

TALK OF THE SOUTH

From the Editors of *Garden & Gun* Magazine

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The Saloon at sunset. (Photo courtesy of Saloon Studios Live)

Music on the Mountain

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For generations, Southerners have retreated to the cool, verdant landscape of North Carolina's Blue Ridge to escape the summer heat. Now there's one more reason to seek out the beloved destination: [Saloon Studios Live](#), an intimate new music venue set on twenty bucolic acres occupied by a replica of an Old West township, located a few minutes south of West Jefferson. Inspired by a childhood spent watching Westerns and a love of rock and roll, Mike Jones constructed the outpost—which also includes features such as a general store and a blacksmith shop—with Saloon Studios Live as its centerpiece. The space doubles as a top-notch live music recording studio and seats just a hundred people, meaning fans are guaranteed an up-close-and-personal experience with marquee country, bluegrass, blues, and rock musicians, as well as artists on the rise.

Saloon Studios Live will launch, in fact, with a special Hall of Fame lineup on May 12: **Steve Cropper**, the celebrated guitarist who played with the Stax Records house band, Booker T. & the MGs, and was a founding member of the Blues Brothers, will join **Dave Mason**, the influential songwriter and guitarist for the band Traffic, for a [one-night kick-off concert](#). Guests can arrive early to explore the fascinating small town, before grabbing complimentary cocktails and hors d'oeuvres at the Saloon. If you hang out until the last bar is sung, you'll get the chance to rub elbows with the two rock greats at a meet and greet. With the charming villages of Boone and Blowing Rock nearby, as well as plenty of mountain homes and cozy cottages for rent, there's no reason not to make it a long—legendary—weekend.

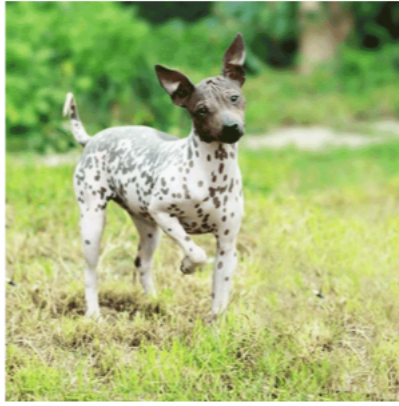
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