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## Sugar Ray flies back to previous life as superstar rockers

BY JENN POPIEL • FOR THE BEACHCOMBER • JULY 23, 2009

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DEWEY BEACH — A journey brought them to multi-platinum status, and now Sugar Ray is entering phase two of their career after a five-year hiatus.

Committed band members Craig "DJ Homicide" Bullock, lead singer/guitarist Mark McGrath, drummer/guitarist/vocalist Stan Frazier, bassist Murphy Karges, and guitarist/vocalist Rodney Sheppard have been together for two decades, and although they pursued other careers during the break, Sugar Ray took time to appear at more modest events such as festivals, fairs and corporate functions.

In 2008 the band's longtime friend, producer Josh Abraham of newly launched Pulse Recordings, invited Sugar Ray to create a challenging album with particular focus to "reach down deep and refine their songwriting."

Without interfering with the band's signature sound, in-house producer/songwriter, Luke Walker integrated a new approach complementing the creativity, attitude and energy of the album.

"We really clicked with Luke," said Sheppard. "Separately and together. A lot of time in the past, the band would come up with a song and get it three-quarters of the way there. With Luke, we were able to realize all our ideas."

This time around as the underdog but not ashamed of it, Sugar Ray is working their way through the ranks, receiving extensive airplay for the lightheartedly catchy single, "Boardwalk" from the new album, "Music for Cougars." Featured special guests include Rivers Cuomo of Weezer, Donovan Frankenreiter, Josh Freese, Dean Butterworth, Wayne Jobson, Tim Pagnotta and Collie Buddz.

Known for their top billboard hits, "Fly" (1997), "Every Morning" (1997), "Someday" (1999), and "When It's Over" (2001), Sugar Ray is not concerned whether they will match their previous successes selling millions of CDs — they're just excited to get back out there doing what they love best, performing.

"Music for Cougars" has received quite a stir of positive as well as negative feedback from its title alone. Sugar Ray means no harm behind the name.

"It's catchy," Sheppard said. "Better than being named something plain like Orange." While performing at an outdoor show, label owner Josh Abraham said to the band, "Dude, look at all your fans — they are all cougars." Hence, the established name of the album.

Lead singer Mark McGrath admitted that he and the band are all getting older, and if there is a male version of a cougar, he would consider himself a "manther."

**IF YOU GO**  
**WHAT:** Sugar Ray  
**WHEN:** 8 p.m. Thursday  
**WHERE:** The Bottle & Cork, Dewey Beach  
**COST:** \$25  
**CALL:** 302-227-7272  
**WEB:** www.deweybeachlife.com, www.sugaray.com

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