

Maybe it's something in the water, or the gastrointestinal chaos caused by an endless diet of cheap Mexican food and cheaper booze, but from Scratch Acid and the Butthole Surfers to Ed Hall and Cherubs, Austin has produced some of the world's scuzziest noise rock. (Maybe the scene could get its own statue next to Stevie; an amp blowing up or something.) Aural assault fanatics can now add **Gorch Fock** to that storied, grimy list.

Detractors may think this seven-headed hydra, founded by bassist Win Wallace, sounds a little too much like the Surfers' grind, but two drummers, two guitars, bass, electronics and trombone will do that anybody. At its best, **Gorch** sounds like all of those earlier bands at once, from four-on-the-floor rumble that doesn't forget to add a little melody ("Charles Lynch") to staggering, sneering grooves ("A or Na").

For such brutal musicians, **Gorch** always manages to shoehorn in oddly hummable riffs, and the trombone works with the roar, never against it, providing a streak of bright tonal color against the collapsing wall of gunk. A monstrously compelling debut --and local label Perverted Son's best album yet -- in a tradition that's as important to Austin as outlaw country and thinking Dallas is for idiots.

-- Joe Gross

**Gorch Fock** plays with Rusted Shut and Nerve Death at Room 710 (710 Red River, 476-0997) on Friday.

Best Austin Album

Austin American Statesman 1/8/04

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2. Explosions in the Sky, "The Earth Is Not a Cold Dead Place" (Temporary Residence) 47
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5. Marcia Ball, "So Many Rivers" (Alligator) 29
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7. Grand Champeen, "The One That Brought You"  
(Glurp!) 25
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15. Milton Mapes, "Westernaire" (Aspyr) 14
17. Bonny Holmes, "Boxful of Trouble" (self-released) 13
17. J Church/Storm the Tower, "Split" (Broken Rekids) 13
17. Marti Brom, "Wise to You" (Goofin') 13
20. Toni Price, "Born to be Blue" (Antone's) 12