

News	Interviews	Concert Reviews	cd/DVD Reviews	GIVEAWAYS	Classic Trax	Rock Talk Forum
• ROCK RADIO •	The rock Shop	TOUR DATES	Trivia	Newsletter	CONTACT US	HOME

Classic Rock Revisited presents an exclusive interview with...

Jacques van Gool of Backstage Auctions



Backstage Auctions is a new business that takes the risk out of buying music memorabilia of the Internet. Jacques van Gool is quickly making a name for himself in the collectable industry. A lifelong collector, van Gool left a high profile corporate job to follow his dream. Backstage Auctions is off to a great start and there are many exciting things to follow.

In this interview Jacques discusses Backstage Auctions core belief and operating agendas as well as his love of collecting Kiss memorabilia. Backstage Auctions deals direct with the artists themselves or people in the music industry. This is a unique idea and the early results are good. Look for Backstage Auctions to grow like wildfire in 2005. Jacques has many ideas and the means to make them reality. Stay tuned to Classic Rock Revisited throughout next year to find out what is new and exciting at Backstage Auctions!

- Jeb Wright, December 2004

Jacques van Gool: I am very familiar with Classic Rock Revisited. I love it. When it was mentioned that we were going to do an interview I was honored.

Jeb: Well thank you. I am very impressed with what is going on with Backstage Auctions. How did Backstage Auctions come to be?

Jacques: Basically, it came from between my ears. Before starting this company, I had a job in good old corporate America. I was born and raised in the Netherlands and 15 years ago I got an assignment in the United States. They told me it was going to be for six months but I later found out they had bought me a one way ticket. I ended up fifteen minutes outside of New York. I have lived in many different States while I was paying my dues trying to make a living the way I thought I was supposed to make a living. I woke up about a year and a half ago and I was pushing through my infamous mid-life crisis. I thought that this is not what I want to do with the rest of my life.

I have always had two passions. One is music, particularly rock music. The other is collecting. I am very passionate about collections. Whether you collect porcelain turtles or Deep Purple vinyl, it doesn't matter. I just love the passion people put into their collections.

In the late 1990's the Internet came along and it changed how auctions were done. It was no longer just traditional art type auctions. Suddenly you started having rock memorabilia and then eBay started up. There were new avenues for collectors to find the one-of-a-kind items they have only been able to look for at expos or record collector functions. While there are many places doing this on the Internet, I felt that there were none that really lived up to my expectations. I am not claiming Backstage Auctions

to be the perfect answer but it is the type of auction house that I have always been looking for. I wanted to achieve a classic rock auction house. It is different from a number of ways than what is out there. We exclusively represent musicians or people in the music industry.

Authenticity is number one. We want to sell a great item but we also want to sell piece of mind. If we were to do an auction for Ted Nugent then you would know that you are buying that guitar directly from him. You can't get any better than that. All serious collectors have been burned, sometimes more than once. We have all bought items that turn out to be fake or had terrible problems with acquisition. I wanted to create something new and exciting but I also wanted to create instant piece of mind. I think that is essentially the foundation of what I wanted to create with Backstage Auctions.

Jeb: How long has Backstage Auctions been around?

Jacques: Technically, we are a year and a half old. We did a few trial and error auctions that were for a very small audience to make sure we were on the right track. Once we knew the software had all the bugs worked out of it we moved forward. The first really big auction we did was this summer. The auction was the private collection of producer Eddie Kramer. In the fall, we did the auction for Motley Crue's first manager and more recently we did an auction for Lydia Criss, who is the ex-wife of Peter Criss.

Jeb: So far it has gone off without a hitch?

Jacques: We really didn't have any kinks. Everything went flawlessly. I really think it has paid off that we were extremely diligent. We worked with the right programmers and we have the right web hosting company. The last three auctions we did, each final day of the auction, we averaged about 250,000 hits in the final hours. That is an enormous amount of traffic. That number tells you two things: The interest is there to make the auction a success and it also tells you that we put it together correctly. From a technological point of view it is very important to know we can handle it.

Jeb: It sounds to me you had a pretty high paying career. Did anyone think you were crazy to walk away from it to start a rock n' roll website?

Jacques: Many people did! I think the more people who tell you that you are crazy then the more you're destined to do it. I had a very prestigious career. I traveled the world and I made good money. For most people, to leave that behind does not make sense. To me it makes perfect sense. I have always loved adventure. It goes back to being a kid born in the Netherlands and then moving around the world doing great things. I have never been a firm believer in comfort zones. It might be nice for a while but eventually they get boring. Let's face it; rock n' roll is exciting. The music business is exciting. You could say for decades I have followed by brains and my education and now I just want to follow my heart. Again, for a lot of people that sounds crazy but to me it is fun and I have never hesitated for one second. I have always believed that I could make this happen and pull it off. I think if you are really into it and you believe, then you can make it happen. I was reading your story and there are parallels between what you did and what I am doing. I think there are a lot of people who are like us who might have the ideas but there are a smaller number of people who actually go out and do it.

Jeb: Besides the authenticity factor what else is Backstage Auctions doing that is different?

Jacques: When you participate in a auction then you pay a commission. Your commission can be as low as 15% and as high as 25%. I have never liked that as a collector. Sometimes you want an item really bad because you are emotionally attached to it. It starts at three hundred bucks and then it is seven hundred bucks and all of the sudden it is a thousand. You decide to make one more bid at \$1100. You win it and blink twice and suddenly here comes an additional \$220 commission. Nobody likes that. We all understand that the auctioneer needs to make a living but 20% is a little steep. We charge 5% commission. 99% of our customers consider this a non-factor. If I look at the expenses of running an auction house like this and the revenue created by the auctions then I must admit it is pretty much a zero based business. We can survive at this rate but for me to be more comfortable then there are two things that must change. First, we will have to do more auctions and second, we will have to do bigger auctions. We are going to do both of these things in 2005. We are still growing and as we grow we will attract bigger bands and higher end

collections. Eventually, we will attract the higher end collectors. At the end of the day, it will work out.

Jeb: So it is not all about money with you?

Jacques: Don't get me wrong, I cannot afford to lose money. That said, this is not some smart plan to quickly make money and then run off to do the next thing. To talk to customers and to hear how excited they are is wonderful. When you listen to them then you take a step back and realize that you have made an impact on that person's life. I need to make money to keep doing this but I get a higher amount of satisfaction from the appreciation and the excitement from my customers and my clients. We have far exceeded the expectations of all of our previous clients. Their expectations include how much money the auction is going to generate for them and how many of their items will actually sell. We average over 80% of auction items sold, which is much higher than industry standards.

Jeb: Besides selling collections I have heard you are a big collector yourself.

Jacques: I started collecting magazines; paperbacks, comics and anything else that had a Kiss cover decades ago. If you put Kiss on your cover then it is going to sell. Kiss just have such a great visual aspect to them that you can't help but have them catch your eye. Who would you rather see on the cover of a magazine, Gene Simmons spitting blood or Cat Stevens sitting there with an acoustic guitar? No disrespect to Cat as he made some great songs but Kiss will sell better. I have been picking up Kiss related print material for 30 years now and I probably have the most extensive and accurate database of publications with Kiss covers in the world. At least once a week somebody contacts me with some question, reference or request about Kiss. I have been interviewed about this collection a lot. VH1 even did a story on me.

Jeb: Just how many periodicals have Kiss on the cover?

Jacques: In a nutshell, worldwide there are roughly 4000 publications that have had a Kiss cover on them. In 30 years I have been able to collect about 3700 of them. You could say that I have a rather extensive Kiss library.

I really enjoy specialty type collections. I really can see why people get into collecting one particular thing. At the end of the day they can tell you more about that item than the person it is about. Most people can't believe that I have amassed that many magazines with Kiss. Many people wonder where I even had the idea to do it. Through the work that we are doing with Backstage Auctions I get to learn about our customers. I have met people who have rooms, basements and attics dedicated to their collections. It is like these people have dedicated shrines in their houses just for there collections.

Jeb: What is the Holy Grail of Kiss printed material that you are still looking for?

Jacques: At this stage of the game I enjoy the hunt more than the kill. There are a few very rare local publications, most from 1974 that have a Kiss cover. They are impossible to find. For instance, Kiss may have come through Macon, Georgia in 1974 and a local magazine decided to put them on the cover. Typically, those magazines are free and are handed out at record stores. Next week someone else will be on the cover and the copies of Kiss will be pulled back and destroyed. If you didn't happen to stop by the record store and pick one up then you are SOL.

There are a couple of university newspapers or magazines that are hard to find as well. Kiss toured a lot of college towns when they came out because that is where the kids were. If Kiss came to the university then the college paper might print an article about them and put them on the front page. Who would keep that? These are the types of things that are high on my list.

It took me fifteen years to find a copy of The Delta Collegent newspaper. I read an article that Kiss had visited the campus and that the college did a cover story on them. When I saw the word cover then I knew I must find out more about it. I called the university but the person answering the phone was 19 years old and didn't have a clue about what I was talking about. I ended up visiting the university. I found the person responsible for the university archives in the library. The Delta Collegent has been in existence for almost a hundred years. The library of the university has kept a copy of every single issue over that hundred-year

period. However, in the entire history of the school only one copy of the Delta Collegent was ever stolen. It was the one with Gene Simmons on the cover. Every neighborhood has a Kiss nut living in it so I can so understand how it got stolen. I was devastated for the school as their collection is now incomplete.

I found the guy, who at the time was a student, and took the photos for the cover. He sold his original photos, negatives and a couple of copies of The Delta Collegent to another collector. That collector then sold it to someone else. I went to a Kiss Convention one morning and there was a dealer just opening his bin and I saw the issue sitting there. I almost had a heart attack. It was the real deal. After a little bit of negotiating I had found one of my Holy Grails. This story represents the diligence of the very depth collectors will go to.

Jeb: So many times fans get excited about auctions only to find out they have to take out a second mortgage to afford the memorabilia. Can the common man come to Backstage Auctions and still walk away with something historical without going broke?

Jacques: We all read about the Eric Clapton half a million dollar guitar but there is only one percent of the entire auction community that can afford that. At the same time, we don't want to be eBay either. I cannot afford to sell ten-dollar items. Most of our auction items tend to start around \$100. There are pieces that start in the high hundreds or low thousands but they are special pieces. We try to make a wide range of times. If all you can afford to spend is \$100 then I will do my best to get you a great collectable from your favorite rock musician. I think that is one of the reasons that we have been successful. I understand that not all collectors are blessed with a big budget. For most of us this is a hobby that we can only dedicate a certain amount of money to each month. Some months you may not be able to spend even a dollar. That is just reality.

Would I turn down Pete Townshend's private collection of guitars? Of course not, but I would also ask Pete to add some smaller items as well because I want to satisfy everybody. I am glad you asked that because I want people to know that.

Jeb: Last one: Has there been an item come through one of your auctions that you wish you would had bought yourself?

Jacques: Yes there has been one and it is not even Kiss related. Eddie Kramer had a number of original recordings from Electric Ladyland from Jimi Hendrix and Led Zeppelin. Items like that make you stop in your tracks and say wow! Everything he brought to the table was phenomenal. There is something magic about items like that. To me that really made me just stop and daydream for a little bit. Reality kicked in and I realized that I can't eat candy from my own candy store. I am in the business to work as hard for my clients as I can and also for my customers. I want to get as many interesting collectables out on the auction block as possible. I think I might have a irresistible weakness if I did an auction and somebody had one of those Holy Grail Kiss items that I am always searching for. I might have to say, "Hold on there!"



[Visit Backstage Auctions Today!](#)

New **READER COMMENTS** *New*

Rocker
12/18/2004

This sound VERY cool. I am gonna check the site!!

Add your comments Below

Name (optional)

[Click Here To Read other Interviews at Classic Rock Revisited](#)