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They live in LA but the Veronicas just keep coming home. Back for two months already, they've just performed at the ARIAs and this week will be at the Melbourne Cup. In between, Brisbane's twin pop sensations will keep up with rehearsals for their upcoming national tour. **Sally Browne** met up with the Veronicas in Sydney

HOMECOMING QUEENS

LISA Origiasso is guessing what's on her sister's iPod: "Shiny Toy Guns I think would be on there. The Follow. Marilyn Manson's new record."
 Twin Jess says: "Do you want me to test you? That's right, by the way."
 Lisa explains: "We have very similar taste in music. Jess tends to be a bit more hardcore at times. I love my acoustic rock. My favourite artists are Dallas Green, a guy named Buchanan. But then we love CSS, the Sounds, Under the Influence of Giants. We were both huge fans of Michael Jackson growing up."

The girls are in Cockle Bay, Sydney, enjoying lunch at the water's edge — a stop on a typically busy schedule.
 They've been back in Australia from LA for about two months now, and the Veronicas' merry-go-round is in full swing.
 In the space of one week they'll go from Sydney, where they performed at the ARIA awards, to their home town of Brisbane to rehearse for their upcoming tour, then to Melbourne to hang out with TV host Rove McManus and attend Tuesday's Melbourne Cup.

Also on their iPods, says Lisa, is the Veronicas' new album, *Hook Me Up*, released this weekend. "We've been having to listen to it because we have to pick the second single," she explains.
 The first single, the catchy, groove-laden *Hook Me Up*, proved to be a natural success, reaching No.4 on the ARIA charts. And it set the tone for the album, the follow up to their top-selling debut *The Secret Life Of...*

The 12-track album marks a change in direction for the Veronicas, who have been exploring a new electro-pop sound, influenced by bands they got into in LA.

This time around, they also knew exactly which songwriters they wanted to work with, including Billy Steinberg, best known for his work with Madonna, and John Feldmann, who has worked with Good Charlotte and the Used.
 Most of the record was written in intimate sessions in their home in LA with German songwriter Toby Gad, the man behind Fergie's hit *Big Girls Don't Cry*.

"It was really great," says Jess. "Toby works on a simplified set-up on his Mac computer. It takes all the pressure out of being in a recording studio. We were able to take our time and get it right and not stress about time ticking."

Two years older (they're now 22) and with two years' worth of life experience to write about, the Veronicas have produced a much more personal album, too.
 The most intimate track on the album is *In Another Life*, about Jess's break-up with her long-

term boyfriend, who lives in Australia. Writing the song was almost like therapy and an emotional experience for both sisters.
 "It was probably the hardest song we've ever written," says Jess, "because it was like, write a line, cry for 10 minutes, write another line, cry for 10 minutes."

"I was worse than you," says Lisa.
 Gad was very patient with the twins, waiting until they had finished crying and then telling them to keep going because the material was good. Jess reckons you can hear her sniffing on the record.
 "When it came time to record it, it was the same thing," she says. "Sing a line and then cry. But once we kind of did it, it was, 'OK, it's done now. And it's all out there.'"

For Lisa, *Revenge is Sweeter (That You Ever Were)* is one of her most personal tracks.
 "It was about an idiot that I dated overseas," she says with a laugh.
 "It was more forthcoming with the details." When it comes down to it, that song's about cheating," she explains. "A lot of people have been through it, like

I've been through it, so it was very easy to relate to that situation. And I saw that whole situation go on, so it wasn't hard for me to write that song with her."
 Adds Lisa: "And those notes you hit makes you sound like you're channelling my pain!"
 Obviously the sisters look out for each other in terms of relationships and have a sixth sense when it comes to approving each other's boyfriends.

They may have similar taste in clothes and music, but their taste in men is completely different.
 Lisa is famously dating Australian *Idol* star Dean Geyer, who will be supporting the girls on their upcoming tour. Jess is dating Azaria, lead singer of Sydney band the Follow.

The two couldn't be more different.
 "It's so funny," says Jess. "When we first started dating — because we started dating our boyfriends at pretty much the same time — we'd stereotype Dean as this good Christian boy and then Dean is like this heathen, rock'n'roll, dirty boy who doesn't shower. Dean is someone who brushes his teeth five times a day. We'd just pick out really funny things about each of them. We think it's hysterical."

"The boys got on well, however.
 "They're both really sweet, kind people, that's why," says Jess. "They've both got really good hearts. Neither of them have to try and like each other, they're just really open people. It's important for us to have that."

Next on the girls' agenda is rehearsing for their tour, which kicks off in Perth on November 30 and reaches Brisbane on December 11. The girls will then be heading back to LA in the new year.
 Although their promo schedule keeps them moving, they're currently living with their folks in the Brisbane suburb of Hendra while they wait for their parents' new riverside apartment to be ready.
 "I can't wait," says Lisa. "It's got a pool, a spa and a gym."

"You know why you like it?" points out Jess. "It's because we're used to staying in hotels and it's like a hotel."

Despite the red carpet and Moët lifestyle, Jess says it's not difficult to stay grounded. They're still suburban girls at heart and still hang out with their old friends from school.

"People are always kind of surprised, but it's actually not a hard thing to stay grounded," she says. "We were raised to never put ourselves above anyone, so we've always lived our life like that. So we don't really know any different. People don't suck up to us as much as people think."

They also have the sisterly bond to keep each other in check. "We deflate each other's egos on a regular basis," says Lisa.



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OVER the next four weeks, the Veronicas will give readers of *The Sunday Mail* an exclusive behind-the-scenes look into their lives as they count down to their national tour! Each week, the Veronicas will record an exclusive online video blog showing their preparation for the big tour.

The *Hook Me Up* tour kicks off in Perth on November 30 and hits the Brisbane Entertainment Centre on December 11 and the Gold Coast Convention Centre on December 12. Log on to thesundaymail.com.au to see what the girls have been up to this week.

In harmony: Twin sisters Jess (left) and Lisa indulge in their passion for fashion and fun