



"Long live rock & roll" is more than just a motto for the band deFrance. It's a way of life and a way of consciousness; like the summoning of ancient nobility, it's the mantra that's been tattooed on the soul of singer, songwriter, guitarist, and founder, Drew deFrance.

The story starts along the muddy banks of the Ouachita River in the vest pocket town of Camden, Arkansas. A small but imaginative place, it was home to blues greats Little Willie John, Guitar Pickett, and Michael Burks, the latter of which later mentored an eager and budding kid named Drew deFrance all about blues, rock & roll, and life on the road.

When he was about knee-high to a grasshopper, Drew found interest in his mother's guitar. "I would stare at it for hours thinking it held some mystery, some ancient knowledge, that it was meant for me... and when my parents weren't home, I'd take it out of its case and do my best Pete Townsend windmills." He soon found himself blossoming into somewhat of a virtuoso. "I remember skipping school and recording the *Austin City Limits* Stevie Ray Vaughan special on my VCR and mimicking all of his guitar licks, movements, sounds, and tones on my Fender Stratocaster. I remember starting to believe in myself and thinking, 'Wow, I can really do this!' The next thing I know, I was playing Jimi Hendrix and the Free Bird solo." The future was looking bright for the brimming young guitarist, although soon he would find out what the blues was all about.

On November 1, 2003, while en route to Drew's 15th birthday celebration, Drew's brother and two close friends died in a tragic car wreck. This event forever altered the musician's life. From that day forward, not a single day or musical note was taken for granted. It set in stone the chain of events that have led Drew and his band where they are today.

It wasn't long after that unfortunate, unforeseen event that Drew met drummer, lifelong friend, and future bandmate Daniel Stratton Curry. The two started jamming and learning how to make "magic" as they called it. "We would find these places in between the songs that we could extend, improvise, and really learn to stretch the limits of our imagination and the song," Drew reminisces. With guidance from Camden musicians Larry Russell, Bill Osteen, and Michael Burks, the two started playing all over the South. As they studied the masters of classic rock, rhythm & blues, jazz, and country music – the makings of Americana Music – they began to realize the importance of where they grew up, the American South, and its greatest export, the blues. Through all of its flaws, ignorance, and aptitude for destruction, this very region has birthed the music that this country is known for, and that the world loves.

Muddy Waters put it best when he said "the blues had a baby, and they named it rock & roll." As they gained wisdom and guidance from their mentors, a strong backbone of knowledge from their studies of the masters, and perspective on southern life, Drew deFrance and Daniel Curry knew they were next in line to create a new generation of Americana music.

The two began their search for like-minded musicians to create the rock & roll/Americana music they loved and so dearly needed. They took that journey to Austin, Texas, where Drew studied at Willie Nelson's Arlyn and Pedernales studios, learning the ropes of the recording studio and music business while both of them cut their teeth at venues all over the city. Austin is also where Drew developed his songwriting style into a "serve the song" method, taking cues from Austin staples such as Doug Sahm, Townes Van Zandt, Guy Clark, Robert Earl Keen, and Hayes Carll. The information and experience earned during this time would later become indescribably useful to the group at a time when they needed it the most.

After years of playing the Texas circuit and not having much luck finding the team they knew would work together to achieve their dreams, Drew and Curry decided to bring the knowledge learned and the experience gained in the "live music capital of the world" back home to

Little Rock, Arkansas. Upon arriving back in The Natural State, things started to *naturally* come together. During this time Drew and Curry played in a number of local bands and the two shared the stage with legends Peter Frampton, John Fogerty, Johnny Winter, Robert Randolph, Drive by Truckers, Whiskey Myers, Cinderella, and Great White.

The fellas soon found solace in local musician Andrew Poe. Much like Drew & Curry, Poe had an extensive southern music background. Known as a premier blues and R&B guitarist in Little Rock, Arkansas, Andrew had honed his skills with local blues star Lucious Spiller, the nephew of blues legend Magic Sam. The two guitarists hit it off immediately. "Me & Poe knew it was right from the first note, and he's been there ever since."

The trio was established, and with additional keyboards & bass, the newly formed band deFrance released its debut album *Home* in September 2015 and started hitting the road more than they ever had before. "Touring became the new way of life for us, and it's remained that way. We have been out every week since February 2015 with little to no time off. The road has molded and shaped our band but it's also nearly destroyed it."

After years of running the never-ending roads of America and once again earning support slots with Whiskey Myers and Robert Randolph, they also found new openings with Kenny Wayne Shepherd, Living Colour, and Morris Day & The Time. While at times fruitful, the road took its toll on some of the members of deFrance. Too many long nights, extensive drive times, sleep deprivation, and little to no pay because of extensive overhead and investments back into the band caused friction with relationships at home in Arkansas and between band members. "We've gone through 18 iterations of this band in four years," says guitarist Andrew Poe. "It's not for everybody." The exhausting measures even took its toll on drummer Daniel Curry, who decided to take a leave of absence. "I needed to do some real soul searching," says Curry, "I had to get away for a while and just figure out where I belonged and what I was meant to do. After a while I realized that I was destined to play rock & roll with this band and I had to come back." During this time of personnel changes, Drew reached out to bassist/vocalist Connor Roach who ended up being the perfect pick. "Once we got Connor in the mix it was amazing, we knew this was the breath of fresh air that we needed." Immediately the lineup hit the road again nonstop, and with drummer Daniel Curry returning in positive and rejuvenated spirits, the quartet was set and ready to rock!

The only thing hindering the band during this time was the ever-looming status of their record deal. In 2016, talks soon formed between deFrance and an international record label. While the vast and astounding empty promises flowed, as they often do in the record and music business, the band waited patiently but in limbo, all the while continuing their commitment to the road. Although 2017 quickly passed, deFrance continued to tour and produced another record. The pattern continued in 2018, the band ending the year with three records in the vault, nearly 40 songs, and three years of fans built from the proven grassroots method of endlessly working on the road. In what seemed like record company purgatory, the band has waited nearly four years to release their long awaited sophomore album, *Second Wind*. Tom Petty was right, the waiting is the hardest part.

The band garnered success off the first record, *Home*, but in the words of Drew deFrance, "How long can we make it off of one nine-song record?" The answer is: four years, 600+ shows, three European tours, and openings with ZZ Top, Bon Jovi, and Deep Purple to thousands of fans in some of the greatest, most prestigious rock & roll venues in the world such as Montreux Jazz Fest, Whisky A Go Go, and their hometown Verizon Arena.

When talks continued to land nowhere with label executives in early 2019, the band broke from the deal and started out on their own. Work began fast when Drew deFrance used the studio knowledge learned over the years and during his time in Austin to produce the long overdue albums. The records made at Wolfman Studios in Little Rock, Arkansas, with engineer/studio owner Jason Tedford, keyboardist/studio pro Joseph Fuller, and pedal steel guru Neil Jones (American Aquarium) are now out of the vault and ready for the world. Years of patience, hard work, and consistent nights performing, recording, and mixing are paying off. The fellas in deFrance are excited to bring to you, for your listening pleasure, the highly anticipated new album *Second Wind*. Please enjoy, listen loud, and stay tuned... a LOT more is soon to unfold!