

One Ton Pig celebrates sophomore CD

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By Aaron Davis



Jackson Hole, Wyo.-Who doesn't like bacon? Especially free bacon. On Tuesday, there will be two thousand pounds of swine waiting to be consumed. Actually, One Ton Pig combines for more like 835 pounds, but that's beside the point.

The folk-rock, alt-country quintet is set to release its sophomore live recording, *Big Norm*, this Tuesday. Recorded live at The Timberline Bar in Victor on July 23, Marshall Davis of Double Wide Studios captured two full recordings of 20 new original tunes. An afternoon sound check set, as well as a night set with an audience, produced 14 keepers that were then mixed and mastered.

"By the end of our night set, we were all really fatigued, so we ended up keeping a little more of the day set," guitarist-vocalist Michael Batdorf said. "I like the challenge of recording live. It can be really daunting but also revealing, and this album says a lot about us as a band."

In case you're not familiar with band members, One Ton Pig features guitarist-vocalists Batdorf and Justin Smith, Tim Farris on mandolin and vocals, bassist Andy Calder and drummer Jason Baggett. They formed in fall of 2006 and have maintained a Tuesday residence at the Silver Dollar Bar ever since. In 2007, the band released *High on the Hog*, recorded live during one of the weekly shows.

"Tuesdays are like supper club with your buddies," Smith said. "We take some risks with new material when we launch each new season, and it gets really tight as the season progresses. For this recording, we had a collective pep talk and decided—not without tension—that we didn't need to be mad at one another ... just enjoy the music and trust it, and we did that."

Sonically, Big Norm is akin to a "live in the studio" album compared to High on the Hog. The production leans towards the soundboard fade rather than a "room" sound, with little audience presence. The band sounds well rehearsed, and the result is cohesion. Batdorf penned most of the tunes with three contributions by Smith and one grassy instrumental, "Sonoma," written by Farris.

There are plenty of local references within the lyrics, including "Murder in the Hole," a tune written about the man who was found dead in Flat Creek a few years ago. One phrase from Batdorf's "Let Me Rattle" jumped out at me: "Tetons are like knowledge / they're young and exciting / But the hills are the wisdom / And yeah, I can rest inside them."

"Most of these songs were written in a two-year period of traveling around," Batdorf said of his tunes. "As writers, we take a close look at the societies and communities around us. Some of this takes place at home where we feel comfortable, and in other places you feel more vulnerable."

Big Norm was inspired from an actual pig that grew to freakish proportions, weighing in at 1,600 pounds and earning the title, "world's largest pig." And while the band's namesake and album's namesake lean toward slapstick, One Ton Pig's music is anything but.

You can grab a copy of your own at CDBaby.com/OneTonPig2, iTunes or at the show next week..

One Ton Pig will celebrate the release of Big Norm 7:30 to 11 p.m., Tuesday, at the Silver Dollar Bar. The free party will include drink specials, giveaways and free bacon. 733-2190.

photo by AARON DAVIS

One Ton Pig releases its second live album this week: Big Norm.