

MOUNTAIN ROCKS

Phil (AC/DC) Rudd's Rural Abode

Phil Rudd played drums for the mighty AC/DC from the release of High Voltage right through to Flick of the Switch, but for the past decade he's lived right here in New Zealand. He came over on holiday after he left AC/DC, got as far as Rotorua and never went back to Australia.

He tried farming, lived the beach lifestyle at the Mount ("it was too bright"), married a New Zealander, owned citrus and avocado orchards, ran helicopters and kept a few race-cars until finally he ended up on this kiwi fruit farm just outside Tauranga. The fruit farm foundered a few years ago but the recording studio Phil built amongst the trees is now regarded as one of the better facilities for rock bands in this country.

Phil designed and built the place himself four years ago for personal use, but word got around that here was an extremely pleasant environment in which to work and he found himself in business. Jan Hellriegel, Dead Flowers, Midge Marsden, Pumpkinhead, the Nixons, Nine Livez, Whisperscream and Adrenalin have all recorded albums or EPs at Mountain Studios (named after Phil's favourite group) and left notes in reception testifying to the great "vibe". We drove down to see him one weekday night and after he'd finished dinner with the family he took us to see the studio. The atmosphere is light and spacious with one large, high-ceilinged main studio and three smaller rooms, all treated differently for sound, plus the console room and comfortable sleeping and lounging areas.

Standing in the main studio, which is empty but for a stand of microphones in one corner and a giant equipment box stamped with "AC/DC" in the other, Phil says this is how he remembered Albert's Number One in Sydney.

"That was where we did all those old albums. It was a famous room, a horrible old room but we just loved it. We went round all those flash places in Paris years later like Pathé Marconi — dreadful sounding places. The Stones recorded there and we thought we would. We ended up in a mobile outside the warehouse, where we did *For Those About To Rock*."



Photo: Murray Cammick

Phil Rudd at Mountain Studios

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