

Rob Bramley the Owner of Guitar Lounge Passes Away.

Written by P.G Fitzgerald

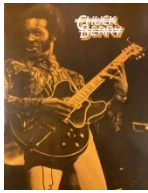
Originally in the September 2024 Songsmith

Back on the 2nd of September I received an email from Ross Bruzzese that Rob Bramley the owner of Venue & Guitar Lounge has passed away. As Ross said in his email, “He was one of the very best guitar sellers out there. Bought my first Fender bass from him in October 1988!” – from Venue Music.

Thinking back to Venue Music which used to be in Druitt Street, opposite Town Hall. It opened in 1981 with Rob having a business partner called Barry. Two things I remember buying from them is many guitar pedals, strings and accessories. One of the biggest things I ever got from Venue Music was my guitar lessons from a teacher named “Harvey” who taught me some amazing ideas on improving my guitar playing. In fact, some people were amazed at how much I’d improved after going to Harvey’s lessons.



I continued getting lessons from Harvey in his home up Avalon way, but the travel time was so much I eventually gave the lessons away. If I knew what I know now I would have spent that time travelling! It turns out Harvey was actually Harvey James, one of Australia’s best lead guitarists who played in bands like Axiom and Sherbert, but I only found out years later. What he did teach me was incredible! So, Venue Music had indirectly contributed to my music enormously. I read up in Aussie Gear Heads that Barry retired due to tinnitus which left Rob out on his own, so Venue Music closed in mid-2009.



So, what was Rob to do? He apparently was an amazing guitarist hailing from New Zealand who’d played in many bands in the 1970’s. His band even backed Chuck Berry for his 1975 NZ Tour. So, guitar was in his blood. He decided to “indulge his passion for guitars in a more relaxed and low-key environment” by opening the Guitar Lounge in Clarence Street in the City in 1991.

Guitar Lounge was a store that seemed to have a unique range of instruments. Of course, there was your bread & butter, but there always seemed to be some instruments you wouldn’t see elsewhere. Its mainly in the last ten years that I got to know Rob better as I used to call it “The Fender Shop” as it specialised in Fenders. However, when members of



my family passed, I was able to afford some guitars. Some of these I purchased at Guitar lounge. In 2016 I brought a Gretsch Electromatic G5620T hollow body in Metallic Red, which Ross said really suited how I played. Also, in 2016 I brought an ivory Maton MS T-Byrd whose rock maple neck blew me away. Late in 2014, or passed on it. Going into Guitar Thinline and Rob was very yeap, it came home with me.



early in 2015 I’d played a Fender Thinline in Hawaii but Lounge in 2017 I found a similar Fender Telecaster convincing by letting me play it and it was amazing so

Rob did get annoyed with Derringers in Adelaide, but he the guitar he tried to buy it off me Telecaster Acoustasonic from Derringers he got up bargain, and I got a good deal. I kind of wish I’d electric from Rob as I was interested, but it didn’t stand out like my Fender Meteora HH does.

I can’t remember when I last went into Guitar Lounge in its old store as I did my back last year and couldn’t walk properly for about 9 months. I remember back in April, I think it was going in and seeing that the old store had closed and checking out the new store. However, something was missing. Was it the stock standard guitars? Was it the intimacy of the old store?

Was it going “Hi Rob” and asking him questions. One I remember years ago, as I couldn’t get a straight answer from anyone, was that Maton had stopped making electrics as I wanted a 500-custom made. Rob knew what was happening “on the street” as there are too many bullshit artists in the industry. I’d been into the new store a few times and asked after Rob to be told that he still comes in.



So, Ross’ email came as a bit of a shock as Rob was a constant in a turmoil of change. Always trying to sell me guitar even with my excuse that my girlfriend thinks I have too many. I went into Guitar Lounge last week to offer my condolences, and I had to buy something in memory, so I got a MXR Raw Dawg Overdrive, a mini pedal that has a sound a bit like Eric Gales who I’ve seen a few times at the Byron Bluesfest. When I plugged it in it sounded amazing! They gave me a good price as well as I’m a regular customer. I like to think that Rob guided me to that pedal, so even after passing he’s still helping guitarists!



Talking to Brendan who is running the store for Linda, Rob’s wife, he doesn’t know if Guitar Lounge will continue as it depends on Linda who is now the owner. She’s been doing the accounting for the store for years so that side of the business is covered. Brendan has had experience in Byron Music so that part is covered, but the future at the moment is uncertain. Hopefully with all the guitar stores closing Guitar Lounge will continue as a continuous memory to Rob. *Ed: Guitar Lounge is still open as of March 2026.*

So, thanks to Rob for all the guitars I brought, the strings, the straps, the lock nuts, etc, etc and all the advice. Many guitarists and songwriters owe a lot to Rob, so we all remember him well and will think of him far into the future. The world is a sadder place without Rob trying to sell me a guitar!

