



perfect words

BY DEBORAH MINTER

Recording her new CD *Perfect Little World* has been a long and somewhat frustrating journey, but for SHARON BENJAMIN the end result was worth all the trouble.

As if to prove that nothing that good is ever easy, the album almost had **SHARON BENJAMIN** and her husband/music partner **MARK HILLIER** tearing at their hair.

"We started recording in a studio in Sydney," Sharon explained, "but we weren't happy with how it was coming together. With one thing and another it just went on and on and on. So finally we decided to build our own studio and do it ourselves. From then on it came together beautifully and we're just ecstatic with the result."

When it came time to release the debut single from the album, there was a small glitch.

"I wanted to go with *Why He Rolls*, a song about a truck driving dad coming home from six days away, but one of my friends heard it and started crying, 'Oh that's so sad!' We decided to go with *High As Heaven* instead.

"We thought it'd be better to start off with a happy song," she laughed. "I have a habit of writing tragic stories."

"*High As Heaven* was written in about twenty minutes. I got that initial line and the rest of the song just poured out of me. Then when we started recording it I discovered it wasn't quite long enough. It didn't seem quite right. It took me another month or two to write the bridge. It worked out for the best because it has added such a great feel to the song."

"As a songwriter, there's a very strong urge not to ever close the book on a song," Sharon admitted. "That can drive you insane. I'm such a perfectionist; I just have to come to a point where I'm happy with what I've got. They're like children leaving the nest."

Sharon has the ability to write songs raise the excitement level. *I Want What She's Having* is a light-hearted look at jealousy. "We are all jealous of something," Sharon said. "We admire someone's new car or

diamond ring. No one's immune from that little surge of envy."

Firmly tongue-in-cheek is another snappy track, *Jack Of Diamonds*. "It's about a guy with absolutely no depth of character; fast cars and fast women," Sharon said. "It's not about any person I know, so all my friends can relax."

Sharon's subject matter is full of emotional themes and situation, but not a lot of 'traditional' country issues. "There are a lot of stories that aren't about koalas and blue cattle dogs or utes, but people relate to them because of the feelings they portray."

Not exactly about a ute, but about a girl who loves them, is the hit song Sharon penned for close friend **CRAIG GILES**, *Who Said Girls Don't Drive*.

"It's awesome to have other people recording my songs," she said. "It comes back to personal opinion; what I think is a hit might not be what the artist is looking for. But as soon as Craig heard that song he wanted it, because he knew he could 'sell' it to his audience."

"I've got a lot of things I want to say and who cares whose voice it is, as long as it's my message."

Since finishing the album, Sharon and Mark have gone on to record Aussie Legend **REG POOLE**.

"It was such an honour to work with him," Sharon said. "He could have his choice of studios, now he's an OAM and a SIR and a HMAS and all the other letters, but he chose us. It was a big thrill. We're now talking about doing a tour with him and (fellow country performer and comedian) **OWEN BLUNDELL**. That'll be a real humdinger of an experience!"

With radio stations already clamouring to add *High As Heaven* to playlists, Sharon will no doubt be holding her ground beside the best in the nation.