

Jack Johnson: A Greener, Cleaner Rock Star

The Singer Wants to Reduce Carbon Footprint of His Tour

By BILL WEIR

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Singer [Jack Johnson](#) doesn't mind success, as long as it doesn't come with the large carbon footprint. In an industry known for its excess, the 33-year-old has steered clear from outrageous rider demands like green M&Ms only or expensive whiskey and instead requires recycling stations at green buffets at his tour venues.



The Hawaiian hopes to entertain audiences and combat the waste associated with rock concerts, which he noticed when his star began to rise.

"As it got bigger we were on a bus and then a couple busses and we had a bigger crew and trucks bring the gear around, and one day I just looked out back behind the venue and realized we had a pretty big footprint," Johnson said.

After seeing Neil Young and Willie Nelson power their buses with biofuel, Johnson decided to take it to the next level, and he built a solar-powered studio and began using his rock star leverage to demand a carbon-neutral tour.

His tour T-shirts are organic cotton, and each venue his tour visits must promise to offset its electricity use by investing in wind power or protecting a rainforest.

It even trickles down to his menu.

"All the lettuces, all the vegetables, squash blossoms, everything [...] we got from local farms. The seafood's local," said Johnson's tour chef David Thorne.

Johnson, who is an avid surfer, is just one of a growing group of eco-friendly pop stars, saving the Earth one tour at a time.

Along with Johnson, Dave Matthews, Jon Mayer and Maroon 5 are just a few of the acts working with a "green tour" company called Reverb, founded by Guster guitarist Adam Gardner.

"Rock 'n' roll excess I think maybe is on its way out which is fine by me. I think you're seeing more and more artists realizing that it doesn't make sense it's a waste both environmentally and financially," Gardner said.

Part of Johnson's environmentally conscious tour includes an eco-village where fans that carpool to the show get perks.

But some question whether this brand of eco-friendly rock resonates with concert goers after the music stops.

"Honestly, I probably don't pay that much attention to it," said concertgoer Matt Bodnar.

But that won't change Johnson's message, though some believe he's preaching to the choir.

"We don't get to see the positive things or the negative things it's doing until a few years later," he said. "I think preaching to the choir is important too, to reiterate to kids that it is cool and OK and it's not geeky to think about this stuff."

"We're not gonna change the world, me or the band or our little crew, but when you take the thousands of people we play for each night and when they start taking action and everybody starts to work together it's a big growing wave and everybody does their little part so in that way music can change the world," Johnson said.

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