

roots n blues n bbq

Story by Matt Marshall • Photos by LG Patterson/RBBBBQ

This year, we were warmly welcomed to a festival that we described back in 2010 as rapidly becoming one of the most prominent in the country.

Five years later, as it turned out, Roots n Blues n BBQ in Columbia, Missouri, has certainly been working tirelessly to fulfill that bold prediction.

Crossing through the gates and into the beautiful outdoor festival footprint puts visitors on top of a hill overlooking a breathtaking scene filled with colorful ambient lights, sculptures made from recycled bottles and CDs, giant hand-painted folk art, over a dozen eclectic food trucks, and two big stages pumping out the best in roots and blues music.

The multi-day affair came with a Ferris Wheel, more food than you can eat (we tried), and the bizarrely endearing, bigger than life-sized puppets courtesy of the Astral Gypsies' Giant Puppet Troupe. It boasted acres of exceptional artistic endeavors: illuminated art exhibits, interactive art, musical painted signs, and family-friendly

play areas. There was even a professional, harnessed tree-climbing adventure for the kids, craft beers and food-stocked VIP areas for the adults.

Roots n Blues alumni Buddy Guy made a return to the festival, playing some of his big hits as well as music from his new album, *Born To Play Guitar* (<http://rockn.ro/fy3>).

Most magnificently, Roots n Blues n BBQ delivers one of the utmost dynamic and impossibly entertaining lineups in the country. They bring the roots with Lucinda Williams and Mike Ferris, soul with Irma Thomas and the extraordinary uprise Charles Bradley. Rebel Brass Band and Tab Benoit call up the Louisiana swamps, Dwight Yoakam kicks up dust and the list goes on with North Mississippi Allstars and Robert Randolph, Danielle Nicole, Memphis-based rock n' blues outfit Lucero, Dr John, Robert Cray, and almost doesn't end!



The soul power, Charles Bradley.



Big puppets and interactive art dotted the festival grounds.



Robert Randolph



Mike Ferris



Music art!

