

2 Texas singers, rockin' and restrained

By Mark Robison
RENO GAZETTE-JOURNAL



Joe Gosen/Reno Gazette-Journal

ancing.

separate shows Friday night at the same place. Fans of each got what they came

Rancho Nevada in Verdi hosted the two sides of the Texas-performer coin this weekend. Jerry Jeff Walker commandeered the country-rock side, and Townes Van Zandt took the introspective songwriter side. Because of an unexpected venue change for Van Zandt, the two performed

for, even if alcohol took away from both shows for different reasons.

I caught Walker's late show. It was a drunken party from the opening notes. People were hanging on each other, shaking their hips and raising beer cups to every chorus. Quite a few had stayed from the early show, paying \$40 a ticket. Before seeing this, I didn't understand why anybody would pay that much to see a has-been country singer whose claim to fame was writing "Mr. Bojangles" more than 25 years ago. Of course, I hadn't seen him. Now, every time Rancho Nevada owner Jeff Cotton brings Walker, I'll be there, for both shows when I can afford it. His music is good-times bar-band music, loose and boisterous. It's maybe not as timeless as the music of other outlaw Texas performers, but it's more fun. "Trashy Women" rocks like Bad Company, while the title of "Up Against the Wall Redneck Mother" says it all. Walker and his band maintained a high-degree of poise amid the chaos around them. There were fans too drunk to realize how obnoxious they were,

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