

FOREDAY RIDERS
PLAYIN' UP
INDEPENDENT

FOREDAY RIDERS
BLUES LIVE AT
FRENCH'S
INDEPENDENT

FOREDAY RIDERS
RIDERS DIGEST
INDEPENDENT

FOREDAY RIDERS
ONCE A WEEK
INDEPENDENT

oz blues

For nearly half a century, Sydney's Foreday Riders have been at the vanguard of Australian blues. Founded by brothers Ron and Jeff King, playing harmonica and guitar respectively, the band emerged in the wake of the '60s British blues boom, hitting its stride as a quintet in the early '70s. Where many of their contemporaries assumed a playing style that mirrored UK bands' interpretation of blues music, the Riders cut straight to the source, drawing inspiration directly from the Chicago blues of Muddy Waters, Willie Dixon, Little Walter, The Aces and others. Mastering a distinct and identifiable blues sound, the Riders have not only shared stages with some of the genre's greatest names, they've also been a training ground for many of Australia's finest blues musicians who've passed through their ranks and gone on to forge their own careers. Albeit with a succession of inevitable lineup changes, the Riders, led by the King brothers, are still going strong today. Eschewing mainstream recognition in favour of dedication to their craft, the band has been lauded by the Australian blues community as our foremost exponents of Chicago style blues.

Paradoxically, it's this commitment to playing authentic blues that has contributed to the band's survival over many decades as a big fish in a little pond, so to speak. Long time blues lovers will welcome the Riders' CD reissues of these landmark Australian blues LPs from 1974 to 1986, and many will still have some of the original records in their treasured vinyl collections. For this aptly titled *Days Of Wine & Vinyl* project, these records were painstakingly transferred to digital without sacrificing any of the music's dynamics and character. After the release of *Blues Live At French's* in 1974, Sydney blues fans and visitors to the city made it a priority to check out the band at French's Wine Bar in Darlinghurst where it had a long residency. Containing only one original song, that official debut record by the band proved their mastery of bona-fide Windy City blues. Its 1975 successor, *Once A Week*, had only one non-original, but demonstrated the band's creative songwriting flair, representing its own worthy contribution to the urban blues canon.

Playin' Up came in 1977. Like its immediate predecessor, which expanded the sound to include noted session guests on piano, it introduced tenor and soprano sax into the mix of originals and covers, incorporating a jazzy West Coast jump/swing feel. Guest musicians have always been a feature of Riders live gigs, a practice continued in their recorded work. Returning to a Chicago groove on *Riders Digest* in 1986, where they also put a Windy City stamp on selections from other blues strongholds, they are joined by three members of another leading Aussie blues band, The Hippos. The music on these CDs sounds as fresh today as it did back then. Raw, exuberant and unpretentious, the foot-stomping music of The Foreday Riders (affectionately known as The University Of The Blues) will resonate with blues fans old and new. *Al Hensley*

