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RANDY MEISNER

Takes it to the limit one more time

BY KEN SHARP

First working with the likes of Poco and Rick Nelson's Stone Canyon Band, Randy Meisner found international fame as a founding member of the Eagles. An immensely talented bass player and versatile singer/songwriter, Meisner delivered the band's 1975 smash million-seller, "Take It To The Limit." He remained an integral force in the Eagles throughout the group's '70s heyday, exiting the group in 1977 upon the completion of the *Hotel California* tour. After splitting from the Eagles, Meisner released several moderately successful solo albums, such as *Randy Meisner* and *One More Song*, and racked up minor hits with "Hearts On Fire" and "Deep Inside My Heart," a duet with Kim Carnes.

Today, Meisner, 59, spends his free time playing dates with The World Classic Rockers, an outfit composed of former members of Journey, Steppenwolf, Lynyrd Skynyrd, Santana, and Toto. *Discoveries* had a chance to sit down with Meisner and delve into his early country-rock and Eagles memories.

DISCOVERIES: Share your musical background.

Randy Meisner: I grew up on a farm in Scottsbluff, Neb., and my mother sang a lot. My grandfather played violin and taught piano, so it was kind of a musical family in a way. I heard Elvis Presley and Conway Twitty, and that made me want to get an acoustic guitar. At around 12 or 13 I got an acoustic guitar and took some lessons. I played some PTA meetings out in the country. Jimmie Rodgers' "Honeycomb" was one of the first songs I learned. Then I went to town school when I was 14 and a half. I met some guys in town, and I started a group with Grady and Doug Wall called The Deacons, and then it was The Thunderbirds. We couldn't find a bass guitar, so we ordered one out of a Sears catalog. We got one guitar that was really sturdy and put four strings on it. We played through high school. Met up with my guitar teacher, and we started a band called The Dynamics. We did a lot of Beatles and R&B songs. I think I was about 17. We played a Battle Of The Bands in Denver. We did pretty good, but we didn't win anything.

There was a group there called The Soul Survivors that did shows with Herman's Hermits. They heard me sing, and Gene Chalk from The Soul Survivors drove to Nebraska and asked me to go to

Denver to play a few shows to get some money together. Then we came out to California in '64 or '65. We couldn't find any work because there were a million bands out here. [laughs] We kind of kicked around in Hollywood.

By that point I was playing bass. We called ourselves The Poor. We made three singles with Charlie Greene and Brian Stone. They had Sonny & Cher and Buffalo Springfield at that time. Barry Friedman was our producer. He did The Kaleidoscope. Our record was on Loma Records. I think it was a subsidiary of Atlantic. They got a little bit of play, but nothing really happened. They sent us to New York, and we played a club, The Salvation Army, that wasn't finished yet. We got there and we stayed in one bedroom at The Earl Hotel in the middle of summer. It was like 100 degrees. We all had cots, and there were cockroaches all over and we couldn't breathe. The drummer had poison ivy and had this calamine lotion all over him. At the time there was a guy that wanted to sell us some weed. We had \$80 between us, all five of us. We gave him the money and never saw him again, so now we had nothing. We

didn't have any real money at all. We'd steal pastries and milk from this truck that was parked outside the hotel real early in the morning.

We finally opened the club. Jimi Hendrix was the opener. Charlie and Brian got us some nice clothes, some bell-bottoms, and we get ready to go on and Jimi Hendrix comes in. We were excited to meet him. So he goes up and he does the fire thing and he burns the guitar and destroys the whole P.A. system. The guy comes back, "You lucked out. You don't even have to play." We played two weeks there as the house band, and that was our introduction to New York. We came back to California. Finally a friend of ours, Miles Thomas, who worked with Buffalo Springfield, told me Jimmy Messina and Richie Furay are starting a group and they want me to do a tryout.

After that Miles told me Jimmy Messina and Richie Furay are starting a group and they want me to do a tryout. I went to Laurel Canyon, and here's Timothy Schmit just walking out and I'm going in. I played for a while and they said, "You're in." So we started Poco together. We were like, the



first country-rock group. I was real into R&B, so I considered myself a good R&B bass player. George Grantham, Poco's drummer, could play anything, and Rusty Young with the steel guitar and Jimmy Messina. Rusty and Jimmy had written some songs. I don't think I really wrote anything for the band. I left after about a year.

Jimmy Messina and Richie [Furay] were in the studio. We'd finished the recording and had started the mix. I called down and said, "Yeah, I'd like to listen to it." Richie said, "No, just Jimmy and I are gonna do it." I said, "Wait a minute. I made the music too. I'd like to listen to the mixes." Richie said, "No, you just can't." I said, "If you're not gonna let me down there, I'm just gonna quit." And it was simple as that. [laughs] Later on, when we had the Poco reunion, Jimmy said, "Randy, I didn't care if you came down. Richie did. If I'd have known, I would have let you come down." This is 20 years later. [laughs] Anyway, they put the album out. It was kind of a painting on the first Poco album [*Pickin' Up The Pieces*]. They took me out of the painting. They left my voice on and my bass parts, and on one song they took my voice off. But all my background harmonies and bass parts are on there.

After that Ricky Nelson had seen Poco play at The Troubadour, and he asked me to start a band. Then I got my friends Allen Kemp on guitar and Pat Shanahan on drums from The Soul Survivors and The Poor, and we started playing with Rick for a while. That was The Stone Canyon Band. We played with Rick for a couple of years. We rehearsed at his house. I ended up buying it after the Eagles had started. Lived there for a while, and then Andrew Gold bought it after I left.

You are very underrated as a bass player. Your lines in the Eagles are very melodic and memorable.

I loved R&B, Smokey Robinson And The Miracles, Mary Wells, The Temptations, Marvin Gaye. The bass players on the Motown stuff were great. They really inspired me. After I took my first guitar lesson, I learned three chords and that was enough. Most songs have three chords. I started playing bass. At the time I was self-taught. I came out to California and thought, "God, I better learn some scales if I do sessions and stuff." I bought one of these Mel Bay books and learned all the scales, and that was it. From there I just played how I feel. I can't read music. Once I learn a part it's there. My bass playing came real naturally. In the Eagles' rehearsals that's how a lot of the songs would come together. Everyone would bring their own little thing of how they played, and that's what made the sound of the band. On "Hotel California" [Don] Felder designed that bass part and I played it, and boy it was a rough one to sing and play at the same time because there are some counter parts on there. [Sings "Welcome to the Hotel California..."] You gotta do some counter parts on the

bass. That took a while to learn and sing at the same time. But when you're younger it's easier in a way. Now it would take me a little more time I think.

With Poco and the Eagles, there's a common musical thread that runs throughout, with the disciples being The Byrds, Buffalo Springfield, and Flying Burrito Brothers.

We listened to The Byrds and Buffalo Springfield a lot. I was in awe of Chris Hillman's bass playing. Still am. He played some great bass parts, although he played with a pick and real direct, a way different style than me, but man, I was just amazed at his playing. The Byrds' records were so good. I mean, even The Beatles loved The Byrds' music. It's the

Could you sense a chemistry from day one with the Eagles?

Yeah, I kinda did. Glenn was talking to David Geffen at the time. Him and Henley were going to start a group. They were backing up Linda Ronstadt at the time so we went up to Chuck's Cellar in San Luis Obispo, and I played with them that one night. After I played with them that one night, I just felt a magic between the three of us at that point. Michael Bowden was playing guitar at that time. Anyway, I just felt it, and all of a sudden, John Boylan kind of stepped in and got Bernie Leadon in the band. John was a producer who was working with Linda Ronstadt. He produced part of Rick Nelson's albums, so I knew him from that. Bernie was the last to join the Eagles. We went up to Aspen

way down to the waitresses for having us here." It was just a funny little thing that happened along the road. One of our first gigs in California was at Beverly Hills High. That was fun.

Anyhow, Glyn wasn't sure of us at the time. We came back to L.A. and started practicing at Rick Nelson's rehearsal studio down on Laurel Canyon and Ventura. The Eagles started rehearsing there. We started doing more acoustic stuff, singing and getting our harmonies together. Then Glyn came in and heard us and said, "That's what I wanted."

How did Glyn view the band?

He wanted just the vocals and a nice clean sound. And he was right. He did a really good job on our first album. The second one, *Desperado*, was good. We did the first one at Olympic Studios in London. It was real huge; the board was so cool. There were airplane parts for meters. It was so neat to watch Glyn work. We had the Revox tape recorder, three or four of them going on. It was pretty amazing to watch Glyn work in those days.

Our second album was done at a smaller studio, Island. David Geffen really didn't want us to do that record. He didn't want a theme record. We decided we wanted to do it. The guys were real strong on it, J.D. Souther and Glenn and Don. My song, "Certain Kind Of Fool" just barely got finished. I had the beginning of it but not the body of the song. So in London they helped me finish it real quick, and it turned out real good. It fit with what they were portraying in the theme. That outlaw theme was a neat idea. Once that album was done I thought it was a real fine album. It did well. They had most of the songs. They'd read the books and the Daltons and all that stuff. "Desperado" is a great song. We rehearsed it for a while. When we worked with Glyn it was more of a live setup.

On the third album, *On The Border*, Glenn and I wanted to do more rock 'n' roll. In Nebraska I'd listen to Wolfman Jack late at night on the radio and he'd play all the old R&B stuff. Glenn and I were always the ones fighting for more rock 'n' roll rather than acoustic tunes. We felt that the first two albums were mainly acoustic, and we wanted to boogie a little bit. So we went over there and got "The Best Of My Love" done with Glyn Johns, which was more up his alley, and we wanted to do more rock 'n' roll. That song turned out so nice. It's Glyn's style with the vocal and the clean sound. We finally decided not to work with him anymore. It just wasn't right.

Then we got Bill Szymczyk. Bill had recorded "The Thrill Is Gone" with B.B. King, and we thought he'd be perfect for us and he was. We were impressed with his sound. Szymczyk got us a real nice bass sound, and I loved the way he worked. Bill came from more of a rock and R&B background. He was really good to work with, really attentive and a hard worker. "You want to do it? Wanna stay



The Stone Canyon Band

way the band looked and sounded. They just had it going on. I really love "Turn, Turn, Turn." The 12-string guitar and just the sound of it was so original to me. They had such a distinctive sound with their vocals and melodies.

It's interesting — Chris and Bernie Leadon were part of The Burrito Brothers. At the time I didn't really know much about The Burrito Brothers until I met Bernie, and then I realized Rick Roberts, a friend of mine, was in them for a while. He was later in Firefall. Bernie's acoustic playing was just incredible. Still is. And his banjo playing too. Like I was saying, in the Eagles Bernie had that in his pocket, and I had a little bit of R&B in my pocket and [Don] Henley had a lot of talent and [Glenn] Frey too. Frey was from Michigan and had that Detroit kind of feel. The first time I met Glenn Frey he was hitchhiking. I gave him a ride in my little Austin Healy Sprite. I didn't know him. We didn't know we were even gonna be in a group together. It was a pretty good mixture for the Eagles. It all worked out good. We were all about the same age and had about the same energy. We had a lot of great times.

to a club up there for a week or two, just to get to know each other's playing. We did cover songs, maybe "Johnny B. Goode," some old blues songs and a few originals that we were starting to write, like "Witchy Woman." We wanted Glyn Johns to produce us. We were playing at a club in Boulder, and Glyn came up to see us. At the time Glyn thought we were too rock 'n' roll and didn't concentrate on the vocals enough, which probably was right. But at the time we were like, "Yeah, we wanna rock 'n' roll!"

We played this club. Every night I would record us on a little stereo cassette. I got this mixing board from Radio Shack, took all the mics and recorded everything. It sounded really good because nobody was in the club. All the kids from the colleges were taking their exams so we get like three people a night. We were just playing to a dry stage, so it recorded really well. After that the *Concert For Bungle* album came out, and so I recorded the applause off the album, made a loop of it and added it to the live tape. It sounded like we were playing to millions of people. And Glenn saying at the end, "I'd like to thank the management all the



all night? OK, let's get it done." Bill became like a member of the group. I really liked the *On The Border* album. Especially for Glenn and I, the bass parts on *On The Border* are fun, some R&B stuff. I was real happy with that album. I remember Glenn came in with "Already Gone" and said, "Here's a song." We thought it was cool. Really fun to play, really rock 'n' roll. I always liked our rock stuff the most, things like "Life In The Fast Lane." That was really fun. Joe brought the guitar lick in. We worked out all the harmonies. Glenn would sing lead, and then we'd find places to sing. After a while when you played together, it was almost natural what harmony you'd be singing. Like with me, I did a lot of high parts. There was a certain timbre in our voices that when we sang together it was like an instrument.



Do you remember the first time you heard "Take It Easy" on the radio?

I remember hearing it for the first time, and it was amazing. I lived in an apartment in Studio City. I had given the manager at my apartment and some of my friends had the "Take It Easy" single and they all played it and said, "That's never gonna make it." Now every time I see those people they say, "You were right! You were right! It was great. I never could have believed then that the Eagles were gonna make it." [laughs] It was great to hear it and to be able to send it to your parents. I love the way Glyn Johns mixes. It's so clean and nice. It sounded so good. I remember Jackson [Browne] and Glenn brought that song in. For us it was always work, work, work. If somebody brought a song in, we'd work on it and rehearse and work it up. Henley was real strict on drums. I was a loose, bouncy bass player for a while, and then I started folding in with him on the kick drum and just hitting the spot once in a while and all of a sudden we got real tight. In terms of getting our harmonies down while we were rehearsing, we worked on it a little at a time and just worked out the parts until they sounded good and everybody felt they were comfortable. It had to sound and feel good.

The Troubadour was a band hangout.

We drank a lot of beer there. [laughs] Randy Newman, Steve Martin, Jim Morrison, all these people that we'd know hung out here. We'd go down there and have a few beers. That's how I started "Take It To The Limit." I went back to my house one night from the Troubadour. It was real late at night. I was by myself and started singing and playing

[sings] "All alone at the end of the evening." That's where it started. I had a couple of verses. Don and Glenn helped me finish it just in time to get it on the record. I knew it was a good song. I liked it, but I thought more of a rock 'n' roll, up-tempo thing would have been a hit. But it happened to make it. It was the second single released from the album. It kind of made it on its own. Radio started playing it so much, and it became a big hit. The high note that I sing at the end was tough to do live. It was pretty difficult, it was a challenge every night. But I pretty much nailed it every night. There weren't many times I didn't because we were rehearsed really

song, but he was more country and I was more R&B. Now I really love bluegrass, mandolins, all of that.

With Henley and Frey writing the majority of the Eagles' material, was it difficult for you to get your own songs recorded by the band?

No, everybody was welcome to write a song. I didn't write as much, that's all. Don and Glenn were a team, and they had a good thing going. I was basically on my own. I'd bring in a song and they'd tell me if they liked it, and often they'd say, "Let's finish this sucker." Don and Glenn

Part of it was the bluegrass and country style. He was a master acoustic player. He played some slide. He had that Clarence White B-bender. Glenn had more of a rock 'n' roll-sounding lead-guitar approach where he played more of the Eric Clapton kind of stuff, and Bernie was more in the notey, the precise notes that he played. He brought more of a country feel. It was so neat, like on "Take It Easy" with the banjo underneath it and on songs like "My Man's Got It Made," more of the acoustic stuff.



Early Eagles, from left: Bernie Leadon, Randy Meisner, Don Henley, and Glenn Frey.

well. We wanted everything to sound just like the records. We designed them that way because everything worked. But when you do it live it gives it that little extra feeling to a perfected record.

I was nervous about doing that song live. I wouldn't have spotlights out on me. Everyone had spotlights. I just didn't want to be in the limelight. Maybe one song they'd put a little bit of light on me on "Take It To The Limit." But I liked to be on the side and play and do my parts. I was kind of shy, actually. I just wanted to do my job.

Bernie and I tried to write in the beginning. We had a song called "Earlybird." I lived in Woodland Hills then, and he was in Topanga. We got together and did that

wrote such great songs. They'd work on a song until it was finished, and you knew it was gonna be real good. They had in mind what they wanted to do and wouldn't stop until they achieved it. Don went to college, was really into literature and Shakespeare. He wrote great lyrics. I didn't even graduate high school. [laughs] Glenn was from Detroit, which was a little bit more wild and R&B-influenced. I think that combination worked really good. Glenn's a really good lyricist too, but Henley always had the fine little details in his lyric writing. They were a great team, and that's been proven over and over again.

What did Bernie Leadon bring to the band's sound?

How did the band's sound change when Don Felder joined?

That was great. We had known Don before. Bernie and Don had grown up in Gainesville, Fla. We wanted more rock 'n' roll. That was kind of a problem in some ways because Bernie didn't play much of the rock 'n' roll stuff. Eventually Bernie left, and Felder, what do you say, great guitar player. He's such a precise player. You can tell he studied Clapton, I think.

Close as you can get. [laughs]

I really liked "One Of These Nights." It was just a ballsy song. The bass part was fun. Very high vocals on the end, my God! [laughs] Henley always said,



"Meisner could make dogs howl." [laughs] Since then I do have to sing a little lower because I had an operation on my throat. I had some nodes on my vocal chords, which was kinda neat for the time because I could sing one note and get a harmony. There was a node in the middle of my vocal chords; it was like two voices coming out. "James Dean" was another good one. That was a song written by Jackson, J.D., Don, and Glenn. Cool song. That was a really fun song to play. They brought that to rehearsal. Anything that was jumpin' I loved to play on bass 'cause a lot of the slower songs were just two notes on a bass.

We played "James Dean" in Detroit. Every once in a while you get this feeling that you're The Beatles or something. Everything went right; every song clicked perfectly, and the crowd just loved us.

The critics were not kind to The Eagles. Why didn't the critics get it?

In some ways maybe we were a little too stiff on stage. We just stood there on stage and didn't do a lot of dancing, not much entertaining. We thought, "Our music is the entertainment. We don't want to show off." Playing our music was the most important thing. I don't know why the critics didn't like us. I don't think it bothered the band too much. We all wanted to be kind of low profile anyway. We didn't want to be a flash-in-the-pan. Look at how great they are. We wanted to keep a lower profile to begin with, so I don't think it bothered us that much.

The Eagles were almost anti-image.

Yeah. We had no intent of being a flashy band. We just wanted the music to come across, just wanted to concentrate on the music and be the best we could be on stage. I wanted to make sure I sang the right parts and we were playing the right parts and making that sound that we put on the record. That was our main concern. It wasn't about who was the coolest on stage. We avoided a lot of publicity we actually could have had. It's almost like if you don't give many interviews they're almost more curious about you.

At one time the band was probably the biggest in the world.

Yeah, it was pretty amazing when we started getting the real big crowds and playing stadiums. It just blew your mind. It made you feel great that people were appreciating us, loving the music. And still to this day, kids, 17, 18 years old are listening to the Eagles' stuff. [laughs] That's a good thing right there. It's long-lasting. From day one, I just had a feeling that the band was good and would make it. I felt it was gonna happen, almost like a premoni-

tion. And everything just started popping into place. Once you're on a roll there wasn't a time to kick back too much. You finish an album and then do the tour, and by the time the tour is over you better do another one and get it out there. You gotta keep it rollin'. So there was partially why I got my divorce. There wasn't any time to be home. You're on the road or in the studio, so it was a lot of work.

How did major success affect the band?

In my situation I'm just real laid-back

Fast Lane" and a girl was sitting there digging it. I told her, "I used to play in that group." "Really!" she said excitedly. She said, "I have all the albums, and my kids are listening to them." God, it's amazing.

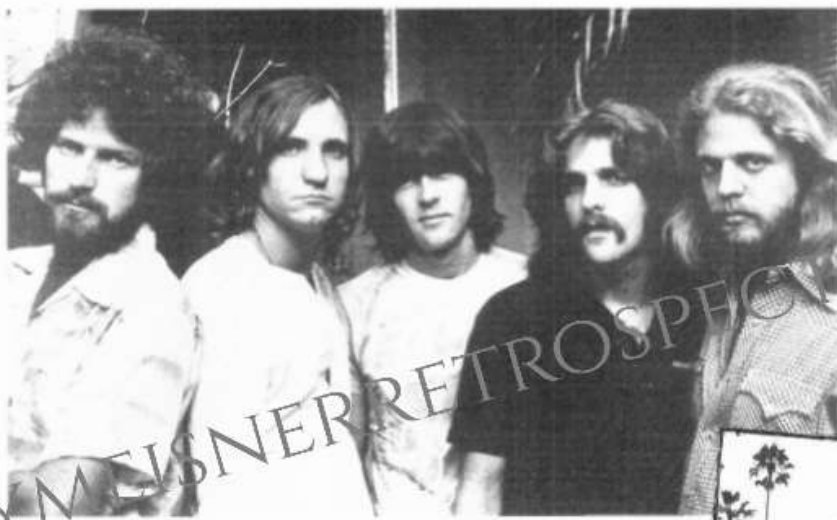
You've come to terms with the band's legacy.

It's just good to know that kids nowadays are listening to it. It's long-standing music. They're good songs. The lyrics are really good and the way that they were produced and the way that we played them. That's why on *Hotel California* we

California." Don asked me if I wanted to write the lyrics and I kind of started on it, but it takes me a long time to get something going because I was writing on my own. I didn't study English literature, so it was harder for me to find words that would go together lyrically. I had a hard time with that. Musically I could always get an idea or hook line that was good. Later Henley got a hold of it and [laughs] and wow! There you go! [laughs] Man, what a great job he did. I thought it was great. It had a real mysterious thing about it. That's what's great about songs — people find all kinds of meanings in them. "Hotel California" was a hard song to record. We were at Criteria in Miami, and we had to do a lot of splicing. Our producer, Bill Szymczyk, had a new board design. At the time it was the latest thing for making punch-ins. That really helped out a lot. But boy, we spent some hours in there, man, working on that song and the album.

"The Last Resort" was another great one. Also liked "Victim of Love." Felder came up with that song, and we did it and it worked. "New Kid in Town" was another great one. That song came real naturally in the studio. Don and Glenn would normally come in and play us a song on acoustic, and we'd sit around and listen to it and get ideas. I'd grab a bass, we'd grab our guitars, and Henley would get on the drums. It was a natural progression. I wrote "Try and Love Again" for that album. That was the last song I wrote for the band. Joe [Walsh] helped me a little bit with that. I had that song for a long time and never really got it finished. I brought it in for those album sessions. We worked on it and worked on it, and it turned out really good. Don and Glenn helped put it together.

Getting in Joe Walsh in that band and on that record was great. It was a great combo between him and Felder. Between the two of them that's what I think really enhanced the sound of the record. Walsh gave us some new blood. His guitar playing and great ideas really helped. He brought in more of a rock feel, but his song on that album, "Pretty Maids in A Row" wasn't really rock 'n' roll. It was a real sad, kind of slow thing, which you kind of wouldn't think he would write, you know with his stuff like "Rocky Mountain Way" and "Funk #49." It was a nice addition to the group to do those songs. "Life in the Fast Lane" was how it was for us. We were hitting it pretty hard. I mean, just everybody was at that time. It was that era. It was party time. [laughs] He was really talented. He could do lots of different things. He was also a really fun person to work with. I had a lot of fun



Hotel California-era Eagles, from left: Don Henley, Joe Walsh, Randy Meisner, Glenn Frey, and Don Felder.

and didn't really worry about it too much. Money and success wasn't anything that I really cared about, to tell you the truth. The success of the music was all I was worried about. Being successful and thinking "You're some big shot now," that never entered my mind. I've always tried to be humble about it and enjoy what we had. We made it on our own terms. We were all happy with what we were doing, and it showed with our success. There were never any real big egos in the band, thinking "We're so cool." That was the opposite of what we wanted. We wanted people to think we were just like you. We were just like anybody else. We just worked on it, had some talent, and a lot of it was luck too. The other thing was if we had given a lot of interviews, had our pictures plastered all over, "Eagles, Eagles, Eagles!" then you wouldn't have had a little bit of a normal life. That was what was kind of cool about it. A lot of people knew the music but didn't really know who the guys were in it. That was kind of a neat thing.

Even now I'll be buying something somewhere and they'll be playing the Eagles in the stores and once in a while I'll tell someone I was in the band, and they'll go, "No way!" I was in a store the other day and they were playing "Life in the

were so precise and wanting to make it so perfect. We made sure we got it so good.

Your memories of the Hotel California album?

We worked really hard on that album. We wanted it to be really, really perfect. We'd do the tracks to it and sometimes Henley wouldn't like his drums, and my bass was with it so we'd have to change it. We did quite a few splices on the tape. We wanted that album to be just perfect, and it turned out that way. Nothing's ever perfect, but it's as close as you can get. Recording the songs on that album was hard. We worked a lot on them. We had to go out on the road while we were doing that album and then go back to Criteria Studios in Florida to finish it. I think it took at least three or four months to record the album. It was a long time. We went back and forth a lot on that album, wanted to get the tracks right and mixed right. We knew the album was special. When it was almost done and all the pieces were getting out together, I knew that it was great.

Don had the musical track for "Hotel



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times with him, maybe too much fun. [laughs]

I remember the *Hotel California* tour, and it was fantastic. We started in Australia and then went to Japan, and that was warmup for us. We came back and did the U.S. tour, and we ended up at The Forum and did some recording there. We were so well rehearsed on that tour that every night it was great.

We were getting along pretty well doing that album. On the road we'd get into it a little. When you travel so much everyone gets a little bit irritable once in a while. You get tired of being on the road. At the time I was married, and I eventually got divorced because I never hardly saw my family. It just was hard. They lived in Nebraska, and they didn't want to move to L.A. That was kinda tough going through that, and it affected me on the road. It's one of the reasons I left the Eagles. I felt I'd had enough of all the traveling, so I left and did my own thing for a while. It was towards the end of the *Hotel California* tour. I was on the road, really getting frustrated, getting the divorce. We did the last gig at The Forum. After that I talked to Glenn and we kind of got into it a little bit and I just said, "Yeah, this is probably it for me." It's kind of ironic that Timothy Schmit replaced me, going back to passing him when we were both trying out for Poco. We just kind of changed doors. [laughs] I didn't like the

song "The Long Run," at first, but now I like it. It was different Eagles to me. I'm not in it [laughs], but they did quite well. [laughs]

When I hear Eagles songs now it's better, and you feel that sense of accomplishment. At the time you always wanted it to be so perfect that you were never satisfied. And now I listen to our records and I'm real satisfied.

When I look back, we had had some great times, partied together, made some great records. God, we had so many good times on the road. When Walsh came in, boy, it got real fun. [laughs] Some of the stuff he did was dangerous. I remember we were in Kansas City one night, and we had the Presidential Suite upstairs in this hotel and we were up there having a few beers and he said, "Let's throw the TV out of the window into the pool." And I said, "OK." We tossed it out, and luckily it hit the pool. If somebody had been down there it would have hurt somebody. But he was wild. We had a good time. Funny guy.

I've been playing steady with The World Classic Rockers, so my singing and playing chops are still there. I still play "Hotel California" every night with our band. I



Randy Meisner, live with band on Catalina Island, Calif., in 2006.

can do it in my sleep now. [laughs] Nick St. Nicholas and Michael Monarch from Steppenwolf, Nick's wife, Rosalie, does a tribute to Janis Joplin. We've gone through different drummers. Right now Aynsley Dunbar from Journey is playing with us. Randall Hall from Lynyrd Skynyrd is also with us. I do my songs in the beginning. We all switch off because there's so many people in the band. So I go on and do "Take It Easy," "Take It To The Limit," "Already Gone" and then I play "Hotel California," and Fergie Frederiksen, one of the lead singers from Toto, sings the lead. We also have Alex Ligertwood from Santana and he sings

with us now, and that's really good. We play corporate dates at real nice hotels, and the people just love us no matter where we play. Every song we play is a hit record, so the crowd loves it.

Lastly, six years ago the Eagles got inducted into The Rock & Roll Hall Of Fame. Tell us about that night.

I was kind of nervous at first because I hadn't seen the guys in a long time. They had a little rehearsal hall. At first I was a little nervous, but then when I got around Glenn and everybody and they starting joking like the old times, I thought it was pretty cool. It was a little awkward on stage. When I got up to say my thing I clutched up. Henley gets up and had a way with the audience, and Timothy said a really nice thing about me. Then I played guitar on "Take It Easy," which was fun, and they wanted me to play the electric guitar, the chinks on "Hotel California," so it was kind of neat holding a guitar. I would have been more comfortable on bass, and Timothy and I doubled some vocal parts together. It was nice to see all the guys again. I felt real proud to be inducted. ●