

GUITAR ONE
TABS

BLACK SABBATH
PARANOID

NICKELBACK
SAVIN' ME

JOE PASS
HOW HIGH
THE MOON

QUEEN
FAT BOTTOMED
GIRLS

Guitar One

THE MAGAZINE YOU CAN PLAY

EXCLUSIVE

BLUES

SAVING
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WRITER'S
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PLUS! THE
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YEAR LONG
WOLFMOT
PRIESTES
WITCH
THE SWO

Watermelon Slim

Big, juicy, and refreshingly flash-free

GEAR BOX

ALBUM
Watermelon Slim & the Workers
(Northern Blues)

AXE "A cheap-ass little Regal Dobro," says Slim. "Three hundred dollars will buy you that plus the case. I've got two of 'em for touring."

STRINGS
D'Addario Bronze Acoustic for Dobro (.016-.058)

AMP Fender Blues Junior, Hot Rod Deville

Bill "Watermelon Slim" Homans is unlike most bluesmen you've heard: he's worked as a truck driver and watermelon farmer; has a MENSA-certified genius IQ; has earned two undergraduate degrees and a master's degree; and, in addition to his blues work, also writes country songs.

"One of the things I'd like to do is record the next great country & western, shit-kickin' truck-stop album," the Boston-born, North Carolina-raised singer-songwriter explains. "I've got all the hits for it already written. Country & western has its forebears and blues has its forebears, and to a certain extent, they're the same."

Until that country album sees the light of day, though, Slim's fans will have to

make do with his latest blues release, *Watermelon Slim & the Workers*, which showcases his evocative Dobro slide, immediate vocals, downright mad harmonica chops, and a tight backing band. Still, while blues aficionados and industry types rave about the new disc, Slim notices the little things—like fewer opportunities to call his own shots.

"This is not as much an adventure as it is a business at this point," he laments. "That's one of the main things that's done changed on me."

Slim's assessment may be a bit dour, but his latest album, which follows the sparse, mostly acoustic *Up Close & Personal* (Southern Records, 2004), is anything but. It's a rollicking mix of past and present, bolstered by a super-huge guitar sound that's most prominent on tunes like "Hard Times," "Devil's Cadillac," and a cover of Mississippi Fred McDowell's "Frisco Line," which Slim performs in open-G tuning.

"I'm a stylist," explains the left-handed Slim, who began playing an upside-down righty guitar in his hospital bed following a tour of duty in Vietnam. "I'm not a great guitar player, but I do have a style, and I've worked hard at becoming a master of my style. I'm not, however, a person who is ever gonna blind you with speed. I'm never gonna be one of those flash guitar players." —SEAN McDEVITT



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