

James Burton International Guitar Festival

By [Paul McGrath](#) | August, 2007

Guitarists were three deep at Shreveport, Louisiana's Municipal Auditorium between March 30 and April 1, and among them were slide man Lee Roy Parnell, eternal rocker-boy Rick Derringer, acoustic sensations Monte Montgomery and Thom Bresh, Southern-rock ambassador Dickey Betts, and Ed King—the man who birthed the "Sweet Home Alabama" riff. They were there to help the legendary James Burton host his second James Burton International Guitar Festival—a charity event that puts guitars into the hands of Louisiana kids who might otherwise never own one. Last year's event yielded 600 guitars, a number that will likely be doubled this year.

For Burton, this is payback for a lifetime spent making music. From the time he first took the same Shreveport stage in 1954, as the 14-year-old guitarist for the Louisiana Hayride, Burton has been the staff picker for Ricky Nelson, Elvis Presley, Emmylou Harris, Merle Haggard, and John Denver, and he has played on thousands of other sessions.

"I'm a very lucky man," said Burton. "God gave me this talent that allowed me to spend my life playing music, and now I get the chance to start some kids on the same road. There is nothing in this world that gives me more satisfaction."

Until joining Chris Isaak for the finale, Burton let the others do the work. Montgomery brilliantly interpreted "Little Wing" in a way no one could have imagined possible. Muriel Anderson's "regular kind of 13/8 Bulgarian thing" left the audience's clap-along attempts in the dust. Merle Travis' son, Thom Bresh, played his roots on both sides of his "double-front" acoustic. And Lee Roy Parnell's slide playing on his goldtop Les Paul was the hit of the show. After confessing that he copped most of his licks from Dickey Betts—"Just so that you know that I know," he joked—Parnell returned to play note-perfect Duane Allman lines beside Betts on "Southbound" and "Ramblin' Man."

"Both of those guys are in the air everywhere," said Parnell. "You can't avoid their influence."

[Guitar Lesson Scams](#)

My quest for the truth behind all the web's guitar training methods

www.SmartGuyReviews.com/Guitar

[Suck at Guitar?](#)

Our guitar teachers review the top home-study courses. Some are great!

www.musiciansinfo.org

[James Burton-Free Radio](#)

Listen to James Burton Radio Free Unlimited Listening!

www.pandora.com

[Online Guitar Lessons](#)

Learn to play guitar with high-quality video. Take free sample!

www.WorkShopLive.com

Ads by Google

Guitar Player is part of the Music Player Network.

[Gear](#) [Brands](#) [Artists](#) [A](#) [B](#) [C](#) [D](#) [E](#) [F](#) [G](#) [H](#) [I](#) [J](#) [K](#) [L](#) [M](#) [N](#) [O](#) [P](#) [Q](#) [R](#) [S](#) [T](#) [U](#) [V](#) [W](#) [X](#) [Y](#) [Z](#) [0-9](#) [Topics](#)

Guitar Player is a trademark of New Bay Media, LLC. All material published on www.guitarplayer.com is copyrighted © 2006 by New Bay Media, LLC. All rights reserved.