



## Larry Joe Taylor's 26th Annual Texas Music Festival

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We just got back from [Larry Joe Taylor's 26th Annual Texas Music Festival](#) in Stephenville and it was a blast - 5 days of excellent country music with over 50 bands and singer songwriters, camping, eating and drinking, and great people watching! We must like it because this was our 12th LJT Festival - not bad, but we know several artists and fans who haven't missed a single one!



1989 was the first Larry Joe Taylor Music Festival and it was a one day event in Mingus, Texas. A flatbed trailer was the stage for six artists, there were no food vendors, and the crowd was around 100 people. In 2003, the festival had become so successful that it outgrew Mingus and moved to Melody Mountain Ranch (Larry Joe bought the Ranch) about 7 miles from where Larry Joe attended Tarelton State in Stephenville. This April the 26th Annual Festival included:

- ↳ 5 days of music from over 50 excellent singer songwriters
- ↳ over 300 acres on Melody Mountain Ranch with around 1000 campsites full of trailers, tents, motor homes, and other things to catch some shuteye
- ↳ three stages for music
- ↳ a VIP area with a backstage bar with free food and beer, VIP (very important potties that are even air conditioned), backstage seating, and sky boxes above the stage
- ↳ over 25 vendors selling everything from pizza to burgers to fajitas to corn dogs plus hats and frozen margaritas
- ↳ more that 50,000 fans who love music, drinking, dancing, and good times
- ↳ a bar serving frozen margaritas, beer, wine, excellent Zing Zang Bloody Marys, and more



Here's the line-up for Larry Joe Taylor's 26th Annual Texas Music Festival:

- ↳ **Allsup's Stage** - a covered stage and open grassy field around the outside of the pavilion. This is a stage where the fans can get up close to the musicians and listen to and appreciate the music:

- ↳ **Wednesday** - T-Birds Garage Pub Winner, Richard Leigh, Walt Wilkins & the Mystiqueros, and Joe Ely
- ↳ **Thursday** - Prophets & Outlaws, Tommy Alverson, Keith Sykes, Max Stalling, and Gary P. Nunn - Clay McClinton was scheduled to play but was seriously injured in a car accident
- ↳ **Friday** - 106.9 The Ranch Winner, Chuck Pyle, Michael Hearne, Dolly Shine, The Damn Quails, and Deryl Dodd
- ↳ **Saturday** - Terri Hendrix & Lloyd Maines, Steve Fromholtz Tribute, Davin James, and Ray Wylie Hubbard



- ↳ **Bud Light Stage** - a huge stage with a jumbo tron on each side of it and a large open area for thousands of music and party fans plus several vendors surrounded the perimeter of the stage:

- ↳ **Tuesday** - KHYI Winner; Larry Joe Taylor, Dave Perez, Mike McClure, & Deryl Dodd song swap; Bart Crow; and Kevin Fowler
- ↳ **Wednesday** - Curtis Grimes, Uncle Lucius, Cody Johnson, Kyle Park, Stoney LaRue, and Eli Young Band
- ↳ **Thursday** - Mark McKinney, Sean McConnell, Casey Donahew Band, Wade Bowen, and Randy Rogers Band
- ↳ **Friday** - Sam Riggs & the Night People, Charla Corn, William Clark Green, Whiskey



Myers, Roger Creager, and Josh Abbott Band

↳ **Saturday** - Eleven Hundred Springs, Tejas Brothers, Brandon Rhyder, Reckless Kelly, Jason Boland & the Stragglers, Larry Joe Taylor

↳ **Zing Zang Stage** - this stage is inside T-Bird Garage Pub which has a bar area, outside covered patio that overlooks the Bud Light stage, and a stage that can be partitioned into a small more intimate setting (for Bloody Mary Morning Music) or opened up for dancing and lots more music fans:

↳ **Every morning at 10:30** was Bloody Mary Morning with music by Thom Shepherd and Coley McCabe and some special guests - it doesn't get much better than after a long day and night of music and lots of beer, starting the day off with a couple Zing Zang spicy Bloody Mary's

↳ **Saturday Night** Cooder Graw started playing after the Bud Light stage music stopped - great to see Cooder Graw back with some of the original band members and Matt playing "Susie," his washer board



The Allsup's stage is for the serious music lovers and a portion of the music is acoustic; near the front of the Bud Light is party city and packed with lots of young music and party fans; and T-Birds Garage Pub outside patio is a welcome escape from the sun, an opportunity to have a hard drink, and get away from the crowd but still enjoy the music on the main stage.

Every year Larry Joe and all of the Taylor family (Larry's wife Sherry, Zack his drummer and son, and Martha who is Zack's wife) surprise us with something new. Some of what was new this year is a bigger VIP area with a larger bar, some new food vendors, a lot of bands playing the festival for the first time, another exit to help eliminate the Sunday morning congestion, crushed rock around some of the main stage area to keep the dust down, and more. It's little improvements like that that keep making Larry Joe's festival one of the best. Some of the other things that make it one of the best music festivals in Texas and some of the reasons why we keep coming back include:

- ↳ it is hard to beat 5 days of music from 50 very talented singer songwriters and their bands
- ↳ you've got to admire the creative ways to get beer, food, people, chairs, and more from the campsite or cars to the music stage



- ↳ there is plenty of camping for tents to huge motor homes and lots of fun parties and pickin' and singin' around the campfires from noon until the sun comes up
- ↳ it's great people watching including unique costumes, beautiful women, handsome guys, weird hats, and a variety of ways to consume drinks
- ↳ fans use some innovate ways to get a better view of the stage (mostly on top of coolers) or a comfy way to listen to the music



- ↳ it's always fun trying to catch one of the LJT tee shirts shot out of an air gun into the crowd from high above the ground on a scissor crane
- ↳ there is a wide variety of music - Texas Country from the founding father of the progressive country movement (Gary P. Nunn); honky-tonk from Bart Crow; humable melodies that are straight from the saddle poetry (Chuck Pyle); music that's more "black water" than "red dirt" from Davin James; music that brings just enough heart-ache and angst mixed in with one heck of a party (Dolly Shine); neo-traditional country (Jason Borland & the Stragglers); southern rock with a western swing heritage from Josh Abbott Band; Kevin Fowler's beer drinkin', hell raisin', good time music; home grown country and a little bit of rock-n-roll from Mark McKinney; Michael Hearne's country swing and southwestern Americana; powerful and provocative lyrics from Randy Rogers Band; lyric driven roots

rock with soul (Sean McConnell); new rock sounds with elements of R&B and blues by Uncle Lucius; and lots more



- ↳ it's BYOB and lawn chairs or blankets - Larry Joe has you covered if you happen to drink more beer than you brought, he has a store that sells beer, ice, and more
- ↳ there a wide variety of choices for food from brisket to fresh oven baked pizzas to corn dogs but the delicious patty melts from Kate's Cafe are our favorites
- ↳ tickets are very reasonably priced for such an outstanding line-up
- ↳ you'll hear some unbelievable music from a wide variety of instruments



- ↳ some of the artists and bands are described and gives you an idea of the variety of music: tight, eclectic, and energetic (Brandon Rhyder); full of high energy and charisma like Roger Creager; a genuine Texas treasure that's hip, has brains, and an infectious attitude (Charla Corn); Eleven Hundred Springs' honesty and lack of pretense; a wandering minstrel, gypsy cowboy, and visionary song poet (Joe Ely); smart, charming, listenable, as well as danceable (Max Stalling); loaded with grit, swagger, and heart (Randy Rogers Band); and Stoney LaRue's golden ear musicianship, amusing wit, and soulful magnetism



This year we decided to implement the first annual Texas Outside Larry Joe Taylor Music Festival Awards and the winners are:

- ↳ **Outfits and Costumes** - you'll see lots of interesting and unusual outfits, so we have two awards:
  - ↳ **Most Patriotic Outfits** - I would be in deep ca-ca if I picked a winner, so here are the nominees



↳ **Best Dressed Nominees** - you can pick the winner



↳ **Best Bloody Mary** - the Zing Zang spicy Bloody Marys at T-Birds Garage Pub each morning starting at 10:00 plus music is the only way to start the day

↳ **Most Dedicated Fan** - Ralph wins by a large margin, he is always in the first row at the Bud Light Stage from the time the music starts and until it ends each night (where does he get the energy?), he's always surrounded by pretty women, constantly dancing at the Allsup's Stage, and during this years festival he was invited on the Bud Light Stage to dance to the roar of the crowd - and he's done all of that for the last several years



↳ **Best Group Tee Shirt Award** - a three way tie and there were lots of tough choices



↳ **Best Up & Coming Drummer** - Zack Taylor, Larry Joe's son, is good but it looks like his son will soon overtake him

↳ **Best Duo** - there were lots of good ones by it just don't get any better than Larry Joe and Dave Perez of the Tejas Brothers doing "7 Spanish Angels"

↳ **Cutest and Most Dynamic Female Performer** - Charla Corn is a runaway winner, but I love Terri Hendrix's smile and sincere, warm personality



↳ **Most Pleasant Surprise For A First Time LJT Festival Band** - we loved Curtis Grimes, Mark McKinney and Prophets and Outlaws

↳ **Best Dressed Granny Award Winning Singer Songwriter** - Richard Leigh always has a tie, vest, and white shirt on during his

- performance while the vast majority of the other performers are in shorts, tee-shirts, and Levis
- ↳ **Best Gesture of Goodwill To Help a Fellow Musician** - a banner for the audience to sign and an auction which raised over \$38,000 to help in Clay McClinton's recovery from a very serious accident
- ↳ **Highest Bid for an Auction Item** - \$10,000 for a performance at the winning bidder's house with Larry Joe, Davin James, Deryl Dodd, Dave Perez, and to get the bid up a little more Larry Joe included Tommy Alverson without him knowing about it



- ↳ **Best Attendance Record of the Returning Veterans** - this was Keith Sikes 13th, Tommy Alverson has been to almost every one, and Bart Crow has been to 25 as either a fan and a singer around the campfires (where he met his wife) or a performing artist (last six years)
- ↳ **Great Ideas** - free shuttle bus from the festival to Stephenville
- ↳ **Cutest Guys** - I didn't pick these guys, wonder who did



- ↳ **Cutest Girls** - I love this job but couldn't narrow it down to one



- ↳ **Best Group Song** - when several artists joined Larry Joe to sing Rusty Wier's "Don't It Make You Wanna Dance" and "May the Circle be Unbroken" plus when Keith Sikes, Lloyd Maines, Terri Hendrix, and more artists joined Michael Hearne in "New Mexico Rain"
- ↳ **Most Moving Moment** - there were several during the Steve Fromholtz Tribute



- ↳ **Best Food Vendor** - Kate's Cafe is hands down the best with cooked to order Patty Melts and fries that are delicious
- ↳ **Best New Food Vendor** - the award winning BBQ from Cowboys

- ↳ **Best Stage and Day To Get Up Close and Listen to the Music** - Allsup's Stage and every day at the stage was outstanding
- ↳ **Best Washer board Player** - tie between Matt with Cooder Graw and Roger Creager's washer board player



- ↳ **Best Attentive Potty Guard** - what a great job, is his wife in there?
- ↳ **Most Creative Beer Bong** - a female mannequin
- ↳ **Best Free Breakfast** - for the last several years, the Wednesday Night Boys have cooked delicious free breakfast tacos for anyone who wants them on Sunday



- ↳ **Miscellaneous Awards** - you pick the category



- ↳ **Best Band To Get The Crowd Excited** - Roger Creager had them going and beer, water bottles, beads, and even a pickle landed on stage during his set
- ↳ **Best Smile Out All Of The Artists** - no question that Deryl Dodd takes the trophy but close behind is Curtis Grimes and Roger Creager



- ↳ **The Most Gracious Hosts** - our thanks go the Taylor Family - Larry Joe and Sherry and Zack and Martha



From our perspective the best way to enjoy this festival is to buy VIP tickets which include free food, up close backstage reserved seating, air conditioned potties, and free beer, wine, soft drinks, or 40 Creek Whiskey! The Bud Light Stage gets packed with the younger set, so we set up our chairs toward the back and with a good view of the stage or jumbo tron and a little ways away for the mass of humanity. When someone comes on that we really want to listen to or watch, we'll use our VIP tickets to get us backstage and our assigned seats just in back of the drummers for the bands. And it's hard to beat the free dinners (pork loin, pulled pork, carnitas, a Cajun spread, brisket, and all of the fixins) which are all very good, plus the free beer. Check Larry Joe's website for details and pricing and the VIP tickets.



See you next year. And thanks again to the Taylors and the hundreds of staff that make this one of the best run and most enjoyable Texas Music Festivals.

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