

15 MINUTES

New vintage sounds

There's nothing like cruising down the street in a six-fo' with a killer stereo, but what if you could take that stereo with you? Kaden Hill is an engineering wiz who manufactures killer, portable stereos sold under the Rare Bird Stereos moniker at rarebirdstereos.com. The stereos first start with an idea, usually a speaker Hill finds in a junk shop or thrift store. He installs the found speakers into a variety of vintage vessels: canteens, purses, suitcases, toolboxes. Then, after some time and work—cutting holes, lining the interior with acoustic foam and wood, shellacking to prevent rust, wiring—the end product is an “up-scaled Bluetooth stereo,” as Hill describes it, replete with multiple-day battery life and bass-thumping speakers. The News & Review caught up with Hill in Sacramento, where he lives, to talk about Rare Bird Stereos, favorite projects, living with attention-deficit disorder and music.

When did Rare Bird start?

Rare Bird was probably about four years ago. I was living out in the woods with some friends, and that was kind of a time in my life where I was learning to ride the waves of the universe. I didn't have a whole lot. I didn't really have a job. I had a friend that was throwing a market in Sacramento, so I started building stuff for it. I was building little wood reclaimed shelves—anything I can find. My passion has always lied in what I can find around me and what I can make out of it. I kept finding speakers everywhere, just laying on shelves.

Craziest, fave project?

I love doing custom work. That's probably my favorite ... when there's intention behind it. ... There's a sentimental value. It gives it an actual purpose. The coolest one I got to do will forever be—it was actually for an ex-girlfriend of mine who's a really good, dear friend—was this '80s red TV... I took the actual screen and cut a wood



PHOTO BY JEREMY WINSLOW

piece to go where the screen was. I Mod Podged this static on it so it looked like a dead TV. I put the speakers in there, I put these different lights in it. It was rad and weird.

How does your ADD influence your creativity?

[I was diagnosed with dyslexia and ADD in] my junior year of high school. I was like, “That's why this has sucked.” But I also didn't truly apply myself because academics was never really my jam. I was lucky enough to have teachers who would let me do art projects instead. I think I've come to know myself a lot better than I ever have, where I understand that I get depressed sometimes, or I understand that some days are crazy, but it's also temporary. Working in the trades, too, you always have so many projects going at one time that it's really easy to be ADD.

Fave artist, music genre?

I listen to a lot of old country, like Hank Williams. That's my genre. It's [also] a lot of Steely Dan and rock. I love rock. ... And psychedelic rock.

—JEREMY WINSLOW

THE GOODS

Allies at last, reinventing Rawbar



by
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When I walked through the door at what's soon to be the **Allies Pub** last week, I could hardly believe the transformation. What was once office space—next door to **Bank of America**, on the back side—is now a warm, vibrant, comfortable pub.

When I mentioned that to the owners—**Steve and Alison Kay** and their daughter and son-in-law, **Emma and Justin Martin**—they said they were aiming for a cross between a traditional English pub and Cheers. I looked down at my shirt and, yep! I was dressed appropriately for the occasion in my commemorative T-shirt from the venerable Boston bar of the classic sitcom.

But, back to Allies. Despite the huge amount of work it took to transform the space, it couldn't be more perfect. The location is great, right around the corner from the City Plaza, and with a large shaded patio out front and ample parking. The kicker, it turned out, however, was the fact that the historic building actually has a cellar. That allows the Kay/Martin team to cellar-condition their beers the traditional British way. They even imported hand pulls from England to draw directly from the cellar.

The menu will be simple, they say, and focus on bangers and mash, as well as traditional pasties and pies. What is of particular interest to me is the large wine list to accompany the British Bulldog and **Specialist** (their American partner, ahem, ally) beers. They'll have 18 wines on the menu, including some local ones (see “Wine, beer and Bible hobbies,” The Goods, June 13).

Steve Kay told me they're expecting all their final inspections to happen this week, so look for news about the Allies opening very soon. Maybe I'll see you there.

RENOVATION TIME Not far away, at the corner of Fourth and Broadway streets, **Rawbar** has closed its doors. But do not fear—it's only for a couple of months while some of the major renovations on the building it inhabits are undertaken. It's my understanding there'll be an outdoor patio when they're finished, plus the renderings for the façade look amazing. In the meantime, you can get your Rawbar fix this weekend (July 18 and 20) at special pop-up nights at **Argus Bar + Patio**.

BANKROLLING A few weeks ago, I announced in this space that **Bank of America** had donated its long-empty building in Paradise, which survived the Camp Fire, to the town. Well, it's not the only financial institution stepping up to help out in the recovery effort. **Golden Valley Bank Community Foundation** this week announced it will pay the salary for a disaster recovery manager for a year—with the understanding that the position would be retained for at least three years.

“In the aftermath of this disaster, it is clear that the Town of Paradise requires someone to oversee what will be a complex and lengthy recovery,” a press release from the town reads. It's awesome to see the support that was so overwhelming in the immediate aftermath is still strong.

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