



Ventura River Bio-region and Coastal Communities

Jimmy O Talks About The Blues

Editor's Note. I talked with Jimmy O about playing his brand of the blues in Ventura County.



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I'm really glad is the blues is having a strong comeback. I've been doing the blues since I was very young. I had my blues heroes growing up – B. B. King and Albert King on the traditional side and Jimi Hendrix for the modern blues. I remember when I was about nine or 10 sneaking into my brother's room when he wasn't around and listening to Howlin' Wolf and others. But really my biggest influence in the blues was Willie Dixon. I am really into songwriting and Willie Dixon was a big influence on me.

I started playing guitar around the age of 10 or 11. My first band ever was a blues band. The first song I ever wrote was a blues song for my high school variety show. The theme of the show was 'Out Of This World', and I wrote a song called "Martian Blues". I guess I had the blues at an early age. But the blues can come to anyone - whatever your race, nationality, color—everyone gets the blues.

I always like to say, "If you don't dig the blues you have a hole in your soul." The blues is uplifting music. It is not to get you down, but to pick you up. The blues is healing music; its there to pick up your spirits.

Commando Cody MacDonald plays the harp. I started with Commando Cody a few years back in the Howlin' Muddy Kings. When our CD (Bolt from the Blue on Smokestack Records) came out we formed this band and we've been really working—all the way from Ventura County to Riverside County and all points in-between.

The audiences in Ventura County are very hungry for the blues. L.A. is so more trendy and really fickle. But the minute I get out of LA. County people are so much warmer to the blues.

The audience at Joe Daddy's is really with it. I always feed off the energy of the audience. Well be back in Ventura playing at Joe Daddy's just about every month. There's a big bash there on New Year's Eve and we'll be there.

Joe Daddy's is strictly catering to the blues, and I really love the atmosphere Sandy is really a joy to work with. He's a big fan of the blues, - not just a regular club owner trying to cash in on the blues market. The clubs atmosphere and decor and the friendly people up there are great. We've been treated well. And the food is awesome - very southern, very down-home food. You'll hardly be able to finish a meal. The BBQ ribs and chicken - its all like the blues, good cookin,' good atmosphere and good music all fitting in together. ■