

*A back-to-basics new album, Wasting Light (Rosell/RCA), and career-spanning documentary, Foo Fighters: Back and Forth, show a 20-year journey coming full circle and prove that the secret to a happy work experience is a short commute. Here, let Dave explain.*

MAKING A RECORD in your garage? Dude, bucket list, hello.

Getting together with Butch Vig [who produced Nirvana's *Nevermind*] to make an album opens up a lot of memories. I didn't want to use computers, I wanted to use tapes because I felt like we do our best when it sounds like us—when we know that the red button means you're recording, and that's it. So you just start thinking about the way things were. And then the idea of doing it in the garage.

I bought the house eight years ago; my wife and I got married in the backyard. There was a master bedroom, a kid's bedroom, a guest bedroom, and then another bedroom that was my office, a place to put stupid ashtrays and Grammys and other shit my wife didn't want around. Then the guest bedroom turns into baby number two's room and my office turns into the new guest bedroom. I get, like, three days' notice, totally booted out of my own house and I don't have anywhere to put my Grammys anymore. I decided to put a second floor above the garage and that turned into the control room for the new record.

So I started thinking—have you seen the Tom Petty documentary? It's four fucking hours, dude. It's *Ben-Hur*. I thought we should do a Foo Fighters history before we wind up with so much footage that it's four hours long. But then knowing we were going to make a record with Butch in the garage, I thought, "Let's make a documentary, too." Because kids these days don't necessarily understand the craft of analog recording, where you've got a razor blade and you're splicing tape and there's a bead of sweat and it's like, "Macgruber, you've got five seconds!" The more I thought about it, the more it seemed like it's all one story: Butch and I meet 20 years ago in the [San Fernando] Valley to make *Nevermind*, an album that nobody had any

expectations for, ever. That explosion just changed our lives in so many ways. And the connection between Butch and me and Krist [Novoselic] we will always have because of that. We were kids. And losing Kurt [Cobain] and how that destroyed our world, we needed a way to keep going. Then Butch becomes the drummer of Garbage and a huge producer, and the Foo Fighters go on to have this career, and we become fathers and men. You start thinking about time. So why not be the band that can sell out stadiums but also make their records in a garage to tape? It seemed like the happiest ending I've ever fucking read.

Honestly, the most important message in the movie is that you can be a musician that has a garage big enough for a minivan and two children's bicycles and make rock'n'roll and still go and headline stadiums. You don't need fucking computers. You don't need to Auto-Tune your voice, unless you suck. I want people to see how easy and raw it can be. I don't feel like I have to be perfectly in tune all the time. I don't feel like our tempos have to be mechanical. Let's just do it like people would.

**LISTEN TO THIS:** When we play festivals, I'm usually about 15 to 20 years older than any of the bands there, and I think that's fucking rad.

I used to think I could never be onstage

past 30. But I'm really proud to be that person who will walk onstage and know that I have gray pubic hair.\* I'm all good with that.

I don't think there's any such thing as planned longevity. It's pretty cool when you go play Neil Young's Bridge School benefit and you can tell who his road crew are because they all have big, long white ponytails and look like Gandaf. First of all, this shouldn't be a "career." My mother was a schoolteacher for 35 years—that's a career. I think that kind of ambition can really poison what you're doing when you're talking about making music. You know why I make songs that wind up on the fucking radio? *Because I like songs that are on the fucking radio.* The more focused you are on that, the less you're paying attention to things that really matter. Believe me, we've never been cool. From day one. We kept our heads down and navigated through the skinny-tye phase and the fucking nü-metal phase and the rap-metal phase. It's been one of those things where we've had this blatant disregard for anything 15 yards away from what we're doing now.

My first reaction in seeing the documentary was that I couldn't believe how long I'd been friends with these people, let alone be in a band with them. And how much has gone on between us. How many funerals we've been to. How many babies have been born. How many weddings we've been to. Fuck Grammys and concerts. We're just people. When you see something like that, when you see a documentary of your life, that's the first thing you think: *Oh my God, I'm growing old with these people.* It has nothing to do with the Foo Fighters. It has nothing to do with the music. That's the heavy part to me, that we've actually made it this far as friends.

\*I really don't have gray pubes.

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**-DAVE GROHL**