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Laura Soares

She's a Screamer

2011 Koenigsegg Agera

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Angels and Airwaves,
Cohed and Cambria
& Circa Survive

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**RED DEAD
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ALAN
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June 2010

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20 QUESTIONS

Get To Know Your Cover Model

Laura Soares

Photography by: Andrew Gates
Make-up by: Livia Duarte

L

born and raised in Rio de Janeiro. Growing up in the "city of the world" it's no surprise this Brazilian belle began modeling swimwear in her early teens. Steady work throughout the years helped support her through college where she earned a Bachelors Degree in International Business. Moving to Los Angeles in 2006, she put her degree to use launching Laura Soares Swimwear, where she focused on fit, feel and function. Laura designed the suits herself, selected the fabrics and had them manufactured in Brazil for import to the United States. Within months of it's launch her hot collection could be found in trendy boutiques from Beverly Hills to beach cities up and down the Southern California coast and has since spread to other markets across the US. With Brazilian semi-precious stones, wood works, metal works, and fine fabrics, Laura ensures a unique-finish which makes every bikini simply unequaled – especially when she's wearing it!





20 QUESTIONS

1.What's your Ethnicity?

Brazilian

2.What's your zodiac sign?

Virgo

3.Where are you from originally?

Rio de Janeiro - Brazil

4.What did you like most about growing up in Rio de Janeiro?

The weather, the beaches, the diversity, the art and music, the free spirit, and the overall culture.

5.What kind of mischief did you get into while growing up?

I didn't have a lot of time for mischief considering my Mom passed away when i was 11 years old and I had 2 younger sisters to help my dad raise so I grew up very quickly with a lot of responsibilities.

However, now that my sisters are successful professional women (both doctors) it's really been lately that I've been able to get into some mischief.

6.What's the craziest thing you've ever done?

Drop out of law school in Brazil in my 3rd year in order to pursue a life and carrier in America.

7.What brought you to LA?

**I came to LA to start my own business, my Swimwear line:
(<http://www.LauraSoares.com>)**

8.What's your favorite hobby and why?

Water sports and Travel.

9.What's your guilty pleasure?

A brazilian secret family receipt: fresh

banana microwaved for 30 seconds sprinkled with cinnamon sugar and vanilla cream.

10.Who do you admire?

My Father for successfully raising 3 daughters on his own and for all of the giving back he did for his community by volunteering as a doctor in the Favelas in Rio.

11.What's one of your personal goals?

To be successful in life & marry my best friend.

12.What do guys compliment you on the most?

My brazilian curves.

13.What's your favorite body part on yourself?

Eyes & Smile.

14.What's your least favorite body part on yourself?

Everything's a tie for first place. (laugh)

15.What do you look for in a guy?

Self confidence, good values and a gentleman.

16.What's the first thing you notice about a guy?

Attitude.

17.What turns you on?

Depends on the moment.

18.What turns you off?

Arrogance.

19.What's your biggest pet peeve?

People who argue a point of view when it's clear they haven't done their "homework".

20.Who's your celebrity pass?

Pierce Brosnon or Barack Obama. RM

PIT PASS

Get In The Driver's Seat!

Ageless Acting

Perhaps you have never heard of Koenigsegg or the extremely high end sports cars they produce. In 1994, Christian von Koenigsegg sought out to create a world-class supercar, and thus, the inception of the manufacture. Eight years later, in 2002, the first Koenigsegg rolled off the line: the CC 8S. In 2004, the CCR was introduced and held the Guinness record for fastest production car in the world, being clocked at 241.63 mph. The Bugatti Veyron, with its speed of 253.3 mph, has only since beaten that record. Six years, and probably millions, if not billions of dollars in R&D later, and we are introduced to the 2011 Agera.

The 2011 Koenigsegg Agera seems to almost be in a class of its own. Its competitors are that of only the most expensive, best handling and fastest cars on the planet. Koenigsegg's may not have the heritage, but they have the technology and force to take on any Porsche or Ferrari from the factory. The Agera, which means 'to act' in Swedish, and is also derived from the Greek, 'Ageratos,' meaning 'ageless,' pulls its power from a 4.7L V8 that has some help via twin turbos. Compression is at a very low 8.9:1, however, when coupled with the fact that aforementioned twin turbos are running at 1.5 bar (21.75 psi), it sounds just



Written by: Nicolas Bates
Photos by: Koenigsegg

SPECS

2011 Koenigsegg Agera

Price:	\$1,203,300+
Engine:	4.7L Twin Turbo V8
Torque:	811 lb-ft.
Horsepower:	910 hp
0-60 MPH:	3 sec.
Top Speed:	245+ mph
EST. MPG:	17.7 mpg Combined
Available:	Production Starts Summer 2011



right. This V8 hurls the 2,832 lbs Agera from 0-62 mph in 3.2 seconds and from 0-124 mph in 8.9 seconds, and has a colossal 910 hp at 7,250 rpm with 738 lb-ft of torque available throughout the range of 2,680-6,170 rpm, with a peak of 811 lb-ft of torque. Koenigsegg states this car is capable of doing upwards of 245 mph. Serious bodily harm could result from sudden acceleration if one is not careful. The Agera's power to weight ratio is almost unparalleled. And just in case you might be worried about stopping such a car, its brakes are beyond F1 spec.

The Agera looks as if it was designed for a video game set in the future. Where your car might harbor missiles that deployed from above the rocker panels to destroy fellow warriors of the asphalt. It's wide, and it's low. The front end is slightly reminiscent of the McLaren F1 in that it seems to be slightly "pinched" forward, with the windshield being closer to the front than usual. Many mid mounted supercars are fond of this design, and the Agera is no different in that aspect. A long and wide scoop starts on both sides of the car at the doors and travels back to the rear fender well. A bubble like protrusion comes up from the flat and wide "body" of the car to create the ample and necessary room for human piloting.

Saying the interior of the Agera is futuristic would be to completely understate the sophistication of design and pure genius that went into its creation. Everything is smooth and slightly sloped. No hard or aggressive angles exist within. The main control console looks to be out of an alien craft with its smoothed edges and circular shapes. However, this is mainly due to Koenigsegg's new "Ghost Light" lighting system where soft, light blue light emanates from invisible tubes called nano tubes, which shine through the console and the aluminum to make any and all symbols visible on the console and dash. The driver can select what information he wants to visualize in his cluster at any given time. Perhaps one would like to see lap times, g forces enacted, or, maybe just the navigation system or cd track number. Either way, you are covered.



Koenigsegg is not a manufacture that has history. It has not competed for a win at Le Mans, has not competed for trophies, for fame. It has no heritage. And it is certainly not old enough to provide anyone with the chance to own a classic Koenigsegg. Yet, with the 2011 Agera, Koenigsegg has created one of the most agile, fastest, competent and well designed and engineered cars Earth has ever seen. Koenigsegg does not produce many of its vehicles, only 15-20 Agera's will be produced worldwide, so the chances you will ever witness one in waking life is slim to none. But if you do, consider yourself lucky to have seen such a feat on wheels. **RM**

A full-page photograph of a woman with long, dark, wavy hair, wearing a red, textured, two-piece bikini. She is posing in a jungle-like setting with large rocks and green foliage in the background. She is looking directly at the camera with a slight smile. Her left hand is resting on her hip, and her right hand is resting on her thigh. She is wearing large, ornate earrings with a purple gemstone and a teardrop pendant.

*Everything's a tie
for first place.*

See more of Laura at
www.LALatinModel.com



STATS:

Birthday: September 21

Height: 5' 6"

Weight: 121

Measurements: 34C-25-37

ALL ACCESS

The Latest Album Reviewed!

Ready for Takeoff

Photo by: Chapman Baehler

Written by: Lindsay Murphy

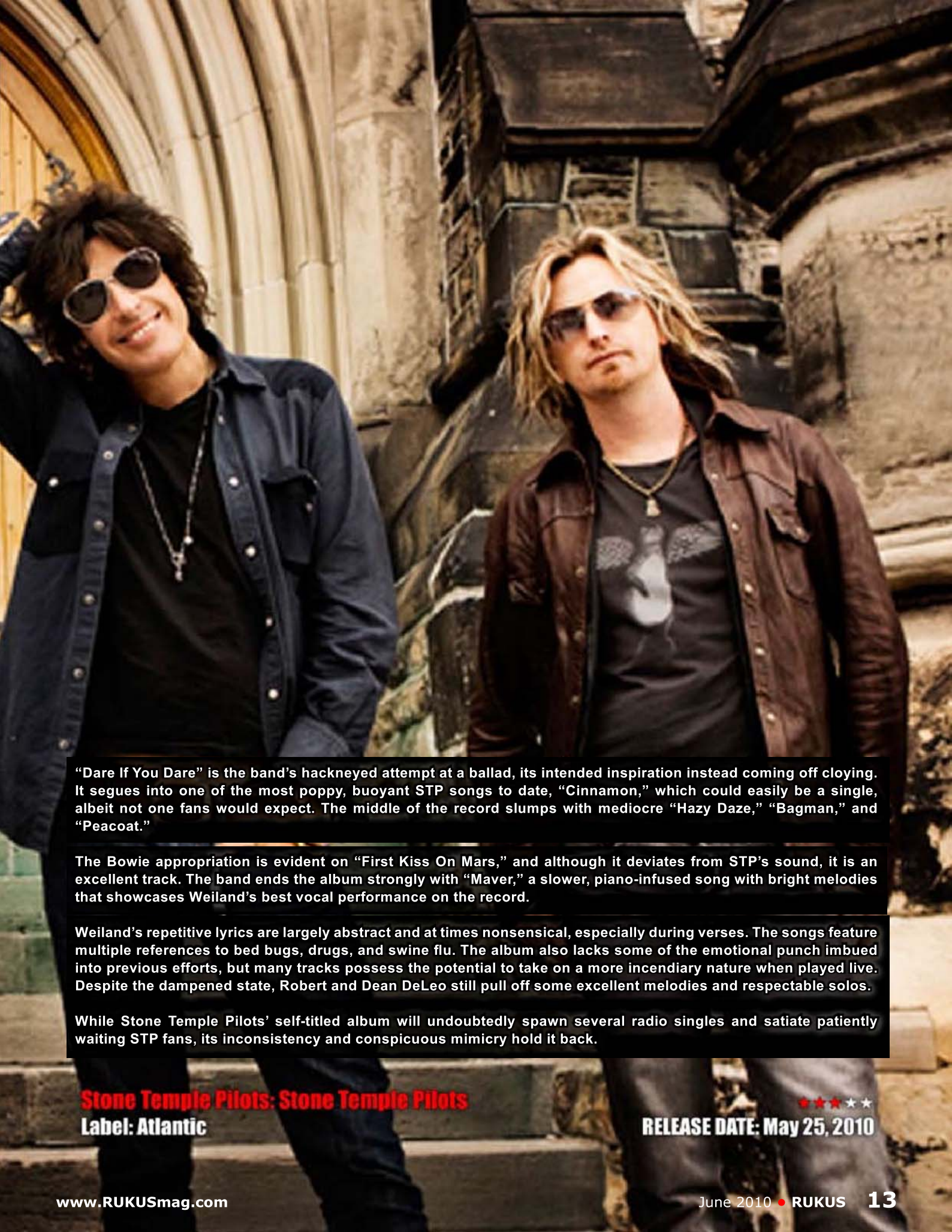
After nearly a decade lacking new music from Stone Temple Pilots, Scott Weiland and the DeLeo brothers have returned with their eponymous effort. While the band admirably attempts to avoid becoming a nineties grunge nostalgia act by progressing their sound, the result is unbalanced.

The new album blends the band's early grunge style with their later psychedelic-infused rock to form a slew of structured songs. From crunchy to bluesy, it features glaring influences from a gamut of rock 'n' roll powerhouses, creating an album in identity crisis. Regardless, Stone Temple Pilots emerge with some rockin' tracks.

Scott Weiland's voice has changed considerably over the years; whereas his initial work begged comparisons to Eddie Vedder and the late Layne Staley, Weiland's vocal performance on this album spans rock stylings. Some songs mimic a melding of Dylan-esque, talky verses and Cobain-sounding choruses, while others seem to channel David Bowie and Steven Tyler.

"Between the Lines," the heavily-played first single and track on the album, boasts an undeniable Nirvana feel—and not just because the bridge borrows melodies and lyrical assonance from Nirvana's "Stay Away." "Fast As I Can" seems to be inspired by the same song, but is one of the album's standouts.

"Take a Load Off" is most reminiscent of the band's early material and will please STP fans. An amalgamation of Aerosmith and Led Zeppelin influences are apparent in the bluesy licks and soaring solos that compose "Huckleberry Crumble," another key song. Twangy guitars characterize "Hickory Dichotomy," a track that feels out of place and detracts from the album's cohesiveness.



"Dare If You Dare" is the band's hackneyed attempt at a ballad, its intended inspiration instead coming off cloying. It segues into one of the most poppy, buoyant STP songs to date, "Cinnamon," which could easily be a single, albeit not one fans would expect. The middle of the record slumps with mediocre "Hazy Daze," "Bagman," and "Peacoat."

The Bowie appropriation is evident on "First Kiss On Mars," and although it deviates from STP's sound, it is an excellent track. The band ends the album strongly with "Maver," a slower, piano-infused song with bright melodies that showcases Weiland's best vocal performance on the record.

Weiland's repetitive lyrics are largely abstract and at times nonsensical, especially during verses. The songs feature multiple references to bed bugs, drugs, and swine flu. The album also lacks some of the emotional punch imbued into previous efforts, but many tracks possess the potential to take on a more incendiary nature when played live. Despite the dampened state, Robert and Dean DeLeo still pull off some excellent melodies and respectable solos.

While Stone Temple Pilots' self-titled album will undoubtedly spawn several radio singles and satiate patiently waiting STP fans, its inconsistency and conspicuous mimicry hold it back.

Stone Temple Pilots: Stone Temple Pilots
Label: Atlantic

★★★★★
RELEASE DATE: May 25, 2010

Godsmack Back

Photo by: Paul Brown

Written by: Lindsay Murphy

Four years after their fourth album *IV*, Godsmack prove their ability to construct hard-hitting music is better than ever. With *The Oracle*, the Grammy-nominated gods of hard rock have delivered a strong album chockfull of catchy, radio-ready songs.

On *The Oracle*, they stay true to their songwriting roots instead of attempting forced musical progression. The band consequently emerges sounding like classic Godsmack, heavy with melodic guitar-driven tracks, which will likely please fans. Although such formulaic tracks have the propensity to appear stale, Godsmack manage to animate each song with exciting new riffs and melodies.

Frontman Sully Erna sings with his usual gravely vigor that defines the band. Lead guitarist Tony Rombola offers catchy distorted guitar riffs characterized by stop-start aggression and somewhat standard wah-wah-imbued solos. Bassist Robbie Merrill lays down some of his best bass lines yet, and drummer Shannon Larkin punches listeners with percussion. Erna's testosterone-laden lyrics span topics from alpha-male machismo to struggling with personal demons.

The first single "Cryin' Like a Bitch" is an aggressive, pummeling track that begins the record with a bang. "Saints and Sinners," the second song and original album title, launches with a thunderous bass line and continues with strong melodic hooks. Military-inspired rhythm guitar drives "War and Peace," a real headbanger that features an infectious chorus.

Sully croons in the vein of Layne Staley, the late singer from Alice in Chains, in key track "Love-Hate-Sex-Pain." Deviating from the mostly upbeat album, it contains slow, minor harmonies aurally conveying his complex agony. The

GODSMACK

THE ORACLE



song provides a nice departure from its peers and ends with a sprinkling of piano that beautifully contrasts with the band's metal underpinnings.

A dueling harmonica/guitar solo anchors "Devil's Swing," a zippy, grooving standout. "Good Day to Die" sounds strikingly similar to Metallica's "Master of Puppets," both in Rombola's guitar riffs and Erna's Hetfield-esque snarl.

Godsmack close out the album with title track "The Oracle," a long instrumental scattered with sound bites and replete with galloping rhythm guitars, soaring solos, double bass drums, and supplementary strings. It's a haunting epic reminiscent of old-school Metallica and ends the album on a strong note.

The Deluxe edition includes a DVD with two bonus tracks: "Whiskey Hangover" and "I Blame You," and the iTunes edition contains extra "The Departed."

Every song on the record has single potential, and finding an album lacking filler is rare. While Godsmack don't reinvent themselves, they present a powerful metal offering with *The Oracle*.

Godsmack: The Oracle

Label: Universal Republic Records

★★★★☆

RELEASE DATE: May 4, 2010



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LIVE & LOUD

The Live Show Reviews

Angels and Airwaves

Written by: Nicolas Bates

Photos by: Nicolas Bates

On the second to last stop of their "Love" tour, and almost back home to San Diego, Angels and Airwaves played the Hollywood Palladium on May 29th 2010.

Before Angels and Airwaves hit the stage, the crowd grew impatient as they were blasted with copious amounts of fog from the fog machines and yelled the likes of, "C'mon, already!" and "Let's go!" before Angels and Airwaves' set commenced promptly at 9 PM. An eclectic crowd, one that contained teenage girls and boys, but also adults over 30, greeted the band with immense anticipation. It has been 2 years since the band has last toured through LA, and that was evident judging from the crowd's excitement.

The lighting heavily doused the band in dark blues, heavy reds and greens throughout the set. It worked extremely well with the fog and Angels and Airwaves' atmospheric and airy music. The astronomy theme that is touched on so much was not lost.

The set consisted of mostly of songs from the latest release, "Love". Songs like "The Flight of Apollo", "Hallucinations" and "Shove". However, they also played songs off "I-Empire" and "We Don't Need to Whisper". Songs like "Everything's Magic", "Love Like Rockets", and "Lifeline". The crowd seemed to thoroughly enjoy these older tracks, even jumping up and down and clapping during "Lifeline".

Atom Willard's drumming was spectacular. He is a very hard hitting, yet, precise drummer who can play along to click tracks all day, it seems. He truly is the backbone of this band. David Kennedy, who is also in Box Car racer with Tom DeLonge, adds great energy to the band and the stage. He, as well as Tom, were all over the place all night - always fun to watch. Matt Wachter, ex 30 Seconds to Mars bassist, provided some of the best backing vocals I have ever heard. Crystal clear, perfect tone and great projection accompanied every word out of his mouth. Both David and Matt tended to synths here and there throughout the set, as well. Tom's energy was enormous the entire set, and he bounced back and forth from playing guitar and vocals, to just vocals, where he was really able to frequent all parts of the stage. Tom DeLonge was very intimate with the crowd, and on more than one occasion, walked to the far side of stage left and right to shake hands and touch fans' hands.

Angels and Airwaves was very well perceived at the Hollywood Palladium and put on great show, especially knowing it was their second to last stop on this long tour. Many people might think Tom put this band together for the wrong reasons, but when you watch them play, you know his, and everyone else's hearts are sincerely in it.

Band: Angels and Airwaves
Venue: The Hollywood Palladium

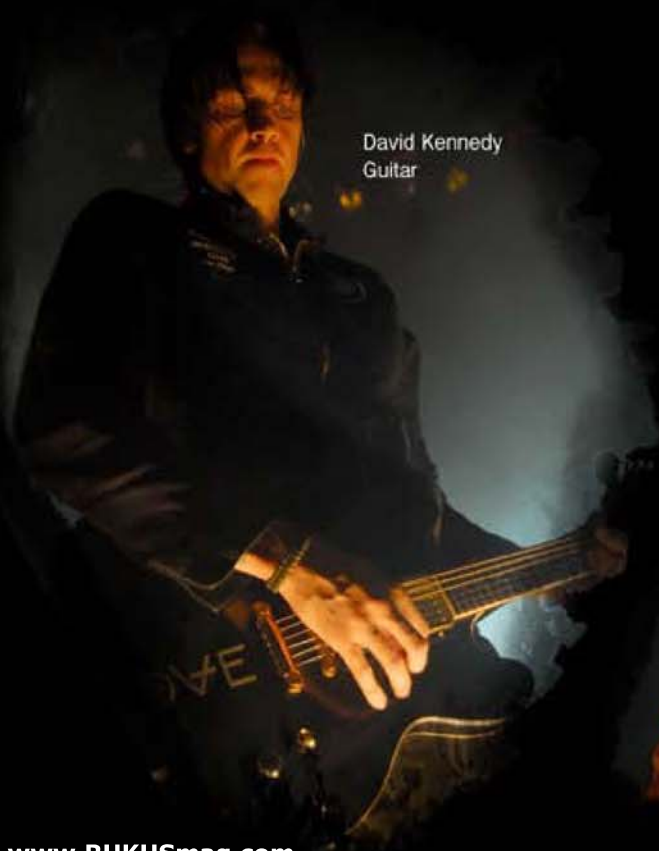
Date: May 29, 2010
City: Los Angeles, CA



Tom Delonge
Lead Vocals, Guitar



Atom Willard
Drums



David Kennedy
Guitar



Matt Wachter
Backup Vocals, Bass



Circa Survive

Written by: Lindsay Murphy
Photos by: Nicolas Bates

Coheed and Cambria and Circa Survive played a spirited show at Pomona's packed Fox Theater. With overlapping fanbases, excellent live offerings, and two of the year's top albums so far, the pair was a perfect fit to tour together.

Circa Survive entered the stage and erupted into "Get Out," the catchy first single off their recent release *Blue Sky Noise*. A line of five huge mirrors had been erected behind the band, reflecting the massive, impassioned audience.

Frontman Anthony Green is an eminent figure within the scene, his name alternatively eliciting spiels of veneration or rants annoyance. Wearing a white T-shirt with the words "Sale Item" scrawled across, he seemed to be playing a hyperbolic version of himself onstage. Bursting into epileptic fits, fixing the mic stand to his pelvis and extending it for the audience's use, lifting up his shirt to reveal his abs, spinning wildly with his mic stand—Green's antics were exaggerated and entertaining, and he knew the crowd loved it.


Circa Survive's fanbase is incredibly fervent, and Green's crowd interaction heightened their insanity. He leapt over the photo pit, stood on the partition, and sang with his fans. "Look at your brothers and sisters," he sermonized, "you are one person in this container." He hugged a crowd surfer, jettisoned another bold one back into the audience, encouraged them to continue "standing on people's faces," and dared them to keep fighting their way to the front.

Guitarists Colin Fragicetto and Brendan Ekstrom, bassist Nick Beard, and drummer Steve Clifford all focused solely on the music and performed strongly.

Circa played four songs off their new record and few fan favorites including "In Fear and Faith," "Stop the Fuckin' Car," and set standouts "Living Together" and "The Great Golden Baby." The band's theatrics, coupled with a concrete song choice, more than appeased their ardent fans.

Band: Circa Survive
Venue: Fox Theater

Date: May 4, 2010
City: Pomona, CA



Anthony Green
Vocals

(NOT PICTURED)
Colin Fragicetto - Guitar
Brendan Ekstrom - Guitar
Nick Beard - Bass
Steve Clifford - Drums

Coheed and Cambria

Written by: Lindsay Murphy

Photos by: Nicolas Bates

Coheed and Cambria commenced their colossal set with "The Broken" and slid into "Here We Are Juggernaut," both off their latest album *Year of the Black Rainbow* (check out our review in the May issue of *RUKUS*).

Frontman Claudio Sanchez put on a passionate performance. With every chance to break away from the mic, he jumped across the stage in a spasmodic, kicking frenzy. Sanchez's distinctive mass of curly hair shrouded his face for the first few songs, but he finally tamed it with a headband. His fingers flew across guitar strings on songs like "Guns of Summer," and at times, he played behind his head and even with his face.

Travis Stever's guitar emblazoned with Coheed's "Keywork" emblem, depicting the fictional universe that inspires the narrative behind the band's series of concept albums. Hidden in the back, the band's touring keys player Wes Styles appeared somewhat indolent. Tiered above him on risers like an Olympic medal ceremony, Chris Pennie showed some incredible drumming on songs like "World of Lines."

A huge screen plastered the wall behind the stage flashed revolving videos. Some songs featured obfuscated images of the band layered on top of scenes showing twitching witches, kissing kids, and curious squirrels. An animated skeleton swayed on the screen for several songs, perhaps alluding to "When Skeletons Live," although they did not play the track.

Although a band of few words between songs, they did express appreciation for their legion of fans. Antithetical to Circa Survive's earlier performance, Coheed cultivated a commanding stage presence without assuming rock star personas.

Fans participated throughout the set, using their hands to form birds and guns, and pumping their fists to punctuate important parts of songs. Vehemently singing along, at times their voices nearly drowned out Claudio's.

Coheed played a solid spread of songs, spanning all five albums but focusing on their most recent. Crowd favorites included "Al the Killer," "No World for Tomorrow," and "In Keeping Secrets." The epic ending to their extensive set climaxed in an encore featuring "Far," "Welcome Home," and "21:13."

Between the two bands, their new songs all translated well live, and the audience emphatically clung onto every note. Circa Survive and Coheed and Cambria put on performances worth catching.

Band: Coheed and Cambria
Venue: Fox Theater

Date: May 4, 2010
City: Pomona, CA



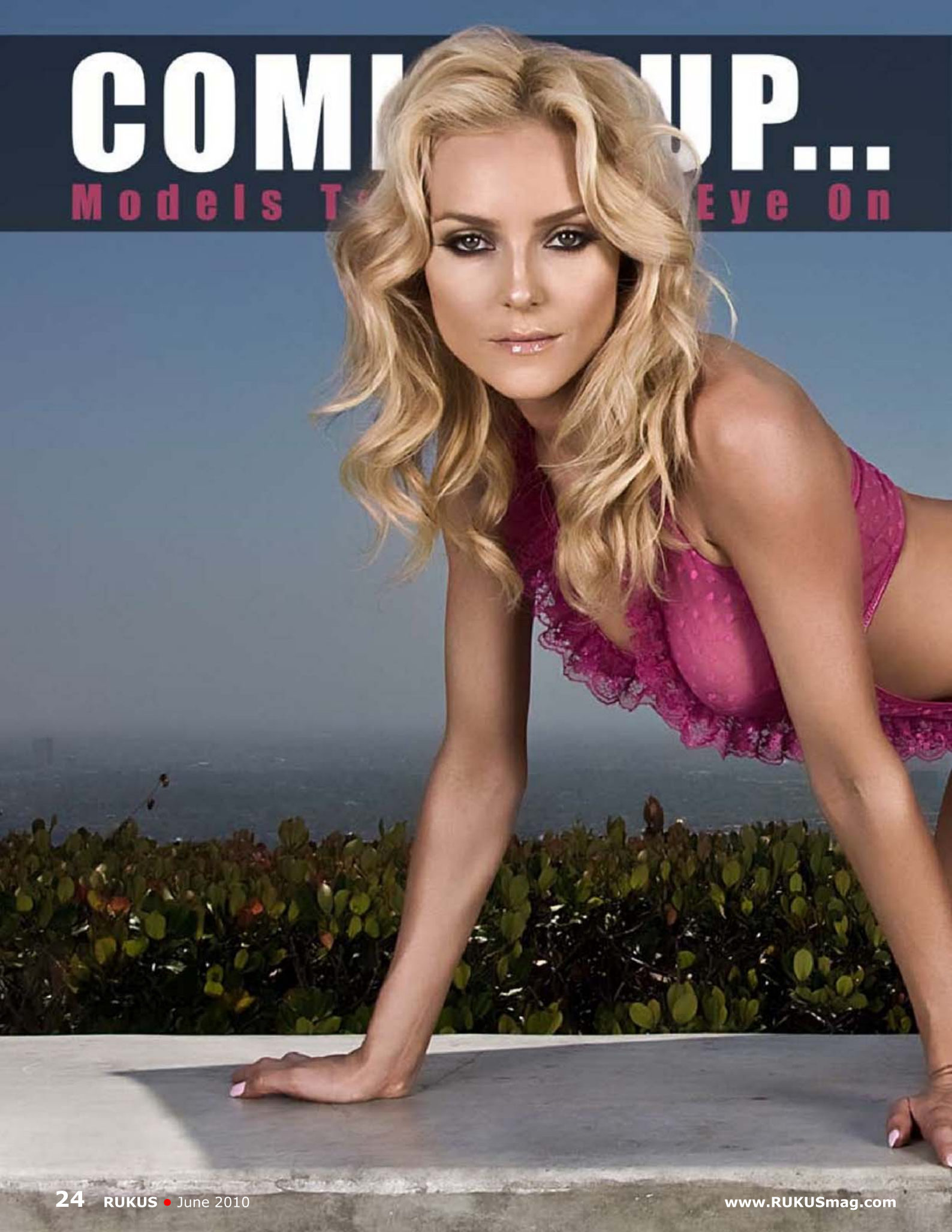
Claudio Sanchez
Lead Vocals, Guitar

Travis Stever
Guitar

(NOT PICTURED)
Michael Todd - Bass
Chris Pannie - Drums
Wes Styles - Keyboard

COMING UP...

Models To Watch Eye On



Casey Durkin

Photography by: Andrew Gates
Make-up by: Rokael Lizama



Durkin was born and raised in Boston, Massachusetts. After graduating high school, Casey moved to the Big Apple to attend the Pratt Institute in Brooklyn. There she studied Fine Art and Art History. Wanting to take her knowledge of the arts in another direction, Casey moved to Los Angeles to continue her education and graduated from the Fashion Institute of Design and Merchandising. In 2004, she was crowned Miss Los Angeles and was a runner-up in the Miss California USA Pageant. Casey has been a runway model for Mercedes-Benz Fashion Week and has modeled for numerous print campaigns including Yana K and Interlude, and magazines such as Seventeen, Women's Wear Daily, and Apparel News. She can be seen starring in music videos for the Rolling Stones, Faith Hill & Tim McGraw, Christina Aguilera and Snoop Dogg. She has also worked as a Red Carpet correspondent for Maxim Online and as a host for "Your LA" on NBC. Casey continues to work in both the fashion and entertainment industry. Lil' Kim helped the successful launch of Casey's clothing line, *Hush Money*, by wearing Casey's accessories during her appearance at the 2009 MTV European Music Awards.



*I Like a man
to take charge.*





THE STATS

Birthday:
August 21, 1985.

Zodiac Sign:
Leo.

Measurements:
34C-24-35.

Height:
5'8"

Weight:
118

Ethnicity:
Swedish, Irish
and German.

Hometown:
Northborough, MA.

Turn Ons:
I like the man to take
charge. I also like when
a man likes me to wear
lingerie.

Turn Offs:
Men that don't cherish
and respect their women
turns me off. When I have
a boyfriend I treat my man
like a king, so in return,
I expect to be protected
by him and treated like a
lady.

Pet Peeves:
Dishonesty.

Celebrity Pass:
Benicio Del Toro, because
he's manly, rugged and a
gentleman.

See more of Casey at
www.caseydurkin.com

COMING UP...

Models To Keep An Eye On CONT'D




Jen Shipley

Photography by: Andrew Gates
Make-up: Lyndsay Gabrielle
Hair: Liz Zvingler



Shipley was born and raised just outside Indianapolis in a small town of Mooresville, Indiana. After graduating with honors from high school, Jen moved to Indianapolis to attend university. With a degree in Business Administration under her belt, another move was in order – this time to Miami, Florida. Here Jen began working as a talent director for a modeling agency. It wasn't long before she was managing her own budding modeling career. A year later, Jen made the move to Los Angeles where her modeling career continues to flourish.

A full-page photograph of a woman with dark, wavy hair, wearing a black string bikini. She is posing against a light-colored, textured wall with a window frame visible on the right. Her skin is glistening, and she has a navel piercing. The quote is overlaid in the top right corner.

*...I am definitely
a true Gemini...*



THE STATS

Birthday:
May 31.

Zodiac Sign:
I am a Gemini... and I am definitely a true Gemini there are two sides of me.

Measurements:
34C-24-36

Height:
5'4"

Weight:
110 lbs.

Ethnicity:
I am Native American on my dad's side (full blooded Sioux, Cherokee, and Blackfoot tribes) and I am German and Irish on my mom's side.

Hometown:
Indianapolis, IN.

Turn Ons:
Someone who is sweet and romantic.

Turn Offs:
Someone who is cocky and big headed.

Pet Peeves:
People who are two faced and fake.

Celebrity Pass:
I would have to say Jesse Williams he plays one of the doctors on Grey's Anatomy and he just has the most beautiful eyes and smile.

See more of Jen at
www.modelmayhem.com/jenshipley



GAMER ON

The Last Reviewed!

ALAN WAKE

LET THERE BE LIGHT

By: Mike Lowther

When I discovered Remedy Studios was assembling a thriller title, I got a little antsy. When I saw some of the first preview screen shots, I got excited. Finally, a survival horror with a cinematic narrative. *Alan Wake* is the story of a writer who hasn't conceived a book in nearly two years, and has ventured to a small, creepy town called *Bright Falls* to finish his novel. After Wake's wife disappears, he notices strange appearances of characters and visions from his book that he has not yet written.

Think *Silent Hill* meets *Max Payne* with a high emphasis on story. The game almost feels like you're reading a book, as *Alan Wake* reads pages of the book as you collect them throughout your journey. Darkness plays tricks on you while dealing with your wife's disappearance. Primarily, you'll use light to navigate through the mysterious town of *Bright Falls*, using flashlights and lampposts to kill mysterious creatures and regenerate health. The game is broken down into chapters, and each chapter begins with "Previously, on *Alan Wake*." You know, something similar to those primetime television series. Pretty damn cool.

Graphics are nicely done and the landscape renders are magnificent. As mentioned earlier, light is the main visual detail in this game, and it looks remarkable when it's there. Cut scenes are pleasant as the shots are well choreographed, but mouth movement is a total distraction. Sometimes, it looks like the characters are eating invisible chicken wings. Another standout is the abundant array of product placement. Everywhere I look, I see Energizer batteries in the wilderness, Lincoln had their SYNC product in the dash, and various mentions of Stephen King and *The Shining* were present. I'm not bothered by it, but I'm still left guessing if it adds to the real-world experience, or tarnishes a spooky moment as a television can turn on to a ridiculous Verizon commercial in the midst of a giant rock rolling through a possessed cabin. You actually get an Xbox Achievement for that one.

Though there's a high emphasis on story, there's a weakness in the combat department. Light is a great tool, and in theory, one of coolest things to use as a weapon. But the defensive motion to dodge attacks is horrendous. It's difficult to defend yourself, even if you have a second to realize you're about to get whacked with a flying dagger from a walking imaginative spirit. Unfortunately, *Alan* can't run very fast for long periods of time, so you're usually stranded to stay and fight. A stamina gauge may have helped.

Keep in mind that the normal gameplay difficulty tosses plenty of ammunition and flashlight batteries your way, oftentimes more than you need. Accessories don't carry over to the next chapter, so use them if you need to. Though your item stash could be plentiful, you'll have to adopt the third-person control system when walking on narrow sections of mountain passes or bridges in the dark. There are holes to fall through occasionally, and I've taken my plunder more times than one.

For a title that's based on an imaginary book, the dialogue from *Alan Wake* is utterly boring. His one-liners are horrific and you can easily tell someone is reading a script as you fight black wads of darkness and walking poltergeists to survive the story. But strangely, mild voice acting flaws don't prevent a wild scare. Nine times out of ten, I've been shaken out of my computer chair from a wandering ghoul, and audio stingers definitely prove worthy. With high expectations for this title, I've been swayed slightly by the not-so-impressive dialogue, but the sophisticated environments and small-town aura will capture just about anyone looking for a solid, spooky play through in this thriller title.

Alan Wake

PRODUCER: Microsoft Game Studios

PLATFORM: Xbox 360

RELEASE DATE: May 18, 2010

★★★★★

RATINGS: Teen

GENRE: Psychological thriller, Action

A promotional image for the video game Red Dead Redemption. It features the character John Marston, a man with a beard and mustache, wearing a dark suit, a striped vest, a blue patterned tie, and a black cowboy hat. He is holding a black revolver in his right hand, which is raised towards his head. He is standing in front of a stone wall. The background shows a sunset or sunrise over a landscape with trees and a body of water. The text "GAME ON" is in the top left corner, and "RED DEAD REDEMPTION" is in large white letters at the bottom. The page number "34" and the magazine name "RUKUS" are in the bottom left corner, and the website "www.RUKUSmag.com" is in the bottom right corner.

GAME ON
The Game Reviews CONT'D

RED DEAD REDEMPTION

WELCOME TO THE WILD WEST

By: William Nadel

Red Dead Redemption. The name is laden with rich and intentional irony because this digital masterpiece is a true, red blooded redemption for Rockstar's action western series. Rockstar San Diego has blown the cow patty out of the pasture with this incredible sequel to the middle of the road offerings of Red Dead Revolver. I consider this game to be a sequel only in spirit because of the unending attention to detail the developers employed and the effort the team put into distinguishing this game from any other before it.

Redemption is a bona fide open world western, played from a third person perspective that will be very familiar to anyone who experienced Grand Theft Auto 4. From start to finish, the game provides fresh and eye popping moments that illuminate the wonder of the old west. I have never seen natural game environments looking so beautiful on a console. From the rolling puffy clouds meandering along at sunset to the global lighting awakening the world's inhabitants at dawn, Rockstar San Diego has summoned the stunning vistas and soul of the western frontier in a way that'll make you long for real life adventure.

The game world is open and massive and will remind folks of what they loved about the GTA: San Andreas level design. Whilst traversing the varied terrain on your beautifully rendered horses, you'll encounter a breathing landscape ripe with living creatures, big and small. Hunting and gathering is a major source of money and progression. You can hunt and skin animals such as elk, bears, and buffalo to use for trade in the different general stores throughout the land. You can also gamble at games like poker, blackjack, and horseshoes for big bucks.

This would all mean jack sh*t if they hadn't provided us with such solid gunplay. You'll have a good time battling big bad posses on horseback, surviving difficult gunfights utilizing the game's cover system, and you'll see some of the most realistic death animation physics in any game due to the adoption of the Endorphin animation system. They brought back the useful Dead Eye aiming mechanic that slows time and allows you to paint red X's of death on multiple targets. Learn this mechanic and use it often. There are a few combat and mission related bugs, but only once did I have a mission busting screwjob bug where it didn't register that I had successfully killed and looted my target during a bounty hunter mission.

The online multiplayer suite is what you've come to expect from the house that GTA built. They gave us the ability to roam the entire game world online with 15 other human players through multiple game types. I really enjoy teaming up with a posse full of my compadres and raising a Rukus online, pitting ourselves in Free Roam against other bands of brothers. Toss in the well-crafted story, creative cutscenes and convincing delivery by the voice actors and you have a no-brainer purchase on your callous thumb'd hands.

For the unaware, my Xbox Live Gamertag is X Trippopotomus. You should pop this game in your still functioning Xbox 360 disc drive, invite me to an online posse at high noon and we'll go wreak some raucous justice upon the bloody hillsides of Red Dead Redemption. That is, if you've got the guts. Well, do ya... Punk?

Red Dead Redemption

PRODUCER: Rockstar San Diego

PLATFORM: Xbox 360

RELEASE DATE: May 18, 2010

★★★★★

RATINGS: Mature

GENRE: 3rd Person Action Western

A woman with long, dark, wavy hair is posing outdoors. She is wearing a blue string bikini top and bottom. She is looking over her shoulder towards the camera. She has a wide, multi-strand bracelet on her left wrist. The background features a modern building with a textured, grey facade and large windows. There are some green bushes in the foreground.

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