

## LOCAL TALENT



**THE GUITAR MAN**  
Bill Asher designs and builds instruments for the Westside's most accomplished musicians. Photographed by James Acomb.



Asher strings a newly built guitar in his Culver City workshop.

## BILL ASHER

A local luthier is considered a master by legendary musicians.

WRITTEN BY MARGOT DOUGHERTY • PHOTOGRAPHED BY JAMES ACOMB

In a sound-proof room off his home workshop, Bill Asher demonstrates the round, rosy sounds of a commemorative acoustic Hawaiian lap steel, a gorgeous, zaftig instrument that's one of the 100 or so guitars Asher and his small team, which includes his brothers Robert and Bo, make each year. The size of the outfit may be modest, but the client list is not: Ben Harper, Bonnie Raitt, Lindsey Buckingham, Peter Dinklage, the Black Crowes and Rickie Lee Jones are just a handful of superstar Asher patrons.

After building a replica of his Stratocaster in a shop class at University High School in West LA, Asher approached a local guitar store about a job. "I don't need any money," he told them, "I'd be happy to just put tools away and sweep the floors." Thus began a four-year apprenticeship. Thanks to financial help from his mom, *Bewitched* star Elizabeth Montgomery, and dad, producer-director William Asher, he took over the store's lease at age 24.

By 2001, Asher wanted to concentrate on designing and building his own instruments. He set up shop in the basement of the Culver City home he shares with his wife, Jessica, and their two young girls. Asher Guitars now offers nine models, electric and acoustic, ranging from \$2,400 to \$10,000. Whether it's the Ben Harper Signature Model, the Ultra Tone T-Deluxe which Steve Miller bought, that Hawaiian lap steel acoustic or its electric counterpart, you don't have to know a single chord to want one.

For more on Bill and Asher Guitars, call 310-821-2888 or visit [asherguitars.com](http://asherguitars.com).



| ART CLASS |

## CULTURE CLASS

Add some creativity to your life with an art class—or two. The following studios will whet your palette.

The **LOS ANGELES ARTS ACADEMY**, with its massive indoor-outdoor studio, offers classes in drawing, ceramics and sculpting, often making use of recycled materials.

Los Angeles Arts Academy, 1925 Broadway Avenue in Santa Monica. 310-829-ARTS, [sculpturestudio.org](http://sculpturestudio.org)

**PEACH TREE POTTERY**, a quaint little studio, is an inviting place to learn the basics of throwing on the potter's wheel. Come for a single class or, better yet, sign on for a series. It's addicting.

Peach Tree Pottery, 3795 Boise Avenue in Mar Vista. 310-567-2708, [peachtreepottery.com](http://peachtreepottery.com)

Eric (Cre8) Walker, a renowned Los Angeles graffiti artist, offers private classes at **VENICE PUBLIC ART WALLS**. The organization also offers curated graffiti tours around town.

Venice Public Art Walls, c/o In Creative Unity, 2554 Lincoln Boulevard, #162, in Venice. 310-309-7756, [veniceartwalls.com](http://veniceartwalls.com)

Learn to draw, paint and create ceramic or found-object sculpture at **OFF-ROSE**, a studio tucked away in a secret residential garden. Off-Rose The Secret Studio-Gallery, 841 Flower Avenue in Venice. 310-664-8977, [offrosegallery.com](http://offrosegallery.com)

—HEIDI BROOKS

