

Hometown boy turned country music singer talks about life in the limelight — and the front porch light.



He grew up kicking around town with his friends at Vanguard College Preparatory School. When he was old enough, George's bar became his hangout — and even inspired an album title. There's no question country music singer/songwriter Pat Green claims Waco as his home. Now a husband and dad of two young kids, and living about 100 miles north of his hometown, Green talks to *Waco Today* about where he is right now — in his music, in his role as a father, in his thoughts on life.

Waco Today: You still claim Waco as your home, right? What about Waco says home to you?

Pat: Waco will always be my hometown — the place where I was raised. I just wish I had a plane or Waco had direct flights to anywhere in the country. I still know every corner on every street, just about.

Waco Today: In what ways are you that same kid who grew up in Waco?

Pat: I suppose I still dream the way I did back then. I was always curious and always daydreaming.

Waco Today: What are some of your best memories about growing up in Waco? What is the craziest thing you ever did?

Pat: I remember going to lots of Baylor games — all the sports. Like any kid, I wanted to grow up faster than was humanly possible. I guess that is why I hung out with all the older kids in school. My brothers and sisters were all older than me. As far as the craziest thing I ever did ... Well, I think it would be easier to name the crazy things I didn't do because there weren't very many.

Waco Today: What are your favorite restaurants/hangouts when you come home?

Pat: I still love George's. I did a lot of growing up there and finding out about life and how things really are in the world. Poppa Rollos and La Fiesta also stick out in my mind as the places our group went a bunch.

Gratefully Green

By Gretchen Eichenberg

Photos by Jimmy Bruch



Waco Today: Where do you live now? And, what's your typical routine? Are you home for dinner most nights? How many days a year are you on the road?

Pat: I live in Fort Worth. It's close to DFW Airport and moves at the right pace for me ... slow. I'm on the road 150-200 days a year so when I'm home, I stay pretty close to the house.

Waco Today: Who is your wife? How old are your kids?

Pat: Wife, Kori; son, Kellis, 4; daughter, Rainey, 1.

Waco Today: Talk about fatherhood. What surprised you? What scares you?

Pat: What I couldn't see coming was just how hard it is to leave the family and go out on tour. I still love performing as much as ever, it's just harder to get on that bus than it used to be. What scares me is that I will miss my children's childhood. To that end, I am working on cutting back on my touring schedule a bit. The greatest joys I get out of being a dad, besides the smiles and laughter around the house, is learning about the true nature of life.

Waco Today: How has fatherhood — familyhood — changed your music, your lifestyle?

Pat: I write about all those things relentlessly. It is almost all-consuming on a creative level.

Waco Today: So, you've recorded about 10 albums now, right? From the very first one to Cannonball, briefly describe how your music has evolved.

Pat: I'm not writing much about the old college days anymore because that's not where I'm at now. I hope that my creative ability in music is much more universal in its appeal. It's easy to get all caught up in the hoopla of being in the lights, so I just keep my head down and try to be honest in the things I'm writing.

Waco Today: How do you describe your own music style? What inspires you, influences you? Where do you get your ideas for songs?

Pat: I try to be myself. That is all that works for me. Guys like Willie Nelson, Bruce Springsteen, set the bar high and I really look up to them for direction in my career. My songs come from the melodies that I play on the guitar. This might kinda sound weird but I hear a lot of melodies and lyrics in my dreams and have to get up and write them down.

Waco Today: What music/artists do you listen to?

Pat: Springsteen, Willie, Jerry Jeff Walker, Jack Ingram, and lots of stuff like that.

Waco Today: At what point do you think your music went from Texas underground to country music's mainstream? Was it with the release of "Wave on Wave" or before that?

Pat: Wave on Wave was definitely the turning point from local to national for

Pat Green will play a New Year's Eve concert at the HOT Coliseum. For tickets, call 776-1660.

me. That song was so enormous. It was one of the most played songs of the year at country radio. I was blown away by the impact it had on my life and my music.

Waco Today: Music critics say you've "been expected to explode as the next country music star for years now." Is that something you spend time thinking about?

Pat: I'm just glad to be in the conversation about the next big thing.

Waco Today: What's been the proudest moment of your career so far?

Pat: It happens every time I come home—when the faces of my wife and kids light up when I walk in the door. Other than that, the Grammy nods were great as well.

Waco Today: What's your favorite stage to perform on — in what city?

Pat: Madison Square Garden in New York was the highest I have ever been on stage. That place is reserved for guys like Sinatra and the Stones. I sang there last summer on tour with Kenny Chesney. Wow.

Waco Today: What advice do you have for aspiring young musicians today? Or, what advice would you give any kids today about going for their dreams?

Pat: Any dream is worth chasing, any time, anywhere. Go for it — that is the only way



that things happen in this world.

Waco Today: The American Red Cross recently honored you for your service to that organization. Why are you passionate about Red Cross? What would you tell others about why they should support Red Cross?

Pat: Blood is a universal common place for all humanity. We all have it and we all need it to live, so it seemed like a good place to focus my energy. As well as St. Jude's Children's Hospital. We all owe it to the world to give what we can. So, go do it.