

2014 Joe Val Bluegrass Festival Preview



The 29th Joe Val Bluegrass Festival is quickly approaching, February 14 -16 at the Sheraton Framingham Hotel, in Framingham, MA. The event, produced by the Boston Bluegrass Union, is one of the premier roots music festivals in the Northeast. The festival site is minutes west of Boston, just off of the Mass Pike, and convenient to travelers from throughout the region.

This award winning and family friendly festival features three days of top national performers across two stages, over sixty workshops and education programs, and around the clock activities. Among the many artists on tap are The Gibson Brothers, Blue Highway, Junior Sisk, Illrd Tyme Out, Sister Sadie featuring Dale Ann Bradley, and a special reunion performance by The Desert Rose Band.

This locally produced and internationally recognized bluegrass festival, produced by the Boston Bluegrass Union, was honored in 2006 when the International Bluegrass Music Association named it "Event of the Year." In May 2012, the festival was listed by USATODAY as one of [Ten Great Places to Go to Bluegrass Festivals](#)

Single day and weekend tickets are on sale now and we strongly suggest purchasing tickets in advance. Patrons will save time at the festival and guarantee themselves a ticket. Hotel rooms at the Sheraton are sold out, but overnight lodging is still available and just minutes away, at the Doubletree by Hilton, in Westborough, MA. Details on the festival, including bands, schedules, hotel information, and online ticket purchase at www.bbu.org

And visit the [29th Joe Val Bluegrass Festival](#) on Facebook for late breaking festival news. You can also find an event preview from Steve Ide [here](#).

Here are some of the highpoints of the festival –

[Our Main Stage features some of the top artists in Bluegrass Music.](#)

[The Gibson Brothers \(Sat\)](#)

Based in upstate New York, Eric and Leigh Gibson have been playing and singing their special brand of brother duet and bluegrass music since 1983. In 2013, the Gibson Brothers won the Entertainer of the Year award for a second straight year at the International Bluegrass Music Awards. Eric Gibson was named Songwriter of the Year, and the New York-based quintet also won Vocal Group of the Year as well as Song of the Year for "They Called it Music," written by Gibson and Joe Newberry. Both Eric and Leigh are phenomenal song writers and performers and clear crowd favorites. Joining them are Jesse Brock on mandolin, Clayton Campbell on fiddle and Mike Barber on bass.

[Gibson Brothers - They Call It Music EPK](#)

[Gibson Brothers – Help My Brother EPK](#)

2014 Joe Val Bluegrass Festival Preview

[Blue Highway \(Fri\)](#)

Bluegrass superstars Blue Highway are kicking off their 20th year as a working band with a brand-new album, *The Game*, and a headlining slot at the 29th annual Joe Val Bluegrass Festival, New England's premier wintertime roots music festival.

Blue Highway's *The Game* was released on January 21, 2014 to rave reviews. Daniel Mullins of Bluegrass Today wrote "In addition to being blessed with great singers and songwriters, Blue Highway is one of the most instrumentally gifted bluegrass bands on the circuit today," while Marc Myers of JazzWax issues a challenge to his readers: "I defy you to sample a track and not fall in love with their sound and spirit." All Music calls the album "another fine set that shows off the group's intelligent songwriting and precision playing and singing," while Hudson Valley Bluegrass sums the album up a bit more succinctly: "Really. Truly. Fantastic."

At the 20 year mark, Blue Highway is indisputably one of the most esteemed and influential groups in contemporary bluegrass. The band's nine exceptional albums and compelling live performances give proof to the stellar reviews, Grammy nominations, and numerous awards earned by the band since it first took the stage on December 31, 1994, with the same musicians that comprise Blue Highway today. Individually, Jason Burleson (banjo, guitar, mandolin), Rob Ickes (13-time IBMA Dobro Player of the Year), Shawn Lane (mandolin, fiddle, vocals), Tim Stafford (guitar, vocals), and Wayne Taylor (bass, vocals) are masters of their respective roles. Together, in Stafford's words, they are "a democracy in the best sense of the word": five gifted artists selflessly merging their talents into a seamlessly brilliant group sound. As Bluegrass Today's John Lawless recently observed, "Blue Highway gets stronger with each release."

[Blue Highway at Joe Val - Monrobro](#)

[Your Second Cousin Curley on Blue Highway](#)

[Russell Moore and Illrd Tyme Out \(Sun\)](#)

Cumming, GA. (January 21, 2014) – Billboard Magazine has released its *Best Of 2013: The Year In Music*, documenting the best-selling albums for the year, including the Top 15 Bluegrass Albums. *Timeless Hits From The Past Bluegrassed*, the latest release from Russell Moore & Illrd Tyme Out, ranks #5 alongside artists such as Steve Martin and Edie Brickell, Alan Jackson, and Old Crowe Medicine Show.

Released in January 2013 through the Cracker Barrel Old Country Store® exclusive music program, the 12-track album features newly recorded classic hits performed bluegrass style by the seven-time IBMA Vocal Group of the Year, Illrd Tyme Out and IBMA's most awarded Male Vocalist of the Year (five-times), Russell Moore. The legendary band gives a modern flare to the popular music originally recorded by Elvis, Merle Haggard, Willie Nelson, George Jones and Tammy Wynette, among others. It debuted at #1 on the Billboard Top Bluegrass Albums chart where it remained for seven consecutive weeks for a total of 14 weeks in the Top 10.

Besides Russell, the band includes Justen Haynes on fiddle, Wayne Benson on mandolin, Keith McKinnon on banjo and Blake Johnson on bass.

2014 Joe Val Bluegrass Festival Preview

[Russell Moore and Illrd Tyme Out – Old Home Place](#)

[Junior Sisk and Ramblers Choice \(Sun\)](#)

Junior Sisk and Ramblers Choice are gaining great recognition as one of the best traditional bluegrass bands to hit the scene in decades. Junior's soulful and sometimes haunting vocals, reminiscent of the late, great, Carter Stanley, who happens to be his hero, have captivated audiences for years. He was recently awarded the 2013 IBMA Male Vocalist of the Year. The pleasant mix of old and new is sure to offer something here for everyone. Joining Junior is long time singing partner and cousin Jason Tomlin on bass, Jason Davis on banjo, Johnathan Dillon on several instruments, and Billy Hawks on fiddle and guitar.

[Desert Rose Band Acoustic \(Sat\)](#)

The BBU is hugely excited to present a rare area appearance by Rock and Roll Hall of Fame member Chris Hillman and the Desert Rose Band. Joining Chris Hillman in this acoustic appearance are John Jorgenson on guitar/mandolin, Herb Pedersen on guitar and Bill Bryson on bass.

Chris Hillman was one of the original members of The Byrds, and along with fellow bandmates Roger McGuinn, David Crosby, Gene Clark and Michael Clarke, were inducted into the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame in 1991. After his departure from the Byrds, Hillman, along with collaborator Gram Parsons, was a key figure in the development of country-rock. Hillman virtually defined the genre through his seminal work with the Byrds and later bands, The Flying Burrito Brothers and Manassas with Steven Stills. In addition to his work as a musician, Hillman is also a successful songwriter and his songs have been recorded by artists as diverse as; Emmylou Harris, Patti Smith, The Oak Ridge Boys, Beck, Steve Earl, Peter Dinklage, Tom Petty, and Dwight Yoakum.

In the 1980s Chris formed The Desert Rose Band which became one of country music's most successful acts throughout the 1980s and 1990s, earning numerous 'Top 10' and 'Number 1' hits. The band's successes lead to three Country Music Association Awards, and two Grammy nominations. Although the Desert Rose Band disbanded in the early 1990s, they performed a reunion concert in 2008 and have since played a few shows together in select venues.

Herb Pedersen began his career in Berkeley, California in the early 1960's playing 5 string banjo and acoustic guitar with artists such as Jerry Garcia, The Dillards, Old and in the Way, David Grisman and David Nelson. His recording discography is diverse, as demonstrated by his work with artists as varied as Earl Scruggs, Peter Rowan, Gram Parsons, Emmylou Harris, Stephen Stills, Linda Ronstadt, Kris Kristofferson, John Prine, Jackson Browne and John Denver. He has also found success as a songwriter "Wait a Minute" was recorded by The Seldom Scene and Alan Jackson. Pedersen continues to perform in concert with the Laurel Canyon Ramblers and with Chris Hillman.

John Jorgenson is known as a pioneer of the American Gypsy Jazz movement. Jorgenson first came to national prominence with The Desert Rose Band, when he was honored as the ACM's "Guitarist of the Year" award three consecutive times. Following the Desert Rose Band, Jorgenson formed another award-winning group, the virtuosic guitar trio The Hellecasters.

2014 Joe Val Bluegrass Festival Preview

Originally conceived as a “one off gig for fun”, the group went on to win both “Album of the Year” and “Country Album of the Year” from the readers of Guitar Player Magazine for the stunning debut effort “Return of the Hellecasters”. Already a fan of the Desert Rose Band, Elton John recruited Jorgenson to perform on a worldwide tour that extended to six years of concerts and recording. The Washington Post recently wrote: “If there were a Summer Olympics for guitarists, Jorgenson would be a sure-fire gold medalist.”

Bassist Bill Bryson is best known for his unique style, which is reflective of the California culture and its melodic strains, country rock overtones and laid-back rhythms. He’s is also an accomplished songwriter. One of the best known of Bryson’s original songs is “The Girl at the Crossroads Bar,” recorded by the Grateful Dead as well as the Laurel Canyon Ramblers. As an in demand studio musician he enjoys playing bass in both formats. He has performed with The Bluegrass Cardinals, The Rice Brothers, The Laurel Canyon Ramblers and Loafer’s Glory.

They will perform all the DRB hits (“He’s Back and I’m Blue,” “One Step Forward,” “I Still Believe In You,” “Ashes of Love,” “She Don’t Love Nobody,” “Love Reunited”) and a healthy dose of classics from Hillman’s Byrds/Gram Parsons/Flying Burrito Brothers era (“Wheels,” “Sin City”) as well.

[Desert Rose Band – Love Reunited](#)

[Chris Hillman and The Byrds – So You Want to be a Rockin Roll Star](#)

[Balsam Range \(Sat\)](#)

From deep in the Appalachians where the Great Smoky Mountains meet the Blue Ridge comes the Balsam Range band, creatively blending Bluegrass, Folk, Gospel and Jazz into a new American acoustic music experience.

Founded in 2007, Balsam Range consists of five friends with unique experiences and backgrounds that blend together effortlessly to form their distinctive sound. Since bursting onto the scene, Balsam Range has made a definite mark in the Bluegrass and Acoustic music world. They were nominated for IBMA Emerging Artist of the Year in 2010 and in 2011, and won the IBMA Song of the Year award in 2012 for the hit “Trains I Missed.”

Their latest release is Papertown.

The band consists of Buddy Melton (fiddle), Marc Pruett (banjo), Caleb Smith (guitar), and Tim Surrect (bass, dobro).

[Balsam Range – Papertown](#)

[Balsam Range – Last Train to Kittyhawk](#)

[Sister Sadie featuring Dale Ann Bradley \(Sat\)](#)

Sister Sadie is a 5-piece acoustic band comprised of 5 very talented female musicians & singers based out of Nashville. They include five-time IBMA Female Vocalist of the Year Dale Ann Bradley (guitar), Gena Britt (banjo), Tina Adair (mandolin), Beth

2014 Joe Val Bluegrass Festival Preview

Lawrence (bass), and Deanie Richardson (fiddle). They recently formed after playing for fun at the Station Inn, and continue to have fun playing in this “extracurricular” project separate from their regular touring bands. We’re thrilled to have them at Joe Val!

[Sideline \(Fri\)](#)

What do the bluegrass musicians from the best bands in the industry do when they are not touring? Form another superband! Sideline is an “extracurricular” project from several musicians heralding from bands like Illrd Tyme Out, Mountain Heart, and Cherryholmes. It started out as just an opportunity to play a few Christmas shows in the wintertime when touring gigs are less frequent, but it morphed into a band, a CD, and several stellar performances at festivals and venues (as their other touring obligations permit). We’re thrilled to have them at Joe Val this year. The lineup appearing at Joe Val includes Steve Dilling, Darryl Webb, Jason Moore, Jimmy vanCleve, and Skip Cherryholmes.

[Special Consensus \(Sat\)](#)

Special Consensus is a legendary Midwestern bluegrass band that has performed at major festivals since 1975. Over the past 30 years they’ve recorded over 10 albums and concert videos. Besides powerful vocals and hot picking, they are widely known for their popular bluegrass music in the schools program. The current lineup consists of founding member Greg Cahill (banjo), Rick Faris (mandolin), Dustin Benson (guitar), and Dan Eubanks (bass).

[Special Consensus – Scratch Gravel Road EPK](#)

[Chris Jones and the Night Drivers \(Fri\)](#)

Founder and front man of The Night Drivers, Chris Jones is a quadruple threat as a singer, a songwriter, a guitarist—and, thanks to his role hosting SiriusXM’s Bluegrass Junction, as the most widely heard broadcasting voice in bluegrass. His immediately recognizable voice, warm sense of humor and abundance of talent have combined to make him one of the music’s most distinctive personalities, and one of its strongest artists. He’s won numerous IBMA awards in several categories. Joining him is fellow radio personality and multiple IBMA winner Jon Weisberger on bass, fellow SiriusXM personality (see a pattern here?) and banjo wizard Ned Luberecki, and Mark Stoffel on mandolin (the only one without a radio show, but he’s frequently in the studio as a recording engineer).

Charlottesville, VA - Tuesday, January 21, 2014 -- Chris Jones & The Night Drivers' album LONELY COMES EASY has steadily been gaining fans from listeners and DJs since its release in August. The group's first single, "Wolf Creek Pass," released as a digital EP in the Fall of 2012, reached #1 on the Bluegrass Today's Weekly Airplay Chart, followed by title track, "Lonely Comes Easy," this past September. And now this

2014 Joe Val Bluegrass Festival Preview

week, their third single "Where I Am" has also reached the #1 spot. This reflective song, co-written by Chris and Tom T. & Dixie Hall, is about being satisfied with where you are, regardless of social pressures to reach for "larger goals" in life; "I want to be where I am/This little piece of land/I've come to understand/I want to be where I am."

Chris Jones latest Rebel Release Lonely Comes Easy #1 on Bluegrass Today's Weekly Airplay Chart. <http://e2.ma/message/3by5f/nr7ewi> and listen to Where I am - <http://e2.ma/message/3by5f/nr7ewi>

The Spinney Brothers (Sun)

From the Annapolis Valley of Nova Scotia, Canada, the Spinney Brothers are comprised of Allan Spinney, Rick Spinney, Gary Dalrymple, and Adam Pye. Brother duet singing, backed by supportive and complimentary instrumentation, is the foundation of their tasteful and recognizable sound. By incorporating original material, which draws from various sources, the Spinney Brothers effortlessly intertwine the past with the present. They were nominated for the 2013 IBMA Emerging Artist of the Year. The Spinney Brothers believe in freshness and excitement of traditional bluegrass music. Give a listen, and you are sure to be entertained.

Hillbenders (Sat)

The dynamic bluegrass quintet from Springfield, MO with their high-octane shows, tight harmonies and stunning instrumental prowess, have been winning fans and making waves at every festival appearance, and consequently re-invited to since their formation in 2008. "Our music appeals to anyone that can enjoy a fun performance. We share a passion for the music, a passion to perform," says guitarist Jim Rea, "It's evident we have fun on stage. People come up to us and say sarcastically, 'liven up!'"

The band lineup includes Mark Cassidy (banjo), Gary Rea (bass), Jim Rea (guitar), Nolan Lawrence (mandolin), and Chad "Gravy Boat" Graves (dobro).

The Hillbenders – Concrete Ribbon

Detour (Sun)

Detour is a "bluegrass powerhouse" that features heartfelt originals, tightly focused harmonies, and high-steppin' instrumentals from a superbly talented sextet of veterans of Michigan's bluegrass scene. "Quarterline Road," the kick-off tune from the group's latest CD, *A Better Place,* soared to the top of BluegrassToday.com's weekly airplay chart and scored in the top 50 of Roots Music Report's national folk/bluegrass charts. The band's lineup features the soaring lead vocals of Missy Armstrong, the championship fiddling of Peter Knupfer, the inventive rhythm lines of Jack Grant on bass, the soulful guitar of Scott Zylstra, the hard driving mandolin and superb song writing of Jeff Rose, and the stellar banjo playing of Kevin Gaugier. Detour has quickly become a standout—"a bluegrass joyride" that the Lansing State Journal acclaims as "perhaps the best bluegrass band Michigan has yet produced." Bob Blackman, host of "The Folk Tradition" on WKAR-FM, says "for the total bluegrass package, take this Detour!"

2014 Joe Val Bluegrass Festival Preview

Detour on *Bluegrass Today* - <http://bluegrasstoday.com/new-members-new-label-for-detour/>

[A Joe Val Video Postcard from Your Second Cousin Curly](#)

[A new selection of 2012 Joe Val Festival Videos](#)

More information on 29th Joe Val Bluegrass Festival at <http://bbu.org/jvhome.htm>



Joe Val Master Classes

We're pleased to announce a great line-up of eight Master Classes at this year's Joe Val Bluegrass Festival. These classes are geared towards intermediate and advanced musicians, and class size is limited to 15 participants.

The classes take place on Friday, February 14, from 11 am until 4 pm (with an hour-long lunch break) just before the festival begins. Preregistration is required. Click [here](#) for Master Class details, artist bios and registration.

Early-bird tuition (before February 1st) is \$60 for BBU members (\$65 for non-members), and after the early-bird deadline is \$70 for BBU members (\$75 for non-members).

Early Bird Pricing for Master Classes has been extended to February 1st

Here's a list of the classes.

- **Singing – Dale Ann Bradley of Sister Sadie and 3-time IBMA Female Vocalist of the Year**
- **Banjo – Ned Luberecki of Chris Jones & The Night Drivers and SiriusXM broadcaster**
- **Dobro – Rob Ickes of Blue Highway and most-awarded instrumentalist in IBMA awards history**
- **Fiddle – Jim Van Cleve of Mountain Heart and Sideline**
- **Guitar – Tim Stafford of Blue Highway and Grammy award winner**
- **Songwriting – Jon Weisberger of Chris Jones & The Night Drivers and IBMA Songwriter of the Year**
- **Mandolin – Shawn Lane of Blue Highway and formerly with Ricky Skaggs and Doyle Lawson**



Joe Val Fast Track Classes

Ever wanted to learn a new instrument or learn how to sing? Our Fast Track Classes are for you. These classes are geared to beginners and take place on Friday, February 14th, from 11 am until 4 pm (with an hour-long lunch break) just before the festival begins. Preregistration is required. Click [here](#) for Fast Track details, artist bios and registration.

Classes meet from 11-4 on Friday with a one hour break. Fees are as follows: Early bird pricing until February 1st: BBU members \$60, nonmembers \$65, then \$70/\$75. Please register by signing up with the instructors directly.

Early Bird Pricing for Fast Track Classes has been extended to February 1st

Here's a list of the classes.

- **Banjo - Rich Stillman**
- **Guitar - Tony Watt**
- **Mandolin - August Watters**
- **Fiddle – Laura Orshaw**
- **Dobro - Chad Darou**
- **Singing for "Non" Singers - Mary Maguire and Nancy Harrowitz**



Joe Val Showcase Stage Schedule

Friday, February 14

- 6:00pm The Birdhive Boys
- 6:45pm Cricket Tell the Weather
- 7:30pm Wide Open Spaces
- 8:15pm Waiting for Neil
- 9:00pm Railroad House

Saturday, February 15

- 9:45am Twisted Pine
- 10:30am Four Bridges
- 11:15am NewFound Grass
- 12 noon Old Country Road
- 12:45pm Molly Tuttle Trio
- 1:30pm Blue Hat, Yeah!
- 2:15pm Flatt Rabbit
- 3:00pm The Deborah McDonnell Band
- 3:45pm Michelle Canning & Rough Edges
- 4:30pm Cold Chocolate
- 5:15pm Demolition Stringband
- 6:00pm Mark Kilianski & The Moonshine Ramblers
- 6:45pm The Gather Rounders
- 7:30pm Brother's Rye

Sunday, February 16

- 10:30am Merrimack Valley Bluegrass
- 11:15am Too Blue
- 12 noon TruegrassCT
- 12:45pm Honky Tonk Masquerade – Unplugged
- 1:30pm EC & The Moonshiners
- 2:15pm Fiddlin' Quinn & His Big Folks Band
- 2:45pm The Zolla Boys
- 3:20pm The Korey Brodsky Band