

THE STORY OF A THING

# A Designer's Favorite Possession: A Guitar That Reminds Him of Home

As told to Emily Spivack

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*In this series for T, Emily Spivack, the author of “Worn Stories,” interviews creative types about their most prized possessions. In April, the designer Scott Sternberg, formerly of Band of Outsiders, launched Entireworld, a line of well-made men’s and women’s clothing intended for everyday wear. Here, he describes the music shop that was a sanctuary for him as an adolescent, and the guitar he purchased there.*

There was this music store where I grew up in Dayton, Ohio, called Dayton Band. It was a little free-standing building that was always filled with cigarette smoke. You’d walk in and the guy at the front desk, Jim, would be smoking. The private rooms in the basement where they taught guitar would be filled with smoke. I used to take lessons from a guy named Rick Bashore. He would teach me a song or a lick, or we’d jam together. He’d get really into it and forget he was smoking a cigarette so it’d be hanging out of his lip, ash falling everywhere. Or, he’d stick the cigarette on the head of the guitar and save it for later, which I thought was really cool.

Going to the store was about self-preservation. I didn’t identify with the kids around me. I was gay, but not out at the time or in touch with that. Spending time at Dayton Band was a respite, like, “I’ll just be over here strumming this guitar in a corner.”



Sternberg purchased the guitar in his hometown of Dayton, Ohio. Laure Joliet

From when I was 9 years old until I was 13 or 14, my mom would drop me off at the store for guitar lessons. One afternoon she was late picking me up and I couldn't have been happier checking out the guitars, synthesizers and keyboards. From then on, I would ask her to pick me up later so I could hang out. I would sit in a corner for hours with a Rickenbacker electric and a little amp with the volume turned way down and chill. The dudes who worked there were cool, musicians who just wanted to play and hang out, and I really got to know them.

This place was so Dayton, Ohio; it couldn't have been more Midwestern. It wasn't sophisticated but the guys who worked there had insanely cool taste in music and educated me about 1970s rock 'n' roll and all the greats. I live in L.A. now, but there's an Ohio boy in me that'll never go away.

I got this guitar from Dayton Band after I'd gone away to college. I had pawned off a crazy Les Paul and I wanted an acoustic. I went back to visit the store during Thanksgiving or a winter holiday and they had this Guild guitar they'd been

holding onto for me. They were like, “This is your guitar, man.” I’ve had it ever since. I took it back to school with me in St. Louis, and then to four different homes in Los Angeles.

It’s always leaning against a wall in a corner of my house. I’ll pick it up and play it when I’m thinking about stuff I need to do, meditating on an idea or drinking my morning coffee. I’ll screw around on it, just an involuntary thing. In my current home it resides in a beautiful little sun-filled room that I’ve turned into a music room, with an old Hohner Pianet from the 1950s and a Korg synthesizer from the 1990s. I see it every day because it’s across the hall from my bedroom. I wake up, get out of bed, and see it staring at me: “Play me. Play me.”

*This interview has been edited and condensed.*

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