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## DOING THINGS THEIR WAY

Revamped deSol makes new studio album

Posted by the Asbury Park Press on 08/5/07

BY CHRIS M. JUNIOR  
STAFF WRITER

**STORYCHAT:** [Post Comment](#)

It's a steamy July night at the Jersey Shore, and with his bandmates seated around him inside the cozy, temperate confines of Lakehouse Music, deSol bassist/singer Chris Guice has the floor.

Holding a laptop computer, eyes fixed on its screen, he reads aloud a short paragraph with information about the Asbury Park-based band's new album, "On My Way," that will be e-mailed to deSol's fans.

After the group's members give it their collective OK, Guice shuts down the computer so they can talk about the events that took place before and during the completion of the album.

A one-paragraph timeline wouldn't even scratch the surface.

### From the Middle East to Deal

Last October, deSol embarked upon an Armed Forces Entertainment tour that took the Latin-rock band through the Middle East. It marked another new lineup for the ever-changing deSol, which has seen its share of personnel changes since hitting the Jersey Shore music scene in 2001.

Renzo Staiano, a guitarist from California, had just taken over for Rich Soto, who left to pursue other musical interests.

"We had excellent shows with (Staiano) and good chemistry," said Guice, "but at the end of the tour, he discovered that it wasn't (what he wanted)."

Staiano's eventual successor came via producer and Lakehouse Music owner Jon Leidersdorff, who suggested to Kevin Ansell, formerly of Highway 9, that he get together with deSol.

Ansell was familiar with deSol, having seen the band perform years before at Harry's Roadhouse in Asbury Park. He recalled liking deSol's groove-oriented music and thinking to himself, "That's the kind of band I should be playing with."

In November at a rented house in Deal, where the band was writing a new album, deSol and Ansell jammed on some Led Zeppelin songs to break the ice.

It worked — and the following month, Ansell and deSol were at Lakehouse Music working on original material.

### Label deal Curb-ed

In January, deSol's deal with Curb Records became kaput. The relationship with Curb — which released deSol's self-titled album in 2004, followed by a slightly different version in 2005 — had been shaky for a while, the band said, and lead singer/guitarist Albie Monterrosa cited a December 2005 discussion with label executives as a turning point.

Curb wanted a new album, Monterrosa recalled, but he sensed that submitting one would not result in a timely release.

"I saw a lot of bands (in a similar situation) — and then their records got shelved," he said. With that in mind, the musicians met with lawyers to work toward ending their Curb deal.



The concept of deSol — whose members include bass guitarist Chris Guice and lead singer/guitarist Albie Monterrosa — as mainly a Latin-rock band was put to the test during the writing and recording of "On My Way."

### ON MY WAY

New deSol album  
Due in stores Tuesday  
CD release show at 6 p.m. Saturday  
Riverside Gardens Park,  
West Front Street, Red Bank [www.desolmusic.com](http://www.desolmusic.com)

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The Nashville, Tenn.-based Curb — home to such country acts as Tim McGraw and LeAnn Rimes — was interested in the band at first, explained Guice, but "it wasn't designed to handle us being a touring band that was going to have a slow build and build fans."

**The beat goes on**

Ansell became an official a member of the band in January, said Guice. But another key change to the lineup was right around the corner.

With gigs scheduled in March, and in need of a drummer to replace the departed Jeremy Hoenig, Monterrosa called former bandmate Ron Shields.

As luck would have it, Shields had quit his day job and was looking to get back into music. He took it slow at first, according to Guice, playing random gigs with the band well into the spring before committing long-term.

"The concept of deSol is bigger than the sum of its parts," said Guice. "We have a core, of course, but we've had different drummers, different guitar players and different percussion players over the years, and it barely causes a stir. It's not like it's just one guy out onstage, and if he's gone, suddenly the concept dies."

**New direction**

The concept of deSol as mainly a Latin-rock band was put to the test during the writing and recording of "On My Way."

Leidersdorff essentially pushed the band into broadening its horizons, telling Monterrosa to "take all the rules away" and just write songs without being concerned whether they had a Latin feel.

"Jon has a way of making you feel comfortable with letting your creativity be what it's meant to be and not having a preconceived idea about what you should do," said Guice, "and that was the most liberating thing for the band."

The difference can be heard in the muscular title track, featuring stomping drums and edgy rhythm guitar; "Teardrops," a midtempo, pop-styled duet between Monterrosa and New York singer Carmireli; and "Free Again," a country-flavored ballad with a slow, steady single.

The Latin side of the band still is evident on the new album, most notably on the songs "Santos," "Lagrimas" and "Vivir En Tu Aire."

"These guys have so much soul," said Leidersdorff, who not only produced "On My Way" but played drums on the album. "They have so much experience and depth, they could play any song."

"A lot of these songs were healing," said Monterrosa. "A lot of these songs have to do with mending a broken relationship. I wanted to write a political album when I got home (from the Middle East), but this came out because it needed to come out — for my heart to open and to continue to ground myself."

"We're in our 30s — we're not 22 anymore," he added. "We have families and real relationships. This record is 'On My Way' because we're on our way to being better people and grounding ourselves."

**A Shore thing**

"On My Way" has a true Jersey Shore flavor; it was recorded, mixed and mastered in and around Asbury Park. (Leidersdorff, who only works with select clientele, says Lakehouse Music is based in Asbury Park.)

All of the album's creative aspects were done in house, said Guice, with the band enlisting outside help afterward to handle certain responsibilities.

"When we were starting out, we had a manager who was calling the shots," said Guice. "As we evolved and learned and traveled, we discovered we could do a lot of this ourselves."

"On My Way" is being released on the band's own saZon label (in partnership with New England-based Two22 Music, a management and production company) and distributed nationally by New York City-headquartered Alternative Distribution Alliance.

"Sing It All Night," the album's first single, has landed on trade publication Radio & Records' Triple A National Airplay chart and is at No. 21 in the magazine's current issue.

"You see so many guys in the area — everybody disbands; everybody gives up," said Monterrosa.

"But we're not like them."

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