

The troubled STP frontman on getting clean, Christmas-caroling in county jail, and the joys of a mid-labor massage.

By Matt Hendrickson Photograph by Alex Prager

Q: Stone Temple Pilots are releasing their first album in nine years this June. Did you ever think of skipping the record and just doing the cash-grab tour?

A: We got back together and toured in 2008 and realized pretty quickly that we were going to get burned-out playing the old songs every night. We have just as much fun in the creative process as we do on the road—it's not like when we were in our twenties and it was rock-and-roll hell on wheels.

Q: Do you miss that?

A: No, I don't. I had plenty of it.

Q: The band's breakup in 2003 was acrimonious. How were you able to put the past behind you?

A: Well, no one does drugs anymore, so it was pretty easy. Dean DeLeo and I were the close runners-up to the Toxic Twins throne. The wounds heal. And we got the humor back in the band. That's the most important thing—to laugh at the same funny stories we were laughing at years ago.

Q: Dean has questioned your sobriety.

A: He's probably referring to my drinking. I still drink. If he thought he could drink and not do drugs, he might do that too. I can have a scotch and not want to shoot up.

Q: You sound so matter-of-fact about it now. Why were the drugs so hard for you to kick?

A: Heroin made me feel all right in my own skin. Before I did it I was uncomfortable going into crowds, which is interesting given my profession. But when I did dope, the fear went away. That's why I hung on to it so long. But my kids fill up that hole now.

Q: I read that when you were in jail for possession you taught music to your fellow inmates.

A: A counselor gave us some Christmas car-

ols, and I'd learn all the parts and assign the harmonies. There were some former Crips and a white supremacist in there, which added some levity to the idea of missing the holidays with your family. I ran into a couple of those guys a while back and had a good laugh. As horrible as jail was, there were some first-rate guys in there.

Q: You feuded with Axl Rose after you formed Velvet Revolver with his former Guns N' Roses bandmates. Now that you've left that group less than amicably, do you want to trade war stories with Axl?

A: We came close to getting together one time. I had wondered if he was the center of all their problems or if it was a mixed bag—and it was definitely the latter. When Velvet Revolver first got together it was great. I got to know the guys before: Met Duff at the gym, because he loves to work out and I was obsessed with running. I was in rehab with Matt. I'd only met Slash twice—he's not the most social person. We had all been through the same experiences, and it felt like a gang. But everyone was a rock star. There were petty jealousies. Then the wives got involved with the business of the band, and that was the beginning of the downfall.

Q: Speaking of wives, your ex Mary Forsberg wrote in her memoir that you got a massage while she was delivering your first child. What were you thinking?

A: What do you mean? I was incredibly stressed-out. She was having contractions and that was tripping me out, so I called up our friend and she gave me a massage. I laid out right next to where Mary was.

Q: You didn't think it was weird, even after the nurse kicked the masseuse out?

A: No one I've ever talked to thought it was weird. It's incredibly stressful when the person you love is having a child. And I was sober at that time, so I needed something to take the edge off. ■

Q:

"WELL, NO ONE [IN STONE TEMPLE PILOTS] DOES DRUGS ANYMORE. . . . I STILL DRINK. . . . I CAN HAVE A SCOTCH AND NOT WANT TO SHOOT UP."

Weiland talks style, football, and STP's new sound (one track is "Beatles meets Joy Division") in our extended Q&A on details.com.

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