

Cultural Daily

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The Blues Are Alive and Well in NorCal's Upper Lake

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The Blue Wing mascot – a 1947 Ford Truck .

The Tallman Hotel and Blue Wing Restaurant in Upper Lake, California, are getting ready to present what has become one of the most charming local blues festivals that you'll find in the western United States. Now in its ninth year, the Blue Wing Blues Festival is ready to take flight August 7 – 9, and also on Labor Day, September 7.

Headliners this year include the Ford Blues Band, with special guest Volker Strifler; Harriet Lewis and the Family Band; Alligator Records recording artists Rick Estrin and the Nightcats; and the Nancy Wright Band.

The Ford Blues Band will take the stage on August 7, led by veteran bluesman Patrick Ford on drums, Mark Ford on harp and vocals, Dewayne Pate on bass, and German-born Volker Strifler on guitar and vocals. Strifler and his band have won several blues awards; Mark Ford's solo releases on Blue Rock'It Records have been best sellers; and Pate is one of the most sought after session men on the West Coast. Together they make for one of the most skillful and intriguing bands on the blues scene today.

Harriet Lewis & the Family Band take on the headlining duties on Saturday, August 8. Lewis is a dynamic soul, blues and jazz vocalist originally from Philadelphia and of Jamaican Heritage. She began singing in her Baptist church at the age of 12 and has been perfecting her craft ever since. She has performed as lead or backup vocals on some 13 CDs and performs widely in Europe, particularly Germany where, in 1995, she won an award as "Best Soul, Blues and Jazz Singer in Europe."



Rick Estrin and the Nightcats will headline August 9.

Rick Estrin and the Nightcats top the bill on Sunday August 9. Estrin ranks among the very best harmonica players, singers and songwriters in the blues world today. His quick wit and signature look – coifed hair, pencil-thin mustache and sharp attire – add even more color to his performances.

Backing Rick are virtuoso musicians in their own rights. Kid Andersen is a fiery showman on guitar together with Lorenzo Farrell on bass and keys and J. Hansen on drums.

The openers certainly hold their own as well.

August 7 – 9 will feature legendary Los Angeles blues guitarist Bernie Pearl. Pearl has been playing the blues since the 1950s and has performed with and learned from the likes of Lightnin' Hopkins, Mance Lipscomb, BB King, Albert Collins, Buddy Guy and Big Mama Thornton.

Labor Day will see the queen of California Boogie Woogie piano, Wendy DeWitt, leading things off. DeWitt puts on a energetic show and honed her skills under the tutelage of Western Swing hall of famer Tommy Thomsen. Blues Review magazine's Robert Feuer said that DeWitt is "... at the top of the list of female piano boogie woogie players."



The show starts at 6:30pm each evening, with LA Blues legend Bernie Pearl will open each performers setting up on the veranda of the show, August 7 – 9.

Tallman Hotel, and the audience gathered in the intimate garden between the Hotel and Blue Wing Restaurant.

"It's a nice time of day and a great spot to enjoy world-class music," says owner Bernie Butcher. "With a top quality barbecue dinner thrown in with the price of admission, it's a great value for music lovers."

Tickets are \$50 per day (\$55 at the door), plus tax, and are limited to 100 each evening. They can be purchased directly at the Tallman Hotel, located on Main St. in Upper Lake, or by calling the Hotel reception desk at 707-275-2244 ext. 0. You can also purchase online here:

[alert type=alert-blue][**CLICK HERE TO BUY TIX ONLINE**](#)[/alert]

More information including the barbeque menus for each night can be found at www.tallmanhotel.com/concerts.

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