

The Hell Hounds

With a Blues legend in their corner, the band goes "all in" on a new CD

By Geoff Livingston

A chance meeting with the son of one of Blues most legendary bassists- Blues Brother Donald 'Duck' Dunn, and the subsequent hanging with dad, has set off a whirlwind series of recordings, collaborations and performances for Palm Beach County Deltabilly Blues band The Hellhounds.

After playing at the International Blues Competition in South Florida, vocalist Vince Flora met Dick Waterman, photographer and promoter of many Blues artists. Dick invited the band to his place in Oxford, Mississippi where he hooked them up with Delta blues musicians in Clarksdale, Mississippi. After checking out all of the legendary blues artists Waterman has photographed, from Son House to BB King and many more, Vince was taken so much with the Delta Blues atmosphere in Mississippi that he's already optioned property in Clarksdale. He hopes to own a blues joint across the street from the Ground Zero Blues club, owned in part by actor and local Clarksdale resident Morgan Freeman.

Blues legend Robert Johnson is said to have sold his soul to the devil in exchange for musical virtuosity, and "Hellhound On My Trail" from Mr. Johnson is where the Hellhounds draw their name and inspiration. This area in the Delta is saturated in the blues and Vince and the band soak it all in. The exact location of "The Crossroads" is

widely disputed if it even exists at all, but Highways 61 and 49 in Clarksdale, MS intersect and is one of the possibilities of where Robert Johnson felt "I believe I'm sinkin' down".

But it was at the Amp Shop in West Palm Beach where Vince ran into Jeff Dunn, who was getting a '66 Gibson Thunderbird bass guitar appraised. This is where the chain of events went into 2nd gear. Jeff Dunn is a soundman (Black Crowes, Cinderella, Blondie) and producer himself, and is involved with Donald 'Duck' Dunn productions. The two struck up a conversation over the bass, only to find out the owner of the guitar happened to be one of the most influential and admired bassists of our time. Jeff Dunn came out to see The Hellhounds play live. He loved the band and wanted to produce them. He said he'd like to get his Dad involved, and he and his wife June came to see them. Donald sat in with the band and took a liking to their unique musical style.

At an afternoon barbecue they all sat down together where the blues legend offered support for recording the band. And with his experience and influence will help with the production and distribution of their CD.

Donald shared anecdotes with the Hellhounds about playing on some of the most definitive music of an era- "Knock On Wood", "Hold On I'm Coming", "Green Onions", "Dock Of The Bay", "In The Midnight Hour" to name just a few. And also of the musicians he's performed with- Otis Redding, Bob Dylan, Eric Clapton, and so many others it would be difficult for even him to list.

Donald has arranged for the band to record in Ardent Studios in

Memphis, in early September with the Dunn family producing, Donald helping with the arrangements. Larry Nix of Ardent Studios will be doing the mastering, having done the final touches on tracks from Albert King to Stevie Ray Vaughn to ZZ Top. Stax Session drummer Steve Potts will be recording with the band, he having done all of the Otis Redding recordings, worked with Neil Young, Reba McEntire and is the Booker T. & the MG's road drummer to mention just a few. Kevin Houston of Ardent will be the engineer for the recordings. Dick Waterman is tapped to photograph the band for the album cover.

The band plans on keeping overdubs and additional instruments to a minimum, so that their live raw sound shines through. Reproducing an over-produced album live is impossible, and their live show is what they hope to capture on tape. "We're just hoping to make a great album" says Flora, adding "with all of the people on our side thanks to fate, really....and with a lot of hard work we'll have a really great album".

The band will be shopping for agents with the help of the Dunn family, and will be working on a European tour, as well as doing a lot of road work in the States. The band is revved up for the trip to Memphis, and they are going for broke on this project. With their determination and hard work, as well as the ways the chips have recently fallen for them, the little band from Jupiter could be on the road to bigger and better things. Go to www.HELLHOUNDSLIVE.com for all the latest news and photos.