

# GUITARS THAT RULE THE WORLD

Gene, Paul and Ace  
Discuss Those  
Famous KISS  
Guitars Past &  
Present

by Tommy Thayer

As KISS prepared to embark on their 1996-1997 Alive Worldwide Reunion Tour, I had the unusual opportunity to sit down with Gene, Paul and Ace to get their personal accounts and recollections of the KISS guitars they've played, and what influenced an entire generation of KISS fanatics to pick up and play Gibson Les Pauls and Flying Vs. After all, nobody cares what kind of guitars The Grateful Dead or The Eagles play. This is different. KISS has always had the look, the sound, the theatrics, costumes, platform boots and cool guitars. Like most KISS fans, I've been curious to know all the explicit details of KISS and their guitars through the years. Even now, as I'm in the position of working for them, I still bug them relentlessly about trivialities they've been asked a million times before. Or in reality, things that they couldn't possibly remember or don't care to. Here's their account of what I could get from them.

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Gene and Paul shown here on February 21st, 1974, performing "Douce" on Dick Clark's *In Concert*. Gene's playing his custom made wood bass, and Paul, his Albert Lee-influenced custom made black V with white binding. Both guitars were made by Charlie Lohus.



Ace shown here in the basement studio of his condo in 1978, with an array of rare guitars and amps from his collection. "The 1959 Sunburst Flame-Top I'm holding, I bought for \$4000 from my friend at We Buy Guitars, which doesn't exist anymore, on West 48th Street in New York. A couple years later, on the way to Atlantic City I needed cash so I put it in hock for \$6500, figuring I'd get it out later, but I ended up losing \$12,000 that day. Last I heard, the guy who owns it now got offered 25-30 grand for it."

