



A rocker with a soft side

He's sexy, politically active and still making hits. Carole Radziwill caught up with the rocker in—where else?—Jersey.

CAROLE RADZIWILL: So I listened to your new album, and it's really great. But I have to confess something—until about a year ago, I was pretty much a disco queen.
JON BON JOVI: [*Laughs.*] Obviously you've crawled out from under that rock. Good.

CR: How did you get into music in the first place?

JBJ: It was a good way to get girls.

CR: But you married your high school sweetheart, Dorothea. How long have you been married?

JBJ: Eighteen years.

CR: In rock star years that's 200.

JBJ: The truth is, Bono and Bruce [Springsteen] have been married a long time too. I suppose it would make for a more interesting story if I dropped my wife for Jennifer Aniston. There would be a feeding frenzy, and I could

work that press thing, but that is a pretty shallow existence. Maybe it's a better story, but it's not my reality.

CR: On your new album, a lot of the songs are about melancholy love.

JBJ: Yeah, losing it or looking for it, like my song "Make a Memory," which is about unrequited love.

CR: I thought it was about adultery!

JBJ: Is that where your mind is, young lady?

CR: In the video the guy and the girl are in the bedroom, he's wearing a wedding ring and she looks sad.

JBJ: Actually, she's supposed to be a ghost. If you watch the end of the video, she walks right through him.

CR: Oh, I didn't get that. It's a great talent to be able to tell a story in three minutes. When you were writing the songs, did you think about how they worked together?

JBJ: In a way. I wanted to make the album read like a book, with a beginning, middle and an end.

CR: I recently bought a turntable, so now I listen to entire albums. I used to just download separate songs, which is like reading random chapters of a book. I've always wondered what musicians thought about that.

JBJ: It's heartbreaking. I try to explain that to my kids—the experience of going to a record store, flipping through racks and finding that album cover that intrigues you—but my kids don't want to know about it. They download the one song on the album they like, and pay their 99 cents.

CR: Musicians always seem to be driving down lonely highways or on long and winding roads.

JBJ: [*Laughs.*] We're always looking for something.

CR: So what do you drive on the lonely highway?

JBJ: I bought a hybrid.

CR: Really? In my fantasy, you drove here in a pinstriped Corvette, with a T-top and red bucket seats.

JBJ: Nope, it's a Toyota hybrid and it's great. Let me tell you something, it goes like stink—it's plenty fast.

CR: You're very involved politically.

JBJ: I'll speak out on issues that I'm knowledgeable about, but I never preach politics from the stage. Now, I didn't vote for [President Bush]. But I've never said anything bad about the guy because I have respect for the office.

CR: Are you playing the Live Earth concert this summer?

JBJ: Yeah, I am. I'm Al's [Gore] biggest fan.

CR: You have a nice carbon footprint.

JBJ: Why, thank you.

Carole Radziwill is the author of What Remains, published by Scribner, now available in paperback.

LUNCH DATA

WHERE: Molly Pitcher Inn, Red Bank, New Jersey

WHAT THEY ATE: Caesar salad and iced tea (Jon); goat cheese salad and iced tea (Carole)