

# San Jose Mercury News

## Top 10 Fender Contender Country Music Challengers Announced

*Fans' Favorite Will Open Country Summer Festival on June 5*

SANTA ROSA, CALIFORNIA, UNITED STATES, April 2, 2015 /[EINPresswire.com](http://EINPresswire.com/)/ -- The Top 10 Fender Contender Challengers have been announced, and the fans' favorite will open Country Summer, Northern California's biggest country music festival June 5-7 at Sonoma County Event Center.

Click here to: [Vote For Favorite Fender Contender](#). The first round of voting continues through April 15. Top 10 include:

Jared Porter – Porter was the Australian Star Maker award winner in 2014. He has performed in Nashville, toured with Australia's biggest names in country and recorded his debut album, “East to West.” He’s venturing back to the states to make it big.

JD Bauman & the Boot Band – Santa Rosa has been Bauman’s home since birth. The Honky Tonk sound on his newest release profiles his booming baritone accented by the eerie likes of a steel guitar. The band has an impressive resume, having shared the stage with Willie Nelson, Joe Diffie and The Charlie Daniels Band.

Lindsay Bruce – Born and raised in Northern California, Bruce is the voice of California Country – a blend of her West Coast upbringing and traditional country values, amplified by her last three years in Nashville. Her sound combines the upbeat feel of a summer concert with singer/songwriter relatability. In 2014, she landed a spot on Season 6 of NBC’s “The Voice.”

LMJ – Lisa Marie Johnson, affectionately referred to as LMJ, blends country, Americana and blues into a style she calls “Stomp and Groove.” LMJ has worked her way through college, gigging around the San Francisco Bay area, while also recording. She released her first extended play “This is Me” in 2011 and a full length album in 2012.

Mason Grace – Built by artists Jynette Lynell from Tampa, Florida; Tamara Ray from Bakersfield, California; and Jacqueline Rose from Saint Louis, Missouri, this trio is currently in the studio cutting their latest tunes. Their unique blend of country music transposes modern country to a fun groove with an infectious country swag sound.

McKenna Faith – Faith is a 20-year-old country rock/country pop singer/songwriter and Nashville recording artist from Northern California. She has toured the nation, shared the stage with country's biggest stars and was the #1 Selling Independent Female Country Artist on iTunes in 2013.

Queen Anne's Lace – Carly Graves and Kyle Lino grew up listening to 1990s country music and branched out to alternative rock, pop and bluegrass. “We have tried a variety of styles, but you just can’t beat feel good country music.”

Rob Staley – Staley is a young country music artist living in Los Angeles with a genuine love for “real country music.” Since relocating from his small hometown in Plattsburgh, New York, his band is quickly becoming a fabric of the Southern California country music scene. The Rob Staley Band has just released a new record.

SaraBeth – Born and raised in Dallas, SaraBeth is a singer/songwriter making her mark in Nashville. She charted two Top 40 singles in 2014. With dates nationwide, she has shared the stage with country superstars, including Brantley Gilbert. Her current self-titled extended play is set for release April 14, 2015.

Tyler Rich – Rich found his love for country music after seeing George Strait at the age of 8. After years of touring across the country with multiple bands, he decided to pursue a solo career. Since that day, he has performed alongside some of the industry's top artists, including Easton Corbin. His debut album will be released in 2015.

Second round of voting to determine the winner will be from April 17 through April 29, to select the winner, who will be announced May 1.

Country Summer presented by Lithia RAM of Santa Rosa, has announced 13 of 14 entertainers. Headliners include Jake Owen on June 5, The Band Perry on June 6 and Brantley Gilbert on June 7.

Daily tickets start from \$69 for general admission, \$99 for reserved seats. Visit [www.countrysummer.com](http://www.countrysummer.com) or call 800.514.3849.

Sponsors include Lithia RAM of Santa Rosa, Bud Light, Montgomery Village, Friedman's Home Improvement, Les Schwab Tire Centers of Sonoma and Mendocino Counties, Leese-Fitch Wines, Jack Daniel's, River Rock Casino, Fender, Creams, Cattlemens, Harris Ranch, the City of Santa Rosa, American AgCredit, Santa Rosa Convention & Visitors Bureau, and Froggy 92.9.

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