

GAL/ASIA

As the purveyor and retailer of unique woods, the reputation of Woodworker's Dream and the Martin Sawmill spread quickly. Budding instrument makers from all around the USA and Canada quickly became my loyal customers. I was learning a great deal about the properties of these various woods and in time, was solicited to write occasional articles for Taunton Press's *Fine Woodworking Magazine*. Locally, *The Rodale Press* had acquired *American Woodworker Magazine*. Soon I was writing a monthly feature page called *Woods Of The World*.

On the guitarmaking front, there was an organization of instrument makers based in Tacoma, Washington called *The Guild Of American Luthiers*. I was a regular and active participant at the annual Guild instrument-making conventions and was eventually asked to serve on their Board.

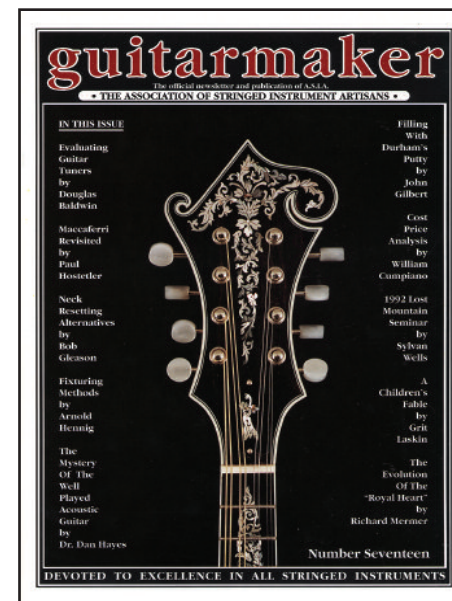
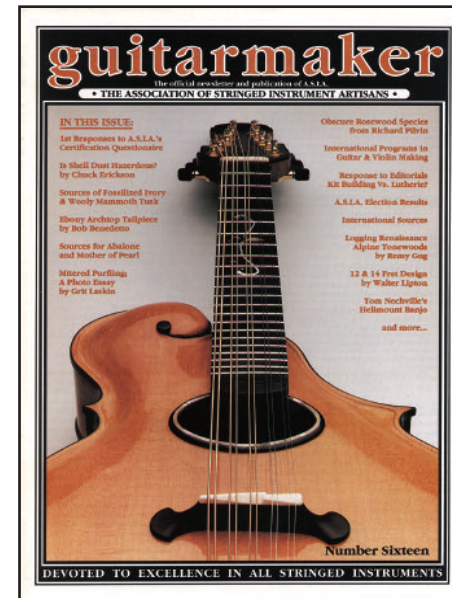
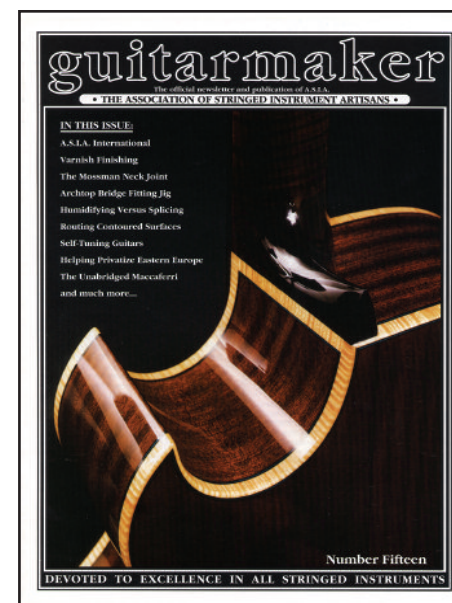
It's a long story and one I wish I could tell, but due to extenuating circumstances, I can't. That's a different book.

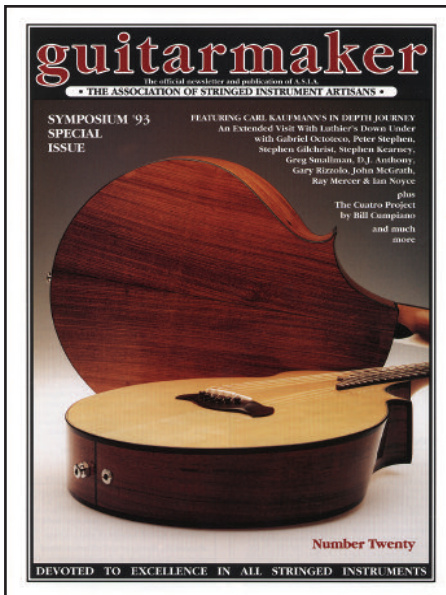
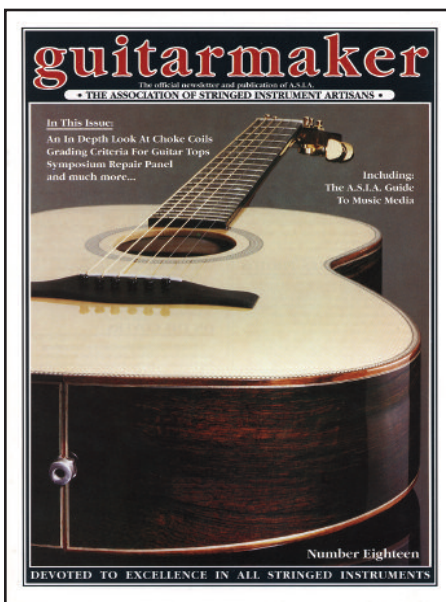
I can say that eventually a group of instrument makers decided to form a new organization. About twenty of us got together and wrote a mission statement. In trying to name the group we decided that we preferred the label "artisan" to the more obscure term of "luthier." We also decided that our focus would be on "stringed instruments." The notion of being a Guild seemed odd given the persecution that Christian Frederick Martin Sr. had endured at the hands of the Violin Makers Guild in Markneukirchen, so we opted instead to form an "association." So it was that the Association of Stringed Instrument Artisans (with the ironic acronym A.S.I.A.) was born.

In a short period of time, our meager ranks grew to one hundred, at which point I was enlisted to produce a newsletter. Two pages grew to four, then eight, then sixteen. The membership continued to grow, spurred on in great measure by the bi-annual

musical instrument-making conventions held on the campus of Lafayette College where Susan worked. During the zenith of each convention, I was enlisted to host what evolved into a hilarious and lucrative series of benefit auctions, fueled with a generous pile of donated white elephant instruments and assorted guitar making supplies. The information sharing and spirit of the association was impressive and special. The membership soared to more than two thousand. I proposed that the name of our newsletter be amended to *Guitarmaker Magazine*. The new title was slightly controversial, since it seemed to exclude mandolin, banjo, lute, violin and dulcimer makers, but the change was very well received. A color cover really made the publication look professional and the format expanded to more than sixty pages.

With my full-time position at Martin and my extra-curricular work as Executive Director of A.S.I.A. and editor/publisher of *Guitarmaker Magazine*, I was completely buried in work, but the interaction with virtually all of the instrument makers worldwide gave me a tremendous vantage point within the marketplace. In addition, my technical knowledge in the area of Macintosh computers, desktop publishing, offset printing, layout, writing, information gathering, event coordination and the day to day management of a non-profit organization gave me an entirely new set of skills that would gradually impact my position at Martin. In due time it became clear that I could be of service in the area of advertising, especially since a string of advertising coordinators had come and gone, leaving a relatively disjointed campaign. I seized the opportunity with great passion, wasting little time in bringing the full department back in-house from the protective clutches of an outside advertising agency. The controversy was eased with significant cost savings, but the best part was that the relatively thick wall between work and art was beginning to crumble.





ALL
ROTTEN
SCURRILOUS

The Luthiers' Blab

SUMMER 1989

SYMPOSIUM '89!

MIDGET HECKLER HITS LECTURE CIRCUIT by Sy Gezoont

Speakers at the evening programs of Symposium '89 found their talks enlivened by a piping voice from the rear of the hall, which posed such stumbers as "Where'd ya get that table?" and "How old was he when he died?" Such incisive interrogation served to keep the speakers on their toes and denied them recourse to prepared responses. This reporter feels that the White House press corps could learn much from this miniscule maven, whoever he may be.

- MYSTERY PANTS FOUND IN STREET by Hugh Mongus

An incredibly filthy, disgusting pair of mud-encrusted pants was discovered in the middle of the street following luthiers' festivities at the College Hill Tavern early Sunday morning, according to a high White Horse souse. Ownership of the said trousers has yet to be determined, although they were reportedly equipped with a belt, pocket change (some of it Canadian), and a room key to #122 McKean Hall



SOAKED BOAK

A VERY MOIST DICK BOAK LOOKS BACK ON A JOB WELL DONE AT THE TAVERN ON SATURDAY NIGHT.

UKULELE SERENADER



HUNGARIAN TENOR MEETS KOREAN BARITONE

by Shirley Eugeste
Now it can be told: the silken-voiced crooner who regaled all of College Hill with a strolling concert, causing young maidens to rush to their balconies, was none other than the Magyar Mariachi Sandor Nagyszalanczy, editor of a certain upscale wood working magazine.

BEST EVER? by Ludomir Grackelczik

The fireworks are over again in Easton following what some have called the best Symposium to date. Property values on college hill have returned to normal and the College Hill Tavern has been set to rights following repeated Kamikazi attacks.

While attendees were hard put to determine the high point of the gathering, it was widely reported that the highest highs were ob-

tained after hours. Indeed, this reporter witnessed with his own eyes many sordid episodes which had best, perhaps, be left untold. Such is the sleazoid nature of this publication, however, that we must ignore our better judgement and tell all. After all, indiscretion is the better part of value.

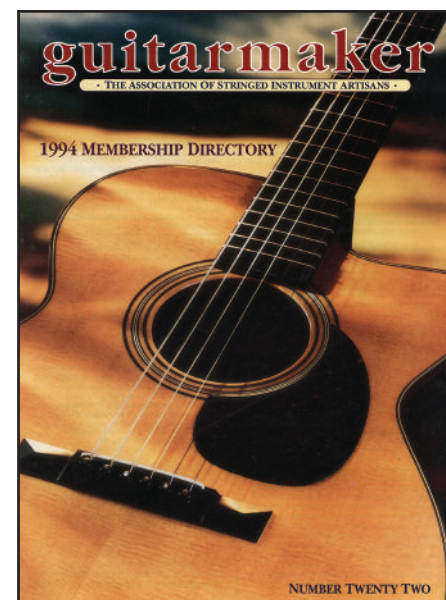
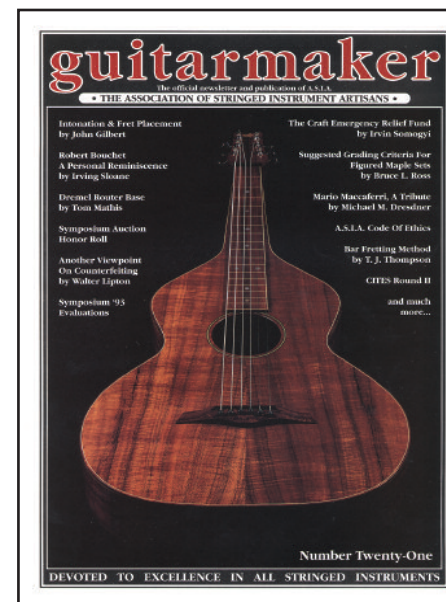


MYSTERY OBJECT



VANDALS SOCK IT TO BOAK'SWAGON by Thurston Hunger

In the tumultuous climax of Symposium '89, bands of marauding vandals took to the streets of the College Hill section of Easton early Sunday morning. In one incident, Dick Boak's red Honda was besmirched and bemucked with an incredibly filthy, disgusting pair of mud-encrusted sweat socks of unknown origin. According to a misinformed source, authorship of this desecration fits the modus operandi of a well-known New York guitar merchant, who shall here remain nameless. Easton police have declined to comment pending chemical analysis of the socks.





"Maestro" Mario Maccaferri with a Selmer style jazz guitar collaboration with guitarmaker John Monteleone.

Tuesdays With Mario

During my time as director of the Association of Stringed Instrument Artisans, I had the very distinct honor of becoming good friends with Mario Maccaferri. For those unfamiliar with Mario, he is famous in guitarmaking circles as the originator of the unique Selmer guitars that became synonymous with the legendary Hot Club jazz guitarist of the thirties and forties, Django Reinhardt.

Throughout Mario's long and colorful life, he wore an assortment of remarkable hats. He had been an acclaimed master of the classical guitar and an expert designer and maker of musical instruments of all shapes and sizes, including guitars, cellos and violins. He was one of the primary manufacturers of reeds for wind instruments, a pioneer in plastic die injection mold manufacturing and technology, a significant inventor and holder of patents, a designer and manufacturer of household items like the clothes pin and the 8-track cassette, but most of all he was an incurable tinkerer.

My initial contact with Mario had been through my guitarmaking friend John Monteleone. I wasted no time in extending an invitation to Mario to address one of our guitarmaking Symposiums.

John offered to drive Mario to the event since Mario's age made the trip from his home in Rye, New York difficult. Mario loved rubbing shoulders with fellow instrument makers and music enthusiasts, and he introduced himself to most of the participating artisans and vendors. He particularly enjoyed reminiscing with C. F. Martin III and Manual Velazquez in the green room before their respective talks. They had experienced so much of the century from similar perspectives.

After the Symposium, Mario and I spoke often on the phone. At the time, I was managing the Martin Sawmill and Mario became dependent on me for an occasional slab of ebony or rosewood. He also wanted help liquidating his excess inventory of plastic guitars. My curiosity finally led me to his factory, warehouse and shop in the heart of the Bronx, after which I visited him often.

I was so lucky to have that time with Mario. He was always excited to share his latest projects and when lunchtime would roll around, he would boast of his wild escapades in Paris before the war. After a big plate of pasta, it was impossible to wrestle the check away from him. After lunch, he would unlock his closet of old guitars and struggle through the chord progressions with his aging hands, eventually handing the instrument over to me with a shrugging but emphatic command: "Dickie, never get old!"



Mario at his French American Reed Company inspecting and sorting reeds with his wife Maria and a worker (left).



Rare all rosewood-colored Maccaferri G-40 Prototype. Gift from Mario Maccaferri, 1985



In Memory Of C. F. Martin III, Pen & Ink, 1986

Changing Of The Guard

Integrity is a special attribute. You're not born with it, but if you collect your experiences carefully, it starts to etch itself in the lines of your face. C. F. Martin III had integrity. He earned it by caring about people and by surviving nearly a century of mixed successes and hardships.

He walked through the shop every day. His real purpose in doing this was to stay connected to the workers and to himself. They appreciated it.

He took special pride in his knowledge of the instruments. He knew them well. One day he was walking around the shop and there was a conversation going on about the 7/8 size Dreadnought model. The prototype was at the inspection bench and it was producing an odd overtone.

"Where's the bracing pattern?" Mr. Martin chimed right in.

"I'll get it." I rushed over to the metal drawers where the patterns were kept and retrieved the one in question. Mr. Martin inspected it carefully.

"What you need here is to angle these tone bars a bit more, then you'll need to add a small brace here and here. You should never have a space three inches square or larger, unsupported by a brace."

So we went and did what he suggested and wouldn't you know it, the wolftones disappeared.

I had the distinct honor of inviting Mr. Martin to join fellow industry legends – Mario Maccaferri and Manuel Velasquez as well as his own grandson Chris – to be keynote speakers at the guitarmaking Symposium in Easton, PA. I had organized the event and was hosting the evening. After Chris's talk, I introduced Mr. Martin, who stepped slowly up to the podium, assisted with his cane. "I can walk upright, you know." He had a sense of humor.

"Perhaps some of you have been or are now teachers, and maybe sometime you had the experience of having your pupil do better than you do, and that's the way I feel right now. Chris has done very well and I congratulate him."

"I brought this cane along because in the first place I need it. I fell and hurt my back last year, and Dick Boak recognized my need and he made me this cane. It is made of Indian rosewood with the Martin fingerboard position mark inlaid. That's my great helper, and I'm very thankful to Dick for it. I'll lay it down—very respectfully."

His words went directly to my heart. That's the kind of man he was. He wasn't afraid to be kind, in fact it brought him great pleasure. He liked to be liked. He had given so much to the world, to the community and to the family business. And at that particular time, things were not going particularly well. His son Frank had been an embarrassment. Frank had been extricated from the business and that was particularly painful for C. F. A debilitating strike and downturn in the economy had seriously jeopardized the company. In spite of these many setbacks, C. F. remained positive and committed to his family's heritage, drawing only a nominal salary and coming to work every day.

As he concluded his talk, tears welled up in his eyes. "The Martin business is not over. Chris is right. The future is his."

C. F. Martin III is buried with the rest of the Martin family in the Moravian cemetery overlooking Nazareth. I visit him there from time to time to pay my respects.

A Wedding In The Woods

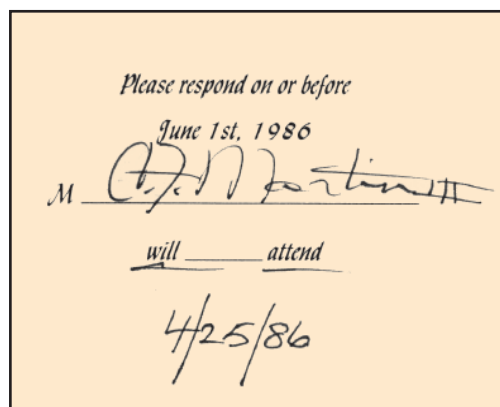
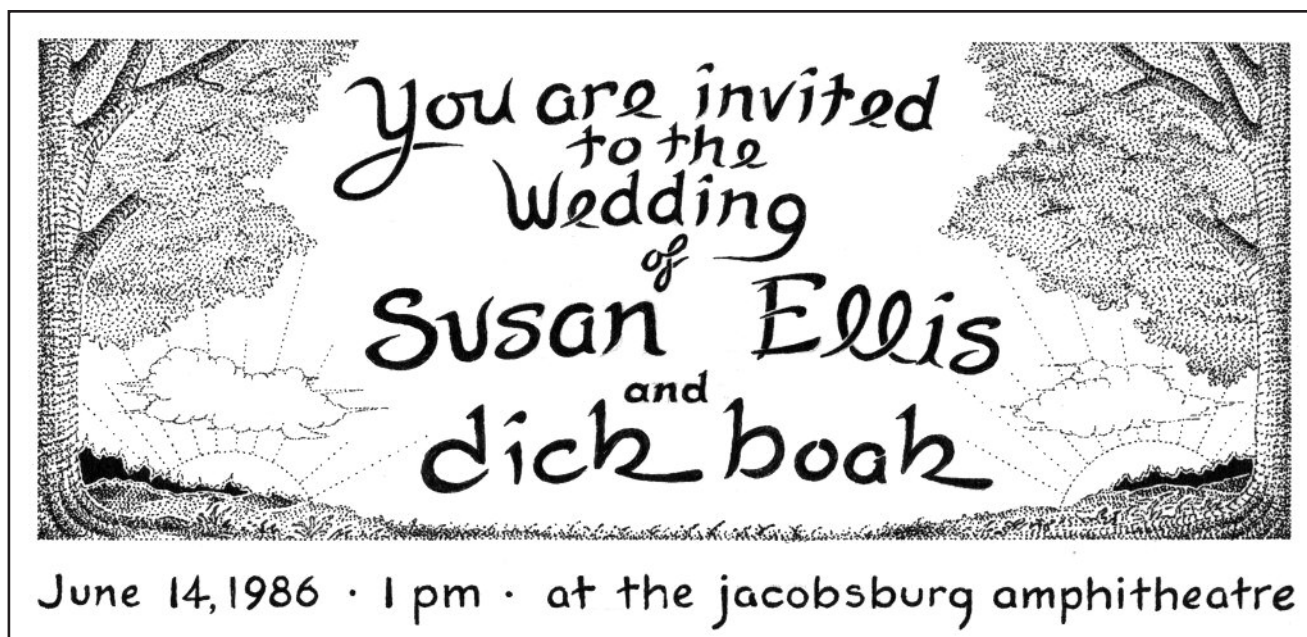
I have met hundreds, no thousands of people, and extrovert that I am, I consider them all pretty good friends. This is my shallow side. Susan is a bit more quiet and reserved. You might say mature.

I envisioned a wedding like Woodstock – perhaps Paul Simon or the Rolling Stones would perform. Susan envisioned something much more realistic and personal – immediate family with a few close friends. Reluctantly, I compromised. One thing we agreed upon completely was the location. There is a beautiful state park north of Nazareth called *Jacobsburg* and it is a special place for us. A rustic amphitheater is built into a hillside with a small stage. We convinced our friend Peter Amerman, the openminded chaplain at Blair Academy, to perform a somewhat Unitarian if not bohemian ceremony. An informal reception would follow at the Church of Art.

I illustrated a small card with interchangeable text. One version contained the invitation that was posted to our select group. The other was a wedding announcement for a much broader audience. We had prepared the announcement envelopes well in advance and I was overly anxious to mail them. Knowing better, Susan managed to restrain my urge, but on the Friday just one day prior to our wedding, I couldn't hold back any longer. I dropped the sack of envelopes into the mailbox in the center square of Nazareth. The postman wasted no time retrieving, sorting, and dispersing them early the next morning and miraculously, dozens of casual friends who weren't actually invited to the wedding received the announcement. A surprising percentage of these recipients mistook the notification for an invitation and rushed out to Jacobsburg in their Bermuda shorts to take in the events of the day.

I had arrived early in my tuxedo that special morning, and having consumed half a dozen cups of decaffeinated coffee at breakfast, found myself in the predicament of having to badly urinate without benefit of a proper facility. Being resourceful, I carefully traversed the mud-trodden path down toward the creek and located a bush that seemed sheltered enough from the people who were there helping with the preparations. Halfway through my peeing process, I heard my named called out from a vantage point directly across the stream. There stood the joyous group of uninvited couples waving to me – wondering how to traverse the stream. I zipped my zipper with an sheepish glance and gestured toward the bridge.

Shortly thereafter, the soothing instrumental meanderings of Dire Straits' *Love Over Gold* merged into the humid air as the bride's maids hobbled along the mulch path in their high heels. Susan followed gracefully – a vision in pastel toward the steps of the makeshift altar – looking like a swan in spite of her last minute hyperventilation. Mark Knopfler's eerie guitar drifted into receding vibrophones, then into Susan's brother Jay's Paganini violin processional as our vows were exchanged, the poems read, the veil lifted, and the kisses sealed.

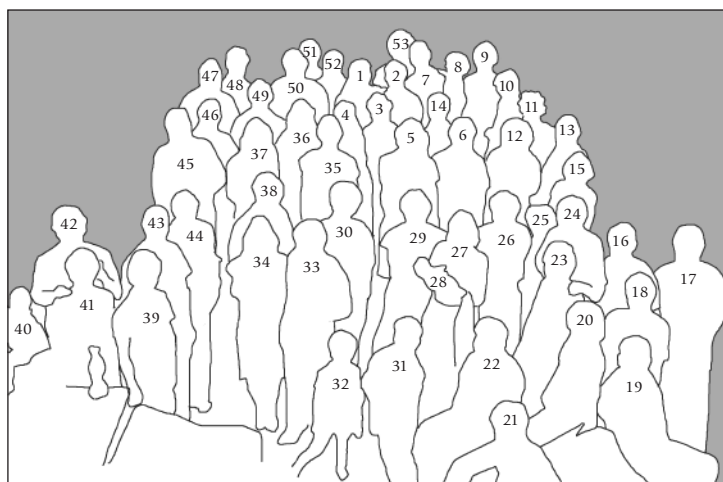


The pen and ink invitation for our wedding in the woods (above) was mailed to my friend and inlay artist David Nichols who proceeded to scroll cut our design motif (below) as his fantastic wedding gift in an assortment of mother of pearl and colorful wood marquetry. C. F. Martin III, our specially invited guest, had responded in the affirmative to our delight (at left), but at 92 years his fragility had caused a fall that put him in the hospital. Quickly, his health took a turn for the worse, but still he managed to have flowers sent to the reception with his congratulations and regrets. The following day he quietly passed away as Susan and I arrived in Lake Placid for our honeymoon.





Wedding Reception At The Church Of Art, June 14, 1986

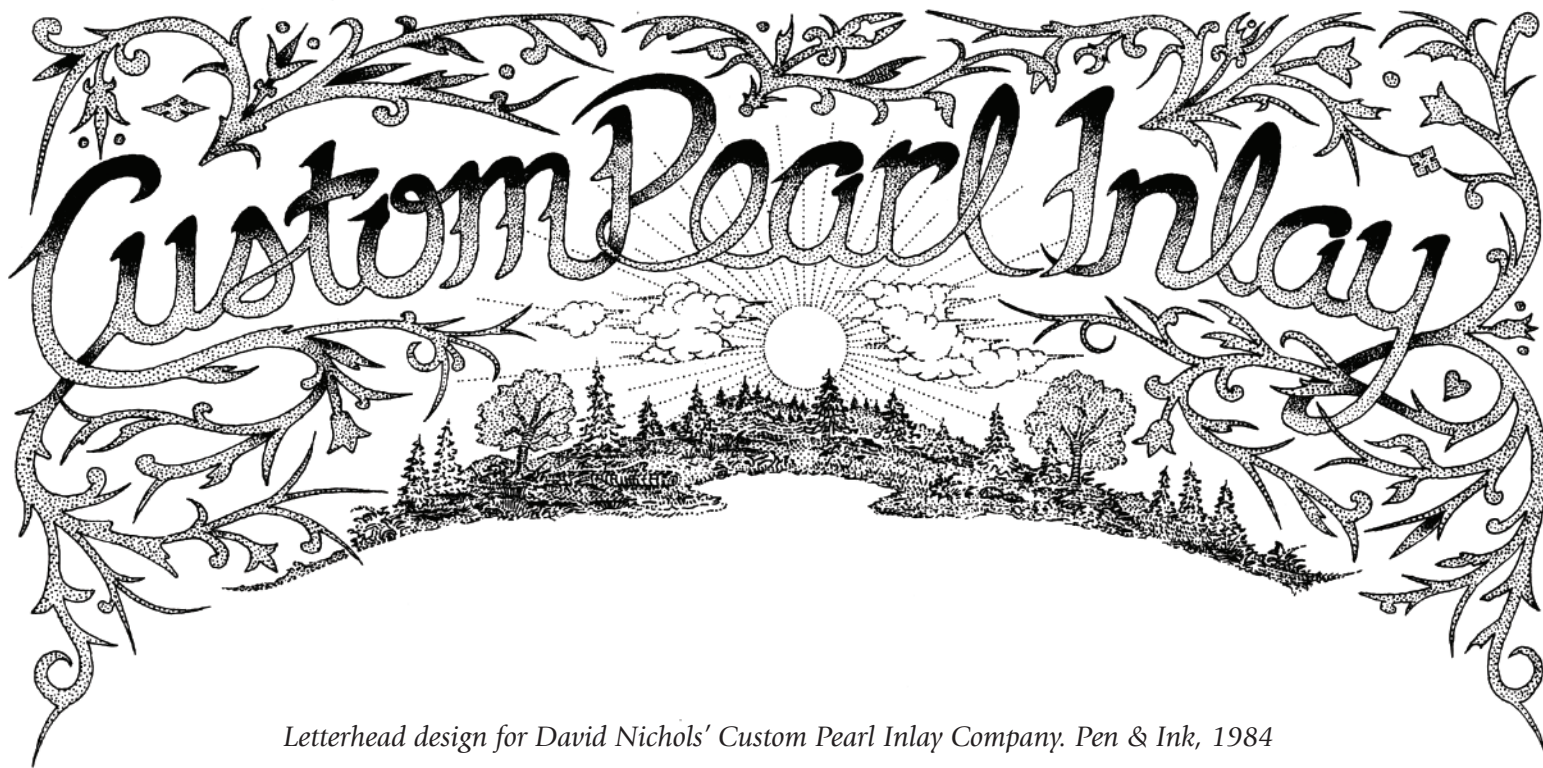


1. Susan Ellis 2. Dick Boak 3. Dale Unger 4. Tina Unger 5. Kim Cooper 6. Bill Cooper 7. Tom Boak Jr. 8. Kellye Boak 9. David Boak 10. Elaine Boak 11. Rudy Hilt 12. Lynn Hilt 13. Jack Crawford 14. Geoff Ellis 15. Marcie Lightwood 16. Chris Martin 17. David Nichols 18. Bruce Fackenthal 19. Tom Boak Sr. 20. ? 21. Bill Boak 22. Todd Boak 23. Peggy Fackenthal 24. Mike Fackenthal 25. Carter Crawford 26. Helen C. Boak 27. Vivianne Ellis 28. Paul Ellis 29. Jody Boak 30. Judley Sharp 31. Forest Hilt 32. Brian Hilt 33. Jay Ellis 34. Jody Malcolm 35. Lorna Ellis 36. Jeanne Goldberg 37. Nancy Ellis 38. Peter Amerman 39. Analea Malcolm 40. Sarah Ellis 41. Liz Swigart 42. Bob Swigart 43. Mike Ellis 44. Harry Crawford 45. Richard Simpson 46. Joy Upson 47. Hollis Upson 48. Guitarist 49. John Boak 50. Al Hunter 51. Joe Tone 52. Cindy Ellis 53. Cindy Amerman.

What a switch! The service was out in the woods and the reception was in the Church. Weddings are times of great change, when all of your most significant friends and family members gather to watch you "cast off," as if you're going on some type of cruise. I suppose some do.

Many of the people in this photograph are gone now – fathers, mothers, uncles. The children are all adults and the adults are growing older – a continuous cycle, trite but true. Life moves forward, and we discover our significance in the eyes of our children.





Letterhead design for David Nichols' Custom Pearl Inlay Company. Pen & Ink, 1984

Commercial Art – No Invoice

Back on the drawing front, my prolific output far exceeded my ability to sell what I produced. I just didn't like what money did to art and I didn't wish to waste my time merchandising myself. Nonetheless, without really soliciting jobs, they tended to seek me out.

This was a fine situation. It enabled me to pick and choose the creative projects that I undertook, and while the bulk of these were self-initiated non-commercial conceptualizations, there was a steady barrage of mildly commercial projects from the valued people in my ever-changing immediate circle.

And so, I produced calling cards, stationery, logos, ads, and design consultations, rarely with any invoices or strings attached, except that I tried to maintain the originals (or at least the contact negatives) for my personal archives. There was satisfaction in this, but no sense of real success.

On the work front, I was one of the few, if not the only one, capable of producing appropriate inlay designs for the bulk of Martin's custom orders that begged such a service. My knowledge of guitars and my sensitivity to the tradition of instrument ornamentation certainly qualified me for these tasks. Accordingly, I became great friends with David

Nichols of *Custom Pearl Inlay* in upstate New York. For years he singlehandedly executed the many hundreds of hand-cut fingerboard and headplate inlays that graced the one-of-a-kind custom orders that helped to revitalize the spirit of Martin.

As computer-aided design and manufacturing technology developed, it became possible to replicate inlay intricacies, especially with the advent of thinly sliced laminated abalone pearl called *Ablam*. This was the brainchild of Chuck Ericson, the notorious *Duke of Pearl* and my good friends Larry Sifel and Jeff Harding of *PearlWorks*. With Larry and Jeff's computer aided inlay wizardry, an innovative industry was born. These advances coincided nicely with the artist signature model projects that I was initiating; in fact, most of the critical visual elements of the signature guitars could never have materialized in any quantity without Larry and Jeff's ingenuity and collaboration.

The first use of *Ablam*™ on a Martin guitar appeared with the execution of Gene Autry's name in mother-of-pearl on the fingerboard of Gene's D-45S signature edition. Shortly thereafter, the first use of computer cut *Ablam* body trim was approved for use on Eric Clapton's 000-42EC. The quality and precision of these inlays was clearly superior and replicable, and the yield from the endangered



Jeff Harding and Larry Sifel of PearlWorks



Pickguard Design For Laser Etching. Pen & Ink. 1997

In Memory Of Larry Sifel
1948-2006



Good times with Chris Martin and Larry Sifel.



Pickguard Design For Laser Etching. Pen & Ink. 1997

abalone and mother-of-pearl pearl shells was significantly more efficient.

Every subsequent signature edition depended upon and benefitted from this new technology. The procedure for producing these inlays commenced in Photoshop on my Apple Macintosh computer. I would create black and white silhouetted bitmapped images of proposed inlay designs and furnish the completed files to PearlWorks. They in turn would create the intricate programs and tool paths for their micro-milling machines, then test out my artwork by excavating the fingerboard cavities and cutting the perimeter of corresponding pearl components. The results were startling and a myriad of incredibly creative projects followed.

As Martin's inhouse digital manufacturing capabilities developed, an array of CNC and laser machines gradually appeared on the shop floor. Using the same basic procedures developed with Larry and Jeff, I experimented with artwork intended for laser burning into guitar parts. Although the laser etching of graphics on spruce guitar tops was less than impressive, the process did have more potential

and contrast with darker woods like mahogany, and with the lightly singed surface of acetate pickguards. Although the creation of laser-burned award plaques and novelties is now quite commonplace, I was never able to achieve good results with any graphic applications on pickguards, mostly due to the inherent and undesirable diarrhea-brown coloration of burnt plastic.

Nonetheless, conceptualizing and preparing digital inlay designs became one of my primary specialties – perhaps even one of my shared legacies with my great friend Larry Sifel who sadly passed away long before all of his endless and brilliant ideas could come to fruition. That job is up to us now, though it is unlikely that anyone could approach it with the passion and skill that Larry did.

The challenge is to provide the creative interface between the musicians, the inlay artists and the artisans who craft the guitars. When everything works, very special tools emerge that eventually find their way into the hands of inspired guitarists, where visual and tonal beauty collide to yield magnificent musical rewards.



Presentation Card For Roger Sadowsky. 1979

Houdini Underwear

Several weeks had passed since I had asked Susan to marry me. She was from a large family. I was anxious to meet all of her varied relatives, so we planned a trip down to Columbia, Maryland to meet her half-brother Jay and his wife Jody. Jay was a computer programmer and analyst for NASA and Jody ran a very successful rehabilitation consultation business.

I seemed to hit it off right away with Jay and Jody, so much so that I suppose I wasn't feeling very inhibited. A glass or two of wine contributed to my spontaneous abandon.

Somehow, our after-dinner conversation about Jay's vector calculation research led us into a discussion about topography that reminded me of Harry Houdini. I was a big fan of Houdini. I'd read a book about him and remembered how fascinated he was with topographical trickery. Specifically, I had read about one trick that he used to do that involved removing his dress shirt without removing his dinner jacket.

I was in a wacky mood and I wasn't wearing a dinner jacket. I was, however, wearing underwear and it soon occurred to me that perhaps I could perform an inspired variation of Houdini's shirt trick.

"I can take my underwear off without removing my pants," I boasted. Jay and Jody looked at each other with a slight sense of trepidation, but decided instead to humor me.

"OK? We'd like to see that!" they lied.

I might begin by saying that a prerequisite to Houdini's trick is loose-fitting clothing. I hadn't quite remembered this key element. I was wearing fairly tight-fitting black jeans and my underwear was not the optimum boxer short variety. Unfortunately, these small deterrents didn't impede my performance.

The first step in accomplishing this trick is to navigate one underwear leg downward past the knee toward the ankle, then with the spare arm, the contortionist must reach up into the pant leg, grab the garment in question and slip it around the foot. This procedure is not unlike a woman's trick of removing a brassiere without unfastening the hook or unbuttoning the blouse. I proceeded with great



confidence.

For some reason I struggled greatly with step one. I just couldn't seem to get it. I was rolling around on the rug performing strange bodily contortions. These undulations were followed with what was clearly a slight ripping sound.

Oops.

I had come this far. I couldn't just give up in defeat. Rolling to the left, then to the right with both arms inserted into different ends of the pants, I was breaking out in a sweat of embarrassment, defeat, and exhaustion. Finally, a major ripping sound broke the tension.

Everyone gasped.

Jay and Jody looked at each other in confusion, horror and amazement. This was the guy that was going to marry "Susie." What in the world had she gotten herself into?

Dermatologist's Delight

Sue and I had planned to take a camping trip to Vermont. I hadn't been back to Stowe since my teaching career had crumbled a decade and a half earlier. I still romanticized about the rugged hikes I had made along the Green Mountain Trail and looked forward to retracing some of the more memorable steps with Sue.

About three weeks prior to our scheduled departure, I broke out in a rather excruciating rash that itched like the dickens. I wasted no time in getting across the street to Dr. Snyder's office. He took a quick look and nonchalantly determined that I had contracted a case of "scabies." He explained that this was a rather contagious form of parasitic mite, the notion of which created great anxiety for me as well as my confused wife. The question of exactly how I had contracted such an affliction was especially disconcerting.

With tremendous reticence and embarrassment, I handed my prescription to our neighborhood pharmacist, who shaded his temple in confusion but promptly filled a small green jar full of Quell, a slightly toxic lather designed to discourage the little critters from making themselves comfortable in my proximity.

With great anxiety, I followed the shampooing directions and precautions, but there was no relief. The rash worsened and the itch became unbearable. I returned in defeat to the doctor's office for an updated diagnosis.

This time Doc Snyder took a more discerning look and after great consideration pronounced to my extreme delight that it wasn't scabies after all, but rather a chronic case of poison ivy. This time, he scribbled out a prescription for high-intensity cortisone cream supplemented with alternating swabs of calamine lotion. Inbetween treatments, I took hot and cold showers to try to ease the itch, but it was little use. I was clearly on a beeline path to stark raving madness.

The redness had now spread from my trunk to my neck and thighs, but in spite of this I put my faith and hope in medical science and packed the car for our northward trip. Equipped with every conceivable brand of anti-itching liquid from rubbing alcohol to aloe vera gel, we departed and I



He's itching so much, he's taken to drink!

actually found some solace in a constant and agitated rotation of assorted ointments. We arrived in Vermont and eventually set our tent in the field outside Liz Macfarlane's mountain cabin. The fact that Liz had been a previous girlfriend lent little consolation to Susan's increasing disillusionment over our supposed vacation.

Nonetheless, the three-way conversation that night acknowledged the great humor of my unsolvable predicament. It was decided that Liz's country doctor should be consulted in the morning. He inspected me with great empathy, and then examined a skin scraping under his microscope, informing me that I had neither poison ivy nor scabies. He suggested that it might be some form of virus and that Benadryl might give me some temporary comfort until our return home, at which point he strongly recommended making an appointment with a dermatologist. I stocked up on Benadryl and eked out a few more tenuous days until torrential rains found us immersed in our tent at 3:00 am. So concluded our enchanting Vermont excursion.

I followed the doctor's advice and promptly set up an appointment with a popular dermatologist in my locality. I had never visited such a specialist and enthusiastically took my place in the overcrowded waiting room, filling out my medical history with unswerving accuracy.

The office procedure was curious. Nurses would guide each patient into a hallway full of closet-sized cubicles, after which the solitary doctor would scurry from room to room, spending little more than 30 seconds with each patient. There was a waiting line with the cashier who was processing insurance claims and payments at an unprecedented rate. After filling out my payment forms, I used my borrowed pencil to calculate the hourly intake. I figured a conservative \$3,000 an hour – an eight-hour shift clearing an easy \$25,000. Leaving plenty of time for golf weekends and several flights to the Grand Caymans, two hundred working days a year totaled a clean five million. What a racket!

My turn eventually came. I was nestled in my little room where I was instructed to remove my garments and don a skimpy blue gown that tied loosely in the back. Finally the doctor came in, directing me to drop the gown and lift my arms above my head like a bank teller in a holdup. In two seconds, he blurted the prognosis "pityriasis rosea." Positioning me onto my side, he wasted no time in swinging a large blue-bulbed lamp in proximity to my torso, then he flicked the switch.

"Stay still," he said as he scurried away to the next cubicles. In five minutes, he returned, flipped me over onto my other side, repositioned the blue light, and vanished. The light was warm and ultraviolet. Upon his return, he beckoned the nurse. "He's done. Pityriasis rosea," he rifled. "P107 Cream, 8 ounce tube." And off he went.

As I put my clothes back on, I glanced at the dozen or so inspection rooms, all of which were occupied, emanating their eerie luminous blue glow. As the nurse led me to the cashier, I asked her about the blue light. Hastily she explained that it's rarely effective and urged me to use the cream. Confused, I asked her to write the name of my affliction on a sheet of paper. She handed me an immense tube of P107 and my handwritten diagnosis on a scrap of paper as the cashier's window opened.

"That will be \$180.00 for the office visit and \$60.00 for the ointment." Amazed, I wrote the check.

That evening, I still itched as I imparted my incredible experience to Susan. That night, we

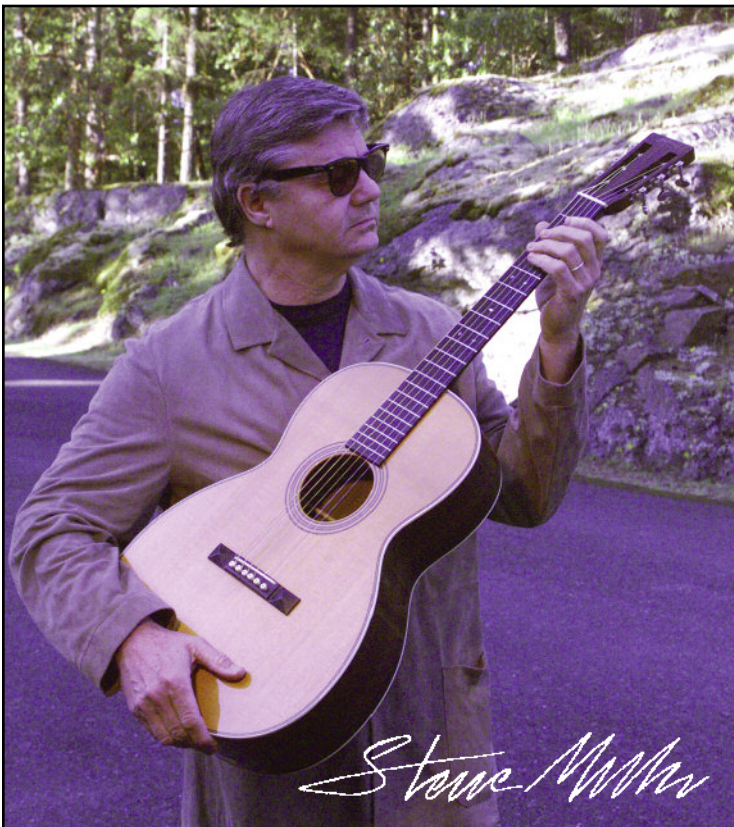


Living a fairy tale.

headed out to the library to return the hiking trail guides that we had signed out and I found myself straying over toward the reference books. There on the shelf was the Complete Medical Glossary & Reference – a 70-pound tome of technical dribble. I slid it off the shelf and with the tiny slip of paper in hand I flipped through the Ps.

There it was: "Pityriasis Rosea – The Dermatologist's Delight: Thought to be one of the most misdiagnosed skin disorders in dermatology, pityriasis rosea, a bright pink rash typically originating in (but not limited to) the upper extremities, is generally misdiagnosed a minimum of three times prior to being correctly, if ever, identified. The virus, which arises typically in the spring and fall, is accompanied with extreme itching that renders the patient willing to relinquish excessive remuneration for any comfort or cure, but ironically at present there is no cure. The virus does, however, run its course in due time, generally coinciding with the eventually correct diagnosis, hence The Dermatologist's Delight."

Sure enough, in about a week my Pityriasis rosea did run its course and I was left with \$55 worth of P107 Cream that sat wastefully on the shelf until reaching its disconcerting expiration date. In hindsight, I got off cheap, though – this story emerging from my itchless relief at the bargain rate of a mere twenty cents per word.



Steve Miller with the 12-fret Martin guitar that provided the tonal inspiration for his eventual Signature Edition.

The Gangster Of Love

The phone rang early one afternoon.

"This is Steve Miller." The voice on the other end seemed familiar.

"THE Steve Miller?" I asked.

"Yes, I suppose," he answered.

He asked if he might stop in the following day to see the factory. I told him I'd be thrilled to show him around and wrote it into my schedule. I was a big fan of Steve's and was excited about the visit.

He arrived just after lunch the next day with his wife Kim and a few members of the band. I rolled out the red carpet and they all appreciated it. They don't call him Stevie "Guitar" Miller for nothing. His genuine love for the instrument came across clearly, and our mutual passion for guitars helped establish the foundation for our ongoing friendship.

That afternoon, Steve ordered a number of stock and special order guitars. Some of the instruments required some extra supervision on my part. Over the next several months, as the guitars became available one by one, I would call Steve to update

him on our progress. There was always an excitement in the anticipation of a new arrival. During one conversation he suggested that I should consider coming out to his home for a visit. I was flattered of course, but unsure about how serious the invitation was. When he mentioned it again, I warned him that if he invited me one more time, I might just take him up on it and he did, and I accepted.

Steve and Kim's property was an artist's dream: an architecturally beautiful home with guest cottages across a small brook, an impressive recording facility and a comfortable art studio, all situated along a rushing river that nestled into the snow covered peaks of an adjoining state park. I spent several days with them, enjoying the conversation, the music and the cuisine. Steve and Kim were down to earth and gracious, but more than that, they genuinely enjoyed sharing their sense of lifestyle and culture. We played guitars, talked about instrument making and tone, did yoga, hiked and smoked cigars on the porch.

Steve had always been an avid environmentalist and in 1993, he invited me to meet him in Southern California for a special *Earth Day* benefit concert. I was unsure exactly what my role would be, but upon arrival I realized that it was all right to simply relax and enjoy the event. Steve was sharing the bill with Paul McCartney, Don Henley, Kenny Loggins, Natalie Merchant, K. D. Lang, Bruce Cockburn, Chevy Chase and many others. The concert was exceptional and I was grateful to see all of the bands, including Steve and Paul, from such a privileged vantage point.

Several months later, Steve's band was again touring the summer sheds. They had a day off after their Philadelphia show and Steve and Kim accepted our longstanding invitation to drive up to Nazareth for one of Susan's fantastic lunches.

Our relationship had grown to the point that on several occasions Steve had alluded to the possibility of a position for me as his personal assistant, for lack of a better title. Impressed with Susan's talent and organizational skill, there seemed to be a potential role for her as well. This was a great and exciting opportunity for us, but the real thrill came from the notion of reinventing ourselves and our careers. We booked our flights and began to investigate real estate in the area. There was a great sense of anticipation in facing the unknown.

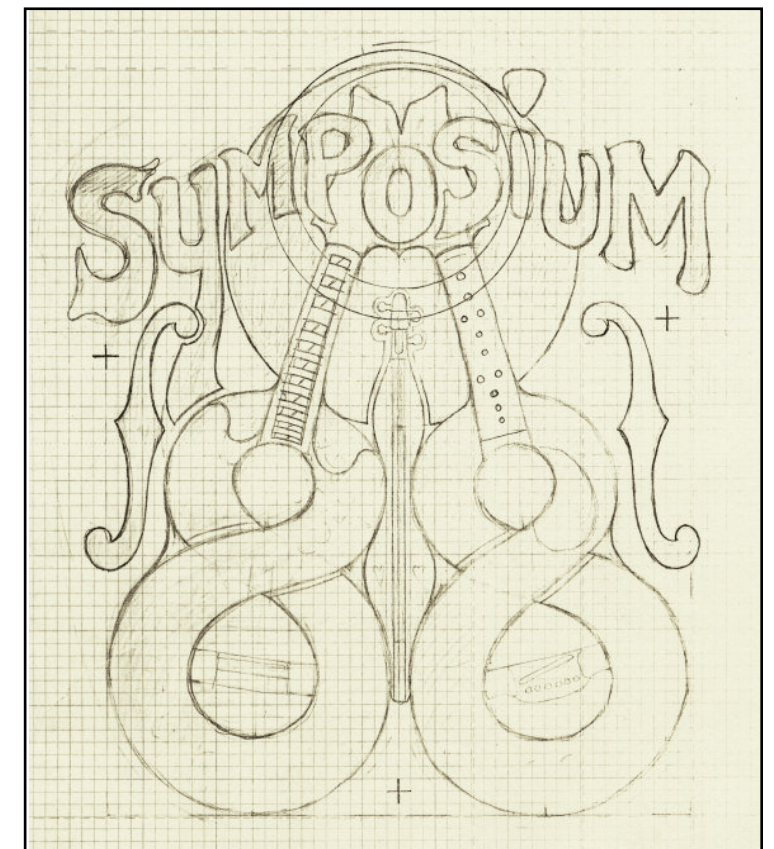
Free Falling

The thrill of running a non-profit organization was beginning to wane. It was taking an inordinate amount of time to book the membership checks, answer inquiries, write and publish the magazine, and manage the logistics of the bi-annual Symposia. Beyond that, all of the extra work was beginning to impact my time with Susan, so I gave ample notice to the Board of Directors and a search ensued for my replacement. The transition was difficult, but when it was over I felt a tremendous sense of relief.

My guitarmaking friends conspired to secretly fabricate a special plaque for my contribution of time to A.S.I.A. Grit Laskin cut and assembled the East Indian rosewood sections. Larry Sifel and Jeff Harding at *PearlWorks* executed the incredible pearl inlay. The finished piece (above right) stands as one of my most prized mementos.

My soft exit from A.S.I.A. was especially well timed given that Susan came home one afternoon with a small package from the pharmacy.

"I'm a little off schedule," she said, as she unpacked the pregnancy test kit. I sat on the steps of



Logo and T-Shirt design mockup for Symposium '88.



A.S.I.A. Award Plaque by Grit Laskin, Larry Sifel and Jeff Harding. East Indian Rosewood, Abalone, Mother of Pearl, 1995

Jet Airliner

So we flew to out to visit Steve and Kim Miller. It was overwhelming. The cheaper houses were more than we could afford, so we looked in the adjoining towns surrounding the valley. The properties were still very expensive. Steve offered to put us up in one of his guest houses until we decided on a place. This was extremely generous, but Susan was feeling very conflicted about raising a child away from her family. I was slightly scared that things might not work out with Steve and we would be transplanted without a secure situation. Steve, sensing the difficulty of our decision, let the job offer stand but suggested that we shelve the idea of moving, and focus on raising our child. We were relieved.

Fearing that I was about to fly the coop, Martin gave me a modest but needed raise. In the meantime, one of my friends was going through a difficult divorce and needed to sell his house just north of Nazareth. Sue and I liked the feel of the property and following our natural nesting instinct, we made a snap decision and bought it.

Emily was born as the fall settled in. While she was still a baby, we visited Steve and Kim again. A few years later, when Sue was pregnant with Gracie, Steve and Kim invited us out to their new home in the Pacific Northwest. Steve had chartered a beautiful vintage sailing ship ironically named "Martin's Eden," supplied with a captain, cook and crew who were all the same person. We joined Ned Steinberger of *Steinberger Guitar* fame and his wife Denise, who was also expecting. Steve captained his



Susan and Emily with Kim Miller.

the stage/altar reading the instructions as we waited for the allotted time to elapse.

The plus sign emerged like the mysterious messages that bubble up from those fortune telling eight-balls. We embraced our mutual state of shock.

Susan wasn't sure how I would react. We hadn't really planned this or talked about it very much. Subconsciously, there was always the possibility that this might happen.

Our heads were spinning. Without even having a chance to stop and think about what was happening, one thing was sure – we were both elated. Life was about to drastically change.

There were, however, a number of loose ends that

would have to be resolved. The Church of Art with its open balconies and limited space would be no place to raise a child, and a flurry of flattering job offers had come my way prior to discovering this news.

The most exciting of these opportunities was the possibility of going to work for Steve Miller. Our flight had been booked for a month and Idaho real estate brochures were spread haphazardly across the kitchen table. It would be difficult to leave our former lives behind, but we seemed willing to take the leap. Day by day the reality of our conception began to settle in as Tom Petty's *Free Fallin'* softly echoed on the stereo.

own boat with Kim and another couple who were close friends. We sailed in tandem through the San Juans toward the Olympic Peninsula, stopping to spend the night in a tiny cove on the eastern side of Lopez Island.

We cooked fresh salmon filets on our own boats. Ned and I, not constrained by pregnancy, immersed ourselves in a bottle of red wine. Just after dusk, Ned, the captain and I rowed over to the Steve's boat in a small and unstable dingy. Steve was moored further than we thought and by the time we pulled alongside, all of the deck lights were out. Everyone was sound asleep, including Steve who had suggested earlier that we join him over for dessert. In spite of much giggling, splashing, and boatside immaturity, nothing could rouse the Millers, hence the lyrics to *Sleep Cowboy* were conceived in a raucous display of spontaneity.

Sleep Cowboy

Some people call me the sleep cowboy, yea.
Some call me the gangster of snooze.
Some people call me "Snore-ee-se" (Snort, Snort)
Cause I've slept for the duration of the cruise.

Some people talk about me.
They say I'm catchin' lots of "zzzzzzz's."
But its easy, it's so easy to slip under
When you're rocked by the rhythm of the seas.

Cause I'm a snoozer.
I'm a doozer.
In my cabin cruiser.
Do my dreamin' just for fun.

I'm a sleeper.
I'm a peeper.
Don't you buzz my beeper.
When the lazy day is done..

I'm a restler.
I'm a jester.
I'm the son-in-law of Lester.
I do my sleepin' in the sun.

Oooh, Oooh, Oooh, Oooh
Oooh, Oooh, Oooh, Oooh,
Oooh, Oooh, Oooh

I'm the smoothest dude that you never did see
Cause I'll be hiding under my bed's canopy.
Dreamin', dreamin', dreamin', I'll be dreamin' for a week
And when I finally get up, I'll just go back to sleep...

Repeat (with prolific snoring in the background) and fade...

©1997 Sailor Music. All Rights Reserved.
(Sarcasm contributed by dick boak. No Rights Reserved.)



Except for a signed label,
the only reference that the
00-37s were Steve Miller
models was a laser-etched
joker mask on the interior
neck block.

Steve Miller 00-37 Signature Editions, 1999.
Engelmann Spruce (KSM), Hawaiian flamed koa (K2SM).

I wasn't sure that Steve appreciated my songwriting talent (or lack thereof). I admit that the lyrics were a bit harsh, but it was all in good fun. I offered to split the royalties and he jokingly threatened me with copyright infringement.

We pushed off the next morning fully refreshed and we survived the moody seas, mooring up in Port Townsend for the *Wooden Boat Show* before sailing back the next day.

Ned had patented an ingenious adjustable neck for acoustic guitars and the three of us spent hours discussing the merits. In fact, the combination of a player, a builder and an inventor inspired more guitar talk than the females could bear.

Nonetheless, the seeds of a Martin/Steinberger adjustable neck collaboration were born, as well as preliminary specifications for a Steve Miller Signature Edition. After returning to Nazareth, I started churning out jokers and jesters, jet airliners and space cowboys, flying horses and flying eagles. In the end though, Steve and I decided to mothball all of the inlay ideas in favor of an extremely pure design, devoid of ego, that could stand on its own merits as a fine instrument. Of course, the guitars were all gobbled up by the music stores in a feeding frenzy, proving that there is still integrity in restraint.



Photo by Kim Miller

Steve Miller in his art studio with the prototype of his 000C cutaway signature edition issued in January of 2005.



*Acoustic Guitar by William "Grit" Laskin, 2000
#271099, Commissioned by dick boak*

Laskin Red

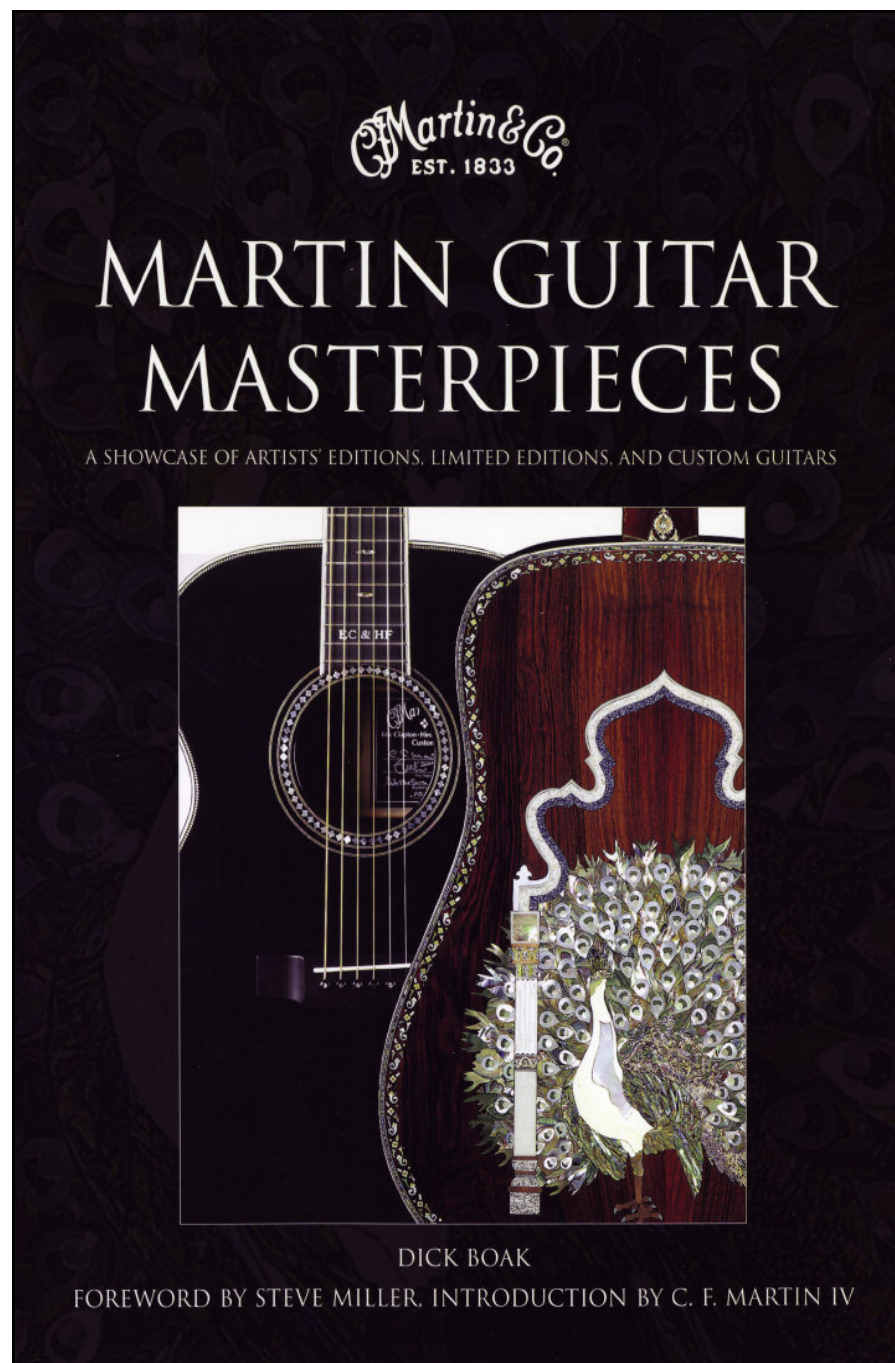
One of the few guitars I have ever purchased from another maker was made by William "Grit" Laskin. I had saved a soundboard of Appalachian red spruce, plus an extraordinarily figured set of Brazilian rosewood. Martin wouldn't use the sapwood, but for me that's what made it all the more special. I didn't trust myself to do justice with such a precious set. I had always admired Grit's instruments and I commissioned him in 1996 to make a special guitar with these woods. When we started discussing inlay, I decided that I wanted to poke fun at Martin. The headstock inlay features Grit, standing on the top rung of a ladder inside a music store window, painting over the Martin logo from the window. Grit suggested that since his last name shared three common letters with Martin, he would depict himself replacing the "M," the "R," and the "T" with his own name in *Laskin Red* paint. The resulting work of tone and art, complete with beveled built-in armrest, is one that I truly cherish.



Back Detail. Prior to its extreme scarcity, wild figure, sapwood, and flatsawn grain in Brazilian rosewood were typically rejected.



*Headstock Inlay Detail, William "Grit" Laskin, 1999
(From the author's personal collection.)*



Cover of "Martin Guitar Masterpieces," Bulfinch Press, 2003

ISBN: 0-8212-2835-8
 NO OF COPIES PER CARTON: 12
 AUTHOR: DICK BOAK
 TITLE: MARTIN GUITARS
 PRICE: US\$40.00 / CAN\$60.00
 PO# LBB06912
 WEIGHT PER CARTON: 17.5KG

Palazzo Meets Bulfinch

In May of 2002, I received a call from an English guitar enthusiast named David Costa. I had talked to him before, but the connection didn't register. He said that he and two friends would be traveling soon in the States. He wanted to know whether they could come by for a special factory tour?

I scheduled their visit and didn't think much about it until their arrival one Thursday morning. David was casually dressed and seemed rather artsy. His friends Colin and Pam Webb were a bit more formal. All three were amiable and professional.

English accents bring out the *Beatle* in me and before long I was inflicting them with my typically bad Liverpoolian impressions. Nevertheless, there was good humour (as the English would spell it) and we all struck it off bloody well. They were impressed with the factory. They asked a lot of questions about the limited edition signature model program and complimented me on my knowledge and passion for guitars.

After the tour, we sat down for a chat. Colin and Pam were involved with book publishing. They outlined a tentative proposal for a book about rare and limited Martin guitars. I thought it was a terrific idea, but knowing how crazy my own schedule was, I suggested that I might refer them to a few potential Martin experts appropriate for authorship of such a large project. I printed out a few names and addresses for them and they looked up at me in confusion.

"You don't know who we are, do you?"

I knew that David and Colin had been collaborating on books. I knew that David was a graphic designer in London and that Colin and Pam were more involved with the business aspects of publishing and packaging.

I didn't know that David had done album covers for Elton John, Mark Knopfler, George Harrison, Eric Clapton, the Beatles and many, many more music icons.

David perked up. "We've brought along some samples of some of the book projects

we've worked on together. I'll bring them in from the car." He returned with a large sack and emptied it carefully upon the table.

"We specialize in high quality limited run books." He handed over a copy of the best selling book *The Beatles Anthology*, then a beautiful limited boxed edition entitled *Eric Clapton – 24 Nights*, and finally an assortment of other lovely coffee table books.

"Why don't you look these over?" Colin said. "We'll be in touch after we return to the UK. The books are for you."

I thanked them profusely as we said our cordial goodbyes. After their departure, I flipped through the various volumes they had given me. I was tremendously impressed with the overall design and layout and I began to feel a sense of remorse in not having offered to write the book myself, especially since most of the Martin signature guitars had happened as the result of my direct efforts.

I was particularly surprised and pleased when they called back several days later to say that they really didn't want anyone else. If I ever desired to be published, this was the time. I considered their second offer a great compliment and opportunity, but also a daunting challenge.

I had already written many of the artist model pieces for Martin's *Sounding Board* and had also captured several of the more personal and humorous celebrity encounters for this *Dot To Dot* book. I forwarded a few of these on to David and Colin via email to give them an idea of the informal first-person vantage point I had in mind. They both liked what they read and soon an agreement was drafted, reviewed, and signed.

For the better part of eight grueling months, I spent my late evenings trying to keep up with Colin's stringent deadlines. Although my chapters were generally late, I was at least able to keep David thoroughly occupied during his layout and design process.

John Sterling Ruth supplemented the existing Martin photography with some ultra-high resolution digital details and before long the book started to take shape.



Joining Steve Miller in San Francisco and Oakland for a shortlived but fun book signing tour.

Palazzo printed the book in Singapore and negotiated a U.S. distribution agreement with Bulfinch Press, a division of AOL Time Warner. The marketing department at Bulfinch did an admirable job in advance promoting sales. They even sent me to California for a book signing tour with Steve Miller who had graciously accepted my invitation to write the foreword for the book. In addition to the huge thrill and honor of being published, I came away with the heightened confidence I needed to finally finish the book you are now viewing.

Since I had covered the subject of signature editions with relative thoroughness in *Martin Guitar Masterpieces*, I wrestled with the issue of whether it was necessary to rehash any of those stories in these pages. Since the initial stories were intended for this book in the first place and since some of the anecdotes were too extended or revealing for the Martin book, I made the decision (in the spirit of connecting the dots) to include the handful of the original unabridged artist stories here.

During the course of my writing routine, I was becoming more disciplined and structured. Sitting down with the mouse and keyboard every evening started to feel like second nature, at least I was achieving tangible results. I doubt I'll ever be thought of as much of a writer, but if there is a specific space to fill, let me at it. Give me a word count and I'll write it to fit!

Writing To Fit

Writing to fit is like installing kitchen cabinets.

When a space avails itself, my mind dispatches a skilled apprentice to the jobsite who carefully measures the job, making sure to calculate the complex angles to the nearest degree. Every fluctuation of the floor and ceiling – every diverging theme is considered.

The exact perimeters outlined, he reports back to the shop where each noun is now sawn and fit. Verbs are carefully selected like drawer pulls and hinges. Unnecessary adjectives are trimmed. Moldings are punctuated, masking the unsightly seams. Corner miters converge like conjunctions. Descriptions are sprayed like fine lacquers.

Pre-assembled paragraphs are loaded onto the truck. My mind drives – slowly so that the load doesn't shift. The installation isn't quick. There will be adjustments. Prepositions prop up the uneven sections – everything fits.

I stand back and look – a droplet of perspiration blurs the corner of my vision. A young woman enters the room with her checkbook. She is pretty and she likes her cabinets. My work is done.

461 Ocean Boulevard

In 1992, Eric Clapton recorded an extended set of songs for MTV Unplugged. The highlights of the show were *Tears From Heaven*, an intensely emotional lament that followed the tragic death of Eric's son Conor, plus a slow yet inspired acoustic version of the rock classic *Layla*. Every song recorded during that session possessed a fresh magic that revitalized the mass appreciation for acoustic music.

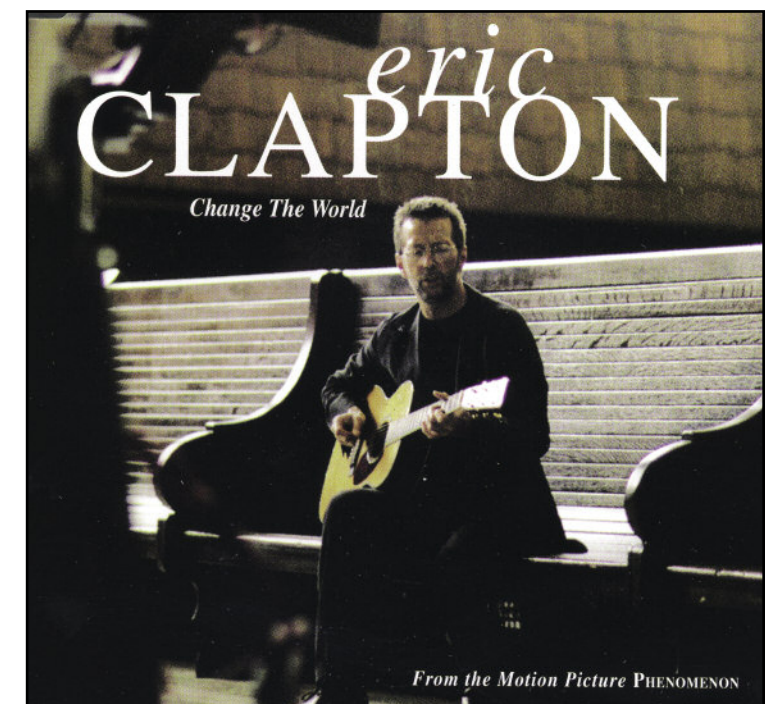
The predominant acoustic guitars on the show had been Martins, so it wasn't long before my phone started to ring off the hook. Everyone wanted to know exactly what models Eric was using and whether they were available. We had had a reasonable success the previous year with the Gene Autry Signature Edition guitar. The project had sold 66 guitars and generated a charitable royalty for *The Autry Museum of Western Heritage*.

It seemed too obvious that a Clapton Signature Edition would be extremely well received. With

Chris Martin's blessing, I prepared a brief but sensitive fax to Clapton's office in London. A heartfelt and favorable response came back the next day and before long I was hard at work with Eric's guitar technician Lee Dickson, blending features from two of Eric's favorite Martins. While the model was being prototyped, I searched his lyrics for a numerical reference that might lend itself to an edition quantity. Flipping through my dusty stack of albums, I landed upon *461 Ocean Boulevard*. The number was ambitious but seemed perfect given that Eric's demographics transcended age, race and gender. We offered 461 guitars and they sold out within hours of their introduction at the national music show in Anaheim, leaving us all wishing that Eric could have moved a mile or two up the road – perhaps to 1461 Ocean Boulevard.

As the 000-42EC models made it through the line, it became increasingly clear that these guitars were very special; a perfect collaboration with a legendary artist and an inspired guitar design. It would be a tough act to follow.

Susan and I traveled to London with Chris Martin and his half-brother Douglas to meet up with Eric backstage prior to one of his performances at the Albert Hall. There we were photographed



Eric Clapton playing my personal 000-42EC model (#2) during the filming of the *Change The World* video at the old Hoboken Train Station in Hoboken, New Jersey.



With C. F. "Chris" Martin IV, Eric Clapton, and Susan backstage at the Albert Hall in March of 1995.

presenting him with the number one guitar from the edition. Eric was late to go onstage and slightly disshoveled but that didn't squelch our enthusiasm for the moment.

Several months later, Eric flew to New York City to shoot the video for his hit *Change The World*. He assumed that it would be easy to borrow one of his signature guitars, but they had simply all been sold and he hadn't brought his own guitars. He called my office in a panic. Having purchased #2 of the edition, I hopped in my car and rushed to the Hoboken Train Station where the filming was taking place. What a thrill it was to have my personal guitar in Eric's hands during the filming of the video as well as the ad promo for the movie *Phenomenon* and the cover of the jacket for the single release.

There would be many more Eric Clapton

collaborations and models in the cards, including an unprecedented Custom OM-50 Deluxe guitar with an alligator skin case, a tremendously popular stock model, two Brazilian rosewood editions, a limited run of beautiful black *Bellezza Nera* guitars plus a possible run of some creamy white *Bellezza Biancas*.

Iacocca's

Lee Dickson had taken care of Eric Clapton's guitars for decades. Throughout the course of our collaboration with Eric, Lee and I had become good friends. When the Clapton Blues Tour came to Philadelphia, Lee used his day off to come up to Nazareth for an afternoon at the factory. Afterwards, we headed over to Allentown for a nice dinner at a small Italian restaurant owned by Lee Iacocca's sister. We waited a long time for our pasta to arrive and to

pass the time, Lee picked up the restaurant's guest book on the counter next to our table. Joking around, Lee signed *Paul McCartney* into the book with a comment about his wonderful day at the Martin factory with dick boak. Then I took the pen and signed *Eric Clapton*, with a wry comment about how nobody in the damn town seemed to know who we were. We had a good chuckle about this, then set the book back in its place and went about eating our dinners.

Several weeks passed and my memory of Lee's visit slowly faded. Then one afternoon, the phone rang. It was a cub reporter from the local newspaper. He wanted to know if I could confirm the rumor that Paul McCartney had recently been to the Martin factory in Nazareth. I didn't have the faintest idea what he was talking about and emphatically explained that Paul McCartney had never been to the factory, nor did I expect that he ever would.

Defeated, he hung up.

The next morning, he called back and asked whether Eric Clapton had been to the factory recently.

"This is ridiculous." I retorted. "Where are you getting this?"

He said that rumors were all over Allentown. I asked him to check the source and get back to me. I really was becoming curious and annoyed about this. The notion that these two might have been in town together or separately was absurd.

Another day passed. He called again.

"A restaurant owner says they were both in town. She said that they made an entry into the guest book. They mentioned your name!"

"What restaurant?" I asked in disbelief.

"Iacocca's."

If it weren't for the static connection, I think he might have heard my jaw hit the floor. It all came back to me in an instantaneous flash of embarrassment and guilt. I had no choice but to confess. I told him the entire story and apologized profusely.

I don't think he thought it was very funny. On top of that, it spoiled his story. I suggested that he tell what really happened.

"Oh yeah, that's news," and the phone slammed.

With a sheepish grin, I picked up the phone and dialed Lee's number in London.



*Inset: Grand Ole Opry Micarta® fingerboard and headplate design.
Above: HDN "Negative" Edition Prototype, 2002*

Bellezza Nera

One afternoon, I received a phone call from my friends at *Acoustic Guitar* magazine in Marin County north of San Francisco. The publication was celebrating its tenth anniversary and the editors were soliciting each major guitar manufacturer to create two matching custom instruments to commemorate the milestone. Given that the guitars would receive considerable publicity, I was being encouraged to think outside the box. I dubbed the project AG-10 and started to consider the design options.

I had been experimenting with white Corian® and cream-colored Micarta® as potential fingerboard choices for a Limited Edition *Grand Ole Opry* model. With a color close to ivory, the Micarta® material seemed perfect, especially since I had been trying to develop a fingerboard design that would capture the essence of the lettering and coloration on the Opry microphone placards.

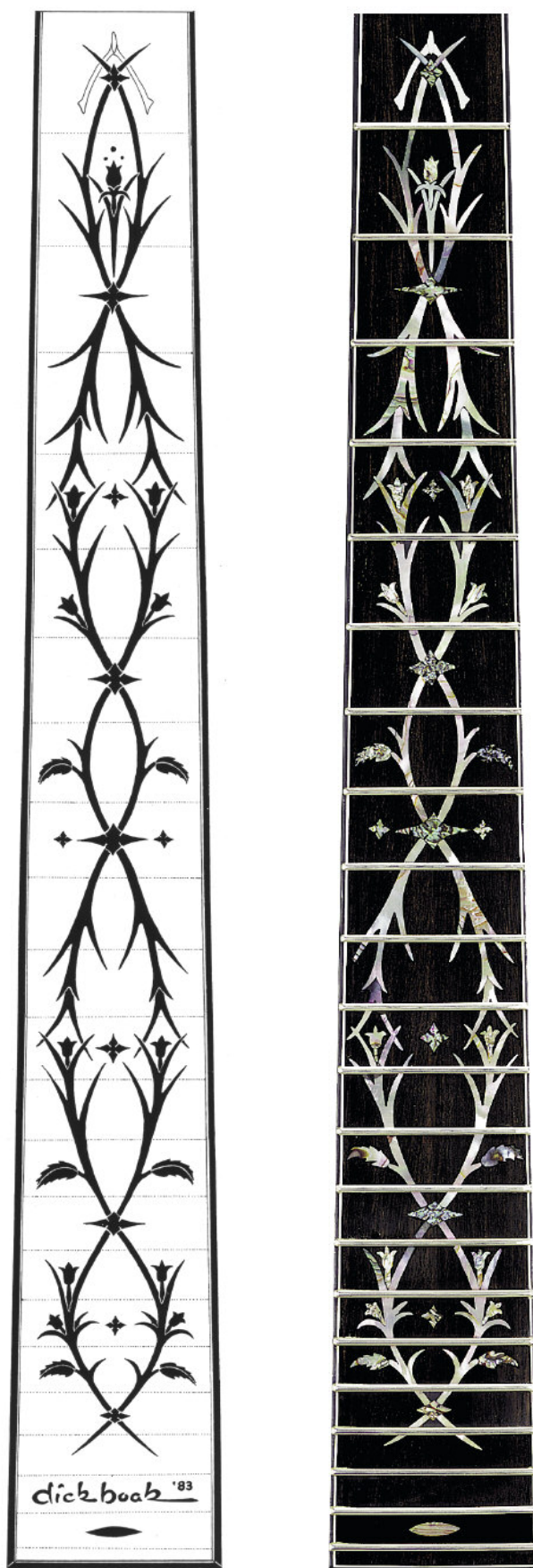
After flirting with the notion of finishing the AG-10 guitar in black lacquer, it occurred to me that the face view was beginning to resemble a photographic negative wherein all of the blonde surfaces could revert to black and all the darker surfaces could revert to white. Extending this theme toward its logical conclusion, the pickguard, bridge and headplate were specified in white and the bindings, nut and saddle, bridge pins, and tuning machine buttons were changed to black.

The result was striking enough to draw an inquiry from Bob Dylan when he noticed the AG-10 guitar in the pages of the *Acoustic Guitar* magazine. He wanted one. We ended up making him two "negative" prototypes for his *Love and Theft* tour. We held high hope that he might finally agree to a Bob Dylan Signature Edition Martin model.

For months we waited for Dylan's decision, but the phone call never came. Gradually, I came to realize that the instrument could stand quite nicely on its own without depending upon Bob's endorsement. And so negativity found its way into the Martin line in the stunning form of the HDN *Negative* Edition. Then with equal input from Eric Clapton and his Japanese friend Hiroshi Fujiwara, eight beautiful black 000s evolved – their dark integrity inviting the inevitable introduction of the Clapton/Fujiwara *Bellezza Nera* Limited Edition.



*Martin Custom "EC & HF" Prototype, 2003
Clapton used #1 on the cover of "Me And Mr. Johnson."*



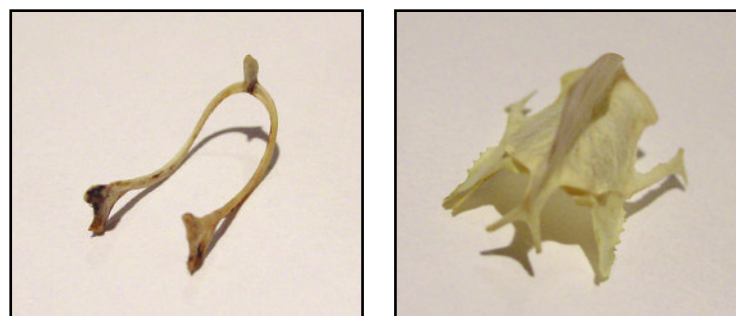
The original Vine Of Harmonics illustration paired with its corresponding Custom Shop fingerboard option.

Double Trouble

On the country music front, Marty Stuart and Travis Tritt were touring together under the heading of "Double Trouble." Marty's signature model had certainly caught Travis's eye and one afternoon, they descended upon the factory under separate cover. Marty arrived in a Checker cab and Travis in a gigantic black limousine. The production of Marty's model was in full swing and I took them on an extended tour of the factory.

Afterwards, we all sat down and Travis rattled off specifications for what was at the time the most expensive Brazilian rosewood Custom Martin guitar ever constructed. He wasn't sure, however, exactly what ornamentation to choose for the fingerboard. I happened to have my Custom OMC 12-String Deluxe Cutaway with the "Vine Of Harmonics" inlay pattern (*see page 179*) with me. I had drawn this pattern based upon the fractional harmonic subdivisions of the scale length. The tiny spines terminating each branch were intended to bear some significance to the astute slide player. Not only did my design have little practicality; Chris Martin gradually came to jokingly call it "The Vine Of Twigs" for the obvious reason that it was practically devoid of leaves. As a crowning touch to my vine of barren branches, I added a tiny wishbone as a subtle reference to my most prized possession, that being the incredibly fragile wishbone of a hummingbird that I had found in the grass as a child.

Travis found some solace in this oddly attractive pattern and chose it for the fingerboard of his extravagant instrument. To the benefit of the pattern, the inlay artists at PearlWorks took poetic license in choosing a wide variety of colors from their pallet of shell and composite stone.



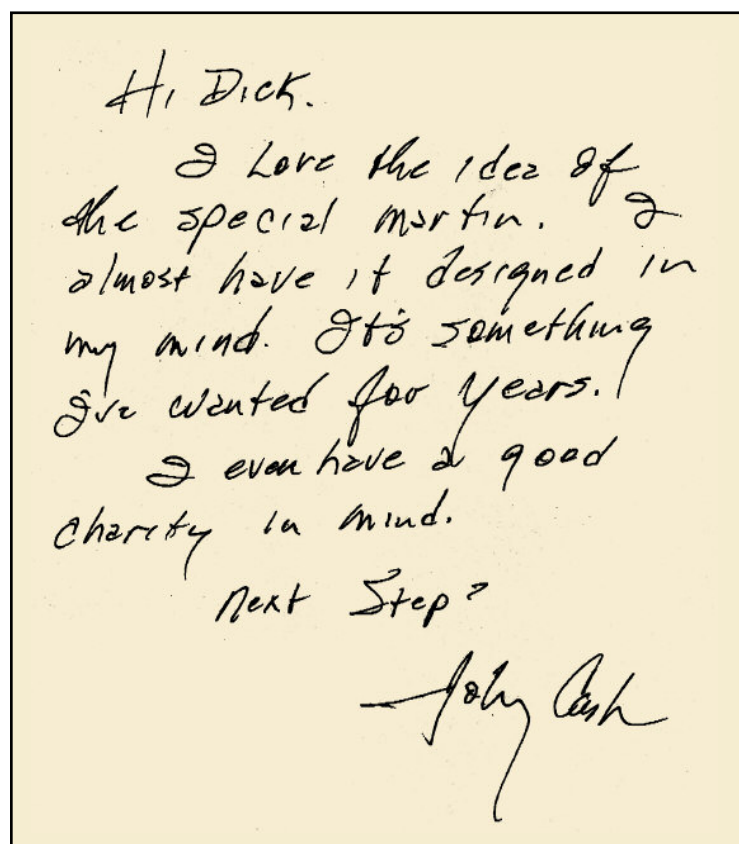
These remnants of a hummingbird skeleton reside as my most prized possessions in a small glass jar on my workshop shelf.



Travis Tritt's Custom D-45 with Vine of Harmonics, Herringbone pearl bordering and Tree of Life pickguard.

Travis's guitar was magnificent – twigs, wishbones and all, and it is a great honor to see him show up occasionally on a TV special or video cradling it in his arms. I think Travis took particular pride in the fact that he had out-performed Marty in the ornamentation department, let alone cost. Marty just rolled his eyes and raised the ante with a sly comment about outperforming Travis in the taste and tone departments!

Marty had been married to Johnny Cash's daughter Cindy, and though they were long since divorced, Marty had maintained a very strong tie with Johnny. We both thought a Johnny Cash model would be a winner, so Marty made the call for me. The next morning I received a very enthusiastic handwritten fax from Johnny and we were on our way.



Johnny Cash

It seemed pretty obvious that the "Man in Black" would want a black guitar. We went back and forth a few times with some ideas and ended up with an elegant D-42 model with 13 patriotic pearl bordered abalone stars as position markers and Johnny's signature at the last fret. The completion of the prototype coincided nicely with the Telluride

Bluegrass Festival. I lugged that guitar across the country and up that beautiful mountain, eventually meeting up with Johnny behind his tour bus.

Johnny looked weary, but he and his wife June Carter Cash were very gracious. He loved the guitar. It's hard to not get excited over such a piece of personalized art. Right in the middle of all of this, up comes Stormin' Norman Schwartzkopf, a longtime friend of Johnny's. I found him oddly refreshing. We talked while Johnny strummed. He performed well that night, considering that his illness would get much worse in the months that followed. Looking back, they were such warm-hearted people. Our project takes on a special meaning now, and of course the guitars are stunning and rare. I remember seeing a television special that Johnny did with his good friend Willie Nelson, who was so taken with Johnny's guitar that he sang a song on camera with it. The next day, Marty Stuart again rose to the challenge and furnished me with a special phone number. I called it.

Photo by Doug Berry



With Johnny Cash at Telluride, 1997.

Willie

The phone tones pulsed, then....

"Hello."

"Yes, ah, hello. I'm trying to get in touch with Willie Nelson?"

"This is Willie." said Willie in a very soft monotone. Marty had given me the cell phone on Willie's bus. I was a bit startled to be talking to Willie so directly.

Willie was smooth as silk. He liked the notion of having his old guitar replicated. *Trigger* was undeniably one of the most famous and recognizable instruments on the planet. In the late 60's, Willie had had an inexpensive "Conn" nylon stringed guitar with an ingenious onboard pickup. One night, it got badly damaged during a show and Willie took it in to Shot Jackson's in Nashville to be repaired. Shot couldn't fix it, but he had a brand new Martin N-20 hanging on the wall.

"Can you put the pickup from that thing into the Martin?" said Willie.

"Sure can," said Shot.

It's a gas to look at photos of Willie and that guitar through the years. Willie was clean cut when the guitar was new. A decade later, his hair was shoulder length and the N-20 had a few scratches and dents. By the mid 80's, the guitar was starting to show some serious wear and so was Willie, but he didn't want to get it fixed. The sound was just right, in spite of the fact that there was a sizeable hole worn right through the soundboard. The guitar had become such an integral part of Willie's sound that he invited his closest friends and band members to sign the guitar and soon it was covered with legendary names: Cash, Kristofferson, Haggard, Jennings.... and a hundred more.

So when the IRS got on Willie's case, it's no surprise that the first thing he did was hide that guitar away. It sat safely in his manager's office for months until things cooled down a bit.

Willie was scheduled to do a concert in Valley Forge. I made plans to meet him there so that I could talk measurements and take some photos of *Trigger*. After the show, I waited backstage with Waylon Jennings and seventy-five middle-aged women. Finally one of Willie's roadies came to get me and Waylon. Those women were so envious. I hopped up

on the bus and there he was, relaxing at his table. He stood up to greet us and I said, "Hello, Mr. Willie." I wasn't seated for 15 seconds before a gigantic joint was lit and passed to me. It was a peace offering of sorts, and like a cavalry captain sitting with Geronimo, it was impossible to refuse. After a few moments it didn't matter if I inhaled or not. It would have gotten to anybody just through osmosis!

There were five or six big guys on the bus, plus Waylon, and Willie's little sister Bobbie. One of the big guys passed me the joint and reassured me: "Don' worry, little feller. Yer safe with us. An' ya' know, Willie's the only remaining cannabis-based lifeform on the planet!" This was somehow comforting.

After twenty minutes or so, Willie decided he was ready to go outside and sign autographs for the several hundred twitterpated women that were nestled around the bus. I realized then that I too needed his autograph in order to create the digital artwork for the fingerboard. I handed Willie my notebook opened up to a blank page. He reached out with his Sharpie and made a squiggle. I looked at it in disbelief. It was completely illegible.

I didn't want to insult Willie, but I handed the notebook back to him. "Willie, I need you to do it again." He squiggled again, this time a slightly more intelligible squiggle, but a squiggle just the same.

Returning to Nazareth, I worked on the fingerboard artwork for the prototypes and my friends at Fishman created a faithful version of Willie's unusual pickup. Everything came together nicely. When the first guitars were completed, I called to check Willie's schedule and was amazed to find that he was going to play the State Theater just ten miles east of Nazareth. I met him the afternoon of the show in the parking lot of the Larry Holmes Commodore Inn across the river in Phillipsburg, New Jersey. I arrived at two and the bus driver informed me that Willie was still asleep. At three, I was summoned. I grabbed the prototype and climbed up the steps onto the bus.

This time it was just me and *Geronimo*. He lit the joint and passed it my way. The stuff never seemed to affect him very much. He looked at the prototype with great interest and sized it up against the genuine *Trigger*. We joked about making a machine that would attack the guitar just like he does in all

the right spots, but before we knew it, it was time to head over to Easton for the sound check. Willie suggested that I leave my car and drive over on the bus. With wafts of marijuana smoke seeping from the vents, we crossed the toll bridge and exited onto 4th Street. The Easton Circle was under major construction.

There was a tiny sign at the end of the exit ramp that said: "No Busses or Trucks." Of course, that sign was only a few feet off the ground. In the tour bus, we were too high to see it. Willie was too high as well. The smoke inside the bus was so thick our visibility was as obscured as our judgement. *Poodie*, our driver, proceeded boldly toward the circle.

Two lanes became one and the bus came to a halt. It was impossible to turn at the circle. Poodie tried to back up, but there were a dozen cars behind us. The stalemate lasted long enough to attract a young police officer. He banged his fist on the bus door. The sizzle of extinguished embers emanated from the sink disposal as a wave of paranoia swept

Photo by Richard Starkey



With Willie Nelson and two Triggers in Easton, PA, 1998



Photo by Christian Weber

Willie's original Trigger couched and evading the tax assessors.

through the bus. Willie said: "Just relax everybody. This bus has diplomatic immunity. We're a separate country."

Poodie slipped off the bus and closed the door with such grace, only a few acrid wafts made it to the vicinity of the officer's nostrils. He wanted to board the bus in the worst way, but Poodie wasn't about to permit this without a search warrant. After fifteen minutes of verbal wrangling, the frustrated officer begrudgingly issued a \$250 traffic violation. He had no idea who Willie Nelson was, not that that would have made any difference. He cleared the cars in back of us and supervised the slow de-vacuation of the bus. Soundcheck would just have to wait.

After the show, Willie greeted people on stage. He had both versions of Trigger and several snapshots were taken. The guitars raised some nice royalties for *Farm Aid*, the mayor of Easton intervened to void Willie's ticket, and life returned to some sense of normalcy for everyone, except of course for Willie.

Masiakasaurus Knopfleri

More than any other recording artist, I have been enamored with Mark Knopfler's musicianship and guitar playing from his first *Dire Straits* album up through his movie soundtracks, collaborative partnerships and solo releases. When the opportunity presented itself to collaborate with Mark on a signature model project, I seized it with passion and commitment.

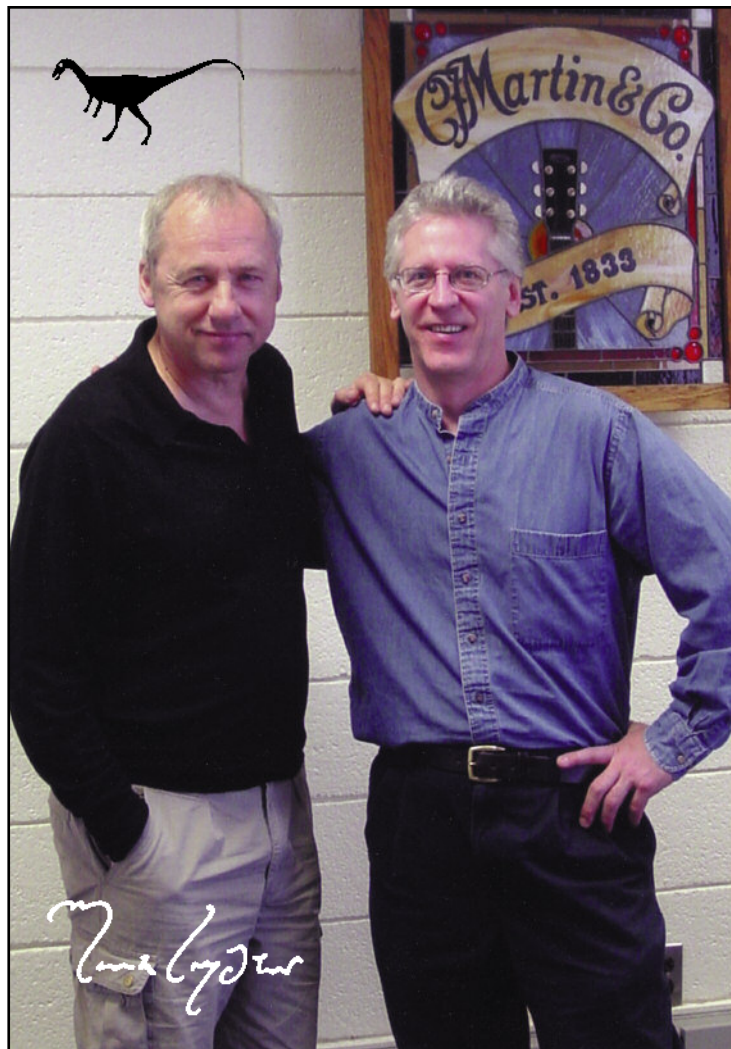
Identifying the optimum mix of size, tonewoods and appointments for Mark was not an easy task, but gradually we honed in on the specifications. While we were working on the initial prototypes, a team of paleontologists from the University of Utah were digging for fossils in northwestern Madagascar. They weren't having much success, that is until they inserted a *Dire Straits* CD into their boom box. Almost immediately they found dinosaur bones from a previously undiscovered species. It became their running joke that if they didn't play Mark's CD, they wouldn't find any fossils, but when they did they would hit the jackpot.

They decided to honor Mark by naming their new discovery *Masiakasaurus knopfleri*. In the newspapers, Mark responded that he was most honored to have a fast-moving, versatile and vicious creature named after him.

I thought the story was very amusing and proceeded to design an assortment of dinosaur inspired inlays for the fingerboard, but upon proposing my idea to Mark, he was less than enthused. I think that all the newspaper articles and hubbub had gotten to him. Reluctantly, I placed my inlay designs on the back burner.

En route to the annual *MusikMesse* in Frankfurt, I arranged to stop in London to meet with Mark and put the final specifications to rest. Appropriately, he was recording a tribute to Hank Williams, Sr. with his fellow band members and Emmylou Harris at *Nomis Studios* in Shepherd's Bush. I arrived quietly right in the middle of the session. When they took a break, Mark greeted me briefly and sat me down with a cup of tea right smack in the middle of the studio. Watching the recording process was remarkable, especially in such close proximity.

Following several takes, everyone retired to the console to review the playbacks. After much



With Mark Knopfler at Martin in April of 2001.

rewinding, Mark decided that a few extra tracks of vocal layering would be necessary. When Mark and Emmylou headed back into the studio, it became clear that this would take some time. I went downstairs to the cafeteria for some lunch. Halfway through my salad, Mark came to my table with his tray and said: "Mind if I join you?" I was taken aback but thankful that he was opting to sit with me instead of Emmylou.

I had a lot of issues that needed to be resolved in order to finalize the specifications. While eating our lunches, we discussed the difficulties surrounding the cutting of his special rosette design, then we tackled some last minute inlay ideas. With great hesitancy, I produced my illustration of the tiny dinosaur and made my final case for its inclusion.

"I know you don't want this on the fingerboard," I pleaded, "but how about we bury this little critter inside the body, laser etched on the front block

above the serial number?"

I waited. A gleam appeared in his eye.

"Then everyone can discover the little *Knopfleri* for themselves, just like those blokes in Madagascar!"

"Exactly!"

Two months later, the prototypes were nearing completion. Mark was kicking off his US tour in support of his *Sailing To Philadelphia* CD release. I had extended an invitation for a factory visit and on a sunny Friday in April, a chartered helicopter descended loudly upon the Nazareth Speedway.

Accompanied by bass player Glenn Worf and guitarist Richard Bennett, Mark disembarked and stretched, then hopped into the Martin van for a short tour around Nazareth before being whisked over to the factory to see his prototypes in process.

Knowing that these fellows appreciated good cuisine and given the scarcity of any first rate caterers, Susan prepared a gourmet lunch that included the wonderfully fresh mozzarella from *Calandra's Cheese Shop*. The locals like to refer to the shop as "Cheeses of Nazareth." That's our Nazareth joke. Mark and his crew found this most humorous.

After lunch, we headed back to the Nazareth Speedway for a few quick laps around the track at a dizzying speed of 50 mph. Actually, the asphalt was being repaired in preparation for the weekend's big race and Mark's tour insurance didn't allow for any risk taking before performances.

With the evening's show at Philadelphia's *Tower Theater* calling, everyone climbed back into the helicopter for what Glenn fondly described as "a walk in the air." The following night we were fortunate to catch Mark's performance at the Beacon Theater in New York City. The music was superb, Mark's guitar wizardry was as dazzling as ever, and we got to sit next to Bette Midler!

As the guitars came through one by one, it became clear that Mark's strong convictions regarding how his Martin model should look and sound were naturally inspired. Several of the instruments found their way into the deserving hands of Mark and his bandmates who soon released a largely acoustic album entitled *Ragpicker's Dream*. That's where the relevance and satisfaction really is – to place wonderful tools in the hands of wonderful musicians.



Too Bad You Are A Communist

One afternoon, I was flipping through one of the guitar magazines and noticed that Joan Baez was pictured with another brand of guitar. I was horrified. She had been playing a 1929 Martin 0-45 guitar throughout her entire career. I called her office immediately to find out why she wasn't playing her old Martin.

Nancy, her assistant, wasn't 100% sure but thought that someone from another guitar company had told Joan that her Martin was worth more than \$100,000 and that she was crazy to keep it on the road with her. Apparently, she was then presented with one of the competition's guitar models. Heeding the advice, she retired the Martin to her bedroom closet and started touring with the non-Martin model. I was distressed.

Nancy said she would have Joan contact me and sure enough, within a week, I took the call. Joan confirmed the story, but added that after thirty years of constant use, her old Martin was the worse for

wear. The fingerboard had been poorly replaced and one of the inlays was missing altogether. There were some hairline cracks in the sides and the action was high. I offered to restore the guitar for her at no charge and she graciously accepted. Several weeks later a heavily insured carton arrived at the factory containing the legendary and precious guitar.

Shortly after the guitar was unpacked, my phone rang. It was Milt in the Repair Department. He was very distraught. He wanted to see me right away. I walked back to his bench.

"You won't believe this." He turned on a small light that he had placed inside the body of the guitar and handed me an inspection mirror. I took a look. There, on the underbelly of the top, the bold words were haphazardly scrawled:

"Too bad you are a communist!"

The statement was legible only with use of the mirror, which meant that someone had purposefully written the words backwards. It occurred to me that Joan might have had the instrument serviced during the Vietnam War years, most probably by someone who seriously objected to Joan's politics. Milt was worried that she might think that someone from Martin had done this. He asked that I call her with the news. I did.

When I reached her on the phone, I asked whether she was sitting down. I wasn't sure how she was going to take this. Slowly, I told her the whole story and as the word "communist" rolled off my tongue, there was an uneasy silence, then a spontaneous burst of laughter.

Joan laughed for several minutes. She found the story ironic and hilarious.

The restoration of the guitar went beautifully. Before returning the completed instrument to her, I took very careful measurements and photographs. She was so thrilled when she received it. She wrote me a very nice note.

In the weeks that followed, I proposed a Limited Edition Joan Baez Signature Model Martin guitar,

with royalties that would support *Bread & Roses*, the West Coast music charity that her sister Mimi Farina had founded. Joan loved the idea and we proceeded with a prototype that drew its inspiration from her

old 0-45 Martin. As the prototype neared completion, I awoke in the middle of the night with a brainstorm. Why not make a special label for the underside of the top, readable only with an inspection mirror that told the story in short order, complete with the "Too Bad You Are A Communist" punch line. Joan loved the idea.

Martin ended up making 59 of these very special guitars. The edition size was based on 1959, the year that Joan Baez came onto the scene at the Newport Folk Festival. The entire edition sold out immediately.

Eventually, Joan's tour brought her to the Ballroom at the *Bellevue Hotel* in Philadelphia. I met her there. She was playing the number one guitar and halfway through her performance she stopped. Holding the guitar proudly up for the audience, she spent five minutes telling the entire story. The audience roared.

I understand that when Joan Baez is bold enough to travel with her precious Martin guitars, she always tells that story with great animation and pride.

Dear Dick,
This is the most beautiful guitar
I've ever laid my hands on. I'm
speechless -
I'll be touring with it, loving it
cleaning it, and making music with
it for many audiences to come!
Thank you all at Martin
Joan.
(P.S. Too bad I'm a Communist)



Sting in the studio with John Kurgan (left) and Eric Clapton.

Sting

Gordon Sumner (AKA Sting) kept a Manhattan apartment in the same building as Paul Simon and Saturday Night Live producer Lorne Michaels. Sting's equipment manager and guitar technician was Danny Quatrochi. Danny's best friend and neighbor was John Kurgan. John was a professional musician, amateur luthier and recording wiz. I met him during one of his many visits to Martin and we became good friends.

Through John and Danny, I proposed a special Martin signature model collaboration to Sting. Sting was receptive enough to discuss it further, so John made an appointment with Sting's assistant Teresa. On a sunny Thursday morning in 1997, I met John near Central Park West and he helped me with my gear. I'd brought a Martin Humphrey nylon string guitar, my prototype Martin acoustic bass, my pinstripe electric bass (*See page 177*), and an assortment of strings and accessories that he had requested. I was aware that Sting was fond of art, so I brought along a selection of my prints.

We entered through a modest door on the first floor. The apartment was paneled tastefully in traditional dark cherry. To our right was a comfortable waiting room with overstuffed leather couches and chairs. To the left was a simple office setup with a bank of telephones where Teresa and her staff managed Sting's affairs. She informed us

that Sting was meditating and would be with us shortly.

I set my things down and sank into the leather couch. There was art everywhere. I didn't realize it, but above my head was a large Rembrandt original. John pointed this out. It was hard for me to imagine that one could actually own art of that value. I mulled around the waiting room in awe looking at Sting's treasures, and then Teresa came in and said that we could go upstairs.

I gathered all of my paraphernalia and awkwardly started up the elegant spiral staircase to the second floor. Along the way I passed a Monet, then a Renoir, then an Egyptian sarcophagus, then a large fragment of Roman relief to the top landing where I clumsily readjusted my load, turned to the right and gasped.

"I'll be damned if that's not the original set of barrel back dining room chairs from one of Frank Lloyd Wright's Prairie style houses in Chicago!"

Being a big fan of Wright's, this was even more impressive than the paintings.

From the next room I heard a quiet voice say: "That's quite astute!"

It was Sting, sitting on a small Persian carpet in



Rosette detail of the first Sting CSMH Signature Model that because of rainforest concerns, never happened.



Photo by John Kurgan

With Sting at his Manhattan flat.

the full lotus position. He looked extremely relaxed in his blue spandex skivvies. I'd heard all the stories about Sting's yoga and its effect upon his sexual capacity. I entered the large living room with my wares and set everything down neatly.

"What's in the box?" he asked.

"Oh, just some swag." I smiled.

"You don't have any Martin designer sweatpants in there, do you?"

"Fraid not." I laughed. This set me at ease as he slipped on a T-shirt and took a seat at the piano bench to see what I'd brought. John helped me get the various instruments out of the cases and Sting inspected and played them all with care. I knew he was an excellent bass player, but I was particularly surprised at his adeptness on the nylon string guitar. Beyond that, he possessed an obvious charisma and magnetic warmth. I found him intensely creative, sharp-witted and personally warm.

After looking at the instruments, we sat down and discussed the details of a model. It wasn't long before the subject of rainforests came up. I had been one of the founding board members of the Woodworker's Alliance for Rainforest Protection (W.A.R.P.) so I was well versed on the subject. Sting asked about the status of mahogany and rosewood. I told him that I thought we should avoid using rosewood, but that we had some lovely quilted mahogany. My feeling was that the boycott of mahogany provided greater incentive for burning of the rainforest canopy to

create cattle grazing lands, whereas use of these woods returned money to the local community and showed them the economic value of sustaining their timber resources.

Sting pondered the merits of my argument, and concurring with my basic logic he said, "Well then, let's do it." And we did it. He took great pride in signing his name for me a dozen times on a blank page for the digital signature artwork. We agreed that the charitable royalties from the project should go to Sting's personal cause, the *Rainforest Alliance*. I returned to Nazareth and began solidifying the designs. I spent an inordinate amount of time working on an Amazon tree frog rosette motif which I abandoned out of sheer technical frustration. Anyway, Sting loved the rosette on his antique Renaissance guitar and I replicated this with the great help of master luthier Michael Gurian. Finally, specifications were agreed upon, woods were selected and matched, and two prototypes were initiated. Concurrently, I untangled all of the legal snarls with Sting's longtime manager Miles Copeland and in record time, our simple contract came back fully executed.

The prototypes were stunning. John Kurgan and I made arrangements to meet again with Sting in Manhattan. I was very excited when Sting first opened the case and set his eyes upon prototype number one.

"You've done me well!" he said with a sparkle of pride. He agreed to some photos that I took with my Nikon. A few weeks later, I was off to the Nashville

NAMM trade show where the model was introduced to the music dealers and a flurry of media attention began to encircle the project.

Within days of returning from Nashville, I received a panic call from Sting's publicist asking about the guitar. I explained the project to her and the logic of using the quilted mahogany but I could hear doom in her voice. There had been some bantering on the web about Sting's guitar being made of rainforest-unfriendly wood and instead of trying to defend the position, Sting's people decided to abandon ship. Miles called shortly thereafter to inform me in no uncertain terms that we would be canceling all of the orders and rescinding the model from the marketplace. Fortunately, we had only made the two prototypes. Sting called me personally to apologize and say that he had underestimated the groundswell of public opinion about the use of mahogany and that he would gladly work with me to try to salvage the project in a newer, more rainforest-friendly direction. Of all the calls, his was the most civil.

So we swallowed our pride and returned to the drawing board. This time around, I focused on SmartWood^{CM} Certified timbers forested in compliance with standards set by the Forest Stewardship Council. The Sitka spruce soundboards, although uncertified, were reclaimed from logs that were destined to become pulp for baby diapers. We prototyped a nylon string guitar and an acoustic bass. Once again, John Kurgan and I made arrangements to deliver the instruments to Sting in Manhattan for his approval.

Sting had just released his "Brand New Day" CD and was rehearsing with his band prior to a lengthy world tour. John and I met up and were buzzed past security at SIR Studios. There were several rehearsal rooms at SIR, each slightly larger than a basketball court. A full stage with all of the microphones, amplifiers and instruments was set up along one wall of the studio. Sting was seated on a stool in the center. He nodded and gestured for us to take a seat on a small couch that faced the stage. For forty minutes, we sat sipping Earl Grey tea and listening to our personal run-through of the tour playlist, then the band took a break for lunch.

"What do we have here?" Sting eagerly opened the oversized acoustic bass case and started

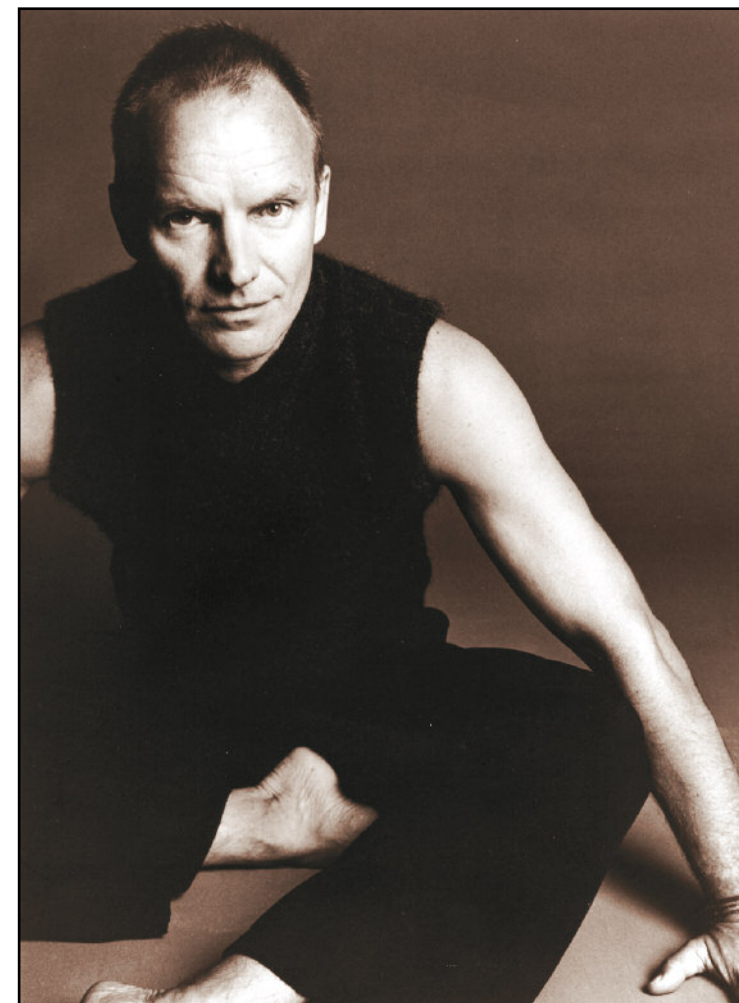
thumping out bass rifts.

"Cool!" he grinned. He took it over to the stage and plugged it in. Dominic Miller, the extraordinary guitarist in Sting's band, was noodling around on the nylon string and they fell naturally into Sting's country hit *Laughing Through My Tears*. It was a special treat to hear Sting play that bass. He used it for the rest of the afternoon, then walked over to say goodbye.

"I'm keeping this one, right?"

"Of course! It's just for you."

It wouldn't be the last one. I had electrified one of my Size 5 Mini-Martins for him. He loved its crystalline sound and used it to record *Dead Man's Rope* on his solo release *Sacred Love*. When he started touring with an assortment of small-bodied Martins and Ditsons, John Kurgan and I pitched him on another signature edition – this one a little high-strung Terz guitar made with an assortment of sustainable woods that would make his friends at the *Rainforest Alliance* proud.



Sting SWB Signature Edition Acoustic Bass



With Paul Simon and Chris Martin during rehearsals for *The Capeman* at The Hit Factory in New York City, 1996.

Simon Says

Roger Sadowsky had put me in touch with Paul Simon's offices in Manhattan. Several phone conversations with his management followed and Paul was responding positively to the idea of a signature model collaboration with Martin. I was excited by this since I had been a Paul Simon fan from the start. I knew his lyrics inside and out and appreciated the detail he put into his songs. When the opportunity presented itself to drive into New York City to meet with Paul, I seized it. I had been told that Paul was a bit difficult to deal with. This, combined with the huge effect he had had upon me, left me nervous in anticipation of our impending visit.

"A winter's day, in a bleak and dark December." Lyrics from every song were swirling in my head as I approached the famous *Brill Building* where he kept his offices. It was freezing cold and the wind howled.

There was a small grocery store on the corner. I went in and bought two large fresh-squeezed orange juices. I was remembering orange juice lyrics. This would be my peace offering.

I announced my arrival to the security guard and after a phone call upstairs, he showed me to the elevator. I was heavily laden with guitars and a selection of prints of my drawings. As I entered,

Martha, Paul's receptionist, greeted me and let me know that Paul would be running late for our meeting. I was invited to make myself at home.

His office was divided into two rooms of equal size. The one with Martha's desk doubled as a museum for Paul's gold records and Grammy awards. I put my guitar cases down and hung my coat.

I peeked in the other room. It was more like a living room, warmer and cozier. There were several cushy chairs and sofas, a grand piano, and an assortment of instruments arranged around the perimeter of a Persian rug.

After allowing the case to acclimate slowly, I unpacked my 000-42S Soloist (See page 180) that I had brought along to show Paul. It was a very special 12-fret guitar with Brazilian rosewood and Adirondack spruce. I sat on the leather couch next to the front door and began to play. Time passed and Paul's assistant Mark had come in to greet me. Leaving the guitar perched on the couch, I had joined Mark at the large glass meeting table in the center of the room. We talked and waited for Paul to arrive.

Minutes later, the doorknob jingled and the door creaked open very slowly. Paul was dressed in a heavy coat with a fur-lined hood. I think it was the same coat he wore on the cover photo of his second solo album. He poked his head in long enough to pull the hood down and away from his head. He saw my guitar lying on the couch and with one foot in the hallway and the other propping the door open, he reached quickly for my guitar, picked it up, strummed a chord, set it back down as quickly as he had picked it up, wrinkled a knurled frown on his forehead, looked up, and blurted:

"I don't think so."

He put his hood back up, pulled the door shut with a loud abrupt slam... and he was gone.

I looked over at Mark in horror.

"Is that it?"

Mark was speechless. We both sat there staring at each other, our jaws gaping in disbelief, when suddenly I saw the large wooden door begin to creek open slowly like a cheap Vincent Price movie, Paul's head appeared sideways. A wry smile crept over his face.

"Just kidding!" He hustled through the door, hung his coat on the hook and came over to properly greet me.

We settled into the more comfortable room where we talked guitars for an hour. It took that long for us to realize that you can't talk about tone. You have to listen. So Paul decided that a visit to the Martin factory was in order. Several weeks later, he arrived in Nazareth with his son Harper. They had a field day playing the dozens of different sizes, styles and shapes available. At the end of the day, the specifications were decided upon and

the prototypes were initiated.

Months later, during rehearsals for Paul's Broadway show *The Capeman*, I delivered the prototypes. Paul seemed stressed. He was clearly letting the play get to him. It was Christmas time and I did my best to cheer him up.

More months passed. Paul's instruments were finally ready and I arranged to deliver them in person. He was recording songs from *The Capeman* at The Hit Factory. When I arrived, he was sealed up in one of the sound stages with a large group of background vocalists. When he finished recording, he came out to greet me.

Paul played the two signature guitars until he was satisfied that they were exceptional, then he motioned for me to follow him into the sound studio. There were two huge mixing consoles. One of the recording engineers was rewinding the recently recorded track from the 50s doo-wop song *Bernadette*. Paul asked him to queue up to the beginning of the song with his lead vocal turned off.

As the playback began, Paul picked up his handwritten lyrics, and standing right next to me, he sang the entire song.

Stephen Stills

Perhaps more than any other group from the Woodstock generation, Crosby, Stills, Nash (and Young) embraced acoustic music before the word "unplugged" was even conceived. In spite of some lateral endorsement deals, they had all owned and played Martin guitars throughout their careers.

In addition to being an extraordinary instrumentalist and songwriter, Stephen Stills was also a significant collector of Martin guitars; in fact his purchases of older Style 45 Martins had drawn so much attention in the guitar market that Martin vintage instrument prices were affected across the board. His passion for guitars inevitably brought him to us and we began working earnestly on a stunning *Southern Cross* Signature Edition D-45.

Given Stephen's vast knowledge of guitars, there wasn't much room for error. Nonetheless, I managed to create a pickguard with one too many mother-of-pearl stars in the *Southern Cross* constellation, and in spite of our miscommunication about the coloration of the top, the exact height of the ivoroid bindings, and the style of the fingerboard inlays, we managed to introduce a corrected edition, limited to no more than ninety-one exquisite guitars. In spite of their accuracy and integrity, they carried a retail price of \$19,000 each. It was going to take a special



Above with Stephen Stills in Nashville. Right: Clips from Ted Koppel's "Nightline."

effort or a miracle to sell all ninety-one.

Excited about the edition's introduction, Stephen flew in from Los Angeles to rub shoulders and sign autographs. When the show closed, I gathered a small group and took him out to dinner at Morton's figuring it would be a nice way to thank him for making the long trip. Stephen ordered an enormous steak that came to the table on a plank of wood that certainly would have yielded several guitars. He easily carved his way about half way through it, then his appetite surrendered. The remainder was eventually relegated to a doggie bag. With his unabashed signature grin he confessed: "I'll polish this off later this evening." And that was that!

We returned home well fed, but unfortunately only about half of the guitars had been sold. And then miraculously, the phone rang. It was ABC Television. Ted Koppel's *Nightline* was looking to expand their Friday night programming with human interest stories. Specifically, they wanted to do a celebrity feature about a Martin artist signature model project. We suggested Stephen Stills and the producer Jacques Grenier – a Martin guitar devotee – loved the idea.

Stephen made his Mecca back to Nazareth once again to be filmed overseeing the production of his model. Weeks later, ABC reciprocated by flying out to Los Angeles to film Stephen at home with his collection of Martin guitars. To cap it off, *Nightline* lugged their cameras into the Anaheim NAMM Show to interview random customers about Stephen's model. When the edited show aired several months later, the phones rang off the hook and the remaining half of the edition vaporized as effortlessly as that slab of beef at Morton's.



Film clips: ABC Nightline



Mayberry

I'd been trying to get in contact with Andy Griffith for nearly two years to no avail. One afternoon I called a number that I thought was his manager's, but a shy Hispanic woman answered and when I said I was trying to reach Andy she responded with confusion in broken English. Wrong number?

After several months passed, I returned to my quest. This time I was successful in reaching Andy's agent in Los Angeles. He suggested that I send a proposal, which I promptly prepared. I had watched Andy play his unusual Martin D-18 throughout his career and I suggested in my fax that we replicate his D-18 as a limited edition offering.

The next morning my phone rang.

"Is this Mr. Boak?"

"Yes, this is Dick Boak."

"Well howdy. This is Andy Griffith!"

It was Andy all right. I couldn't believe I was having a conversation with the Sheriff of Mayberry.

"I want to tell you the story of that guitar," he said with great excitement in his voice.

He proceeded to explain how at the beginning of his career in 1958, he had been cast in the starring role for Elia Kazan's *A Face In The Crowd*. In that debut role, Andy played *Lonesome Rhodes*, a guitar-playing Arkansas rascal who rose from hobo to corrupt media star and king maker. The prop department, knowing little to nothing about guitars, bought a brand new Martin D-18 and proceeded to paint it completely black, gluing sequins spelling out *Lonesome* and *Momma* on its face. Andy was quite distraught that they had ruined such a fine instrument. After the film was completed, Andy "liberated" the guitar from the prop room and took it back to his apartment.

Faithfully, he set out to restore it, removing the sequins and sanding off the black paint to the bare wood. It took him nine days to get all of the black paint off. In the process he sanded through the headstock decal and removed the pickguard. Not knowing how to restore the original finish, he took the guitar out onto the New York City streets in search of a guitar shop that could spray lacquer.

On the Lower East Side, Andy stumbled upon a small instrument maker's shop. The owner agreed to refinish the guitar, but at Andy's request, he didn't replace the decal or the pickguard.

The proprietor was none other than the legendary John D'Angelico, now acknowledged to have been one of finest makers of archtop jazz guitars ever.

This guitar became Andy's favorite instrument and he used it on all of his classic musical performances on *The Andy Griffith Show* and *Matlock*, and on his many country, gospel and bluegrass recordings through the years. It was no wonder that he was thrilled to collaborate with me on a special Martin signature edition.

Over the course of the ensuing year, I became friends with Andy and his gracious wife Cindy. The guitar project was a huge success of course, but the best part for me was getting to know Andy during our many conversations. Like the characters he has portrayed, Andy is exactly who we would all hope him to be – simply and purely – himself.



With Roger McGuinn and two Martins in Nazareth.

Name Dropping

Of course I'm most fortunate and thankful to have met and befriended so many of my musical heroes. It took me several years to lose the nervousness that typically surrounds celebrities, but they're just people and generally they like to be treated like average Joes.

Giving credence to celebrity can gravitate to name-dropping and even groupie-ism. Nevertheless, I've dabbled in doo-wop with Dion and gnawed on scrapple with Merle Haggard and his earthy crew at the Nazareth Diner. I awakened Graham Nash from a sound sleep at 5:30 in the morning because I forgot about the time difference in Hawaii. I chomped on over-boiled corn on the cob with David Crosby and navigated Lionel trains with chief engineer Neil Young.

In England, I discussed dinosaurs while dining with Mark Knopfler and chortled a carafe of cabernet in skiffle-king Lonnie Donegan's roadhouse chambers. I challenged protocol with Stormin' Norman Schwartzkopf while waiting to board Johnny Cash's black tour bus with my black guitar at



Giving "Thanks" to Merle Haggard in Los Angeles.

Telluride. On a foggy morning, I breakfasted on scrambled eggs and marmalade toast with Shawn Colvin.

I salivated over sashimi with Roger McGuinn, sliced sumptuous sirloin with Stephen Stills, and sang synchronized Spoonful sonatas with John Sebastian. I smoked stogies with Stevie "Gee-tar" Miller, swallowed my pride with Paul Simon, and swapped swag with Sting.

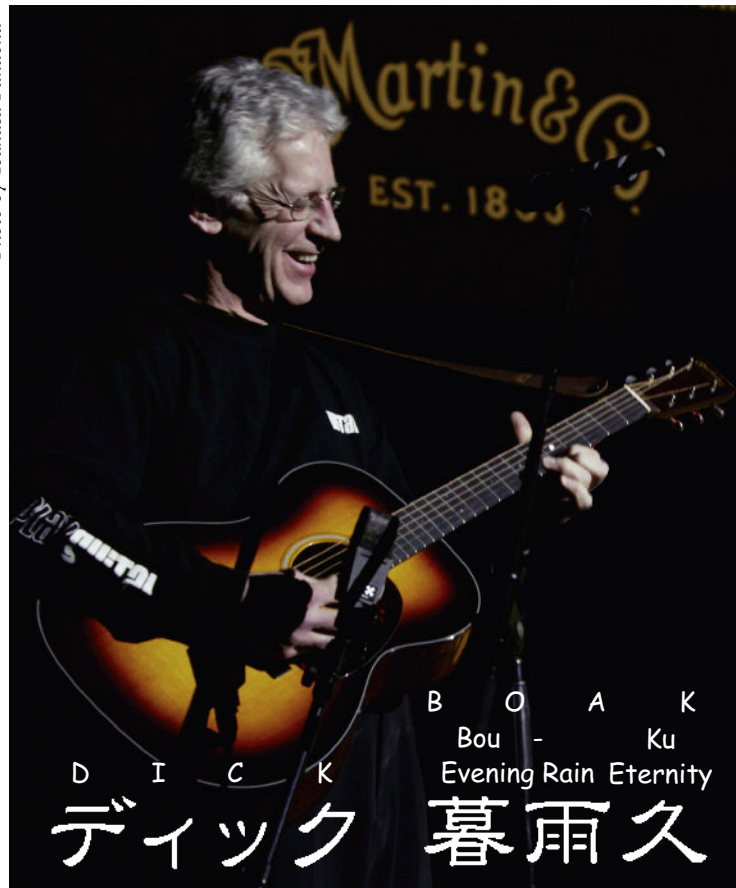
Arlo asked me if I'd ever been arrested and Willie nearly got me arrested.

I sorted through soundposts with David Bromberg and feasted on crustaceans courtesy of Jimmy Buffett. I joked with Joan and jammed with Juber. I ate American Pie with McLean in Maine and reminisced with Rowan and Rice at the Ryman.



Up against the wall with mandolin king David Grisman.

Photo by Tsukasa Fukuoka



The tenuous "Evening Rain Over Eternity" Tour in Tokyo.

I certified crocodile cases for Clapton, bartered with Babyface, and commandeered koa for Keb.

I pleaded the fifth with George Martin while totally missing McCartney. I trashed the Troubadour with the Trio, carted camels in cabs for Frampton, and caught full moon fever from Petty.

I hobnobbed with Howe and laughed with Longworth – harmonized with Del and honkytonked with Kitty – caroused with Carthy and cheered with Chinery – fantasized with Fogelberg and toured with Travis – drank a beer with Bob Weir and played possum with The Possum.

I hid reverently behind a rack of amplifiers while like a ghost, Bob Dylan floated up onto the stage in a hooded sweatshirt for his pre-show soundcheck.

I almost touched Jim Morrison's boot in Baltimore, while he was wearing it. That would have been something! Marty Stuart called me a rascal and that I am, but it's not about me, is it? It's about them, and it's about the music.

It is a great gift to have others share themselves with you and to share back. As the jazz classic lyric



Laughing with Lonnie in London.

goes: "The greatest thing you'll ever learn is to love and be loved in return."

It has been a great honor for me to collaborate with so many great artists and bring to fruition so many great instruments, but it doesn't end there. The guitars have a life of their own and they last much longer than people do. Magically, they find their way into the hands of great musicians who use them to make great music.

Fifty or a hundred years from now, someone will pick up one of these special guitars – battle-scarred and lacquer-checked with integrity – hold it up and strum a chord. Maybe they'll know that I had a hand in the conception and design. That would be just fine with me.

Evening rain.... eternity!



Unknown

Explaining the finer points to an indifferent Elvis.

	Andy Griffith		Peter Rowan		Steve Miller		C. F. Martin Sr.
	Arlo Guthrie		Jimmy Buffett		Sting		C. F. Martin III
	Kenny Edmunds		Hank Williams, Sr.		Rodney Sheppard		C. F. Martin IV
	Beck Hanson		Ian Anderson		Tom Petty		George Martin
	Tom Paxton		Jim Croce		Travis Tritt		Norman Blake
	Chuei Yoshikawa		Joan Baez		Willie Nelson		Isato Nakagawa
	Clarence White		Johnny Cash		Woody Guthrie		Mark McGrath
	Dan Fogelberg		Jonny Lang		Martin Carthy		Eric Johnson
	Dave Matthews		Judy Collins		Merle Haggard		Lucinda Williams
	David Crosby		Keb Mo'		John Mayer		Diane Ponzio
	Del McCoury		Kenny Wayne Shepherd		Mark Knopfler		Bob Shane
	Dion		Kitty Wells		Marty Stuart		John Stewart
	Don McLean		Roger McGuinn		Lester Flatt		Nick Reynolds
	Elizabeth Cotten		Rory Block		Laurence Juber		George Grove
	Eric Clapton		Shawn Colvin		Lonesome Rhodes		The Kingston Trio
	Gene Autry		Stephen Stills		Lonnie Donegan		John Mayer
	George Jones		Steve Howe		Paul Simon		Godfrey Daniels
	Ernest Tubb		Gordon Lightfoot		Graham Nash		Godfrey Daniels



Signature Edition & Special Project Guitar Pick Designs, 1995-2003



With Dale Unger and an early "American Archtop."

Breaking Away

One evening, I received a call from master archtop guitar maker Bob Benedetto. His shop was less than an hour north of Nazareth and our close proximity had enabled me to become friends with Bob and his wife Cindy. He'd been working alone, but had decided that he wanted to take on an apprentice/employee. Because I was managing A.S.I.A. and publishing *Guitarmaker Magazine*, I knew just about every guitarmaker in the country. Accordingly, he sought my advice. He wanted someone who would be compatible in personality and receptive to learning, as opposed to being set in a particular style or method.

I scrolled through my alphabetical database looking for potential recommendations and it wasn't until I reached "U" (file #2147) that I landed upon



Final "American Archtop" Logo Design. 1998

the name of my best friend and cohort, Dale Unger.

Dale had been working in his family's plumbing business his entire life, but his heart was in woodworking and guitarmaking. He had considered trying to get a job at Martin, but his timing was off and Martin probably wouldn't have been able to take full advantage of his capability anyway. When I saw Dale's name on the list, everything clicked.

Bob called Dale the next day and before I knew it, he was working part time on a trial basis. The two were perfectly suited for each other and soon Dale was working full time, learning every aspect of Bob's craft and process. This was especially helpful to Bob. The extra set of hands enabled him to expand his production with extra time to focus on a collaboration with Fender/Guild and to make the necessary plans for a move back to Florida.

After several years, Bob and Cindy did in fact pack up shop and head south. With Bob's full blessing, Dale decided to try going out on his own. He took out a loan to get him through the transition and furnished his home shop in Sciota with all of the necessary power tools and spray equipment.

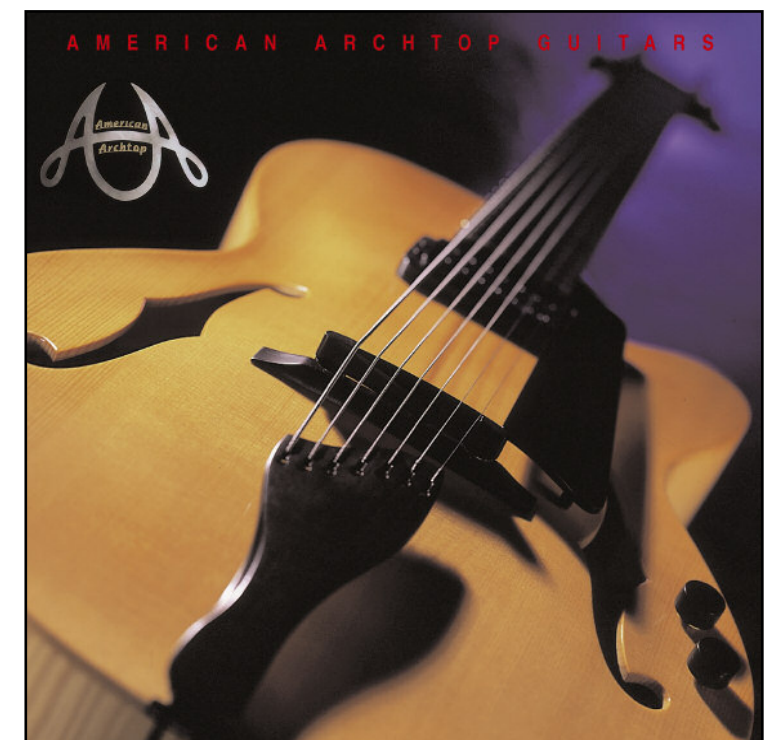
One Saturday, Dale came down to work with me on a logo design. He had chosen "American Archtop," a great brand name for his guitars and surprisingly one that was not taken. Together, we set about developing ideas and before we knew it, a bookmatched "AA" design was starting to evolve. I sketched half of the pattern and scanned it into my Macintosh. We flip-flopped it, stretched it, and

modified it several dozen times until finally we were satisfied. The next week, Dale sent the artwork off to a specialty company to have laser-cut silver-foil transfers fabricated. When they came back, they were perfect.

Excited about his new business, I commissioned one of the first orders for one of his archtops. Dale conspired with our mutual friend Dave Nichols at Custom Pearl Inlay to create a special ebony tailpiece with my name and my triple-stranded infinity symbol inlaid in abalone shell. The resulting instrument was beautiful – so good in fact that it really came in handy as a display piece. I'm honored to have my name on such a special guitar and Dale reaps some promotional value being associated with me. Every now and then, if I'm lucky, he actually allows me to borrow or play my own guitar!

A number of key jazz players have become Dale's customers and in the 7-string community, he has developed a strong reputation. He was successful in corralling many of these players into a collaborative CD project and once again, Dale needed my computer expertise to complete the CD cover and package design.

Dale's business has thrived since he first ventured out on his own in 1998. He has had a backlog on orders of at least a year or two, even in the difficult

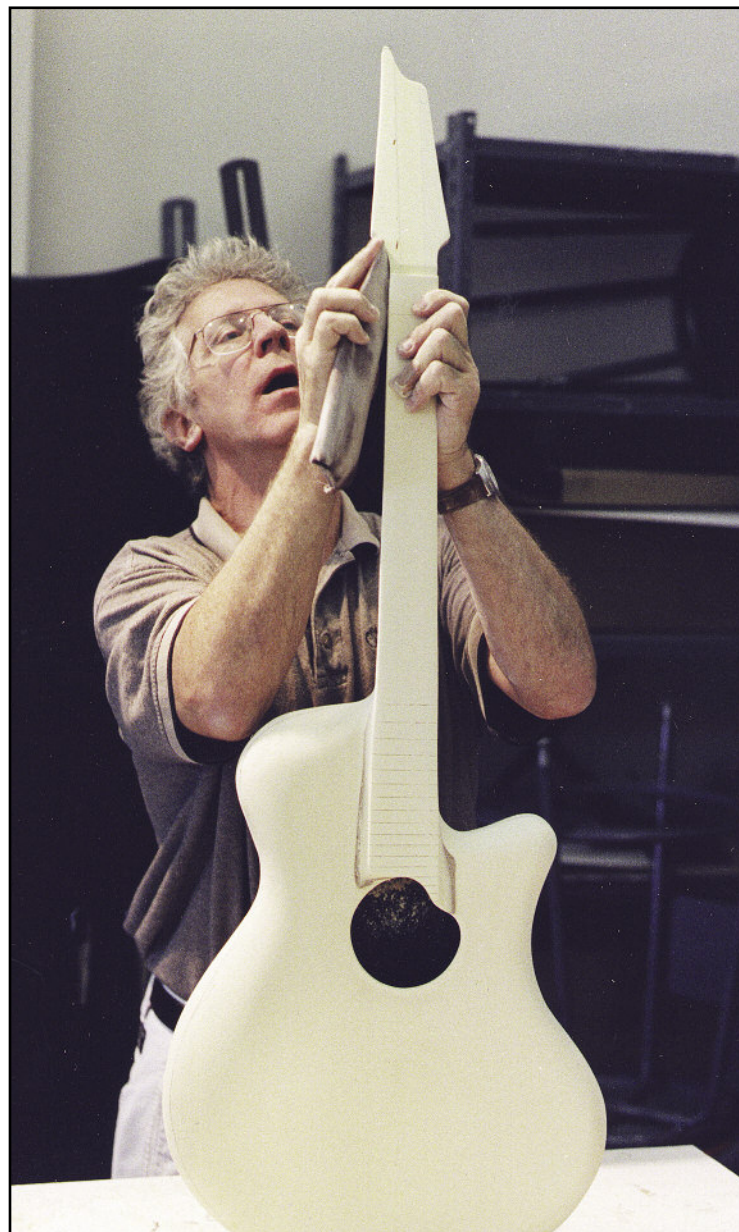


Cover of "American Archtop" CD compilation. 1998

economic aftermath of 9/11, and he manages to complete about twenty special instruments a year.

After getting his guitars on the covers of a few of the more respected jazz magazines, Chris Martin began to take notice of Dale's success and invited him to co-instruct the first annual Martin Acoustic Design Course at the Northampton Community College.

Following that success, the conversation veered toward the potential of a collaborative archtop guitar project with Dale. Our friendship survived the contract negotiations and the first Martin/American Archtop prototypes were completed in the summer



*At work on a hard foam prototype, 2002
Northampton Community College Design Course*



Contiguous Acoustic Guitar Design With Stand. 2002

of 2003. After considerable engineering angst, production models began to be delivered in the fall of 2004.

Susan and I had looked forward to revitalizing The Church of Art after a string of tenants, but we never seemed to have the energy or the time to get anything started. With the building vacant, Dale proposed renting the space to teach private courses in Archtop Guitar Construction. Eventually, his vision for the future of the church superceded our own and although it was an emotional decision, we agreed to sell. What better candidate than "Deacon Dale" to keep the Church of Art moving forward.



Winning Entry In Crayola Crayon Competition, 1997

The Unraveling *(Continued from page 140)*

An old acquaintance of JC's named Dr. Mike Miller had had a rather successful side business smuggling and distributing significant quantities of hashish until the Feds intercepted one of his shipments. Not wanting to face prison time, Dr. Mike went on the lam, but the government decided to exert their insidious leverage. They paid a little visit to his parents and threatened to seize their home and possessions, and take them into custody for the rest of their God-given lives. This tactic was effective. Soon, Mike turned himself in deference to his parents.

Being very much aware of what the government was willing to do and not wanting in any way to place his own family in jeopardy, JC made a decision to keep his whereabouts completely secret. The only person who did know was Bill Lynn, who had received a brief communication from JC in Jamaica. Given that the local detectives were all over Bill to reveal information about JC, Bill concocted a story of JC's ultimate demise to fend off the inquiries and in time, it worked.

Oddly enough, Bill Lynn, being the musician that he was, owned a Martin guitar. One day, he called to get a replacement case for one of his instruments and it wasn't long before we were talking about JC's disappearance.

Over the course of the next several years, Bill and I had many lengthy conversations. We always discussed guitars and we always discussed the mystery of JC's vanishing act. During one of our conversations, I was pressing Bill for any tidbit of information that he might be harboring about my cousin. In a hushed voice, he asked if I would hold what he was about to tell me in complete confidence. I indicated that I certainly would. He told me that the rumor in the islands was that JC was "no longer with us." I was shocked and distressed and I carried this possibility with me furtively for many years, assuming the worst. Just at a time when I began to feel an obligation to share the awful rumor with JC's parents (my Uncle Jack and Aunt Marty), they received an amazing and heartfelt letter from a woman named Mimi in Jamaica.

During his exile in Jamaica, JC had cleaned up his act, quit his propensity for alcohol, joined AA,

and succeeded in a career in the field of sports equipment, having risen to the respectable position of plant supervisor. He had met and fallen in love with Mimi Gauthier, a French Canadian expatriate working at the Montego Bay Yacht Club.

Through the course of their developing relationship, JC confided his dilemma in not contacting his family. Mimi had her own perspective, given that during a ten-day excursion and conference in Central America, her own father had passed away and her family in Montreal was unable to reach her. Upon her return, she learned that the funeral service had already taken place. Devastated by this, she urged John to contact his family, but given the potential ramifications, his repeated response was, "What do you want me to do?"

In time, Mimi took the bull by the horns and in spite of his reluctance, she wrote a sincere and heartfelt letter to JC's parents, explaining who she



J.C. Crawford returns to Cleveland to put things in order.

was and that their son was alive and well in Jamaica. Exhilaration was followed by many phone calls and subsequent visits to Jamaica by family and old friends. It was magnificent to have JC back in our lives.

The dark cloud hanging over the situation was that the laws of extradition had changed and Attorney General Janet Reno had given her ultimatum to bring in as many outstanding warrants as possible. Federal marshals, embarrassed that they couldn't catch the bigger fish, threw their lines out for the small ones. A quick review of Uncle Jack and Aunt Marty's phone records showed a long list of calls to JC's Jamaican number. It was only a matter of time.

JC was dressed to the Ts en route to give a speech and accept a special award for his company's softball team. Within Montego Bay's free-zone, he was intercepted by a soon-to-retire US Marshal Don Crawford (no relation) who verified JC's identity and placed him under arrest. After several weeks chumming with the Rastafarians in the Kingston jail, JC was extradited to Ft. Lauderdale where with the assistance of a good attorney and his family, his case was carefully prepared. My Uncle Jack, my illustrious cousin Chip, and I made arrangements to fly down for his hearing, serve as character witnesses, and do our best to see that he was well represented.

Just prior to the hearing, I was in Frankfurt for the annual International MusikMesse. After a very rich Italian dinner one evening, I started to feel very ill. As midnight approached, I became more than slightly concerned that I might be having a heart attack. I took two nitroglycerin tablets and crossed my fingers. By three in the morning, I was alligator clipped to a primitive Frankenstonian EKG at the local Krankenhaus. There, a confused German doctor assisted in my decision to hightail it home on the next available flight.

In hindsight, it is likely that I had been suffering from food poisoning or worse yet, gas! I was, however, cognizant enough of my heart condition that upon returning home, I went directly to my cardiologist. He identified two troublesome blockages that he was able to clear using what the catheter experts fondly refer to as the Roto-Rooter. I was feeling better, but to my extreme dismay not in any condition to fly to Florida for JC's day in court.

When his day finally came, the judge really didn't pay too much attention to the original charges. It was the fact that he had fled prior to sentencing that ruffled the governmental feathers. Nonetheless, everyone seemed to realize what an upright fellow he was and what a severe personal price he had already paid. He was given a relatively lenient three-year term less time served, and after a year and a half he was released on good behavior with 18 months of probation.

His citizenship restored, JC was free to resume his life in Jamaica with Mimi where for several years they have cared for and bred Doberman pinschers. For more than a decade, his father (our Uncle Jack) had faithfully and selflessly tended to his wife Marty's deteriorating condition, so it was a shock to everyone when Jack himself took ill. JC wasted no time in joining his sister Carol in Cleveland to be by their father's side as he gradually slipped away. That Jack Crawford was a special person, one of a kind, a genuine and honest man with a tremendous propensity for giving of himself and bringing joy and humor to all around him – especially children, who laughed without control in his presence.

Deprived for so many years of contact with my cousin, I boarded a plane for Cleveland to reconnect with him and experience the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame from a perspective that only he could provide. There, my cousin's true story unfolded before me, dispelling the incredible myths and fables that had surrounded his unusual odyssey, and revealing a uniquely singular man of integrity, personality, charisma, warmth, intelligence and unparalleled humor – an uncanny acorn not very far from the oak.



Missing the record on Outward Bound with large concords.

Grapes

At a very young age, I discovered that I possessed the special talent of being able to stuff exceedingly large numbers of grapes in my mouth.

The caveat is that no chewing or puncturing is allowed. Smaller green seedless grapes are of course preferred, and grapes are counted going into the mouth, not out. Believe me when I tell you, it's better that way. The first time I demonstrated this talent in public, I was surprised to find that onlookers generally become extremely amused. Such encouragement has only prodded me further to attempt breaking my previous records.

It was no surprise that at the peak of my fortieth birthday party, my assembled friends presented me with a sizeable bowl of grapes. The challenge was on. I took it seriously.

The videotape was rolling. Like a deranged chipmunk, I tucked the first dozen back between my left earlobe and the space where my wisdom teeth used to reside. The second dozen quickly balanced out the right side. Then I worked on the lower flanks, inserting the tiny green globes along my chin line. I reached the fifty count and the crowd cheered.

Anyone who has seen footage of Dizzy Gillespie playing his horn knows that the human cheeks are capable of uncanny flexibility. I stuffed another forty-eight grapes easily into the ever-expanding pouches beneath my upper cheek bones. My eyes were getting puffy, but I hadn't even explored the inner mouth area or the lips. As I broke one

hundred, my audience was spellbound.

My previous record had been one hundred and eleven grapes, an inspired performance that ended only after the contagious laughter of my friends had enveloped me. I was careful not to get caught in that trap again.

With furrowed brow, I breezed past the one hundred and fifteen mark, the crowd now gaping. There was still some room near the roof of my mouth. Oh, and I'd almost forgotten about the space under my tongue. One hundred and twenty three. I found a spot near the edge of my lip, but when one went in two popped out. I quickly replaced them with two more to spare. My face was bursting in every direction. One hundred and twenty six! One hundred and twenty seven!

I held my mouth firm as I rotated to show the hordes. A new world record! One hundred and twenty seven. A prime number. Indivisible. With grape skins and drool for all.

Solo

I am the one between two bridges;
the one you pass as you scurry by.
I am busy here on my unique island.
My mind, my hands, my clever eye...
have fabricated things for you:
a seat should you prefer to sit.
Come relax and share my view.
I'm really rather proud of it.
To use my bridge you pay a toll:
a simple nod or should you choose,
some conversation, rest or drink.
I've orange juice. Sorry, no booze.
My sculptures aren't from far away.
My clock, my hawk, my rippled tower,
my lavish garden and driftwood swirl
were all found here within the hour.
When I complete my furnishings
I'll pass the time with pen and poem
knowing that tomorrow night
I'll be warm and dry in my own home.
The wind will knock my relics down.
Floods will wash my spot away
and though I held no ownership,
it was my place – alone – today.
Our lives are short compared to these
majestic groves and solemn trees.
If when we're gone, they still remain
our living here won't be in vain.
But if these places disappear
our children will not visit here.
And that, my friends is sad. No joke.
Most sincerely... Richard Boak.



"Pond Life" by Rudy Hilt. Acrylic on canvas, Spring 1985 at Silver Hill.

Silver Hill

Rudy and Lynn Hilt were Vince's neighbors out in Pennsburg, twenty-five minutes west of Nazareth. They were such a creative couple that our meeting was inevitable. After Vince introduced us, our friendship took on a life of its own. They became honorary and everlasting deacons of the Church of Art.

Rudy and Lynn lived there on Silver Hill with their two young boys, Brian and Forest, and Rudy's father Pappy.

Pappy was a contractor who lost the use of his legs after falling off a roof at a construction site. He stayed active and prolific though, immersing himself in woodworking, violin making and stained glass.

Lynn was an extraordinary jeweler, though her artistic life often took second fiddle to her role as mother and wife. When she was able to find the time, she would produce earthy and organic earrings, necklaces and bracelets with an uncanny sensitivity to craft and choice of materials.

Rudy was irrepressible. His creativity bubbled out in every direction and medium, but because of his cumulative experience as a designer and builder of homes, he kept returning with some reticence to that particular skill. His early homes were freeform and hand hewn in an almost counterculture fashion. But with each opportunity, his sense of design and technical knowledge matured. Though his degree was in art, it became increasingly evident that he was a more capable in the field of architecture than most of the officially certified architects in a very wide radius.

So Rudy zeroed in on his strong points and formed *Architectural Focus*, a small architectural design firm that offered an efficient and cost effective alternative to traditional architect-built homes. Before long, Rudy was attracting the most prestigious and wealthy clients in the broader Lehigh Valley area. Every home he designed became a living testament to his talent and an effective calling card for future work.

Growing out of the small offices on the ground floor of his home, he invested his energies and finances into a beautiful studio adjacent to his home. There, a team of draftsmen and women turned out scores of working drawings and models. The industry surrounding Rudy's projects was surprising. There were scores of hand-picked sub-contractors that were getting a major piece of the pie. To comply with architectural regulations, Rudy paid a per-drawing fee to a willing architect in order to legitimize the blueprints.

Rudy began two very high budget homes along the fairways of a local golf course. When construction started, the homes began to attract a great deal of attention. This attention activated



Rudy Hilt installing Lynn's Silver Hill sign in 1984.

a group of powerful architects in eastern Pennsylvania who had become increasingly jealous and envious of Rudy's successes. After all, he was infringing upon their client base and making them look bad. They not only didn't like it. They weren't going to stand for it. They made life very difficult for Rudy, eventually forcing him to hire a full time certified architect onto his staff.

This solution only further angered the architects, who were well connected in the political and financial circles of the Lehigh Valley. When Rudy and Lynn encountered a few months of cash flow problems, an architect's lawyer serving on the board of the bank quickly foreclosed. Rudy and Lynn lost everything: their home, their studio, and their business. With a great sense of loss and despair, they gathered their belongings and chased their dreams to Sedona, Arizona.

A lot of people were devastated with their departure, but in the years that followed, there were many phone calls and visits to Arizona.

One night Susan and I were near Pennsburg and for the sake of curiosity we drove past their old home. The lights were on. It was painful to see someone else living in the special space that they had created. We had heard that one of the lawyers that had foreclosed for the bank had acquired the home for pennies on the dollar. It was sickening.

That night, I noticed that Lynn's beautiful hand carved *Silver Hill* sign was still displayed near the front driveway. To me, this seemed so inappropriate. For more than a year, I developed an assortment of

schemes and fantasies for retrieving the sign. Then one mild moonlit February evening, I found myself slightly inebriated, returning from Bethlehem with cohorts Dale and Jim (last names withheld to protect the not so innocent). I suggested to them that the night seemed right for a visit to *Silver Hill*. They had both heard the whole story.

We stopped at Jim's house to pick up a bow saw, and then we headed out Route 248 toward Pennsburg. Halfway there, the adrenalin began to pump. Jim was driving his SUV. Dale was riding shotgun. I was in the back trying to disarm the ceiling lights and fold the back seat flat. As we drove past the property, the sign shimmered from behind a crop of bushes. There were no lights on at the house. Just an extra car parked in the driveway. A quarter mile up the road we turned around in a cornfield and pulled over. The timing seemed perfect.

Heading down the hill, they let me out about a hundred yards above the house, and then proceeded all the way down the hill where they were instructed to wait for five minutes. Bow saw in hand, I walked down toward the house. Strange tractor-like noises came from a property up on the right, but I was soon beyond view.

I slipped behind the bushes, set the saw down and tested the post. It rocked with relative ease back and forth. I gave it a vigorous workout but it just wouldn't lift it out. I tried the saw but the post must have been locust or some equally impervious hardwood. Finally, I grabbed the sign itself and gave it a strong twist. The rusted screws gave way with relative ease. The sign was mine.

Containing my excitement in the increasing darkness, I tucked the sign and the saw under my arm and walked thirty or forty yards down the hill until a pebble crackled under my foot. The neighbor's dog began to bark. He wasn't very far away. It sounded like a big dog and I think he had my scent. My heart raced.

The dog just barked and barked. I stood sheepishly along the roadside waiting to see whether my accomplices would come through.

The dog's owner finally came to his back door. "Whaddaya hear, boy?" His voice traveled clearly up the hill. "Come here. Come on in." The dog refused and continued his brainless barking. "Right now. Come on." I envisioned the wagging, slobbering

creature lurching toward a Milk Bone. "Good boy!"

And the dog was inside.

A few minutes later, I heard a vehicle lumbering up the hill. It was Jim and Dale all right. They saw me leaning up against the fencerow and pulled to a stop. I picked up the sign and the saw, hopped in and off we went.

The sign was in pretty bad shape. In the weeks that followed, I cleaned it up, reinforced it and gave it a backing. After some wire brushing and a few coats of deck stain, it went off in high style to the little town of Cornville, Arizona. There, I suppose an unsuspecting Rudy and Lynn cut the bubble wrap and revealed the tiny piece of American tragedy, love and justice. Now, the sign has found an appropriate wall upon which to hang.



Above: Two faceless vigilantes with incriminating evidence.

Below: Rudy and Lynn with sign in Cornville, Arizona.





Jalopies

Susan was commuting to Philadelphia in her rundown baby blue Volkswagen Beetle. It was in pretty bad shape. Occasionally, parts would fall off in the street and I would run across to the Mobil station for an instantaneous diagnosis. One day, I took an odd looking greasy cylinder over to Terry the mechanic who held it in his hands with a puzzled look.

"Aw, you don't need that thing."

"What is it?" I grimaced.

"Not sure, but the car will run fine without it."

A few weeks later, the gas pedal became disengaged and the battery fell through the rotted floorboards behind the driver's seat, but with a few coathangers and some duct tape, the damn thing just kept on going – a miraculous jalopy.

We're all jalopies – resilient ones at that, but when the warranties expire and the parts begin to rust, it's only a matter of time.

Foresight

Having nearly lost my eyesight as a child, I suffered a month of total darkness inside my bandages and by the time the light finally returned, I had come to cherish my vision beyond all other senses. Ironically, that which is most precious to us is subject to the most vulnerability.

More than four decades later, I was working at my Macintosh on a late Friday afternoon when all of a sudden darkness hovered down like a liquid eclipse. I didn't understand what had happened. I

tilted my head at different angles to see whether the condition was temporary. There was a sliver of light at the very bottom of my sight and the blackness was like a floating drape, or the gracefully undulating wing of a manta ray.

I called my eye doctor immediately after making the short drive home but he was on vacation and his office had forwarded calls to another number. I dialed again and after explaining my situation, I made an appointment for early the next morning with the substitute. He listened to my description and peered with his light. I suppose he saw the scar tissue from my childhood accident and mistook the striated cloudiness for a cataract. He really didn't have a bright enough scope to inspect my inner eye. It simply wasn't his specialty, so my detached retina remained undiagnosed. He suggested that I make an appointment during the next week with my regular doctor. I called Monday morning and scheduled a Tuesday appointment.

I was glad that I didn't need to miss work on Monday, since I had planned an important trip to New York City to deliver some prototype signature edition guitars to Sting. The absence of vision in one eye didn't bother me that much, at least not until I was informed that my retina was indeed detached and that time is absolutely of the essence with this

Photo by Tsukasa Fukutoku



Surgeon's inner eye view of the optic nerve and retina.

affliction. I underwent surgery on Thursday – six days too late in the concerned eyes of the capable Dr. Sinclair. The operation took many hours but seemed to go smoothly. After spot welding the torn retina back into position with a barrage of laser bursts, a bubble of gas was infused to replace the inner vitreous humor of the inner eye. With my eyes facing downward, the premise was that the bubble would exert enough pressure upward upon the healing retina to hold everything in a suitable position. The only dilemma was that this regimen required that I lie face down and still for the better part of two weeks. In a moment of brilliance and compassion, Susan ordered a massage table and co-endured the tremendous burden of my recovery. One of the few joys was my daughter Emily's fascination with smiling up at me from beneath the table's porthole.

Gradually, the bubble dissipated and the bandages came off. I had some small semblance of right eye vision for which I was most thankful, but after two weeks had passed I found myself once again under the close scrutiny of my eye surgeon. The spot welds had failed. The retina was once again detached. I became despondent and discouraged, in no mood to return to surgery, let alone bear two more weeks of the face down regimen. Only through the positivism and prodding of my surgeon was I convinced to give it another shot. After the second surgery, my face was black and blue – swollen like a pummeled and defeated boxer. Worse than that, my eye had undergone so much devastation that in effect I was rendered blind, though a murky and disconcerting brightness did manage to seep



Post-detachment patchman with Gracie on board.

through. I healed slowly and wore my black patch proudly like some cantankerous pirate.

Oddly enough, anything is better than what I had endured. Now I am most content with one working eye – “driving with one headlight” as they say. The good eye has become stronger in fact. Accordingly, my sense of vulnerability has shifted fully to the left where my perception resides – my last precious bastion of visual connectedness, the essence of my life and work and purpose.

Thanking Dr. Garzia

In the year that followed, I underwent a hernia operation, a vasectomy, and a gradual loss of stamina and breath. Concerned that my heart was straining, I changed to a more aggressive cardiologist and surrendered to the necessary testing. Heart problems run pretty deep in the family and accordingly I had maintained a hyperawareness to the eventuality. The first time I felt the sensation I was feeding heavy planks into the sander in the blistering 105° heat. There was a dull pain in the nape of my left shoulder. Given that my heart was nearly six inches southwest of that spot, I surmised that like my grandfather, I might be developing an aneurysm. I went to the doctor to ease my mind and instead came home depressed over the apparent weak hand that I had been dealt.

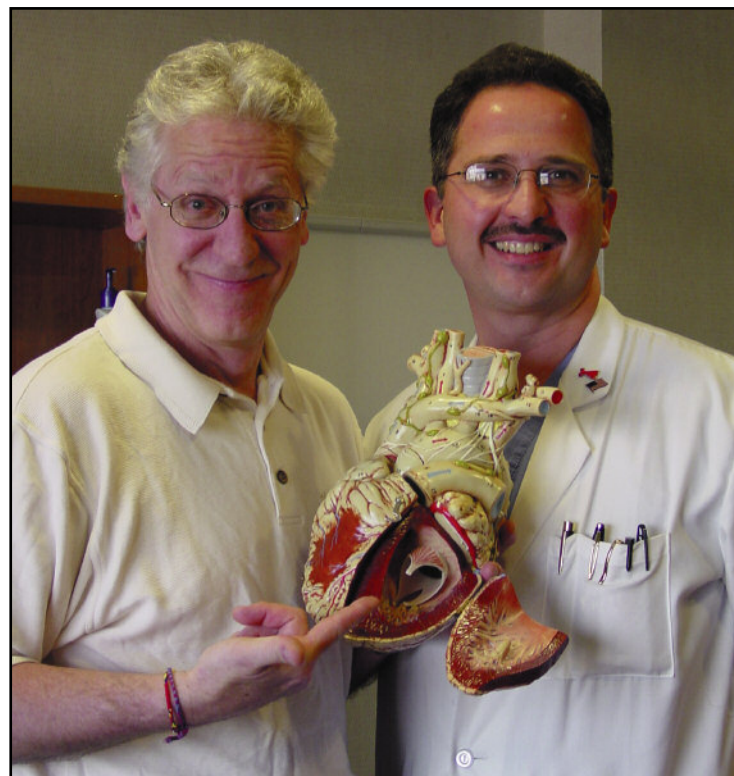
Ah, but for the wonders of modern technology. Three catheterizations and a single bypass later, I have ridden the emotional roller coaster of mortality and cholesterol. While shivering on the operating table prior to succumbing to anesthesia, I sparred

playfully with my heart surgeon, Dr. Garzia, who was scrubbed, gloved, and ready to split my rib cage apart, peel my mammary artery from the inside of my chest and graft it to the left anterior descending coronary artery of my beating heart – struggling though it was from a 100% blockage of sirloin steak gristle, overly buttered corn on the cob, and accumulated egg yokes.

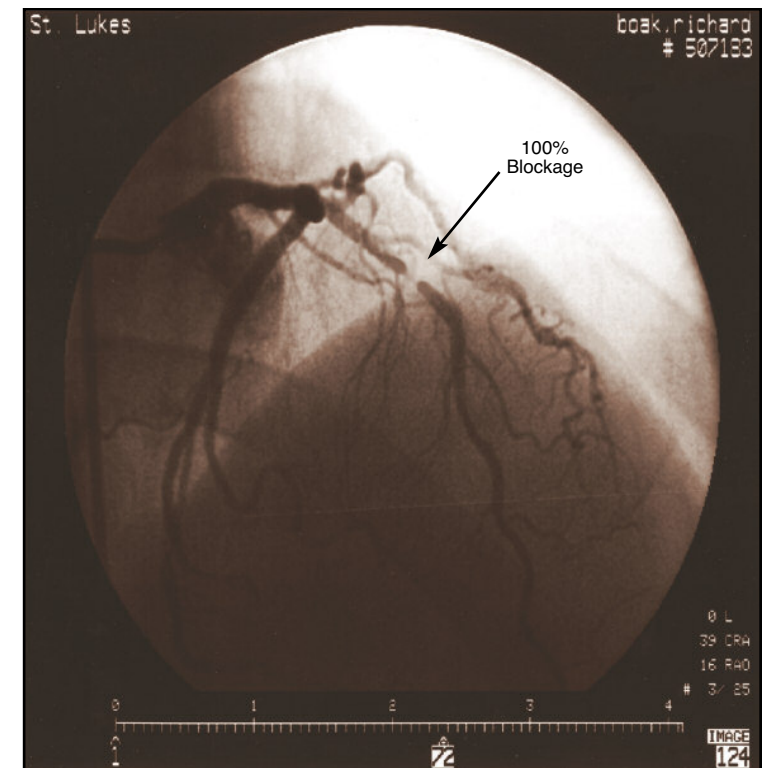
I promised Dr. Garzia that if he did a good job, I would acknowledge his great contribution toward the completion of this book, which lay in a dreadful state of disarray through years of second-guessing and neglect. But now we’ve arrived together at this last page. Obviously, he came through.

After the operation, I began connecting the dots; after all I had six weeks of mandatory time off to do it. I made tremendous progress, but the conclusion remained a struggle. After all, how do you end a story that hasn’t finished?

One of my post-adolescent philosophical theorems was titled “Death As Infinity.” The basic premise acknowledged the possibility that when the heart stops beating, there is typically enough oxygenated blood remaining in the brain to allow it to function for many minutes after life as we recognize it has ceased.



Thank you. Dr. Garzia. A job well done.



Radioactive dye photograph of coronary artery blockage.

If the heart is the true drumbeat or rhythm of life, it seems plausible that it is also the body’s timepiece. As the heart slows gradually to a stop, the perception of time must surely become distorted. Anyone that has taken a barbiturate or anti-depressant knows that time can indeed slow down. Perhaps with no heartbeat, there is no perception of time and the brain can be left to its own mysterious devices – electrical charges racing through millions of synapses, activating memory and imagery. Could this be the tunnel of light that those who have returned from near death describe – timeless and infinite knowledge and perception?

I held great fascination with this idea, but in time I came to view it as a playful and meaningless conjecture – a philosophical excursion without substance or solace. Like a blind man with insomnia, perception by itself is an empty and lonely shell.

Isn’t it interaction, emotion, experience, and creativity that constitute the more tangible traces – the footprints of our lives? Isn’t a more useful measure the assessment of our impact after we have departed?

“I read the news today, oh boy – four thousand holes in Blackburn, Lancashire!”

Epitaphs

"John Doe expired at the local hospital on Friday afternoon. He was 79 years of age. We don't know what he did or why he did it or what he died from or anything about his purpose on the planet, but he is survived by a confused wife and family, and a long list of uncles, aunts, cousins, nephews and nieces that will no doubt evaporate with obituaries just like this, if they're lucky."

I don't mean to be pessimistic, but a short paragraph in the local newspaper is not an adequate way to summarize or honor a lifetime. The typical obituary is a pathetic and drab pronouncement and the services that follow are often equally dreary. Natural transitions should be celebrated, not bemoaned.

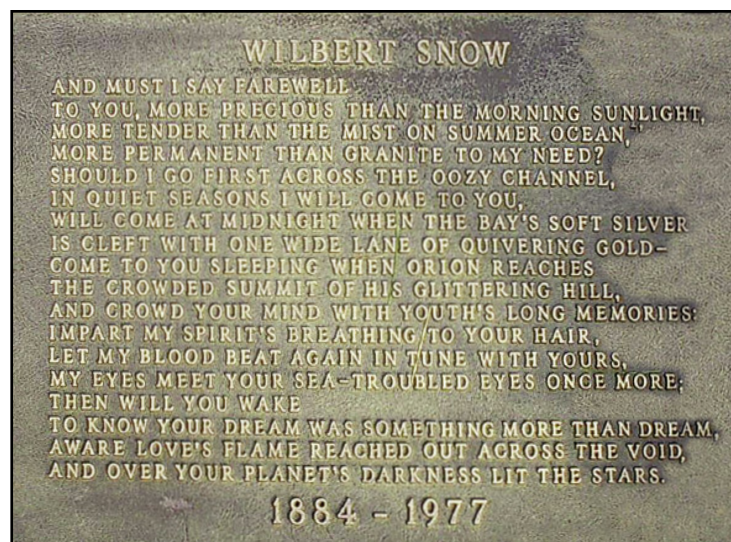
People live and die and are forgotten. That's a fact. What better options do we have as human beings to circumvent this reality? Certainly we live on in our children's futures, but their lives belong to them.

I found my answer in a small community cemetery on a back road near Rockport, Maine. A painter named Nicholas Snow had directed me to the exact location. His father, the poet Wilbert Snow (a contemporary and friend of Robert Frost) was buried there. Frost and Snow! I'm sure their literary friends relished the name-play.

Wilbert Snow

And I must say farewell
To you, more precious than the morning sunlight,
More tender than the mist on summer ocean,
More permanent than granite to my need?
Should I go first across the oozy channel
In quiet seasons I will come to you,
Will come at midnight when the bay's soft silver
Is cleft with one wide lane of quivering gold—
Come to you sleeping when Orion reaches
The crowded summit of his glittering hill,
And crowd your mind with youth's long memories:
Impart my spirit's breathing to your hair,
Let my blood beat again in tune with yours,
My eyes meet your sea-troubled eyes once more;
Then will you wake
To know your dream was something more than dream,
Aware love's flame reached out across the void,
And over your planet's darkness lit the stars.

1884 - 1977



I walked through the tall grass until I came to the spot. There was no gravestone – only a flat plate of bronze relief, inscribed with a poem in the words of the man who lay below:

I don't know exactly what it was about the poem that struck me so heavily that afternoon, but as I read the last couplet I simply fell apart – my tears were without control. I stood there for a long time and watched the droplets splash upon the ridges of the bronze letters – small salty pools forming within the Ds and the Os.

Certainly it is a beautiful poem. It is concrete and eloquent. Like paintings, poems can have different meanings to different people, so I won't try to unravel or analyze the phrases here. One thing I do know: Many others have stood there and read those words. In that context, words can penetrate deeply.

I found out later that Wilbert didn't write the poem for that purpose. Instead, it was selected from one of his books by a family member to serve as his epitaph. What a special way to remember someone and to be remembered. In that sense, this book is my bronze plaque.

Long after we are gone, wouldn't it be extraordinary for our lives to be viewed in their totalities – not simply as short paragraphs in discarded newspapers – and even if all of the individual ingredients of our lives aren't that exceptional or earth-shattering, when taken in context don't they belong together, congealed into a completeness – the amassed result exceeding the summation of the individual elements.

Fully connected – dot to dot.

I'll See You In My Dreams

Grace was five years old. One night while putting her to bed, I asked her whether she ever had any dreams. She said "Yes, Dad. I dream about the grassy meadow at the bottom of the waterfall." I looked at her with great surprise and said. "Grace, I had the very same dream."

A brightness filled her eyes. She looked up at me from behind the covers, her blanket tightly in hand, and said "Dad, why don't we meet in our dreams?"

"That's a great idea Grace. Where shall we meet?"

"Let's meet on the rock ledge behind the waterfall."

"That's perfect!" I kissed her and tucked her in.

The next night the conversation continued. I learned that our house was at the top of the waterfall and that we owned magical unicorns that could fly. That evening and endless evenings to follow, Grace and I would mount our unicorns in our dreams to explore the pristine world where no one ever became sick. Sometimes we would ride on the backs of our magic dolphins. Susan and Emily gradually became enthralled and without hesitation, Grace invited them along. We swam in the river by the grassy meadow. We unearthed dinosaur bones in the sandy tar pits. We paddled kayaks on the exotic rapids that cut through the jungle – each night there was a new adventure.

One morning as I prepared to depart for California on business, it occurred to me that our fantastic dream routine would be interrupted. I knelt down and asked Grace what we should do. She looked at me with great seriousness and calmly answered, "Dad, dreams can travel anywhere."

"Oh yeah!" I realized. We made our plans and picked our designated meeting place. The next afternoon, I called from the West Coast.

"Dad. Where shall we meet tonight?"

Dreams know no distance, no boundary, no limit.

"Wherever I am Grace, I will meet you there!"

∞



"Unicorn Dream" by Grace Boak, Gel Pen on Paper, 2003



"Pegasus" by Emily Boak, Pencil on Paper, 2006

Vicariousity

Our children either embrace or discard what we attempt to give them. From the looks of things, Grace and Emily have grasped and applied the joys of creativity. Their early years have been filled with great passion for dexterity, craft, art and music.

I would love to take credit for this, but at best I provided an erratic and sometimes hyperactive example of self-determination and purpose. It is Susan that has filled the overflowing craft cabinet with supplies and encouraged their vast array of projects while I sat proudly on the bleachers cheering. She has also dedicated herself to their pursuit of knowledge while showing tremendous patience and support for my health tribulations and self-engrossed diversions. For that I thank her.

When all is said and done, it is the children that surpass us, forming genetic connections between the past and future. It's impossible to imagine what they will become, but there is great solace, hope and awe in the notion that we can live long past ourselves through them and their successive offspring. Vicariousity is experience through another rather than first hand, using sympathy or the power of the imagination. Granted, we are reduced in time to faded photographs in drawers or dusty books on shelves, but the invisibility of our influence and shared experience holds the real connection to and potential for immortality.



Sonnet For Emily and Grace

Before your birth my life was self-immersed
with wood and words and ink, my art would flow.
These empty tasks were carelessly dispersed
to feed the need for self worth and ego.

Your toddler clothes were gradually outgrown –
two girls transformed to women gracefully.
The fruits of all the savored seeds we'd sewn
had blossomed to become our family.

One day I might seem gone, but I'm not through.
Remember how we laughed and don't be sad.
Our dreams will merge – my calling out for you
to carry on and relish what we've had.

To share a portion of your lives for me
has sealed my soul to yours eternally.

"Emily and Grace," Photograph by John Sterling Ruth, 2004

*Portions of the proceeds from the sale of this book
will be allocated toward the furtherance of art
and to the restitution of inproprieties contained herein.*



Index Of Headings (Page Order)

Connecting Dots(Preface)
Introduction1
Respect For Vision2
Visual Distortion3
Dexterity & The Covert Child3
Frog Medicine4
The Darker Side5
Blackie, Billiards & The Road To Ruin8
Keeping Store9
Blair11
College Prepped13
MC514
Gettysburg Address15
Not Necessarily Stoned16
Marty19
Billboards Anonymous, Un-Inc.19
Positive/Negative20
The Icehouse21
Geodesics23
Kirkridge23
A Candid Survey Of American Life...25
The Cage29
The Final Frontier31
Crown Of Creation33
Art On A String35
Vagabond Gypsies43
Morningstar Ranch45
Gorilla Architecture55
The Legend Of Egor58
Reconnecting61
Disintegration62
Decompression69
Rides For Riders81
Re-Entry83
New Perspectives85
Billy89
The ABCs of Printing92
Blair (Full Circle)95
Belvidere99
The Blair Academy Dome101
Dumpster Diving (Part One)101
Pointing North102
Surviving Stowe105
The Mountain107
Packrat Press108
Buckminster Fuller109
Georgian Bay To Las Vegas110
Stowe (Part II)115
Kentucky117
The Breaking Point119
Exile In Moscow121
Homeward Bound121
Oil & Water124
Dumpster Diving (Part Two)125
The New Kid In Town127
Trial & Error129
Watch Out For That Ax, Eugene130
Strike131
Scabbing133
Swans & Stripes135
The 1833 Shop137
Woodworker’s Dream138
Driving Mr. Martin139

Joining The IRS139
Burn And Learn140
Fishing For Blues141
Amish Ice Adventure143
Life Sentence144
The Crux Of Art146
Candy147
The Church Of Art149
Reverend Dick149
Deacon Dale151
Live In Concert152
Outfitting The Sanctuary155
Musical Chord Wheels157
Ken Dieterly159
The Apple And The Rose161
Concerts In The Park163
Susan163
Anti-Man165
The Bugman Cometh165
Organicism165
Guitar Immersion167
Black In The Saddle Again169
Honduras Coverup170
Fifteen Minutes Of Fame171
Crossing Over173
Spruce Geese174
Covering The Basses175
A Smaller Reverence178
Pushing The Limits179
GAL/ASIA181
Tuesdays With Mario183
Changing Of The Guard184
A Wedding In The Woods185
Commercial Art – No Invoice187
Houdini Underwear189
Dermatologist’s Delight189
The Gangster Of Love191
Free Falling191
Jet Airliner192
Laskin Red194
Palazzo Meets Bulfinch196
461 Ocean Boulevard197
Iacocca’s198
Bellezza Nera199
Double Trouble200
Johnny Cash201
Willie201
Masiakasaurus Knopfleri203
Too Bad You Are A Communist204
Sting205
Simon Says207
Stephen Stills208
Mayberry209
Name Dropping209
Breaking Away213
The Unraveling215
Grapes216
Silver Hill217
Jalopies219
Foresight219
Thanking Dr. Garzia220
Epitaphs221
Vicariousity222

Index Of Headings (Alphabetical)

A Candid Survey Of American Life...25
A Smaller Reverence178
A Wedding In The Woods185
Amish Ice Adventure143
Anti-Man165
Art On A String35
Bellezza Nera199
Belvidere99
Billboards Anonymous, Un-Inc.19
Billy89
Black In The Saddle Again169
Blackie, Billiards & The Road To Ruin8
Blair11
Blair (Full Circle)95
Breaking Away213
Buckminster Fuller109
Burn And Learn140
Candy147
Changing Of The Guard184
College Prepped13
Commercial Art - No Invoice187
Concerts In The Park163
Connecting Dots(Preface)
Covering The Basses175
Crossing Over173
Crown Of Creation33
Deacon Dale151
Decompression69
Dermatologist's Delight189
Dexterity & The Covert Child3
Disintegration62
Double Trouble200
Driving Mr. Martin139
Dumpster Diving (Part One)101
Dumpster Diving (Part Two)125
Epitaphs221
Exile In Moscow121
Fifteen Minutes Of Fame171
Fishing For Blues141
Foresight219
461 Ocean Boulevard197
Free Falling191
Frog Medicine4
GAL/ASIA181
Geodesics23
Georgian Bay To Las Vegas110
Gettysburg Address15
Gorilla Architecture55
Grapes216
Guitar Immersion167
Homeward Bound121
Honduras Coverup170
Houdini Underwear189
Introduction1
Iacocca's198
Jalopies219
Jet Airliner192
Johnny Cash201
Joining The IRS139
Keeping Store9
Ken Dieterly159
Kentucky117
Kirkridge23

Laskin Red194
Life Sentence144
Live In Concert152
Marty19
Masiakasaurus Knopfleri203
Mayberry209
MC514
Morningstar Ranch45
Musical Chord Wheels157
Name Dropping209
New Perspectives85
Not Necessarily Stoned16
Oil & Water124
Organicism165
Outfitting The Sanctuary155
Packrat Press108
Palazzo Meets Bulfinch196
Pointing North102
Positive/Negative20
Pushing The Limits179
Reconnecting61
Re-Entry83
Respect For Vision2
Reverend Dick149
Rides For Riders81
Scabbing133
Silver Hill217
Simon Says207
Spruce Geese174
Stephen Stills208
Sting205
Stowe (Part II)115
Strike131
Surviving Stowe105
Susan163
Swans & Stripes135
Thanking Dr. Garzia220
The 1833 Shop137
The ABCs of Printing92
The Apple And The Rose161
The Blair Academy Dome101
The Breaking Point119
The Bugman Cometh165
The Cage29
The Church Of Art149
The Crux Of Art146
The Darker Side5
The Final Frontier31
The Gangster Of Love191
The Icehouse21
The Legend Of Egor58
The Mountain107
The New Kid In Town127
The Unraveling215
Too Bad You Are A Communist204
Trial & Error129
Tuesdays With Mario183
Vagabond Gypsies43
Vicariousity222
Visual Distortion3
Watch Out For That Ax, Eugene130
Willie201
Woodworker's Dream138

Index Of Illustrations

Academic Surrealism (Stephen Curtis)42
Acrobatics26
Action Reaction Yantra36
Air Dancer84
Alive (Yearbook Cover Graphic)107
American Archtop (Headstock Logo)213
Apple And The Rose (Detail)33, 161
Apple And The Rose (Full)162
Artist Signatures211
Assorted Packrat Press Business Cards109
Asymmetric Expansion Yantra .136, Back Papers
Balance Beam, The89
Between Time & Timbuktu41
Birds In Flight27
Birds In Flight (Yantra)44
Birth66
Black Sun165
Blair Academy Certificate Of Recognition . .102
Calling Card, dick boak125
Calling Card, Church Of Art153
Candy148
Cardinal22
Cat26
Characteristics of the Symptoms of Death . .34
Checkmate88
Checkmate (Detail)87
Children On The Beach71
Church Of Art151
Church Of Art Painting (by Kevin Broad) .149
Church of Art (by R. W. Lichtenwalner) . .154
City Seal124
Clyde Clod, Various Incarnations Of1
Concentric Word Rings35
Conception65
Counter Card126
Crayola Crayon Guitar Drawing214
Custom Pearl Inlay (Stationery)187
D-28 Dreadnoughtt129, 131
Directions To Church Of Art (Gene Mater) .154
Discarded Study of Mary from “The Pieta” . .84
Disintegration Of Consciousness17
DNA Spiral80
Dreaming (Cover)108
Driftwood Visions116
Egg14
Elephants96
Entire Universe..., The (Tullio DeSantis) . . .18
Flames Of Vision3
Flaws of Science (Cartoon)11
4-Axis Yantra47
Fred Filiment’s Stolen Novel (Cover)108
Fred Filiment, The original28
Freedom (Cartoon)11
Freedom (Story Header)99
Freehand Yantra123
Freeform Trees103
Galactic Eye160

Garden Of Eden (Detail)97
Garden Of Eden98
Geodesic Dome at Morningstar46
Hindu Goddess With Crystal Ball & Totems .62
Hollywood Palm82
Ike Eichenlaub (Blindfolded)57
Illuminated Candle81
In Favor Of Frogs4
In Memory Of C. F. Martin III184
Indian Dancer51
Involuntary Vision70
Iron City Bell111
Iron City Fishing Club Map112
John Saylor (Blindfolded & Rendered) . . .145
Ken Dieterly (Business Card)159
Koh-I-Noor Rapidograph Ad131
Left Eye, Right Brain (And Vice Versa) . .31, 32
Liz Over Taurus114
Logic27
Magma34
Map Of Morningstar Ranch63
Martin Title Box129
Meditation47
Meditation Yantra25
Medusa54
Mercury Rising53
Meta-morphosis (Cover)11
Metaphysical Trellis85
Miniature Landscape36
Mitch Perez Machinist ID Tag130
Momentum Yantra38
Moravian Snowflake93
Morningstar Yantra50
Multi-Laminate Exotic Wood Fretless Bass .177
Musical Chord Wheels157, 158
Negative Landscape145
Night Dancer42
Now59
Nudity (Cartoon)12
Numeric Yantra37
Old Grist Mill, The94
Old Man With Goose71
Omega Natural Foods144
Opening Sleeve For Hollywood Portfolio . .68
Organic Yantra58
Organicism165
Oval Butterfly75
Oval Reflection55
Peace (Cartoon)11
Pegasus (Emily Ellis Boak)222
Phallic Tree90
Pickguard Design For Laser Etching187
Platinum Horse118
Pond Life (Rudy Hilt)217
Porpoise Birds43
Positive and Negative Divisions20
Procreative Dandelion76
Procreative Yantra40

Proton Yantra25
Racism (Cartoon)12
Rain (Cartoon)12
Rainbow Eyes16
Regenesis Yantra39
Repressed Anger64
Revenge67
Roger Sadowsky (Presentation Card)188
Sailors Of The TeePee (Russian Egg)21
Simple Eight Axis Floral Yantra25
Small 10-Pointed Yantra35
Snake Bird Violence67
Snyder’s Woodcraft (Business Card)128
Spiral Vortex–FrontispieceFront Papers, 77
Stowe Mirage117
Stowe School, The (Andrè George)105
Stowe School Diploma (Header)107
Sun Through Trees78
Sunrise Sunset (Small Version)60
Sunrise Sunset (Large Version)91
Susie’s Dolls72
Symposium 88 (Logo & T-Shirt Design) . . .191
Taurus49
Tears (Cover)12
Ten Pointed Star56
The Balance Beam89
The Entire Universe (Tullio DeSantis)18
The Old Grist Mill94
The Stowe School (Andrè George)105
The Wave, Preliminary Sketch For15
The Well at Morningstar Ranch (sketch) . . .45
The West Wind Bends The Pine110
Three Worlds2
Thunderbird48
Tree From Griffith Park73
Tribute to Dali86
Tribute To Kahlil Gibran83
Tribute To M. C. Escher76
Tribute To Pablo Picasso69
Tupelo: New York City to Nova Scotia122
Unfinished Calling Card, Church Of Art . .150
Unfinished Waterfall146
Unicorn Dream (Grace Boak)221
Universal Model52
Universal Model #257
Vignette166
Vine Of Harmonics (Inlay Design)200
Wave, Preliminary Sketch For The15
Wedding Invitation185
Well at Morningstar Ranch, The (sketch) . . .45
West Wind Bends The Pine, The110
Wheel Of Balance104
Wind Exerting Its Power Over The Land . . .106
Winona Landscape Fantasy74
Woodworker’s Dream138
Wormwood Vision79
Yama (Hindu God Of Creation)61
Yantra #58 (A Tribute To Lewis Wain’s Sanity)26

Index Of Musical Instruments

** Designates photography by John Sterling Ruth*

1/4 Size 4-41 6-String Guitar *178
8-String Ebony Acoustic (Construction) . . .156
8-String Ebony Acoustic169
9-String Acoustic (Jay Black) *167
American Archtop (Dale Unger) *213
Andy Griffith D-18209
B-18 Acoustic Bass Prototype *176
Boak-struments127
Church Of Art 00 12-fret *168
Cigar Box Ukulele *178
Contiguous Acoustic Guitar *214
Custom 01 Martin Dreadnought *168
Custom EC & HF Prototype *199
Custom 5-41V Terz Guitar *178
Custom Martin Schoenberg 000-42 12-fret *180
Custom OMC-12 Deluxe *179
Custom Sunburst 7-42 Acoustic Guitar . . .179
Custom Travis Tritt D-45 *200
Double Cutaway Electric-Acoustic *173
E-18 Prototype (Body Detail) *134
E-18, EM-18, EB-18 Martin Electrics134
EB-18 Electric Bass175
Eric Clapton 000-42EC198
Guitarmaker Magazine (A.S.I.A.)181, 182
HDN Negative Edition Prototype *199
HDO Grand Ole Opry (Neck Detail) * . . .199
Honduras Rosewood Acoustic *170
Joan Baez 0-45JB204
Johnny Cash D-42JC201
Laminated Fretless Electric Bass *175, 176
Laskin Acoustic Guitar *194
Maccaferri G-40 Prototype *183
MC² Martin Double Cutaway180
Maverick Bass (Body Detail) *134
Merle Haggard 000C-28SMH210
Modified Martin T-28 Tiple *167
Multi-Laminate Fretless Bass *176, 177
Parabola Ergonomic Electric Guitar *135
Paul Simon OM-42PS207
Pinstripe Electric Guitar (Mahogany)159
Pinstripe Electric Guitar (Walnut)159
Roger McGuinn D12-42RM209
Single Cutaway Acoustic-Electric *173
Spruce Goose174
Stephen Stills D-45SS208
Steve Miller 00-37KSM/00-37K2SM *193
Sting CMSH Classical Prototype (Rosette) .205
Sting SWB Acoustic Bass *206
Sting Mini Terz (High String) *178
Swan Electric (Headstock Detail) *133
Swan Electric *135
White Oak Dreanought Prototype *143
Willie Nelson “Trigger”202

Index Of Poems, Songs & Sidebars

\$3.5 Million Payment Ends Dispute 42

A Frog Leg Fantasy 4

A 3 1/2 x 2 1/2 Wallet Sized Photograph ... 12

Apple And The Rose, The 161

Autumn 147

Bay Of Tears 146

Birth And Death Are The Same Door 64

Buckminster Fuller Letter 109

Buckminster Who? (Cartoon by Mal) 109

Building Stop Sought At Ranch 63

Candy’s Giant Potato 147

Checkmate (A Brief Explanation Of Reality) .87

Cigarette Conscience 103

City Student Builds Miniature Astrodome .. 23

Containers 146

Cumberland River Ferry, The 119

Dancer, The (For Eugenia Haney) 115

Dirge For Father 100

Fingernails 120

Fred Filiment’s Stolen Novel 28

Georgy Kessel’s Dog 12

How Not To Prepare Bluefish... 142

I’ll See You In My Dreams (Grace Boak) ... 221

Ingredients Of A Good Luck Charm 100

James Merriam Howard, Jr. Letter 95

Joan Baez Letter and Interior Label 204

Johnny Cash Letter 201

Letter To A Friend Potentially Lost 120

Life Work Of Local Artist (Article) 117

Love Is 12

Map Of Morningstar Ranch, 1972 63

Miles Bryant Letter (The Stowe School) 101

Marquis Quotes From The Church Of Art 153

Mother Earth Church (Ad Text) 150

Observations From A Dark Window 119

Observations From The Window Of Flight #128 .. 64

Practicing Piano 147

Refrigerator Vision 3:00 AM 119

Sebastian Overcomes Spelling 163

Short Poems 103

Sleep Cowboy 193

Solo (Outward Bound) 216

Song For Blackie 8

Song For One Who Wishes To Remain Anonymous .113

Sonnet For Emily and Grace 222

South Vietnamese Baby Lift Tragedy 103

Spectrums 77, 78

Strange Dream 103

Striving 103

Student Puts Self Behind Bars 30

The Apple And The Rose 161

The Cumberland River Ferry 119

The Dancer (For Eugenia Haney) 115

To The Owner Of Sabatini’s Restaurant ... 140

The Last Page 12

The Middle Class Tragedy 11

The Paradox Of Need 103

The Seconds Of Your Love (A Song) 147

The Sunburn Shroud Of Elvis 157

Thorns Of Christ 120

Three Observations 114

To A Janitor Crying In A Closet 12

Wedding Song (For Billy & Kim) 90

Wilbert Snow 221

Woodwind Cantata 103

Writing To Fit 197

Index Of Photographs

** Designates photography by John Sterling Ruth*

1833 Shop (1983 Catalog Cover) 137

ABC Primetime 171, 172

A.S.I.A. Award Plaque * 192

African Padauk Speakers 156

American Artist Magazine, Sept. 1978 133

Andy Griffith 209

Art Smith & Dick Boak at Blair 13

At Work In The Sawdust 156

Baby Elephant (Silver Pendant) 95

Barry Frey’s Geodesic Dome Photo 23

Bill, Dick, John & Tom Boak 1

Billy 90

Blackie Krajczar 8

Blair Academy Dome 101

Boakstruments 127

Bug Collection Obsession 165

Building The 8-String Ebony Acoustic 156

Breakfast 16

Candy 147

Cage, The 29, 30

Cane For C. F. Martin III * 139

C. Frederick Martin III 132, 139, 141, 172

Chevy Tailfin Glasses 6

Cholla Cactus (Detail) 79

Chris Martin With Big Fish 142

Chris Martin With C.F. Martin III 141

Chris Martin With Eric Clapton 198

Chris Martin With Diane Repyneck 143

Chris Martin With Dick Boak 141

Chris Martin With Doug Greth 141

Chris Martin With Larry Sifel 188

Chris Martin With Paul Simon * 207

Chuck Anderson 172

Church Of Art (Exterior) 150, 171

Church Of Art (Interior) 152

Church Of Art (Kitchen) 163

Church Of Art (Marquis) 171, 186

Church Of Art (On ABC TV) 171, 172

Church Of Art (Pews) 164

Coaching Soccar at Stowe School 106

Coronary Artery Blockage 220

Crown of Creation Dome 33

Cup & Saucer: Mahogany, Walnut, etc. 155

Dale Unger 151, 213

Dancer, The 115

David Grisman 210

Dorky Wrestling Pose 6

Dr. Garzia 220

Drawing In Hollywood 46

Drawing In California 80

Electric Meter 31

Elvis 157, 210

Emily Ellis Boak (222*) 192, 222

Eric Clapton 197, 198, 205

Exotic Gardens Near Winona Boulevard ... 74

Frank Martin 128, 133

Gallery 121

Geodesic Test Dome 24

Gimp & Indian Bead Lancers With Pennies .. 5

Grace Anne Boak (222*) 220, 222

Grapes 216

Guitar Picks * 212

Guitarmaker Magazine Covers 181-182

Houdini * 189

Hummingbird Wishbone & Breastplate ... 200

Hunter, Lusardi & Boak at Gettysburg 15

In Memory Of Blackie Krajczar (Pool Table) .. 8

Iron City Bell 10

Iron City Bell (Silver Pendant) 95

Iron City Fishing Club (Aerial View) 110

Iron City Gas Pump 10

Iron City Store 9

Iron City Sunset 9

J. C. Crawford 140, 215, 216

Jackie Cooper 51

Jaguar Belt Buckle 92

Jalopy * 219

Jeff Harding With Larry Sifel 187

Jewelry Boxes 125, 126

Joan Baez 204

John Boak With Alfa Romeo 99

John Kurgan 205

Johnny Cash 201

Jon Oliver Nelson 24

Judley Sharp (It’s Judley) 32

Kentucky NRT Group 119

Kim Miller 192

Kirkridge Dome 24

Kissing The Frog 190

Kitchen Sink 155

Koh-I-Noor Rapidograph Ad 132

Lathe Turned Bowls 121, 155

Life Magazine Cover, July 1969 45

Life Sculpture #1 16

Liz Macfarlane and Dick Boak 113

Lois Brownsey & Kent Heckman (Ruby) ... 152

Lonnie Donegan 210

Lou Gottlieb 45, 46

Louie Vida & Family 7

Madman Smashes The Pieta 83

Mario & Maria Maccaferri 183

Mark Knopfler 203

Martin Dumpster 127

Martin Guitar Masterpieces (Cover) 196

Marty Mayers at Gettysburg 19

Marty & Georgia at Morningstar 54

MC5 Album Cover 14

Merle Haggard 210

Mr. Stripes 5

Nancy Eichenlaub 119

New Yorker Magazine Rejection Letter 13

Noel’s Log Cabin in Kettle Creek, KY 118

NCC Acoustic Guitar Design Course 214

Notched Tension Hoop * 130

Optic Nerve & (Detached) Retina 219

Overalled and Long Johned 107

Paul Simon * 207

Pennsylvania State Police Note 34

Performing at Godfrey Daniels 121

Performing In Tokyo 210

Proverbial Alfred E. Neuman Complex 5

Pickguard Design For Laser Etching 188

Raku Bowl (Susan Ellis) 164

Roger McGuinn 209

Rudy & Lynn Hilt (Silver Hill) 218

Russ Borman at ABC Printing Co. 92

Satan or Jesus Billboard 19

Sawmill, The (Brochure Cover) 137

Science & Mechanics Magazine Hydroplane .. 9

Sounding Board Newsletter Covers 195

Spittoon 125

Squinting 87

Stack Laminated Turned Vessel * 130

Stephen Stills 208

Steve Miller 191, 193, 197

Steve Scarpa 172

Sting 205, 206

Stowe School Facing Mountain Road 105

Sunburn Shroud Of Elvis 157

Susan Ellis 163, 186, 192, 198

Susan Richardson 68, 72

Taken To Drink 190

Ten Foot Cube 115

The Cage 29, 30

The Dancer 115

The Sawmill (Brochure Cover) 137

The Wave Light Sculpture 15

Thomas Dickson Boak, Sr. 150

Timothy Sloyer 6

Tom Haney’s Dome at Stowe School 106

Tom Paxton 172

Trees Along Vermont Avenue in Hollywood .. 73

Trinket Box: Ebony, Rosewood, Walnut 129

Tullio Desantis & Damon Boone 31

Tullio With Crop 32

Tupelo The Cat 120

Turned Bowl: Walnut, Rosewood, etc. 126

Vince Smolczynski 171, 172

Wave Light Sculpture, The 15

Wedding Reception 186

Wedding Invitation (David Nichols) 185

Whiplash Hydroplane 10

Wilbert Snow Gravesite 221

Willie Nelson 202

Wood Carving of Fawn 85

Woodworker’s Dream (Opening Day) 137



