

# A Vision of Quality

## World-Famous Luthier Bob Benedetto Joins Guild's Quest for Excellence

*At Guild, We Build a Quality Guitar.* This simple phrase has been both a motto and a heartfelt commitment at Guild since 1952, when Al Dronge founded the company in a loft in New York City. Over the years, Guild has been challenged at the management level by sudden death, changes of ownership and even a bankruptcy in 1988, but on the production line, the simple motto has always been foremost in the hearts and minds of the men and women who build Guild guitars.

In November of 1995, two decades of managerial ups and downs ended when Fender Musical Instruments purchased Guild from the US Music Corporation. Under new leadership, Guild's original pursuit of quality gained new energy—new processes and controls were introduced, new equipment was purchased and, most importantly, the new management brought a level of commitment to quality not seen at Guild since Al Dronge.

On March 10, 1999, Guild took its commitment to Quality one step further by signing a "Design and Consultant Agreement" with the world-renowned archtop jazz guitar builder Bob Benedetto. Widely regarded as the third master in the archtop lineage that runs from D'Angelico to D'Aquisto, Benedetto has been building archtop jazz guitars for over 30 years.

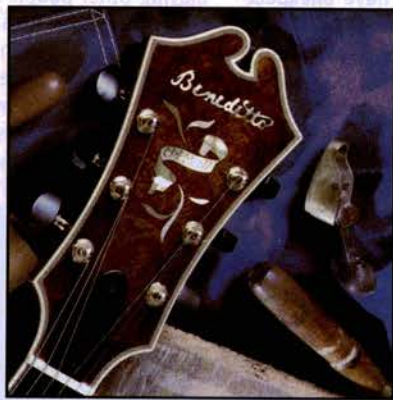
Bob has agreed to work with Guild's factory at Westerly, Rhode Island, to enhance the quality of Guild's flagship Artist Award and Stuart model jazz guitars. The Guild Custom Shop in Nashville will also benefit from Benedetto's expertise and will become the builders of

a select number of Benedetto models. The details of this great news can be found on page 20 in the article by Charles Chapman.

Building quality guitars is our duty as well as our motto. As a former artist relations manager for Guild and other US Music products, I never made a distinction between what we owe the artist and what we owe the regular customer—we owe the same thing to every buyer of a Guild guitar, and that is a quality product that we stand behind. To this day, we feel that same deep responsibility to all our customers, dealers and artists, all in an equal manner, and that is our commitment to our vision of quality.

From the corporate office to the factory floor, the tradition of quality guitars by Guild is important to everyone in our organization and therefore our attitude is something in which we take pride. We believe that we deliver the best value in American-made guitars, but we will not be satisfied with our efforts. We know that quality is maintained only by a continuing effort to improve, and standing on your previous accomplishments only leads to falling backwards.

We are delighted about our new agreement with Bob Benedetto for the specific reason that it gives us one more tool to further our commitment to continuing improvement. The jazz guitar is the foundation of Guild guitars—we began making them in 1952—and Bob, like the rest of the jazz guitar community, appreciates the fact that our spiritual investment is deep. We will continue these efforts to improve our products by combining the best of our history with the best people and the best raw materials available, so that each and every Guild customer receives a quality instrument that we stand behind. —*Bill Acton*



## Guild at the 3rd Annual Catalina Blues Festival

The Third annual Fender Catalina Island Blues Festival, which took place May 14th–16th, once again featured some of the biggest names in blues. Twenty-six miles across the blue Pacific from Southern California, Catalina Island provided a magnificent haven for one of the most important and popular blues jams in the nation.

The three-day event, which Guild co-sponsored, was headlined this year by blues wunderkind Kenny Wayne Shepherd. Featured guests included the ever-entertaining Taj Mahal, six-string virtuoso Robben Ford, Delta Blues legend (and stepson of Robert Johnson) Robert Junior Lockwood, acoustic blues maven John Hammond and Austin's Doyle Bramhall II.

The first two days of the festival thrilled the audience with free performances and smoking evening concerts. Since diehard blues fans aren't known for passing up historic performances, Sunday afternoon was a highlight as the throng filed into the Avalon Theatre for

"Guild Unplugged." They came to witness intimate solo acoustic sets by John Hammond and Robert Junior Lockwood.

Hammond switched frequently between six- and twelve-string Guilds while simultaneously honking on a blues harp and weaving his engaging, bawdy blues tales.

Lockwood, at 84 the senior performer at this year's festival, learned some of his first licks from stepfather Robert Johnson. In the 60 years since, Lockwood's playing has evolved to include intricate jazz progressions and melodies that take his music from the Delta to the Big City and back again.

The Guild Custom Shop contributed a one-of-a-kind F30RLS with the Avalon Casino Ballroom inlaid in the headstock and a unique finish by Custom Shop master builder John Kornau. The guitar was raffled off to benefit the Catalina Island Performing Arts Foundation, a nonprofit organization that provides music and arts education to children. —*Adam St. James*



*Robert Junior Lockwood*



*John Hammond*



*Custom Shop  
F30RLS*