

Lambert's Launch

The star taps into her country style with a new shoe collection. BY MARGARET SUTHERLIN

Miranda Lambert knows more than the country music business. Sure, the Grammy winner was named female vocalist of the year — for the fifth straight time — by the Academy of Country Music this month and will release her fifth album, “Platinum,” in June, but she also recently added footwear to her list of achievements.

The singer quietly launched her namesake shoe line, Miranda by Miranda Lambert, in December. While she already runs lifestyle boutique The Pink Pistol in Tishomingo, Okla., and Lindale, Texas, this collection marked her first steps into design.

“I had this pair of boots that I absolutely loved. The style was really hard to come by, and I literally wore off the soles on stage,” Lambert told *Footwear News*. “I kept thinking about getting my own boot line because you just couldn’t find them.”

She teamed up with St. Louis-based Rich Footwear Group on the line, which includes everything from dress heels and casual summer sandals to cowboy boots. All combine a rock ‘n’ roll aesthetic with Lambert’s comfortable country roots.

Styles retail from \$40 to \$150 and are now available at major retailers including DSW, Rack Room Shoes and Country Outfitters. Famous Footwear will carry the collection later this year.

“I definitely am using my music as inspiration in my life and vice versa. If I didn’t have the music, I wouldn’t have any of this going on,” she said. “Music is my foundation for building branches of business — my shoes, The Pink Pistol and other projects.”

As for her own style, Lambert said it can range from red-carpet looks to the most casual. “It’s fun to get dressed up, but at the end of the day, I’m back in my jeans and T-shirts at home



Miranda Lambert



Miranda by Miranda Lambert fall '14

hanging outside on the four-wheeler,” she said. “You need something for that fun dress up, but you need everyday wear, too. That is what I’m focused on.”

1 You have your hands in several business ventures, so why did you want to introduce shoes?

ML: There is always a point in your career when you can take the next step and this felt like the right step for me. I’m not touring as much and I’ve had time to focus on [the line] — spend time getting inspired for the shoes and promoting them. I haven’t worried too much about [entering the fashion world]. I’m a singer-songwriter first and foremost, so knowing that I have a great foundation and career, I wanted this to be fun. With the boots and shoes, I get inspired by the music and, if I have that, it all falls into place.

2 Did you learn any lessons from The Pink Pistol stores that helped you create the line?

ML: Keep it simple. You can’t get crazy with design because you need something for everybody. I learned that with buying for my store, especially at the beginning. You have to keep it a little neutral or you’ll paint yourself into a corner. Another huge part of any business is finding the right people — [those who] have the same vision and are excited about the project. Negative energy affects us all so quickly, so you need positive energy to push each other and get stuff done.

3 What has been your biggest challenge in footwear?

ML: Navigating the first few years is going to be about learning what works and doesn’t, stylewise. Getting to know [co-designer] Jeff Birnbaum better and working together more will help. I have little ideas, but he can make things [come to life] on paper. It’s starting to come together more — we’re getting more fluid and to be on the same page. I may not be up on the next trend, but I’ll find my own new trend and use it as inspiration.

4 Where do you see the line in five years?

ML: If it’s anything like music, I want it to grow organically. The longer we’re out there, the better the product will be, too. I want people to wear the shoes and have to buy another pair because they’ve worn the shoes so much. There are definitely possibilities, though. We’re starting with shoes and would love to have handbags or belts. But we need a strong foundation in the beginning with boots and shoes.

5 With all of your projects, how do you balance it all?

ML: You need priorities. You have to know when to say no sometimes. It’s all about figuring out where your life starts and work ends and vice versa. Having downtime helps your creative side. It’s an important part of not just my music but the shoe line, too. You have to find time to create the next phase and imagine what the next line is going to look like. Having time off to think about those things is crucial.