

## Q&A with G-Love

BY RYAN SALM | TAHOE.COM

Q: Where did you find the funk heard in your music?

A: I got it from two sides. The first was the pursuit of playing guitar and learning the Delta blues. The other is from growing up listening to hip-hop, and one day they both collided. My drummer didn't grow up listening to hip-hop. He grew up playing the stuff hip-hop samples like the Meters and James Brown. Hip-hop was looped off those kinds of records. He would know where I and the music were coming from, and immediately we had a cohesive sound based around that.

Q: Are you more into the hip-hop or the blues these days?

A: I am still into both: I am listening to more of the old stuff. The blues is something you can always go back to. Listening to those classic blues records always brings me back to my roots. The blues are the solution.

Q: Who are your biggest inspirations?

A: Bob Dylan and The Beatles were my first really big influences. From there I got hooked on bluesman John Hammond and from there it went on to Robert Johnson and Big Bill Broonzy. Then there was the hip-hop like Tribe Called Quest, Gang Starr, De La Soul. That whole 1986-95 hip-hop is what I consider the golden age of hip-hop. I always go back to those records.

Q: What is the best thing about being a musician?

A: The best thing is playing music every night. When you are a kid playing in the room it is a fantasy, a dream come true. You never think that you can actually pull it off. It's a pipe dream. Then you get to meet everyone you grew up listening to. The friendships with other musicians and the ability to get on stage and play every night is amazing. It was my dream to make a record. I put a lot of work into making it happen and it did. Now it's 16 years later and it's my life. It is the cycle of life. You tour for a year then make a record then repeat the process.

Q: What's more fun — writing the songs or performing them?

A: The writing is what it's all about. That moment of creation is the natural high. When you are playing live and you're really into it, it has that same euphoric feeling. I am addicted to the stage. It's like "Where the wild things are." It is like a monster. I have stage fright but how you deal with it is the difference between a good performer and a bad performer. Even James Brown had stage fright. Everyone has it whether it be throwing up or whatever. You are on stage and bearing your heart and soul to people you don't know. A victorious night is when you overcome that feeling and it becomes inspirational. The nights I worry about are when I am not nervous. The crowd can tell that you are human when you make a mistake. Breaking through the mistake is what it is all about. I have never puked before a gig but I have other issues. When I first started I almost got an ulcer in the mid-90s because I was feeling the stress and nervousness to be on my game. I played 250 shows a year. These days I get nervous but not bodily wise.

Q: How do you keep the music fresh?

A: We keep it fresh by continuously writing new tunes and making sure we are doing something new with the old tunes. Writing new tunes and learning new covers keeps it fresh.

Q: What's the key to having a good time on the road?

A: The key is three different things: First it is really working on the music. You've got to rehearse with the band and rehearse with yourself in order to have great shows. If you put the work in and have great shows then all the other B.S. that comes along with it will be all right. Shows are only a few hours of a day and if you don't get your rocks off during that time it can be a waste of a day. Second is eating well and exercising. I do it every day. I need to eat healthy — no burgers and pizza. I put good things in my body to keep my stamina up. Thirdly is finding peace of mind. Are you rich enough to have your lady around on tour? Do you want to be single? How are you gonna see your kid and family? How do you deal with being away from family?

Q: What is your favorite thing about playing in Lake Tahoe year after year?

A: We always had a vibe in Tahoe. We have always had great shows like those days at the Nugget. Reno is close and we had a bad time there once when our sound guy had a run-in with the law. The law caught up with him in the Hilton parking lot. We were surrounded by 20 cops and they found some weed. Two of

my crew went to jail. That was a fond memory. It is great to be in Tahoe. I swim in the lake when I can and I have definitely had nights when I give my gig money back to those casinos. I have skied Squaw a bunch too.

Q: Do you have a favorite condiment?

A: G-Love and Special Hot Sauce available on philadelphonic.com

— Ryan Salm, Lake Tahoe Action

### **If you go**

Who: G-Love & Special Sauce

When: 9 p.m. Wednesday and Thursday, Sept. 9-10

Where: Crystal Bay Casino's Crown Room

Tickets: \$25 advance, \$30 day of show

Original URL: <http://www.tahoe.com/article/20090903/EDITORSCHOICE/909039991/1020/WHATTODO>