



Beat goes on with some tasty sounds

By Gregory J. Wilcox, Staff Writer

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Bill Detamore was a budding musician barely out of his teens when he first dismantled a drum to see how it worked.

Soon, he was teaching himself to cut and sand the hoops, stretch the heads, attach the vibrating snares and set the hardware that gives each drum its distinctive sound.

Today - 26 years and 40,000 drums later - Detamore's Pork Pie Percussion has made its mark among some of the music industry's biggest names. Made in a small shop in Canoga Park, the drums have laid down the beat for The Ramones and Guns N' Roses, as well as solo performers like Eric Clapton, Lou Reed, Cyndi Lauper and Willie Nelson.

"It's a thrill every time I see them up there," said Detamore, 50, who signs and dates each of the handmade sets.

For Detamore, drum- making started as a hobby while he earned an associate degree in graphic design at Pierce College. After graduating in 1982, he got a job at what is now Pratt & Whitney Rocketdyne, and made and sold drums on the side.

"I never thought in a million years it was going to be a living," said Detamore, who lives in Woodland Hills. "I just got more got more busy, and one day decided to quit my job and try it."

Every business needs a name and Detamore selected his while he and a buddy were watching "Goodbye Pork Pie," a 1981 action movie made in

New Zealand.

"I said, What do you think of Pork Pie?" Detamore recalled. "It just took off from there."

He has five employees and operates a full service shop that does repairs and customizing in addition to manufacturing drums.

Detamore said his drum kits typically range from \$3,000 to \$10,000, although custom sets - like one he designed for ZZ Top drummer Frank Beard to resemble radioactive oil drums - go for much more.

One of the more unusual orders came from rocker Lenny Kravitz for his Baptism tour in 2004.

"Lenny wanted to have every piece of metal on the stage 24-karat gold plated and everything that was not 24-karat gold he wanted to have candy-apple red," Detamore recalled.

Kravitz hit the road with about \$10,000 worth of gold on the band's equipment, including the hardware of the musician known as Zoro the Drummer.

Zoro, a former Chatsworth resident now living and teaching in Nashville, said he and Kravitz



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were watching the movie "Scarface" when they came up with the color scheme.

He still remembers opening up the boxes and seeing the red-and-gold kit for first time.

"Dude, I felt like I was 12 years old," he said in a phone interview. "It was heavenly and totally over the top. I still love it. It kind of made your heart rate go up."

Zoro still has the drum kit set up in his house. He never used one of the gold-plated bass drum pedals and also has that on display.

Detamore crafted a pretty loyal customer base over the years, even with drummers under contract to other manufacturers.

Grammy Award winning drummer John Molo of Tarzana is also signed with drum maker DW but he's been a regular customer of Pork Pie's for 15 years.

Molo hooked up with Detamore after buying a vintage Gretsch drum kit that needed repairs and refinishing.

"I knew of his reputation as a (drum) sage. He's your go-to guy," said Molo, who was the drummer for Bruce Hornsby and the Range when the band won the Grammy Award for Best New Artist of 1986.

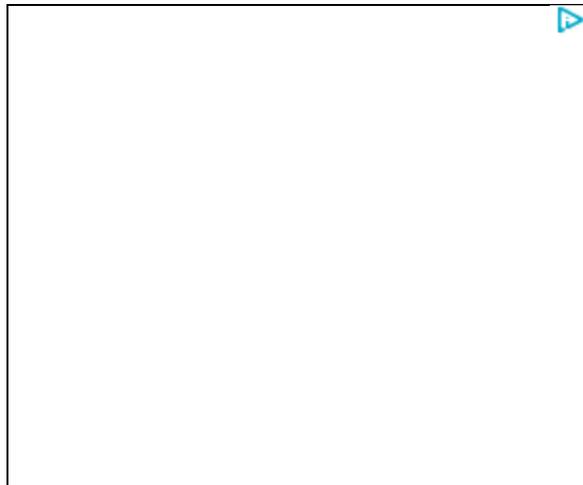
Some of Detamore's formers employees even end up making drums.

Gaai Nakamura was a professional drummer and teacher in Japan, then honed his drum-making skills during six years he worked for Detamore at Pork Pie. He now makes drums at a home based shop in Sherman Oaks.

"It's ironic that I ended up chasing the sound rather than performing on drums," Nakamura said.

Nakamura has set his sticks aside, but Detamore still beats the skins once in awhile.

"I have three kids now so that kind of put the kibosh on a lot of gigging," Detamore said. "It's hard to be a good father when you are getting home at 3 in the morning. I play a few gigs here and there but it's just basically for fun."



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