

# Entertainment WEEKLY

## Rascal Flatts promise Vegas residency is 'Flatts as you've never seen them before'



Jay DeMarcus, Joe Don Rooney, and Gary LeVox are at a new stage of their career. Fifteen years of touring, nine albums, and 33 singles later, Rascal Flatts is now a band of fathers (the most recent addition being Joe Don Rooney's third child, a baby girl, this past fall), they've proudly partnered with heartburn medication Nexium 24HR, and after taking the longest break of their career—four months—they're launching a nine-show, three-week residency at The Joint in Las Vegas tonight.

*EW* caught up with Rooney on the way to Riot! at The Joint rehearsals to talk about staying fresh and being a Vegas club's first country residency.

**ENTERTAINMENT WEEKLY: Tell me how this residency came up. ROONEY:** The Hard Rock reached out to our management last year and they had the idea of bringing in a country act to play The Joint for three shows a week for three weeks. So our managers asked us, and we were like, "My gosh it sounds amazing." The deeper we got into the deal the more perfect it fit for the Rascal Flatts catalogue to meet Vegas in the coolest way possible. It's a really intimate setting in a really great theater that I think will showcase Rascal Flatt's music really well.

**You're probably used to playing much larger venues than The Joint [The Joint seats 4,000], are you tailoring things differently than shows of recent past given that?** We've been really fortunate for many years now —probably the last 10, we've been together for 15—to play some really big shows, so to get back in this theater vibe is going to be

really cool. It's kind of nostalgic for us. And being the same venue for nine straight shows, we get to keep everything set up—we play Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday night gigs. It'll be stripped back a little bit from previous shows that any Rascal Flatts fans have been to over the past decade. A lot less going on on-stage, production-wise, more focused on the music. And we'll be able to make eye contact with every person there, that's something we haven't gotten to do in a long time. It's just gonna be a different experience, for the fans and us, and we're really fired up.

**You've spent the last 15 years in the album-then-tour routine, was part of this appeal that it was different?** I love the idea of being permanent and still being able to play shows. For fifteen years its been making album and touring, making album and touring—it becomes very conveyer belt. We've actually just had the largest break we've been on, through the fall and winter.

**EW: Can you tell me a little about the Vegas set list? Rooney:** You know, we're on our 33rd single now, "Riot" off *Rewind*. We've looked at the set list a billion different ways but the Hard Rock came to us and said, "Hit them with hits." So we sat down and decided to do the hour and a half show with as many hit songs as we can. And we'll do the same show every night, we have some tricks up our sleeve that I can't let out of the bag yet. But if you've seen Flatts before, you've never seen us like this. And if you haven't seen Flatts, this is a great way to get to know us and see what we're all about. We'll let you see what we do best—soaring ballads and uptempo songs.

**Can we expect any new music in 2015 from the group?** We're writing, right now, a lot and looking for songs. We'll probably start recording early summer. Probably the end of this year before we're looking at anything new. And then we're kicking off a tour in St. Louis after Vegas—we've started four tours or so there. We're going to do 25 cities, mixing venues and festivals. We're doing Shaky Boots in Atlanta.

**Lastly, big congratulations on the ACM nomination for Vocal Group of the Year.** You know, this is the first time in a few years we've been up for anything and we're very excited about that. When that came across that morning, we were just floored and so very humbled to still be in the dance after so many years. Anytime the industry tips their hat to you it's like, "Wow. This is fuel." It makes us feel good, we're very proud

Rascal Flatts Las Vegas Riot! at The Joint begins tonight.  
**Originally posted February 25 2015 — 4:04 PM EST**