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Larry Joe Taylor's Rhymes & Vines 2015 Music Festival

The 10th annual [Larry Joe Taylor Rhymes & Vines Texas Music Festival](#) kicked off with Bloody Marys, cold beer, frozen margaritas, good times, and good music with Randy Brown on Wednesday around 7. The dynamic and entertaining Randy Brown sang some of his own as well as some cover songs to a packed T-Birds Garage Pub at Larry Joe Taylor's Melody Mountain Ranch on the outskirts of Stephenville.

The bar was wall to wall with a lively crowd as Randy sang and picked and joked with us for hours. When he finally took a break, Dave Thomas took his place and sang some of his best songs. Fun way to kick off Rhymes and Vines Festival.





Thursday At Larry Joe Taylor's Rhymes & Vines

Thursday morning we were back at T-Birds Garage Pub because one of the highlights for me at Rhymes & Vines is the 10:00 "Bloody Mary Morning" at T-Birds Garage Pub with live music from several different artists - it's hard to beat starting the day with a spicy Zing Zang Bloody Mary, good music, and friends from around Texas. Over the next three days, Bloody Mary Morning at T-Birds included:

- ↳ Thom Shepherd & Coley McCabe on Thursday
- ↳ Larry Joe Taylor & Davin James on Friday
- ↳ Mike Graham on Saturday

Thom and Coley are great together with a good mixture of some cover, some funny, and some of their own songs. Larry Joe Taylor and Davin James, billed as the James Taylor show to attract a few more people (the bar was packed but not disappointed when the real James Taylor didn't show up) were outstanding as they sang, picked, exchanged funny digs, and bantered back and forth. My cheeks were hurting from smiling and laughing so much. And they seemed to be having as much fun as we were! Don't ever miss an opportunity to see these two talented singer songwriters together! Hated to see their set end.





T-Birds Garage Pub is in the center of Larry Joe Taylor's 300 acre Melody Mountain Ranch. It's a small bar with bar seating, as well as, some bar tables and chairs with walls covered with pictures from previous festivals. The slide show playing on a couple TVs as the artists sang also brought back some fond memories from previous years - one of which was of my 3 year old granddaughter dancing on the stage 6 years ago! T-Birds has a covered outside patio and the inside can be expanded for the late night music and a larger crowd.

Thursday afternoon was "Happy Hour" at T-Birds with Thom and Coley. Following that we set up the lawn chairs and coolers in front of the Colorado High Stage which is a stage under a covered pavilion with grass around the perimeter (for lawn chairs and canopies) and vendors and campsites forming a semi circle around the grass.





The music on Thursday included:

- ⇒ Parker McCollum
- ⇒ Davin James
- ⇒ Sean McConnell

At Rhymes & Vines it's not uncommon to run into some of the artists hanging out, having a drink, and interacting with their fans at T-Birds Garage Pub. And they always seem very approachable and easy to talk to.



Friday At Rhymes & Vines

Friday
started like
Thursday
with music
and
Bloody
Marys at



T-Birds
and that
was
followed

by a Dove and Drink Tasting and Competition with Larry Joe Taylor and Roger Creager. Roger took his time preparing and grilling some dove stuffed with cheese, sausage, and jalapeno and wrapped in bacon. Roger was slow and methodical in preparing his dove and not sure if it was on purpose but Roger's grill, which was supplied by the Taylors ran out of propane. This created several funny moments as Larry ribbed him and Roger jabbed back with some quick one liners. Larry Joe's grill worked perfectly and his jalapeno stuffed with dove tartar and wrapped with bacon were ready way before Rogers. To kill some time waiting for Roger, Larry Joe ask Dalton Domino who was standing in back to come up and sing a couple songs.

Since Roger was still busily preparing his creation and having to share Larry Joe's grill, a female singer songwriter (didn't catch her name) sang a few songs. Roger's stuff still wasn't done so they started the drink contest and judging - Larry Joe making some concoction in fancy cups with lime and hemp vodka from Colorado High. Roger took his time preparing a Bloody Mary with clamato juice, worcestershire, horseradish, and more and then added several olives, celery, and sausage. Little did he know that Larry Joe got him again - one of the three judges was with Zing Zang. Roger realized it and quickly added a splash of Zing Zang and mentioned how much he loved Zing Zang. I had to leave before the samples of the dove and drinks were handed out and the winner was announced. My money was on Larry Joe in both categories.



After the Cookoff there was a homebrew demonstration and then the music started at 3:00 on the Colorado High Stage and the line-up included:

- ↪ Abbey Cone
- ↪ Dalton Domino
- ↪ The Last Bandoleros



- ↪ Dolly Shine
- ↪ Zane Williams
- ↪ Deryl Dodd



↳ Roger Creager



What a fantastic day of music with some first timers (Abby Cone and The Last Bandoleros) and some like Deryl Dodd who have been entertaining us for several years in a row. This was the first time we've seen The Last Bandoleros and they were fantastic - lively, entertaining, and some great songs - and they stole the afternoon which is hard to do when you're competing against a Grand Ole Opera performer (Zane Williams) and one of the

most talented (guitar, keyboards, trumpet, and washboards) and entertaining singer songwriters in Texas - Roger Creager.

Unfortunately, we had to leave early Saturday morning and missed Bloody Mary Morning with Mike Graham, a cooking demonstration with Amy Kushnir and Garth Blackburn, a homebrew demonstration and sampling, and the following line-up that started at 2:00:

- ↳ Luke Wade
- ↳ Erick Willis
- ↳ Prophets and Outlaws
- ↳ Mark McKinney
- ↳ Tejas Brothers
- ↳ Larry Joe Taylor
- ↳ Mike Ryan

A friend of ours said Saturday's music was great - Luke Wade was on the Voice, this was Ericks first time at Rhymes & Vines and he was good, the crowd loved the loud and rocky Prophets and Outlaws, Mark was fabulous and every song was great, Daryl was his normal entertaining self, the Tejas Brothers were fantastic as usual, Larry Joe was great with some new songs and the highlight was when all the musicians joined him on stage for "Don't It Make You Want To Dance," and Mike Ryan was good.

Rhymes & Vines Fans

We've been coming to Rhymes & Vines for at least 5 years and it's like coming back to a family reunion - we get to reacquaint with friends we've made from past Rhymes & Vines or other music festivals and each year we meet several new people. Most of the folks who attend Rhymes & Vines are older (40's and above) dedicated music fans who love music, cold drinks, and good times. They are here to catch their favorite artists, party with friends and fellow music fans, camp and enjoy the camaraderie, or sing and camp around the campfire. Everyone's welcome at Larry Joe's festivals and you'll find babies in diapers, dogs of all sizes, and some teens who really seem to enjoy the music. Coolers filled with your choice of something to drink, lawn chairs, and canopies are allowed. If you run out of beer or ice you can stop by Larry Joe Taylor's mini beer mart and buy a case and some ice or just head to T-Birds Garage Pub and drink there - you'll be able to hear the music but not see the artists. See this page of Rhymes & Vines fans to see more pictures.



Camping & Dining at Rhymes & Vines Music Festival

Some of what makes Rhymes & Vines fun is the camping. Melody Mountain Ranch has lots of choices for camping some of which include assigned campsites with water and electric that are so close you can sit in your lawn chair at your site and see the stage. Other water and electric sites are less than a couple minutes walk to the stage. The water and electric sites are limited and go fast. Once you have an assigned site, you've got it for your lifetime as long as you pay for it each year. There are lots of primitive or dry camp sites - all of which are within a five minute or less walk to the stage. The campground is full with everything from tents to travel trailers to hammocks to mattresses in the back of trucks to \$300,000 motorhomes.





And there is always something going on in the campground - games of washers or bean bag toss or ladder golf, the smell of sizzling bacon or brisket cooking on the grill, laughter and tall tales, and best of all good music around the campfire with some talented fans who are typically joined by the main stage performers.

With all that music, late night drinking, and fun the stomach seems to constantly be growling and the good news is there are several choices to load back up on some calories. There are vendors selling turkey legs and BBQ sandwiches, hamburgers and chicken sandwiches, nachos and burritos or fajitas, as well as pizza or corn dogs. You won't go hungry and the prices are reasonable and the quality is good. Every year I look forward to the hands down best patty melt I've ever had plus some fries from **Kate's Cafe** - hot and juicy with cheese, onions, and a great sauce all on toasted rye! They also serve a very good burger and chicken sandwich. And the wood fire oven cooked freshly made with I get to call it toppings from **Crusty's Wood Fired Pizza** is also delicious - so good I usually have two!



In addition to four to six food vendors there is also the merchandise tent selling the performing artists CDs, t-shirts, hats, koozies, and more plus a cowboy that sells a wide variety of cowboy and cowgirl hats.

Bottom Line

If you like country music, BYOB, and camping and good times than you need to plan to attend next year's Rhymes & Vines Music Festival. Some of what keeps us coming back to Larry Joe Taylor Music Festival includes;

- ↳ the festival is very well run - the music starts on time, the set changes are quick, and the clean-up staff does an excellent job
- ↳ an excellent line up of some veterans and new up and coming singer songwriters
- ↳ a smaller, mature, and fun loving crowd who love good times and good music
- ↳ an opportunity to meet and interact with or sing and pick around the campfire with some of the artists - Dalton Domino summed it up well "I love this festival - it's condensed and compact and gives us an opportunity to interact with and get to know our fans"
- ↳ Roger Creager shares our opinion when he stated "this is one of our favorite festivals and we can't wait to get here - this year we came out a day early to listen to the music and hang out"
- ↳ the same campsite is reserved for us year after year and we know and like who we are camped next to plus we're less than a minute walk from the stage



Thanks to the volunteers, the staff, and the Taylor family for making this one of the best run and most entertaining festivals of the year. Larry Joe is an excellent host, a social butterfly and always mingling with his numerous fans, a chief (superb stuffed jalapeno) and bartender, and an outstanding entertainer at Bloody Mary Morning, on the stage during his set, or around the campfire. Thanks Larry Joe for another excellent festival.

