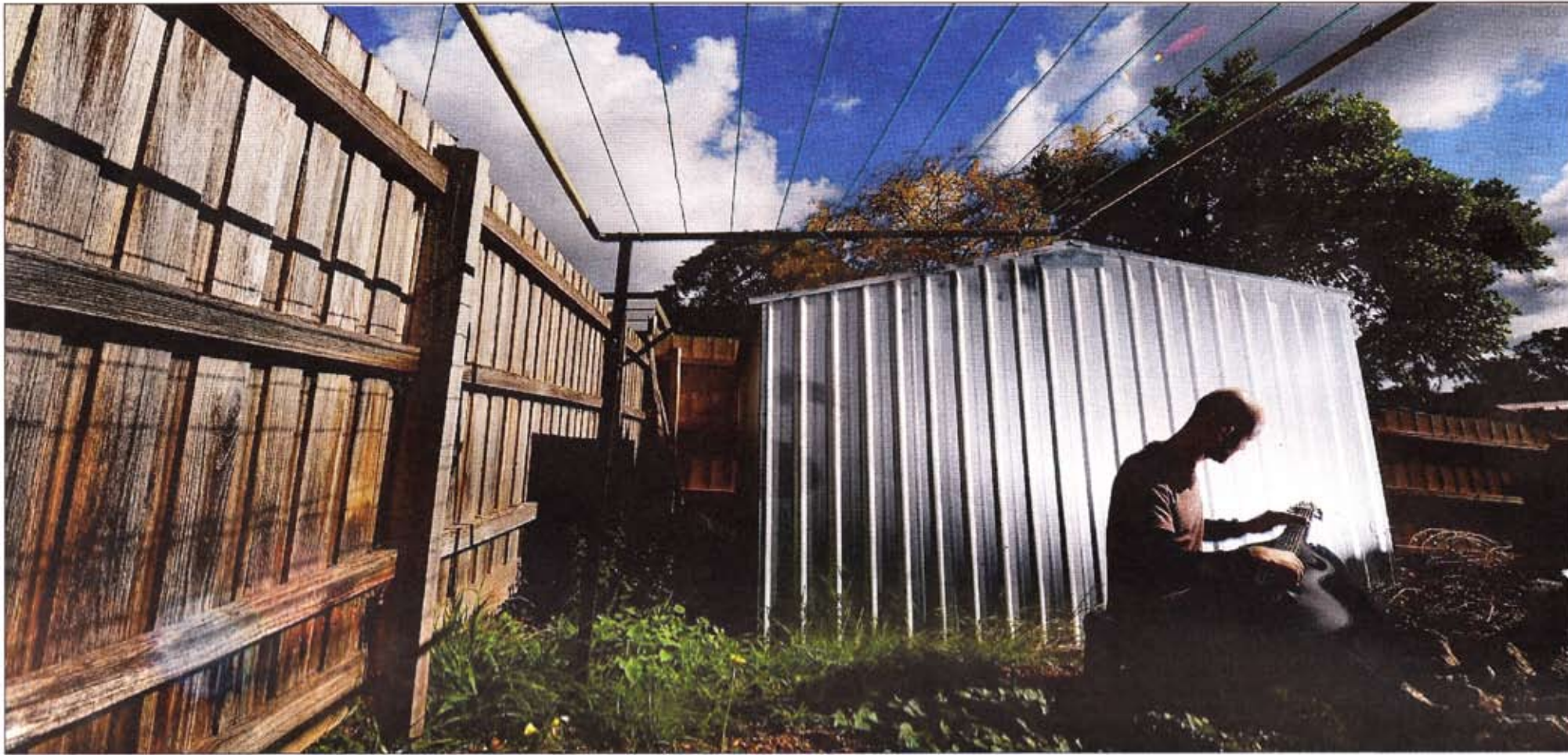


Play



Hans Jahr works on building a custom carbon fibre lap-slide guitar.

Picture: ANDY DREWITT N47DV207

Six strings to his bow

Music | Raelene Morey

WHEN Diamond Creek luthier Hans Jahr turned his hand to the art of building lap-slide guitars, he could barely have imagined a more spectacular start to his career.

Jahr's first guitar – a 21st century interpretation of the Weissenborn acoustic slide guitars of the 1920s and 30s, made from carbon fibre – was sold to a modern-day legend of slide, Ben Harper.

The 36-year-old graphic designer said he built his first prototype for the Halua acoustic lapsteel six years ago.

He said Harper was known to be

Diamond Creek man's guitars attract worldwide acclaim



an avid collector and thought there was a chance the design would pique his interest.

An email to Harper's management had stunning results.

"After a week or two his guitar technician replied and asked if I wanted to make a guitar for Ben Harper," Jahr said.

"Well yes I did, and I worked full-time on it for a month or two to get it done."

He said the \$2000 sale was a fantastic beginning to his career.

And when Harper's technician asked for a second guitar, just a month after the first was delivered, he didn't hesitate.

"It was definitely an inspirational kick to get that confirmation that I was doing something right," Jahr

said. "I don't know if I'd still be making guitars if I didn't start off so spectacularly."

He said he had built six guitars – two for Harper, one for a New York collector and one for a musician from San Francisco, who had heard about him through word of mouth.

The other two he kept for himself. Jahr, who is originally from Norway and settled at Diamond Creek two years ago, said he learned to mould guitars using carbon fibre from a Norwegian designer.

He said carbon fibre was an ideal material because it was less restrictive than wood, enabling him to build the tear-shaped Halua design.

"There are no restrictions on form so you can have double curves – whatever you want," he said.

A prototype of Jahr's guitars are hanging at Diamond Creek cafe Piccolo Meccanico, ready for customers to play.

"There's even a Mini Marshall (amplifier) you can plug into," Mr Jahr said.

He said he was presently working on his seventh guitar as a gift for a musician friend.