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By Celeste Perron



Here's a girl who sings with relish and apparent firsthand knowledge about setting fire to a cheating boyfriend's stuff, tearing apart a bar when she sees her ex with a new woman, and lying in wait to shoot an abusive guy. But hanging out one afternoon in her tour bus, the makeup-free 23-year-old seems more sweet UT sorority sister than hellcat ready to sink lead into any man who betrays her. "I do write a lot from personal experience, but I also embellish a bit," she says with a coy smile.

A lifelong resident of Lindale, Texas (population 3,370), Lambert began singing in bars at age 17 and first tasted fame in 2003 as a contestant on USA Network's *Nashville Star* (the country version of *American Idol*), where she belted out fiery, self-written songs. In 2005, her first album, *Kerosene*, sold more than 900,000 copies, and her star keeps rising: Lambert's second effort, *Crazy Ex-Girlfriend*, debuted at number one on the country charts this year, and the Academy of Country Music voted her Top New Female Vocalist in May. Now she's traversing the country performing solo and opening for Toby Keith. Here's the latest from Miss Lambert, who's bound to win you over -- even if country isn't exactly your thing.

Got any real-life "crazy ex-girlfriend" stories you want to share?

Once, my high school boyfriend was ironing his shirt and he says, "I'm just going over to so-and-so's house to watch movies." My parents are private investigators, so I'm thinking, "You're ironing your shirt to go to a buddy's house? I'm not buying that." So I drive by this club he promised to stop going to -- it's kind of raunchy, like a guy with a girlfriend shouldn't go there, you know what I mean? -- and his car was there. We broke up the next day.

As private investigators, your parents have caught cheating spouses and taken in abused women. Has that made you cynical about relationships?

Probably. Plus, my dad's a cop. I was always suspicious and looking over my shoulder because that's how I



was raised. They opened my eyes to how ugly people can be. But in terms of love, my parents have been married for 27 years now. So for all the bad I've seen, I can also see the other side of it.

Is your boyfriend [country singer Blake Shelton] scared of your bad ass image?

No, he doesn't buy into it!

Your album outsold his by about 5,000 copies in the first week. Do you think that was an ego blow for him?

Having the number one and two albums on the country charts isn't too shabby, so we were happy for each other. We're competitive in a friendly way -- we had a deal where if mine sold more, he'd take me on a surprise vacation, so I'm excited about that.

You've been in a band since you were 17. Has your style changed a lot?

Before I was on *Nashville Star*, I played in Texas bars and my style was awful. Bad clothes, shiny. I was a big shiny, glittery-type person. Now I'm a jeans and T-shirt girl, or I'll wear sun dresses and cowboy boots in the summer. But at first I had to have stylists tell me, "That's ugly."

How do you stay in shape living on a bus?

I travel with a trainer because I don't have enough willpower to do it on my own. We have a ball, bands, Nautilus dial-up weights, and a portable fold-up workout bench all stored under the bus. We use those every day. And I really don't run, but we power walk for 2 miles.

What about eating healthy on the road? It must be hard late at night, after a long show...

Yeah! We might not go onstage until 9:30 or 10, and when you're done, you're starving and somebody's ordered pizza, or Taco Bell, or Denny's, or IHOP. Eating that way really...doesn't work -- at all! Especially with my body type. So I've changed my eating habits. At first my trainer would bring me a plate of chicken and vegetables and rice and I'd be like, "Are you kidding?" because I'd been having fried chicken and real Cokes. Now everyone knows to order me a salad. I mean, I *hate* to eat healthy, but I just feel better when I do.

Have you noticed major changes?

My whole body has changed in the last 2 years. My skin's better. I'm not trying to get stick skinny -- I'm an average girl and that's fine with me -- I'm just trying to tone my body. So every day I work on it, and I can tell the difference in my clothes, especially pants, which fit much better.

Do you ever say to hell with it and just eat?

We call them "cheat days"! I used to have one once a week, but I don't feel good after a *whole* day of cheating, so now I have more of a cheat meal. I love chicken fried steak, mashed potatoes, rolls -- good Southern food, which is what I eat when I'm home.

What else do you do at home in your downtime?

I'm an outdoors girl -- I like to go fishing, riding four-wheelers, hunting.

What do you hunt?

Deer, turkey, and hogs. My dad took me hunting when I was little and I really got into it about 3 years ago. I do it with him or my little brother.

How do you react when people say "I like every type of music but country"? Or does anybody even dare say that to you?

I do hear it, and I think they don't always give it a fair chance. Some people might not like real country like George Strait -- though I don't know how you couldn't like George Strait -- but then there's country rock like Keith Urban, who is on the other end of the spectrum. There are all different kinds of country. People should give it a chance!



Miranda's Must-Haves: You'd better not mess with her

M.A.C. Lip Gloss

"I feel naked without it. I have several favorite colors!"

Tour bus

It features zebra-stripe rugs, faux-croc upholstery, and damask curtains. "It's my home!"

iPod

Right now she's got Jack Ingram, Beyoncé, Amy Winehouse, and, of course, Blake Shelton on shuffle.

Mixed-breed pooch Delilah

"I *hate* when I can't bring her with me."

Trainer Tony Boykin

"I feel worthless if I have to skip a workout with him."

****Win Miranda Lambert's new album *Crazy Ex-Girlfriend*****



Photo by: Ture Lillegraven

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