

# An English girl in New York



**The American music industry is a notoriously difficult nut for British artists to crack, but in Estelle, we've got someone with the talent and ambition to do just that. James Descombes chats to the chart-topping superstar...**

**She** may be best known for her hit single *American Boy*, but this English girl is making big waves on both sides of the pond. With the likes of American heavyweight rapper/beat-maker Kanye West and UK super-producer Mark Ronson lending their skills to Estelle's last album, this top Brit talent looks set to continue her worldwide chart domination.

It's been a long and, at times, hard road for Estelle to get to her current position as one of the country's brightest music stars. But 2008 has definitely been a year she'll remember, with the release of her second album *Shine* and *American Boy* shedding light on one of our hottest music talents. "Things have just gone crazy, *American Boy* went to number one all over Europe. It's just insane right now."

Born and raised in west London, Estelle started out working in a record shop before her talent, showcased at local clubs, was noticed by fellow hip-hop artists who let her shine on their albums. It didn't take long for Estelle's ability to write, rhyme and sing to propel her into the industry, and with her super-catchy single *1980* and debut album *The 18th Day*, Estelle cemented her position as one of the country's best newcomers, even picking up a MOBO Award in the process.

After a promising entry into the music industry, things started to slow down for Estelle, and her record label dropped her in 2005. "I put out my album, which had the song *1980* on it, and it just kept progressing really well. Then it went dead because the label didn't really push the album, they pushed the single."

Estelle moved to New York in 2007 to resurrect her career and attempt to take the US music industry by storm. She hasn't looked back since, though she cheekily admits to missing a few home comforts.

**"I miss fish 'n' chips. They have places in New York, but it's not the same."**

"Americans don't really eat at home, they don't really cook, they eat out – that's the culture. You get used to it and start eating out. I miss fish 'n' chips, though. They have places in New York but it's not the same.

2008 saw the spectacular return of Estelle, hooking up with Kanye West, who she met outside a fast food restaurant in the US, and signing to American R&B superstar, John Legend's Homeschool Records. The monster hit *American Boy* went to number 1 in the UK on digital sales alone and her album went Top 10.

Estelle was also nominated for a Mercury Music Award, won two MOBOs and performed at Glastonbury in 2008. "It was like 'wow', I'm at Glastonbury. We were on the main stage and it was like, what's going on?"

The future looks bright for Estelle, and with more music on its way she won't be taking a holiday any time soon. "The next year I'm going to tour like crazy. I'd like to go to Hawaii at some point, though. I've been to Turks and Caicos. It's as though someone just put paradise on the side of the water and said 'there you go, sit around'."

Estelle's album, *Shine*, is out now.

