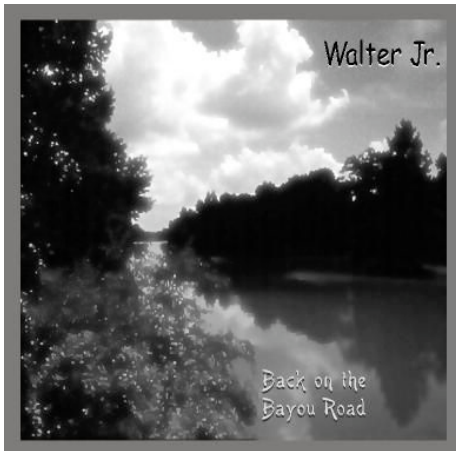


WALTER JR. - BACK ON THE BAYOU ROAD

Gatortone Records
by Mike Breen



Walter Jr.'s *Back On The Bayou Road* is a trip back, in time and place, to the now-clichéd rusty old juke joint shack, at a Saturday night fish fry where whiskey, voodoo, violence, home cookin' and loose women abound. Smell the smoke in the air, lean back in your chair, wipe that moonshine drool stream off your stubbly beard and admit it -- its rare to hear a Blues album this good. *Bayou Road* is a purist's dream of power-murk production, slithering guitars, Congo Square percussion and memorable, clever songs. There are also a couple of forays into Memphis Soul and Gospel. While they're nice, mellow slow jams, and a tasty tip of the hat to Stax, it's the funky - butt title track that will hook you instantly and make this one of your favorite 'Nawlins Blooze records for years to come. Guest shots from the likes of Bonnie Bramlett, Sonny Landreth, and Oteil Burbridge certainly add flavor to an already strong set of tunes. But an old - soul Southern character like Walter Jr., the genuine article, effortlessly outshines them all with his raspy voice of experience and a charming, self - deprecating sense of humor. (RH)

Grade: A

Mike Breen