

Canada's Most Beautiful

2013

THEIR TALENT KNOWS NO BOUNDS – AND NEITHER DOES THEIR BEAUTY. HELLO! CANADA CELEBRATES THE YEAR'S TOP 50, STARTING WITH AVRIL LAVIGNE

It's a balmy 24° C on a postcard-perfect March day. The blazing sun starts to set behind palm trees that dot California's skyline and the first words out of Avril Lavigne's mouth are, "Is it snowing in Canada?"

The 28-year old singer has just wrapped up her cover shoot for *Hello! Canada's* Most Beautiful issue at Milk Studios in West Hollywood and has transformed from high-fashion princess in couture and five-inch stilettos to the Avril the world is more familiar with – think black graphic tee and well-worn flats. Her infectious energy and warm welcome are evidence that the politeness Canadians are famous for has not worn off, despite the Napanee, Ont., native's 12 years south of the border.

"I didn't ever really think I would want to be in the city," she says of her adopted metropolis. "But I travel so much that I feel like I don't really live anywhere; I'm just always moving between L.A. and everywhere else."

In spite of this nomadic lifestyle, Avril has found more than just a place to crash in Los Angeles. The past 12 months of the Grammy-nominated singer's Hollywood life have been especially exhilarating thanks to a new album and an engagement – two monumental events that happen to be intricately woven together.

It was while working on her fifth studio album that the petite blond beauty fell in love with Nickelback frontman and fellow Canadian Chad Kroeger. What was originally slated as a co-writing gig on a single track turned into hours of studio time working side by

side on the album and recording two duets.

Their fourth studio session culminated with a smitten Chad down on one knee, a 14-carat, pear-shaped diamond engagement ring in hand.

"It evolved into this wonderful thing," Chad has said. "When you're sitting there singing across from somebody into the microphone and you're singing a love song, you start to develop these feelings for that person and it just blossomed into this thing."

An equally smitten Avril agrees. "With him it was one of those things that kind of just happened, and it makes a lot of sense because we had a similar upbringing," she says. "I'm really happy to be with a good Canadian guy."

ROMANCE ON RECORD

Their chemistry comes through on Avril's album. "Some songs are more personal to me on ▶

Despite the title of her new single, 'Here's to Never Growing Up,' Avril has been slipping into more sophisticated styles on both the street and red carpet, preferring rubber-soled Chanel loafers and leopard platform pumps. Here, the singer glams up her punk roots in ballet-inspired lace-up heels and layers of tulle.

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As the creative force behind her own clothing label, Abbey Dawn, the petite singer loves to have fun with fashion. Knee-high mesh boots and a feathery minidress are the perfect match to Avril's eye-catching engagement ring.

"I'M REALLY HAPPY TO BE WITH A GOOD CANADIAN GUY"

this record," she says of the untitled release, which will come out this fall. "When we realized that we were falling for each other, it made it that much more special."

And while her latest hit single captures her youthful spirit – "Here's to Never Growing Up" has already been dubbed the graduation anthem of 2013 – Avril is happy to embrace her more adult side these days.

"I still love to do fun things like skateboard, surf and play hockey but I also love to cook for my friends and family – I have that nurturing bug."

Her tastes in fashion have also matured. "[My style] has evolved so much in the past few years. I started with more of a tomboy-ish style, but now I am more comfortable being girly and wearing colour. I am comfortable in my own skin and with who I am."

So when does she feel beautiful? "When I'm doing photo shoots and I'm getting my hair and makeup done. I basically get to play dress-up and walk around in poofy skirts and heels, stuff I don't usually wear at home."

That's not the only time she feels like a queen. "I feel most beautiful when, well, I'm around Chad," she confesses. "He makes me feel so beautiful and I'm not one who really dresses up that much. I'm usually in the studio in regular, comfy clothes. I wear some pretty out-there designs. He likes my style – he thinks I'm cute."

He also likes her daring nature, "that I'm not afraid of anything," she explains when asked why she thinks the rock 'n' roll star first fell for her. "He's said that to me before, that I am fearless because anything I do, I give it all I've got. I guess he likes that."

Avril's spontaneous ways revealed themselves early on in the relationship when the pair jetted off for a romantic interlude in Paris – and she convinced a thus far ink-free Chad to get matching tattoos. The duo returned to North America even closer as a couple, with the apt phrase "*Vivre le moment présent*" forever inscribed on their skin.

WEDDING SONG

On-set, Chad's admiration for his fiancée was loud and clear when Avril stepped out in one show-stopping gown after ►





“WE WANT TO MAKE SURE THAT WE ARE ON THE SAME ROAD TOGETHER, NOT TWO SEPARATE PATHS”

another. An awestruck “Wow!” was the besotted Alberta-born musician’s reaction to seeing his bride-to-be in a frothy lace-encrusted tulle number.

The “Photograph” singer’s presence on-set is part of the couple’s plan to be as involved as possible in each other’s lives.

“We have decided to spend the majority of our time together,” says Avril.

It was Chad’s calming and jovial presence on-set that brought forth a burst of giggles from an often camera-shy Avril just before she stepped in front of the photographer’s lens.

As the pair spent every moment together on the four-hour shoot – even popping into the fitting room between takes, re-emerging hand in hand with a beaming Avril in her next look – it was clear they are were madly in love and excited to wed.

Like any bride, Avril wants her big day to hold surprises for both her guests and her groom, but she’s already in full-on planning mode. Even though the couple have said they’ll keep it small – only close friends and family – in typical Avril fashion, she plans to go all out on the details, even as she preps for her upcoming tour.

“I’m planning a wedding, I just finished recording and I am putting a record out all at the same time so I have a lot going on – never a dull moment!”

Choosing the perfect song for their first dance could have presented a challenge for the music lovers though Avril revealed the pair will be stepping onto the dance floor to a tune they both hold dear to their hearts. “Our wedding song will be a duet we recorded together for my new album.”

She let us know that her dream dress has been picked, the venue has been booked and the rings have been selected –

“WHEN WE’RE HANGING OUT AND HAVING A GOOD TIME, I NEVER WANT IT TO END”

but she’s keeping everyone, including her fiancé, in the dark on some of the crucial details. “Some things will be a surprise; some things will be what he likes and still will surprise him!” she says.

NOT COMPLICATED

It’s this take-charge attitude that Avril considers to be the driving force behind her more-than-decade-long music career.

“I got to where I am today by working really hard. I didn’t have any connections, I didn’t come from money,” says the blue-eyed star. “I used to babysit and clean houses, shovel driveways, cut grass. I put flyers out and I worked at Mary Brown’s Fried Chicken; I had so many jobs, I was always hustling.”

A few life lessons from her parents also helped along the way. “I appreciate everything that I have versus taking it for granted. I think upbringing is a big part of that.”

It’s not a stretch to predict that the singer will apply this same philosophy to her marriage. Their upcoming nuptials, which Avril teases will be “spectacular,” are her second trip down the aisle (her three-year marriage to Sum 41’s Deryck Whibley ended in 2010) and Chad’s first. Both stars understand the toll a hectic rock ‘n’ roll lifestyle can take on a relationship.

“We want to make sure that we are on the same road together versus two separate paths,” she says. “He has been with me the past year, making my record. I was on tour with him [in Sydney, Australia], and he is going to come on tour with me.”

A recent surprise performance at the Viper Room in Hollywood brought Avril onstage to treat her fans to a preview of her new tunes with a supportive Chad rocking out in the audience. When the pair isn’t ▶




Opposite page: Avril is all grown up in a houndstooth check bustier. This page: The star, who loves to make a statement, shines in a gem-embellished blazer and floor-grazing gold skirt.

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onstage or in the studio, their home life echoes that of any young couple. "I like to stay up late, order room service and watch movies. When we're hanging out and having a good time, I never want it to end."

Luckily for Avril fans, her latest album is just the beginning of a very promising partnership. Music lovers can expect even more from the duo as their bond grows deeper as husband and wife.

After all, says Avril, writing songs and singing with Chad helped pave the way for their relationship.

"I think it definitely gives you something to bond over and you get to know each other in a different way," says the star. "With us being so creative, it really gave us a chance to open up to each other." 

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HELLO! iPad EXTRA! See
Avril behind-the-scenes

A shoot like *Hello!*'s makes Avril feel like Canada's most beautiful star! 'I basically get to play dress-up and walk around in poofy skirts and heels – stuff I don't usually wear at home,' she says. Here, the singer is serene in a tutu and leather tank.

