



BC RICH GUITARS - A QUICK HISTORY

REALLY THE RICO'S GUITAR MAKING GOES BACK TO THE EARLY 1900'S BUT I WOULD JUST LIKE TO CONCENTRATE ON BC RICH GUITARS AS WE KNOW THEM TODAY.

BORN ON OCTOBER 13TH 1941, BERNARD CHAVEZ RICO GREW UP PLAYING CLASSICAL AND FLAMENCO GUITAR IN LOS ANGELES CALIFORNIA.

AS A BOY HE WORKED WITH HIS FATHER, MASON BERNARDO RICO, HELPING TO MAKE, AND LEARN ABOUT, MANY MANY ASPECTS OF GUITAR MAKING.

HIS FATHER HAD STORES SUCH AS, VALENCIAN GUITAR GUITAR SHOP, CASA RICO AND BERNARDO'S GUITAR SHOP.

AT FIRST BERNIE BUILT KOA UKE'S AROUND 1953-54 AND LATER ON GUITARS, STEEL GUITARS AND MARTIN 12 STRING CONVERSIONS.

THE BC RICH NAME FIRST APPEARED AROUND 1966-67 WHEN HE MADE APPROX 300 ACOUSTICS.

IN 1968 BERNIE DID SOMETHING THAT WOULD CHANGE THE COURSE OF BC RICH FOREVER, HE BUILT AN ELECTRIC GUITAR USING A FENDER NECK.

EARLY MODELS WERE BASED ON FENDERS AND GIBSONS AND THE FIRST SERIOUS RUN WAS IN 1969 HE BUILT 10 10 FANCY EB3 BASS'S AND 10 LES PAUL STYLED GUITARS ALL CARVED OUT OF MAHOGANY.

THE SEAGULL IS GENERALLY RECOGNISED AS THE FIRST GENUINE BC RICH ELECTRIC AND THIS FIRST APPEARED IN 1972 IN GUITAR AND BASS FORM, WERE NECK THOUGH AND HAD THE HEELLESS NECK JOINT.

BOLT ON NECK STARTED APPEARING AROUND 1976-77 WITH PARTS MADE BY WAYNE CHARVEL.

WARLOCKS AND THE 6 IN LINE HEADSTOCK WHICH IS COMMONLY RECOGNISED SHOWED UP IN 1981, AND THE ACOUSTICS STOPPED IN 1982.

IN 1983 THINGS WERE STARTING TO PICK UP WITH THE HEAVY ROCK SCENE AND GUITARISTS WERE GETTING FED UP WITH THE FENDER/GIBSON DESIGNS SO BERNIE INTRODUCED THE IRONBIRD, WAVE, STEALTH AND WIDOW (CO DESIGNED BY BLACKIE LAWLESS FROM WASP) AND IT WAS HARD TO WATCH MTV WITHOUT SEEING SOMEONE USING A BC RICH SOMEWHERE.

IN 1984 IT BECAME APPARENT THAT ALTHOUGH BC RICH GUITARS WERE QUALITY THEY WERE ALSO OUT OF POCKETS REACH FOR THE UP AND COMING GUITARISTS OF THAT ERA.

STILL WANTING TO KEEP A HIGH QUALITY GUITAR BUT MAKE IT MORE AFFORDABLE BERNIE STARED MAKING IMPORT GUITARS IN NAGOYA JAPAN, THESE WERE MADE BY MASAN TARADA AND IIDA.

IN 1984,THE US PRODUCTION SERIES APPEARED, THESE GUITARS WERE US ASSEMBLED KOREAN KITS.

1986 SAW THE ASSASSIN SHOW UP FOLLOWED CLOSELY IN 87 BY THE ST3,GUNSLINGER,OUTLAW AND INNOVATOR BASS.

IN 1987 A NEW JERSEY COMPANY CALLED CLASS AXE WERE MARKETING THE IMPORT SERIES AND BY 1988 THE BUDGET RAVE AND PLATINUM SERIES WERE INTRODUCED.

IN 1989 BERNIE WANTED A HOLIDAY SO HE ALSO LET CLASS AXE TAKE CONTROL OF THE USA SIDE OF THINGS WHICH TO MANY WAS NOT THE BEST MOVE EVER AS THE QUALITY DROPPED CONSIDERABLY TILL 1994 AS THE RICO'S HAD NO REAL INVOLVEMENT.

DURING THIS TIME BERNIE DID MAKE SOME GREAT QUALITY GUITARS UNDER THE BANNER OF, "MASON BERNARD", APPROX 225 OF THESE WERE MADE.

HAVING REGAINED CONTROL OF THE COMPANY IN 1994 BERNIE BEGAN MAKING MODELS SUCH AS EAGLE ARCH TOPS AND B41,65 ETC ACOUSTICS.

NOTHING MUCH OF NOTE HAPPENED BETWEEN THEN AND NOW APART FROM THE INTRODUCTION OF THE BEAST IN 1999.

SADLY, ON DECEMBER THE 3D 1999 BERNIE PASSED AWAY AND WILL BE MISSED FOREVER BY MUSICIANS AND FRIENDS WORLDWIDE.

BERNIE JNR HOWEVER IS CARRYING ON THE FAMILY TRADITION AND MAKING GREAT QUALITY GUITARS UNDER THE BC RICH LOGO AND LONG MAY IT CONTINUE.

IN 2000,NJ BEAST IS LAUNCHED, LTD ED NAMM NJ MOCKINGBIRD(100 MADE)

2001,BLUE ACRYLICS INTRODUCED, LTD ED, RUMOURED ONLY 52 OF THESE IN INITIAL RUN.

AUTUMN 2001, IMPORT ACOUSTICS INTRODUCED, SLIMLINE MOCKINGBIRD AND WARLOCK ALONG WITH FULL SIZED EAGLE ALSO INTRODUCED.

[Top of Page](#)