

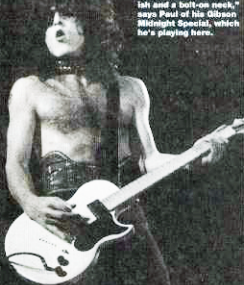
GUITARS THAT RUDE THE WORLD

continued

1973

Gene: We were recording the first Wicked Lester album, and at the time I was using an Epiphone Bass. I loved that bass. It had a kind of guitar feel to the neck, even thinner than a Les Paul. All of our equipment was stolen from our rehearsal loft at Mott St. & Canal St. in New York City. So I bought a Fender Precision Bass that had Gibson humbucker bass pickups in it, so the sound was

"It had this weird white sparkle metal-flake finish and a bolt-on neck," says Paul of his Gibson Midnight Special, which he's playing here.



Gene taunts the crowd with his #1 Gibson Grabber at a KISS show in the fall of 1975.

very bizarre. It had the boomy lows, but with high end. Towards the end of recording Wicked Lester, Steven Stills was at the same studio doing his solo record. He heard the sound of that bass and fell in love with it, and gave me \$300 for it. I remember originally paying \$150 for it, so I thought boy, I'd made a killing.

Gene: So I took half the money from the Precision bass and had Charlie LoBue make me a bass. Charlie was a craftsman who used to make his own guitars by hand. I walked in, I saw this guitar hanging on the wall but it wasn't quite the one that I wanted so I said, "What happens if the horns were equally the same size," because I

Paul and his original Charlie LoBue custom made guitar, early on at KISS' rehearsal loft in New York City. This guitar made it only as far as one of the first gigs.

Paul: There was a guy named Charlie LoBue who made guitars. I knew Charlie because he originally worked for Dan Armstrong, who had a vintage guitar store on 48th Street. Dan Armstrong's store had all the cool vintage Les Pauls. This was back when '58 Sunburst Les Pauls were going for about \$600, and I couldn't afford one. Charlie ultimately opened his own place called Guitar Lab [701 7th Avenue, New York]. He was really the guitar maker for the real musicians. The first guitar I played in KISS was one of Charlie's stock models, similar to Gene's bass. It was the same walnut color, but the only difference was mine had a cream colored binding. It was loosely based on a Gibson. At our first show we did as a New York band with The Brats and Wayne County, we were playing at a place that was basically a factory by day, and at night they had party/concerts there. At the end of the night in the thick of everything going on—Wayne County eating dogfood out of a toilet—the guitar got stolen... Somebody just lifted the guitar out of the case, left the case, and walked out with the guitar in hand.

