

Road Warrior

JOHN BELL

GUITARIST AND SINGER
WIDESPREAD PANIC

FOR JOHN BELL, life on the road isn't just one of the hassles of the job, it is the job. Bell, 46, leads Widespread Panic, one of the world's most successful "jam bands." JB, as he's known to fans, friends, and even reporters, has done more than 2,000 shows since 1986, selling out places like New York City's Madison Square Garden and Radio City Music Hall. Last year he spent 120 days on tour, tailed by an avid group of "Spreadheads," as the band's followers are called. Given that Widespread Panic is famous for never playing the same show twice, every stop is an adventure, even after 23 years. Here's JB's abridged guide to life on the road. —Hank Gilman



BAND AID
BELL RELAXING IN CLARKSVILLE, GA., WHERE HE AND HIS WIFE OPENED A WELLNESS CENTER



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1. Favorite hotel
Grove Park Inn & Spa in Asheville, N.C. —beautiful views of the Smoky Mountains, mineral pool with waterfalls, and very friendly staff.

2. Quick snack
French fries and anything that can be doctored with truffle oil.

3. Can't-miss restaurants The Pelican in New Orleans. It sits in a protected alley in the



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French Quarter—relaxed and non-touristy. Kenichii in Austin—Asian and sushi with a lot of unusual surprises.

4. iPod library?
I default to Van Morrison a lot. Jeff Buckley, Talking Heads, Neil Young come up too. Coleman Barks reading his translations of Rumi's poetry is good to stretch to. Comedians Eddie Izzard, Mitch Hedberg,



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Bill Hicks, Dave Attell, and Lewis Black are also running around loose in my 60-gig iPod.

5. Music pit stop
The Iridium Jazz Club in New York City. Ninety-four-year-old Les Paul still plays a regular gig on Monday nights. A true living legend—and he's funny too.

6. Best golf course
I've never met a



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course I didn't like—not to say they all liked me. Seaside and Plantation courses on St. Simons Island, Ga., and the Broadmoor in Colorado Springs come to mind. I grew up playing at the Country Club of Cleveland; it's home to my family and memories—so that's my favorite.

7. Golf clubs My set is like a mutt pup: I carry a Scotty



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Cameron putter, 64 and 56 degree wedges, Mizuno or Ping irons, a **Ping driver**, and a Cleveland 3 wood, my "perfect club." I also carry my sand wedge and Walter Hagen blade putter I've had since I was 15 years old.

8. Tour packing tips
Thanks to the technological age, I have much less baggage —CDs, notebooks,

and recording gear are now all contained in my Mac. Still, I have a full bellman's cart when checking in: my **Washburn HB-35 guitar**, my laptop and printer, clubs, camera bag, suitcase, grip, and books.

9. Travel read
The latest issue of *Home Power* magazine; it features all the latest green household gadgets.

FRIES: JUPITERIMAGES/ABLESTOCK—ALAMY; GUITAR—SAM COHEN