

Artists

JIMMIE VAUGHAN

and form that deep groove is not easy. It's a whole other thing.

How does a blues guitarist move away from their influences and find their own voice?

I always tell the story about the dream I had. I was in a room with all of my favorite guitar players: Buddy Guy, Albert King, B.B., you name it. We were having a jam, passing

the guitar around the room, and when my turn came up, I had nothing to play. What was I going to play? I can't play Albert or B.B. licks! It's like, what's stupid Jimmie going to do? I think it's really important to ask yourself, what *you* want to hear. Then try and play that. If you keep asking yourself that, after while you'll probably start to

get some answers. It's a process, but the great thing is, you can work on it every day.

You often use a capo to change keys while playing in open position. Was using the capo a way to lead yourself down a different path?

Yeah. I enjoyed figuring out a way to make it work and, ultimately, to be able to express my own thing. It made me phrase differently and it forced me to not just copy. Gulf Coast players such as Clarence "Gatemouth" Brown and Guitar Slim used a capo, and so did Albert Collins and Johnny "Guitar" Watson. I don't use a capo exclusively, but I have used it a lot, even going back to the Thunderbirds. It gives you open strings and pull offs with the open notes ringing all around you—kind of like your own little universe of sound.

What did you use to track *Blues, Ballads, and Favorites*?

I mostly used a couple of different Fender Jimmie Vaughan Strats, though occasionally I also used my old Fender Coronado. I've always liked the Coronado because you show up to a gig and no one else has one. I've been using flatwounds on my Strats for about two years now—either Fender or D'Addario .010-gauge sets.

Why did you go to flatwounds?

I was listening to classic blues and R&B records from the '50s, and they all used flatwounds on that stuff and that's why it sounds good. Someone at Fender told me that when you bought a '55 Strat new, it came with flatwounds because those were the only electric strings available. I throw away the wound third string, however, and replace it with a plain third so I can bend it—although the wound third is good for jazz. With flats, I like the way the ring of the wound strings balances with the sound of the unwound strings. There is a pure kind of brightness with the wound strings, but with a nice *thump* as well.

What did you use for amps?

Reissue Fender Bassmans and my Matchless Clubman head through a 4x10 Matchless cabinet. I dig old amps, but they're just not practical. They need to be worked on all the time, and if you haul them around to gigs they get beat up or someone will steal them. I just bought an amp from a local guy here in Austin named John Grammatico. It's his take on a Fender Bassman and it's amazing.

Do you use all of the Stratocaster's pickup positions?

I use the bridge or neck pickup mostly. The tone control on my Strats is wired to



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