

Breathe deep, breathe easy and get to know Lamb OF God from the quiet side and form it's lead singer: Randall Blyhte. It'll do you good, especially if you happen to be traveling near the band's hometown of Richmond, Virginia. These Grammy nominated musicians have toured the world, sold a few million albums, and are associated with such legends as Ozzy and Metallica, but after the amps are unplugged and the members of Lamb Of God are finally at rest in their abodes, and if we could have a guided tour of the area with Randall, what things might he point out that make Richmond special to him and why Lamb OF God call it home.

Let's find out.

TS: Favorite place to grab a brew, and maybe some grub?

RB.: Although I don't drink alcohol anymore, there is one bar in Richmond I still frequent from time to time to visit friends, and that bar is the almighty GVAR Bar. It's owned and run by a race of intergalactic rouges known as the Scumdogs of the Universe, AKA GVAR (google 'em.) Go there, and you may gain a glimpse of understanding into the Richmond music scene (not to mention enjoy great drinks in a rather "unique" environment.) For lunch, I am a big fan of Coppola's Deli in Carytown - their Industrial Sandwich is amazing. When it's chilly outside, the low-key Pho Tay Do in the West End can't be beat for a piping hot bowl of Vietnamese noodle soup. And if you want a truly amazing dinner of some of the very best Italian food you will ever eat, served in a very "Richmond" atmosphere, mamma'Zu in Oregon Hill is THE spot to go- be prepared for a wait on the weekends, but it is so worth it!

TS: Best place to see a sunset?

RB.: If you want to watch the sun go down into the mighty James River that runs through our city, the Pipeline Rapids Walkway (downtown behind the flood wall) is amazing. Alternately, the Church Hill Overlook on the 2100 block of East Grace St. provides stunning sunset views of our beautiful skyline.

TS: You're all accomplished musicians. Got any "Art Junkies" or Bookworms in the band? If so, any recommendations where to go and stare at a Picasso, a Warhol? Catch up on some Poe?

RB.: I happen to be both- for art (including Picasso and Warhol, not to mention the largest collection of Fabregé eggs outside of Russia), head to the Virginia Museum of Fine Art There was a \$150-million expansion to the building in 2010, and the structure is a work of art in of itself. As an avid photographer (@drandallblythe on Instagram), I regularly check out photography exhibits at Candela Gallery (Two great independently-owned bookstores in Richmond are Chop Suey Books in Carytown, and Fountain Bookstore in Shockoe Slip - the owners and staff of both

stores are extremely knowledgeable and both shops carry an excellent selection of books (including, ahem, autographed copies of my best-selling memoir, “Dark Days”- plug, plug!) And although you can buy Poe at most any bookstore, it’s a lot cooler to pick it up at the Poe Museum which houses the largest collection of Poe memorabilia in the world (Edgar Allen grew up in Richmond). From time to time there’s even an Unhappy Hour in the (allegedly) haunted garden out back on the fourth Thursday of every month, from April through October- buy a book and drown your sorrows simultaneously!

**TS:** What about Hollywood, Virginia-ever been there?

**RB:** No, I’ve never been there, but I have been to Hollywood Cemetery in Richmond more times than I can count! It’s a must-see when visiting Richmond- beautiful vistas of the James River, the burial sites of two U.S. Presidents, immense and sprawling terraced family plots, and the lair of our very own RVampire, W. W. Pool (yes, we have a vampire- New Orleans, eat your heart out.)

**TS:** Last question; When you’re nearing the end of a long concert tour, what do you look forward to most about coming back to the place you call home: Richmond, Virginia.

**RB.:** Seeing my wife, of course! Beyond that, I just want to make coffee, sit on my own back porch, and drink it while I enjoy the peace and quiet that Richmond provides. That’s really what I enjoy the most about my town: while there is plenty to do, Richmond isn’t so large and busy that you can’t truly kick back and chill. We’re a medium-sized city that behaves many ways like a small town- relaxed and friendly. It’s a (literally) beautiful place to live.

**TS:** Thank you for sharing your time, and for cluing us in on what makes Richmond so great, and why Lamb Of God call it home.

**RB.:** Thank y’all for asking!

Randall Blythe is the lead vocalist of Lamb Of God, author of the best-selling memoir, Dark Days and a published Leica Camera photographer.

Randall is on Instagram @drandallblythe, & his band at @lambogod