Rory Block, Tom Paxton & Eric Clapton Headline New Artist Signature Editions

Rory Block

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Tom Paxton

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Eric Clapton

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New Marquis Series

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Dear Martin Enthusiasts,

The economy seems to be picking up. We’ve certainly noticed that in the increased orders coming in for our guitars. You’re keeping us very busy, and we appreciate the confidence you place in us to deliver instruments of quality and integrity.

It’s no surprise that our instruments are so highly valued overseas. The fluctuations of the dollar sometimes affect that business in either direction, but one thing is quite consistent and that is the passion that the Japanese have for Martin guitars. I recently visited Tokyo for a show celebrating the 15th Anniversary of T. Kurosawa & Co. as our distributor in Japan. I spoke with many Martin owners and was amazed at how many of them own several of our guitars – a D-28, a D-45, perhaps a 000-28EC Eric Clapton model. They really cherish the craftsmanship and attention to detail, as well as the incredible heritage that our company holds.

Because of their tremendous enthusiasm for Martin products, Kurosawa initiated a Martin Club of Japan several years ago. We watched with curiosity the fervor that they put into this project. They published their own magazine, similar to The Sounding Board in many respects, and offered special incentives and Martin branded products to their Martin Club members.

We thought they had a great idea, and we began to consider the possibility of creating something along that line. On June 1, 2004, we proudly launched The Martin Owners Club, and already the membership rosters are impressive. Find out how to join and read about the various club benefits on the back cover of this issue and, of course, there is plenty of information about the Martin Owners Club on our web site at www.martinguitar.com.

In any event, we’re very excited about the launch of the Martin Owners Club, and we cordially invite you to join.

Sincerely,

C. F. Martin IV
Chairman & CEO
C. F. Martin & Co.
Dear Mr. Martin,

I have one of those “old Martin in the attic” stories for you. I flew to Hawaii for vacation a couple of weeks ago. I had planned the weekend on Oahu and the week on Kauai. My sister however lives on the big island.

After some pondering, I decided to catch an inner-island flight to have lunch with her in the middle of the week, as it would be silly to come all that way and not see her. She’s 74, so I felt that it was better that I make the effort to go see her, rather than make her come all the way over to see me.

When I arrived she said, “I have a gift for you. Have you ever heard of Martin guitars?” My jaw dropped. It turns out it was a 1909 0-30, in great shape and very rich sounding. It was given to her in 1946 at the convent where she was a nun. I’m currently having it worked on: resetting the neck, re-gluing the bridge, and having it re-fretted. Soon I should have myself a pretty darn nice playable ax. My co-workers here at Acoustic Guitar magazine are contemplating a Great Acoustics feature on it, which would be fun.

That’s the skinny. I’m sure you’ve heard a million of these stories, but to me this one is very special. I promise to scratch it up and leave the strings on for years. Sincerely,

Peter Penhallow
Acoustic Guitar Magazine

Dear Mr. Martin,

I’m 1/3 of an acoustic trio called Emerson, Smith & Phelps. One of my bandmates, Alan Phelps (above), has been an avid wood and metal worker for over 25 years and an equally avid acoustic musician. One year, with a bonus from his job, he bought the instrument that’s still his pride and joy – a 1926 00-21. When a downturn in the economy left his job outlook shaky in the mid-’90s, he decided to turn his passion into an avocation and open a luthiery business. He built instruments from kits for practice, attended a number of workshops, and studied under renowned craftsman Michael Hornick. Before opening his shop (the A. C. Phelps Mandolin & Guitar Co.), Alan decided he’d visit the Martin factory to see how it’s done at “the premier guitar factory of the world” (as he told a radio interviewer early last year). So he drove all the way from Cary, NC, to Nazareth, PA, to see your facility. After taking the regular tour, he went over to see the old factory and was completely taken with it: the squeaky wood floors, the old work benches, the smell of spruce, mahogany and rosewood still hanging in the air. He was so taken, in fact, that on the way home a melody began running through his head. By the time he got back, he had composed an instrumental he titled “Pilgrimage to Nazareth” in homage to your company. That song now appears on our CD, Acoustic-Americans, and features Alan on his 00-21. The other guitar used on the CD is my 1971 D-18. I just thought you’d like to know that before the four gentlemen pictured in your July 2003 issue made their “Pilgrimage to Nazareth”, my bandmate had already written and recorded a song about it! Sincerely,

Don Smith (Cyberspace !)

Dear Mr. Martin,

Well, we have survived another Christmas season here in Ladoga, Indiana and in the process, we have added another generation to the C. F. Martin guitar family by presenting my son in law Chris with his first Martin guitar. I chose the DXM for him because of its tone and durability. I know he will get years of pleasure from this guitar and possibly pass it down to his kids as they learn to play.

I have always loved my Martin guitars because of the superior quality and excellent sound. I have an HD-28, a Kenny Wayne Shepherd Signature model, a CEO4, a jumbo J12-16RGT, a DC-16RGT and a sunburst D-16RGT. These guitars are so beautiful and wonderful sounding I can not understand why anyone would ever buy a “Brand X” guitar. I have owned the herringbone HD-28 for over twenty years now and it has withstood eleven moves to all climates. It sounds even better now than when I first purchased it, a testament to Martin’s quality and workmanship.

And to the craftsmen who made my CEO 4, thank you for the best guitar I have ever played.

I just want to thank you again for making such great guitars that have provided my family with so much joy over the years. By the way, the photo above is my son in law Chris Hagist with his DXM, me with my CEO 4, and brother in law Rick Goldsberry with his D41. We proudly refer to ourselves as “The Martin Men.” Sincerely,

Jim Geiman
Ladoga, Indiana

Dear Mr. Martin,

I was intrigued to find this rare shot of Ringo playing John’s Martin D-28 while John tried his hand at Ringo’s drum kit. That’s a switch!

Dan Vanderhaar
Menemmomie, WI

Dear Mr. Martin,

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Jim Geiman
Ladoga, Indiana
Robert Selvaggio

Robert has quite a story. It all goes back to Fathers Day in 1999. He was attending the three-day Telluride Bluegrass Festival up in the beautiful Rocky mountains of Colorado. On the first day of the festival he passed a stand where raffle tickets were being sold to win a Martin herringbone HD-28. He plopped down his two dollars, filled out all of the information, kissed his ticket, folded it, bent the corner up a bit, and put it in the box.

Two days later on stage, miraculously, Robert’s name was drawn from thousands of entries. In Robert’s own words: “I was rooted to the ground with my arms and fists straight up in the air...screaming my head off!”

After he calmed down somewhat, he found his way backstage to claim his “treasure,” and since that day, Robert and his guitar have been inseparable. His career as a singer/songwriter/performer took off. Releasing his first CD in June 2001, Rob lived out of his truck for eight months to save money for his first European tour. He traveled in England and Wales, had his guitar stolen, then got it back!

Robert now lives in Columbus, Ohio where he continues to pursue his music. Through a grass roots effort, he has managed to distribute his CDs across the US, Europe and Asia. He’s working on a new album currently. When he can, he likes to perform in schools and spread as much good will as possible.

One thing is for sure.
That Martin guitar changed his life!

Charbroiled D-35

David Neely, who manages a Martin Warranty Repair Center in LA, recently furnished us with these “before” photos of a D-35, which was badly damaged in a fire. Miraculously it survived and will be back in shape soon. David has promised us “after” photos when his refurbishments are completed.

Gadz-Ukes!

David Barry sent us this photo of his father Charles Barry taken in Denver in 1918 when David’s father was just two years old. The ukulele is still in great condition and is now of course a special family heirloom.

NASCAR Busch Series

Martin’s Chief Operating Officer Keith Lombardi (left) and Administrative Services Manager Sylvia Fehnel (right) presented polesitter Kyle Busch with a special Concept III prototype prize at the 2004 NASCAR Busch Series race at Nazareth Speedway in May of 2004.
Author and outdoorsman Rob Lyons has been featured in previous issues of the Sounding Board. (See Backpacker Stories, Volume 12, January 2002). His most recent expedition took him and his companions down the Green River of Utah on a canoeing adventure connected with Origin Expeditions, a non–profit company in the San Juan Islands dedicated to getting kids into the wild. The trip was a reconnaissance effort exploring curricula for future programs.

In addition to Rob and his wife Pamela in one canoe, Anna Lindall and Cedar Charnley were along working up a course guide of the Green for a college project. Paul Lewis, another Origin Expeditions director, was their field supervisor who led the other two canoes.

They spent a couple of weeks all told on the river, traveling to the Southwest. Coming from the verdant San Juan Islands, they found it quite an adjustment floating on water that seemed more like liquid mud. (“They really should have named it the Brown River!”)

One of the culinary delights of the expedition was the abundance of freshly caught channel catfish, which kept the group supplied with fish entrées virtually every night, but even the catfish shared the river’s earthtone hue.

To soothe the desiccating mood of life on the Colorado Plateau, Rob had the good sense to bring along a pair of Martin Backpacker® Mandolins for the journey, one with each party, and a little mandolin riff drifting out across the desert while each night went a long way towards nourishing a parched soul.
Judy Collins

Judy Collins continues to delight audiences with her pristine vocals and emotive interpretations. Shown here with her Signature Edition HD12-35SJC model, she maintains a busy tour schedule and has just released The Essential Judy Collins Collection that includes her most popular hits plus her renditions of classic favorites. Also slated for release is a CD of songs written by Leonard Cohen and sung by Judy that includes three previously unreleased tracks.

Gordon Lightfoot

After a sudden illness in September, 2002 that very nearly took his life, Canadian veteran singer and songwriter Gordon Lightfoot is well on the road to recovery. Check it out for yourself when you listen to his newest album, Harmony. Here he is pictured with his vintage Martin D-18 that he uses in the studio as well as in concert. Look for upcoming performance dates after the first of next year. (Len Jaffe)

Stephen Stills

At a wintertime Martin clinic, Stephen Stills had the opportunity to play Martin’s one-millionth guitar. The milestone instrument was specially crafted to celebrate 171 years and six generations of the family-owned business, and Stills, a long standing Martin enthusiast, was thrilled to hold the priceless instrument.

More recently in May of 2004, Stephen was honored for his lifelong support for UNICEF at a special dinner, fundraiser, and concert in Boston, Massachusetts. Stills was presented with the UNICEF Children’s Champion Award. Following dinner, Stephen sang a soulful rendition of one of his hits backed by a children’s choir. The remainder of the evening featured a lively jam session featuring Stephen’s many friends, among them the James Montgomery Blues Band members. A Martin DXM guitar signed by Crosby, Stills, and Nash was one of the many items silent-auctioned for charity. The guitar brought a final bid of $2100. The entire event raised more than $100,000 for UNICEF.
Yesteryear

Kathy Barth was eleven years old when she started guitar lessons on this rare 1965 F-50 and Martin amp combo at Zellner’s Music Center (currently Nazareth Music Center). Now decades later, Kathy’s husband Bill and son Ryan are both Martin co-workers.

Guitar 101

Teacher Bob Goldman brought his class of guitar enthusiasts to Martin for a factory tour, and we had to pry the guitars out of their hands before their bus returned to South Jersey.

Steve Miller

Martin clinician Richard Starkey (right) teams up with “Gangster of Love” Steve Miller at Steve’s ranch in Idaho. Naturally, Steve has amassed quite a collection of Martin guitars (plus a few other brands) and Rich visited to do setups, fret work, and fine adjustments to the collection. Steve and Rich are pictured above holding one of Steve’s personal 00-37KSM Signature Edition models.

Steve has one of the most beautiful recording studios on the planet. Aside from being architecturally stunning, the mostly all-wood building resonates as sweetly as the music that Steve records there. Of late, he is still very active in diverse musical styles that include jazz, rhythm and blues, and of course rock.
George Sabolick

George Sabolick started playing guitar at the age of 9. He was brought up on Beatles songs, the Byrds and a little bit of everything in-between that the ‘60s had to offer. When he was 14, George saved his money and purchased his first Martin guitar (a D-35) which carried him into his career. He started playing at high school dances which led to full-time performing at night clubs.

George has a deep appreciation for fingerstyle guitar music, being influenced by Chet Atkins, Doyle Dykes, Laurence Juber and many others. He has a passion to involve himself in a world of fingerstyle guitar enthusiasts. George teaches guitar clinics, does session work and has produced and played on 9 CDs. His latest CD is Songmaker of the Night. George is currently producing another new fingerstyle CD, featuring “that great Martin sound” which will be released this fall.

Being brought up in a Christian home, George answered his calling to be a Worship Leader/Songwriter. He currently is the Administrative Pastor and Worship Leader at Calvary Laguna under songwriter Senior Pastor Joe Sabolick. Before coming to Calvary Laguna, George had been leading worship for 2000 people weekly at Calvary Chapel Rialto for 15 years.

It has been said that George just loves God, people and guitars. He says that he has owned many fine guitars in his life but always has found his way back home to that great Martin sound. George currently plays the D-18DC David Crosby Signature Edition and the OMC-18VLJ Laurence Juber Signature Edition.

George resides in South Orange County with his wife, Dona. He has three boys, Richard, Adam and Jordan. For information on purchasing George's CD's, please contact him at (949) 460-0202.

The Concert For George

If you are a Beatles fan, or if you appreciate the masterful guitar work of George Harrison, or if you simply like great music, this special CD/DVD tribute by George’s many legendary friends is for you! Produced with tremendous emotion and sensitivity by Eric Clapton, the concert was recorded and filmed at the Royal Albert Hall in London on November 29th, 2002. In addition to Eric’s musical direction and stellar performance, the show features musical vignettes from surviving Beatles Paul McCartney and Ringo Starr, George’s son Dhani Harrison (who bears a striking resemblance to his father), fellow Traveling Wilbury’s members Tom Petty and Jeff Lynne, Ravi Shankar and an amazing orchestra of traditional Indian music virtuosos, and long-time collaborators such as Billy Preston, Klaus Voorman, Jim Capaldi, Albert Lee, Joe Brown, and too many more to mention here.

The intensity and depth of feeling in these performances is hard to describe, but it is likely that if you have had any appreciation of George Harrison, you too will be moved to tears while viewing this tribute.

There is no shortage of acoustic guitars in the show. Eric Clapton, Andy Fairweather Low and Paul McCartney all play their Martin guitars extensively, and Paul does a moving rendition of Something with a Martin ukulele.

It just goes to show that although “all things must pass,” there is in fact an “art to dying.” George taught us a great deal. If he were around to witness this tribute, he’d probably be embarrassed at such attention. Don’t you be reticent. Treat yourself to this timeless tribute!
Maury Muehleisen was born on January 14, 1949 in Trenton, New Jersey, the second of eight children of Maurice and Margaret Muehleisen. He took piano lessons from the age of nine, mastering the classics and more. Picking up the guitar at age seventeen, he taught himself and excelled. By the time he was twenty, Maury had a recording contract and his first Capitol Records album entitled “Gingerbread” containing eleven original works by Maury, produced by Terry Cashman and Tommy West.

Even though his album and the promotion of it was not very successful, he was lucky enough to be given an opportunity to share his musical talent with the world through his friendship with Jim Croce, as Jim’s lead guitarist. And Jim would have been the first to say that he was lucky to share his spot in the limelight with Maury. For it was this gifted combination that created Jim’s three ABC albums - “You Don’t Mess Around With Jim,” “Life and Times,” and “I Got A Name” in 1972 and 1973. Maury’s life came to a tragic end at age 24 on September 20, 1973, killed in an airplane crash along with Jim Croce, Jim’s road manager Dennis Rast, his booking agent Ken Cortese, the opening act comedian George Stevens, and the pilot Robert Newton Elliott.

Maury’s short-lived career with Jim Croce has been rewarded with three gold albums, two gold singles, and global attention in the years since his death. Yet, in those years, his family, friends, and fans have always remembered the young man who maintained unwavering pride in his name and his birthplace, a young and talented soul who just wanted to sing for people and asked only for a smile in return.

Maury brought his trusted D-35 to Martin in October of 1971 for some refretting.
Al Shelton is a true artist. Throughout his colorful 84 years he has immersed himself in painting, sculpting, writing, singing, leather carving, and carrying on the cowboy tradition. We found out about Al from Matt and Gunnar Nelson, twin sons of Rick Nelson.

In the ‘60s, Al crafted the now legendary guitar cover for Rick. Contemplating a Rick Nelson Commemorative Edition guitar, Martin commissioned Al to replicate the famous cover, the completed version of which is now on display in the Martin museum. More recently, Martin has commissioned Al to carve a guitar cover of his own western freeform design for the museum collection. Al has said that because of his increasing years, this might be his last major project, and he has planned it to be his “grandest piece yet.”

For decades, Hollywood’s most famous luminaries have stood in line for Al’s art which has included bronzes, leather carvings, belt buckles and paintings. One of his most famous works is part of the permanent collection of the Autry Museum of Western Heritage in Los Angeles, which includes the hand-carved silver mounted saddle outfit, fancy stitched inlaid cowboy boots and gun belt featured on the majestic bronze monument of Gene Autry and his horse Champion. Titled after the Autry Classic “Back in the Saddle Again,” the sculpture is considered to be the museum’s show piece.

Allan Sanders of Vinita, Oklahoma is our newest and youngest Little Martin salesman. Allan was recently accepted into The Oklahoma Opry. He has been playing the guitar since he was 5 years old and got his first Martin last December for Christmas. He loves performing and has played extensively in Branson, Missouri. Last July he was asked to play the National Anthem at the OKC Bricktown Stadium before the Red Hawks played the Colorado Rockies in front of 7500 fans.

Allan began playing for The Oklahoma Opry in March of 2004 performing on Saturday nights in Oklahoma City. The photo above is his most recent promotional picture that he uses for autograph signing. He proudly stands behind his Martin and gets thousands of looks and compliments when people say “Look what that kid is playing!” Bluegrass music never sounded so good.

Rex Allen (2nd from left with his Martin) and “Your Pals” of Trenton’s Sunset Round-Up circa 1950.
Keeping Lonnie Alive

The Paul Leegan Band is the Official Lonnie Donegan Tribute Band. Paul’s bandmate Warren James wrote in to tell how much Paul, who performs as Lonnie, loves his Lonnie Donegan Signature model. Paul recently performed at the most prestigious charity event in the UK: “The Grand Order Of Water Rats.” Lonnie was a key member of that charity and had the “Water Rat” logo inlaid on the headplate of the edition. Paul and Warren both agree that the tribute was a wonderful moment to honor the legacy of Lonnie and represent Martin guitars. An upcoming musical tribute (below) will further honor the life and times of the legendary King of Skiffle featuring Lonnie’s sons Peter and Anthony Donegan together with Lonnie’s Skiffle group performing all of his major hits.

Felix Mania

Don Oriolo, head of Felix The Cat Productions, takes a musical break with the prototype of the Felix guitar. He’s been working on a 27 minute documentary “Felix Through The Years” that traces the history of Joe Oriolo (Don’s father) and Otto Messmer who created the Felix legacy. The documentary will accompany the DVD of the feature length movie “Felix The Cat Saves Christmas” due out this fall in movie theaters. Don plays the Felix theme song during the introduction of the documentary. The response to the Felix guitar has been terrific, with a total announced edition size of 756 instruments. More to follow!

Steve Kaufman

Steven Kaufman is the only three time winner of the prestigious National Flatpicking Championships held annually in Winfield, Kansas, capturing first place in 1978, 1984 and 1986. He is shown at left with two of his Martin guitars: a rare 1932 C-3 round soundhole Martin archtop and a lovely vintage orchestra model OM-42.

Steve’s Acoustic Kamp is one of the best organized, educationally beneficial, camaraderie-based Kamps available. People come from all over the world to eat, sleep, dream and play music in the foothills of the Great Smoky Mountains.

Recipient of Acoustic Guitar Magazine’s Gold Award For The Best Music Camp, Steve offers two sessions annually in June, and they sell out very quickly. The first week-long Kamp ends on Father’s Day, and the second one starts on Father’s Day. For further info, go to: www.flatpik.com
Blueswoman Rory Block Honored With Signature OM

From the Delta to Chicago, from the crossroads to the highway, the road is one of the blues most powerful images. So when the time came for C.F. Martin to create a signature guitar to honor blues artist and long-time Martin devotee Rory Block, a road theme proved irresistible. The new Martin OM-40 Rory Block Signature Edition is road worthy in every sense of the word.

One of the most highly regarded blues musicians of her generation, Rory Block knows the road well. As a teenager, her travels took her to meet many of blues’ founding fathers. As a performer, she played as many as 250 shows a year during the late 1970s and early 1980s. Even in 2004, after 22 albums, four W.C. Handy Awards and nearly 40 years of paying dues, she will head out in her motor home to do 37 concerts in the United States and then hop a plane to the United Kingdom to do 9 more. Martin OMs have been her guitars of choice for years and the OM-40 Rory Block Signature Edition is an honor well deserved.

The OM-40 Rory Block Signature Edition’s road motif begins at the headstock, where the polished African black ebony headplate features both the familiar “C.F. Martin & Co.” script logo and an image of a 1930s Hudson Terraplane, the car in the legendary Robert Johnson song “Terraplane Blues,” inlaid in mother of pearl. The road runs down the African black ebony fingerboard, where the center line (with and without passing zones), inlaid in mother of pearl, is punctuated by unique road sign position markers: “traffic light ahead” at the 5th fret, “crossroad” at the 7th fret, “railroad crossing” at the 9th fret and “yield” at the 15th fret. The railroad tracks themselves are inlaid in mother of pearl at the 12th fret, as is Rory Block’s signature between the 19th and 20th frets.

Block’s personal preferences are reflected both in the guitar’s premium tonewoods and in its appointments. The top of beautiful Engelmann spruce is matched to delicately scalloped 1/4” width Sitka spruce top braces for effortless response and impressive dynamic range. Bold herringbone top trim and blue paua pearl rosette inlay shine brilliantly against the amber of the vintage toner on the top. The back and sides are handsome East Indian rosewood. A genuine bone nut and matching compensated bone saddle add to the instrument’s crisp, clear voice.

The genuine mahogany neck with diamond volute measures 1 3/4” at the nut and features a modified V-shape and satin finish, both selected for playing comfort, plus nickel Waverly™ open-geared tuners with butterbean knobs for tuning ease. The frets are hardened nickel silver, requested by Block for its brilliant tone and ability to withstand the slides (either metal or glass) and string bending integral to blues guitar.

Such preferences come from nearly a lifetime of playing blues guitar. Rory (actually Aurora) Block grew up in New York City, where Washington Square Park and later her father’s leather shop were the center of a thriving folk music scene. She learned to play the guitar at age 10, but didn’t discover and dedicate herself to country blues until age 14. With fellow traveler Stefan Grossman, she began meeting and learning from blues icons like Mississippi John Hurt, Reverend Gary Davis, Son House, Skip James and Fred McDowell. She dropped out of high school to travel cross country in pursuit of her passion, eventually returning to New York to record the instructional album “How to Play Blues Guitar” with Grossman.

After quitting music for a decade to start a family and take a brief excursion into contemporary pop, she reconnected with the blues in the late 1970s. “High Heeled Blues,” released in 1981, garnered a rave review from Rolling Stone, which called the album among the best country blues in recent years. Nearly constant touring and a steady stream of fine albums – including “Best Blues and Originals,” “Ain’t I a Woman,” “When a Woman Gets the Blues” and “Confessions of a Blues Singer” - over the next two decades cemented her place as one of America’s finest traditional blues singers and guitarists. She also began writing her own songs, in a style that merged blues, soul and gospel.

Rory Block continues to flourish in the new millennium. Her 2003 album, “Last Fair Deal,” was released to ecstatic reviews and received a W.C. Handy nomination for Acoustic Blues Album of the Year. Her latest recording, a collaboration with Eric Bibb and Maria Muldaur titled “Sisters and Brothers,” likewise has been well received. In the last year or so, she has been joined at home and on the road by Beauregarde, a dog
whose adoption inspired her to select the Best Friends Animal Sanctuary to receive her entire portion of the proceeds generated by her Signature Edition Martin.

The Rory Block Signature Edition’s unique combination of tonewoods and appointments blend beautifully with Martin’s standard Style 40 specifications, offered here in an OM model for the first time. The handsome Style 45 rosette and multi-colored mosaic backstrip show superb Martin craftsmanship, as do the fine black/white mitered purfling that accents the grained ivoroid-bound body, neck and headstock, as well as the grained ivoroid end piece and heelcap. A perfect polished gloss finish brings out the natural beauty of the body wood, and a polished and beveled tortoise-colored OM teardrop pickguard protects the top. Left-handed guitars can be ordered at no additional cost: factory installed electronics are extra.

Delivered in a Geib™ style hardshell case, each OM-40 Rory Block Signature Edition guitar includes an interior label personally signed by Rory Block and Martin Chairman C.F. Martin IV, is numbered in sequence and shows the total number of guitars in the edition. Martin dealers and distributors will accept orders for the OM-40 Rory Block Signature Edition for 60 days from the model’s announcement, after which the size of the edition and the names of participating Martin dealers will be posted on the Martin web site, www.martinguitar.com.

A longtime Martin OM performer, Rory Block’s Signature Edition combines the highest level of performance and tone with a completely unique blues-inspired inlay motif. A 1930s “blues mobile” adorns the headstock and a two-lane highway (complete with passing lane, street signs and a railroad crossing) marks the standard fret positions of the fingerboard.
Tom Paxton Signature Edition
Salutes Legendary Singer-Songwriter

His songs are timeless classics, his generosity to both audiences and fellow musicians is renowned, and his passion for justice and the ties that bind people together is unwavering. For all this and more, Tom Paxton ranks as one of the most revered musicians of his generation. Martin is proud to introduce the HD-40LSH Tom Paxton Signature Edition in his honor.

After forty years of making great music, Paxton just gets better; he received a Grammy nomination for “Best Musical Album for Children” of 2002 and another for “Best Contemporary Folk Album” of 2003. He writes and records so often he has begun posting “short shelf-life songs” (those too brief or too topical to wait for the next album) on his website, www.tompaxton.com. In concert, his warm personality, rich voice and accomplished guitar accompaniment continue to captivate audiences young, old and in between. The toughest aspect of creating the Tom Paxton Signature Edition Martin proved to be getting him to slow down long enough to describe the guitar he wanted to bear his name.

Based on the Martin Dreadnoughts Paxton has played for much of his career, the HD-40LSH Tom Paxton Signature Edition features a unique combination of tonewoods, design and appointments that distinguish it as a guitar built to a professional’s exacting requirements.

The top is bearclaw-figured Sitka spruce, renowned for both beauty and rarity. An oversized soundhole combines with scalloped top braces for impressive power and balanced timbre. The mahogany “modified-V” neck is topped with a polished African black ebony headplate, on which the C.F. Martin script logo and a stylized portrait of Tom Paxton, complete with his ubiquitous soft cap, is inlaid in mother of pearl.

The guitar is crafted with premium quality East Indian rosewood back and sides, while the fingerboard, belly bridge, bridge pins and endpins are of African black ebony. Polished gloss lacquer finish on the body and headplate of the HD-40LSH Tom Paxton Signature Edition bring out the beauty of the tonewoods, while the neck’s satin finish provides playing comfort. Each instrument comes packed in a heavy duty Geib™ style hardshell case.

Though not quite an overnight success, Tom Paxton rocketed to the top of the music world with impressive ease. A native of Chicago, Paxton grew up in Oklahoma. He discovered folk music as a child; his love for it developed while he was earning a degree in drama from the University of Oklahoma. A stint in the Army brought him to New York City’s Greenwich Village in the early 1960s, where his singing and playing on the coffeehouse circuit soon brought him to the attention of record labels. Recorded in 1964, his second album, “Ramblin’ Boy,” included some great original material, including the title song and “Last Thing on My Mind.” Tom Paxton songs quickly became folk music staples, and several of them went on to become standards, covered by everyone from Willie Nelson and Tony Rice to Placido Domingo and Dion.

At last count, Paxton has released more than 40 albums. His latest, “Best of Friends” (with Bob Gibson and Anne Hills) and “Looking for the Moon,” show his magic with word and melody at full power. Over the years he has shown a special affinity for the young; “The Marvelous Toy” and “Goin’ to the Zoo” are examples of his children’s songs, and he also has written several critically acclaimed children’s books.

He continues to tour regularly, bringing his music and his message to devoted audiences around the world. In addition, he champions fresh musical talent by showcasing them in concert and on his website. Little wonder he is beloved by fans and fellow artists of every generation.

Each HD-40LSH Tom Paxton Signature Edition guitar bears an interior label personally signed by Tom Paxton and Martin Chairman C.F. Martin IV, and is numbered in sequence with the edition total. Left-handed instruments can be ordered at no additional charge. Factory-installed electronics are available for an additional cost.

Orders for the HD-40LSH Tom Paxton Signature Edition will be accepted for a limited time, after which the total number of guitars and the names of participating Martin dealers will be posted on the Martin web site at: www.martinguitar.com.
Above, the headstock of the HD-40LSH Tom Paxton Signature Edition guitar features Tom’s stylized likeness. The inlay evolved from a classic photo of Tom wearing his customary Enfield hat (below) and is executed in mother of pearl against an ebony background. At right is a detail of the bearclaw spruce soundboard with the Clarence White inspired large soundhole. In 1964, Tom Paxton christened the brand new Sycamore Street Martin factory with a special performance (below right) to a crowd of employees and Nazareth town folk on the back loading platform.
Tom Petty and Dhani Harrison performed a moving tribute to inductee George Harrison at the 19th Annual Rock & Roll Hall of Fame Induction Ceremonies held on March 15, 2004 at the Waldorf Astoria Hotel in New York City. Tom is playing his Signature Edition 12-string prototype, and Dhani is playing rhythm on Tom’s 6-string Edition prototype.


John Mayer belts it out on tour in Bozeman, Montana, with his OM-28JM Signature Edition.
Eric Johnson performed with his MC-40EJ Martin Signature guitar at Acoustic Guitar Magazine’s Acoustic Cafe held during the winter NAMM Show in Anaheim, CA.

Don McLean on tour with his pride and joy “American Pie” D-40DM Martin Signature edition guitar.

Leon Redbone (above) stopped in at the Martin factory for one of his famous visits. A very special 7-string custom for Roger McGuinn had just been strung up, and Leon was the first to play it. McGuinn (right) has been touring with the guitar ever since and loves the powerful tonal dynamic of the extra G-string.
Imagine a guitar cooperatively conceived by a British musical icon and a Japanese trendsetter, built by America's most respected guitar company and affectionately given an Italian name. Now stop imagining and start anticipating the new Martin Eric Clapton/Hiroshi Fujiwara Bellezza Nera, among the most stunning looking and sounding limited editions in Martin history.

A legendary musician and performer for more than 40 years, Eric Clapton needs no introduction. Hiroshi Fujiwara stands as one of modern Japan's most important cultural figures, a visionary DJ responsible for creating and introducing cutting-edge “club” music and fashions to Tokyo in the 1990s. The two became fast friends while working together on music projects.

During one of Clapton’s visits to Japan, he and Fujiwara began envisioning a custom acoustic guitar that blended the best in design and sound. Over time, the ideas were fleshed out and – with Martin’s Dick Boak facilitating the project – C.F. Martin built eight of these unique custom guitars. One can be seen on the cover of Clapton’s recent album dedicated to the music of blues great Robert Johnson, “Me and Mr. Johnson,” while another appears on the cover of Dick Boak’s recent book, “Martin Guitar Masterpieces.” The completed guitars were so breathtaking that Eric, Hiroshi and Martin agreed to collaborate on a limited edition version for the public.

At Eric Clapton’s suggestion, the model is named in Italian, the language of music – “Bellezza” meaning beautiful and “Nera” meaning black. The polished black gloss finished body, neck and headplate, and matching African black ebony fingerboard and bridge on this 14-fret 000 – Clapton’s favorite Martin model – provides an eye-catching “canvas” for some beautiful yet tasteful inlays and appointments.

The unique custom rosette that adorns the soundhole features a center ring of Martin’s traditional small mother of pearl slotted square inlays set against a black background. Fine pattern herringbone wood inlay encircles the top, and herringbone purfling bisects the back. Grained ivoroid body binding is accented by black/white/black fine line purfling on the sides and back. The neck and headstock are similarly bound with grained ivoroid, within which mitered fine line inlays – black/white on the neck, black/white/black on the headstock – add an extra measure of visual drama. The grained ivoroid heelcap and end piece sport matching black/white/black line inlays.

The polished headplate provides an elegant backdrop for Martin’s elaborate “alternative torch” inlay, a design originally created on one of the first Martin 00-45s in 1902, inlaid here in colorful abalone pearl. This pattern was revived for the Eric Clapton 000-42EC Signature Edition issued in 2000. Equally striking are the specially-made sterling silver-plated Schaller tuners with sterling silver-plated buttons. The fingerboard features Martin’s Style 45 snowflake inlays, with “Bellezza Nera” inlaid in script above the last fret in mother of pearl. Black ebony bridge pins and end pin are topped with abalone pearl dots. To allow its elegance to shine unrestrained, this guitar comes without a pickguard.

Within the Bellezza Nera’s handsome appointments lies a tone monster crafted in the Martin tradition. Premium solid tonewoods are featured throughout. The top is Italian alpine spruce, (the same tone wood used by Antonio Stradivari) revered for its rich, powerful tone. Scalloped 5/16” top braces contribute crispness and balance. The back and sides are crafted from East Indian rosewood, which provides both strong projection and roundness to the tonal palette. The modified V-shaped neck measures a comfortable 1 3/4” at the nut. Carved from solid genuine mahogany, the neck features Martin’s diamond volute at the base of the headstock. The nut and compensated saddle are made from genuine bone to assure impressive string-to-string definition.

Each Bellezza Nera includes a special black interior label personally signed by Eric Clapton, Hiroshi Fujiwara, Martin Artist Relations head Dick Boak and Martin Chairman C.F. Martin IV. In keeping with the black theme, this guitar comes with a special Geib™ style hardshell case with black plush interior and black anodized hardware. C.F. Martin dealers and distributors will be accepting orders for the Eric Clapton/Hiroshi Fujiwara Bellezza Nera Limited Edition for a limited period concluding on September 27th, 2004. After the order period closes, the size of the edition and the names of participating Martin dealers will be posted on the Martin website, www.martinguitar.com.
Me and Mr. Johnson

Returning once again to his blues roots, Eric Clapton’s latest CD is a full band tribute to Eric’s lifelong idol and influence, Robert Johnson. Appropriate to the introduction of the Bellezza Nera Edition, renowned British artist Peter Blake (of Sgt. Pepper album cover fame) created a painting for the CD jacket that depicts Clapton holding his prized black custom Martin, one of eight special instruments made in collaboration with Eric’s innovative friend from Japan, Hiroshi Fujiwara (at right). These legendary blues essentials are spontaneously executed with a truly refined Clapton touch. Joined by an all-star cast that includes Billy Preston, Steve Gadd, Nathan East, Doyle Bramhall, Jim Keltner, and Andy Fairweather Low, this recording is peppered with mainstream gems such as “Come On In My Kitchen” and “Love In Vain” as well as some more obscure Johnson treasures.

Reincarnation

Eric Clapton was recently interviewed in Vanity Fair magazine to promote his new Me And Mr. Johnson CD release. During the interview, he was asked: “If you could choose what to come back as, what would it be?” His answer: “A Martin OM-45.”

“I’ve received the guitar and love it. I want to congratulate you and your crew for absolutely excelling yourselves yet again! I suggest we consider sharing a version of this with the public. Once again, congratulations and thanks.”

eric c.
Elegant Additions & Enhancements To Martin Full Gloss Acoustics

NEW ! Marquis Series
Following in the spirit and success of the Golden Era® series, C. F. Martin proudly introduces the Marquis Series.

The first models in the series, the D-28 Marquis and D-28 Marquis Sunburst boast appointments that mirror Martin’s herringbone D-28GE Golden Era® model, with the exception that the Brazilian rosewood sides, back and headplate used on the Golden Era® models are being replaced with select East Indian rosewood.

In keeping with vintage pre-war Style 28 specifications, both models continue to utilize Adirondack red spruce for the soundboards and internal bracing.

The D-28 Marquis Sunburst features a 1935 style sunburst finish.

NEW ! Aura Cutaways
The DC-Aura is a Dreadnought cutaway with the highly acclaimed Fishman/Martin Aura™ Onboard System (see opposite page for description). The DC-AURA features solid East Indian rosewood back and sides with a gloss lacquer finish, Style 41 top inlay, hexagon outline fingerboard and bridge inlays, an ebony headplate with the Martin script logo inlaid in mother of pearl, and Gotoh gold enclosed tuners with large ebony buttons.

The OMC-Aura (not shown) offers identical appointments in an Orchestra Model cutaway configuration.

NEW !
HD-28VE With Fishman Ellipse™ System
HD-28VE

Marquis Series

Following in the spirit and success of the Golden Era® series, C. F. Martin proudly introduces the Marquis Series.

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NEW ! Vintage Acoustic Electrics
Martin is proud to introduce two new Vintage Series acoustic electric models highlighting Fishman’s new Ellipse Blend™ onboard electronics system (see opposite page for full description).

The HD28VE and D18VE (not shown) match their Vintage Series counterparts and enable complete onboard equalization without intrusive modification to the instrument.
A task team at Martin was formed to create a guitar inspired by traditional American “tattoo” art, hence the Limited Edition Tattoo model that features “tawny satinwood” HPL back and sides, an HPL top with imprinted graphics created by Robert Armstrong, and a natural Stratabond™ neck. Each guitar is furnished with a special dark brown leatherette case with traditionally embossed faux leather tooling and mauve plush interior. In addition, a tattoo themed strap specially made by Jodi Head Custom Guitar Straps accompanies each instrument.
Vintage Appointments & Elegant Abalone
Featured On Martin’s New Model Offerings

**000-42 Auditorium**

Identical in specification to the popular D-42, this new addition to Martin’s Standard Series stock models provides an elegant high-end short-scaled instrument that is equally ideal for expressive blues or fingerstyle playing in either a performance or recording setting. The **000-42** includes an ebony fingerboard inlaid with the Style 41 snowflake pattern, a Style 45 headstock inlaid with C. F. Martin block letters, vintage-styled gold butterbean tuners, and Style 42 abalone inlaid top bordering. The tone is enhanced with scalloped bracing, and the neck features Martin’s modified V-shape.

**J-41 Special**

Following the successful introduction of the **D-41 Special**, Martin is proud to introduce a matching **J-41 Special** featuring many vintage styled enhancements. Traditional Style 41 abalone hexagons have been upgraded to vintage Style 45 snowflakes. Other enhancements include forward shifted bracing, grained ivoroid trim, gold butterbean tuning machines, 1 3/4” neck width, a “through” saddle ebony bridge, and a polished gloss lacquered body with aging toner on the soundboard. Combined with the D-41’s typically elegant abalone rosette and top inlay, this new version is truly Special!

**OM-42QM2 Quilted Maple NAMM Show Special**

This Quilted Maple OM-42 is limited to orders received from Martin dealers in attendance at the Nashville 2004 NAMM show only, and no more than 30 guitars will be offered. Features include a premium Italian alpine spruce top, a Stauffer-style pointed pyramid bridge, a Style 45 flowerpot inlaid into an ebony headplate, Martin “M” inlaid ebony tuning machine knobs, Style 45 snowflake fingerboard inlays, grained ivoroid bindings with Style 42 abalone top inlay, and exquisite highly figured quilted maple back and sides toned with a hand-applied “British tan” stain reminiscent of violin finishes.
New Little Martins

The newest addition to Martin’s very popular line of Little Martin travel guitars is the LX1 (above) which features a solid spruce top with mahogany-grained high pressure laminate (HPL) back, sides and headplate. The fingerboard and bridge are crafted from solid striped ebony, and the neck is carved from rust-colored Stratabond®, an extremely strong wooden multi-laminate that resembles piano pinblock.

Like its koa grained counterpart at left, the DCX1RE is equipped with a Fishman® Classic IV Sonicore onboard electronics system. This acoustic electric solid top cutaway provides an attractive, roadworthy and affordable guitar with great tone.

Spruce Tops For New X Series & Little Martins

DCX1KE
Cutaway Koa Grained HPL With Solid Spruce Top And Onboard Electronics

The response to the mahogany grained DCX1E has been so positive that Martin is introducing a Hawaiian koa wood-grained HPL model to the X Series line of stock model Martin guitars. The DCX1KE (above) is a full-sized Dreadnought Cutaway with a book-matched solid spruce top and koa-grained high-pressure laminate (HPL) back, sides and headplate. The fingerboard and bridge are crafted from solid striped ebony, and the neck is shaped from naturally colored Stratabond®. Equipped with a Fishman® Classic IV Sonicore onboard electronics system, this model provides the working musician with an affordably priced stage or studio instrument.

DCX1RE
Cutaway Rosewood HPL With Solid Spruce Top And Onboard Electronics

The DCX1RE (above) is a full-sized Dreadnought Cutaway with a book-matched solid spruce top and rosewood-grained high-pressure laminate (HPL) back, sides and headplate. The fingerboard and bridge are crafted from solid striped ebony, and the neck is shaped from rust-colored Stratabond®, an extremely strong wooden multi-laminate that resembles piano pinblock.

Like its koa grained counterpart at left, the DCX1RE is equipped with a Fishman® Classic IV Sonicore onboard electronics system. This acoustic electric solid top cutaway provides an attractive, roadworthy and affordable guitar with great tone.

DCX1RE
Cutaway Rosewood HPL With Solid Spruce Top And Onboard Electronics

New Little Martins

The newest addition to Martin’s very popular line of Little Martin travel guitars is the LX1 (above) which features a solid spruce top with mahogany-grained high pressure laminate (HPL) back, sides and headplate. The fingerboard and bridge are crafted from black Micarta® and the neck is carved from rust-colored Stratabond®.

The LX1E offers the same features as the LX1 with the inclusion of Fishman Mini Q Electronics to provide excellent sound reinforcement capability.

The tone of the standard LXM Little Martin has been praised for its even balance. These new models provide the tonal woodiness and projection that comes naturally with solid spruce.
Neil Young & Crazy Horse • Greendale
Greendale is a brilliant extension to a legendary career. A theatrical approach to a concept album, Young tells the story of a small California town and its struggle with modern day morality and survival of tragedy. His solo acoustic ballads and rockin’ band songs are sure to become Neil Young classics. This innovative CD/DVD introduces ideas through a character-based protest from the depth of Neil’s conscience.

Roger McGuinn • Limited Edition
Reminiscent of yesteryear with a brand new kick, Roger McGuinn gives us “Pho-Kop,” a mixture of Folk and Hip Hop. His previous CD, Folk Den, focused more on traditional music. With Limited Edition, Roger has infused his legendary 12-string sound to yield this cohesive effort that captures the tonal essence of the more memorable Byrds recordings.

Mason Jennings • Use Your Voice
Mason Jennings has been a long time Martin player and a songwriter who we’ve been following closely. His latest studio release proves it has been all worthwhile. These are classic songs from a contemporary poet. This disc argues the point, “They just don’t write ‘em like they used to.” An intimate reflection of unintentional hooks and acoustic energy that only Mason and his Martin could produce.

Brett Dennen
Songwriter and co-director for the successful children’s camp The Mosaic Project (right), Brett offers this memorable adult/teen oriented album filled with positive messages and guidance for a broken world. Brett’s voice and 000-16GT (which bears his painted message, PEACE) instantly draw the listener in. With a heartfelt passion for his craft, Brett is an artist we should not only hear, but listen to.

George Sabolick • Groovin’ Strings
A member on the Martin Clinician roster, George puts his vast collection of Martin guitars to work on this stellar fingerstyle CD. Combining classy cover arrangements with energetic originals, Groovin’ Strings lives up to its name. Silhouetted on the cover, George stands with his prized OMC-18V Laurence Juber Signature model. For more information, visit George on the web: www.georgesabolick.com.
Cathy Fink & Marci Marxer • Bon Appétit!  This Grammy Award winning children’s album not only teaches young people about healthy habits and good hygiene, but is jam packed with hot riffs and bouncy rhythms that parents alike will love. Brought to you by these two longtime Martin enthusiasts, Bon Appetit! helps to promote a healthier earth and combat malnutrition on a global scale. Visit www.micronutrient.org.

Cassandra Wilson • Glamoured Smooth and mellow tones flow from this head bobbing album of jazzy gems. Opening with a memorable version of Sting’s Fragile, Glamoured holds the mood throughout its well chosen cover arrangements and originals. Joined by producer/co-writer Fabrizio Sotti on his Martin guitars, Cassandra captures an essence that can be appreciated by all genres that she so tastefully crosses into.

Dan Bern • New American Language From the high energy of “Alaska Highway” to the sweet acoustic sizzle of “God Said No”, Dan Bern continues to excite the music world and bewilder the critics as one of today’s best songwriters. It is hard to fathom how such a deeply philosophical approach has attracted such pop appeal. Dan’s music is hopeful, reflective and surely sarcastic, yet funny and dead serious at the same time – a must for Dylan fans.

Brett Dennen • The Mosaic Project This collection of meaningful songs is a powerful tool in teaching children to tolerate diversity and live in peace. “Fighting is Not the Solution,” “Dance and Be Free,” and “Don’t Laugh at Me” are just a few of the tracks that easily become pop hits with their empowering lyrics. Brett’s involvement with the Mosaic Project camp creates indelible memories for children and adults alike. www.mosaicproject.org.

Kelly Lancaster • High Lonesome Gypsy From the fast and furious feel of old time Bluegrass to the timeless tones of the traditional arrangements, this recording came to life using an impressive collection of old and new Martin guitars. Most tracks are spontaneously recorded in one or two takes. Kelly is joined by the award winning Vladimir Kotsiouruba, Randy Powell, and Brian Wunder. More info at: www.highlonesomegypsy.com.

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Ruth Downes and Kelly Lancaster became friends in 2002 and soon discovered that they both own and cherish matching 00-21 Martins. Upon closer inspection, they realized that their guitars were both built in the same batch in 1929 with very close serial numbers (#38732 and #38751). They like to imagine their guitars sitting on a Martin workbench together in 1929, only to be reunited 75 years later! Kelly has been reducing the odds of such coincidences by expanding his repertoire of Martin instruments. On his High Lonesome Gypsy CD (reviewed at left), he plays five Martin guitars: a 1935 D-18, a 1940 00-40H, an HD-28Lsv, and two more 12-fret 00-21s owned by bandmate Brian Wunder.

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I thank God that I wasn’t born into the world’s most famous accordion family! And though I run the company today, I didn’t actually grow up in the business. When I was young, though, I’d go out to the factory in the summer time and spend time with Grandfather Martin. I’d get to do odd jobs like packing strings or pushing the neck blank falloffs into the bin as they passed through the bandsaw—things that OSHA would never allow today!

One Christmas, when I was about ten or so, I got my first guitar, a nylon string 5-18 Terz guitar. My teacher, learning who I was, tried to steer me into a more formal method. He had me sitting with my foot on a pedestal and my thumb properly placed behind the neck in the classical position, and playing scales. I just wanted to learn some chords and go right into Beatles tunes—it was really very frustrating for me. But later I got the electric guitar—one of the old archtop GT models with the F-holes—and a Fender Twin Reverb, and I could finally make some noise. And of course, the Twin Reverb has become much more valuable than that electric Martin will ever be!

I never did become much of a guitar player—or builder, for that matter. One year at camp, the shop class instructor told me it was time for me to move beyond Popsicle sticks and build a more significant project. So I contacted my dad and my grandfather and told them that I wanted to build a guitar, and I asked them to send me a guitar kit. And they said, “What do you mean, a guitar kit?” I said, “You know, just put all the pieces in a box and send them to me.” At that time, guitar kits as such didn’t really exist. Fortunately, though, my request came at a time when the company had been doing some research and development on some unusual body shapes. So what they ended up sending me were the parts and a blueprint for a trapezoidal-shaped guitar. The body wasn’t quite square, but trapezoidal, where the upper bout is narrower than the lower bout, but the sides are straight. They figured I wouldn’t be able to bend the sides, so they’d send me this thing that they kind of threw together.

So with the guidance of the camp counselor, this project became my first attempt at building a guitar. And we were really on our own. There was no book, no instructions, just a bunch of parts and a big blueprint thrown into a box.

Now, not having grown up in the business and not having spent a lot of time in the shop, I didn’t realize that you had to assemble the rim first. So I cut the top and back to what I thought was the appropriate dimension and then tried to build the sides around it. What a nightmare—that’s not how you build an acoustic guitar! You build the rim first, and then you glue on an oversize back and top, and trim it. When it was all said and done, there was an awful lot of wood filler that had to go where there should have been a nice joint with the wood. And then that whole thing of fitting a dovetail neck to the body was something that not even my counselor knew how to do.

It’s an amazing thing that the guitar got built, but it did, and I still have it. I took it to a luthier’s convention several years ago, where I told the story and played it. People find it quite charming. Thank goodness it’s a nylon string guitar; the action isn’t as critical. And because it is trapezoidal, it’s very much like an Ovation in that it keeps sliding off your leg.

Back in the ‘60s, the company did make a few production units of that design. Of course, those were well-made! The guitar I built was really an embarrassment. The closer you got to it—oh my God! It was apparent that this kid didn’t know what he was doing. But it gave me a taste. And it really taught me that if I was going to get involved in this business, I’d better do my homework.

One year I went to Nazareth for the entire summer. And it was at that point I sat down with my grandfather and told him that I wanted to build a real guitar. He suggested a 12-fret Dreadnought, “Because,” he said, “if you want the best sounding guitar, that’s what you should build.”

So there I was, out in the plant with all the parts and specs, and ready to build my first real Martin guitar. But what happened was I would get to a particular workstation, and the
individual doing that job would take my part and demonstrate on that part how the job was done. And it was done perfectly. And then he would give me some reject D-18 parts and say, “Okay, now you try it.” And I’d screw them up. And then I would take my perfect part to the next workstation, where that person would demonstrate the operation on my part, and give it back to me and let me practice on reject material. When it was done, the stinking guitar was perfect. But I did very little of the work. I watched them assemble it, too, because none of the craftsperson wanted to be the one who passed bad work onto the next person, knowing that I would be the one who had done the bad work. It was pretty hilarious. It was not the guitar I built, but rather, the guitar I watched being built. But I really did learn quite a lot from that experience. My brother has that guitar now. In fact, he learned to play on that guitar.

In the fall of that year, I went out to UCLA, where I didn’t do particularly well; I really didn’t like it out there. I called my mom to tell her I was coming home. When she asked about my plans, I told her I was going to work in the guitar factory. She said, “You’re gonna what?! You’re not going to go back to college?” I said, “Not right now. I’m going to work in the guitar factory.”

So I went out in the plant and worked on the bench. And I could put ribbon on with the best of them. But when it came to fitting necks, I’ll be the first to admit that I never really quite got it. And hand-bending sides, I never quite got that either. But some of those simpler tasks I could do. And through that experience, I learned to speak the guitarmaker’s language. And it gave me an understanding of what it’s like to work in a shop with people who have said to themselves, “I’m willing to do this for a living, knowing that I’m never going to build a whole guitar. But I also know that I’m working for a company that really prides itself on its quality.” And the more I did that, the more I said to myself, “I’m going to run this business, not work on a bench.” So I ended up going back to college, to Boston University, and I got a degree in management. When I came back, not only could I talk about guitar construction; I could talk about business.

“What better product for a liberal Democrat to be intimately involved with than the guitar!”

My grandfather was more of a guitar builder than my father. My grandfather played, and he knew and could talk guitar construction. My father was more of a businessman. If you were to sit down with my dad and talk X bracing, he would very quickly just glaze over and space out. But running a business and growing it and maintaining the quality—that he understood. So it was a good thing that they were both here at the same time. They represented the best of both worlds to me. I learned everything about guitars from my grandfather, and what I learned from my father was, “This is a business. We have to treat it like a business. It’s not a hobby; it has to make money. And if it doesn’t make money in a sustainable manner, someday it will go away.”

Unfortunately, I also got to see my father make some pretty significant mistakes; there were some bad acquisitions along the way. When he bought the Darco String Company, he should have quit right there. That was a brilliant move. But then he bought Fibes Drums, Vega Banjos, and Levin, a Swedish guitar company. We had to divest ourselves of all three after horrific losses. But, Darco remains our second-most important product line. The nice thing about strings is that they need to be replaced. And while people may eventually buy more than one guitar, they’re going to be buying strings for the rest of their lives.

And so now, the company is moving into a new generation, and a new millennium, and with that, we face new concerns—especially as guitar makers. But, I just can’t imagine being anywhere else. What better product for a liberal Democrat to be intimately involved with than the guitar! I so identify with Woody Guthrie. I don’t know what I would have done had my family’s name been Winchester or Beretta! And the characters that I’ve met and worked with over the years are just precious. It’s an industry full of characters. And it’s not always about the money. The money helps, but this is an industry where the money is almost always secondary to the more personal and emotional attachments for the people who play, make, and sell the guitar. That’s really what’s behind it all.

“Between The Strings” is packed with interesting guitars stories. It is available at booksellers nationwide, or on the web at www.johnaugustmusic.com.
This great photograph was taken at the Martin display during last year’s Philadelphia Folk Festival, one of the oldest continually running music festivals in America. Don’t miss this year’s festival scheduled for Friday, August 27 through Sunday, August 29, 2004, in Schwenksville, PA, about a half hour north of Philadelphia... and enter the raffle to win a Martin HD-28V!

INTRODUCING...

Martin SP® Fingerstyle and Martin SP Marquis® acoustic guitar strings. Like all Martin SP strings, these new sets are designed for extended longevity and excellent tone.

Martin SP Fingerstyle strings utilize an electro-plated brass core wire with high tensile strength providing exceptional durability, precise tuning, and resistance to string breakage. Martin SP Fingerstyle sets employ a thinner diameter core wire yielding more string flexibility and expressiveness for the fingerstyle player.

The new SP Marquis strings blend specifications from Martin’s popular SP and Marquis brands. Sharing the characteristics of existing SP sets, SP Marquis strings incorporate high tensile strength electro-plated brass core wire that resists breakage and enables precise tuning. Hand-silked wrapping at the ball end of the string provides tighter seating of the string at the bridge pin, and reduces wear on bridges and bridge plates.

SP Fingerstyle and SP Marquis string sets will be available in Light and Medium gauges and will be offered in both Phosphor Bronze and 80/20 Bronze styles.
My Daddy’s Old Guitar

It was snowing on that winter’s eve in 1963
the first time he took that case and opened it for me,
in the backseat of some Chevrolet or maybe GMC.
I ran my hands across the strings and he promised it to me.

I was maybe 3 or 4 years old but I remember to this day
the air was filled with magic sounds as he began to play.
I still recall daydreaming how wonderful it would be
if I could learn to play like him, he promised it to me.

It was around about the springtime of 1972
he was off to the marketplace to run an errand there or two.
He put the guitar in the corner, his method tried and true,
he said don’t mess around with that old guitar,
no matter what you do.

It’s true I am a Waller – my daddy’s first born son.
I can do a thing or two but listening wasn’t one.
As soon as he was down the driveway,
he knew where that guitar would be,
passing down those magic sounds he promised to me.

It has come to mean so much
this old herringbone deluxe.
The old Dreadnought that sparked the flame.
My Daddy’s Old Guitar.
It was cold that night in Gordonsville, the Christmas of ‘02.
Many friends had gathered around when my daddy called to me,
as he reached inside that guitar case he gently set it free.
He said son, “You guard it with you life”.
Then he passed it on to me.

40 years have come and gone since that night in ‘63,
if anything could mean so much I can’t imagine what it would be.
As I was traveling down the highway, headed east on 33,
I bowed my head and a teardrop fell..... he’d passed it on to me.

It has come to mean so much, that old herringbone deluxe.
The old Dreadnought that sparked the flame.
My Daddy’s Old Guitar.
I am the keeper of the sacred flame. My Daddy’s Old Guitar....

Written and recorded by David Randall Waller ©2003
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Buddy Guy

While hanging out with John Mayer, blues legend Buddy Guy tried John’s Signature model and soon picked up a J-40 Martin which he has been playing during his more intimate opening portion of his current tour. During his “unplugged” set, he shares colorful stories about his early years with blues greats like Muddy Waters and Willie Dixon.
MARTIN STORIES
We’d love to hear your Martin stories!
Send your photos and stories to:
The Sounding Board, P. O. Box 329, Nazareth PA 18064

The evening prior to the Honolulu Marathon in December of 2003, Randall Rattray was jamming on the street and one of the fellow street musicians made the suggestion that he take his Backpacker® along for the marathon. It occurred to Randall that this might be a first, so it was a definite “go.” The spectators along the route cheered him on and appeared to be quite amused though we’re not sure whether the instrument had any impact on his ranking at the finish line!

Josh Archie Roberts is a sergeant with the 12th Aviation Brigade of Company F, 106th Aviation Battalion. In the above photo, he’s playing his LXM while sitting atop a Chinook helicopter in northern Iraq near Balad, north of Baghdad.

CORRECTION
In our previous issue (Volume #17) we inadvertently mixed up our photographs. The photo at right was sent in by Second Lieutenant Dave Swaintek, not Sgt. Kevin Lawson as we had indicated. He wrote to tell us that although he misses his SPD-16M back home, his Martin Backpacker® has kept his soldiers entertained and allowed a great escape from the stress of a deployment and war in Kuwait and Iraq. On a few occasions, the Backpacker has been mistaken for a sniper rifle while in the case and slung on his back. In spite of that small problem, the troops love it and it keeps Dave’s fingers agile. At right is a picture of Dave’s Backpacker being played in his tent in Kuwait.
**Bringing It All Back Home**

Ben Roth lives close enough to the Martin factory to smell the rosewood. There must be something inspirational about the proximity because he’s been enthralled with guitars through all of his “early” years. Now he’s graduating from high school. His uncle Kevin Diehl (a final inspector at Martin) bought him a Backpacker®. He took it with him to the Top Of The Town in Arlington, VA, that overlooks virtually all of the landmarks in Washington D.C. To top that off, his family decided to commemorate his graduation and 18th birthday with a Martin Vintage Series OM-28V, a gift that will have meaning for many decades to come.

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**Skipping Stones**

Terry Gann, a long-standing Martin fan, played in the band The Bountymen in his home town of Greenbriar, Tennessee. The Bountymen played covers of traditional folk music like The Kingston Trio and Gordon Lightfoot as well as traditional bluegrass tunes. Terry also had some success writing songs for The Oak Ridge Boys, Lester Flatt, and The Nashville Grass.

Terry is shown here with his Backpacker® at the Franklin Canyon reservoir in the hills outside of Hollywood. This was the location of “Myers Lake” on The Andy Griffith Show – the spot where Opie skipped a stone into the lake. Myers Lake was also the site of many picnics and escapades on the show. Yes, he’s playing Andy’s theme song; and though it would have sounded better on the Andy Griffith Signature Edition D-18, isn’t that what Backpackers are all about!

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**Pickin Daddy’s Guitar**

Adam Phelps is the proud owner of a Martin D-15 that he bought in 2002. He sent us this photo of his four year old son running through the chord progressions. It’s a pretty good Dad that entrusts his Martin to the next generation, but you can be sure that Dad is close at hand. Adam says his son is doing pretty well for his age with the guitar. It won’t be long before “somebody” will need their own.
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