

### **Do you always work with one guitar at a time, or do you always have a bunch going at once?**

Always a bunch going, ones finished the other one starts. I start it off with the picture and then I scale it up myself.

### **How did you end up with the name Dr. Frankenstein?**

It was just logical, like the Shelley Novel, but it's spelled with an "in" instead of "en." I didn't want to use the name exactly since its copyrighted, I chose the "in" simply because it was available, and I own the name now. What Dr. Frankenstein did was he took body parts from anybody and put them together, well that's essentially what I do. I have no problem using parts from companies XYZ and ABC, I put them all together.

Finish the sentence...

### **I don't do it much, but I enjoy...**

Designing. Designing the guitar, or planning it. I prefer that to actually doing the work. I've done it so many times. After you do this job a thousand times ( *points at installing frets on the neck of the guitar* ), it's no longer exciting, this becomes a job for me. For me to do the scale-up, and the planning of how I'm going to build it, that's what I enjoy the most now. I wish I had someone who I could say to "Okay you install the frets, I'm going to lunch I'll be back in a few hours. But no one else can do this except me, to my standards, unfortunately, they are so high that I don't trust anyone else."

### **If it weren't too late I would?**

I would figure out a way to salvage wood off the beach in the Dominican Republic.

### **Like a system?**

A system. There are millions of dollars worth of wood on the North Coast, and it's just rotting there. The hotel owners hate it, but the government won't let you take it.

### **It's illegal?**

We have wood police here. I have some guitars made from wood salvaged from Rio San Juan. The guy who cut the tree down ended up in jail for nine days. People squeal on others here, but I've walked so many times on the beach, past the main hotels of Cabarete, and there is at least a million dollars worth of wood on these beaches. If I was 20 years younger I would find the permits to get this done, what's required, I would buy the equipment, a vehicle with good tires, and a lift. There is a guy here who can saw it. People don't realize that wood that comes from the ocean is at least 3x more expensive than wood that comes from the Forrest.

### **It's more expensive?**

No, it's more valuable. I don't know what the ocean does to it. But for example Yamaha, in 2002, emailed me to buy 10 thousand feet of maple from me, they thought I was in the business of wood. They ended up buying the wood, and they sunk it in the ocean. If you buy their top-of-the-line guitar. It's made from wood that came from underwater. Wood underwater does not decay. No bugs, nothing. But it's heavy like heck. You need the equipment, and I'm too old now, I don't have the time to make it profitable!

**It's a good business idea!**

Yea I don't know why the young guys haven't caught on to that.

**Alright! If it didn't sound so crazy I would make a...**

That's a tough question because I'm made just about everything.

**Every crazy thing you've thought of?**

It's getting there. The thing is I remember when I made guitar number 300, back in Canada, I was really worried that I was going to run out of ideas. Here I am at over a thousand instruments worldwide now, and if anything I've gotten crazier now than I ever was.

**And you still haven't passed your crazy limit?**

No!

**What about a 5 neck guitar?**

Well this double-neck base , ( *points at current project* ) that's really pushing my energy, and no one else has ever done it.

**I have a dream that...**

That I can live long enough to build another few hundred guitars.

**One day I'm going to...**

Be rich and famous!

**Yea!! \*laughter\* I can't stand it when...**

People micromanage a build. I've had clients when I was in Canada more than here because this is relatively isolated, but in Canada, I had people that would come to the house every day for six weeks to see what I was doing. "how come that is there, how come this is here" it drives me crazy. I can't stand micromanaging.

**Yea I think in every job, no one like this. Never underestimate the power of...**

Your imagination

**Love all, trust....**

I guess you gotta learn to love and trust yourself. As an artist, you have to push the bounds. If you're copying someone else's stuff you're never going to make anything. Like my fish guitar there, I know it's cool, but it's like, in 1953 Studebaker made a car that the world hated, no one bought it but right now they're worth millions. Like with a lot of my art guitars, for instance, I know it's cool, and if I think it's cool, of all the millions of people in this world, somebody else is going to think it's cool too.

**I work best when...**

When I'm left alone. It goes back to the micromanaging thing.

**I am...**

The happiest I've ever been in my life. The second happiest time is when we had our family, that's a different level. But I'm speaking of my personal happiness. For example, when I played in a band in the 1960s, I didn't smoke or take any alcohol, I was just obsessed with music, it was just music, totally, it was a 24-hour preoccupation, it's all I thought about, I mean my school grades showed that.

**You were not meant for school or the system!**

No.

**I feel that life just gets better and better, at least it can.**

If you are prepared for retirement it can be the best part of your life. We were just with a Finnish fellow, he's a professional guy, he's 40 years old, and I asked him what are you going to do in the next 15 years that will let you retire at the age of 55? He says the worst part, "what am I going to do after 55?" He's been all over the world, and yet he has not found his passion. So life is over after 55.

**I wish I had....**

More time. Let's face it, I'm in the autumn of my life right now, and mortality is something that... you know you've only got a measured number of years left. I'm very happy that I've created such a legacy because you know, the other day I was looking for a picture of a James Lowe guitar I built, and I was seeing guitars I don't remember building anymore. It's out of control. But you know theoretically, I should be able to do this until...until forever...

**Until the next adventure...**

Yea...

**I can't stand it when?**

I screw something up.

**I'm sure you've made a lot of mistakes here!**

Yea, it's an education process. Anyone who tells you they grew up being a Luthier or Millionaire is a liar, I've made my share of mistakes, I still make mistakes, but the good part is that I learn every day too.

**Do you ever find that the mistakes make sense later on in the bigger picture?**

Yes or you find yourself being frustrated because you're working too hard for a simple process. Then all of a sudden it hits you like, why am I doing it like this? For example installing frets in that neck, in the last two weeks I've changed my process on that completely. I've built 999 guitars putting frets differently than I am right now.

### **You've found an easier process?**

It seems easier yea. The other thing is. I used to use so much more fret wire, now I use less. You save money, you save material, and you feel good at the end of the day because you've found out something new.

### **Definitely. So life is...?**

A bowl of cherries I guess. (*laughter*) You know, life for me, I mean, I spent so many years working at jobs I did not enjoy. Now I can't wait to wake up. I set my limit, 7 am, I don't come into the shop before 7 am, but I can't wait for 7 am. I'm looking at the clock, tick, tick, tick, and ah hooray! 7 a clock! (*we all laugh*) You know I get really annoyed, like yesterday, we went to the shop for the pool job, we needed to get more grout, we come home and it's the wrong color, get in the car, and go back to the shop, I hate wasting my morning. For me working past noon is a waste of time. My best time is 7 to noon.

### **\*We begin speaking about YouTube Luthiers\***

You know you watch videos on YouTube, of guys testing equipment, I don't believe any of it. #1 how big are the speakers on your Mac? A guitar amplifier is 110 decibels loud, the computer is what 30? It doesn't sound realistic. A lot of luthiers lie to you. There are guys out there that either don't know what they're doing or, honest to god, if you want to learn anything they lie to you. For example this catalog, they sell you so many tools and stuff that have no real use. Custom parts for guitars, why? Eric Clapton doesn't use them, why would I use them?

### **Have you ever made your own tools?**

Oh, yea, of course, templates, this here is my own template, I make these, no one sells this piece. I've gotten from Rickenbacker, Gretsch, telecaster, and it says Gretsch right on there, stole it right from them, *\*laughter\**

### **Copy, paste! *\*we laugh\** inspired by! You gotta know how to steal like an artist.**

No, I mean every artist steals from everybody else. You know they take the idea and they twist it a little bit.

I love this guitar... they are just like babies, I'd hate like hell to give them away, what I do is, for example after all these years, that blue guitar downstairs, no amount of money is going to buy that... it's going to have a special place in my guitar room, and when I do that Les Paul it's going to be sea form green, it's going to look really beat up, I ordered a special pickup I want to put into it, I'm going to build it exactly how I want, it's going in that guitar case and that's it.

### **Well some kids stay home, and some go out into the world!**

Well I've built around 24 guitars that were technically meant to be mine, but you know when you're running a business, and someone starts laying out 100 dollar bills, eventually, you say okay Woah, Woah, Woah, enough! Bye, bye, baby! It's gone!

### ***\*Laughter\** So how did you start making guitars?**

Just necessity. You know in 1963 was when I became consciously aware of rock and roll music. A friend of mine is still alive he was a bass player, he said, Okay what do you want to play? I wanted to learn guitar, I didn't know why I wanted to play guitar, I just said guitar, I could have said drums or whatever, he said, okay we need a bass player, and I said okay I'll learn bass. Then we found a drummer and there we were the three of us. We had no equipment. We all bought bass guitars, cheap stuff...

### **How old were you then?**

I would have been 14.

### **So it was like a garage band?**

Yea exactly. It was amazing, it took off really quickly. Then we discovered you know, once you start playing. We were renting equipment, borrowing equipment. The bass player his family was not that well off, you know a lot of kids in the family, so we took his bass guitar apart and we build our first bass guitar when I was 14. We used my father's tools, my father was a carpenter who then worked at the mines. We used his drill. Two sheets of plywood. We copied all the specifications of his. I knew enough about glue and wood that I could do this stuff. And we built this vox copy, vox base guitar copy, and everyone in the city that we lived in thought it was fabulous, we could have sold that for a thousand bucks. I continued, the band got bigger and bigger, I started working at the mines, we had money coming in. So this base player and I, we used to see how many 100 bills we could collect by the end of the summer. When school started, we went to the music store, for new amps, new guitars, new bass, whatever. Sadly I've owned 100 some' guitars, and I've modified every one of them. It got to the point that around 1970, I thought why am I doing this? This is stupid. I am paying the full retail price of a beautiful guitar and then tearing it up.

### **Were you trying to get a better sound out of them?**

I was just never happy with them. There was always a problem with them. I tell my clients now, think of your favorite guitar, I love this and this and this, *but*, everything after the word but, change it! It's a hard process, I have lots of clients that for example, this guy from the states came here, he wants that Rickenbacker copy, he walked out not buying anything, he said he was too confused, he's been in thousands of music store and never seen anything like this in his life. He ended up buying two and ordering another one.

### **So when did you think "Oh this is my work, I can do this, this is my life's work?"**

Well, I monkeyed around with it for years, like I was working day jobs all the time ey, but in 2000 I got laid off from general motors, and it was a really good opportunity because first of all, they paid me 100% of my salary for a year. Then after a year, they paid me 90% of my salary with no taxes. I was making more money than I ever made working at general motors!

So Claire and I sat down and she said well you're still too young to do nothing. We talked about all kinds of opportunities. What I could do, what I should do you know. We didn't get anywhere with that conversation. But I went out in the shop there, I had collected tools to build guitars, I built a telecaster guitar and purposely copied a 1950's telecaster. I was really pleased with how it turned out, and everyone thought it was a real 1950's telecaster. Finally, I had one guy at a music store that said, nice guitar but is it real? I said no, I made it. He knew it wasn't real. He said he knew because the gold color on the fender was wrong.

So I went home and sanded that off, and I thought about it for two or three days, and then I started researching, and that's where the name of Frankenstein came into my mind like boink! I got hold of the government of Canada and trademarked the name, and a few days later the courier brought the papers by mail, and I own the name.

**Did you talk to Claire about it at that point?**

Claire never liked the name. She said it doesn't represent you. I said well what am I going to call it Seppo's guitars? that's stupid. Valjakka? It makes perfect sense because I have no religion, I don't care. I can mix all the parts of every guitar in the world, as long as it makes me happy that's what I'm doing. So it's like dr Frankenstein, he needs a left arm he's like "okay get it off that guy!"

**So that was in 2000, and then you started your workshop in Canada?**

In 2001 I was a full-blown business. I got my business license. I got everything. It blew up real quick. I started building. The first year I was in business I built 50 guitars. First-year.

**Wow you hit the ground running.**

Yea people were loving it. It went crazy. That's when I built my first website. It was terrible. But it didn't matter suddenly I was getting tens of thousands of hits a month. Back in 2000 there weren't too many guys building guitars. There were a lot of guys building acoustic guitars, but no electric guys at all.

**So you always built electric guitars?**

Yes. I've owned in my lifetime extremely expensive acoustic guitars, but we don't like each other. I work on acoustic guitars but I can't play them. I find them very difficult to play. And it doesn't matter, I've owned Gibson J-45 , I've owned Gil Starbird'S, Takamine's, I've owned every one of them. I just look at them like, you don't like me and I don't like you!

**\*Laughter\* So is there anyone in your family that's a luthier or musician?**

No, my dad played the accordion.

**But he was a carpenter?**

Yea, truck driver, carpenter, and then a miner.

**And your mom?**

She was a stay-at-home mom.

**But did she sing or?**

She loved rock and roll.

**There you go! It had to come from somewhere!**

My father hated it, hated it! Till the day he died, he was pissed off because I was not interested in the accordion. He had an accordion at the house all the time. And he would say "Why don't you just

try it?" I would say dad I look terrible with this on me, it's not gonna work man. Then I tried noodling around with the piano. That didn't work out too good either.

**It was always the electric guitar for you.**

Well in my defense, when I started that back in 1964, I built my first bass, and Leo Fender invented the first electric guitar for fender in 1947, so it was like a baby, it was brand new. There were only three companies making guitars back then. The real cheap ones, Fender, and Gibson and that was it. I realized that the body shape doesn't really matter, as long as it's comfortable to play, that's all that matters. With an acoustic guitar, it's like micromanagement you have to follow the rules, it's like a violin. You can't change it.

**So what brought you and Claire to the Dominican Republic?**

**How did that happen?**

The weather. Claire spent two years researching, we looked at everything. The economy, the political life of the country, we didn't want to end up like Venezuela. We had been here many times before on vacation. So when we would come here on vacation. I would be so thrilled to get here, and I would be so depressed when I had to leave.

**Oh, that happens to me too!**

So you know you're at this point of thrill when you arrive and this point of depression when you leave! Then Claire retired, and she was standing at our living room window one day and she said "I'm a prisoner of my own house." We love our house beautiful property, a very expensive house, but she says, I'm a prisoner of this house six months of the year. Now that I'm retired. I want to be free 12 months of the year." After her research, we looked at Uruguay, Nicaragua, you know Puerto Rico, everything. Everything we would check things off, the Dominican Republic always ticked every box.

**If you could have dinner with a famous musician who would it be?**

John Lennon. But he's dead. Most of the guitar players I know, that are famous, that I admire, turns out they're assholes. Like Richard Blackmore from Deep Purple, he's my favorite guitar player, but he's such an asshole. I think I would just end up punching him in the head.

**What about Jimmy Page? Mark Knopfler? Robert Johnson?**

No. Unfortunately, I have a confession to make. I don't like the blues anymore. It's just boring. I just watched a video last night with famous blues guys, it all just sounds the same.

**It does have a really specific style.**

Yea most of it is just depressing, I don't like depressing music. There are two guys that I would select, Todd Rundgren and Daryl Hall.

**Oh, I love Hall and Oats!**

Yea, I used to think that Billy Gibbons was a really big deal.

**Seppo, what is the best guitar to play for the biggest range of music?**



1961 Gibson SG the Les Paul version. I owned one of those, it's the only guitar I am sorry that I sold. I've owned a lot of guitars and built a lot of guitars if I could have that one back. That was when Gibson hit the high mark, its been \*thumbs down\* ever since.

### **Do you miss anything about Canada?**

Our kids and grandson, that's all. I have generally no use for Canada at all. I am very disappointed in Canada.

### **So you chose not to have employees, affiliates, or associates. You chose to make this a one-man show. Did you make this choice at a specific moment?**

Back in Canada I actually tried two apprentices, and I discovered I became a babysitter. The thing is, I can't remember when I was first called an artist, it insulted me first, I thought okay I'm a guitar maker and that's what I am. Then someone says, you are as much an artist as you are a luthier. I was insulted. artist? bullshit? I'm not doing sculpture, I'm not doing painting, I'm building guitars damn it, don't you understand? It kept growing and growing. Now I say I am a Luthier / Artist.

### **You're painting and sculpting all the same.**

Yea, but you know when I tried the apprentices, for example, #1 they didn't share my vision and enthusiasm, and they certainly lacked the skills. I also asked myself, do I really want everyone to know what I'm doing?

### **Did you ever have any offers to partner that were hard to turn down?**

The Chinese.

### **\*Laughter\***

Yea the Chinese, wanted to buy my guitars and make ten thousand of them at a time. I says you're welcome to buy my guitars, but I says I'm not interested in being your partner. Don't put my name on your guitars. There is nothing I can do to stop them. I still can't.

### **Are they copying your guitars?**

Not to my knowledge. People say why don't you patent this guitar? I say what for? I already built it, it's history, I won't be doing another one. So if someone wants to copy it, you know copying is the greatest form of flattery.

### **Working on your own has influenced your work over the years a lot, would you say you have more freedom?**

Yea I have no boss. It's to the point now that I'm very selective about people that I want to build a guitar for. If you've done it for as long as I have, you get a real good idea of how the customer is going to behave. Like that one guy that was at my shop every day, seven days a week, for six weeks, drove me nuts.

### **What's the best kind of client?**

The guy who commissioned the bass guitar over there, has not turned down any suggestions that I've had. He says, who am I to tell you how to build it? I ask him for his preferences, like what is



your favorite color? I accommodate. But basically the rest, the electronic, the neck, all the hardware, he didn't demand anything. Its like a a carte blanche.

**He gives you creative freedom and trusts you.**

Yea.

**At this point, that's the most fun for you.**

Yea, I haven't had such a good time in a long time just fooling around and building these things. But by the same token, any of those guitars that are done, I just take them with me to play and if I can't play them, forget it.

**Has there ever been a challenging time in your business as a luthier?**

I've had two customers, that I've asked them to leave my shop. Those were the most challenging times. Living here in the Dominican Republic really ties you down because of the \$200 limit. Anything over that, boy oh boy, the government here really loves you. They put all kinds of fees on it. The profit margin here is also smaller.

All challenges weren't because of my guitars, I had one guy that bought a brand new Les Paul Deluxe, and he couldn't intubate it, I measured where the bridge was and saw that it was in the wrong place. He says I paid over 5k for this guitar it's impossible the bridge is in the wrong place. I told him look I've been doing this a long time. I can show you. He says you don't know what you're doing. I said okay, there is the door, take your guitar, and F-off, I says don't come back!

**Sometimes people don't understand what you do and they never will.**

Well, here people don't really appreciate my inventory of parts. I have rarely had to order in parts for anyone. Most repairs I can do in 48 hrs.

**What is your creative process like?**

I listen to a lot of people. I spend a lot of time looking at things. I get ideas from the most ridiculous places. Claire went to Encuentro Beach and bought this fishplate that's downstairs and I saw it and thought that's the perfect size for a guitar. They chevy guitar, I have a friend who's a chevy dealer, I made that one for him. The tequila taxi, I just watched a video on YouTube of a traveling musician. This guy he's 45 years old, he spent his entire life, just driving around the US with his guitar in his hand, he goes to a bar, he says hello my name is so and so, can I play for you for ten minutes? The bar hires him, he plays for a week, and then BAM he's off. He drives a 54 Chevrolet, obviously an old tequila taxi. I find that a romantic notion, so I took a pic of his car and here it is.

I'm fascinated by that place slab city in California. You know my wife wants to go to europe, and see the Eiffel tower, I don't give a crap about the Eiffel tower, show me slab city! I want to go there! I'm sure there are some amazing people there. They are way out there.

**\*Laughter\* Yea they are fringy.**

There is no law, no police, no electricity, no nothing. Some have lived there for decades. They love their life out there and it's free. Now people are complaining about being vaccinated "they are losing their freedom" if you live in America, Europe, or Canada you are not a free person. You cant

park on that side of the street in Canada, you go out and it's gone. The Dominican Republic feels like 1980's Canada. You could do so much then. Here we're free.

### **What's your favorite part of building the guitar?**

I like cutting wood. I'm a licensed auto body painter. I have painted thousands of cars in my lifetime. I'm really tired of painting. If I never have to paint anything again I would be happy. But unfortunately, it goes with the business.

### **What makes a fantastic electric guitar?**

Do you want me to be honest?

#### **Honest.**

There is a large element of luck involved. What happens is you have so many variables to build a guitar. Number one is the wood. Let's say I take this desktop, sand it, and build 6 guitars out of it. You would get six different-sounding guitars. Even if I use the same parts, screws, and same potentiometers, it's just the way it is. Musicians use the terms vibe and mojo. There is some guitar that you fall in love with and you don't understand why. They may not be the best sounding. They may not be the best playing guitars. But they've got a vibe and a mojo that just draws you in and you know you can't shake it.

#### **It's like people.**

Exactly. You get a couple, for example, one looks like a movie star, the other one looks like a monster, and yet they love each other. Like Claire and I, we have virtually nothing in common. She likes black, I like white, but we've been together 53 years and it works somehow. We got a mojo and a vibe going on, and I can't imagine being with anyone else. We're both Leo's first of all. We've had fights some days like wow.

#### **\*laughter\* Leo's do love a little drama, it keeps things fresh!**

Yea, like there are guitars, that Paul Barrel guitar I made down there, right now I have to say that's my absolute favorite guitar of all that are down there, and there are better guitars than that one there. If I was a client I wouldn't look at any other. Give me that monster!

#### **They have a life to them.**

Yea.

### **Is there a part of a guitar you can't compromise on?**

The neck. You can't fix it. It's like a car with a bad motor. It may be beautiful but it doesn't work, not much use having it.

#### **The neck is like the spinal column of the guitar.**

Exactly, good comparison.

### **What is the most detailed part of the build?**

Inevitably the neck. You can really screw things up with the neck.

**\*Seppo works on a part\* What is that?**

It's a potentiometer. You know they sell potentiometers for left-handed people. There is no need for such a thing. I mean how embarrassing. We live in a world of deception. all the time. Every commercial you watch is a lie. Politicians are liars. Most of your medicines don't do what they promise they are supposed to do. We live in a world of lies.

**Yes. Is this the prep work?**

When I'm bored, have free time, I do this ( *works on potentiometer* ). So when someone brings in a guitar that has a bad volume situation it takes me very little time to put it together. Profit margins are very low here, so you have to work smarter and faster. You have to do it as easily as you can.

**How long does it take on average to finish a guitar?**

6 weeks. It used to take me 6 months. Now 6 weeks, and as little as ten days.

**That's a quick turnaround! So the art guitars you make are fully functional, how are they different from other art guitars you've seen out there?**

There are very few art guitars kicking around out there. There are lots of companies that play around with making guitars for kids or whatever, but they are not professional quality. This looks incredibly simple for example, but the amount of work that goes into this is the same as a 3k guitar.

**So art guitars are a creative free-for-all, but fully functional, and high quality?**

Exactly. The bottom line is if I won't play a gig with them, they won't leave the shop.

Have you ever made a guitar that then you feel is not playable, and then just becomes decorative?

No. It becomes repurposed. The best example I can give you is the guitars that I shipped to Texas, the ones that customs drilled 13 holes through the body, looking for cocaine. I paid for it to be sent back. I repurposed it. To hide all the holes. I ended up selling it.

**So you're guitars always reincarnate? They never end up in the trash?**

Well, just parts like that neck ended up in the trash.

So you can see a lot of guys building. You see them, they are building the same thing, hundreds of them. There are very few guys that are doing what I'm doing. Totally 100% unique, guaranteed you'll never find another in any music store in the world. I can build a telecaster in six hours start to finish. But what's the joy in that? There is no joy in that at all.

**So a regular day in your life starts at seven am?**

Yea depending on claire. \*laughter\* depending on the boss.

**So you get up and have coffee?**

No coffee. I get up at 6 o'clock and I lay in bed thinking of stuff, I know what I gotta do in the day, what can I do to speed it up or slow it down. I look online to see what ideas I can steal. \*laughter\*

**\*Laughter\* We can spend all day here watching you make guitars! So this is one of my favorite questions. If you could live 5 alternate lives, what lives would they be?**

Hm. What would I rather be doing?

**If you could live 5 alternatives and do anything.**

I'm afraid I'm a really simple person. I'm really happy doing what I'm doing. I don't know what else I would rather be doing. It's a good place to be actually.

**Definitely.**

I would build hot rods. Yea.

**Any other hobbies and passions beyond cars and guitars?**

Well, it's just girls, cars, and guitars. They are all intertwined. that's just the way nature made us. \*laughter\* The one thing that interests me, if had lots of money, I would love to manage an artist or a band.

Most musicians are horrible business people.

**\*We watch Seppo work\***

My life is sanding. I have no fingerprints left. It's a problem. They always ask me to do it again when I need to give my fingerprints. I ask them, do you want a toe? Claire likes it too. My hands are soft. \*laughter\*

**Would you say there is someone who's impacted your life the most and your work?**

\*thinks about it\*

I don't want to sound egotistical, I'm an only child, I had to entertain myself a lot without brothers and sisters. My father, being a carpenter, we didn't get along really really good. He lived with us for a while and always said I don't understand where you learned to do this stuff. My father didn't make furniture or kitchen cupboards, he just build the house. I just had a natural curiosity.

**Did you learn from watching him?**

I used all his tools to build that first base guitar when I was 14.

**Did he see your guitar work overtime?**

He did, he said he didn't know where the hell I learned all this stuff. I almost told him, it certainly wasn't from you, but I didn't want to be mean.

**Parents can be like that, they inspire you in an adverse way.**

Yea in reverse! They say if father wears boxer's junior wears briefs, and vice versa, now that I'm here in the DR I don't wear any commando!

\* laughter \*

**We look through his CDs, the bands that he likes, and pictures of groups that use only his guitars, and talk about a musician who has been his student and now builds guitars as we wrap up the interview.**

I was contacted by a producer in Los Angeles, he wanted to do a tv show on Luthiers. It would have been really cool. Considering how many people would see this.

**Would you ever send out one of your guitars for a movie, or tv show?**

The opportunity hasn't come.

**Not yet. I feel that coming! I see so many of these in a movie or tv show.**

It just takes someone doing a specific project.

**He has a lot of thematic guitars, specific, and niche guitars.**

**Last two questions Seppo! Are there five people you admire the most? Would you be able to name most?**

Oh easily, Richard Blackmore is my favorite guitar player, Claire has always wanted to meet Paul McCartney, I wouldn't mind either. Don Henley, the drummer and singer from The Eagles, Todd Rundgren, and Daryl Hall.

**Nice. If you could pick one to play your guitars who would be number one?**

Todd Rundgren. It's funny, Hall and Oates, when I was growing up I didn't pay any attention to their music, the same as The Bee Gees, I hated them and hated Michael Jackson. I've come to appreciate them now.

**Last question, what makes a good life?**

A good wife for one thing. \*laughter\* I don't know too many women that would allow their husband to do what I'm doing. A view of the ocean. I've always wanted to live by the water.

**Yes, we are in a tropical paradise.**

Our lawyer says there is glory and there is misery on this island and as long as there is more glory than misery you are okay.

**That makes a good life, more glory than misery.**

**I just thought of one more question! What are the five things you're most grateful for?**

Life for one thing. I've played with a lot of people. 75% of them have died. A long life is one thing. Reasonably good health. #1 probably would have been getting a wife that can tolerate you for 55 years plus. \*laughter\*

**Claire!**

Yea, and being lucky enough to have something that could occupy your life and keep your brain going. I've had relatives that retired, and their life ended when they retire. They might as well be dead. Clair's brother-in-law, for example, always wanted to learn how to weld, work with steel, and he never did.

## **2 more things!**

okay, ask me why I started playing guitar?

### **Why?**

To meet girls.

**\*laughter\* Any last thing you want to share? Some secrets?**

**\* laughter \***

The biggest reward of this whole thing is basically the people who are playing my instruments. When I pass away, I don't know where half of my guitars are. There are collectors. The instruments will outlive me a long time.