

*From the May 2013 issue*

**For the Uninitiated:** When Eric Clapton tells you that you're the blues guitar player who makes him want to play again, you're probably on to something. After cutting his teeth as a teenage prodigy around Austin's blues scene, Clark has emerged as rock 'n' roll's preeminent guitar hero, an honor largely earned with blistering, moneymaker-shaking sets in front of huge festival crowds at Bonnaroo, Coachella, and the New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival. His debut album, last year's *Blak and Blu*, is an impressive all-over-the-map fusion of R&B, hip-hop, neo-soul, and, yes, blues. Lots of blues.

**On Playing for Giant Festival Crowds:** "It's humbling when people choose your stage. It's hot, it's funky, but there they are, hanging and listening, caring about what you're doing. To think a weird idea I noodled on at the house has gone to something forty thousand people might hear at a festival is an indescribable feeling. As cool as I might try to be, I think, *Oh, my God, this is real.*"

**The Preshow Ritual:** "Most of the time, we gather backstage and put on O. V. Wright's 'Ace of Spades.' It's a badass southern soul tune. We dance around to it like idiots. Everybody gets loose. And sometimes it's the Otis Redding album *In Person at the Whisky a Go Go*. Then we go."

*Above: Two-button linen suit (\$3,195) by Giorgio Armani; cotton shirt (\$145) by Boss Orange; leather shoes (\$460) by Fratelli Rossetti. Below: Linen-and-resin jacket (\$998), cotton jeans (\$298), and suede boots (\$598) by John Varvatos; cotton T-shirt (\$55) by Boss Orange; wool hat (\$78) by Gents.*