

A Vision of Quality

by Bill Acton

The Quest for Quality Continues in Guild's Westerly Factory

One of the keys to long-term success in any endeavor is self-examination, the ability to step back and look at your work with a critical eye and, if something is lacking, to step in and make a change. The best musicians and record producers go back and listen carefully to the playback when they think they've laid down a good track, asking themselves in the process whether the track is everything they want it to be. Winning football coaches, similarly, make a religion of watching post-game films to see what went right and what went wrong. Furthermore, to be undefeated and at the top of the standings does not mean the coach can stop analyzing film. The best coaches know that this process never ends—if you want to stay a winner, you need to keep up the self-examination.

At Guild, we also check and recheck our work, inspect and re-inspect every guitar in the same way a producer of hit records listens and re-listens to take after take. And while every winning coach examines and re-examines his game films with the disadvantage of not being able to change what is on film, the advantage our inspectors have is that they can change what is still in process and, if the parts aren't coming together the way they are supposed to, they can stop it where it is and have it corrected.

Beginning with our raw wood storage, Guild's craftsmen select and inspect the spruce and hardwoods that will become our work in process. Once these raw materials are processed into backs, sides, necks and tops, our woodshop inspectors step in to make sure these parts conform

to our strict standards. When the parts that pass this rigorous inspection have been braced and glued together into what we call "white wood," they must pass yet another inspector.

Once they pass the white wood inspection, the guitars move into Guild's finishing department where we carefully apply the appropriate finish for each particular guitar model. Before our final assembly department accepts the guitar from finishing, it must again pass inspection. The final assembly department puts on the bridge, pickguard, tuners and strings, and then adjusts and tunes the guitar. Here, the guitar must pass our final inspector who has a no-exceptions policy when it comes to playability. The final inspector has the final say whether a Guild guitar is ready to go into our warehouse for shipping. If the guitar is in our warehouse for more than a day or two, we have the advantage of inspecting it again just before it is shipped to a Guild Dealer.

All these inspections are designed to assure that Guild guitars are everything discerning players expect them to be. Wood is a sometimes difficult and always beautiful material, and quality control is essential at every stage in the construction process.

A Guild guitar will sound better the more you play it, and we sincerely hope that you and your record producer, when you are listening to your song on playback, both agree that your Guild is one of the best parts of the song. ♪



Final inspector Brian Pentel



"White wood" inspector Janice Inman

The Festival by the Sea

Don't Miss Guild at the Third Annual Catalina Blues Fest

The Third Annual Fender Catalina Island Blues Festival will take place from May 14 to May 16, 1999. Of special interest to Guild fans will be the Guild acoustic show in the exquisite Art Deco Casino Theatre.

Sponsored by Guild guitars and *Guitar Player* magazine, the acoustic show will take place on Saturday the 15th and will feature Delta blues legend **Robert Lockwood, Jr.** Lockwood is one of only three living musicians who have performed with Robert Johnson. Lockwood also happens to be Johnson's stepson. If you were at the Guild show last year, you would have heard Honeyboy



Robert Lockwood, Jr.

Edwards, another of the three surviving bluesmen with a connection to Johnson.

Taj Mahal and his band will perform Saturday afternoon on picturesque Descanso Beach. The ageless Taj, who will be celebrating his birthday during the festival, returns by popular demand. Taj's immensely enter-



Catalina Island's historic Casino Ballroom

taining show at last year's Guild acoustic show was one of the biggest hits of the festival.

Opening for Taj will be ex-Arc Angel **Doyle Bramhall, Jr.** with his new band and new record. **Kenny Wayne Shepherd** will headline at the Casino Ballroom Saturday night.

Other scheduled acts include blues act **Big Nick and the Gila Monsters**, who will kick off the festival on Friday night with a special free concert at the Catalina Country Club. **Karen Lawrence & Blue By Nature** and **Debrah Liv Johnson** will do the same on Sunday night, closing three days of acoustic and electric blues in a paradise setting.

For more information, call 1-888-25-EVENT. ♪