



Which Three of These Men Have Back Hair? The answer may shock you! But maybe not.

Tuft Enough

With two EPs, their own radio show and a huge teenage following, the Expendables are finally getting the 'bus respect' they deserve

By Mike Connor

Given that their shows at the Catalyst always sell out, and that they now have a KMBY radio show on Saturdays at 10pm called *Locals Only*, I thought it'd be a good idea to hang with the Expendables to get a real sense of where all the magic comes

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"We're not too deep," says lead guitarist Raul Bianchi. "If you hang out with us for an hour, you pretty much get the same stuff over again."

A tad embarrassed to toot their own horn, the Expendables gloss over the fact that their songwriting is steadily improving, with occasionally insightful (but mostly intentionally humorous) lyrics and an instantly likeable sound--surf-rock reggae a la Steel Pulse and Sublime, but with an added dose of ball-wrenching cock-rock for those about to mosh. Their latest EP, *Open Container*, has plenty of radio-friendly tunes, plus they sound great in concert, live dubs and all.

But let's assume for argument's sake that they're as shallow as they say. Who the hell cares? They more than make up for it in honesty, revealing what really goes on in the tour bus, who has hair and where, what kind of genitalia tastes best with a side of toast ... it's as if they have no idea I'm a scumbag journalist ready to print everything they say, despite the fact that their mothers will undoubtedly read this story. But perhaps it's their unwillingness to be anything but the fun-loving, beer-drinking, funny-as-all-hell 21-ish-year-olds they are that makes them so gosh darn appealing. A fan or two has even gotten a tad obsessed.

"Geoff's the only one who has to worry about stalkers," explains bassist Ryan DeMars. "You can always see the giant horseshoe of women," Bianchi adds,

"perfectly shaped in front of Geoff."

The band is at ease with the popularity that comely singer/guitarist Geoff Weers enjoys with the opposite sex, respectfully referring to him as "the cash cow," and labeling his microphone accordingly. A few other tidbits: guitarist Cam Hanson and singer/drummer Adam Patterson are the only two with girlfriends; three out of five Expendables have back hair; only two have butt tufts.

"But Geoff is clean as a whistle," DeMars assures me. Sweet.



Photograph by Gene Higa

If They Had a Nickel For Every Expendables Show:
Ribsby's Nickel opens Friday at the Catalyst.

The Bone Must Go On

Expendables manager Donovan Haney leads me to the practice spot, a corrugated-roofed shack tucked away in the bunghole of Aptos. It's hidden at the end of a steep, dark, winding road--the kind of place chain-saw-wielding inbreds might call home. Glowing in the light of the

full moon, a human leg protrudes from a pile of leaves near the front door. Inside, the Expendables are crammed together with instruments, amps and a decomposing couch. They practice a lot here, and it shows. The band is warm and welcoming, but I think it's the shoddy porn on the back wall that makes me feel right at home. *This is it*, I think. *This is where the magic happens*.

"We share this space with two other bands," says Bianchi, throwing into question who might have posted the picture of the naked woman with a penis on the wall. I don't ask.

"We started off in high school as a three-piece called Eternal Boner," Bianchi recalls. "When we got Geoff in the band, things took off from there because he was the only one in the band who actually knew how to play his instrument. He came up with the name before he was in the band. We all called each other 'expendable' because we were so bad. And then he came up with the name the Expendables ... and the rest is history."

The band will celebrate its three-year anniversary this Thanksgiving, and they're all just tingling with excitement about the band's success.

"We're still plugging away, driving eight hours for no money," Bianchi muses, but he also admits they've come a long way since they started. "I guess things started picking up after Ryan joined the band. We started writing more songs, practicing more, and started to build a better

following as the music got better."

Now they have some better equipment and a spanking new tour van. They ditched their old Laidlaw bus despite all the beer-drinking good times, but still get a bit wistful about the old ride.

"Any good parties in it?" I ask.

"Oh yeah," DeMars says, "every time."

"We got bus respect all the time, too," adds Bianchi. "People thought we were busing around retarded people or kids, so they'd let us merge."

Hey, whatever it takes to get ahead ...

The Expendables perform with Ribsy's Nickel on Friday, March 28, at 9:30pm at the Catalyst, 1011 Pacific Ave., Santa Cruz. The show is 16 and over; tickets are \$8-\$10. Local bands should submit promo CDs for the Expendables' radio show to P.O. Box 85, Soquel, CA 95073.

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