

# SIN AFTER SINNER

"Hi there! Christof Leim here, guitarist for Sinner; ready to 'Crash & Burn'?"



'Crash & Burn' is something like the eighteenth or so album to be released under the Sinner banner. It's a phenomenal piece of work, opening with the relentless title track and wrapping things up with the anthemic 'Like A Rock', and is pretty much a masterclass in how to take classic metal and give it a twenty-first century twist. Bassist/vocalist Mat Sinner himself admitted in Fireworks magazine that the return of guitarist Henny Wolter was "like a big kick for everyone" and the album's Sinner/Wolter production is loud 'n' proud, and strong enough to punch holes in walls.

The band members are obviously and quite rightly proud of their new baby. "Yes, we are," confirms Christof, "for several reasons really. Mat sure is, because his band is still going strong, which is no easy feat after – what? – twenty-five years or so, and also given the fact that Primal Fear is quite simply bigger and more successful. And as a band we're really happy with it because the album

turned out as we envisioned it when it was written. The masterplan was simple: let's write a 'rock' album, nothing more, nothing less. No orchestra, no keyboards, no epics, no bullshit, just everything that comes to mind when we think of the words 'Sinner' and 'rock'. That was the plan, and that's what happened. The recording itself was the first for this line-up, and the mood was good 24/7. No dramas, no discussions... Unfortunately more kebabs than sane men should eat, but Klaus [drummer Klaus Sperling] didn't mind, though: he's tougher than us mere mortals in that department!"

All of which makes my next question – "was 'Crash & Burn' fairly easy to record?" – a little



unnecessary... "Yes, it was, because of the aforementioned pre-planned direction, or reduction to the essentials, or whatever you want to call it. We had close to zero discussion, absolutely no drama, a lot of laughs and apart from that enjoyable work on something we all like – rock 'n' roll. Simple as that. Plus we had the spiritual help of Dirty Sanchez guesting on percussion. It's all about luv!" he laughs.

I wondered how Christof would compare an album like 'Crash & Burn' with some of the early Sinner albums. "I can only judge the final products," he replies, "because of course I only joined Sinner around 'Mask Of Sanity' in 2006. But I would say that the band in 2008, especially the main man, knows way better how Sinner works, what works for Sinner and when to just stick to your guns. Plus it's all calmer if you don't have anything to prove apart from the fact that you can still kick ass on record. Which is what he – and we – did."

The biography calls this "the strongest possible line-up" which is the sort of statement that normally whips fans into a frenzy of argument. "Well, all four of us are serious enough to do a good job, but loose enough to avoid drama and bullshit," responds Christof diplomatically. "That showed very well on the tour for 'Mask Of Sanity', when this line-up played together for the very first time (because Henny rejoined after the recordings of that album). Henny and Mat work very well together, as evidenced by the fact that Henny is also in Primal Fear, Klaus and Mat go way back, and I... Well, I'm happy to be there, because I like to play that stuff. We're all not nineteen years old and excited at the thought of free beer any more. We are all older – although quite OK with the thought of free beer," he laughs. "But I get to rock – this sounds a bit pathetic here, I know – regardless of setting or success. We just get to do what we love. It's all about more music and less bullshit,"



you know? The business sucks, but the love of music isn't going away, right?"

On the "main man" himself, Christof remarks that Mat Sinner is "A man who really loves music, is beyond busy and not stuck in the Eighties or Nineties. He does 300 things at once – and that's only during the day! I mean, if someone is able to stay in this game for twenty-five years, it must be that something inside is working. You don't get there and get to stay there if it you don't have the drive and passion."

Finally, bringing things back round to 'Crash & Burn', the limited edition version of the album features two bonus tracks, a Mat Sinner/Magnus Karlsson composition entitled 'One Night Only' and the legendary 'Fast Decision'. "When we did the re-recording of 'Fast Decision', the song of the very early and very unofficial album of the same name of 1982 or 1983 or whenever, Mat couldn't remember the lyrics, so what do you do? We googled them – and they were all wrong!" he laughs. "So more than two decades later, he and the band had to figure out his own lyrics from the original recording... Stuff was getting mystical, I tell you..."