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Larry Joe Taylor's 2015 Texas Music Festival

This is a long one!!! So grab a beer or two, turn on some Larry Joe Taylor music, plop down in a soft chair, and start reading this review of Larry Joe Taylor's Texas Music Festival.



This April was the 27th annual [Larry Joe Taylor Texas Music Festival & Chili Cookoff](#). Twenty seven years of good music! That's got to be close to some kind of record in the music festival business - but it turns out that BBC Proms is the worlds biggest and longest running at 102 years! The 18 day Kerrville Folk Festival will celebrate it's 43rd year in May, so Larry Joe's Festival may not be the longest running in Texas but it sure is one of the biggest and most fun Texas music festivals! How 'bout this - I'm giving it the "Biggest, Longest Running, 3 Stages & 6 Days, Chili Cookoff & Texas Country Singer Songwriter Music Festival" - the award is in the mail Larry Joe. No Texas festival can beat

that!

All of that good music over 6 days is enough for anyone - but's there's more: plenty of camping, picking around the campfires, multiple food vendors, a chili cookoff, and lots of partying and good times. Roger Creager summed it up well - "there are two parties that I don't want to miss: Fat Tuesday in New Orleans and LJT's Music Festival!"

This April, Larry Joe Taylor's 27th Annual Texas Music Festival & Chili Cook-up kicked off the music on Monday and the party and music and fun didn't let up until Sunday when it was sadly time for the majority of us to head back to our day jobs. The festival is held on LJT's Melody Mountain Ranch which is 6 miles north of Stephenville. Melody Mountain Ranch is several hundred acres that is normally a quite and peaceful rolling country side with cows grazing and deer prancing through the trees until April when the campers and tenters start rolling in for the music festival. This year there were over 50 musicians performing on three stages to over 50,000 fans and as usual LJT's Music Festival is BYOB (no glass), lawn chairs, and whatever else you want to enjoy during the music.

Monday's Music At Larry Joe Taylor's Music Festival

We rolled in on Monday, quickly got the RV settled into it's spot that we've had for the last 12 years, walked over to T-Birds Garage Pub, grabbed a couple spicy delicious Zing Zang Bloody Marys and sat down just as Gary P. Nunn was introduced. What a fun evening - small crowd of friendly music fans (a lot of whom we've gotten to know

over the last 12 years), cold beer, plenty of dancing and laughing, and as usual some great music from one of the legends of Texas country music.



Music on Tuesday

Tuesday's music started at 3 on the Zing Zang Stage with Thom Shepherd & Coley McCabe and several special guests. The Zing Zang Stage is one of the three stages on Melody Mountain Ranch - the smallest is the Zing Zang Stage inside T-Birds Garage Pub; the Allsup's Stage is a covered pavilion with a large outdoor grassy area and it's home to the acoustic music that typically starts around 11 or 12 and runs to 3 or 4; and the Bud Light Stage is the main stage and it's huge with food and merchandise vendors surrounding the perimeter, gigantic speakers, two jumbo trons displaying the bands, very good acoustics, and a back stage area with a bar, stage seating, and sky boxes for VIPs.





Some of the special guests performing on the Zing Zang Stage each day, which typically started at 10, included: Ray Johnston, Cleto Cordero, Callahan Divide, Jon Young, Joey Green, Carri Mahi, Nick Verzosa, Jenna McDaniel, Troy Cartwright, and more. Hard to beat a wide variety of talented new name musicians coupled with some delicious Bloody Marys at 10:00 in morning on Wednesday to Sunday - what a way to start each day!

At 6:00 Tuesday night the music started on the Bud Light Stage with:

📷 Larry Joe Taylor, Dave Perez, and Deryl Dodd



📷 Clay McClinton
📷 Delbert McClinton
📷 Casey Donahew Band



Even as good as that line-up was, from my perspective Dave, Deryl, and Larry Joe stole the show - the funny and lively antics of Deryl, Larry Joe's songs and voice, and Dave's dancing, singing, and accordion playing were outstanding.

Wednesday's Music

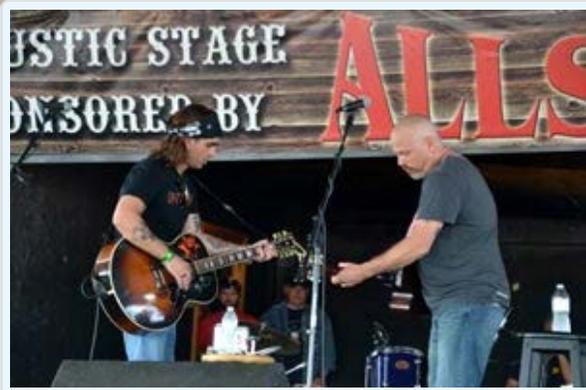
The day started with another couple Bloody Marys and music followed by the following songwriters on the Allsup's acoustic stage:

- ☑ T-Birds Songwriter Competition Winner
- ☑ Richard Leigh
- ☑ Cooder Graw





Cody Canada & Mike McClure



At 5 we moved the chairs over to the Bud Light Stage to listen to:

- Dolly Shine
- Adam Hood
- Cody Johnson



- ☑ Hayes Carll
- ☑ Jason Borland & the Stragglers
- ☑ Turnpike Troubadours

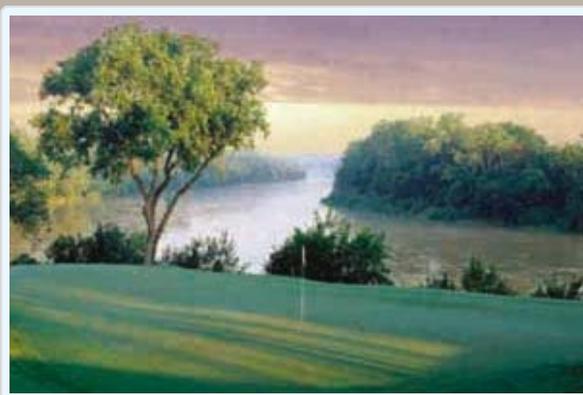


Pleasant Surprise Winner - the winner of the Songwriter Competition (I missed his name but wow, this kid is going places) was outstanding - great voice, good stage presence, and excellent lyrics.

Stole the Show - a tie between two of our favorites - Cooder Graw (great to see him back!) and Hayes Carll (love his lyrics and distinctive voice)..

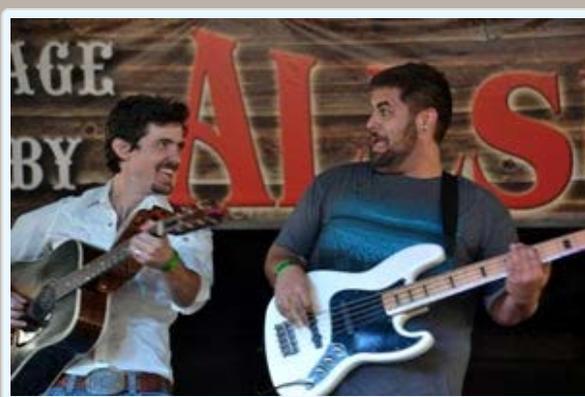
Golf & More Music on Thursday

Thursday morning we got up early (very difficult to do) to head up the road to play Sugar Tree Golf Course. Wow, what a spectacular course that is fair but challenging, scenic and a blast to play, and has good conditions and reasonable rates - it made our list of the [Best of the Best Texas Golf Courses](#) and here is a link to our review of [Sugar Tree Golf Course](#).



After popping a couple Tylenol and Advil (thanks to golf mixed with late nights and lots of beer), we made it in time for Thom Shepherd and a special guest plus a couple more Bloody Marys. And then one of the most enjoyable days of music we have ever had started on the Allsup's Stage:

- ☞ Luke Wade - wow, what a talented musician who was in the top 8 on The Voice in 2014
- ☞ Chuck Pyle - the "Zen Cowboy" is a sly humorist, innovative guitarist, and accomplished and prolific songwriter
- ☞ Zane Williams - we've never seen him before and what a mesmerizing performance and we can't wait to see him again



- ☞ Shane Smith & the Saints - described as carrying deep roots in his guitar case, country soul on his sleeve, and poetic lyrical integrity in his music
- ☞ Shinyribs - dynamic, funny, lively, entertaining, and some great songs
- ☞ Ray Wylie Hubbard - another legend with wit and humor and a predictable but fantastic set



Just after Ray Wylie stopped playing we were told that the music on the Bud Light Stage was going to be delayed an hour due to some incoming nasty weather. Sure enough, 20 minutes later it started pouring. After an hour the rain stopped, the sky cleared, the fans returned with coolers in tow, and the music started on the Bud Light Stage with:

- ☞ Mike Ryan
- ☞ Brandon Rhyder
- ☞ Kevin Fowler





👉 Randy Rogers Band
👉 Wade Bowen



Pleasant Surprise Winner - a tie from two people I can't wait to see again, Luke Wade and Zane Williams

Stole the Show - Shinyribs ran away with it with his unique dancing, funny antics, and lively band - what a hoot when he jumped off the stage and lead us all in a dancing congo line.

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Friday - Another Day of Excellent Music

I woke up thinking, "it's only Friday and we have two more full days of music with

over 25 bands plus another morning of Bloody Marys to help me kick start the day - can I make it?" After a couple cups of coffee and some Tylenol we meandered over to T-Birds for some music from three more talented singers and then plopped ourselves down in our chairs to listen to:



- ☑ Abby Cone
- ☑ Michael Hearne
- ☑ Keith Sykes



- ☑ Walt Wilkins & the Mystiqueros
- ☑ Max Stalling
- ☑ Radney Foster





The Bud Light Stage music started at 5 and included:

- ☑ Prophets & Outlaws
- ☑ Bart Crow
- ☑ Cory Morrow



- ☑ William Clark Green
- ☑ Stoney LaRue
- ☑ Josh Abbott Band



Another day of fantastic music - how can you beat the Mystiqueros, Michael Hearne, Max and Heather Stalling, Cory Morrow, and Stoney LaRue in one day!

Pleasant Surprise - we loved William Clark Green when he first got started when Larry Joe gave him an opportunity to be a solo singer on the acoustic stage. Over the years he has grown very successful but a bit rocky for our taste until his set Thursday night - wow, outstanding!

Stole the Show - a tie between Cory Morrow bouncing all over the stage and Walt Wilkins and the Mystiqueros - a Texas Hill Country super-group

After Radney Foster stopped playing and we were getting ready to migrate to the Bud Light Stage, they announced a very nasty **severe** storm with high winds and hail and a potential tornado was approaching. Sure enough, just as we got to the RV the wind picked up and it started pouring, lightening, and hailing. An hour later the sun was out and the music started played to a huge crowd - that was a tad muddy! The rain did create some funny, sad, and exciting moments thanks to lots of mud - slips and falls; muddy boots, coolers, clothes, and beer hauling trailers; and a hilarious round of mud skidding - a guy and then a girl got a running start, took a flying leap, and went sliding several feet in the mud on their belly!





The Music Continues on Saturday

I made it to Saturday morning ready to go - albeit a little slower than earlier in the week. I was confident that I could make it through 12 hours of music, a couple Bloody Marys, plenty of beer, and I was sure, a sunburn! The morning did require a few more Tylenol and three Bloody Marys (will I have withdrawal symptoms on Monday?) to get ready for music on the Allsup's Stage:

- ☒ Terri Hendrix & Lloyd Maines
- ☒ Dalton Domino



- ☒ Davin James
- ☒ Tejas Brothers



Then on to the Bud Light Stage at 3:00 on a beautiful sunny warm day for music from:

- ☒ Charla Corn
- ☒ Mark McKinney
- ☒

Deryl Dodd



- Sam Riggs & the Night People
- Charlie Robison
- Roger Creager



Larry Joe Taylor



Pleasant Surprise - we hadn't seen Charlie Robison for some time and he had an outstanding set with some of his oldest, as well as, his newest songs

Stole the Show - Davin's voice, picking, and songs are unbelievable; the Tejas Brothers always put on a great show; Roger is one of our favorites and he was hot and as usual got the crowd jumping; and Larry Joe's always good and his last two songs bring all the remaining artists to the stage for a verse or two of Rusty Weir's "Don't It Make You Want To Dance" and "Will The Circle Be Unbroken " - what a way to end the night and 6 days of excellent music! After Larry Joe's set, he always heads to the front of the stage to greet and thank his fans and sign autographs - nice touch and rarely seen!





After Larry Joe's set on Saturday night, a bunch of fans migrated to T-Bird's Garage Pub for a final set by Blue Edmondson. Great way to close a week of excellent music.

A Week of Progression

The 27th annual Larry Joe Taylor Festival seemed to be a progression for me. As the week went on I seemed to get up later each day, downed more Tylenol, gained more weight, had a harder time keeping my eyes open and keeping track of what day it was, forgot the names of several people I'd met over the last few days, and required more Bloody Marys each day to get started!



Similar to my progression, I noticed that just about everything at the festival was progressing:

- ☞ the number of fans grew each day from less than a hundred listening to Gary P Nunn on Monday to over 12,000 (a wild guess!) when Larry Joe closed the show Saturday night
- ☞ the campground swelled from a hundred campers to side-by-side tents and RVs and cars and campfires and games and generators and lots of good times
- ☞ the average age increased from the 40s to the 70s to the dominate group starting on Thursday being in the 20s to 30s





- listening to the music went from sitting on a blanket on the grass to shoulder-to-shoulder standing on coolers in front of the stage and some fancy home made trailers with seats and umbrellas a little farther back
- cooler size, as well as consumption, grew substantially and the method of transporting coolers to the stage went from hand-carried small coolers to pull trailers stacked two or three coolers high and some really creative cooler movers and lots of coolers used to get a better view of the stage



- over the week the fans outfits progressed from Levis and shorts to lots of LJT tee shirts, fancy hats, no shirts and lots of muscles, a monkey outfit, Batman costume, Indian head dresses, and lots more or in some cases, a lot less - great people watching festival
- from clean and smelling good to a tad muddy, dirty, and a little rank and needing a shave and bath



Larry Joe Taylor Music Festival Fans



In addition to getting to listen to some of the best singer songwriters in Texas, part of what makes this festival fun are the fans. They range from some older Bob Wills fans in wheelchairs to young kids and lots of college students. Nearby Tarleton State College in Stephenville must have to cancel classes starting on Thursday because all the students are at Larry Joe's festival. Early in the week and during the music on the acoustic stage the fans are older and dedicated to good music. As the week progresses the Bud Light Stage fans are younger and they are here for music and good times with beer, wine, shots, moonshine, and friends. Overall, it's great people watching and everyone is

polite, friendly, and outgoing - and it's hard not to meet some new people, who you most likely reacquaint with next year. Click here to see some more pictures of [Larry Joe Taylor's music festival fans](#).

Camping at Larry Joe Taylor's Music Festival

Another part of what makes Larry Joe's Music Festival fun is the camping. Melody Mountain Ranch is home to over a 1000 primitive sites and a few electric sites. Once you buy an assigned site you have it for as long as you keep paying for it and as such you get to know who you're camped next to, where the party sites are, and where to go for late night picking around the campfire. We're never surprised when we see Larry Joe and any of the performing musicians show up for a round of picking and singing around the campfire. And it also doesn't surprise me when one of musicians around the campfire shows up that week on one of the



stages or on one of the stages at a future LJT Music Festival.

Camping equipment ranges from \$300,000 motor homes to tents to rental RVs to a sleeping bag under the trees. One year we found a guy sound asleep behind the steering wheel of our Jeep! And the campground is alive from 10:00 AM to 6:00 AM with music, games, laughter, campfires, and the smell of lots of good food - some of which comes from the BBQ grills from the contestants cooking for the chili-cookoff. To see more of the camping scene at Larry Joe, click on [Larry Joe Taylor's music festival fans](#).

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Larry Joe Taylor Texas Music Festival Vendors



Thank God for Joe Dye, the festival manager responsible for a lot including the vendors. The food vendors surround the perimeter of the Bud Light stage with a wide variety of options to help soak up the beer and keep us energized. Joe has lined up over 40 vendors selling merchandise (cowboy hats to camping supplies to pearl snap shirts) and food - corny dogs, BBQ, fajitas, nachos, fries, wings, pizza, chicken on a stick, and lots more.

Each year I look forward to devouring the fries and two or three of the best patty melts in the world from Billy and Kate's food truck - don't miss one of these! They also serve some excellent burgers and chicken sandwiches. This year I also tried a hatch green chili sausage wrap from Bison Food - it was so good that I went back and got another one. Turns out that Bob and Lynn have been serving fajitas, sausage, and more for 24 years at Larry Joe Taylor's Music Festival.



Larry Joe has also set up two merchandise tents for CDs, t-shirts, hats, artist meet and greets, and more.

Plus he has a store that sells beer and ice. T-Bird's Garage Pub has an outside covered patio with bar stools and a great view of the Bud Light Stage, a full bar and music each morning, and an inside stage area with plenty of room for dancing.



Thanks

The 27th annual was another great Larry Joe Taylor Music Festival and our thanks go out to all the staff, the security crew, and hundreds of volunteers who work very hard to make this festival run smooth and fun for all of us. Special thanks to the Taylor family - Larry Joe, Sherry, Zack, and Martha! See you next year.



If you are planning to come next year, you might consider VIP tickets - they are well worth it if you can afford them. The tickets include: back stage access and seating; free beer, soft drinks, water, and 40 Creek Whiskey; and free food which is very tasty. This year some of the meals included with your VIP ticket were: gumbo and okra; carnitas and beans; chicken and beef fajitas; and tender pork loin with beans, gravy, rolls, and cream corn.





See ya next year. And don't forget [Larry Joe Taylor's Rhymes & Vines](#) in September.

About Texas Outside

Texas Outside has been alive & well since 1996 - that's ancient by today's internet standards! Texas Outside was originally developed by Lone Star Internet which is an Austin based web development company with an excellent reputation & client base. In March of 2006, we purchased Texas Outside & made a commitment to add new, exciting, & informative content on Texas outdoor activities & fun things to see & do.

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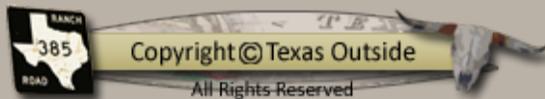
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