



Rocking the G

He makes custom instruments for rock gods.

BY AARON CAVES

While working for his custom guitar maker dad, Elk Grove resident Doug Kauer thought it would be fun to make his own guitars. When the recession hit and no one wanted cabinets, Kauer had plenty of time to make instruments. Soon, he was selling his own line of high-end, custom electric guitars. Today, he has a staff of three and sells almost 100 guitars a year at \$2,500 to \$7,000 a pop.

What goes into a great guitar

Making guitars is a time-consuming, multistep process involving several machines and lots of handwork. The instruments start out as large pieces of lumber; Kauer uses mostly South American mahogany. "It's lightweight; it's resonant," he says. "It's got clarity of sound that you don't hear from other variants. You can't build a bad-sounding guitar out of it."

Not available in stores

Kauer sells his products online (kauerguitars.com) and at guitar shows, offering ready-made guitars and customizable options. A customized guitar takes three to nine months to complete.

Small-batch instruments

Kauer's line includes The Banshee (a durable rock 'n' roll guitar), The Daylighter (an homage to the Fender Jazzmaster but with a crisper

sound) and The Starliner (Kauer's answer to the classic Les Paul). "There's not a lot of repeats in what we make," says Kauer. "Fender will do a limited run of guitars—it'll be 2,500 guitars. A limited run for us will be three."

Famous friends

Kauer's customers include professional musicians Walter Becker (Steely Dan), Scott Holiday (Rival Sons), Tommy Kessler (Blondie), Dennis Casey (Flogging Molly), Andrew McKeag (The Presidents of the United States of America) and Blues Hall of Famer Matt Schofield.

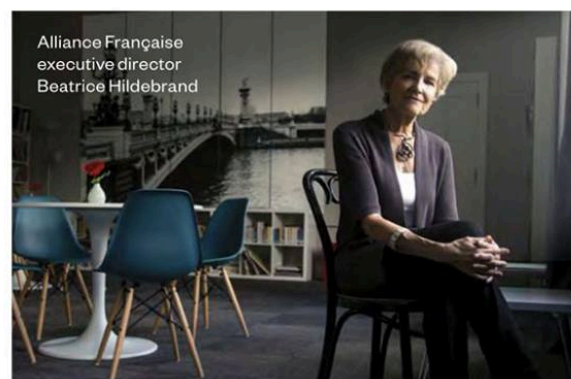
Something completely different

Next year, the company will begin selling an affordable guitar (\$1,299) with fewer customizable components. You can see the new Titan guitar at Kauer Guitars' annual open house on June 11. 9864 Dino Drive, Elk Grove; (916) 538-1425; kauerguitars.com

Shining a Light on a Local 'I Do'



A wedding at Crocker Art Museum is featured in a gorgeous new photo book. "The Knot Outdoor Weddings," written by Carley Roney and the editors of TheKnot.com, features 50 weddings held at beaches, vineyards, private estates and other outdoor venues around the world. The 2011 wedding of locals Lia Benvenuti and Alex Sioukas on Crocker's courtyard appears in the book as an example of a chic city wedding. The event's planner, Kate Whelan, was thrilled to learn the nuptials were selected for the book. "The book has weddings in New York, Napa and Sonoma, even Bali," she says. "They could have chosen anywhere and they chose Sacramento." —Marybeth Bizjak



Alliance Française executive director Beatrice Hildebrand

Francophiles Get a New Gathering Spot

ALLIANCE FRANÇAISE DE SACRAMENTO, the region's French language and cultural center, has a nice new home. In March, the center moved from a drafty warehouse on R Street to the old Fremont School building. The city recently renovated the 1921 brick building, now known as E. Claire Raley Studios for the Performing Arts, and is leasing it to tenants that include Sacramento Ballet and Capital Stage.

Alliance Française's new 4,000-square-foot space includes a library, multipurpose room and six classrooms. The group offers French language classes for adults and children, along with cultural and social events such as lectures, Friday-night French movie screenings, wine-and-cheese socials and French-themed parties.

Alliance Française de Sacramento is the local chapter of an organization created in 1883 by a group of French intellectuals, including Jules Verne and Louis Pasteur, to enhance France's image around the world. The Sacramento chapter has close to 600 members. "There's something about the art of living in France that's very attractive to people," says Beatrice Hildebrand, the chapter's executive director. "It's the art, fashion, gastronomy." —MARYBETH BIZJAK