

Let there be.

Secluded Wilson County studio draws reputable recorders

MUSIC



By Holly Mutz
Wilson County News

It started as a hobby — but it turned into a pseudo-dream job.

It was 1990. Tommy Detamore was working closely with Clay Blaker, a musician seemingly known best for writing songs George Strait made famous, and he began making demos. He put some gear together, including a 16-track tape machine, and started turning his pastime into a real job.

Detamore's career as a sound engineer blossomed from there. But never once did he ever advertise.

"I met people through my association with Clay [Blaker]," Detamore said. "The best ad is the product you put out." For Detamore, the most pivotal project he put out was an album from Doug Sahm. Sahm passed away before the completion of the album, but had recorded enough vocals to release the record.

Sahm's album received rave reviews, including four stars in *Rolling Stone* magazine.

Eventually, Detamore, his wife, and his son moved to the area and started up Cherry Ridge Studios. But the location in Wilson County is kept secret for a reason. "I don't want people to just drop in," Detamore said. "My clients usually don't like it."

Understandable. With that said, it makes you wonder how a recording studio in the middle of Wilson County could stay busy without advertising. But Detamore doesn't seem to have a problem with attracting new projects.

"I think I have managed to build up enough work through word of mouth," Detamore said. "People know what they'll get as far as sound quality."

But it's not only the sound quality that keeps artists coming back. It's the atmosphere.

"It's very low key and people feel comfortable here," Detamore said. "I've been in lots of studios that make you feel intimidated. I swore if I ever had my own place, I'd try to keep that factor out of it."

And with the amount of artists he gets in the studio in a year, intimidation clearly isn't present within this secluded studio.

Detamore has received work from all over, including an artist from Sweden named Bo Svensson.

"He got a hold of a record I had done and called me and wanted to meet," Detamore said.

Svensson converts songs from English to Swedish, and after recording at Cherry Ridge, he sold more than 10,000 units in Europe.

Many artists come in to the studios solo, using Detamore's pool of players to serve as their band. These musicians include Dan Dreeben on the drums, Al Quaid on bass, Ronnie Huckaby on keyboard (he also plays for George Strait), and fiddle and guitar player Bobby Flores, who has played with the legendary country crooner Ray Price.

Detamore uses a lot of computer software to assist in his work. Self-taught in the software department, he claims to "stay on the rusting edge" with recording software. But this was always an interest of his, and he's made it his life's work.

"This has exceeded my wildest expectations," Detamore said. "I always figured life would get in the way of this dream, but it's taken on a life of its own."

Detamore treats each project with tender loving care. "They are all like my children," Detamore said. "Sometimes I don't want to let them go."

One such project was that of Kina Lankford, an Abilene-born

Reputable Recorders:
 Flaco Jimenez,
 Augie Meyers,
 Tommy Alverson,
 Jason Boland,
 Jarrod Birmingham,
 1,100 Springs,
 Jason Allen,
 Jamie Richards
 Kina Lankford,
 Clay Blaker,
 Chris Rybak,
 Pauline Reese

"It's very low key and people feel comfortable. I've been in the studios, and you can feel intimidated. I swore if I ever had my own place, I'd keep that out of it."

*Thomas Detamore,
 Cherry Ridge Studios*



Tommy Detamore (above) adjusts a microphone in his studio. Detamore uses the latest equipment and computer software to develop the best sound for his clients. This room (right) is just one part of the studio. (Staff photos by Holly Mutz)



Look for a feature on Kina Lankford in an upcoming edition of the *Wilson County News*!

For more information about the studio, visit www.cherryridgestudio.com.

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Royal outings

(Left) Floresville Peanut Festival King-elect Justin Leal, Queen-elect Desiree Trevino, and Princess-elect Amy Rankin keep busy at a recent peanut-bagging party. (Above) Page Ryan Palacios and Princess-elect Karissa Ortmann attend the San Antonio Zoo to promote the Floresville Peanut Festival. The festival will be held Oct. 4, 6, 7, and 8 in downtown Floresville. Watch for more photos of the court on the go in upcoming issues of the *Wilson County News*. (Courtesy photos)

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Texas artist who went to Detamore after being referred to him by another up-and-coming Texas artist, Aaron Watson.

“Projects like Kina’s present quite a challenge,” Detamore said. “She gave me a tape containing 10-12 songs with just a vocal and guitar as accompaniment, and I had to figure out how to frame and instrumentally structure each tune in the most effective way. I just always pray about it. I pray to God to give me the wisdom to make it all work.”

He made it work, as Lankford produced her first album, “Copenhagen Kisses,” at the studio.

“I couldn’t have picked a better place,” Lankford said. “It was so efficient.”

Lankford said that the whole production of the CD took about a month, with her only being in the studio a week recording vocals.

“The whole place was awesome, and so was Tommy,” Lankford said.

She was very pleased with the outcome, as she has sold more than 800 copies by word of mouth alone.

“I want the work that comes out of here to be the best that it can be, and that’s a pretty big responsibility,” Detamore said. “If I had a philosophy, that would be it.”

Detamore’s work has clearly paid off.

“When you are working on a record, you are constantly analyzing every little detail,” Detamore said. “Then you hear it three months later and you listen to it more like a fan — and you’re blown away by the finished product.”

And although artists move on to bigger recording studios at times, Detamore still takes pride in those he has helped.

“It’s gratifying to see what people do with their product, with their career,” Detamore said.

For Detamore, it’s all about making good, quality music.

“It’s all about leaving something behind,” Detamore said. “A body of work — these little discs that will most likely outlive us.”

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