

Back on the Bayou Road

Gatortone

By Dan Willging



Maybe someday people will realize the Lafayette music scene is more than just Cajun and Zydeco music. An indigenous brand of blues, R&B and rock 'n' roll has also been fermenting there for practically forever, one that allows guitarist Walter Jr. to wheel and deal his Tabasco-seasoned originals at will.

Walter returns to former Capricorn Records' producer Johnny Sandlin's studio where core Capricorn/Muscle Shoals session men, including the Mighty Muscle Shoals Horns, all played an integral role in 1999's *Louisiana Soul* development. With such a wealth of talent, they breathlessly cover a wide swarth of succulent R&B, madly swinging jazz, chicken-pickin'/harmonica howling blues, swamp roots rock and even a guitar powered rendering of the swamp pop classic "Mathilda". While all this is dandy, what seals the deal are several outrageous funk tracks all cranked by Walter's blistering fretwork and an unstoppable groove.

Comparably overwhelming is the intensely disembodied vibe of "Gator Bait", a midnight bayou symphony loaded with spooky sound effects, hypnotic beats, Bonnie Bramlett's ethereal wailings and Sonny Landreth's dobro picking that sounds far in the dark filled distance. No doubt about it, Walter Jr. has a solid Southwest Louisiana record on his hands, one that took seven years to incubate and finally hatch.