

# THE KING OF NEW JERSEY

In many ways it was **Jon Bon Jovi**'s sound and look that defined the '80s rock scene. In 1994, and after 10 years of unimaginable success for the group, journalist *Sylvie Simmons* met up with Jon at his Malibu home to dissect the anatomy of an incredible story. It resulted in one of Jon's most revealing interviews... All photos *Mark 'Weissguy' Weiss*

**JANUARY 1984, A NEW** band from New Jersey, fronted by a man who used to sweep the floors in his cousin's recording studio, releases its debut album. It doesn't do badly; it just about makes the US Top 50. But in less than three years the band will become one of the biggest-selling rock acts of all time.

"Was it really 10 years ago?" Jon Bon Jovi is sitting in his beachfront house in Malibu, one of the rewards of a decade of success. "It's amazing, isn't it?" Bon Jovi celebrates its 10th anniversary with a 'Best Of' album, due for release in October [the album would end up being called 'Cross Road']. Jon, supposedly on vacation for the rest of the summer to spend time with his wife and young daughter before going into the studio to record the band's sixth studio album, has been poring through the back catalogue choosing what tracks to include.

"I hadn't heard any of them in a long, long time, so it's taken me a while to pull something from every album. Some of them I like more than others. It's pretty strange going back and examining your past like that."

It was all so quick, so big and so frantic, you wouldn't

be surprised if he wakes up in a panic some nights, thinking he's meant to go sweep up the studio, and that the past 10 years have all been a dream.

"Yeah, it is like that," Jon laughs. "I was in a studio yesterday – *and* I cleaned up after myself! I was real good at that stuff! I could tell you so many stories from 1980 to 1983. The time I spent in the studio there and the people I met and my impressions of them made a big impact on what I did. I remember it like it was yesterday."

**'RUNAWAY' WAS** the band's first single and their first Top 40 hit, though it wasn't *Jon's* first single. He'd recorded a track [under his real name, John Bongiovi] called 'R2D2 We Wish You A Merry Christmas' for the 'Christmas In The Stars: Star Wars Christmas Album' [issued in November 1980] before he formed Bon Jovi in 1983. 'Runaway' is a pretty safe bet to make it onto the 'Best Of' record. There's even talk of redoing the video, which Jon has always loathed.

"Wouldn't that be a blessing, to burn the video of 'Runaway'? I did see a bit of that piece-of-sh\*t video ▶

