst tops.*]

W&S: Do you ever practice in the sense that you work on fingerpicking or scales, or do you mainly just write these days?

SB: You know, it depends on the day. Some days if I'm working on a song I'll just focus on lyrics, but usually I'm playing just because I like the sound of it. I never took lessons, so it's always been a process of discovery for me, and that's the most interesting thing about it. I always feel like I'm in uncharted territory because I just play by ear. I definitely do a lot of strange tunings, and lately I've been trying to learn how to play left-handed just to switch things up and hear things differently because that's how you stay engaged. It's about

what I haven't discovered rather than refining something to a perfect place.

W&S: That's cool — a lot of musicians get to your level of success and decide they're where they need to be talent-wise.

SB: Well, it's scary to mess with the formula. It's like if you create the Big Mac and then change the recipe, you're screwed [*laughs*]. I think people get scared because it's hard enough to make a living doing creative things, and music is really fickle. When you actually get recognized, it's really hard to convince people that they need to change it up. But for me, I feel like my whole career is kind of a fluke. I never really planned on making a career out of music; I just kept making things and it kind of took off. My background is more art school and filmmaking and stuff like that, where you're always pushing toward something new. Music doesn't seem that different to me along those lines. I never anticipated being successful. Still to this day I don't understand what people like, so I just keep making what I'm making. But at the same time, since I'm the one making it, there's an aesthetic through-line and organizing principle to it all.

W&S: I know it's been a while, but do people still discover you through the *Garden State* soundtrack?

SB: Oh yeah. I mean, there's a lot of people out there and there's a lot of music out there. It's just impossible to keep track of it all. Most people are just sort of busy living their lives. It's not like they're busy scouring the Internet for new music — they're worried about their bills and that stuff. So people approach me all the time, even if it's just about one song they heard somewhere. I think it's really wonderful; I love that kind of stuff. I love finding old things, whether it's from the '60s or the '40s. When you just discover something that's been laying dormant for decades, that's wonderful. That's a wonderful feeling. **W&S**

You can find *Beast Epic* in stores and on streaming platforms now.

Jonah Bayer is a freelance journalist based in Brooklyn, New York. You can read his work in *Playboy*, *VICE*, *The AV Club*, *Inked*, *Revolver* and *Guitar World*. He is also the host of the *Going Off Track* podcast and co-creator of the Web series “*Sound Advice*.”

The Guitars and Tunings of Iron & Wine

Sam Beam loves his Taylors and plays a range of them on stage and in the studio. Here's his arsenal:

714ce (2003, 2009, 2011)
314ce (2004)
714ce-N (2012)
614ce (2015)
714ce-N WSB (2017)

Beam plays in a number of different tunings, which he says helps inspire fresh musical discoveries. Here are a few:

DADGBE (Drop D, on “Naked As We Came”)
DGDGBD (Open G, on “Communion Cups” and “Someone's Coat”)
DADGAD (on “Half Moon” and “Big Burned Hand”)
CGCFG (various songs)

“Earlier on, I feel like I was trying to polish some of the humanity out.”

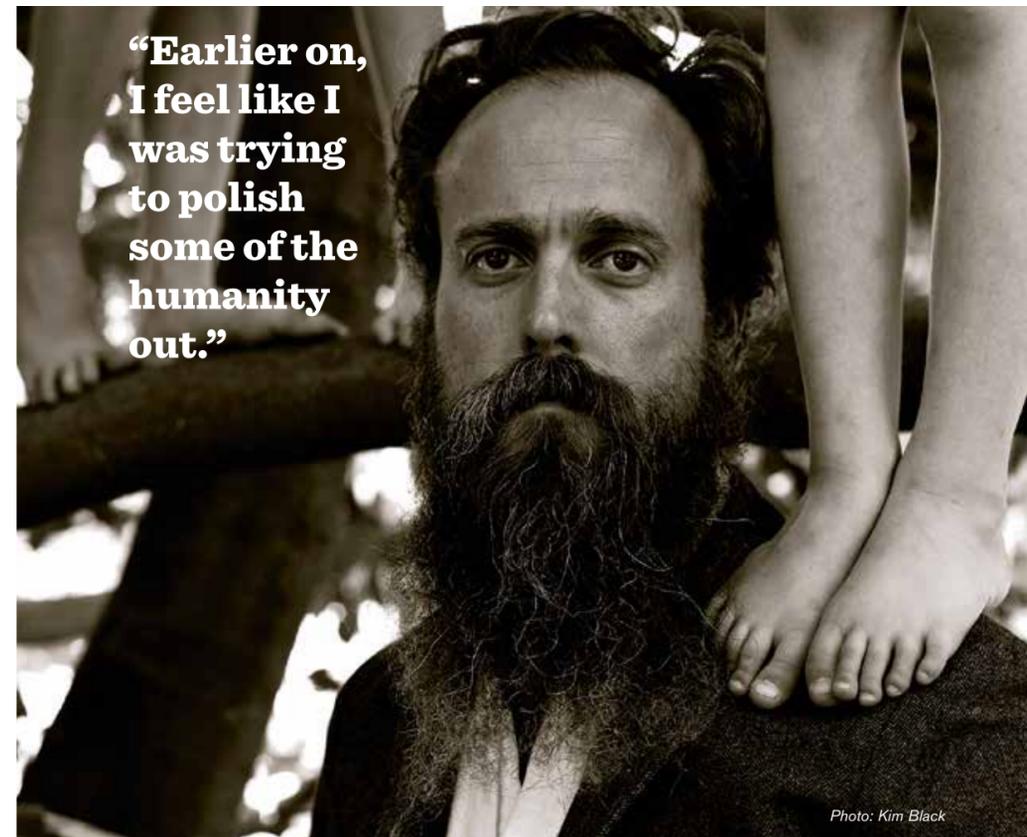


Photo: Kim Black

FLAVORS *to* SAVOR

This year's fall limited editions boast an array of colorful guitar personalities designed to expand your musical palate.

By Jim Kirlin

Musical inspiration is all about fresh discoveries, and as guitar makers, we love to do our part. Our limited edition program provides the ideal vehicle for us to stretch beyond the framework of Taylor's standard guitar line and craft something special — a new voice, a new look, a new feel, or maybe all of the above.

Our latest fall collection delivers another compelling mix of unique instruments: a bold 8-string baritone, our first-ever pairing of walnut with torrefied spruce, koa Grand Auditorium 12-frets, the return of cocobolo, and a T5z Classic Deluxe that sports a trio of new colors inspired by vintage custom cars.

We've staggered our rollout throughout the fall, so you'll want to check with your authorized dealer on availability. Read on for more details, and for complete specs, head over to taylorguitars.com.

L-R: Shaded edgeburst cocobolo/spruce 914ce LTD,
K24ce 12-Fret LTD, Sonic Blue T5z Classic Deluxe LTD



K24ce 12-Fret LTD K24ce LTD

Body: Cutaway Grand Auditorium
Back/Sides: Koa (three-piece)
Top: Koa
Bracing: Performance w/ Relief Rout (14-fret) or 12-Fret
Binding: Figured Maple (Body, Fretboard, Heel Cap & Peghead)
Fretboard Inlay: Koa/Boxwood Ocean Vine
Finish: Gloss Body, Shaded Edgeburst (Entire Guitar)
Rosette: Figured Maple Fishbone-Style Pattern
Tuners: Taylor Nickel
Additional Details: Peghead/Bridge Inlay, ES2 Electronics, Taylor Deluxe Hardshell Case

Last fall Andy Powers crafted a stunning all-koa Grand Concert 12-fret featuring our floating kelp-inspired Ocean Vine inlay scheme, figured maple binding and rosette, and an artfully hand-sprayed edgeburst. It was so well received that we wanted to reprise the aesthetic this year, only this time with a pair of Grand Auditorium models — one a 12-fret, the other a 14-fret.

In each case, the hardwood koa top creates a natural compression effect that helps level out the tonal response — especially with a lively attack — for a clear, smooth and balanced voice. The

12-fret edition, with its shifted bridge position, helps pump out a more muscular midrange sound, and on the Grand Auditorium body elevates the lower mids and broadens the dynamic range.

As Andy noted with last year's all-koa limited, the way the 12-fret design articulates the top adds a splash of extra warmth to the sound. The 12-fret neck and 24-7/8-inch scale length also serve up a comfortable handfeel, and despite the shorter neck, the cutaway affords greater access to the upper register. If you love the aesthetic but

prefer the feel and response of a 14-fret neck (25.5-inch scale length), we've got you covered.

With their focused voices, both guitars make an excellent choice for recording or performance. And with this gorgeous aesthetic, you can count on enhancing your stage presence.

914ce LTD

Body: Cutaway Grand Auditorium
Back/Sides: Cocobolo
Top: Sitka Spruce
Bracing: Performance w/ Relief Rout
Binding: West African Ebony (Including Armrest)
Fretboard Inlay: Abalone/Pearl Ascension
Finish: Gloss Body (6 Mil), Shaded Edgeburst (Entire Guitar)
Rosette: Single Ring Paua w/ Koa/Ebony Purfling
Tuners: Gotoh Gold
Additional Details: Koa Purfling (Top, Back, Sides, Fretboard, Peghead), Paua/Koa Edge Trim (Top, Fretboard Extension), Ebony Backstrap, ES2 Electronics, Taylor Deluxe Hardshell Case

It's been a few years since we've crafted a cocobolo limited edition, so it seems fitting to celebrate its return in style. This run features a selection of vibrantly hued sets sourced from Costa Rica and boasts our luxurious 900 Series treatment, with a few nuanced differences in voicing and aesthetic details.

Instead of using the Advanced Performance bracing scheme normally used with the 900 Series, Andy opted for our Performance pattern, which he felt was a better match for cocobolo's physical makeup and sound profile.

"Although it's a *Dalbergia*, a true rosewood, cocobolo has a different

weight, density and sonic flavor than East Indian rosewood," he explains. "If we used Advanced Performance bracing, there would be a little too much movement going on, and the guitar's voice would be on the verge of out of control. The Performance bracing is a better complement — it's a fairly warm-sounding design, so when combined with cocobolo's bright attack, the two harmonize well."

Rosewoods such as East Indian, Andy says, respond with a bell-like initial attack. Cocobolo's initial ring can almost sound like a ceramic or glass bell.

"The Performance bracing smoothes off a bit of that brightness, capturing some of cocobolo's natural fidelity and vibrancy in an appealing voice."

It also helps that our 900 Series Sitka spruce soundboards are of our finest grade, exhibiting uniform characteristics with very little runout and a high velocity of sound — meaning sound travels through it quickly without much damping — which translates into optimized tonal output. Players can expect a fast and articulate response, and with the Grand Auditorium body, a nice balance of mids, lows and top-end chime. The beveled ebony armrest also helps players strum and pick in a more relaxed way.

Aesthetically, one embellishment to the detail-rich 900 Series appointment package is a smooth shaded edgeburst treatment around the body and neck.

The rich amber-brown gradation adds subtle depth to the cocobolo's glowing

hues, creates a visual harmony between the darker sides and the spruce top, and amplifies the vivid sparkle of the paua top edge trim.

714ce 12-Fret LTD 712ce 12-Fret LTD

Body: Cutaway Grand Auditorium or Grand Concert
Back/Sides: Koa (Koa Series Grade)
Top: Cedar
Bracing: 12-Fret with Relief Rout
Binding: Black
Fretboard Inlay: Green Abalone GA-LTD
Finish: Gloss Body, Shaded Edgeburst (Entire Guitar)
Rosette: 3-Ring Green Abalone
Tuners: Taylor Slot Head (GC) or Taylor Nickel (GA)
Additional Details: 24-7/8" Scale Length, Green Abalone Dot Bridge Pins, ES2 Electronics, Taylor Deluxe Hardshell Case

We haven't made many 12-fret Grand Auditorium guitars. Normally the Grand Concert is our preferred body pairing with the 12-fret neck design — beyond the compatibility of the compact body with the shorter neck, the shifted bridge location (closer to the center of the lower bout) articulates the top in a way that produces a surprising amount of warmth and midrange power for the smaller body size.



"It gives the guitar some low-mid-range swagger," Andy says. "It's always got more attitude when you drive the top from right in the middle."

The Grand Auditorium's bigger body dimensions, by comparison, give the guitar ample warmth and midrange punch on its own without the need to shift the bridge location, and players tend to favor the extra real estate of the longer 14-fret neck.

But the time seemed right for a pair of 12-fret siblings featuring both our Grand Auditorium and Grand Concert shapes. For the wood pairing, Andy chose koa back and sides with a cedar top. Cedar's natural warmth, touch sensitivity, and midrange overtones nicely complement koa's midrange focus and top-end fidelity, giving the guitars more of a played-in sound and making them a great choice for fingerstyle players. The 12-fret neck's bridge placement punches up that tonal output even more.

"These elements add up to a big mouthful of sound," Andy says. "For a fingerstyle player, especially someone who's looking for a big response out of a relatively delicate touch, both of

these guitars will deliver. Between cedar's strong, immediately responsive overtone component and the 12-fret neck and bridge location, you'll feel like you've got more power out of your articulation hand. The Grand Auditorium takes it one step further. You can dig in with the bigger body and it'll respond with a lot of low-midrange power."

Though both models feature a 12-fret neck and 24-7/8-inch scale length, the Grand Concert sports a slotted peghead while the Grand Auditorium comes with a solid peghead. To best utilize our supply of koa, this run will incorporate a mix of two-piece and three-piece back configurations. Other aesthetic details include a shaded edgeburst around the entire body and along the neck, and our classic GA-LTD fretboard inlay in green abalone, complemented by green abalone dot bridge pins.



514ce LTD

Body: Cutaway Grand Auditorium
Back/Sides: Walnut
Top: Torrefied Sitka Spruce
Bracing: Performance with Relief Rout
Binding: Faux Tortoise
Fretboard Inlay: Mother-of-Pearl Century
Finish: Gloss Body
Rosette: Single-Ring Ivoroid/Faux Tortoise
Tuners: Taylor Nickel
Additional Details: ES2 Electronics, Taylor Deluxe Hardshell Case



Although we introduced torrefied spruce tops as a standard feature of our revoiced maple 600 Series in 2015, we've been extremely selective about our use of the specially roasted tops with other guitar models since then. We've only occasionally brought it to a limited edition model.

"We don't want to be careless about the way we use it," Andy says. "While it can be very good, it's an ingredient that doesn't go well with every guitar recipe."

The torrefaction process is meant to approximate the way the wood's makeup naturally changes over time, which causes a guitar top to vibrate more easily and respond more readily to a player's touch. While the torrefaction techniques conventionally used by other guitar makers typically incorporate an oxygen-free environment, our approach is slightly different.

"We're trying to closely mimic what happens to a piece of wood naturally," Andy says, "which is more of an oxidation reaction than solely high temperature. We designed our roasting method to allow the wood to start oxidizing."

After our release of a limited edition walnut/cedar Grand Symphony last fall, Andy wanted to make another run of walnut guitars, this time paired with a torrefied spruce top.

"I love the sound of walnut guitars that have had a little time to age," Andy says. "A 20-year-old walnut guitar sounds glorious. In this case, pairing walnut with a roasted spruce top is an interesting twist."

Walnut's tonal personality tends to combine some of maple's transparency with the dry properties of mahogany. Together with the torrefied top and our Grand Auditorium body style, players can expect a touch-sensitive response that reflects the way they articulate the strings, making for a dynamic voice that captures the nuances of the player.

The guitar borrows our 500 Series appointment package, with the minor material swap of mother-of-pearl fretboard inlays rather than grained ivoroid.



326e Baritone-8 LTD

Body: Grand Symphony
Back/Sides: Sapele
Top: Mahogany
Bracing: Baritone
Binding: Black
Fretboard Inlay: Italian Acrylic Small Diamonds
Finish: All-Satin Body, Shaded Edgeburst Top
Rosette: 3-Ring
Tuners: Taylor Nickel
Additional Details: Elixir Baritone Strings (Tuned to B), Taylor Deluxe Hardshell Case

Releasing baritone guitars as limited editions has proved to be a fruitful approach for us. It provides a recurring opportunity to tout the merits of a uniquely voiced instrument, along with the flexibility to design a slightly different model each time.

Earlier this year, we unveiled our first-ever spruce-top Dreadnought baritone (featuring Engelmann spruce paired with ovangkol). This time around, we return to the Grand Symphony body we've used for most baritone offerings. We also revisit the winning wood pairing

of sapele topped with mahogany, and embellish the baritone's husky acoustic register with a splash of octave shimmer in the form of our rich-voiced 8-string edition.

Our design flexibility is tempered by certain guiding parameters. Warm but dry-sounding woods are especially compatible with the baritone design — they don't produce the overtones that can get in the way, especially with the baritone's deep register and, in this case, the two extra octave strings.

"The use of dry-voiced woods is a practical choice," says Andy Powers.

"With a baritone's lower fundamental notes, more of the high-pitch overtone series are in your audible range, which can interfere with other notes you're playing. That's why many drier-sounding woods with strong fundamental response — mahogany, sapele, koa, blackwood, ovangkol — make really cool baritone guitars."

The 8-string offers a unique blend of a lower-register voicing (it's tuned from B to B) and octave sparkle on the middle strings. Beyond putting songs into a more comfortable vocal range, it gives players and singers a different musical palette to explore.

"I think of songwriters playing a duo gig, where you have one person on a guitar capo'd up, somebody else playing a baritone 8, and two voices," Andy says. "It sounds glorious. Or if you like to play some old blues songs — it's great for that Leadbelly or Lydia Mendoza Tex-Mex 12-string sort of sound. Traditionally those 12-strings were downtuned almost into baritone range. These 8-string baritone guitars give you that sort of flavor without the work. They really shine for a singer-songwriter where you want a different voice."

And if you want to get back to a more familiar tonal register, a capo at the fifth fret will get you there. One tip if you do: because of the octave strings, a 12-string capo will work best. You'll also want to retune after adding the capo because of the differences in string thickness between the baritone and octave strings.

This vintage-look edition features our standard 300 Series appointments, including a satin finish and a shaded edgeburst around that dark mahogany top, along with ES2 electronics that give the guitar a bold and inspiring sonic presence when plugged in.



T5z Classic Deluxe LTD

Body: Sapele
Top: Neo-Tropical Mahogany
Bracing: Standard T5z
Binding: None
Fretboard Inlay: Italian Acrylic Small Diamonds
Finish: Gloss Body and Neck
Color Options: Fiesta Red, Arctic White, Sonic Blue
Tuners: Taylor Nickel
Additional Details: T5z Electronics with 3 Pickups and 5-Way Switching, Taylor Deluxe Hardshell Case

This tricolor twist on our popular T5z Classic Deluxe was inspired in part by the shared vintage heritage of hot rod cars and electric guitars. While the T5z already asserts a unique musical personality — make that personalities, considering its expansive tonal range — these gumdrop-hued editions showcase a fun visual pop in the form of Fiesta Red, Arctic White, and Sonic Blue color options. The all-gloss finish and unbound body and F-holes accentuate the sleek aesthetic, which Andy says pays homage to some of the cool custom cars of the late '50s and '60s.

"One of the big trends in the custom and hotrod world starting back in the 1950s was to shave stuff off to smooth out the car's lines," he says. "Say you

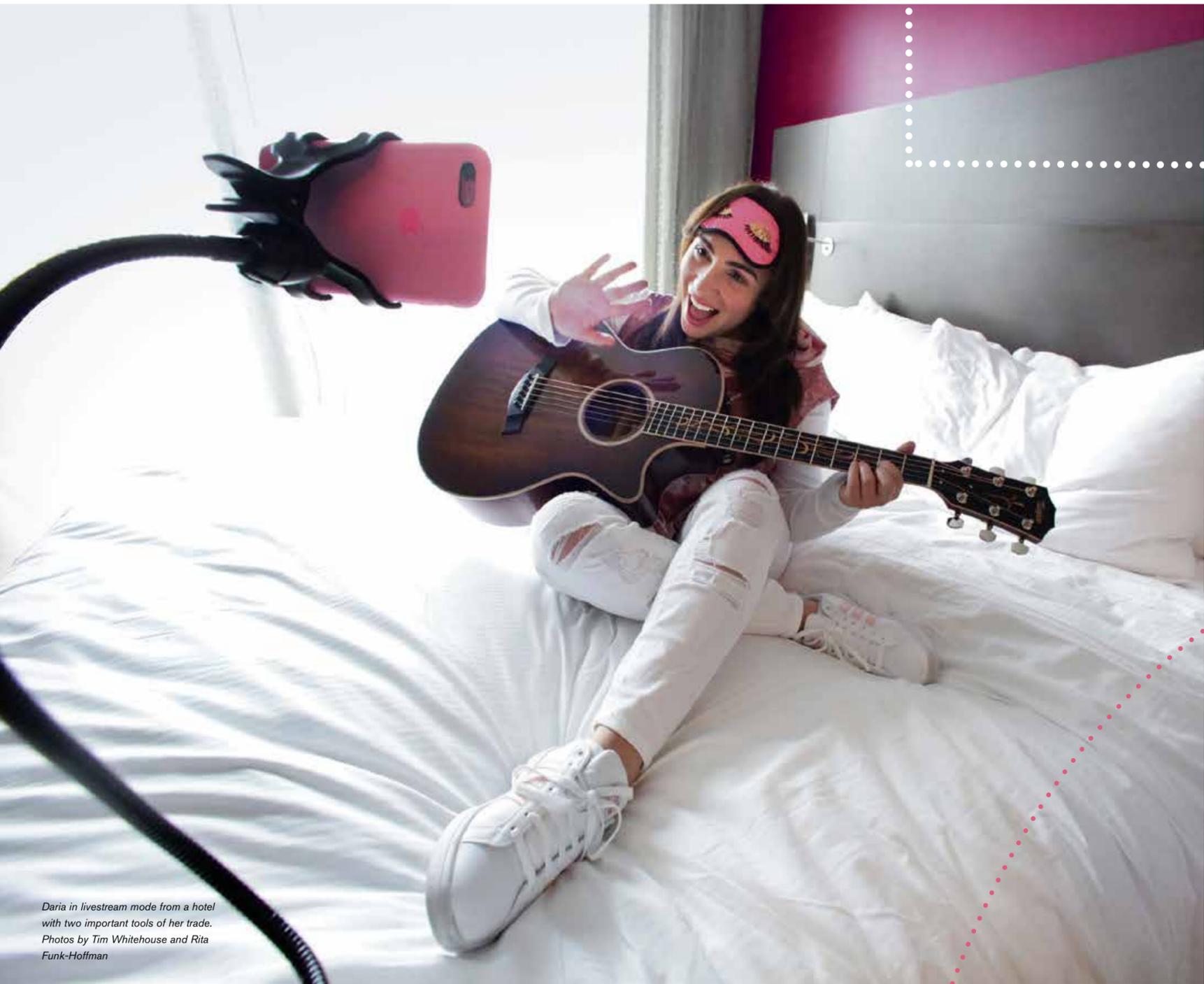
started with a Lincoln Premier or Capri, or a Mercury. A designer like George Barris would shave the door handles off, weld over the holes and smooth them out, and just leave the windows down and open the door from the inside. They'd take off the hood ornament and other bits of chrome and flash to make it even smoother, sleeker and futuristic. Then you'd paint over the whole thing with an attractive, eye-grabbing color, and it looked really great. To me, the electric guitar is tied so closely to the custom and hot rod world; I like to see the shared inspiration."

While the colors harken back to both vintage cars and guitars, musically, the T5z is flush with Taylor's innovative design strokes, including our propri-

etary pickup configuration and five-way switching, which together open the door to a sweeping array of electric sounds, some familiar, and some new. Andy notes that one of the fun aspects of exploring the T5z's sonic palette is that players inevitably seem to discover new tonal colors.

"While you can make a lot of different sounds with it, often electric guitar players will find one or two flavors they can't get with any other electric guitar," he says. "Those often become their go-to sounds with this guitar. The cool part is those sounds vary from person to person, with each player finding new flavors that work really well for their musical style."

All guitars in our fall collection feature a limited edition guitar label. If you need help locating a particular model, feel free to call our Customer Service team and they'll be happy to help you.



Daria in livestream mode from a hotel with two important tools of her trade. Photos by Tim Whitehouse and Rita Funk-Hoffman

H Y P E R C O N N E C T E D

In an age of social media, Daria Musk is using the latest tech tools to broaden the range of live performance and empower others to pursue their musical dreams

By Colin Griffith

Though she's frequently viewed by audiences through an electronic screen, Daria Musk has shaped a career out of making very real connections. From her studio in the woods of Connecticut, the singer-songwriter creates buoyant, heartfelt music that reflects the youthful energy of her generation.

But she's no recluse. Quite the opposite: She's an artist eager to engage with new listeners using every channel available. In fact, she's collaborated with tech giants like Google and Facebook to pioneer new pathways like livestreaming video, leading the way for other artists to do the same.

Most days, you'll find Daria in her studio, working on new songs or playing one of her many Taylors. But quintessential Daria, whose voice and personality have drawn hundreds of thousands to her online platforms, comes through in her performances. Her shows, which mostly happen via Facebook Live, are remarkable for their interactivity. Daria communicates with her audience in the

moment, answering questions between songs, sending shout-outs to loyal fans, and chatting with Ram, her ever-present mentor, bassist and producer. The same warmth that lifts her music resonates through the digital pipeline. Even through a laptop screen, her personality is as effervescent as her voice.

Beyond her own musical ambitions, Daria is striving to inspire a new generation of musicians and artists to translate their passions into a fulfilling professional life. A self-proclaimed "artistpreneur," she wears the "futurist" tag with pride, and she's not shy about sharing her broader musical vision — she's given TED talks and lent her insights to an array of major music conference panel discussions. It's fitting, then, that her aspirations toward creative success are matched by a keen interest in paving new roads in the music industry, especially for women.

In early August we talked to Daria about her career and the thriving connectivity of music on

the Internet, as well as her thoughts on obstacles in the industry and, of course, her collection of Taylors. Many of them clutter her studio space, and she clearly loves her instruments as much as she loves making music with them. For Daria, a good guitar serves as a conduit for the things that feel true inside. Maybe that's why she talks about each of her guitars as if they're lifelong friends that have enabled her to pursue her passion.

We caught up with Daria again a few weeks later, when she and Ram visited the Taylor factory to spend time with Taylor staff and discuss some content creation projects being developed. While they were here, they also livestreamed one of Daria's weekly "Taylor Tuesday" performance segments, which she and Ram have been doing for the past year via Facebook Live. Her special guest was Bob Taylor, who shared his admiration for her "artistpreneurial" approach to her career and even let her play the second guitar he made when he was 17.

How did you get started as a musician and recording artist? Why did you decide to take such an unconventional path?

It's always funny when people ask me that. I didn't decide! I've just been singing as loud as possible to anyone who would pay attention.

sing when I was 13. I got that stuff out of the way from 14 to 16. I'm glad I built up that muscle, because you need to forget the chords on stage and learn how to flow and be comfortable in front of a crowd. Because of all that, live has always been my favorite mode of expression. I really love being a recording artist

we ended up working with their engineering teams to make the audio sound good over live video. After that, I ended up moonlighting as a technologist. It's a unique perspective on the music business.

What was it like when you were first attracting attention on the Internet? Do you think that there's something in that digital connection that fans might not get with a recording artist in the more traditional sense?

I've never been inside the starmaker machinery, so I don't know the rules of how you're supposed to be with an audience. I don't get the mystery-makes-history thing; I've never had a manager or an agent teach me that stuff. To me, it's the same as if I was playing for people at a coffee shop. We're just people connecting through what I think is the most universal language on the planet, music. It connects people in a way that is so instantaneous, so heartfelt; it cuts through any language barrier, any cultural barrier. I just feel really close to people when I play.

There was this magical little moment when I was still playing shows on Google Hangouts because it was face-to-face. I'd see the sun rising through peoples' windows in Norway while I was playing. I got to tour the world for the first time through everybody else's laptop screens. It's inspired my music, and certainly changed who I am as a person and as an artist.

How has that digital intimacy affected how you actually create new music?

A while back, we actually had fans from all around the world send us their voices saying the words "You move me" in their own languages. This was for a song I was working on right before the big break happened. It had this line, "All around the world, you move me." It felt like I was dreaming up what was about to happen, willing it into existence. That was the first song that people really connected to, so we asked them to do that. It's such an emotional sentiment, being moved by something. I didn't think it was something that Google Translate would be able to handle. We got submissions in something like 30 languages, and we chopped those up and did this intro to the single that starts with their voices. So that was really special.

I've always wanted to make a global album. I want to do a multipurpose tour playing shows and sampling sounds from different places. Collaborating with artists from around the world has always been something that I want to do.

Where does that interest in global music come from?

That's the music I grew up listening to. It was Dave Matthews and those odd meters and polyrhythms, this beautiful weaving of different sounds. Paul Simon's *Graceland* is near to my heart, with that Ladysmith Black Mambazo choral sound and the way Paul created those compositions with artists in Africa. Bjork, too, and plenty more. I was attracted to those sounds, the different kinds of chords and scales, different styles of singing.

That's something I've been curious about, looking through your different platforms and seeing how you've built this following. Where do you see this going?

I've always had big visions. Last year, I spent a lot of time teaching myself how to be a filmmaker. So that's my new mode of expression. I've been giving out tiny snippets of the vibe on YouTube, and that's coming very soon. I've actually developed three different long-form video series. They're sort of digital jewel cases for the music.

There's *Unlabeled*, which is going to be a spotlight on my music and my ideas. *Artistpreneur* is going to turn the spotlight back on people I admire. I'm excited to learn from all of those people. I've been developing a whole series for Taylor called *Unmastered*. I'm really excited about that one. It's going to be about demystifying the music industry, breaking the fourth wall and discovering how it works along with the audience. A lot of music maker content online is intimidating. I'm never going to know what this guy with awards on his walls knows. I admire that, but I don't feel like working after I watch. So I'm excited about making the opposite of that. We'll go through the process of writing songs, finding inspiration, doing your own arrangements, figuring out cool chords, and really just finding your own voice, both on guitar and with music in general.

I love to think about unconventional ways of discovering talented musicians. It's kind of become my rallying cry. Because it happened that way for me, and it's what I know. It's a saturated part of the Internet, and more people are listening to music than ever before. At the same time, I think the industry is still missing the mark on a few things I've experienced firsthand. For example, I'm not a big fan of *American Idol*, *America's Got Talent*, that kind of thing. I really believe in owning your art, understanding your world, and being the captain of your own ship. That's the artistpreneur side of things. But I also really believe that music is collaborative, not competitive. Those shows are really good for the people who make the

shows, and not so good for the artists who get put through the mill. I think there needs to be a more modern and authentic way of breaking as an artist. Obviously we have YouTube, Facebook Live, everything on the Internet, but that's such a weedy, complicated, overgrown place. I think we need a lot more curation and a lot more love.

You've written about being a millennial. Is that a challenging label to deal with? Maybe the hardest part about that is how overwhelming it feels to see all these avenues opening up for artists. In

shows, and not so good for the artists who get put through the mill. I think there needs to be a more modern and authentic way of breaking as an artist. Obviously we have YouTube, Facebook Live, everything on the Internet, but that's such a weedy, complicated, overgrown place. I think we need a lot more curation and a lot more love.

Let's pivot a little bit and talk about your experience being a woman in the music industry. The recording industry is very male-dominated.

It's a sausage fest. It can be a little alienating. It's funny, because this whole

working with other people. And being an awkward teen, learning how to play and sing was my first way of really being able to connect with people in a way that made sense to me.

Were there ways that you found to break past that barrier that helped you find your confidence as a female? What would you tell other women about moving past those obstacles?

I think women today are getting really good at not being intimidated. I'm not worried about all the other girls out there. I think they're really brave and

I think that's why I'm passionate about this artistpreneur tag that I've come up with. I think for women in music, the most empowering thing you can do is understand the 360-degree view, all aspects of what you're getting into. I understand how to read my contracts, and I've had to be my own manager, my own agent. So when I did take on an agent, I knew if he was doing a good job or not, and I knew what to ask for. You get to hold this vision of what you want to create and make sure that things are up to your standards. I think women are brilliantly suited to merge these worlds of creativity and entrepre-

I also have a Taylor T5 with a koa top. The T5 was a big confidence breakthrough for me. I always wanted to play more complex lines and rock out in a more electric style, but I was a little intimidated trying to decide on an electric guitar. Having that confidence of knowing my way around an acoustic but still being able to get that Andy Summers shimmer and delay like the Edge, this guitar broke the electric world wide open for me. It became a huge part of the way I write. I also have a 416ce Spring Limited with grafted walnut and a couple of Taylor solid-body electrics. I wish they didn't stop making these!

How did you get involved with Taylor?

A while back, Google invited me out to do a big show out in Seattle where their team was working on Hangouts. I didn't have road cases for my guitars, and I was really worried about flying with them. So I called the Taylor factory, because I'm ridiculous, and left a message. I basically just said, "Hi, you don't know me, but I have all these people online that watch me play and I have to go to Seattle and I don't know how to bring my guitars, what do I do? OK, bye." It was the worst message I'd ever left, and I knew I wasn't going to hear back. But about two weeks later, I got a call, and it was Tim Godwin from Taylor. He had Taylor send a couple guitars to the hotel out in Seattle that I could play for the show. It saved my bacon. We reconnected recently and started doing the Facebook thing. It's just been a really great experience to be able to play so many different guitars and tell people about them. They all have their own voice and their own style, and they all inspire something different. It's a really special thing, the kind of confidence that Taylor guitars instill in you. Because they're so easy to play and they sound so gorgeous, you build a belief in yourself from the beginning. It sounds silly, but it goes such a long way.

Recently, Bob Taylor texted me after one of the Facebook shows. He just told me that he'd been watching the episodes and enjoying them. All I could say was that I was really grateful that he went after his dream, because he's made it possible for me and so many other people to go after theirs. **W&S**

Were you playing Taylor guitars before you started actually working with Taylor? Oh yeah.

Okay, so what did you start with? I can take you on a tour. This is Jasmine, she's my baby. She's a 714ce, and she's really old now, but she's the most beautiful thing on the planet. Cedar top, rosewood back and sides. I started on a crappy, cheap guitar because that was all I could afford, and I spent a long time playing as many gigs as possible and saving up to get her. She was my one and only for a long time. She's got these great love marks, she's all bruised and beautiful. She's still my main writing guitar. We have the longest bond.

I get really excited when I see women playing instruments onstage. When you can play, you own your space, and you have a better way of expressing your ideas.



Daria with special guest Bob Taylor during a "Taylor Tuesday" livestream at the Taylor factory

the past, it wasn't so expected of the artist to have already figured out how to be their own agent, their own marketing director, which is a big part of the challenge for new musicians now. As millennials, I think we have the chance to take the power back. The old systems can't hang on forever.

This reminds me of an episode of *Unlabeled* about how I consider Beethoven to be the first independent artist. He was the first person to figure out how to make copies of his own scores. He was the first person to work with a patron instead of a royal court to distribute the music. He could then write what he wanted to write because he wasn't beholden to some prince. What's happening now with the Internet feels really similar.

Really, any judgement about the validity of art or expression is always going to end up falling on the wrong side of history. Art is art, and of course it's subjective, but the truth is the major label artists are constantly dipping into the pool of amazing creators out in the

relationship with Taylor has been really fun, even though I was really surprised that they would want to work with someone like me. I'm not Andy McKee, I'm not Andy Summers, I'm not any of those dudes. I'm just doing my own thing. I took it upon myself when I was learning to create my own style, and I put a lot of work into that, so it was really cool to be seen and acknowledged. It was really great to hear that Taylor wants to make this world friendlier for women, and I'm really excited to be a part of that, if I can.

Music is such a powerful and empowering way of expressing yourself, your ideas, your emotions. I always tell other young women how empowering it is to play an instrument. Whether it's your laptop or guitar or piano or anything, don't rely on the dudes to make all the music so that you can just be a singer. I get really excited when I see women playing instruments onstage. When you can play, you own your space, and you have a better way of expressing your ideas, even if you're

outspoken about what they want right now. Everybody knows how healthy it is for women to break down those walls and get involved with everything. It's funny to think of music as an intimidating industry to break into as a woman, considering that women rule the charts, for the most part.

This is another reason why I'm passionate about merging the artistic and entrepreneurial aspects of music. I started out playing coffee shops, little clubs and festivals, stuff like that, and that is where I experienced not being taken seriously. There was one experience that I think really shaped me early on. I played an open-mic night at the C-Note in New York, I was probably 15 years old and I was just belting my heart out. It was really exciting to watch people pass around the tip jar. The jar was full of cash after the show, and the owner came up to me with the jar after the show and said I did great. I thought he was going to hand me the jar. He just said, "You don't think this is for you, do you?" I was pretty fired up when I walked out of there.

[Sustainability]

TREE HOWS

Bob Taylor's World Forestry Tour proved to be an enlightening journey down the path of innovative forestry

By Jim Kirlin, with technical support from Scott Paul and Nick Koch

THE DATES: APRIL 20 - MAY 14

THE GROUP: BOB TAYLOR, SCOTT PAUL, STEVE MCMINN, VIDAL DE TERESA, NICK KOCH, KEVIN BURKE, PAUL AKERS

THE STOPS: GUATEMALA, IRELAND, SPAIN, CAMEROON, VIETNAM, MALAYSIA, FIJI, HAWAII, WASHINGTON STATE

After more than a year of planning, on April 20 Bob Taylor and a group of six others embarked on what was dubbed their World Forestry Tour, a 25-day trip that spanned eight countries and four continents. Their agenda: to visit areas where innovative forest restoration projects are being implemented, meet with practitioners, foresters, scientists, wood suppliers and other stakeholders, learn as much as possible, and gain inspiration by seeing diverse examples of successful initiatives. The trip also included visits to areas in which Bob and members of

his group are engaged in their own restoration work: Cameroon (ebony), Hawaii (koa), and the Pacific Northwest (maple). Bob's travel partners included **Scott Paul**, Taylor's Director of Natural Resource Sustainability (profiled last issue); **Steve McMinn**, founder and co-owner of tonewood supplier Pacific Rim Tonewoods (which supplies spruce, maple and cedar, and cuts our koa), who has led the innovative research being done on propagating maple; **Kevin Burke**, who has also been instrumental in the propagation of koa plants in Hawaii and maple in Western

Washington State; **Nick Koch**, general manager at the Hawaii forest management company Forest Solutions and an expert in tropical forestry; **Vidal de Teresa**, managing director of international tonewood supplier Madinter and Taylor's ownership partner in the Crelicam ebony mill in Cameroon; and **Paul Akers**, a longtime friend of Bob's and founder and president of FastCap, a product development company specializing in woodworking tools and hardware for professional builders. Akers (who worked at Taylor decades ago as a teenager fresh out of high school)

is also a renowned expert on applying Lean principles to manufacturing and other areas of life. The trip featured nine destination points: Guatemala, Ireland, Spain, Cameroon, Vietnam, Malaysia, Fiji, Hawaii, and Washington State. Along the way, Akers documented the group's travels with video that incorporated aerial drone footage, which was woven into a series of video blog (vlog) reports that shed light on the innovative forestry programs being implemented at each location. You'll find all the vlog episodes on Taylor's YouTube page, in the playlist

"Bob Taylor's World Forestry Tour — 2017 Video Blog." (Side note: Two stops that aren't represented in the vlog series include a visit to Madinter's headquarters in Madrid, Spain, and Pacific Rim Tonewoods in Concrete, Washington.) The vlog series offers a fascinating glimpse into the future-minded work being done all around the world, and underscores the importance of agroforestry as a vital component of sustainability. We invite you to check out the series when you get a chance. In the meantime, here are some highlights from their trip.



Bob with members of his group and staff from the Izabal Agro-Forest (IAF) in Guatemala tour the IAF forest reserve

GUATEMALA

The group visited with Juan Bronson, a third-generation farmer and the co-founder and COO of Izabal Agro-Forest (IAF), an award-winning agroforestry operation located in the Rio Dulce area of eastern Guatemala. An agro-forestry approach to restoration focuses on plants for food and medicine as much as it does on trees for wood. IAF has done a lot of pioneering work in managing and growing native and threatened species, including Honduran rosewood, mahogany, tropical cedar, cocobolo, and zebrawood. In 2014 IAF was recognized by the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO) as one of the best plantations in Guatemala. It's also regarded as Central America's premiere grower of genuine mahogany.

In a vlog post from the forest, Bob Taylor talks with Bronson about IAF's work to restore former cattle grazing pasture land (which had previously been a forest until the 1960s), and visits new forest areas where rosewood and mahogany trees were planted 30 years ago. Reforestation, Bob notes, is the only guaranteed path to sustainability to ensure the future supply of many tropical hardwoods. Too many other initiatives, he says, are simply managing the slow decline.

Much of the forest cover of Guatemala and Central America has been lost, and Bronson laments the loss of the most viable genetic sources. IAF is working to find the best seed sources and germinate and plant them.

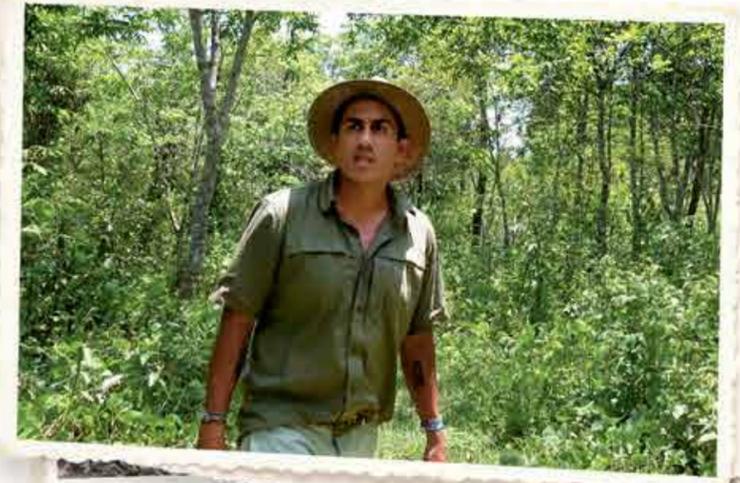
"You can call it a plantation, you can call it a forest that we're building," Bob says in his report, "but the fact is that this is a real, viable forest with incredible wildlife." Taylor's Scott Paul can appreciate the transformation from personal experience. In the late 1980s he worked at the Case Guatemala Orphanage just a few miles down the river, and at that time the biologically diverse land that is now the IAF reserve was all open cow fields.

Bronson talks about other benefits of preserving forests as well, such as the way they create natural buffer systems that can protect against fires, human intrusion, disease, etc. IAF's operation covers roughly 1,200 acres and uses a polyculture system of diverse approaches that in some instances also incorporates clusters of the same species planted in rows, such as with the commercially valuable mahogany, because it stimulates vertical growth and helps control threats to the health of the trees, including shoot-boring moth species. It's an ongoing real-world experiment.

Applying the right cultivation techniques for a given species also helps accelerate the rate of growth. Currently IAF is growing 12,000 Honduran rosewood trees.



Right: Juan Bronson, co-founder of IAF; Below (top down): Scott Paul with a new generation of trees at IAF; Bob Taylor among a trial of mahogany trees at IAF; In Ireland, Bob talks with Traolach Layton about the successful cultivation of spruce



IRELAND

From the heat of Guatemala to the wet and chilly April climes of southern Ireland's County Cork. On this leg of the trip, the group learned more about the cultivation of Sitka spruce in Ireland.

"In the early 1900s Ireland only had 1 percent of their land covered in forest, but thanks to replanting, today they have 11 percent," Bob says. "And they're working to achieve 17 percent."

Sitka, which is not native to Ireland, has become the number-one commercial forestry species there. (The original seed source was Washington State.) Over the last several decades, hundreds of thousands of acres of Sitka have been planted, and upwards of 15,000 private forest owners have emerged in the past 20 years. Much of this reforestation has taken place on marginal lands once deemed of little economic value. In one of their vlog segments, Bob talks with forestry expert Traolach Layton from the timber processing company GP Wood about cultivating spruce for commercial use, and the co-ops that have been formed among smaller private landowners.

The group also visited one of GP's state-of-the-art sawmills. One vlog segment features a cool drone tour of the mill with other aerial views of Cork's ruggedly beautiful landscape and coast. While the Sitka trees currently aren't mature enough for instrument wood, in the decades ahead they may prove to be another viable source.



Top Down: In Cameroon, Vidal de Teresa talks with a resident of one of the first villages involved in planting ebony trees; Bob with forester and educator Dr. Zac Tchoundjeu, founder of Cameroon's Higher Institute of Environmental Science

CAMEROON

The group spent several days in Cameroon, giving Bob and Vidal a chance to show the progress that has been made on several fronts relating to improvements at the Crelicam mill, along with recent successes in the propagation of ebony trees under the Congo Basin Institute's ebony restoration project — a project funded entirely by a private gift from Bob and Cindy Taylor. In one vlog post, Bob talks about the ways that Crelicam has created better work opportunities for the local community, recounting a sentiment that has become a central theme of our work there: "We came for the ebony; we stayed for the people."

Crelicam general manager Andre Bena, a native Cameroonian who was educated in Germany but returned to Cameroon to work at Crelicam because he believes in the social, environmental, and economic value of the forestry work being done, testifies to the transformation that is taking place.

"People are knocking at the door all the time trying to get a job," he says. "Whenever [government] ministers come out to see us, they cannot believe this has happened in Cameroon."

In another vlog segment we learn about Cameroon's Higher Institute of Environmental Sciences, established by Dr. Zac Tchoundjeu to teach agroforestry science to a new generation of students. Dr. Zac realizes that protecting and managing the tropical ecosystems in the Congo Basin for the future will depend on educating young Cameroonians. By providing educational opportunities within Cameroon, the goal is to reverse the "brain drain" effect, in which Cameroonians traditionally have had to go abroad to pursue such studies, and even if they've wanted to return after earning their degree, typically haven't had career opportunities related to their field.

The group also visited the Congo Basin Institute to see the research trials being conducted as part of the ebony project to better understand how ebony trees can be propagated and planted across the landscape. This project aims to plant 15,000 ebony trees over three years. Bob and the crew also visited one of the villages participating in this project and saw the newly built plant propagation facilities. They also toured the forest where the ebony trees will be planted.

VIETNAM

A visit to Ho Chi Minh City offered the group a different perspective on forestry, namely the relationship between the forestry and furniture-making industries, and the global economy that is created in the process. Vietnam is the world's largest furniture manufacturer, and the group visited several factories, including one that transforms scrap wood into furniture that is then sold to the U.S. market. Bob shares in his vlog report that the furniture industry in Vietnam exports some \$7 billion worth of products per year, half of it to the U.S. Half of that furniture is made from U.S. pine and oak, which we grow on plantations in the U.S. and export to Vietnam.



Top Down: Furniture being made at a factory in Vietnam; A view of the nursery at Forest Solutions in Malaysia; Seeds being planted at the nursery



MALAYSIA

In Malaysia, the group visited Forest Solutions Malaysia, a forestry management and consulting company, to learn more about the ways that plantation forestry can reduce pressure on natural forest resources. On one forest stand, they visited areas that had been planted with a 10-year harvest cycle in mind, generating both economic and social value for local communities. According to Forest Solutions Malaysia, the plantation model yields a substantial economic improvement — 10 times greater — over clearing a natural forest. Forest Solutions' method of planting is on the cutting edge of forest practices, and includes a program to restore intact rainforest in key areas. The group also learned about the role that forest plantations serve in providing a supply of fast-growing wood for Asian furniture and paper producers, reducing the impact on the remaining intact rainforests of Southeast Asia.

FIJI

Bob often cites Fiji as an example of the longer-term dividends that come from sustainable forestry and forward-minded thinking. Starting some 70 years ago, the British planted mahogany trees on Fiji with the future in mind. Now Fijians are able to reap the economic benefits, and Taylor is currently purchasing some Fijian mahogany for use on some of our guitar necks. In Bob's vlog post from Fiji, he talks with Bau Tabete, co-founder and owner of Tabs Investments, the company that supplies the mahogany. Bau explains that due to the lack of high volume and mahogany's relatively slow growth rate, clients that attach high value to the mahogany, such as Taylor Guitars, make ideal supply partners. They also support local businesses in other important ways.

"It's companies like Taylor Guitars who nurture companies like [ours] in developing countries where it's extremely difficult to start your own business," he says.

Bau says 80 percent of Fiji's timber industry is derived from plantations, and that the plantation approach yields a better concentration of trees per hectare. The land ownership remains in the hands of the Fijian communities, who lease it to the government or private investors, who in turn do the forestry work — which creates jobs.

Fiji's remaining intact forests must be protected. If well managed, the Fijian mahogany plantations can relieve the demand pressure both there and on the mahogany in Central and South America.



Top Down: Bob Taylor in Fiji with employees of Tabs Investments, in front of processed plantation mahogany; A Fijian kava ceremony with the locals; Bob points out a section of Fijian plantation mahogany

HAWAII

On the Big Island of Hawaii, the home base of Paniolo Tonewoods — a joint venture between Pacific Rim Tonewoods and Taylor Guitars — forester Nick Koch offered a detailed overview of koa reforestation efforts currently taking place. Koa forests have greatly diminished areas across Hawaii due to a variety of factors, among them overharvesting and the clearing of forestland for cattle pastures during the 17th and 18th centuries. (Koa, once abundant, had a value far lower than that of beef, which precipitated Hawaii's deforestation.)

The lack of adequate fencing has also allowed the intrusion of cattle, sheep and pigs into areas set aside for native forests, where they either trample or graze on young koa trees and other fragile native plants. ("It's a salad bar every day," Bob says in the vlog report from the island.)

Nick has worked with Forest Solutions in Hawaii for the past 16 years to reverse this decline by converting pastureland back to native koa tree plantations, with approximately 900 acres, or 400,000 trees, planted to date. One part of the restoration approach is to remove dead or dying koa trees and use the revenue from the sale of the wood to fund replanting efforts. One harvested tree, Koch says in a vlog post, can fund two to three acres' worth of planting. Other investments include the installation of fencing in areas where restoration is happening to keep cattle and sheep out.

Bob makes the point that some people think koa, which is endemic to the Hawaiian Islands, is endangered, but it's actually not. It's simply that many of the larger koa trees are located on protected public land. Koa trees have actually become more abundant as the value of grazing declines relative to that of native forest management.

The group also stopped in Maui to get an update on current projects and a glimpse of the future. Beyond working with Nick and others at Forest Solutions, Paniolo is collaborating with Maui's Haleakala Ranch, the Hawaiian Agricultural Research Center, and the Maui-based Native Nursery. Early rapid growth of koa, Steve McMinn says, combined with superb wood quality, make koa ideal for reforesting temperate lands throughout the islands. Recently, Forest Solutions successfully reforested 150 acres of former sugar cane plantation. Nick is optimistic about koa's future.

"We will be able to provide the next generation with a lot more options than our generation had," he says.

You can watch all the vlog posts from the World Forestry Tour in our playlist on Taylor's YouTube page.



Top Down: Vidal and Steve McMinn in front of an overmature Hawaiian koa tree destined to be removed. Revenue from the sale of its wood will fund 2-3 acres of replanting; Young koa trees planted for forest restoration; Vidal measures the trunk of a koa tree as Nick Koch looks on

Soundings

R.I.P. Jimmy LaFave

As our last issue was heading to press in May, we learned of the passing of acclaimed Austin singer-songwriter **Jimmy LaFave** after a battle with cancer. LaFave was a beloved and enduring figure in Americana circles, whose emotive voice was among the most moving in the folk world — soulful, plaintive, pure, at times stirringly gritty and frayed in a way that allowed him to channel the universal longing, loneliness, heartache, and vulnerability of the human spirit through his lyrics.

LaFave's Texas roots stretched to Oklahoma, where he lived for a time while growing up, and where as an aspiring musician he was captivated by the music and artistic sensibility of folk legend and famed Okie Woody Guthrie. Throughout his career, LaFave was a proud torchbearer of Guthrie's legacy, participating in numerous Guthrie tribute projects at the invitation of Guthrie's daughter Nora, including an appearance at the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame to celebrate Guthrie's work, and the following year to speak and perform at Guthrie's induction into the Oklahoma Hall of Fame. He also served on the advisory board for the annual Woody Guthrie Folk Festival and loved to perform at what he considered his favorite musical event. He was even invited to view unseen lyrics from the Woody Guthrie Archives by Nora, who helped him select a batch, to which he co-wrote music.

LaFave's home base for much of his career was Austin, where he swiftly established himself in the music community, earning a pair of awards for Best Singer-Songwriter. He also earned a reputation as one of the foremost interpreters of Bob Dylan's music, performing and recording dozens of Dylan songs. Though he never achieved broader mainstream notoriety, his work was lauded by critics, his peers, and the loyal following he loved performing for.

He was also a fixture at the annual Folk Alliance Conference that Taylor attends each year, and for those of us on the Taylor staff who saw him perform at one of the many late-night showcase events artists would play, sometimes in hotel suites, it was almost the perfect setting: it served to amplify



Photo: Pete Lacker

the incredible intimacy he was able to create, as he strummed his roadworn black Jumbo **615** and sang, his eyes closed to be fully invested in the emotional content of a ballad. He had mastered the instrument of his voice, and knew how to manipulate its occasional

breaks with soul-baring expressiveness and wrenching beauty.

On May 18, the Austin community celebrated LaFave's life and music with a sold-out "Songwriter Rendezvous" farewell concert at the Paramount Theatre. The emotionally charged event

lasted nearly four hours as more than 20 artists took the stage to pay tribute to LaFave. LaFave himself curated the evening's setlist, a mix of his own songs and others he loved. Anchored by a backing band that featured Chris Gage and members of LaFave's band,

the lineup included Jaimee Harris, Ray Bonneville, Christine Albert, Sam Baker, Ellis Paul, Tish Hinojosa, Kevin "Shinyribs" Russell, Kevin Welch, Sara Lee and Cathy Guthrie, Joe Ely, Slaid Cleaves, Butch Hancock, Ruthie Foster, Abra Moore, Michael Fracasso, Eliza Gilkyson, Gretchen Peters, John Fullbright, and Marcia Ball.

For the evening's finale, LaFave managed to join his friends on-stage, and, despite being in a wheelchair and hooked up to an oxygen tank, lent his noticeably softer voice to a rendition of "Goodnight Irene." Afterward, as the crowd showered him with love in a teary standing ovation, LaFave implored them to help look after his teenage son Jackson. "Take him into the community and nurture him," he told them.

He passed away three days later.

If you haven't had a chance to experience the rich humanity of LaFave's music, his catalog is well worth exploring. Learn more at musicroadrecords.com.

Takin' It to the Stage

In mid-August we caught up with **Pat Simmons** from the Doobie Brothers when the band rolled into San Diego for a sold-out show. Before the concert, Tim Godwin from Artist Relations spent time with Simmons, who was friendly and gracious as always. Godwin brought a **712ce 12-Fret** for Simmons to check out, and after some extended playing time said he liked the unique feel and response of the 12-fret compared to his **14-fret 712ce**.

On stage the band thrilled the crowd with a set loaded with their classic hits. Their triple guitar attack, featuring Simmons, John McFee, and Tom Johnston, was melodic and rocking (you can imagine the sea of air guitar from the crowd on faves like "China Grove"), and the vocal harmonies, especially with bassist John Cowan pitching in, were impeccable. Simmons alternated between ripping on his electrics on the band's rockers and plucking his koa/spruce **GS-Ke** on acoustic-flavored numbers like "Spirit" and his sunburst-top 712ce on "South City Midnight Lady" and "Black Water."

If you recall from our interview from the summer 2016 issue, Simmons is a big motorcycle enthusiast, and he thought we'd get a kick out of seeing a recent painting that features him with two of his material passions. Since 2005, artist David Uhl (uhlstudios.com), a friend of Simmons and the first ever licensed oil painter for Harley-Davidson, has created a signature painting for the famed annual motorcycle rally in Sturgis, South Dakota. This year's piece, "Black Hills Ballad," depicts Simmons resting against his Harley and picking his Taylor by a campfire, against a gorgeous sunset backdrop and with a wolf by his side.

Canadian Makin'

In late June, master luthiers, top-flight players, and guitar enthusiasts convened for the inaugural **Vancouver International Guitar Festival**, a celebration of the art and craft of contemporary guitar building. The event, held June 23-25, brought together exhibitions, master classes, live performances and demonstrations by renowned and emerging guitar makers. More than 80 master luthiers displayed their collections of instruments.

The first day of the event featured VIGF's Luthier Conference, featuring a pair of keynote speakers and "Meet the Maker" roundtable discussions. The program gave attendees a chance to "meet the pioneers of modern luthiery and the next generation of forward-thinkers who are shaping the future of the industry." Our own Andy Powers delivered the opening keynote address. In his talk, titled "Last Man Sanding: My Journey from Indie Luthier to Taylor Guitars," Andy shared his background and offered his take on why guitar making matters in the contemporary world, and why innovation is important for music. He later joined a roundtable discussion with Dave Dunwoodie from Graph Tech Guitar Labs, Doug Kauer from Kauer Guitars, and Canadian guitar-making icon Jean Larrivée of Larrivée Guitars.

Larrivée would later be honored with the VIGF's first Luthier Industry Builder Award. The award was presented on the 50th Anniversary of Larrivée Guitars in honor of Larrivée's "significant and lasting contribution to the evolution of the guitar building industry." The award presentation featured special tributes from Larrivée's protégés, including Linda Manzer, David Iannone, Grit Laskin, and Sergie De Yonge. The following day, Larrivée gave a master class talk in which he reflected on his passion for guitar making and what he's learned in his half-century journey. Other master classes on guitar craftsmanship were



presented by luthiers Bruce Sexauer and Grit Laskin, and on guitar-playing techniques with guitarists Jim Campilongo, Don Alder, jazz player Paul Pigat, and eclectic fingerstylist Itamar Erez.

Notes from NAMM

Members of our sales and marketing teams ventured to Nashville for the **Summer NAMM Show**, held July 13-15. Although the show and our exhibition area are scaled-down compared the winter event in Anaheim, we always look forward to spending a few days in Music City, where so many great songwriters, players, sound engineers, and other industry folks are based. Andy Powers was on hand to talk about our latest designs, spend time with some of our artist friends, and in one closed-door session, offer an exclusive first look at prototype designs we plan to officially unveil at the upcoming winter show. All we'll say for now is that the discerning group invited to sample the prototypes was impressed. Stay tuned for more details in our next issue.

Otherwise, we were able to get new models such as the GS Mini Bass into the hands of some first-call stage and session pros who hadn't yet had a chance to play them, including bass maestro **Michael Rhodes**, who enjoyed the unique feel and tonal flavor of our little four-string wonder. We also showcased other mid-year releases, including

the Grand Concert **Academy 12e** and **sunburst-top 800, 800 Deluxe, and 900 Series** guitars, and we introduced our new 12-fret/12-string Grand Concert models, the **352ce** and **362ce** (featured this issue).

Winning in Winfield

Congratulations to guitarist-composer **Christie Lenée**, who won the **International Fingerstyle Guitar Championship** at the Walnut Valley Festival in Winfield, Kansas, in Sep-



tember. A native of Tampa/St. Petersburg, Florida, and currently based in Nashville, Lenée topped a field of 40 top players from around the world, taking first place with her original compositions "Ivory Coast," "Chasing Infinity," and "Song for Michael Pukac" (Movement 1 and 2). As the winner, Lenée enjoyed the first pick of three

acoustic guitars that were donated as prizes and chose an **814ce DLX**. We checked in with Lenée a week later to get her initial impression of her new guitar. "I've played it every day since the competition," she shared. "The most beautiful thing about this instrument is the glorious shimmer on the top end. She really does sing — especially the harmonics; it's like the angels are coming out!"

Lenée also loved the comfortable feel of the neck and the radius armrest.

"It truly plays like butter...it gives me the opportunity to fly across the neck without much effort...and the armrest makes my right arm feel relaxed and comfortable."

Lenée's guitar and composition chops have earned her accolades in other acoustic circles, and she's jammed on stage with the likes of Tommy Emmanuel, Andy McKee, and frequent Dave Matthews collaborator Tim Reynolds. Her versatile playing style incorporates percussive tapping that has allowed her to infuse her solo instrumental pieces with melodic and rhythmic textures that make her a dynamic live performer. She looks forward to using her 814ce DLX in some of her upcoming performance videos.

Taylor Licks

In late August, longtime Taylor staffers Terry Myers and Glen Wolff met up

with the members of **Cheap Trick**, who were in town for a show. Terry and Glen brought a couple of **GS Mini Basses** for the guys to check out, and both bassist Tom Petersson and frontman Robin Zander dug them. Zander said they're perfect for the tour bus, and that he'd be able to plug the bass into his laptop to record demos... Singer-songwriter and multi-instrumentalist **Darrell Scott** recently picked up a **522e 12-Fret**. Scott has been out with Zac Brown on the band's "Welcome Home" tour. Brown called Scott his favorite musician in the entire world... In August, Tim Godwin from Artist Relations met up with the members of **The Struts**, who've been working on their next record. Last issue we noted that bassist Jed Elliott was loving his GS Mini Bass; this time around, guitarist Adam Slack took delivery of a new **K28e**. Beyond recording, the band was gearing up to open some shows for the Rolling Stones and the Foo Fighters... Actor **Rob Morrow**, who has owned a few Taylors over the years, recently picked up a new **912ce**. Morrow recently joined the cast of ABC-TV's drama *Designated Survivor*, starring Keifer Sutherland.

Calendar

For all the latest Taylor event listings, visit taylorguitars.com/events

New Road Shows This Fall

Our popular Taylor Road Show tour has been going strong for more than a decade now, as our guitar experts circle the globe to share the latest designs from the Taylor factory. The award-winning in-store events resume this fall. Come hang with the friendly Taylor crew as they demonstrate how different body styles, wood pairings, and other design nuances influence tone, offer tips to help you choose the right guitar for your playing style, and answer all your guitar questions. Whether you're a beginner or a seasoned player, you'll come away with a better understanding of what goes into a Taylor guitar.

You'll also get a chance to play and compare the latest models from the Taylor acoustic line, including our 12-fret guitars, small-body 12-strings, and our new GS Mini Bass, and you won't want to miss our electric T5z demo. We'll also have an assortment of custom guitars on hand for you to test-drive.

Our Find Your Fit events take things a step further with a one-on-one consultation to help you choose the right guitar. A Taylor expert will talk to you about your playing style, musical goals, and other preferences, and recommend models that will help you sound your best.

Below you'll find a list of upcoming Taylor events. For the most up-to-date listings, visit our Events page at taylorguitars.com. We hope to see you!

Arkansas

Conway, AR

Wednesday, November 15, 2017, 6:30 p.m.
Palmer Music Company
(501) 327-8129

Arizona

Tempe, AZ

Monday, November 6, 2017, 7 p.m.
Acoustic Vibes Music
(480) 656-7749

Tucson, AZ

Tuesday, November 7, 2017, 7 p.m.
Rainbow Guitars
(520) 325-3376

California

Thousand Oaks, CA

Wednesday, November 8, 2017, 7 p.m.
Instrumental Music
(805) 496-3774

Auburn, CA

Thursday, November 9, 2017, 7 p.m.
Encore Music
(530) 889-0514

Connecticut

New London, CT

Wednesday, November 8, 2017, 6:30 p.m.
Spindrift Guitars
(860) 444-2112

Florida

Clearwater, FL

Tuesday, October 24, 2017, 6:30 p.m.
Sam Ash Music
(727) 725-8062

Orlando, FL

Wednesday, October 25, 2017, 6:30 p.m.
Sam Ash Music
(407) 599-1222

Margate, FL

Thursday, October 26, 2017, 6:30 p.m.
Sam Ash Music
(954) 975-3390

Georgia

Alpharetta, GA

Thursday, October 19, 2017, 7 p.m.
Ken Stanton - Alpharetta
(770) 670-4424

Kentucky

Paducah, KY

Tuesday, November 14, 2017, 6:30 p.m.
Allen Music
(270) 442-8900

Mississippi

Flowood, MS

Thursday, November 16, 2017, 6:30 p.m.
Lakeland Music
(601) 992-0089

Missouri

Rolla, MO

Monday, November 13, 2017, 6:30 p.m.
Merle's Music
(573) 341-3020

New York

Horseheads, NY

Monday, November 6, 2017, 6:30 p.m.
Robert M Sides - Horseheads
(607) 739-1559

New York, NY

Tuesday, November 7, 2017, 6:30 p.m.
Rudy's Music - Soho
(212) 625-2557

Roslyn, NY

Thursday, November 9, 2017, 6:30 p.m.
The Music Zoo
(516) 626-9292

North Carolina

Southern Pines, NC

Tuesday, October 17, 2017, 7 p.m.
Casino Guitars
(844) 521-7768

Asheville, NC

Wednesday, October 18, 2017, 7 p.m.
Musician's Workshop
(828) 252-1249

Oregon

Portland, OR

Wednesday, October 18, 2017, 7 p.m.
Portland Music Company
(503) 228-8437

Keizer, OR

Thursday, October 19, 2017, 7 p.m.
Uptown Music
(503) 393-4437

Pennsylvania

Mt. Lebanon, PA

Thursday, October 12, 2017, 6:30 p.m.
Empire Music
(412) 343-5299

Virginia

Sterling, VA

Monday, October 16, 2017, 6:30 p.m.
Melodee Music
(703) 450-4667

Washington

Seattle, WA

Monday, October 16, 2017, 7 p.m.
Dusty Strings
(206) 634-1662

Tacoma, WA

Tuesday, October 17, 2017, 6 p.m.
Ted Brown Music - Tacoma
(253) 272-3211

West Virginia

Parkersburg, WV

Thursday, October 26, 2017, 6:30 p.m.
C.A. House Music - Parkersburg
(304) 422-4676

Canada

Calgary, AB, CAN

Thursday, October 19, 2017, 7 p.m.
Guitarworks
(403) 216-8525

Whitby, ON, CAN

Monday, October 23, 2017, 7 p.m.
Tundra Music
(905) 493-5000

Toronto, ON, CAN

Tuesday, October 24, 2017, 7 p.m.
KAOS Music
(416) 233-2232

Toronto, ON, CAN

Wednesday, October 25, 2017, 7 p.m.
The 12th Fret
(416) 423-2132

Richmond Hill, ON, CAN

Thursday, October 26, 2017, 7 p.m.
Cosmo Music
(905) 770-5222



True Original

Bill Collings had a knack for refining the best elements of guitar design into his own signature musical forms.

Like others in the guitar community, I recently lost a friend in Bill Collings. While Bill's vibrant and occasionally crazy personality is widely known by those who knew him, one overlooked point in most of the stories told about him was the way his unbridled encouragement could put wind in the sail of another person.

I love the instruments he made. Sure, there are great technical details, crisp workmanship, and clean lines. But what I appreciate most is the way the things he made reflected his personality and perspective. He tried hard and often succeeded in doing what he modestly described as "a good job." Like most guitar makers, he learned by

largely copying what he had seen in other instruments. Looking at a collection of the various instruments he and his merry band of makers offered to musicians, it's easy to see that many were inspired by some of the great instruments from a past era. Yet none seem to be mere copies; they are renderings of iconic musical offerings as

interpreted through an original maker's perspective. While it's relatively easy to simply measure and duplicate a thing, it takes a far larger bank of experience, ability and unchecked creativity to absorb the elements of a design and imagine it from a fresh perspective, while also retaining the inspiration of the original. We musicians and builders were fortunate to get to share what Bill offered us.

This is a far cry from some other interpretations I've seen recently. I'm referring to an ever-increasing number of instruments I can only describe as counterfeits. While a fake version of currency or some other thing of value like jewels may be wrong, it's easy enough to imagine. But a counterfeit guitar, well, that seems weird to me. I think of it this way: A guitar is for playing music. If a guitar is made that performs this function, how can it be a fake? Yet some are. I'm not so naive as to be shocked that people would make an inexpensive thing that tries to look like an instrument we've built in our shop and pass it off as our work. We've always tried to build great instruments,

learning songs written and performed by others. The natural evolution for most players, including me, begins with simply trying to learn a melody or some chords to a song we've heard. We'll graduate to duplicating a particular recording as closely as we possibly can, trying to absorb every nuance and inflection. Ultimately, if able, we move on from there, reimagining the song through our own experience and aesthetic, giving it a fresh dimension in the process. As a good example of this progression, one of the earliest guitar songs I learned was "Walk Don't Run," as played by the Ventures. This version, rendered with twangy guitars, was a fresh take on a recording made a few years prior by the great Chet Atkins, who himself had rearranged the song written and recorded by jazz guitarist Johnny Smith. Listening to each recorded version is a revelation of each artist's perspective and style. All are so good, and such individual pieces. A more recent example is Ryan Adams' retelling of Taylor Swift's record *1989*. Examples like these remind me a great musician is like a

What I appreciate most about Bill's instruments is the way they reflected his personality and perspective.

so in one respect I'm proud that our name has a strong enough association with good work that someone would try to trade on that heritage. Still, I'd be lying if I didn't admit curiosity that a person or factory would go through all the trouble of building even a poor instrument and not take credit for their effort. In a way, it reminds me of a sentiment offered by Nikola Tesla, who wrote, "I don't care that they stole my idea. I care that they don't have any of their own."

In a way, both of these examples are connected by a thin thread in that the initial idea was informed by the work of another. Yet the intention and execution of these two examples could not be further apart, much as the results could not be further apart. One seeks to exert the least effort possible with the hope of delivering less in exchange for a musician's money. The other dedicates a lifetime of effort, study and inspiration to offer the most to a musician by taking the best example they could find and relentlessly laboring to refine an already great instrument.

I appreciate when a musician takes this same approach. We all start by

great author: they tell even a familiar story with their own words.

You've probably heard it said that good musicians borrow, but great musicians steal (an adaptation of a comment about visual artists often attributed to Pablo Picasso). I interpret the meaning of this not as stealing the work of another to call one's own, or of doing poor work and passing it off like a forger. There should be no theft in a nefarious sense; rather, the method of a great artist is to take in a piece of work they recognize as full of merit, and to analyze, absorb and digest the work, be inspired by it, and then reinterpret it as a fresh effort of one's own. That's the method of great musicians and artists, and the method embodied in Bill Collings' work. The guitar world was fortunate to enjoy his efforts and inspiration. We'll all miss him.

— Andy Powers
Master Guitar Designer

Don't Hang Your Guitar Out to Dry

Staying hydrated isn't just vital to our own health; it's essential for our guitars too. No matter how impeccably crafted your Taylor may be, wood is wood, which means that even with a protective finish on the outside, your guitar will react to the ups and downs of relative humidity (RH), since the finish doesn't provide a barrier to water vapor.

The arrival of fall is a reminder to take proper steps to humidify our guitars. In many areas across the Northern Hemisphere, fall brings cooler temperatures, which means firing up the heater at home, which in turn will dry out the air. And with winter right behind it, there are several months during which the humidity level in your home can drop significantly. Remember, acoustic guitar bodies are made from fairly thin panels of wood, so dry conditions leave the wood vulnerable to shrinking and cracking. Your target range should be 45-55 percent RH.

Here are a few humidification reminders, plus a couple of new tips and tools to help you keep your guitar playing and sounding its best.

Use a digital hygrometer to measure the humidity where you store your guitar.

To measure is to know. A digital unit is better than an analog (needle) version — it will provide the most accurate humidity readings.

Use a guitar humidifier.

Unless you keep your guitars in a humidity-controlled room, it's easier to maintain your target humidity levels if the guitar is humidified within an enclosed case. Essentially you end up humidifying both the guitar and the case (Taylor hardshell cases are made of a multi-ply wood shell), which provides another layer of humidity protection. There are different options, including two new products mentioned below.

It's not essential to place the humidifier inside the soundhole.

We're big fans of guitar case humidifiers — they work just as well as

soundhole humidifiers with the added benefit of keeping moisture away from the inside of the guitar, just in case the humidifier were to ever drip or leak. If you do use a soundhole humidifier, make sure it doesn't seal off the soundhole. The guitar's neck also needs that moisture and could be damaged if all the water vapor were to be trapped inside the body.

Below are three humidifiers worth considering, all of which are offered through TaylorWare:

D'Addario Two-Way Humidification System®



One of this product's best attributes is its automated "two-way" humidity control, which means it can either dispense or absorb moisture to maintain a constant RH level of 45-50 percent. Another cool feature is that the complete kit includes three packets and two pouches, which makes it easier to humidify both the body and neck. The dual-packet soundhole pouch houses two packets that were designed to hang inside the soundhole to maintain the RH of the guitar body. But you can also set the pouch to the side of the guitar within the case. The other pouch, which holds the third packet, is intended to be placed beneath the headstock to help maintain the neck and fretboard. Depending on climate conditions, the packets should last from two to six months. Once the contents become solid, the packets can simply be replaced with a fresh set. (TaylorWare #80356, \$30.00)

MusicNomad's Humitar Instrument Case Humidifier



An easy-to-use, no-mess unit, the Humitar comes with a holster that mounts inside the guitar case using a strong adhesive backing. (If you have a cutaway model, it fits nicely in that space.) The Humid-i-Bar sponge holds 10 times its weight in water. To check on the status of the sponge, just pop the top and touch the sponge. If it's wet, leave it; if it's dry, it's time to rehydrate. Simply remove the sponge, soak it in distilled water, and you're back in business. (TaylorWare #80922, \$15.99)

Oasis® OH-6 Case Humidifier



This unit from Oasis also attaches to the inside of the guitar case with the help two neodymium magnets that are inserted in the seam of the humidifier. The magnets attach to either a steel clip or a stainless steel strip with adhesive backing (both are provided with the humidifier). The steel clip fits over the side of the guitar case, providing a flat vertical surface to which the magnets can adhere. The OH-6 will fit in the cut-away space or in the void between the pick box and heel of the neck. A 10 cc syringe is included for water-filling control. For optimal long-term performance, distilled water is recommended because tap and bottled water contains dissolved minerals that can clog the liner. (TaylorWare # 80921, \$19.95)

Protect Your Taylor with the TaylorSense Smart Battery Box and Mobile App

Our breakthrough health monitoring system puts the vital signs of your guitar into the palm of your hand

We love helping customers maintain their guitars, so we're excited to offer a new guitar care tool called TaylorSense, which makes it easier than ever to track the condition of a Taylor guitar. TaylorSense features an easy-to-install smart battery box that replaces the battery box on Taylor guitars equipped with a pickup powered by a 9V battery. The smart battery box houses sensors that monitor your guitar's:

- Humidity
- Battery Life
- Temperature
- Physical Impact



Your guitar's health data is pushed from the TaylorSense battery box to our free Taylor Guitars iOS App via low-energy Bluetooth anytime you're within range. Shaped by our extensive service expertise, TaylorSense is also calibrated to send you timely alerts when your guitar needs care, along with simple "how-to-fix" videos from our service team. The free Taylor Guitars App also includes a mobile suite of useful tools including FourTrack, a multitrack recorder, a guitar tuner, and more.

TaylorSense is currently sold through our online TaylorWare store. To learn more, visit www.taylorsense.com

taylorsense

SMART BATTERY BOX + MOBILE APP



TaylorWare

CLOTHING / GEAR / PARTS / GIFTS



NEW
Men's Urban Zip Hoody
Eco-Jersey triblend. Low-impact yarn-dyed/fabric-washed. Standard fit. (Urban Grey #22994; S-XXL, \$59.00)

Cameron, a supervisor in our Final Assembly department, models our new Urban Zip Hoody.

Visit taylorguitars.com/taylorware to browse our complete line of Taylor apparel, guitar care products, parts and accessories, gift cards, and more.

1-800-494-9600



NEW
Men's Quarter Zip Sweatshirt
Soft-washed, garment-dyed 80/20 ring-spun cotton/poly. Fabric-lined collar. Taylor logo on chest. Standard fit. (Blue Jean #39524; S-XXXL, \$59.00)



NEW
Aged Logo Thermal
Long Sleeve 60/40 cotton/poly waffle thermal with grey Taylor logo on front with contrast stitching. Slimmer fit (sizing up recommended). (Black #20224; S-XXL, \$35.00)



Men's Classic T
Fashion Fit. Pre-shrunk 100% cotton. (Red #1653; S-XXXL, \$24.00)

NEW
Original Trucker Hat
One size fits all. (Black/Khaki #00390, \$20.00)



Men's Cap
One size fits all. (Black #00378, \$25.00)

Ultex® Picks
Six picks per pack by gauge (#80794, .73 mm, #80795, 1.0 mm or #80796 1.14 mm; \$5.00).

Primetone Picks™
Three picks per pack by gauge. (#80797, .88 mm, #80798, 1.0 mm or #80799 1.3 mm, \$8.50).

Variety Pack (shown)
Six assorted picks per pack, featuring one of each gauge. Ultex (.73 mm, 1.0 mm, 1.14 mm) and Primetone (.88 mm, 1.0 mm, 1.3 mm). (#80790, \$10.00)



Taylor Bar Stool
30" high. (Black #70200, \$99.00)
24" high. (Brown #70202, \$99.00)

Taylor Guitar Polish
Spray-on cleaning polish that is easily and safely wiped away. 4 fl. oz. (#80901, \$12.00)





Wood&Steel

A Publication of Taylor Guitars

Volume 89 / Fall 2017

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

Presorted
Standard
U.S. Postage
PAID
Phoenix, AZ
Permit No. 5937

Manage Your Subscription

To unsubscribe from *Wood&Steel*, please email support@taylorguitars.com. Please include your name and mailing address as they appear on this issue, plus the subscription number located directly above your name. To change your mailing address, please visit taylorguitars.com/contact.

The paper we use 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.



AfriCali Fusion

This limited edition Presentation Series stunner marries exotic striped ebony back and sides, supplied by our ebony mill in Cameroon, with a richly variegated sinker redwood top. The tight-grained top, sliced from old-growth redwood reclaimed from a California river, is infused with an array of colors imparted from the mineral-rich river bed. Sonically, redwood blends the warm overtone complexity of cedar with the attacking power of spruce, while ebony yields some of rosewood's bell-like fidelity but with the more linear output of maple. The magic here is in the fusion of these tonal nuances with a 12-fret Grand Auditorium body. Players can expect a warm, balanced response that packs an extra punch with the help of the redwood top and the 12-fret's shifted bridge location.