



TAIL o' the PUP

1. Mexican Queso	\$2.10	Chili Queso	\$4.25
2. Boston Celtic	\$2.10	Charlie Tuna Melt	\$4.10
3. Red Eye	\$2.45	Americana	\$2.40
4. Extreme	\$3.30	Alpine	\$2.50
5. Naked Truth	\$2.15	Steak Sandwich	\$4.25
6. Big Scene	\$2.95	Chicken Sandwich	\$4.10
7. Sassy Ch	\$3.15		
8. The W	\$3.30		
HAMBURGERS			
BREAKFAST			
Donuts			

Chili Fry	\$4.25
Onion Fry	\$4.10
Extra P	\$2.40
Slice of	\$2.50
Chopped	\$4.25

Words: **Joshua Sindell** Photo: **Lisa Johnson**

California Men

Over the past 10 years, LA's **311** have watched countless bands become successful on the back of their patented rap-rock blueprint.

And now it's payback time...

"LA HAS got the best movie theatres in the God damn world," beams 311's bass virtuoso P-Nut, leaning back in a plush chair in the band's manager's office in West Hollywood. "You can see every little movie that no-one else will go to on a big screen here, and that *rules*."

Sure, California has its problems. There's the earthquakes, the mudslides, the racial unrest and the sweltering heat. But for 311, the Golden State has its fair share of upsides: the fast cars, the unending stretches of open highway, the blinding smiles of bikini-clad girls striding over baking beaches. And, of course, the air-conditioned cinemas.

Californian culture promises cool, and more often than not it delivers. It's even had its own soundtrack over the past 30 years, from the angelic harmonies and surf shtick of the Beach Boys, through the laid-back Hollywood rock of Fleetwood Mac and The Eagles, to the soulful punk-funk of the Red Hot Chili Peppers.

You can add 311 to that list. The sense of timelessness that hangs in the air of the Golden State has helped the five members of 311 – P-Nut, co-vocalists Nick Hexum and SA Martinez, guitarist Tim Mahoney and drummer Chad Sexton – define themselves, as a band and as people.

"Everyone has enough of their own space out here," says the tall and irritatingly healthy-looking Hexum. "You don't have to be in any 'scene'. You can just enjoy the

trees and stuff."

ON THE surface, virtually everything about 311 screams California, from their sunny, spiritually-minded lyrics to the band members' chiselled good-looks to the gigs they've played with members of the LA Lakers, the city's champion basketball team. The rolling, rapping sound of their seven albums provides the perfect backdrop to a poolside party with beer and blunts for all. A line from the song 'Champagne', which appears on their new album 'From Chaos', sums up where their minds appear to be at: *'California on the brain...'*

311 are, in other words, the quintessential Californian band. Or at least they would be were it not for one small fact: they're not actually from California. They moved to LA 10 years ago, from the mid-Western city of Omaha, Nebraska. Still, they hardly feel the need to act like recent transplants.

"I love LA," enthuses vocalist-rapper SA Martinez with a wide smile. "There is such a diversity of cultures here. Sure, there are tensions that exist in some communities, but for the most part I think that this city is pretty mixed and integrated. It's cool to see this whole clash of cultures coming together and living together."

Since they upped and moved, the band have sold over five-million albums, all purchased houses in the Hollywood hills, and financed their own local studio. To use a suitably West Coast phrase, 311 have clearly

found themselves here in the sunshine.

"I don't remember feeling all that out of place when we first got here," recalls Nick. "The first Cypress Hill album ('Cypress Hill') had just come out and that was the new shit. We didn't get right into the scene, we kind of stuck to our own. We had a house with a kind of 'compound' feeling to it, and we tried to grow our own pot in the backyard and failed miserably! We were kind of isolated from the rest of the bands here, but we gradually started making our own separate friends here."

UNLIKE MANY of their peers in their adopted hometown, 311 aren't the sort of band who are comfortable pulling faces for the cameras. They view themselves as *musicians*, not rock stars – to this day, they can still walk among their fans and not get hassled. With the exception of P-Nut, most of the band haven't really changed their hairstyles for 10 years, nor have they really tried to radically alter their sound from album to album.

Ask 311 about the fact that their patented blend of rock, rap, and reggae is no longer as uncommon as it was when they began, and these five polite, friendly gentlemen start to grow a little cantankerous. The lyrics on 'From Chaos' indicates a band demanding respect from the generation that followed them. Too often, they say, have they been pigeonholed as smiley-faced rap-rockers with only good vibes to share.

"Like it or not," begins Nick, the band's principle songwriter, "we in 311 have put ourselves or have been put into a niche of being a 'positive' band. I don't think that we want to get away from that necessarily, but we're not this mindlessly happy and corny band."

"There's a lot credit that hasn't been given. A lot of times, I think we get the short end of the stick..."

SA Martinez

'From Chaos' does show 311 moving away from the sunlight-and-palm-tree vibe of their last album, 'Soundsystem', towards the dark side of fame in Hollywood. Songs

like 'Champagne' and 'Hostile Apostle' take aim at posers in the LA rock scene. The title-track itself seems to address those groups who have used the 311 blueprint to springboard to greater heights of success – not least Limp Bizkit and Linkin Park. *'Makin' that hybrid music back in '90 now it's on ya'*, blasts SA Martinez in full attack mode, *'I hear that we're the model for the band you front, we spawned ya...'*

Today, Martinez bats away accusations that it's aimed at anyone in particular.

"There's probably a little bit of a monkey on my back as far as all of the music that you hear today that's been influenced by us," he shrugs, "and there's a lot of credit that hasn't been given. A lot of times, I think we get the short end of the stick. That song is just me saying, 'Let's connect the dots here and see what came from where.'"

"Hybrid music is so big now, that you've got all these bands where the singer may or may not be able to carry a tune and melody has kind of been lost," Nick points out. "We're trying to bring that back into music."

2001 COULD be the band's most successful year ever. As well as this month's Extreme 2001 tour their new single 'You Wouldn't Believe' is yet another solid US hit for them, and they've filmed a high-profile video for it with Lakers center Shaquille O'Neal (311 were all invited to the celebrity-infested party for the Lakers when they won the NBA championship earlier this year). The seven-foot-plus O'Neal has even been known to start stage-diving whenever 311 play local gigs; Nick, Chad and Korn bassist Fieldy returned the favour by playing on O'Neal's latest rap album. Just like the Red Hot Chili Peppers, 311 love their basketball.

"We inherited the Lakers from the Chili Peppers," cracks P-Nut. "Flea's shorter than us, anyway!"

So, gents, is there such a thing as an actual California dream? The otherwise-quiet Chad perks up.

"There is. We packed up our cars and drove out here with very little, and we've done very well for ourselves. I mean, when I'm spending winter in California and it's sunny outside, and I'm going jogging in my shorts in January... it's like, 'I don't want the rest of the world to know how cool it is here!'. I can't quite figure out why it isn't more crowded out here than it already is, because the quality of life is so good." ●

311's new album, 'From Chaos', is out now on Music For Nations. They play the Extreme 2001 tour from August 18.

Fun In The Sun

311's LA tourist guide



Eat sushi

Nick: "There are about five or six amazing sushi restaurants here that I'd recommend. I

think that the best ones are Matsuhisa in Beverly Hills, or Sushi Nozawa in Studio City. But there are tons of them in LA that are good."



Go swimming

SA: "Go to Venice Beach. I've taken my nephews there when they come and visit me, and

they go boogie-boarding in the ocean, and then we all go walking down the boardwalk where there's always something going on. It's very colourful and fun. There are bigger crowds on the weekends, so I sometimes go only during the week."



Visit a museum

P-nut: "There are a lot of places to go and see great, vintage cars in LA, such as the

Petersen Museum on Wilshire Boulevard. Or if you like to go window shopping, there are some sports car places in Beverly Hills where you can see some of the hottest cars in the world for sale for outrageous prices."



Watch a basketball game

Tim: "You can't go wrong with a Lakers basketball game. They play

at the Staples Center, and although seats are sometimes tough to get, it's always a great show. You can see a lot of celebrities from the movie and music world."



Throw your guts up

Chad: "I love amusement parks, and Six Flags Magic Mountain is one of the best I've been to.

They've got at least eight major roller-coasters, such as The Riddler, where you stand up for the whole looping ride. It's pretty cool."