

Pat

Pat is a Capricorn, loves Italian food, and classifies herself as a steady kind of girl.

BY ALASTAIR SUTHERLAND

Rock's pre-Madonna boy toy and present day mom speaks candidly about motherhood, reincarnation, and the Three Stooges. An exclusive Graffiti interview.

In 33 years Pat Benatar has been a college dropout, an Army wife, a bored bank teller, a singer in a piano bar, a famous rock star and, most recently, a mother. She has sold 25 million records, won four consecutive Grammy Awards and produced six platinum albums in Canada. Currently she is in the midst of a 35-city tour in support of her latest album *Seven The Hard Way*. Graffiti interviewed her at the Renmar in LA, where she and her band (including her husband/guitarist/producer

Neil Geraldo) had just wrapped up a day's rehearsal.

GRAFFITI: Tell me, Pat, how tall are you?

BENATAR: Five foot two.

G: And what's your ideal weight?

B: 95 pounds.

G: Is that what you weigh now?

B: Yup.

G: Do you eat a lot, and if so, what's your favourite food?

B: Yea, I eat a real lot. And I love Italian food.

Benatar

FEISTY MINX OR MAINSTREAM MOM?

G: What's your favourite drink?

B: Coffee. Decaf only.

G: No liquor?

B: No. Just wine once in a while. I kind of gave everything up four years ago. Now I don't even do pharmaceuticals.

G: Did you ever go through a drug phase?

B: Not really. Just what everybody does... you know, a little of everything. I quit drugs when I was 19. I never had a problem.

G: Are you into health food?

B: Well, I don't eat meat. Just chicken and fish. And I try not to garbage it up too much.

G: Do you exercise a lot, or do you stay in shape just from performing?

B: Performing isn't enough. Only a few things are ever moving at a time. So I do aerobics and free weights.

G: You don't ski or play golf?

B: No, I'm far too uncoordinated to ski. But my husband skis. And my daughter will probably ski.

G: How many serious boyfriends have you had?

B: They've all been serious! I was a steady kind of girl. I dunno... maybe five...

G: Including your two husbands?

B: No... Boy, when you say it like that, I feel like Zsa Zsa Gabor.

G: How long have you been with your husband Neil?

B: Do you mean musically or romantically?

G: Both.

B: Musically since 1979; romantically since 1980. He came to audition for my band as a guitar player. It was love at first sight. We were married on Feb. 22, 1982.

G: Could you give me the names of your band members, the instruments they play, and their ages.

B: Yea... Charlie Giordano plays keyboards. He's 33. Myron Grombacher plays drums. He's 33 also. Donny Nosov plays bass, and I don't know how old he is. I'm 33, and Spud is 30...

G: Spud?

B: Spud. Spider. That's Neil's name. I never call him Neil. I always call him Spider.

G: Who did Spider play with before?

B: Rick Derringer.

G: Do you play an instrument?

B: No. I wish I did but I don't. I've tried several times - guitar, piano, everything. But I have no talent at all. Maybe I'll try again when I'm a grandmother.

G: Where were you born?

B: Brooklyn, New York.

G: Where do you live now?

B: LA.

G: Do you do your own lawn?

B: No, the gardener does it.

G: Do you have a lot of live-in help?

B: No. We have help, but they don't live in. It's too nuts to have people live in.

G: Do you and Spider go out a lot - night-clubs, parties?

B: No, we're homebodies. We have a small circle of friends and we hang with them. Sometimes it's a pain in the ass to go out... it's not worth it. Our closest friends are the other band members.

G: Do you watch a lot of TV?

B: We rent a lot of videos. But as far as TV goes... when I'm working I miss most of the shows... I don't think I've ever seen *Dynasty*.

G: What was the last movie you saw?

B: Um... *The Emerald Forest*.

G: Did you like it?

B: Yea. It was great.

G: How about the last book you read?

B: *The Second Stage* by Betty Friedan.

G: The last record you listened to?

B: *The Four Tops Anthology*, earlier today.

G: Did you have a favourite cartoon when you were a kid?

B: No. I never watched cartoons. But I used to like the Three Stooges.

G: Who was your favourite Stooge?

B: Curly.

G: What sign are you?

B: Capricorn. Spider's Capricorn too.

G: When did you first start singing?

B: When I was four.

G: Do you remember who your favourite singers were at the time?

B: Umm... Chubby Checker... Hailey Mills...

G: Is your daughter named after Hailey Mills?

B: No. Her name is spelt H-a-l-e-y.

G: Has motherhood affected your music?

B: If it has, it's only in a positive way. It's rounded me out as a person, made me more sensitive, less self-centered.

G: So you lead a happy home life. Yet a lot of your music seems to be bitter, or harsh. I'm thinking specifically of "Sex as a Weapon" and "Love is a Battlefield."

B: Well, just 'coz my home life is smooth doesn't mean the world is smooth. I usually sing from an observation point, not always from personal experience.

G: Did you write any of the lyrics on the new album?

B: I didn't write one thing. Nothing. I was too busy trying to get a grip. In the beginning being a mother is a 24 hour thing!

G: Are you satisfied with the way *Seven The Hard Way* turned out?

B: Yea. It took a long time, seven months. We did a lot of experimentation, but in the end it turned out the way we wanted.



Benatar circa '83. This tour she says she'll probably wear pants.

"IN MY PAST LIFE I WAS PROBABLY JAPANESE..."

G: How do you choose your material?
B: We just go into the studio and everybody throws all the things they've written into a pile. After we've chosen from our own songs we go to other writers.

G: This is your seventh album. Is that what the title refers to?

B: Yea.

G: Is that the only meaning the title has?

B: Yea...it's like...the road to the seventh one.

G: If you were an animal, what kind of animal do you think you would be?

B: A bird. I'd love to be able to fly.

G: How about past lives. Do you believe in them? What or who do you think you were?

B: Yea, I believe in past lives. I think I was probably Japanese. I have a great affection for their culture. I really feel comfortable in it.

G: What's the new show going to be like?

B: Lots of new stuff, lots of old. Two and a half hours long.

G: What will you wear?

B: Probably pants.

G: What's the sexiest thing you've ever worn on stage?

B: This silly purple skin tight zebra suit that I wore for a couple of weeks during

the *Crimes of Passion* tour. That was the silliest and probably the sexiest thing I've ever worn.

G: Are you going in for a lot of sexy stuff these days?

B: No. I've outgrown it. It's a little more subtle now. I mean, it's not gonna be the housewife next door, but it's not gonna be the trash and vaudeville stuff either.

G: Do you consider yourself a feminist?

B: I have a kindred spirit. Growing up when I did you can't help but be, 'coz that's what we were all taught. But I think both men and women would have a liberated attitude.

G: Who are your main musical influences or favourite singers?

B: Judy Garland. Robert Plant. Zep-pelin. The Stones. I like Paul Young's voice a lot. Lots of black singers. I have a whole bunch of musical influences, 'coz I did a lot of theatre and musical comedy in junior high.

G: Who is your favourite guitarist besides your husband?

B: I don't have another favourite! I'm loyal to the end.

G: Did you go to university?

B: I went to college for one semester in 1970. I studied music and drama. It was a drag, so I quit. I was already wanting to be in the real world, and school wasn't it.

G: Then what happened?

B: Well, I was married then, to Dennis Benatar. We were married for eight years. He got drafted, and we had to travel. I was an Army wife...

G: What does Dennis do now?

B: He's in video or something. I don't know. We don't keep in contact. Anyway, I worked as a bank teller in Richmond Virginia. I was so bored that I kept thinking of ways to steal the money. It was horrible. Finally I quit, and one day I picked up a paper and read that a keyboard player was looking for a vocalist to play at a dining room at the Holiday Inn. I did that for four or five months. Then we put a band together and started to play lounges instead of dining rooms. For some reason we started to get well known. PBS wanted us to do TV shows, and I said, 'Wait a second.' If I'm gonna do good let me go back to New York. I'm not gonna stay in Richmond, Virginia. So I split from the band and went back to New York.

G: And you were 'discovered' by manager Rick Newman at Catch a Rising Star...

B: Right.

G: Last question. What's your favourite city?

B: A little place called Hana, in Hawaii. It's my favourite place on Earth. I was married there.

G: Was it a big ceremony?

B: Just Spider, me, the preacher, two witnesses, and a bunch of cows. It was great.

G: Thank you, Pat.

B: Thank you. ■