

## Mills, Shannon Jr.



### **Guitar and Mandolin Maker**

Shannon Mills Jr. was born in Baton Rouge in 1948. He has made his living as a project engineer, but since 1984, he has also made a name for himself making and repairing stringed musical instruments like guitars and mandolins. He lives in Zachary, Louisiana, with his wife Rianne and their three children.

Mr. Mills says that his major influence was instrument maker Johnny Rushing. Mr. Mills makes his instruments in his workshop after work, and typically creates about four instruments a year. Mills makes instruments traditionally-by hand. He uses small woodworking tools, some of which he has handmade himself. Primarily a custom builder, Mills has worked to preserve the traditional styles of guitars, while using updated research and technology to achieve the tone desired by the contemporary ear. Materials include exotic and domestic woods, primarily spruces, walnut, rosewood, and mahogany. The wood is quarter sawed and air cured. He has also used native Louisiana cherry and walnut with excellent results. Walnut is Mills's favorite tone wood, as it produces a warm, woody tone with a subtle "punch."

Shannon Mills also plays the guitar and bluegrass music with his friends.

He has demonstrated instrument making at the New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival, the Louisiana Folklife Festival, and the Louisiana Native Crafts Festival.