

ISSUE #53

# American Music

## The Blasters/Dave Alvin newsletter

JUNE 2007

### Blasters shows

(Phil, John, Jerry, Keith)

- 7/7 Irvine CA at Hootenanny
- 7/21 Bloomington IL at Rock and Rods
- 8/2 Kansas City MO at Knuckleheads
- 8/3 St Louis MO at Beale on Bwy
- 8/4 Berwyn IL at Fitzgerald's
- 8/5 Milwaukee WI at Shank Hall
- 8/7 Columbus OH at the Thirsty Ear
- 8/9 Sellersville PA at Sellersville the.
- 8/10 New York City at BB Kings
- 8/11 Wash DC at Glenn Echo Park

### Dave Alvin acoustic shows (w/ Christy McWilson, Amy Farris and Nina Gerber)

- 6/28 Berkeley CA at Freight & Salvage
- 6/29 Winters CA at The Palms
- 6/30 Carmel Valley CA at the Moonlight Mountaintop Benefit festival
- 7/1 Laytonville CA at Kate Wolf Fest

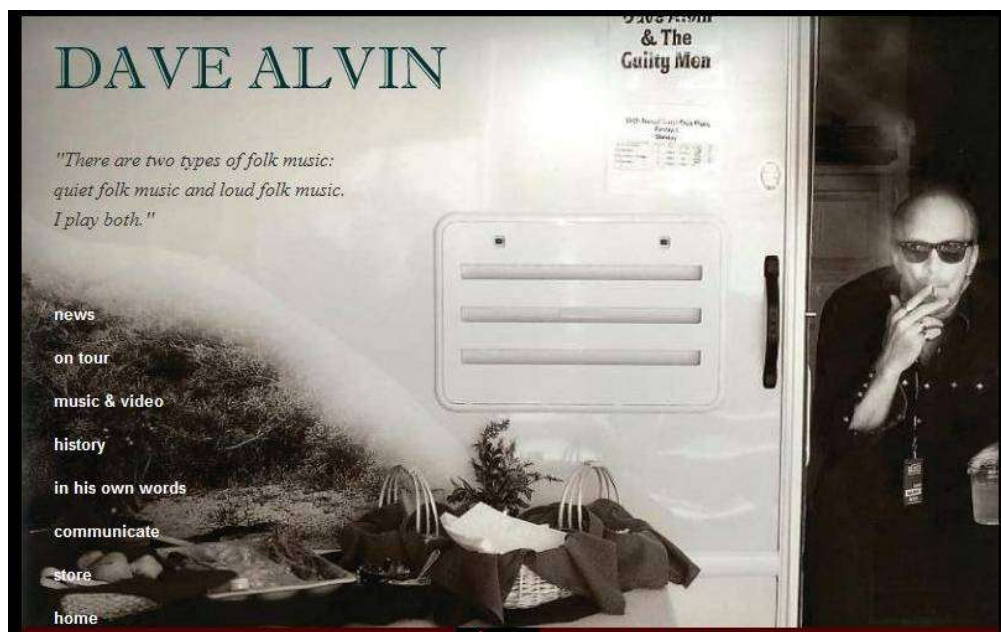
### Dave Alvin & Guilty Men

- 7/7 Irvine CA at Hootenanny

### The Knitters shows

- 7/13 Costa Mesa CA at Orange County Fair w/Willie Nelson

## Dave Alvin Launches www.Dave Alvin.net



**Dave Alvin:** -- Welcome to my new website. I think it looks pretty swanky for a barroom guitar basher. I'm very excited about having my own website and I'm

looking forward to having some fun here. One of the fun things I plan to do, over the next weeks and months, will be posting some new and some not-so-new, rare recordings on the site that aren't currently available anywhere else. The first of these songs should be available early this summer and every few weeks or so I'll be adding more songs. Please check back for more info as I get this together.

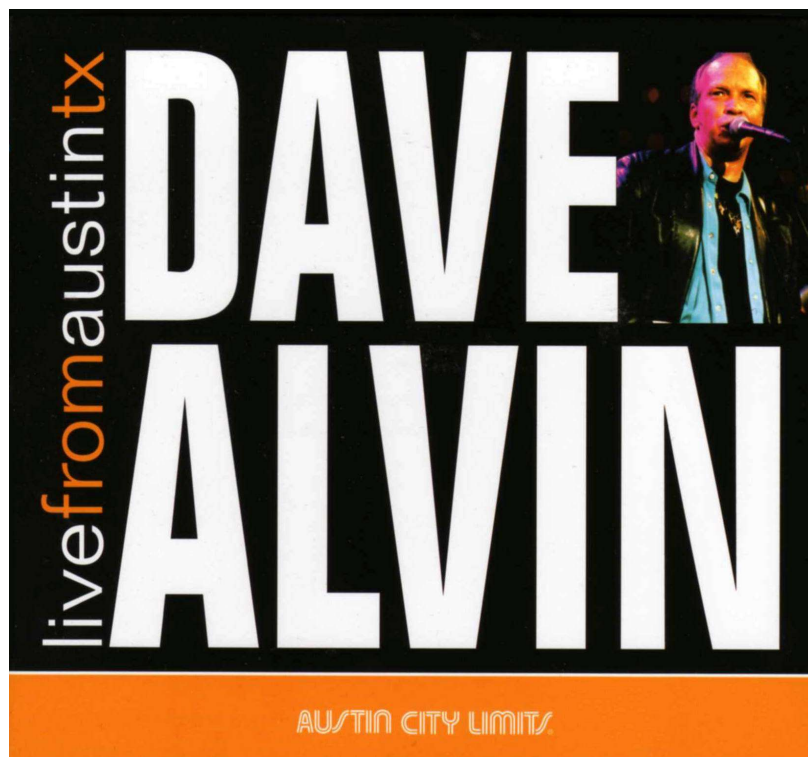
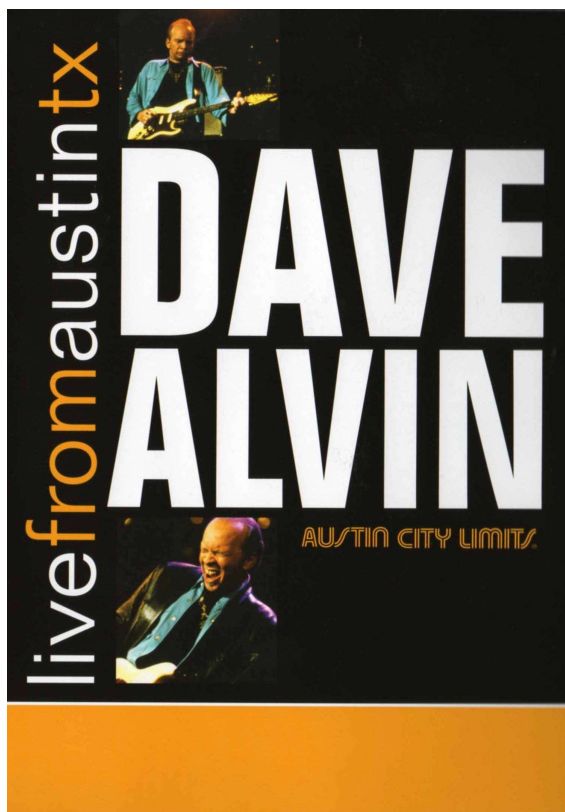
There's also a fairly up-to-date (and as complete as my memory made possible) discography of all the music I've been fortunate to be a part of. This list covers everything from my work as a solo artist to appearances as a guest vocalist, band member, sideman, and producer. There are links on the recordings that are still available, if you wish to purchase them. Unfortunately, the out of print records on the list may only be available at some serious collector's rare record stores or maybe in some discount cut-out bins. Good luck if you feel like hunting them down.

The site also has a page listing of all my upcoming gigs (whether I'm playing solo and acoustic or loud and electric with my band, The Guilty Men) as well as a news page that will have information on upcoming recordings, tours, or any oddball stuff I find myself wrapped up in.

*In This Issue: Phil, Dave, and John remember the Streets of Fire movie, The Blasters tour Spain, and 'Dave Alvin: Live from Austin Texas' is released.*

**Latest News** – Dave played guitar on two recent releases: John Doe's A Year In The Wilderness (Yep Roc) album due out June 12, 2007 and Candy Kane's Guitar'd and Feathered released on 5/22/07. -- Dave Alvin did voice-over work on a few new Jim Beam Whiskey ads that are airing currently on Spike TV and Comedy Central among many other networks. – Dave Alvin contributed a song called DEMOCRACY for a Leonard Cohen tribute album, accompanied by Greg Leisz and Bill Frisell. – Dave Alvin was featured in Acoustic Guitar Magazine (May '07). Includes; an interview by Chris Smither and guitar (Tablature) sheet music for the song KING OF CALIFORNIA – Check out Gene Taylor's web site at [www.Gene-Taylor.com](http://www.Gene-Taylor.com) (corrected from last issue)

**Ride the Dave Alvin Train** -- Dave Alvin will join Tom Russell's Tarahumara Train for the "Roots on the Rails" trip September 13-20, 2007. You'll spend a week with Dave, Tom Russell, Butch Hancock, Terry Allen, Laurie Lewis and Tom Rozum - hanging out with them and seeing musical performances every day. For more info on the The Tarahumara Train - Tucson to Mexico's Copper Canyon on board The Sierra Madre Express, contact: Charlie Hunter 866-484-3669 (or 802-463-3669 if overseas) [www.flyingunderradar.com](http://www.flyingunderradar.com) Cost \$4790. Sign up soon, the spots are very limited. -~~AM~~



## **Austin City Limits is released on CD and DVD**

**Dave Alvin and New West Records have just released a brand new DVD and companion CD as part of Austin City Limit's "Live from Austin TX" series. This exclusive set features his previously unreleased complete 1999 performance from the award winning Austin City Limits television show. Tracks include KING OF CALIFORNIA, BORDER RADIO, FOURTH OF JULY and a medley of JUBILEE TRAIN, Do-RE-ME, and PROMISED LAND and more favorites from the HighTone records years. It's available as a set or individually.**



## Phil Alvin, Dave Alvin, and John Bazz remember



*On June 1, 1984, Universal Pictures released the film 'Streets of Fire' starring Michael Pare, Diane Lane and Willem Dafoe. The Blasters performed two songs in the movie. Here in 2007, the Blasters remember how they got the gig.*

### Recording the Music

**Phil:** Walter Hill (director) liked the Blasters and our music. He wanted to use our music and get us in one of his films. In 1982, they offered us the opportunity to do the entire soundtrack to the Eddie Murphy film, 48 Hours. We received the script and saw in it 'nigger, nigger, nigger.' It's been said over the years that we turned down 48 Hours because we thought it was racist. The issue might have been that we didn't want to put so much pressure on David to write all those songs. We would have had to give up a lot of the publishing rights to them. It might not have been worth the effort, so instead David wrote songs for the Non-Fiction album.

**Dave:** I didn't want to do Streets of Fire, but agreed because I had been the one who didn't want to do 48 Hours. In 1981, we were offered the 48 Hours movie with Eddie Murphy. Walter Hill was the director. He lived in Bellflower right next to Downey and was a big fan of the Blasters. They wanted me to write 7 songs, which was more than I thought I could handle. I also didn't like the script. I wasn't familiar with Eddie Murphy's



comedy, and I thought it was really silly. There is a scene in the movie where they go to a redneck bar in San Francisco. We had a meeting with the producers Joel Silver and Lawrence Gordon, so I asked: "Where is there a redneck bar in San Francisco?" But mainly I didn't want to spend 6 months involved in writing and recording 7 songs for a movie at that point in the Blasters' career. At the time I didn't consider myself a songwriter – I still don't know if I'm a songwriter (laughs). But I really didn't think I was then. We had just done the first record for Slash, and I didn't know if I was writing flukes or what. A "pro" songwriter can come in and say: "Okay 7 songs; you need them by Thursday? No problem." I





don't write that way.

I thought 48 Hours wasn't the type of movie I wanted the Blasters to be involved in. Then it came out, was a huge hit, and made me look real bad with the band. So I said: 'Whatever we get offered next, I'll do.' That was Streets of Fire.

**Phil:** Walter Hill (director) was a very nice guy. He really wanted to get us involved in one of his films. In 1983 they approached us with Streets of Fire. I remember the day we went down to Joel Silver's (producer) office. We walked into his office, Bill Bateman sat down, put his feet up on Joel's desk, and said 'Let's make a deal.' (Laughs),

Bill was good at doing that.

**Phil:** We agreed to do three songs. Joel Silver was so worried that we might back out, he sent us into the studio right away. He gave us a purchase order from the movie company (Universal) that would pay for the recordings. Movie companies pay about ten times more money than record companies. Then I realized something: It's illegal – a trust violation - for a movie company to put out a soundtrack on their affiliated record label. In this case MCA Records. You have to put it out into the free marketplace to the highest bidder.

Joel Silver had been involved in Xanadu which was the first time that a record made more money than the movie. Because of that success, it was believed that Joel knew how to link movie and record company deals and could be trusted to handle a big budget.

The Blasters were already in the studio getting paid maximum triple time for the sessions when Joel Silver called. He warned me he would be calling later on a conference call with new label president Irv Azoff to discuss the budget. Joel told me I couldn't let Irv know that he gave us this open purchase order. So I played along, as Irv told me not to go over budget. It never came up that we were already in the studio at that time spending lots of money. Irv is very smart and knows about the dealings between movie and record companies. I met him years before when he was involved in trying to get the Blasters' contract from Rockin' Ronnie Weiser in 1980.

In the end we made \$80,000 for three songs.

**Phil:** We recorded the original song BLUE SHADOWS, and the Leiber and Stoller song ONE BAD STUD. We also recorded BARN BURNING (from the Rollin' Rock album) but it was never used in the movie or soundtrack. We were concerned about the publishing on ONE BAD STUD. It was a 28-year-old song. I called BMI and they did not have the song listed as active. It was never





a big hit or anything, so Leiber and Stoller did not renew their publishing on the song. But they were still alive so they could renew their publishing at any time. MCA had a guy in England who was taking care of the publishing on the project. I told him that we should tell Leiber and Stoller that we want to put one of their songs (that they didn't renew the publishing on) in a movie. I said: "If they don't cut us a deal, to let us do it, we won't tell them what the song is (laughs)." So they made a special case for that song. So somebody at MCA made a lot of money on that (laughs).

**Phil:** I really liked Joel Silver cause he's a ruthless cut-throat when he had to be, but he was nice to us. He never questioned all the money we spent, because he was just as guilty having the record company involved in the making of the film anyway.

**Phil:** There was a '45 of BLUE SHADOWS backed with a Dan Hartman song called I CAN DREAM ABOUT YOU. They tried to make a hit out of anything they owned part of the publishing on, which they did on BLUE SHADOWS.

**Phil:** I remember the choreographer was preparing a dance scene during ONE BAD STUD and asked us to submit a rough mix for them to work with. They called me and said it was way too fast. We had a few versions of the song and might have slowed it down a little bit. He tried to use BLUE SHADOWS but that didn't work.

### On the Set

**Phil:** We were on set for two weeks at Universal. Lee Ving from the band Fear was in the film, so we knew him. Willem Dafoe knew us because he had sung MARIE MARIE in a movie the previous year called Roadhouse 66. I didn't know that at the time. Lee and Willem didn't have a trailer (dressing room), but we had a trailer (laughs). So, Lee and Willem used to come to our trailer and hang out.

**Dave:** On the set we had to be there at 8:30 and we had our own trailer. Remember this was the old days – every morning at 8:30 a case of beer was delivered. When we ran out of that case of Bud, we would say: "More Bud, please." And another case would arrive.

**Phil:** I remember they had started the Universal public tours through the back lot and one day Bill Bateman and Gene Taylor were walking to the set. The tour bus drove by as the guide said: "Here is the set that is filming a new Walter Hill movie. He did 48 hours. And there are some members of the Blasters." Gene Taylor turns to them and flips them off (laughs).

**Phil:** There was one scene we saw being shot in an alley with a bunch of bikers. When I walked over I recognized some of the guys from a biker club from the Sundance Saloon in Long Beach. The Blasters played lots of gigs there and I knew a lot of the guys, so I felt good that they used real bikers in the movie.

**Dave:** The bikers in the movie were a real biker gang called the Hessians. The Blasters started out for years playing in biker bars, so we knew them and knew biker etiquette. They weren't given beer, but we were, so they came to hang out with the Blasters as well as other extras. There were a few people who were extras who I knew from the L.A. rock scene who they hired. So it "looked" like our audi-





ence, but most of the people didn't know who we were. But our trailer was the hang out.

**Phil:** So for our scene they put makeup on us. I had rolled up sleeves and suspenders. They put a bunch of grease on my hair which made my hair disappear. So it made me look like I had this big bald spot on my head. I remember we played live along with the recording.

**Dave:** They dressed everybody up except me and Bateman who already looked the part (even though they never showed a close up of Bill). They gave me two scarves to wear around my neck and I still have them.

**John:** They shot that scene so many different ways. They shot from the back of the club with no one in there; then they brought all the people back in and shot up close, and then sent them out again. It took so long to do those two songs. There was a guy named Mister Laslow who was in charge of the smoke. No one could start filming until Mister Laslow said the smoke was good. We had to look like we were sweating, so they had someone spraying us down constantly. The directors command would be 'Wet 'em down. Smoke em up. Wet em down' (laughs).

**Dave:** My favorite scene is a close-up shot of Lee Allen. They had a bunch of cameras pointed in all directions all the time. We performed to a playback of the tracks. I think a few times we played a song for the crew.

**Phil:** I remember the girl, Marina, who was dancing – she had a crush on me – she was like a man, hard like a rock and no breasts. I rolled my eyes when the girl took her top off. I did it almost as a: 'Oh boy. Big deal.' Walter said: 'Stop we have to get that look on Phil's face!' They made a big deal out of that.

**Dave:** In general I don't like movies about rock n roll. They look fake. It's hard to script that out. The best thing to do is film people playing live. The script was pretty good. My complaint about the movie is that it didn't go "comic strip" enough. There is a scene in the movie where the hero stops a bus with his hand – like superman – but then that kind of thing was not carried through in the rest of the movie. I thought the two Blasters songs came out good, and I thought the Ry Cooder soundtrack came out great. But I wasn't crazy about the movie. I didn't think it would be a hit, but as time has gone by, it's become a cult movie.

*The Streets of Fire soundtrack has since been released on CD by MCA Records, as is the movie on DVD. The two Blasters songs are included on the Blasters' Testament: The complete Slash Re-cordings CD set. -AM*



# ***Blasters: Spain Tour November 2006***

*The Blasters toured Spain in November hitting all the big cities.*

*by Billy Davis*

*The Venues and people there were great.*

*I was there acting as tour manager and covering the tour for The Blasters Newsletter. We had a lot of fun.*

**November 6** -- The Blasters started the tour on the northern coastal city of Gijon, Spain. We spent three nights in Gijon, so promoter Kike Louie set us all up in an apartment. It was fun seeing the whole band living together. In the living room was a raised wood floor that looked like it could be stage. But in the middle of this stage was a small 14-inch TV sitting on a table in the middle of it. It was odd to look at all that space and a little TV.

Kike Louie had booked us into his Louie Louie club the following two nights, but tonight his club was closed. To occupy our time, he sent us to the only Rock N Roll bar in Gijon – The Savoy. They must have known we were coming because as soon as we walked in we noticed on their TV system, they were playing the 1984 Streets of Fire movie that the Blasters appeared in. The bartenders were big Blasters fans and played us a bunch of old Sun records recordings and 50's country and rockabilly. The beer was sure good too. It was a very cool place. We wound up there three nights in a row even after the Louie Louie club gigs were over.

**November 7 – Gijon at Louie Louie Club** -- I woke up the next morning in the Blasters apartment hearing Phil at the front door trying to tell the housekeeper that we didn't need any services that day. I got a kick out of listening to Phil take on the challenge of trying to speak the little bit of Spanish he knew. The housekeeper didn't seem to understand - this went on for about 5 minutes.

Phil must have felt jet lagged because even with that

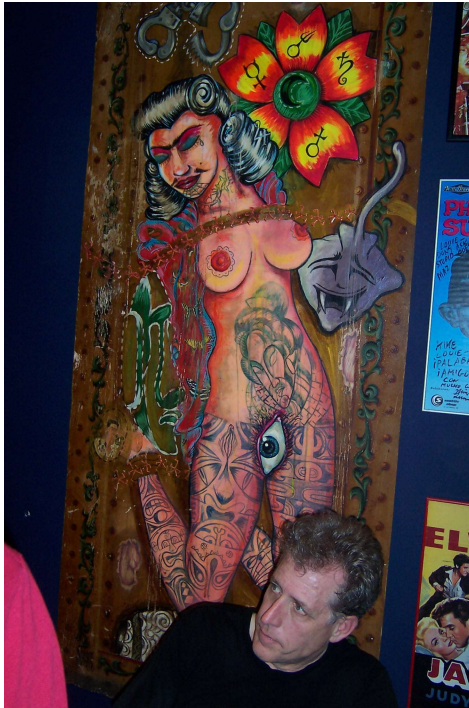


wake up break, he slept about 18 hours straight and didn't come to sound check. The rest of us took every opportunity to do some sightseeing.

At the Louie Louie Club sound check, A Spanish TV crew shot the three Blasters performing the instrumental BONE YARD and then interviewed the band. The director asked the Blasters to do intros and station IDs in Spanish. John Bazz took the lead and read some lines in Spanish addressing the TV audience. The guys had a lot of fun with that.

The Louie Louie Club is very small but a cool place. The Blasters were so loud that





the drums and guitar amps weren't put through a PA system. There's nothing more pure than loud rock n roll in a small room.

Backstage, a few fans were trying to convince Phil to add a Hank Williams song to the Blasters set. Phil instead said: "I'll sing it for you right now." Phil proceeded to sing a few Hank Williams songs, but I only heard a bit, because I was preparing the stage.

The Blasters were due onstage in 10 minutes and the club was almost empty - which got me nervous. This tour had been promoted and advertised well, and the Blasters have a big following in Spain. The Blasters walked out on stage and started testing the amps. Suddenly there was a big crowd. I was surprised and didn't know where they came from.

In a rare instance, the band opened with WINDOW UP ABOVE. Right after the first song, Phil told a joke: "I was in Africa with Madonna. I got all the Africans to contribute to a new charity that is so important. We're gonna bring AC to the EC (laughing). You need air conditioning." I don't think the Spanish fans got the joke but Phil has always suffered in Europe

where few hotels have air conditioners. The next day we got him a fan on-stage.

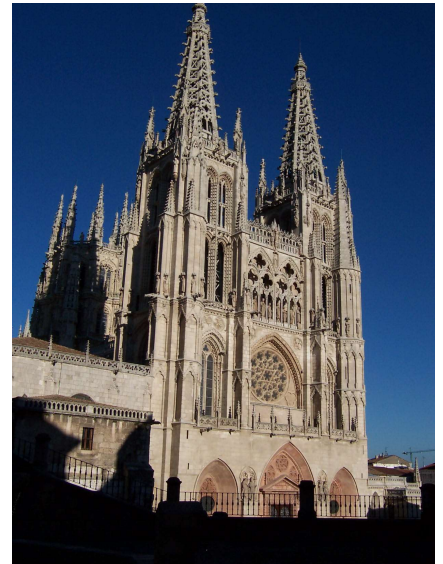
**November 8 – Gijon at Louie Louie Club** -- The second night's show started with AMERICAN MUSIC -- specifically for a fan who was yelling that request the previous night. They pulled out a few rarer songs: LOVE 24 HOURS A DAY and HELP YOU DREAM. Jerry Angel reminded Phil to dedicate GLAD YOU'RE DEAD, YOU RASCAL to US Defense Secretary Rumsfeld, who had resigned his position early that day. Phil usually dedicates the song to President Bush from the



President Bush from the



Paco, The Blasters and Kike





people of New Orleans.

A funny moment happened when, between songs, Phil looked at his watch. The crowd instantly booed fearing the show was almost over. Phil shrugged, laughed and said: "Sorry." He heard there was a curfew because of residents living nearby. The Blasters finished with DADDY ROLLIN' STONE which I thought was a real high energy finisher.

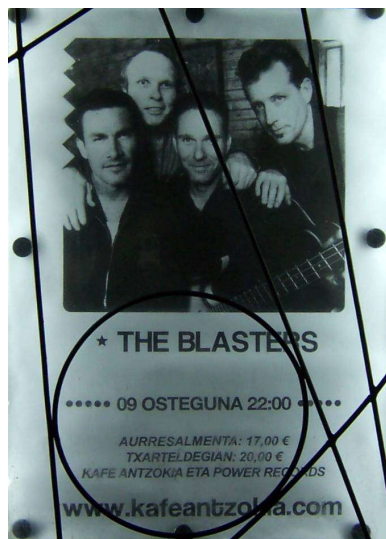
**November 9 -- Bilbao at Kafe Antzokia** – Throughout the tour, every effort was made to get Phil to the hotel to rest while the rest of the band did sound check.

We found that when Phil comes to sound check he sings too much, talks too much, and then doesn't have as strong a voice at show time. There was a decent crowd tonight but there didn't seem to be any long time Blasters fans there.

**November 10** – Promoter Kike Louie and Jaco the driver stayed with us on the whole tour and became great friends of ours. Kike

took us to all the good restaurants. The food was amazing on the whole trip. On our way from Bilbao to Madrid, we stopped for some sight seeing in Kike's home town of Burgos. Perfect timing, because it was Kike's birthday today. Burgos is a beautiful old town with lots of great architecture. The Burgos Cathedral is the most popular attraction and is famous for its vast size and unique Gothic-style architecture. It was built in 1221 and in 1919 became the burial place of Rodrigo 'El Cid' Díaz de Vivar. We all spent a lot of time walking through the streets and taking photos of the massive Cathedral.

**Madrid at El Sol** -- The show was very late – about midnight – so we had plenty of time after sound check to hang around and see the city. We walked around through the big market square in Madrid and then ate at a little Café called Bam Balam. On the way back we walked through a crowded street near the club. A tourist took a photo of some prostitutes and they started hit-





ting him over the head with their purses and hand bags. We just looked on and laughed. It looked like a scene from a hidden camera TV show or something.

By the time we got back to the club, the place was packed with people – a good crowd. The band sounded loud and the crowd responded. During LONG WHITE CADILLAC, a leather-jacketed rockabilly guy stood up in front of Phil, faced the audience and made motions as if he had his hands up on a steering wheel. He and the crowd were having a great time. Just before ONE BAD STUD, Phil said: “Our good friend, the one who promoted this show – it’s his birthday today.” Then Phil sang HAPPY BIRTHDAY. Then he said: “This is for Kike,” and they played ONE BAD STUD.



In the encore, the band played ROCK BOPPIN’ BABY. An attractive long-haired girl got up onstage to dance.

Phil sang the lyrics directly to her as she danced her way through the whole song. We keep kidding Kike that we were going to get him something special for his birthday, but we never did. But everyone thought this was something set up for Kike’s birthday, but no, it was a total coincidence. She thanked the band as she left the stage and Phil gave her a round of applause. Phil then said: “This is for Madrid and all the good guitar players out here.” Then they went into AMERICAN MUSIC.

**November 11 – Zaragoza at Casa Del Loco** – A nice metropolitan city. Our hotel was only two blocks from the club. The hotel was located next to an 8 block-long walking mall of fountains, beautiful marble work and old buildings including the Basilica of the Pillar, the Cathedral of the San Salvador, and the Palace of the Market.

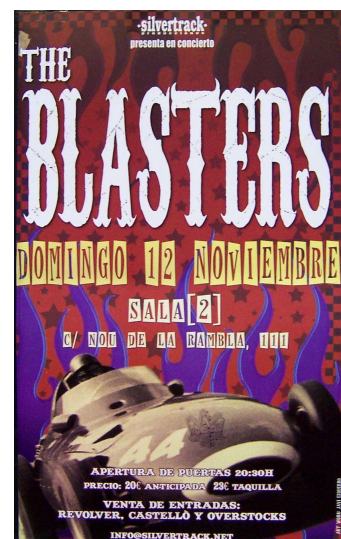
Another decent-size crowd attended. At one point, one of the swirling lights got stuck and aimed right in the eyes of Jerry Angel. It made it difficult for him to see the band for cues. So he got up off the drums in protest while I tried to translate that idea to the lighting man. Phil took the opportunity to play a solo song KEEP YOUR HANDS OFF. Finally, after Kike Louie translated the idea, they turned the light off and peace was restored. The crowd tonight was reserved in the beginning but by the end of the show, they grew so loud, the band came out for a second encore: TROUBLE BOUND.

**November 12 – Barcelona at Apolo 2** – The most disappointing thing about coming to Barcelona for a quick visit, is not getting to see such a cool city. We drove in just in time for sound check and then had to leave early in the morning to catch the flight home.

We were running late so we all went right to sound check, including Phil. It was a treat for all who were there. They played full band versions of I SHALL NOT BE MOVED, MILK COW BLUES, and the beginning of SO LONG BABY GOODBYE which morphed into WHEN THE SAINTS GO MARCHING IN.

The Blasters played a solid set before a big crowd. By this point, the Blasters are a well-oiled machine and their set list stayed pretty much the same, with only the order of the songs changing. Phil’s voice was a little bit hoarse – probably from doing 6 gigs in 6 nights and a sound check only a few hours earlier. It was overall an excellent show and a great place to end the tour. For me this was a lifetime milestone - my 1000 concert.

All the shows had large crowds which inspired the band to play better. Everyone agreed this was a memorable tour. The Blasters can’t wait to return to Spain. -AM





## ***Tales From the Road - Dave Alvin***

**De Moines, Iowa at the Simon Este Amphitheatre -  
7/22/99**

*The Setting: A concert on the Demoinies River in midsummer with bugs flying around everywhere. Half way through the set, Dave stopped and said:*

"I hate to stand up here and complain, but I think that every bug on the Demoinies river is on this stage with us tonight. Let's have a big round of applause for tonight's bugs."

The crowd applauded as Dave continued: "They shall inherit the earth, so we might as well get used to entertaining them now." Dave moved on to introducing the band: "I'm very proud of my band. On the pedal steel, mandolin and telecaster guitar, originally from San Bernardino, CA, Mr. Rick Shea and his many bugs. Back here on the bass guitar, tonight we're officially calling it the 'bug guitar,' hailing originally from San Diego, CA, Mr. Gregory 'Bugs' Boaz. Over here on the keyboards, all the way from Springfield, MO, a man who, if he wasn't a romantic keyboardist, after tonight would be an entomologist; Mr. Joe Terry and his amazing critters. Hailing originally from Marshalltown Iowa, a former paper boy for the Demoinies Register. A hometown hero. . .to his mother. Please welcome Mr. Bobby Lloyd Hicks."

"I'm gonna tell you a story about Bobby growing up: There's a water tower in Marshalltown, Iowa and for many of the young boys growing up there, it was a challenge to climb to the top of that water tower and not get caught. Bobby would spend his Saturday mornings looking out his bedroom window at that water tower. He would say to himself: 'Someday I'm gonna climb that water tower.' As he would go about his chores and work in the backyard surrounded by good Iowa bugs he would look up at the top of that water tower and say; 'To dream the impossible dream.'" Bobby chimed in on his drum microphone: "It was a small town."

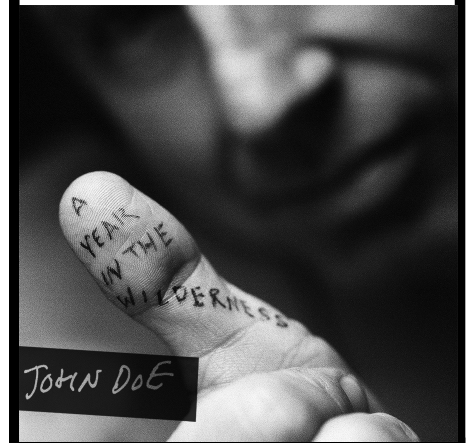
Dave finished it off: "The story has a happy ending. He did climb the water tower, but he got suspended from school, put on probation, and locked in his room for a month."

**Highly Recommended  
New Release  
John Doe**

### **A Year in the Wilderness**

John Doe from X and the Knitters releases another fine solo album on Yep Roc Records. Dave Alvin helps out on lead guitar.

[www.yeproc.com](http://www.yeproc.com)



Now on **BlastersNewsletter.com** you can read old Blasters newsletters in full color with expanded additional content from the period. Also for reference, is an extensive tour date archive for the Blasters and Dave Alvin.

**www.  
BlastersNewsletter.com**

### **AMERICAN MUSIC: The Blasters / Dave Alvin newsletter**

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**contributing writer Tom Wilk**

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# Blasters Tour of Spain Photos







I was taking random photos out the van window at high speed. It was weeks later when I downloaded the photos and saw this ominous shot. Poor guy.

