

The Hillbillies' Guitar Gallery:



► original cardboard carton. A banjo player had had it made, and it had banjo headpegs on it, but he'd never actually used it. So it was an absolutely brand new 1929 guitar and had no marks on it whatsoever, and it sounded *absolutely wonderful*" he smiles. "So I think it's the ageing of the wood which has a lot of effect. When they get older, guitars get a lovely clear treble sound, which doesn't come immediately. I think these two are getting better now, because they're about ten years old. It just comes with age."

What are your own built of?

"Just the usual, really – rosewood, mahogany necks. These are Indian Rosewood because it's so difficult to get Brazilian rosewood these days. The one I built for Brendan was Brazilian, but even then it was getting very difficult to get Brazilian wood and if you did, it had lots of wormholes all over it. This one has a Sitka spruce top which is really nice. Some Sitka spruce is just too hard,

Steve: "A Gibson L5, a late fifties one, and a Gibson L3, which is an early archtop, about 1926. A few of mine have been used for the acoustic guitar tracks – Mark's Pensa-Suhr guitar and his J-45 for the strumming. Brendan used his old D-18... I don't think we actually used any Nationals did we?" he laughs.

The Notting Hillbillies album brings together some of their favourite songs, including Lonnie Johnson's *Bewildered*, Jesse Fuller's *Railroad Worksong*, the Delmore Brothers' *Blues Stay Away From Me*, and *Feel Like Going Home* by Charlie Rich – someone usually associated with the more glitzy end of Nashville. Croker, an unashamed

nostalgic, explains.

"The covers were songs that we always wanted to do, and when we had those we just decided to write some new material as well that would fit in. The record is a mixture of old and new, because we've got

Blues is just good-time music. Just because new things come along doesn't mean what's gone before loses anything.

Guy doing all the stuff on the Synclavier, and it's also obvious that we're not American Hillbillies, so we just wrote a few songs in a fitting style. The Charlie Rich song we'd all ►

Robert Plant picked Charlie