

Post-Surgery, G. Love Sounds Better Than Ever

The Singer Plays Saturday Night at the West Beach Music Festival



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By [Shannon Kelley](#) ([Contact](#))

It seems no one deserves a warm Santa Barbara welcome this weekend more than G.Love. Since having to cancel his September 2008 stop at the Bowl due to an illness in his headliner's camp, the Philly-raised singer-songwriter has been touring relentlessly in support of his latest release, *Superhero Brother*. Now back on the road again, G.Love & Special Sauce are stopping by Saturda's installment of the West Beach Music Festival, directly before Ben Harper and Relentless7 close out the night. The *Indy's* Shannon Kelley recently caught up with the singer via phone to discuss the fest, the fans, and his longstanding ties to Santa Barbara.

So, back in Santa Barbara again! How has your year been? It's been good. Just basically touring a lot. Actually, I had a vocal surgery in November, so I recuperated from that for a couple months then we did a couple winter tours and now we're out on our big summer tour.... Then we'll start working on new stuff.

Yeah — how has all that touring been after the surgery? It's been great, my voice has gotten a lot stronger. I've been taking a lot of vocal rehab and vocal lessons and stuff, so it's been a positive thing, all in all. [It's] just [like] learning a new instrument. I'd been using my vocal

cords and kind of taking it for granted, but it really is an instrument. So you have to tune it and practice it and take care of it and warm it up and just be cognizant of that, you know what I mean?

Well, we're pumped to have you back. This time, you're playing a festival — you guys have a lot of experience both headlining and being a part of a huge line-up, so I wonder how they're different. Festivals are great because you get the opportunity to play with some other artists that you're friends with and don't get to see a lot, like we're playing with Ben Harper, so that's always cool playing with Ben. The thing with playing festivals is you want to bring your A-game [because] you get the opportunity to play in front of someone else's people and not just fans that are there to see you. It's kind of like high school battle of the bands in a way, you know? You want to make an impression. That sounds funny, but you wanna bring a great show — you always want to bring a great show, but especially at a festival you want to push up to that next level.

Is it harder to condense the songs down to a smaller set? The shorter set length always is a challenge for me, but it does force you to trim a lot of the fat off your set. You gotta try to squeeze a lot into a little bit of a time. It's a challenge, but it's a good challenge.

You always have a lot going on: there's the writing on the blog and the video stuff and obviously the music, but there was also, at one point, talk of a cooking show. Last year when we talked you were working on a book called *How Not to Fuck Up Your Chances of Becoming a Music Star*. What kind of stuff are you up to now? All those things are always on the side burner. I made a children's book and I illustrated it and it's awesome, but we're having a tough time trying to get it published. I am continuing to write the *101 Ways Not to Fuck Up Your Chances...* and actually am gonna start releasing parts chapter by chapter on my blog. Also, I've been doing my 12:07 video blogs; every Thursday at 12:07 I do a little 30-second little video wherever I'm at, whatever I'm doing. Other than that, just touring and really focusing on the music and planning on making the best record of my career this fall! And hopefully that will lead to some other opportunities.

I read a post on your blog about you being confronted by a drunk girl after a show who was pissed you didn't play "Baby Got Sauce." Every time I go to a show where the band has been around for a long time, but has one or two songs that were big radio hits, I always think to myself, 'They must get so sick of playing that.' Do you ever get sick of playing a song like that? No I don't get sick of them... but as an artist I always want to play my newest songs and I do play them and I think if you allow yourself to play your newer material it helps your older material stay fresh. But inevitably you can't play every song that everybody wants to hear. Some people don't even want to hear those songs that are like your most famous songs, like they hate them, you know? But it's kind of like the Grateful Dead with "A Touch of Grey;" that was a huge hit that brought them a huge pop audience, but it's not like they ever needed that or had that before.

So, musicians are kind of unique among artists in that you have to go back to your old work all the time. What's it like, going back to things you wrote or recorded a long time ago? I guess it just all goes in cycles. Some stuff that you're writing you like when you're writing it, and some stuff I don't really like so much anymore, you think what the hell was I

thinking? But I think the songs themselves kind of decide their longevity. Certain songs that I've recorded just fit into the record, but we never play them live. They just come at a certain time. But some don't ever make it to the live stage. Some get left behind, and then there are some songs that are great live that you never capture in the recording studio.

You've played Santa Barbara quite a bit. Any favorite things to do while you're in town?
Surfing! Yeah, I think we might have a free day after the show. And just put on a good show, it's a great town, we always have a good time playing Santa Barbara at the — wait, is it at the Bowl this time? Or is it actually at the beach?

The beach. Ahh, cool.

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G. Love and the Special Sauce play Bob's Stage at the West Beach Music Festival this Saturday, September 19 at 6 p.m. For full concert and lineup details, including tickets and VIP passes, call 963-4408 or visit westbeachfestival.com.

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