# John McCartin revitalises Avalon Guitars after years of turmoil



John McCartin has embarked on a new chapter in his life, having recently acquired Avalon Guitars, a household name in the world of premium custom instrument manufacturing based in Newtownards, County Down. This transition marks not only a personal victory for McCartin but also a significant revitalisation for a company that has endured its share of turmoil over the years.

Celebrated for crafting guitars for major artists such as Van Morrison and Eric Clapton, Avalon Guitars was established in 1990 under the name Lowden Guitars. However, the company faced financial difficulties in 2012, leading to a period of distress that saw it nearly enter liquidation. Reports indicated that the company was struggling to maintain its famed quality amid mounting debts, urging then-owners to explore options for salvaging the enterprise. The challenges were emblematic of a broader narrative within the region, reflective of the economic difficulties faced by various sectors following the 2008 financial crisis.

Drawing from his extensive background in manufacturing and his passion as a musician, McCartin expressed a deep connection to Avalon, having been a fan since acquiring his first guitar from the company 25 years ago. His long-standing aspiration to lead Avalon became a tangible reality when he made a formal bid in 2024, years after initially considering the acquisition. According to McCartin, his intention is to consolidate the business and uphold the culture of excellence that Avalon has cultivated over four decades in handcrafting guitars. His familiarity with the brand promises a seamless transition, ensuring that the legacy of quality will be upheld.

Moreover, McCartin's journey intersects with an intriguing chapter in Irish history—his connection to the Seán Quinn saga. Quinn, once the richest person in Ireland with a net worth soaring to €4.722 billion, faced significant legal and financial challenges that ultimately led to his bankruptcy in 2012. Quinn's ventures spanned diverse sectors, but his entanglement with complex financial instruments left a legacy of caution within the business community. McCartin's scrutiny of this saga undoubtedly informed his cautious yet optimistic approach to Avalon, as he takes charge in a climate more wary of financial missteps.

While the official announcement highlighted McCartin's plans for innovation and continuity, it did not overlook the real challenges that lie ahead. Many in the industry remain sceptical, particularly considering the significant shifts in consumer behaviour and manufacturing practices post-pandemic. However, McCartin’s past experience and commitment to the craft may equip him well to navigate these evolving dynamics.

As Avalon Guitars enters this new era, the industry watches closely to see if McCartin can restore the company to its former glory while forging new paths for future growth. His vision aligns with the dedication and artistry that have defined Avalon for decades, promising not just survival, but potential renaissance for an iconic brand that has been at the heart of the musical landscape in Ireland and beyond.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://m.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/entertainment/music/famous-ni-guitar-company-bought-over-by-customer-who-spent-years-at-heart-of-sean-quinn-saga-it-was-in-crisis/a357248598.html), [[4]](https://www.musicinstrumentnews.co.uk/2025/01/23/avalon-guitars-announce-new-ownership/)
* Paragraph 2 – [[5]](https://www.irishexaminer.com/business/arid-30552910.html), [[6]](https://www.irishtimes.com/business/commercial-property/from-boom-to-bust-the-sean-quinn-saga-1.10774)
* Paragraph 3 – [[2]](https://www.avalonguitars.com/news/2025/01/New-Ownership-of-Avalon-Guitars), [[3]](https://www.mia.org.uk/2025/01/avalon-guitars-announce-new-ownership/)
* Paragraph 4 – [[7]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Se%C3%A1n_Quinn)

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://m.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/entertainment/music/famous-ni-guitar-company-bought-over-by-customer-who-spent-years-at-heart-of-sean-quinn-saga-it-was-in-crisis/a357248598.html> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.avalonguitars.com/news/2025/01/New-Ownership-of-Avalon-Guitars> - In January 2025, Avalon Guitars announced that John McCartin, a businessman and musician, had acquired the company. Reflecting on this milestone, McCartin shared his long-standing fascination with Avalon, having had his first guitar made by them 25 years ago. He expressed his intention to consolidate the business and preserve the culture of excellence that Avalon has built over four decades of handcrafting guitars. McCartin aims to work alongside the team of luthiers and craftsmen to continue producing the best guitars in the world.
3. <https://www.mia.org.uk/2025/01/avalon-guitars-announce-new-ownership/> - The Music Industries Association reported in January 2025 that Avalon Guitars, a renowned guitar manufacturer, has been acquired by John McCartin. McCartin, who has been involved in manufacturing businesses for over three decades and is also a well-known Irish traditional guitar player, had previously considered acquiring Avalon five years ago. In 2024, he made a formal bid to take control of the company, aiming to consolidate the business and preserve the culture of excellence that Avalon has established over four decades of handcrafting guitars.
4. <https://www.musicinstrumentnews.co.uk/2025/01/23/avalon-guitars-announce-new-ownership/> - Music Instrument News reported in January 2025 that Avalon Guitars, a leading maker of premium custom guitars in the UK and Ireland, has been acquired by businessman and musician John McCartin. McCartin, who has been involved in manufacturing businesses for over three decades and is also a well-known Irish traditional guitar player, had previously considered acquiring Avalon five years ago. In 2024, he made a formal bid to take control of the company, aiming to consolidate the business and preserve the culture of excellence that Avalon has established over four decades of handcrafting guitars.
5. <https://www.irishexaminer.com/business/arid-30552910.html> - The Irish Examiner reported in May 2012 that Avalon Guitars, a guitar manufacturer based in Newtownards, County Down, Northern Ireland, was going into liquidation. The company had produced customised guitars for artists such as Van Morrison, Eric Clapton, The Corrs, David Gray, and Katie Melua. The liquidation was being handled by accountancy firm FPM, which was instructed to help the company convene an Article 84 meeting to place it into liquidation. Avalon Guitars was established in 1990 as Lowden Guitars and was known for its premium custom guitars in the UK and Ireland.
6. <https://www.irishtimes.com/business/commercial-property/from-boom-to-bust-the-sean-quinn-saga-1.10774> - The Irish Times provided an overview of the Seán Quinn saga, detailing how Seán Quinn transformed a small gravel business into an international empire generating €400 million annually. The saga includes Quinn's involvement in various industries such as cement, glass, energy, hospitality, chemicals, property, and financial services, employing over 5,000 people in Ireland. The article also touches upon the financial challenges faced by Quinn, including his secret accumulation of a 25% stake in the nationalised Anglo Irish Bank through complex derivative products in 2008.
7. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Se%C3%A1n_Quinn> - The Wikipedia page on Seán Quinn provides a comprehensive biography of the Irish businessman, detailing his rise from a small gravel business to becoming the richest person in Ireland in 2008, with an estimated net worth of €4.722 billion. The page covers his diverse business ventures, including cement, glass, energy, hospitality, chemicals, property, and financial services, and his significant impact on the Irish economy. It also discusses the financial difficulties he faced, leading to his bankruptcy in 2012, and the subsequent legal challenges and asset-stripping measures.