

Devon Allman has blues-rock in his DNA. That distinctive sound has been shaping his music since he first started playing guitar as a teenager, all the way to his recent albums with the Allman Betts Band. But for his first solo album in eight years, Allman freed himself of any genre expectations, picked up a bass guitar, and wrote a series of songs informed by R&B, funk, and alt-rock.

“Previously on my records, I was carving out something that I felt needed to fit into contemporary blues or straight-ahead rock & roll,” Allman says. “That wasn’t on my mind this time. Instead, the goal was to write music that moves me.”

The result is *Miami Moon*, an undeniably feel-good album that evokes the promise of crystal-blue skies, never-ending humid nights, and the summertime of our dreams. Recorded at Criteria Recording Studios in Miami, the legendary outpost where Allman’s father, Gregg, and the Allman Brothers Band cut LPs like 1972’s *Eat a Peach*, the album has shades of Curtis Mayfield, Sade, and even The Cure, and calls to mind hues of bright pink and deep navy.

“I always see records in colors, and when I wrote this batch of songs, I knew we needed to record somewhere fun and upbeat,” says Allman, who calls St. Louis home. “We’re living in an era where you can make a record in your basement or your bedroom, but I wanted to go somewhere that had history in its hallowed halls and stories in the fabric of its rooms. There’s a real sacred vibration at Criteria.”

But the location is just part of *Miami Moon*’s equation — Allman also assembled a dream team of a session band to bring his songs to life. George Porter Jr. of the Meters played bass, Ivan Neville handled keys, Lettuce’s Adam Deitch manned the drum kit, and Karl Denson swooped in to blow saxophone. R. Scott Bryan, the multi-instrumentalist who died in 2023 shortly after the sessions wrapped, makes one of his final recorded appearances on percussion. Allman’s longtime collaborator, Tom Hambridge, returned as producer.

“The songs begged for these players,” Allman says. “I called them up and said, ‘Can you take a week out of your schedule and come to Miami, and we’ll eat Cuban food, watch the NBA, and make music? And that’s all we did. The hang is essential to good music.’”

You can feel the chemistry right from the jump. *Miami Moon*’s opening track “White Horse” bursts out of the gate with Deitch’s steady beat and Neville’s snaking bass line, as Allman’s soulful vocal rides high above. “You’re always waiting for your white horse/you’re always looking for a way out,” he sings in the chorus, backed by the harmonies of Allie Vogler and Mattie Schell, formerly of the band River Kittens. “‘White Horse’ has that Curtis Mayfield vibe that I love, and I just went nuts with the production,” Allman says.

For the title track, Allman and his players take you on a trip to South Florida. There’s water effects and nature sounds before Neville’s moody keys and Allman’s baritone dial up a musical swoon. “‘Miami Moon’ is one of my proudest moments on record. It’s got a lot of diversity, including a middle jazzy interlude with the sax. The guitar is straight out of the playbook of The Cure’s *Disintegration*, with the descending lines and the soaked delays,” he says. “It’s such a joy for me to be able to throw something like that into the mix.”

Much like “Miami Moon,” two standout tracks on the album transport listeners to other geographical places. “Climb Aboard” is a call to arms to live boldly, with Allman imploring you to see the world, from Helsinki to Rome, from Argentina to Kilimanjaro. “Sahara,” a stunning instrumental, does likewise, but with Allman’s guitar and Denson’s saxophone charting the course.

“Sahara” was inspired by a trip Allman took to Morocco with his son. “We took camels out into the Sahara Desert and the quiet that you experience is unlike anything on earth. There’s no noises, no people, no vehicles, no cities, no animals. It’s the weirdest but most serene quiet you can ever experience,” he says. “I wanted to write something that would feel like the soundtrack of that. Could I mirror that feeling I had in the music?”

Allman succeeds in creating that vibe and more. He introduces fans to a deep cut by Van Morrison to close out *Miami Moon*: “You Gotta Make It Through the World,” off Morrison’s 1977 *A Period of Transition* album, is a funky band jam with a simple message. “Life isn’t always peaches, man,” Allman says, “but you have to keep going.”

Allman is always pushing forward as his own man and musician. While he’s shaped by the influence of his father, he’s carved out his own sound through brave choices and a relentless spirit. Last year, he and Donovan Frankenreiter set a record by playing 50 shows in 50 states in 49 days. There’s more ground to cover, he says.

“I’m at a point in my career where I am able to spread my wings without any fear. *Miami Moon* is the product of that,” Allman says. “This record is proof that it’s okay to leave base camp and go on your own little hike.”

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