

11 TAKEAWAYS FROM ACL MUSIC FEST WEEKEND 2

NOW THAT THE SECOND WEEKEND OF ACL FEST HAS WRAPPED, WE HAVE SOME OBSERVATIONS TO SHARE

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PHOTO BY CAMBRIA HARKEY

Sometimes it can feel as though Weekend 2 of ACL Music Fest is an afterthought to the first three days, but with a pleasant Sunday and several local bands playing, we had a total blast. Here are our takeaways from the festival.

Coolest Surprise

We'd like to send a thank-you to the universe for the low temperatures and heavenly breeze on Sunday. After the brutal 90-degree heat on Friday and Saturday, it was nice to spend one blessed day at the festival not drenched in sweat.

Biggest Bummer

However, we are bummed to report that the beer hall was completely out of beer before 8 p.m. on Sunday night. Really? Come on, y'all! There are still two bands playing for at least another hour and a half, and we're still thirsty.



Photo by Roger Ho

Best Message

Perhaps it's the aftermath of the horrific Las Vegas concert shooting, or maybe it's just a sign of the times, but we heard lots of bands and artists giving messages of love and positivity to the crowds. JAY-Z said, "Love will always defeat hate," while a member of the Red Hot Chili Peppers reminded us that "the strongest people are the kindest people." One musician even asked the crowd to cheer if they loved their mothers. Aww!

Most Tempting Place for Impulse Buys

We loved browsing the revamped ACL Festival Store this year. Set off at the Barton Springs entrance right as you walked into the park, the air-conditioned space had items from hip brands like Howler Bros., Camp Collection, and YETI that we actually wanted to buy. But we resisted the impulse to increase our wardrobe, and our bank accounts are thanking us.

Biggest Sartorial Surprise

One thing notably absent this weekend? Floral crowns! We only saw one or two people sporting the formerly de rigueur festival accessory. Same thing with Flash Tattoos—we only saw a couple. Sadly, ultra-short shorts that put butt cheeks on display still seemed to be everywhere.



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Look who we spotted in the @aclfestival line! @cw_spr's @jarpad and his wife, @realGpad #aclfest #jaredpadatecki #supernatural

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Greatest Lack of Pretense

We spotted *Supernatural* star Jared Padalecki and his wife, Genevieve, standing in the entrance line to



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get into the festival. They were patient and demanded no special treatment as they stood in the heat. Celebs—they're just like us! They, too, have to wait it out in line.



Photo by Roger Ho

Most Welcomed Music Trend

While last week's artists honored the passing of Tom Petty by playing covers of his songs, this week's bands kept it more diverse. The list of covers included the Beatles' "Helter Skelter" (Ron Gallo), Donovan's "Season of the Witch" (Karen Elson, pictured above), blink-182's "All the Small Things" (Middle Kids), Soundgarden's "Black Hole Sun" (Cody Jinks and Paul Cauthen), Neil Young/Dusty Springfield's "On the Way Home" (Whitney), Queen's "We Are the Champions" (The Growlers), and Lionel Richie's "All Night Long" (Vance Joy). We still grieve Petty (and Chris Cornell), but we appreciated the lighter vibe after last week's tragic events.

Biggest Cause for Confusion

ACL has had corporate sponsors for much of its history, but their presence this year was felt more than usual, mainly because of the confusion they were causing us. From the American Express building to the Miller Lite bar to the Honda/Waterloo artist signing stage, these new "landmarks" had us feeling like we were having déjà vu moments. We learned that you can't just tell a friend you're waiting for them at the Honda Stage or the American Express Stage. You now have to be uber-specific because there's more than one!

Best Relationship Update

During Whitney's set on Sunday, singer/drummer Julien Ehrlich asked if anyone this week had caught the band's set last weekend. Only a few people raised their hand. He gave us a status update anyway: "I told the crowd last week I was meeting my girlfriend's parents this week," he said. "I met my girlfriend's parents this week...and they loved me." We've all been there, dude. Happy to hear it went well.



Photo by Timothy Patrick Ciancy

Best Use of a Cellphone

Middle Kids, who were playing their last show on Sunday after a long tour, decided to have some fun during their set. Bass player Tim Fitz gave out his personal cellphone number and asked the crowd to text messages to him. Turns out it was quite useful, with Tim becoming a PA system for the crowd as he read out texts that included general shout-outs to friends, a birthday greeting, and one person asking if a friend had arrived yet.



Photo by Roger Ho

Most Unexpected Bonding Moment

When a stranger starts yelling at you at a festival, normally your instinct is to run. But at Silent Disco, we found ourselves welcoming these moments. We put on our headphones and selected one of the three music channels (EDM, rap and hip-hop, and '80s/'90s music). When Bon Jovi's "Living on a Prayer" came on, and a woman pointed at us to sing along with her, it actually made us feel like we were sharing a moment that we'll all remember. Yeah, as cheesy as it may sound, Silent Disco was actually a lot of fun! If they bring it back next year, make a note to get there early and don't go too hard, especially if you have a long walk ahead of you at the end of the night.