

Press Release:
For Immediate Release
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Alligator Recording Artist, Coco Montoya performs at Yesteryears Dinner Club 235 W. 2nd Street Pomona, CA. (the downtown arts colony – www.2ndstreetlive.com) Sat 5/5/01. Showtime is 7 Pm and tickets are \$8 in advance and \$10 at the door. Call 909 629 5264 info and order line, Club 5164 and Red Entertainment 909 629 4349. Tickets also available at Tickmaster Online at www.tickmaster.com or call L.A. 213 480 3232, Orange County 714 740 2000 – Credit Cards Accepted.



“A Monster lead guitarist: his blues rock with a passion.”

-Atlanta Journal

“Montoya punctuates each song with his trademark guitar wizardry while breathing life and passion into his vocals.” -

Minneapolis Star Tribune

“Montoya’s singing is completely commanding; his strat leads rage across the disc like a brush fire. A must-have for fans of contemporary electric blues guitar; stripped down and biting; chilling, swampy, beautiful; A modern blues master.”

-Blues Revue

“His tasty licks burn with blues know how.” - Guitar

“Impeccable blues pedigree; birting tone, eloquent phrasing ans swinging, shuffling groves reveal the depth of Collins’ influence.” – Guitar Player

“Superb Guitar Artistry and powerful vocals . . . one of the blues’ leading exponents.” – Philadelphia Daily News

“Montoya sings and plays with Passionate Abandon.” – Boston Globe

“Piercing Guitar Tone . . . Montoya has a wonderful and distinctive vocal instrument; one of th top guys in contemporary blues. A unique musical blend of wisdom and abandon.” – Blues Access

“Heartfelt singing and a merciless guitar with a wicked icy burn . . . Montoya is a show – stopper . . . he swings like a jazz man and stings like the Iceman . . . he is one of th truly gifted blues artists of his generation.” – Living Blues

“Montoya is at the forefront of contemporary blues guitarists.” – Guitar World (more)

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BIO

With the release of *Just Let Go*, his third recording for Blind Pig, Coco Montoya continues to prove he's one of the most formidable blues and roots rock guitar slingers on the scene.

Montoya was born in Santa Monica, California in 1951. He was raised by his working class parents on the west side of Los Angeles and took an early interest in music. His dad had a large record collection of mostly jazz and big bands, and the house was always filled with music. Although he used to enjoy picking out notes on a guitar, Montoya's main instrument while growing up was drums, playing in rock 'n' roll bands. "Then one day I went to a concert featuring Creedence Clearwater and Iron Butterfly. Albert King played between the two groups and I had never heard of him. Boy, after he got done playing, that changed everything. That revolutionized my whole life and showed me what music and guitar playing really were about. I knew that was what I wanted to do."

Another turning point came when Montoya was playing drums at a little bar in Culver City, California in 1972. He met Albert Collins and, "When I saw him play a little later, it was the ultimate. He even let me sit in on a song. A few months later Albert gave me a call and asked if I'd like to go on the road with him for a few weeks to Oregon and Washington. Of course, I immediately said 'yes' even though I was frightened. I asked him when we were going, thinking we would have time to rehearse. He told me that he'd pick me up in about three hours! I was very scared because I had never really played blues before, but Albert was desperate for a drummer. A little later I told him that I loved his music, but if he wanted to replace me I'd understand. Albert asked if I wanted to learn to play blues, because if so, I should stick with him, he would teach me. What a great gift he gave me! I stayed with him for around five years and he was like a father to me."

It was during this period that Coco began doubling on the guitar. Collins went out of his way to teach him what he knew. "We'd sit in hotel rooms and play guitar. He'd play that beautiful rhythm of his and just have me play along. He was always saying, 'Man, don't think about it, just feel it.' He taught me to tap into an inner strength."

"Then in the 1980's I was playing guitar at a club when John Mayall came in to celebrate his birthday. I dedicated a real bastardized version of "All Your Love" to him. Unknown to me, the guy running the board made a mix for John. A little later John gave me a call, asking if I wanted to join a new version of the Bluesbreakers. I was sure it was one of my English friends playing a joke, so I hung up on him! Luckily, he called me back. I knew I shouldn't pass up the chance to play with this great legend, so I joined him and ended up staying ten years. We played everywhere. My guitar advanced very fast with him, simply because of the pressure of being in that band and following in the footsteps of Eric Clapton, Peter Green, and Mick Taylor. John always wanted us to play like ourselves and not copy the records. I learned a lot from him."

During nearly ten years with the Bluesbreakers, Coco toured all over the world, playing the most prestigious festivals - North Sea Jazz Festival, Montreaux Jazz Festival, New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival, and the San Francisco Blues Festival, to name a few. This important period was documented on several recordings, including *Behind The Iron Curtain*, *The Power Of The Blues*, *Chicago Line*, *A Sense Of Place*, and *Wake Up Call*. Coco was also a guest performer on Collins Mix, Albert's 1993 recording. It was Collins who inspired Coco to leave the Bluesbreakers for a solo career. "He was dying of cancer when he told me, 'I know John's been good to you, but it's time for you to do your own thing.' That really shook me." (more)

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Montoya struck out on his own in 1993 and immediately established a reputation as one of the strongest performers on the circuit, tearing up the clubs and knocking out festival audiences around the country with his spectacular shows.

Coco's debut as a solo artist, *Gotta Mind To Travel*, was released on Blind Pig in 1995. On the release he rips through a set of blues and R&B songs with from-the-heart vocals and fiery, intense guitar solos. The album is further enlivened by guest appearances by his mentors Collins and Mayall, as well as Al Kooper, Richie Hayward of Little Feat and label mate Debbie Davies. *Gotta Mind To Travel* became an instant favorite with radio, appearing for months on the radio charts (as well as holding the #1 position for many consecutive weeks) of *Living Blues* and *The Hard Report*, a radio trade publication. *The Hard Report* called it "one of the best blues albums this year and sets the stakes incredibly high for any other releases the rest of the year. Montoya's passionate vocals and expressive guitar are the foundation for what will surely be an album that stands well in the test of time." Coco appeared twice on the *House Of Blues* syndicated radio program hosted by Dan Akroyd, and was featured in articles by the *Associated Press* and *Guitar Player* magazine.

In early 1996, Coco won the prestigious W.C. Handy Award (the Grammy Awards of blues music) for Best New Blues Artist. He was also nominated in the categories of Contemporary Blues Male Artist Of The Year, Best Instrumentalist/Guitar, and Contemporary Blues Album Of The Year for *Gotta Mind To Travel*.

Coco's scorching sophomore album, *Ya Think I'd Know Better*, came on the heels of his Handy Award and firmly placed him in the top ranks of today's rock and roots music performers. The release stayed on the *Billboard Magazine Blues Chart* for 14 weeks and earned the number six spot on the "Top 10 Best-Selling Independent Label" blues releases of 1996. *Blues Revue* magazine said "Montoya's strat leads rage across the disc like brush fire.....(he's) a modern blues master." *Guitar Magazine* called the release "a ripping trip through 11 lively blues-rock sides," while *Guitar World* exclaimed Coco to be "in the forefront of contemporary blues guitarists."

Montoya's latest album, *Just Let Go*, continues to showcase his steely guitar licks and impassioned vocals. After the success of *Ya Think I'd Know Better*, Coco asked Grammy Award winning producer Jim Gaines (Stevie Ray Vaughan and Santana) to rejoin him in the studio, and Jim quickly agreed. Special guests include Ernie and Earl Cate from the Cate Bros and Shaun Murphy. *Just Let Go* features inspired versions of songs such as "Fear No Evil" and "Do What You Wanna Do" as well as refreshing originals like "My Side Of The Fence" and "Just Let Go", which caught the attention of mainstream audiences, media people and fans alike.

For product and more information visit Coco Montoya at Alligator Records, <http://www.alligator.com/artists/artist.cfm?ArtistID=044> or Blind Pig Records, <http://www.blindpigrecords.com/artists/Montoya,+Coco.html>