

Livin' the blues

Hounds Tooth shows modern blues is alive and well

BY MEGAN GLOSS TH STAFF WRITER

 LISTEN NOW



Photo by: Contributed

Chris Peck (from left), Jared James Nichols, Jeff Oscarson, J.D. Optekar and Jamie Brace, of Hounds Tooth. The Milwaukee-based blues band will take the stage at 180 main, Friday, July 31.

Who would have ever known that singing the blues could sound so good?

To the Milwaukee-based band Hounds Tooth, it comes as no surprise.

The youthful five-piece lineup, featuring the soulful vocals of Miss Jamie Brace and the playful musings of 20-year-old blues guitar prodigy Jared James Nichols, will perform at 180 Main July 31 as part of its tour across the upper Midwest.

"Audiences won't hear any standard shuffles with our live show," said guitarist and vocalist J.D. Optekar in a phone interview. "It's a very high-energy show. We like to connect with our audiences and interact with them."

Hounds Tooth formed in 2007 as a means for Optekar to entertain a hobby while being a stay-at-home dad. Today, with a series of awards and accolades under its blues belt, the band has evolved into what some critics have dubbed, "one of Milwaukee's great up-and-coming traditional blues bands," praising the likes of its front-woman powerhouse vocalist, its spirited guitarist and the band's modern blues sound.

The group released its self-titled debut CD December 2007 and plans to head back into the studio this summer to begin recording its followup CD.

Nichols, the band's prized guitarist, also was selected to compete in the 2010 Blues Challenge, in Memphis, Tenn., as part of a youth showcase for the Blues Association.

"There's some exciting things happening for the band," Optekar said.

if you go

Event: Hounds Tooth

Time: 9 p.m.-1 a.m.

Date: Friday, July 31

Place: 180 Main, Dubuque