



Red Hot Chili Peppers

One Hot Minute with Chad Smith.

*I*t's a traditionally scorching July day here in LA. I'm verging on being late for an interview with Red Hot Chili Peppers drummer Chad Smith, and now the valet of the rather elegant hotel the Chili Peppers are ensconced in for their press sessions is balking at parking my 66 Coupe DeVille on a steepish hill. This is not a very rock and roll moment at all. It is, however, kind of in keeping with the album I'm here to talk about. That would be *One Hot Minute*, the new Red Hot Chili Peppers record, an album that was a few years and a

few guitarists in the making. Considering what this band has been through — heroin addiction, the OD death of their first guitarist, Hillel Slovak, and Slovak's replacement, John Frusciante, quitting the band in the middle of its most successful tour in 1992 — a few hitches in recording an album are probably standard issue problems, and they have obviously been overcome quite successfully. Now the album is finished, and sounding as impressive as you'd imagine. Furthering the style set on 1991's *Blood Sugar Sex Magic*, the songs are tighter, denser and more structured, with new member

Dave Navarro (formerly of Jane's Addiction) really shining. Where John was a great guitarist (instinctively rocking, but with a fragile and psychedelic undertone to everything), Dave has given the Chili Peppers a more confident, biting sound, that fits with the monster rhythm section and really soars at all the right moments.

Still outside, the car has been damn near slid sideways into a suddenly vacant parking space (amazing how a Mercedes driving, yuppie fool is willing to yield to overpowered Detroit iron making a high speed U-turn), and I'm bolting past a relieved valet into a maze of luxuri-

ous gardens, only to discover I'm not late at all and everything is running a little behind schedule, which is very much a standard rock and roll moment. There's now a few minutes to relax in the gardens and enjoy a free corporate rock beverage. Then I'm ushered into a bungalow bedroom with Chad, who, after the smutty male bonding bedroom humour is done with, settles down to let me know what's been happening with the Red Hot Chili Peppers.

Kirk Gee: So, you guys have been doing a bit of a guitarist shuffle of late, haven't you?

Chad Smith: "Yeah, it's a bit like Spinal Tap,