C. F. MARTIN & CO. HONORS MULTI-TALENTED JIMMY BUFFETT WITH SIGNATURE EDITION

C.F. Martin & Co., in collaboration with renowned Gulf Coast singer/songwriter Jimmy Buffett, is proud to announce the HD-18JB Limited Edition Signature Model guitar. In honor of Buffett’s classic hit “Margaritaville,” and the subsequently famous Margaritaville Store & Cafe located at 424 Fleming Street in Key West, Florida, just 424 of these guitars will be made. Guitar enthusiasts (as well as Parrotheads) can purchase a HD-18JB from authorized Martin dealers throughout the world.

The HD-18JB Jimmy Buffett Limited Edition Signature Model derives its inspiration from Martin’s legendary HD-28 “Herringbone” Dreadnought guitar. The back and sides of the HD-18JB are crafted from solid genuine mahogany instead of East Indian rosewood that normally appears on herringbone models. The result is an instrument with power, brilliance, clarity and punch. These tonal characteristics, personally specified by Buffett, a long time Martin collector and player, make this model perfectly suited for both stage performance and studio recording. Inspired by his fondness for the Florida Keys, Buffett chose a graceful windswept palm tree for the headstock of his signature model. The palm leaves are delicately cut with Paua shell. Green rippled abalone pearl is used for the trunk, and the cluster of five coconuts is cut from brown lip mother of pearl. The assembled palm tree inlay is tastefully nested below the Martin gold foil logo.

(Continued on page 6)

C. F. MARTIN & CO. PROUDLY INTRODUCES FIRST CERTIFIED WOOD ACOUSTIC GUITAR MODEL

C. F. Martin & Co. is proud to announce the introduction of the SWD Certified Wood guitar, the first certified wood model ever offered by Martin. This guitar represents the culmination of years of research, prototyping, testing, and vendor development.

The SWD model is already being received with tremendous enthusiasm in the marketplace. The combination of great tone, attractive appointments, extremely good value, and positive environmental impact, has yielded hundreds of orders for the model within weeks of its introduction.

73% of the woods utilized in the construction of the SWD Certified Wood model are harvested from well-managed forests independently certified by The Rainforest Alliance’s “SmartWood” program and Scientific Certification Systems, which both operate in accordance with the rules of the industry’s governing body, The Forest Stewardship Council (FSC). These woods originate from certified forests that have been independently evaluated to ensure that they meet internationally recognized environmental, social and economic standards.

(Continued on page 7)
Dear Martin enthusiasts,

Outward Bound! That's what my co-workers and I are doing in the photo below. Once a year, I have the wonderful opportunity of sharing an Outward Bound experiential learning expedition with a diverse group of Martin employees. We spend a week learning to be better team players and we get to know and trust each other more. The results of this (and the other training we participate in) help us to maintain our remarkable heritage, while successfully growing the business. In fact, last year we made more guitars than we ever have in the 165 year history of our company. And that's without sacrificing the quality or raising the price!

So many things are new that I'm not sure where to begin. We've decided to allocate some of our limited supply of pre-CITES Certified Brazilian rosewood to commemorate the 75th Birthday Anniversary of legendary Hank Williams, Sr. and his famous Martin D-28.

The multi-talented Jimmy Buffett, a devoted Martin collector and player, has collaborated with us to produce the striking HD-18JB, complete with a shimmering palm tree inlay in various shades of pearl.

And we are extremely pleased to introduce the Joan Baez 0-45JB, a close replica of the stage guitar she has used throughout her incredible career. This is the first artist signature model collaboration to be offered in conjunction with our highly esteemed and ongoing Women & Music Program.

Our own craftspeople formed a task team that created a unique Employee model constructed of Ovangkol which certainly stretches our design horizons. It’s a beautiful instrument that strays from tradition.

I’m particularly excited about our certified wood guitar. No one knows whether traditional tonewoods will be available in the quantities needed for the foreseeable future. We have been committed to the development of suitable alternatives. The best of these woods look great, sound great, work well, and are durable. When we find materials with these qualities from sustainable and certified sources, we need to embrace them. After several years of investigation, discussion, experimentation and design, our first certified alternative wood Martin guitar will be available for your scrutiny and enjoyment.

To top it all off, our innovative partnership with Tom Humphrey continues to expand with the exciting and bold introduction of the Sting signature model CMHS classical guitar.

We’ve experienced tremendous success in the last few years. We believe we are making the best guitars we have ever made. As the people who use our products, you play a vital role in our success. Thanks for your support, but thanks also for your letters, your input, and your comments. That’s what really keeps us on our toes!

Sincerely,

C. F. Martin IV
Chairman & CEO, The Martin Guitar Company
BOOK OF THE YEAR

Dear Mr. Martin,

I wanted to be the first to notify you and your fellow employees at Martin that the editors of Vintage Guitar magazine have selected the new book *Martin Guitars: An Illustrated Celebration Of America’s Premier Guitarmaker* as our 1997 Book Of The Year. I will notify the authors and the folks at Rodale Press. Everyone involved should be very proud. Its a terrific book.

My sincere congratulations,

Eric C. Shoaf, Editor

Vintage Guitar Magazine

LIFE’S A BEACH

Dear Mr. Martin,

My wife and I took a tour through your guitar making facility last month with our good friend, David Somers, who happens to be the owner of one of your oldest Martin dealerships in Virginia. We appreciated the time you spent with us and we really loved the tour.

Martin guitars are a big part of our family life. In addition to my sizable collection of Martin guitars, I own a Mooney airplane and my son Derek and I often practice our guitar licks on our Martin Backpackers. Note the photo of me (above) on one of our Gulf Coast beach excursions relaxing and strumming, cigar in mouth.

In order to display all of my Martin Limited Edition instruments, which include a 000-28EC Eric Clapton Signature model, a D-35 30th Anniversary model, a D-40FW Figured Walnut model, an HD-40MS Marty Stuart Signature model, an MTV-1 Unplugged model, and many others, I am currently constructing a music room at our home, which will have a 190 cubic foot humidor. I can’t wait to send you a picture of that when its complete!

Your Martin enthusiast,

Joe Gantt

Lynchburg, Virginia

OLD CAN BE GREAT - NEW MIGHT BE BETTER

Dear Mr. Martin,

I have been a proud Martin owner for several years. I own a 1975 D-28 and a 1987 HD-28. I bought each one from the original owners. As you can tell, I love the sound of Martin rosewood Dreadnought guitars, especially ones with some age to them. In fact, I have always thought that buying older Martins was the way to go.

Recently, I was in a local music store looking at new Martins (one of my favorite pastimes) and the salesman assisting me showed me one of the new D-18VM Vintage Series models.

Well after a few strums I could tell that I was playing a special guitar! I absolutely could not believe my ears. Every strum yielded a full, rich, clear tone—with remarkable volume. Individually picked notes rang out like bells. I have rarely heard a guitar sound so good—especially a brand new one! Needless to say, the longer I played, the more I fell in love with the guitar, and the more I realized that I had to own it. I just want you to know that I am totally thrilled with my new D-18VM. It is very satisfying to finally own a new Martin. And it is incredible to me that my first new Martin is a mahogany Dreadnought after being such a die hard rosewood fan. I read somewhere recently that the new Martin guitars being made are better than ever. I’m a believer!

Sincerely,

Doug Burgoyne
Newport News, Virginia

We’d Love To Hear From You. Send Your Letters To:

Your Name
Address
City, State, Zip
Country

Dear Mr. Martin
C. F. Martin & Co.
P. O. Box 329
Nazareth, PA 18064-0329 USA

KINGSTON INSPIRATION

Dear Mr. Martin,

We were delighted to see the Kingston Trio Limited Edition (set of 3) that you recently introduced. In the early 60s, Eddie Nordin (center with his Martin 0-18T), Phil Poth (right with his Vega long-neck) and I formed a pseudo-folk-group called the Revelers. We openly adored The Kingston Trio and did everything we could to emulate them. We even traveled to San Francisco and auditioned at the “Hungry-I.” With the exception of Phil, however, we were devoid of talent, and although we had a few gigs, nothing much happened with our group. But it was the start of a musical adventure that we are still living.

We somehow survived the 60s, got married in the 70s, became established in the 80s, and now, in the 90s we’re still playing our Martin instruments, and would do the whole thing over again without question!

For what it is worth, each of the Revelers remains passionately devoted to his Martin. Today, Eddie is a famous sculptor and Phil is a major musician among his many other accomplishments. My D-28 has been a faithful companion and friend and we’ve had many, many adventures together. I still strum “her” around campfires and the like for the amusement of a very patient inner circle.

Sincerely,

Chris Todd (at left, with my D-28)
Shoreline, Washington
THE SOUND OF MUSIC IS STILL RESOUNDING FOR ELIZABETH VON TRAPP

Elizabeth Von Trapp is the granddaughter of the legendary Baroness Maria Von Trapp. Her father, Werner Von Trapp, was depicted as “Kurt” in the 1965 movie “The Sound Of Music” about the family’s courageous flight from occupied Austria during the rise of the Third Reich. Elizabeth’s family grew up on a backroad dairy farm in Vermont. Their story, popularized by the Broadway play starring Mary Martin and the subsequent movie featuring Julie Andrews, had a tremendous impact on the entire family. Elizabeth grew up with music surrounding her and she was naturally gifted with a beautiful voice. Early on, she learned to accompany herself on guitar. She performs a broad range of music (from Edelweiss to Kinks) in an equally broad range of locations (from Grand Central Station to Fenway Park). Elizabeth loves her J-40. When she went to purchase an acoustic guitar, she took a blindfold and had her husband hand her different instruments. She listened to dozens of guitars, but she picked her Martin J-40 out of the pack as the one with the most spectacular resonance and clarity. Look for her two CD’s: Wishful Thinking and One Heart, One Mind. She has certainly drawn inspiration from the “old” music in evolving her unique and contemporary folk music style.

C. F. MARTIN & CO. WORKERS AWARDED FOR TEAMWORK, QUALITY AND INNOVATION

Three separate teams of Martin employees walked away with honors at the 5th Annual Quality Valley, USA Awards Presentation & Celebration Of Quality.

Taking the highest award was Martin’s Women & Music Committee (pictured above). This group of 27 employees (80% women) took on the task of developing an ongoing series of guitars (and related projects) that would “successfully educate, encourage, acknowledge, and promote women’s involvement with guitar playing.” The group has introduced two highly successful limited editions to date: the mahogany 00-16DB and the rosewood 00-16DBR. The group is now introducing the Joan Baez 00-45JB, which is the first “Women & Music” Artist’s Signature Edition. The committee was recognized in particular for their “strong use of teamwork.”

Also receiving honors were Martin’s Top & Back Assembly and Pearl Inlay Departments. The Top & Back Department, a team of 12 employees, developed new and ingenious methods of gluing tops and backs to the ribboned sides on Martin guitars. Their work increased both quality and accuracy while decreasing the actual labor for these critical fitting operations. The Pearl Inlay Department, a team of 8 employees, successfully reduced the amount of labor required to inlay the delicate abalone pearl pieces that decorate the soundhole rosette. In the process, they increased the visual beauty of the rosette, while greatly decreasing the environmental impact of abalone shell usage, a resource that is becoming more and more precious.

C. F. Martin & Co. has had a long standing philosophy of utilizing new technologies and tooling, if and only if significant increases in quality can be reaped side by side with time savings. Such efficiencies have enabled Martin to offer new models at very affordable prices while avoiding price increases on existing models.

CONTINUED FROM BACK COVER

The two piece back has the Martin style 45 multi-colored mosaic inlay strip. The carved neck incorporates a modified V-shape with old style elongated diamond and pointed neck heel. The genuine ebony fingerboard is inlaid with the vintage Martin style 45 abalone snowflake inlay pattern. Highly colorful abalone pearl is inlaid around the rosette, as well as the perimeter of the top, sides, and back. Grained ivoroid binding compliments the abalone pearl inlay at all appropriate seams in the vintage 45 style.

Joan Baez’s graceful signature will be delicately inlaid in pearl between the 18th and 19th frets. Each guitar will be personally signed by Joan Baez and by C.F. Martin, IV, Martin’s chairman and CEO with each instrument numbered in sequence (i.e. #1 of 59, #2 of 59, etc.). A portion of the proceeds from the sale of the Joan Baez 0-45JB Limited Edition Guitars will be donated to “Bread & Roses”, a charity established by Joan’s sister, Mimi Farina. “Bread & Roses” is a non-profit organization that brings free live entertainment into hospitals, convalescent homes, prisons, and other places that are less likely to experience entertainment opportunities.

Martin Guitar dealers will take orders for the Joan Baez Signature Models immediately, although the guitars will not begin to be available until the late summer of 1998.

1998 LATE BREAKING SPECIAL EDITIONS

In addition to the four Limited Edition Guitar Models discussed in detail on the front and back covers of this newsletter, Martin is offering several other exciting new models and editions.

C.F. Martin is proud to announce a collaboration with Steinway® Pianos in the supply of specially matched and laminated Macassar “striped” ebony veneers for this year’s striking CEO-2 “CEO’S CHOICE” Limited Edition. Martin CEO Chris Martin has once again selected all of the specifications and appointments for this second series of “CEO’S Choice” Limited Edition guitars.

Specially selected Macassar ebony veneer has been utilized for the back and sides of the CEO-2. This dramatically figured wood is very beautiful, producing an equally resonant tone. The CEO-2 also features an abalone pearl rosette, fine pattern herringbone top trim, scalloped bracing, ebony fingerboard and bridge both inlaid with hollow “hexagon outline” inlays, gold enclosed tuners with ebony buttons, N-20 style black bindings with black white side inlay, tortoise color pickguard, C.F. Martin IV’s signature in pearl above the last fret, an interior label signed by C.F. Martin IV, and a vintage “Tweed” hardshell case.

With the CEO’s Choice Project, Chris’s intent is to create instruments that will deliver great tone, tasteful but elegant ornamentation, and perhaps most importantly, excellent value to the customer. (See detail on Page 8.)

Created by a task team of 12 employees, the EMP-1_EMPLOYEE MODEL is a 000-sized cutaway that pushes the limits of traditional Martin design. Solid ovangkol is used for the sides and the wings of the three piece back, which are contrasted with a rosewood center wedge. The black and red marquetry of the rosette is tastefully repeated throughout the guitar’s design, and an abalone pearl “C.F. Martin & Co.” logo adorns the headstock. (See photos on Page 9.)

The 00-21GE GOLDEN ERA is a faithful recreation of the small bodied slotted head 12-fret Martin instruments that dominated the acoustic guitar market for nearly a century. These tastefully understated guitars are experiencing a resurgence of popularity due to their rich and balanced tone. They combine the optimum raw materials and design with the simplest of appointments. This particular model draws its inspiration from the pre-WW2 era. (See photo on Page 9.)

The CONCEPT “J” CUTAWAY model is perhaps the boldest acoustic guitar design Martin has ever offered. The special finish for this guitar is multi-layered and comprised of microscopic opalescent and metallic particles that produce an incredible holographic surface that changes color when viewed from different angles. This model features solid maple back and sides, a solid spruce scalloped-braced top, rounded unbound body edges, ebony fingerboard and bridge both inlaid with hollow hexagons, a single banded abalone rosette, and pre-installed active electronics. (See detail on Page 8.)

After years of research, C.F. Martin is proud to announce that the company has been certified by the SmartWood Program of The Rainforest Alliance to use woods in guitar production that originate from certified forests that have been independently evaluated to ensure that they meet internationally recognized environmental, social and economic standards. We are especially pleased to introduce the first Martin CERTIFIED WOOD MODEL which makes use of certified cherry for the back, sides, neck and interior blocks, katalox for the fingerboard and bridge, and basswood for the interior lining. Although the top and braces are not certified, they are produced from reclaimed pulp logs. It is our hope that this model will lead to future Certified Wood models, thus helping to insure the responsible use of our valuable wood resources.
Hank Williams, Sr. made nearly all of his popular recordings with his Martin guitar.

“Inspired by his fondness for the Florida Keys, Buffett chose a graceful windswept palm tree for the headstock of his signature model.”

Well received by the guitar playing community, prompting references to the 1990s as Martin’s “Second Golden Era.”

The solid genuine mahogany neck features a modified V-shape with an adjustable rod, an elongated carved diamond on the back of the neck, an old style pointed heel, and a grained ivoroid heel cap. The original genuine ebony fingerboard has been faithfully recreated with Martin’s vintage diamond and square inlay pattern (diamond at fifth fret, two squares at seventh fret, diamond at ninth fret, two squares at 12 fret, diamond at 15th fret). The signature of Hank Williams, Sr. is delicately inlaid between the 19th and 20th frets.

Martin Guitar dealers will take orders for the Jimmy Buffett HD-18JB Limited Edition Guitars immediately, though due to demand for Martin instruments, this edition will not be available in music stores until the late summer of 1998.
A superb songwriter, Williams is remembered for his unique ability to reach people’s souls with honest and simple lyrics and music.

A superb songwriter, Williams is remembered for his unique ability to reach people’s souls with honest and simple lyrics and music. Among his best-known songs are the classics “Take These Chains From My Heart,” “I’m So Lonesome I Could Cry,” “Your Cheatin’ Heart,” “You Win Again,” and “I Can’t Help It.” Williams died January 1, 1953. He has been inducted into both the Country Music and Rock and Roll Halls of Fame.

“Certified cherry is utilized for the back, sides, neck, and interior blocks of the SWD model. Cherry has a warm natural visual beauty, especially when combined with Martin’s traditional dark staining. As a tonewood, cherry yields a strong, projective, and balanced sound, with many of the best attributes of the more traditional guitar woods like rosewood, koa, and mahogany. It is interesting to note that in the 1800’s, cherry was marketed under the trade name of “American mahogany.”

The interior ribbon lining is crafted from certified basswood. Basswood, long prized by woodcarvers for its ability to hold delicate detail, also has a history with musical instrument making, being one of the primary woods of choice for the linings in violins.

The fingerboard and bridge for the SWD model utilize certified “katalox” (pronounced “cat-ah-losh”) a relatively unknown but durable Mexican hardwood with properties quite similar to ebony. Katalox has a dark cocoa brown color, it is relatively devoid of grain lines, and has a very fine texture, making it an excellent choice for both the fingerboard and the bridge.

Certified hard maple is utilized for the bridge support plate on the underside of the top.

Quartersawn Sitka spruce is used for both the soundboard and the internal bracing of the SWD model. The logs from which this wood comes were destined to become pulpwood, for of all things baby diapers, but were reclaimed instead specifically for the SWD guitar project. Although this spruce is not certified, Martin is pursuing certification of spruce through the various vendors that supply guitar tops to the music industry.

More recently, Martin provided assistance to SoundWood, a project of Fauna & Flora International, and The Oxford Forestry Institute at The University Of Oxford in the U.K. in their research of the methods and practices of the trade in rosewood from India.

By undergoing assessment and achieving SmartWood chain-of-custody certification in November 1997, the company has committed itself to the aggressive exploration of the viability of utilizing certified wood sources. It is Martin’s hope that the SWD model and project will serve to educate consumers about some of the environmental issues surrounding wood usage on musical instruments and lead to future Martin Certified Wood models, thus helping to insure the responsible use of our valuable wood resources.
The Joan Baez 0-45JB Signature Edition is a beautifully executed recreation of the vintage 0-45 that Joan has utilized throughout her career. It is also the first artist signature model offered in Martin’s Women & Music Program.

The Jimmy Buffett HD-18JB combines vintage herringbone D-28 appointments with select mahogany back and sides, forward shifted scalloped bracing, abalone rosette, Style 42 snowflakes, and a beautiful headstock inlay.

The D-28HW commemorates the 75th birthday anniversary of legendary performer, Hank Williams, Sr. The appointments of this Brazilian rosewood edition closely match Hank’s original 1944 D-28 (serial # 87422).

The Concept-J Model features an amazing holographic finish that changes colors when viewed from different angles. In addition, the body edges are rounded, and electronics are installed for stage use.

The CEO-2, with specifications personally selected by CEO Chris Martin, features beautiful striped Macassar ebony veneer for the back & sides, plus black bindings, and an ebony fingerboard and bridge.
73% of the wood utilized on the “SWD” Certified Wood model is from well-managed forests independently certified by SmartWood in accordance with the rules of the Forest Stewardship Council.

The 00-21 Golden Era® faithfully recreates the wonderfully full-toned 12-fret vintage Martin small-body size. Having first appeared on an 1874 Martin price list, this model draws its inspiration from the pre-WW2 era.

A team of Martin co-workers designed this first Employee model, the EMP-1, with ovangkol back and sides, a unique wooden rosette, and bold design features not typically seen on traditional Martin instruments.

Soundhole detail of the CEO-2 shows C. F. Martin IV’s signature inlaid in Mother Of Pearl at the last fret. Hollow hexagon inlays adorn the fingerboard & the rosette is inlaid with highly colorful abalone pearl.

A detail of the EMP-1 Employee Model shows the unique marquetry around the rosette, the graceful Venetian cutaway, plus the ebony fingerboard and bridge, complete with compensated black saddle.
RAVE REVIEWS FOR AWARD WINNING “NEW” MARTIN BOOK

“Martin Guitars: An Illustrated Celebration Of America’s Premier Guitarmaker,” by Jim Washburn and Richard Johnston is hot off the press from Rodale Books and it’s selling like hotcakes!

The book has received wide acclaim from readers and reviewers all over the world, and recently was awarded the 1997 Book Of The Year by the editors of Vintage Guitar Magazine.

There are several reasons why the book is being so well received. It’s loaded with more than 470 color photographs and the layout is beautiful, but most importantly, the authors have done an extremely good job researching and writing this book. Unlike many guitar related books, this one is actually worth reading!

This hardcover edition is a must have for all Martin enthusiasts and lovers of fine guitars. It is available through your local music store, from local booksellers, or directly from C. F. Martin & Co.

FIRE DESTROYS CAR CASE SAVES GUITAR

“Watching my 1968 Volkswagen catch fire and burn to the ground, and knowing that my 1970 Martin D-35 which had been in my family for 27 years was in the back seat, was like seeing a loved one being run over by a bus. I’ve always avoided being attached to possessions, but that D-35 was an exception. Moments after the fire fighters brought the flames to smoke, I rummaged through the blackened ashes, and pulled out the Martin case. It was the original hardshell fiberglass case that came with the guitar, but it now appeared to resemble a huge burnt marshmallow. I slowly pried it open, expecting the D-35 to disintegrate as soon as I touched it. To my surprise, it was completely intact! In fact the only damage the D-35 had sustained was a few water stains from the fire hoses and some bubbled lacquer from the intense heat. I knew from that moment on that this Martin was meant to survive. My sincere gratitude to the incredible quality and dependability of that Martin guitar case.”

Sincerely submitted by Noah Lange of Beverly Hills, California
Willie Nelson took the opportunity to sample one of the Limited Edition Jimmie Rodgers 000-45JR Brazilian rosewood models, which commemorates the 100th Birthday Anniversary of “The Singing Brakeman.” This guitar, #2 in the edition, belongs to Jimmie Rodger’s cousin, Conrad “Sonny” Rodgers (below right), who naturally takes tremendous pride in his guitar. He carries it with him just about everywhere he goes. This photo was taken at the Knights Of Columbus Hall in Kerrville, Texas during the Jimmie Rodger’s festival last September. It is one of those rare moments when Willie is not holding his famous “Trigger” Martin guitar; the one with an “additional” soundhole. Recently, Willie joined a group of musicians who paid tribute to Jimmie Rodgers with a compendium album of Rodger’s tunes. Included are songs by Bob Dylan, Van Morrison, Mary Chapin Carpenter, Allison Kraus, Dwight Yokum, David Gristman, Jerry Garcia and many more. Ironically, this was Jerry Garcia’s final recording.

THANKS TO YOU TOO, WILLIE

Ruth Roe, (above left) pictured with Martin’s Artist Relations manager and Sounding Board Editor Dick Boak. Ruth is the executor of the estate of Jimmie Rodgers. She is also a relative of Jimmie Rodgers, as well as Elsie McWilliams, who co-wrote many of Rodgers’ songs. Dick was privileged to attend the annual Jimmie Rodger’s Festival in Meridian, Mississippi where Marty Stuart performed the song “T For Texas” in a wonderful live musical tribute.

Country singer Jimmy Driftwood (left) from Timbo, Arkansas was a personal friend of Jimmie Rodgers, so he was equally thrilled when Sonny Rodgers (above right) let him have a go-round with the Limited Edition 000-45JR. Jimmy Driftwood, who made frequent appearances at the Grand Ole Opry, wrote more than 6,000 songs in his career, which has spanned more than a half-century.
Imagine yourself acquiring an absolutely fantastic car, tastefully appointed, and fully equipped with all the best driving features. Keys in hand and anxious to feel the torque and exhilaration of the ride, you get in – only to realize a small detail is now a huge obstacle to your enjoyment. Your tires are flat! Pick in hand, this is how I feel when someone invites me to strum their scallop-braced, vintage Martin guitar – that has dead strings on it. What a pity.

I've met people all over the world who are reluctant to change their strings. Why? There's no doubt that a new set of strings markedly enhances the sound, and changing strings only takes about ten minutes. Perhaps they're just lazy, but they're sacrificing sound quality and enjoyment. Maybe they lack confidence, and don't know how to change their strings correctly. Telltale signs of ineptitude are: multiple (and unnecessary) wraps on the peg, tuners turning in the wrong direction, and strings tuned to an improper pitch.

All new Martin guitars come with a booklet entitled “CARE AND FEEDING”. It features a clear explanation of how to change your strings. You can expedite the process with a peg winder. It's also essential to have a quality wire cutter. Many players rely on electronic tuners; I, however, prefer an A-440 tuning fork. This forces the player to focus on hearing the strings. You'd be amazed at how few guitarists actually “listen” to their guitar.

Many players don't realize that human sweat has acidic content which can easily corrode the metal alloys used in their strings. Therefore, you can prolong your string life by the simple act of washing your hands before playing. Some players' perspiration is more corrosive than others, which means they ought to change their strings more often. For example, I have seen a player who actually turned a new set of strings green after only one hour of play! If the strings no longer retain their brightness and sustain, it's time to change them.

There's no fiercer brand loyalty than guitarists to their chosen strings. Despite the fact that there are dozens of string brands, there are not many string makers in the world. This is because manufacturers sell their strings in bulk to other companies who merely slap their label on the package. At Martin, though, the strings are made by Martin. The string division works right alongside the guitar makers, and they're just as committed to quality.

There are always new technologies in making strings, and Martin is utilizing recent advances in metallurgy to offer you the best strings on the market. The construction of a string is no less exacting than guitar-building, requiring the best raw materials and skilled crafts people.

The components of a string are the core wire and the wrap. Martin begins by testing the core wire to ensure its proper tensile strength. Sophisticated machines, digitized for accuracy and diligently maintained, wrap the core wire and attach the ball ends. The different wraps (for example, phosphor bronze, or nickel) account for the wide selection of strings available. Responding from feedback received from players, Martin has recently changed some of the gauges offered.

The newest offering are the SP™ Strings which employ a special core wire produced exclusively for Martin in Europe. Their hexagonal steel core is slowly drawn from ultra-high quality steel and processed using state-of-the-art heat treatment for a controlled microstructure. This purity helps explain their increased longevity. Because the wrap is done in such a way that prevents slippage on the core, these strings are stronger and less likely to break. They also have an attractive “gold” appearance, harmonious with the look of a Martin guitar. In addition to Light, Medium, and Extra Light, there is also a Custom Light gauge, offering .11 (high E-1st) for the first time. They are bright, beautiful, and long-lasting. As a bonus, they're packaged in corrosion-inhibiting recycled paper and cardboard - so changing strings is good for the environment.

Remember: New strings are inspiring. If you've misplaced your copy of “CARE AND FEEDING”, feel free to call Martin at 1-800-345-3143 and another copy will be sent to you. Do your music and guitar justice - change your strings when they lose their life. It's much easier than changing tires!

Diane Ponzio is a singer/songwriter/guitarist based in New York City, who appears in concert world-wide. She has currently released her third CD. She also travels internationally with Chris Martin performing at Martin Guitar clinics.
IF YOU HAVEN’T TRIED OUR NEW SP™ STRINGS, YOU’LL NEVER HEAR WHAT YOU’RE MISSING

We know how set in your ways you are about strings for your acoustic guitar. But once you live with our exclusive new SP™ Strings, they’ll shatter your loyalty to your previous strings!

We marveled
When we first found the unusual and technically superior wire we use in our exclusive process – it’s extremely slowly-drawn from highest-quality carbon steel and turned it into Martin “SP™ Strings, we started testing…and marveled. And we hardly ever marvel.

Players marveled
We started passing out sets of these SP™ strings to acoustic guitarists at festivals to get their reactions. They marveled. And we continue to get calls and letters from guitarists around the country who’ve tried SP’s and loved them.

Here are samples of comments we’re getting:

“I’m amazed. They are without a doubt the best strings I’ve ever played. I’ve played the same set now for four weeks, through every sort of climate and humidity and I’m just now noticing a little deadness. They well surpass any other string to me.”

-Lewis Phillips, Camden, AR

“These things are awesome!!! I’ve used Marquis for years, but the SP’s just blow them away. To call these strings ‘bright’ would be an understatement; they really do ring. But it is their presence, their authority, their statement that really sets them apart. And when they’re tuned, they’re tuned. These SP strings are in incredible accomplishment.”

-Pete Morjal, Lavergne, TN

“I usually go through strings in one set, but I used the SP’s for four sets over a three-day period. I do lots of Celtic ballads and it happened to be St. Patrick’s Day. The strings actually lasted through all of that! Now, two weeks later, I’m still using them at home and the strings are still good.”

-George Hergen, Roswell, GA

“I’m a performing guitarist. I went into my music store to buy strings. The dealer told me how SP’s are supposed to last longer. I decided to try them. During my performance I play very hard. I always break three strings a night. These SP strings didn’t break, and I used them session after session. I am amazed and pleased.”

-Jim McManus, Mt. Airy, NC

We’re so confident about our Martin SP strings that we’ve made them standard original equipment on all new Martin guitars! If you depend on your strings for a living in the studio or on stage, or just plain want the best strings by far that you can buy for your acoustic guitar, try our revolutionary new SP’s!

CORROSION ! RESISTANT !

C. F. Martin & Co. continues to upgrade quality in fretted instrument strings. We are proud to announce that Martin® and Darco® strings are now being packaged in corrosion-resistant materials.

Corrosive gases, which exist naturally in the environment, migrate quickly through most materials. To insure that your C. F. Martin & Co. strings are as fresh and tarnish-free as the day we manufactured them, the inner sleeves of our packaging are treated with a corrosion inhibitor that reacts with and neutralizes these gases. And in the spirit of protecting the environment, these sleeves are made from recycled materials.

Corrosion-inhibiting packaging was first introduced with Martin “SP™ strings in July, and shipments will be phased in on all Martin and Darco fretted instrument strings over the next several months.
Jim Motzenbecker of Venice, Florida was paging through a guitar magazine when he came across one of our ads that showed Joe Blackburn with his Backpacker® at Mount Everest. So he couldn’t resist sending us this photo taken at Fort Jefferson in The Dry Tortugas for a slightly more tropical perspective. His suggested headline is: “Where Might You Find A Backpacker?” How about 24° 38’ by 82° 50’. Jim says he can’t verify the exact coordinates, but these should put us in the general area! Jim owns a HD-28 herringbone as well. He didn’t risk taking that along on the sailboat, but he knew he would want something to play. His Backpacker® kept him in practice and was easily stowable aboard.

At right, the four Outward Bound instructors and ship captains that recently supervised two Martin Outward Bound sailing initiatives on Chesapeake Bay, take the big jammin’ jump with their Backpacker® guitars. From left to right: Lana Hill, Peter Cilloran, Kate Kenyon, and Greg Watson.

Harry Egeland sporting his Backpacker® at the South Pole in Volume One, Issue One (now a rare collectible). We thought you deserved to see this photo as well at the actual “pole.” Harry took his Backpacker® “everywhere”, including his three month stint at the South Pole station, elevation 12,000 feet. In spite of the brutal weather conditions, his Backpacker® still stays in tune, plays and sounds great. As Harry says: “The size and weight makes the Backpacker® an added joy in my arsenal of portable hobbies.”

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BACKPACKER CONQUERS THE GARHWAL HIMALAYAS

Nicolas Jaques, an avid voyager and mountain climber from Verbier, Switzerland sent us some great photos taken during his team’s telemark expedition to the Trisul, a 7120 meter peak in the Garhwal Himalayas in Northern India. For over three weeks they stayed on the mountain, and during numerous stays at the Base Camp, Babak “Bob Mazarei” and John Falkiner, both great skiers of the team, entertained everyone with great jam sessions, sometimes together with our cook Raj drumming on his tabla. There were quite a few late night parties in the mess tent, and it was especially fun to hear classic American blues songs mingled with Indian rhythms.

SILOUETTES ON THE SHORE

Benjamin Beale of Richmond, Virginia has been a serious guitar player since the age of 9, and he had often lugged his full-sized Sigma Dreadnought around on his various travels, but when he went to Costa Rica last year, he took his Martin Backpacker®. He reports that his traveling was greatly simplified. Everywhere he went, people wanted to hear him play “the small wonder,” and everyone loved the tone. This photo (above) was taken on the beach at Dominical, Costa Rica on Christmas day with an appropriate donkey as his captive audience. Since that journey, Ben has been teaching high school Spanish and he plays his Backpacker® daily during breaks between classes. In the evenings, he plays in several bands and has zeroed in on a Martin 000C-1E acoustic/electric for those demanding gigs where size is no object.

BACKPACKER IMPERSONATOR

At left is a photo Eddie Nickerson, guitar player and lead singer of “Third Rock Masters” of St. Louis, Missouri. Eddie is posing with the Elvis statue that once stood in Elvis Park on Beale Street, in Memphis. The statue is presently being restored and will be placed at the Memphis Visitor’s Center.

Eddie first received his Backpacker® in 1993 and does not leave home without it. Whenever he plays, people admire it and want to know more about it. He always tells them the story of the Backpacker® going into outer space on the Columbia space shuttle.

If you want to see Eddie play his Backpacker®, he is always at the Elvis Park in Memphis the first weekend in May on Sunday, playing Elvis tunes.

BOSNIAN BACKPACKER

Sargent Warran “G.I.” Jodean Stout served his country well during the Bosnian mission in ‘96. Here he’s pictured “down range” among the tanks, in full camouflage attire, effectively replacing guns with guitars. After his stint in Bosnia, he returned to regular duty in Baumholder, Germany.

We’d love to hear your Backpacker stories. Send them to: “The Sounding Board”, Box 329, Nazareth, PA 18064
JOAN BAEZ 0-45 GUITAR IS FIRST “WOMAN & MUSIC” ARTIST’S SIGNATURE EDITION

MARTIN COMMEMORATES 75TH ANNIVERSARY OF HANK WILLIAMS SR. BIRTH WITH D-28HW EDITION

Acknowledged as one of the most accomplished interpretive folksingers of the century, Joan Baez has influenced nearly every aspect of popular music in a career that has lasted nearly four decades. Her distinctive soprano was first heard at the Newport Folk Festival in 1959 and she has had virtually continuous success with her folk, folk-rock, country, and pop/rock albums. For virtually her entire career, Joan Baez has recorded and performed with her favorite guitar, a small-bodied C. F. Martin Vintage 0-45.

In honor of Joan Baez’ unparalleled influence on popular music and to pay tribute to her stellar career, C. F. Martin & Co. is proud to announce the Joan Baez Limited Edition 0-45JB Signature Model. There will be just 59 signed and numbered instruments in this limited edition, in honor of the year (1959) in which Baez launched her career. Joan Baez is the first woman ever honored with a Martin limited edition guitar. The edition is the first Artist Signature Model to be offered by Martin’s highly successful and influential “Women And Music” Project. The guitar will be available only from authorized Martin dealers throughout the world.

A replica of Baez’ priceless, pre-war, 1929 vintage 0-45, the Joan Baez Limited Edition 0-45JB is a rarer small-bodied 12-fret instrument with delicately scalloped top bracing. The guitar is handcrafted with Martin’s highest “premium” grade selection of tonewood: a Sitka spruce sound board, and East Indian rosewood back and sides.

(Continued on Page 6)