

Shamrock hosts guitar music awards

Last Sunday afternoon, the Shamrock Hotel in Kyneton was host to the inaugural Guitarist of the Year Awards.

The brainchild of local musician Philip Connell, head of Phil's Guitar Lessons, the event kicked off with the first of many sets by the Smokin' Ladyfingers.

The first award of the day was the Young Gun Award, for students of primary school age.

The lucky winner, Mackenzie Stone, received his prize of a Rose Tattoo shirt. He then joined Mr Connell, drummer Greg Johnson and guest bassist Lachlan Eddy on stage for a rendition of a Jimi Hendrix tune, Red House.

Next winner on the day was Ned Claridge, recipient of the Metalhead Award. Thrilled with his genuine Iron Maiden tour t-shirt, Ned joined the Smokin' Ladyfingers for a rocking version of another Hendrix tune, this time All Along the Watchtower.

This young guitarist certainly shows a lot of promise. Not only is the 14 year old part of new local band Fading Circle, but he even apes his mentor's trademark of playing the guitar behind his head with consummate ease. Definitely a budding axeman to watch out for.

The third award of the day

went to Brodie Matheson, the Most Improved Student of the year. His prize of a Morley guitar pedal didn't have batteries yet, but he was able to join the Ladyfingers for a cover of Black Night, a tune from 60s blues band Savoy Brown.

Finally, the big award of the day - the Guitarist of the Year. That honour went to 15 year old Tom Stewart-Toner, along with an overdrive guitar effect pedal. He went on to contribute some skilful playing in a cover of the Rolling Stones tune Miss You.

All the winners also received a certificate to commemorate their achievements.

Mr Connell wound up the Awards by praising his students for their hard work and encouraged them to keep up with their efforts.

JAM SESSION

The announcement of a regular all-ages Thursday night jam session starting January 12 next year at the Shamrock was greeted with enthusiastic cheers.

After the gig, Mr Connell said the Thursday jam sessions would be a great opportunity for young musicians to showcase their talents.

After a quiet three months, local hard rock/party band Sox & What, then took to the stage for their final show, prior to

lead singer David 'Sox' Jones, exodus to New South Wales.

The six piece group rocked the Shamrock with a mix of well-known cover tunes and original compositions, testing the decibel levels and hearing tolerance of the punters. Sean Kennedy from the Ladyfingers joined in on backup vocals during the set.

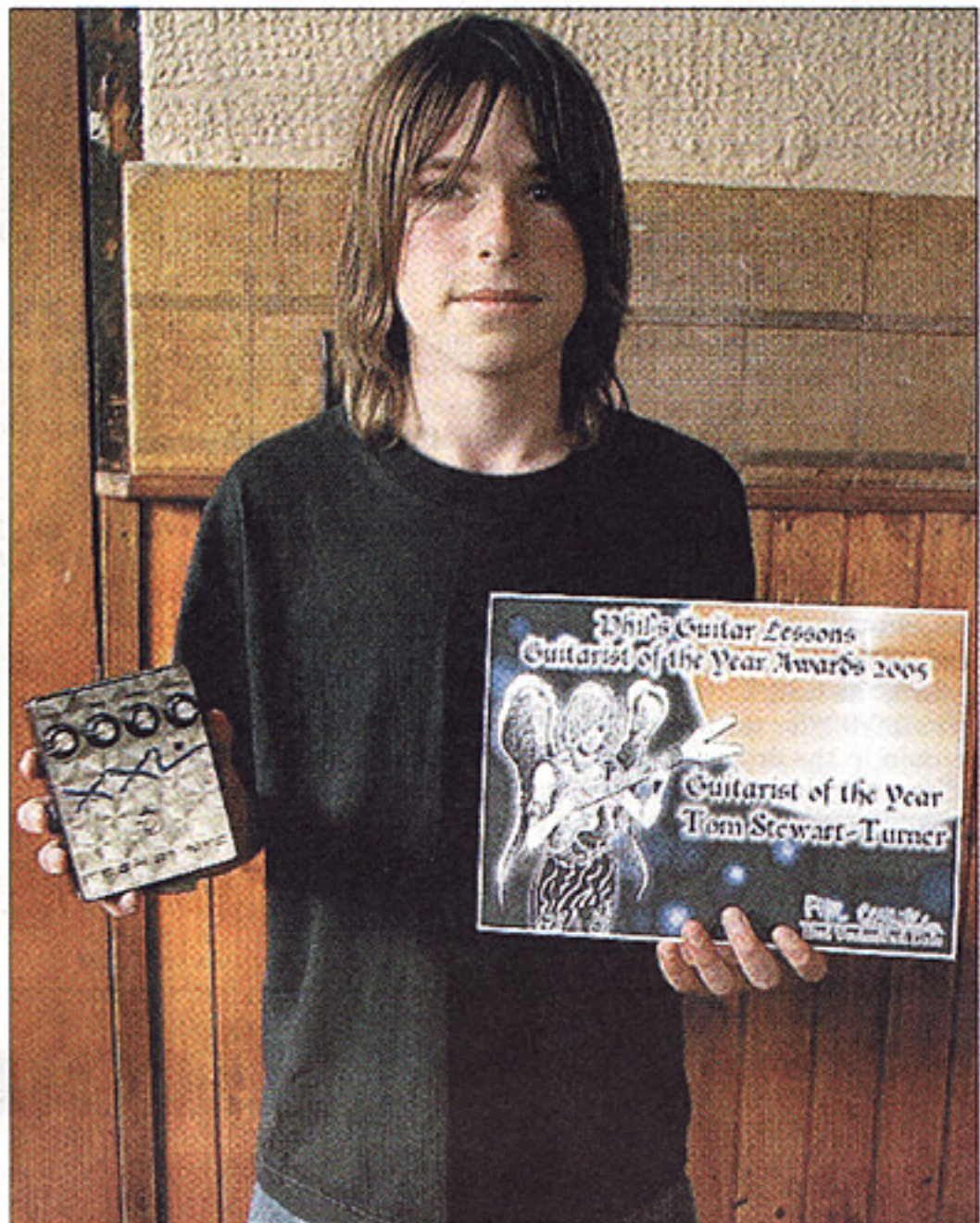
During a rendition of The Doors, Roadhouse Blues, Sox introduced the individual band members - Phil, Greg, third guitarist Chris Cullen, bassist Lyndell Savage and vocalist Krystal McAinsh - for the last time.

Each band member contributed a few solo riffs on their respective instruments, even Krystal with a sparkly green egg shaker.

The band finished off their main set with a storming rendition of Deep Purple's classic rock standard Smoke on the Water. Enthusiastic calls for an encore led to the final song of the last Sox & What set Knockin' on Heaven's Door, albeit more in the Guns and Roses style of the song.

The Smokin, Ladyfingers will play the Shamrock Hotel again this Sunday afternoon, kicking off at 2pm.

* Thanks to Kristy Williams for her dedicated information and photos of the event.



+Tom Stewart-Toner won the Guitarist of the Year award, held at the Shamrock in Kyneton on Sunday. Picture: Kristy Williams