

GUITAR AFICIONADO

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GUITARS, CARS, WATCHES,
WINE & THE DELUXE LIFE

GUITAR AFICIONADO MAGAZINE

VAN
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TALKS
TONE!

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BIG TIME

MARTIN'S WATCH-INSPIRED MILESTONE GUITAR

**RICKY GERVAIS
BRENT IS BACK!**

MOTORING SPECIAL

PAT SIMMONS, JOHN DATES,
LED ZEP'S McLAREN
& BOB MARLEY'S BIMMER

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**THE TWO-MILLIONTH
MARTIN GUITAR**

The legendary guitar maker celebrates another milestone with an exquisite, one-of-a-kind showpiece instrument.

BY CHRIS GILL

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**RICK GERVAIS PLAYS FOR
MORE THAN LAUGHS**

The actor, comedian, and acoustic guitar aficionado returns as rock-star hopeful David Brent in his new Netflix film.

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Guitar Aficionado hits the road for its annual celebration of the connection between guitars and wheels.

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PAT SIMMONS

The Doobie Brothers guitarist and his wife, Cris, cross the U.S. on antique Harley-Davidsons, and bring *GA* along for the ride.

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John Dates reveals his life-long fascination with cars and racing in his captivating autobiography,

Change of Seasons.

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LED ZEPPELIN'S McLAREN

The untold story behind a McLaren MBE/D racecar that the legendary band sponsored for one season in 1974.

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Ricky Gervais with Gretsch Honey Dripper resonator guitar

COVER PHOTO BY - JOHN STERLING RUTH

PHOTOGRAPHY BY ELEANOR JANE. GROOMING BY EMMA LEON WITH KIEHL'S AND BUMBLE & BUMBLE. WARDROBE STYLED BY CHERYL KONTEH.

TIME MACHINE

To commemorate the company's two-millionth guitar, C.F. Martin & Co. collaborated with the RGM Watch Company to craft an exquisite, one-of-a-kind showpiece instrument.

— by CHRIS GILL —

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Several layers of aluminum, brass, pearl, flame maple, and other exotic tonewoods were crafted to resemble a watch movement.

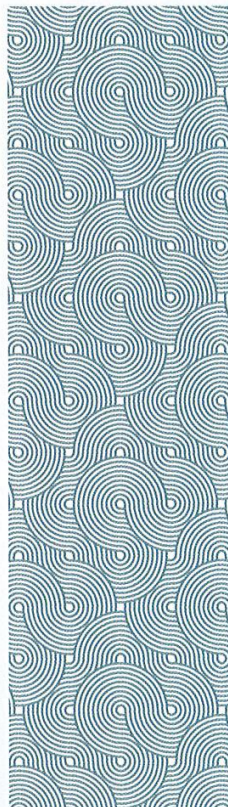
❁ IT TOOK C.F. MARTIN & CO. about 171 years between the company's beginnings in 1833 and 2004 to build its first million guitars. Remarkably, it took the company only 12 years to complete its next million guitars, hitting the two-million mark sometime in late 2016. To celebrate this impressive milestone, Martin built a commemorative, one-of-a-kind showpiece instrument like it did to celebrate the company's first millionth and 1.5-millionth guitars. ¶ "My ancestors would be amazed," says C.F. "Chris" Martin IV, the CEO of Martin Guitars. "Martin has been around for 184 years, and our guitars are as popular and successful as they've ever been. Some people are predicting gloom and doom for the guitar's future, but they forget just how long the guitar has lasted. The dreadnought just

had its 100th anniversary, for example. There aren't many products from 100 years ago that are still popular, but the guitar has defied the odds."

The pace of Martin's production has increased so rapidly that the milestone approached almost before the company completed its commemorative two-millionth guitar. Work on the instrument started in 2013, but the finishing touches on the guitar were not completed until October 2016. The guitar made its public debut at the 2017 Winter NAMM convention in Anaheim in January.

Whereas Martin's previous one- and 1.5-millionth guitars featured the work of independent craftsmen like inlay artists Larry Robinson and Harvey Leach and engravers Bob Hergert and Tara Mitchell, the two-millionth guitar was crafted with input from an entirely different sort of artisan: watchmaker Roland Murphy of the RGM Watch Company of Mount Joy, Pennsylvania. RGM is truly America's premier watch company, handcrafting and hand finishing beautiful heirloom-quality watches in a small workshop that employs only 11 craftsmen.

"About five years ago I went on a tour of the Martin factory," Murphy recalls. "I saw that they do a lot of custom work, and I thought it would be cool to embellish a guitar with *guilloché*, which is an engine-turning process where geometric patterns are cut into rotating metal surfaces with a stationary cutting tool. We use that process for many of our watches, and it's really a lost art. I contacted Martin, got Tim Teel's name and email address, and sent him some photos of our work. He was interested, but he didn't have anything particular in mind at the time."

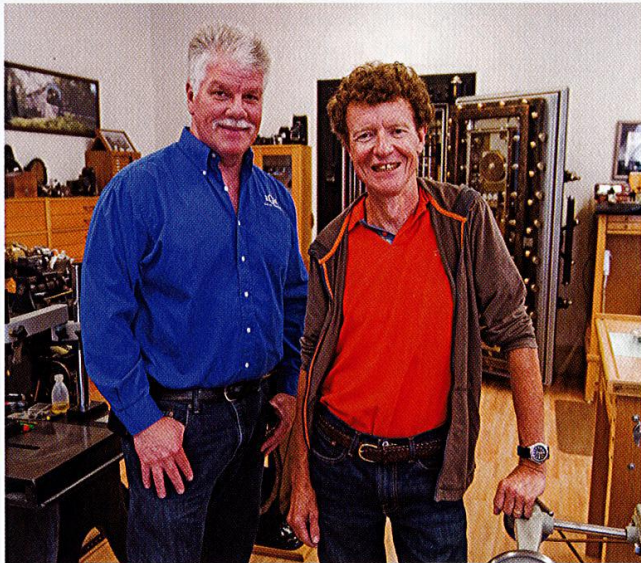
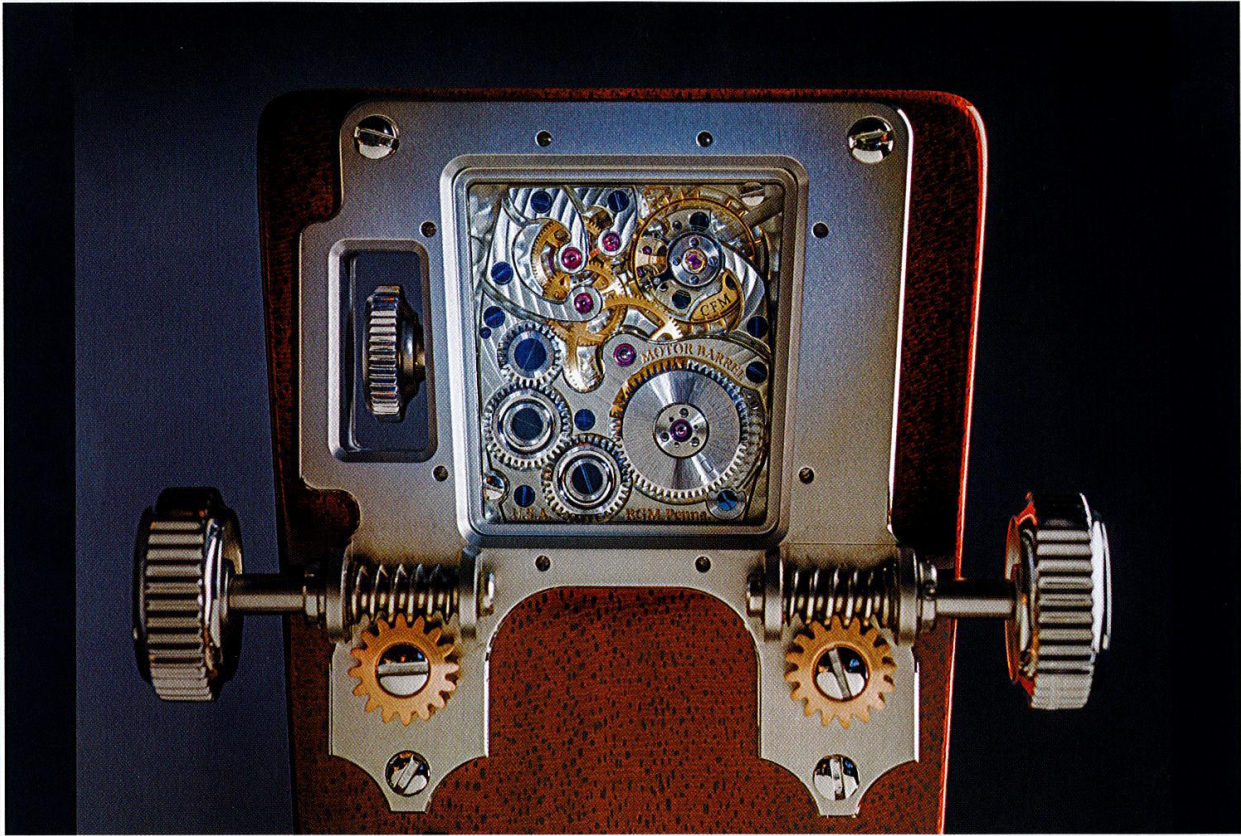


Two years passed and Murphy still hadn't heard anything back from Martin. Then one day, Martin Custom Shop director Scott Sasser decided that he wanted to build a special showpiece guitar and he discussed ideas with Teel, who is Martin's director of instrument design.

"Scott mentioned that he always wanted to do a watch-themed guitar," Teel recalls. "We talked about how we could do that. Around the same time, we realized that we were going to need to come up with an idea for Martin's two-millionth guitar, which was quickly approaching. We put two and two together and realized that the watch idea was perfect for that guitar. Once Chris Martin approved of the idea, we hired Robert Goetzl to do some concept drawings. Scott mentioned that he knew of a watchmaking company in Lancaster called RGM watches. I told Scott that they had reached out to me, so I reached out to Roland, who invited us to his workshop. When Scott and I visited them we were blown away by his operation."

Once RGM was brought into the creative process, the overall idea developed quickly. Murphy made suggestions for and corrections to the graphic designs for the top, back, and neck, which were inspired by a watch movement.

"At some point we recommended using our Caliber 20 watch as the inspiration for the guitar," Murphy says. "Since we already had CAD files for the Caliber 20's movement, that made it easier to come up with a design that was an accurate depiction of a watch movement. We also thought it would be cool to embed a real working watch into the headstock."



[clockwise from top] A working watch based on the RGM Caliber 20 is mounted in the headstock; flamed koa surrounds the top to resemble a watch bezel; Roland Murphy (left) and Chris Martin at RGM.

Front and back views reveal the intricate detail of the watch-inspired design.





[top] Rose-gold inserts adorn the crown-shaped tuner buttons; [bottom] The soundhole cover and rosette are decorated with exquisite guilloché engraving.



guitars featuring many of the same design elements.

“It’s going to be an unbelievably rare and collectible guitar,” says Martin special projects director Dick Boak. “It’s a work of art and a piece of history. When we made the one-millionth guitar, we also offered the D-100, and we made only 50 of those. It took us about 10 years to sell them all. I don’t know how many D-200 guitars we are going to make, but if somebody wants one, they can order one from us.”

While the design for the top and back of the D-200 is not as intricately detailed, the fingerboard on the D-200 and the showpiece guitar are essentially identical. The D-200’s top will feature an inlaid graphic gear design on an ebony pickguard that is also inlaid into the top, and it has similar flamed koa inserts surrounding the top. Instead of having a watch embedded in the headstock, the vertical C.F. Martin logo is inlaid in aluminum surrounded by abalone pearl.

RGM is also making a special watch that is only available with the D-200 Deluxe. “We designed something classic that has a hint of a guitar feel,” Murphy says. “We designed a dial with a larger hole in the middle to resemble a guitar’s soundhole, and we did engine-turning on the solid-silver dial. It comes in a leather watch box that goes into a special pocket built into the case.”

“Even the case is a significant part of the package,” Teel adds. “It’s a Zero Manufacturing case, which is the kind of case that you see in James Bond films. It’s molded aluminum and has a hygrometer built into the side of the case. It’s very protective but also attractive in its own right.”

While this magazine has frequently written about the relationship between watches and guitars, this collaboration between Martin and RGM transcended the usual similarities. Both companies are family owned, both are from Pennsylvania, and both emphasize an extremely high level of craftsmanship and precision. Even the RGM logo resembles the vertical C.F. Martin logo featured on the D-45.

“I think that most people will appreciate the craftsmanship as well as the risk and challenge of building something like this,” Murphy says. “The commitment that Martin dedicated to this project was inspiring. Very few companies would commit to a project like this where you don’t know how much it is going to cost you and you’re willing to let people be craftsmen and do things the best way possible. Most companies are only concerned with how much something is going to cost. Martin didn’t limit us that way, and that is so rare. They only wanted us to make the guitar as best as we could.”