

# THE SWEETEST THINGS

There's no place like home, twin sensations Lisa and Jess Origliasso tell **Sally Browne**, who visited the tour-weary Veronicas at their Brisbane River family apartment

LISA Origliasso is lying on her perfectly made bed when a text comes through. "It's from Billy Steinberg!" she exclaims.

Who? you ask. Only the guy who wrote such huge hits as *Like a Virgin* for Madonna, *True Colors* for Cyndi Lauper and *Eternal Flame* for the Bangles.

He also co-wrote songs on The Veronicas' two albums, *The Secret Life Of* and last year's *Hook Me Up*.

"I told him, 'You are my favourite guy in the whole world,'" says coquettish Lisa, who probably has a black belt in flirting.

The girls are at home on a much-needed break after six months touring in the US. We're looking at artefacts in Lisa's room — a candle bought by her mum and dad, a designer watch bought by twin sister Jess, nail polish given to her by who knows (it definitely came for free).

Blonde Jess holds up a dazzling top. "Lisa's

they get home — after exhausting the local restaurants of their supply of mud crabs — stare at the sky.

"I forgot how nice the air is here, clean and no smog," says Jess.

It's a little R'n'R after what has been a somewhat challenging year as the pop darlings found themselves the subject of newspaper headlines for all the wrong reasons.

It's been a busy six months overseas, too, with the girls touring the country with two other sets of sibling bands — Disney proteges the Jonas Brothers, and Hanson.

The Jonas Brothers tour saw them performing to 30,000 people a night as they got to see the great Disney machine in action.

"Touring is very unglamorous. I didn't wash my clothes for three or four months," Jess says. Lisa adds: "We had to buy new

remain tight-lipped about such things, but now they're listening to those who told them to keep their private life private.

This year has been something of an annus horribilis in terms of the stories that have hit the news-stands.

Accusations of anorexia against Jess, a supposed feud with Pink (they're good friends now), and Jess's dalliances with MTV VJ Ruby Rose are among the topics that have got people talking.

One of the biggest bombs to drop was the semi-nude photos of Jess sold to a picture agency. It was front-page news.

Jess knew something was up the day before as her publicist had been contacted for a statement.

"It was very stressful. I was sick to my stomach," she says.

The next day, from the cocoon of her hotel room, she gingerly asked the staff to

While the Jonas Brothers might feel the tight rein of Disney governing their every move, The Veronicas are resolutely themselves — even to the point of criticism. Some have questioned their provocative image in light of them having a largely young fan base.

But being role models is not something they take lightly.

"We've had so many parents come up to us and say, 'We think you guys are great. I'm sorry for what you've been through recently,'" Jess says.

"And it surprised me a little because that was the thing that upset me the most. I was like, 'Oh no, I hope parents aren't going to throw things at me in the street'."

"They're so supportive. People know that we're very real and people make mistakes. We just live our life and we try to be the best people we can be."

"We always say if you want a perfect role model for your kids, look at the Disney kids because they're put on strings and they're put in situations where they have to be completely perfect, but for me that's a really unrealistic role model for kids to look up to. Nobody's that perfect. Nobody can go through their life without making mistakes."

"One day when I've got kids I don't want them striving to an unrealistic perfection. I want them to look up to people that are real."

"We encourage kids to be opinionated, to be independent, to go for their dreams and not let people bring you down, and if you make mistakes you deal with them and take responsibility."

It's their parents who encouraged The Veronicas to go for their dreams since they were small and they are still close.

While we're chatting, mum Colleen brings in snacks including dips and chocolate cake and other items that are definitely not on an anorexic's diet.

She serves them Sara Lee chocolate cake on their birthday, which is just around the corner on Christmas Day. They'll be 24. Jess eats the more, says their mum: "She could eat a whole one by herself."

Later, we're leaning over their balcony, talking about what they might do when they're older. Jess is into photography, she styled the pictures seen here herself, and Lisa says she wouldn't mind running a record label some day. "I'd love to do song-writing or styling," she says.

"I'd love to have kids and be their manager," Jess jokes.

Lisa weighs in on the idea: "I reckon we get my kids and Jess's kids and make them into a little band."

The Veronicettes. It just might work.

**The Veronicas play the Brisbane Entertainment Centre on February 14.**

PEOPLE TREAT YOU LIKE YOU'RE A CHARACTER. LIKE YOU'RE THE LITTLE MERMAID WANDERING DOWN THE STREET. THEY HONESTLY FORGET THAT YOU'RE A REAL PERSON



obsessed with this vest. She wears it around the house. I'll wake up in the morning and she'll have the vest on and her undies. I'm like, 'What are you doing?'"

Home is a high-rise apartment overlooking the Brisbane River, where they live, for two months of the year at least, with their mum and dad and big bro Julian. The only thing in the apartment that shouts "money" is the view. The twins' bedrooms seem like any suburban girls' rooms.

Above Lisa's bed is a painting given to her by her ex-fiance, Dean Geyer. It features a lyric from a song he wrote for her: "Remember the look in our eyes."

Jess's room is the messier one. A new bass is crammed in next to a small dresser overflowing with bling. Above it is a collage of pictures, poems and love notes. Her make-up is all over the floor.

The first thing The Veronicas do when

underwear. "From Wal-Mart," finishes Jess. "There's nowhere to wash and if you have a day off the last thing you want to do is go to the laundromat."

Don't they have "people" to do that? "We'd have to pay them a lot more to wash our underwear. Or they'd have to pay us."

The Veronicas will return to the US to promote their single *Untouched*, which has been added to major radio stations.

Then they're here for a tour which reaches Brisbane on February 14.

"It's called the *Revenge is Sweeter* tour," says Lisa with a glint in her eye. "It's a bit cheeky." The song references an unfaithful ex.

But apart from in song, the girls say they aren't talking about relationships any more.

Growing up reading celebrity rags, they didn't think they'd be the type of people to

send up the papers. The girl who came to the door shyly handed the newspaper over. And Jess, equally shyly, thanked her in return.

"I was like, 'Awwwww, thanks,'" she says and laughs.

In sisterly solidarity, Lisa stayed in her hotel room for a week. "I hated it," she says. "I didn't go outside."

Although their friends and fans showed strong support, Jess says that sometimes people can forget the person behind the image.

"People treat you like you're a character," she says, "like you're the Little Mermaid wandering down the street. They honestly forget that you're a real person."

Their defence mechanism is their sense of humour, which they both clearly have. Jess may be the more outgoing of the two, but Lisa can deliver a sly one-liner with the venom of Cleopatra's asp.

