

# VENUS RISING

LOOKING TO THE NEW STARS OF 2012

Photographed by **MICHAEL CASKER**  
Styled by **SHEDO OLLEK**



**ALIAS COSTUME RENTAL** shorts  
**URBAN OUTFITTERS** shoes  
stylist's own blouse hat and necklace

# NIKKI LANE

## VEIN OF COUNTRY, HEART OF ROCK N' ROLL

I still ask myself how I had not heard about Nikki Lane before I watched her perform at New York's CMJ festival this past October. Enclosed in a crowd of sweaty people at the Delancey on a Thursday night, with beer on my shoes and almost no energy remaining -- the thought of watching some unbeknownst to me 'Country' band play their third show of the day wasn't too appealing. I considered turning around and leaving. However, as Nikki Lane appeared on stage (dressed like a gypsy in a beautiful flowing black dress), I became enthralled by her vocals that swayed and staggered the crowd. I stayed for the entire performance, and I'm proud to say it was one of the best shows that week.

Lane embodies the heart of a county girl with the soul that's pure Rock and Roll. With a voice that sounds sensational over a guitar, the release of Lane's debut album *Walk of Shame* (I Am Sound records) makes it clear she is ready to conquer the realm of alternative country.

"I always try to say that I'm Indie Country," says Lane, "but I also like to say that I'm Acid Country or Rock 'n' Roll Country because I'm all over the place." While she was travelling across the country, I was fortunate enough to pull Nikki away from the steering wheel for a quick chat that helps to explain it all.

Growing up in Greenville, South Carolina then moving to Los Angeles, New York and finally her current residence in Nashville, defining the origins of influences on Lane's music can be difficult. "Everywhere I have lived has played into my music. LA is the town I feel most comfortable in, because I feel I can constantly express myself. LA has everything New York has aside from New York being a lot cooler and tougher," says Lane. "Nashville is obviously where Country music comes from, so I think that's where I get my honky-tonk side." In the end, it was New York that pushed her to become creative. "There's something about New York City... it's so busy you can really get lost in it. If you decide to not get out of your house no, one even knows you exist. When I was lonely in Manhattan, I found myself becoming very reclusive and that's what influenced me to start writing so aggressively," she reflects.

Listening to badass chicks like Mazzy Star and Cat Power (and even a guy named Johnny Corndog) helped Nikki and her band define the direction they hope to somewhat follow. "[Corndog] Is this country-Americana total badass who sings funny songs and makes custom leather belts. He's quirky, but we crack up listening to him on the road," Lane describes. She tends not to listen to new music on the radio, fearing she might subconsciously emulate their sound. Instead she listens to her friends' bands back in Nashville. "It's nice to listen to your friends, especially friends that are in good bands," she claims.

On the road, Lane also travels with High Class Hillbilly, her portable vintage pop-up shop. Lane is a "professional thrifter," When she first moved to Nashville she started buying and re-selling vintage at flea markets to help pay her bills. Now that she's on the road, High Class Hillbilly helps pay the gas and hotels. Lane is even working on converting a horse trailer into a portable store that can be towed along on the road. When thrifting, Lane says she goes straight towards the footwear. "Boots and cool vintage shoes are my favorite things because they look really good merchandised in a store or on a table. They are good looking things that are easy to show and sell." Recently while performing in Philly, sixty young kids swarmed Lane and her band, obsessing more over her style than the music.

For Lane, her inspiration stems from her day to day activities. "What influences me is my subconscious. The more activities I throw myself into, the more material I have to work with," she elaborates. "I keep it real by continuing to say yes to things that are a little wild, like going on crazy trips or agreeing to sneak into some old abandoned house out in a field. I wouldn't know how to make up the things I have done, I can only do them and then tell you about it. I keep trying to do as much wild shit as possible."

Writing songs comes naturally to Lane, but she still admits she has her struggles. "You can sit and write for a year, but it can get really grueling. It can be fun some days, but other days were awful and I just went home crying because I felt so emotionally drained thinking that the song was a total waste of time." After she wrote the album opening "Walk of Shame," she was excited. "I went home like Oh my God, that's gonna' be the title track to the record... I felt that, the same day we wrote it, because it was just such a good concept."

The best part of the singing/songwriting process for Nikki is the recording. "It's such a small portion of the production but it's so fun," she explains. "We spend a few weeks in the studio and I only get a day or two to record and that's kind of like my moment of glory." And when Nikki's not writing songs, recording or performing, you can find her kicking the shit out of your car! Just kidding, sort of. "I try to be a very logical person, but I also have many miniature freak outs. I'm very lucky to have a husband and a manager that can watch me flip out and kick the shit out of the car tire and act like a total psycho for four minutes and then get back in the car and roll with it."

For the future, Lane will be working towards her ultimate goals in music and fashion. "These are my true dreams and when I do run into problems, I try to be very grateful for what I have. Things are going pretty damn well for me right now. I'm kind of doing exactly what I want to be doing and just to be doing that in itself is worth putting up with the bullshit."

DARYL K Sweater  
VERONICA MOORE earrings

