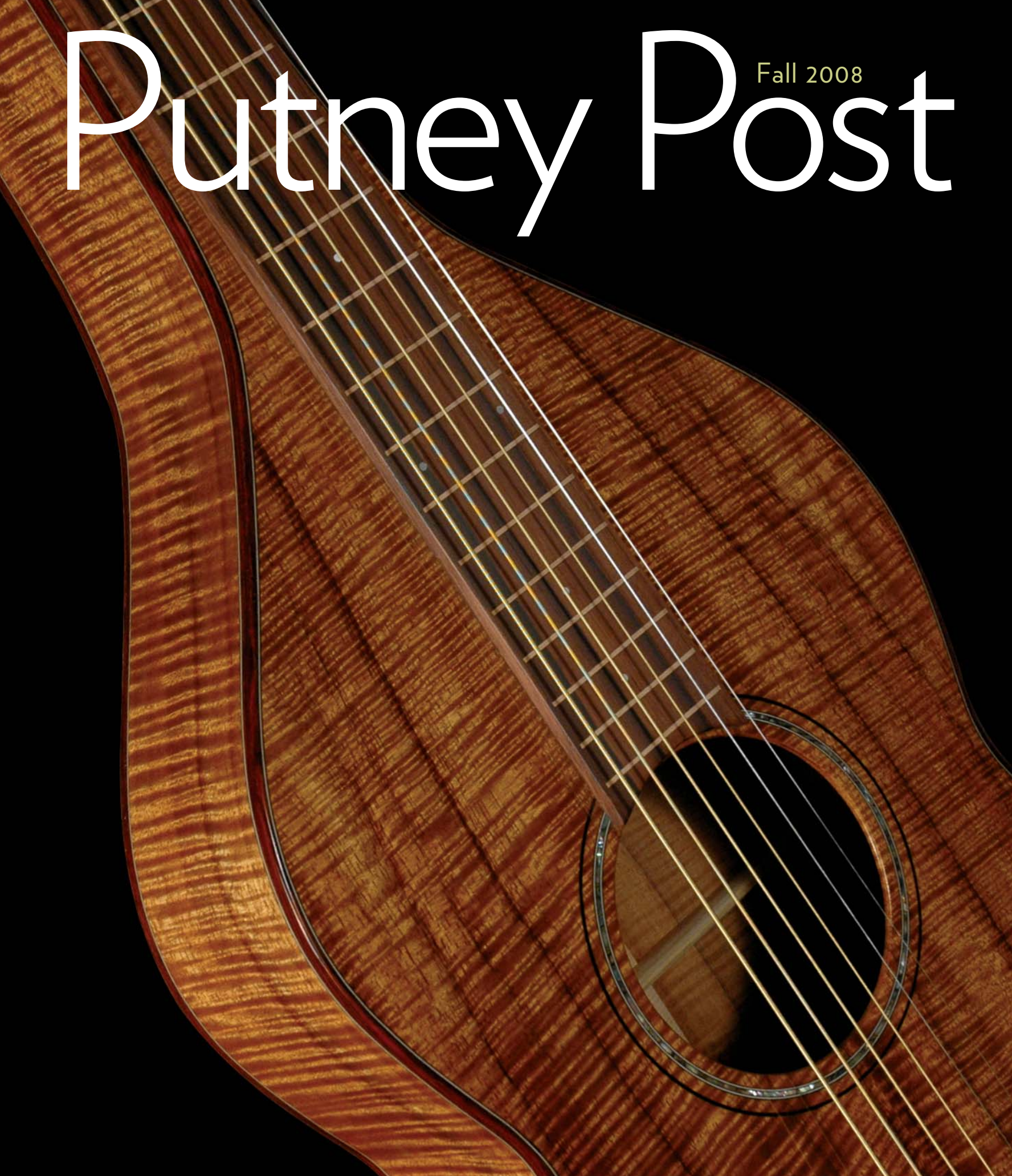


Putney Post

Fall 2008





The Putney School accepted Kipp Krusa '91 as a student in 1989. Here, he responded strongly to both the physical and intellectual labors of "Putney's dedication to the concept of self-reliance." He reflects often on the extent to which the arts at Putney made a lasting impression—from the organic farm he owns with his wife, Tallahassee, to the aesthetic he pursues in his woodworking and luthier businesses. It's a bigger story than we have room for here, so we've decided to start with the latter and get you the rest in time. In his one-man shop on his farm outside of Nashville, Kipp uses his skill as a master craftsman to turn his passion for guitar building into an art form. Now we'll let him tell us how he got this far:

During my time at Putney, we were trusted with use of studio facilities into the wee hours of the morning. I mention this because it was not the education in the arts as much as the realization, through open exposure to the facilities, that conviction and emotion could be focused through creative channels.

I've worked as a sculptor, a furniture maker, a CNC programmer, a guitar designer, and a luthier and have carried with me in all of these professions a pursuit of perfection, purity, and innovation.

Working as a luthier, I've combined my mastery of skill with an adept and distinct talent for design.

My relationship with wood began in 1993 at The Northwest School of Wooden Boatbuilding in Port Townsend, WA.

In 1994 I attended the Timeless Instruments School of Lutherie. I worked for the next few years on commercial fishing boats as I put my shop together and developed my skill as a craftsman by studying with some of the finest woodworkers in the world. I worked at Froggy Bottom Guitars in Newfane, VT for several years. It was there that I deepened my understanding of the intricacies of the guitar building process. My family and I moved to Nashville, Tennessee in 2003, when I launched Krusa Guitars.

I believe strongly that the steel string guitar is still in a process of evolution.

My guitars bring together an amalgam of traditional elements within the world of instrument design. I am not so interested in innovation but in a sort of refinement of classic forms. Specifically, I employ an elevated fingerboard and on some models an offset soundhole. The soundhole placement allows for a classical bracing pattern that is modified to withstand the tension of steel strings. Elevating the fingerboard increases volume slightly, enhances neck to body stability, and increases playability over the body. My personal relationship with the guitar, as a player, helps to hone my perspective on what an instrument should offer.

Musical instruments are tools for non-verbal expression, and I believe that a fine instrument should, like the human voice, be dynamic and articulate across the spectrum. One of the things that I love about the steel string guitar is that there are almost as many techniques employed in making music with them as there are players.

The building of a custom guitar demands a fairly personal relationship between the builder and the player. I familiarize myself with the playing styles of the client, with their body size, hand size, and playing posture in order to define the instrument that best fits them. I also come to terms with the language that the client has used to define tone.

Krusa Guitars has the capacity to build approximately 20 guitars a year.

This allows me to offer truly custom instruments and to maintain a respectful level of attention to the individual requirements of each player's order. I do not take orders that I feel I am not able to fill, and I am not at all interested in increasing production. My instruments are built by me, by hand, one at a time.

Cover Artist: Kipp Krusa '91

krusaguitars.com

By Don Cuerdon



TALLAHASSEE, KIPP '91
AND SAWYER KRUSA IN
THEIR SUNDAY BEST.