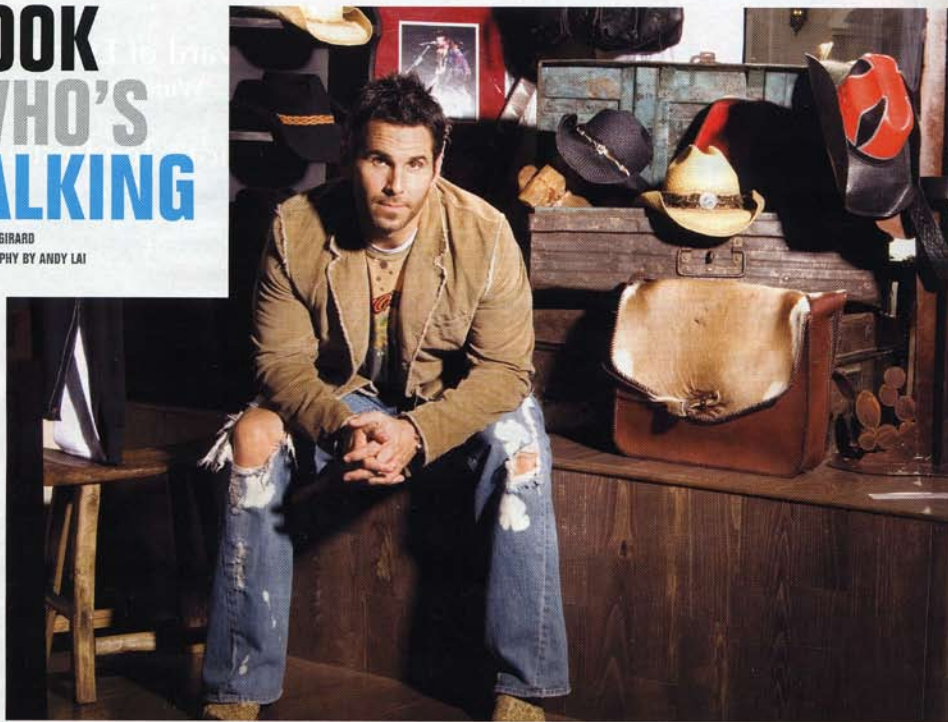


LOOK
WHO'S
TALKING

BY STACY GIRARD
 PHOTOGRAPHY BY ANDY LAI



THE COWBOY WAY *Heath Calhoun's Wild Western Expansion*

Just this side of the millennium, Heath Calhoun came to Dallas, showing all how the West should be worn. Dallas took notice. So did stylists and celebrities such as Madonna, Billy Bob Thornton and Kid Rock, who helped create national buzz about his rough-and-tumble West Village boutique Cowboy Cool, opened in April 2003. But his is not the costumey, literal Western apparel you're used to. Calhoun caters to a clientele of couture cowboys and girls who want to be noticed for their limited-edition belt buckles, vintage rock T-shirts and expressive cowboy boots.

A former gym owner and personal-fitness trainer, the model/actor muscled his way around Denver, New York, L.A. and Texas before opening Cowboy Cool. It was in unlikely New York City where Calhoun, eyeing a pair of Liberty Boot Co. cowboy boots, first came up with the retail concept. A little bit country and a whole lot rock 'n' roll, Calhoun fluently joins his three passions: the Western ideal, rock and the rebellious biker influence. From Norphlet, Arkansas, Calhoun comes by his twang naturally, which only makes the urban-cowboy package more

palatable. (The 48-hour stubble doesn't hurt either.)

Out on the range, he's not, but no one's noticing. He's been busy, with plans to open Cowboy Cool stores in Austin, Houston, Las Vegas, Los Angeles, New York and Scottsdale. His Austin store, located in the 2nd Street District, opens this month, with the New York and Las Vegas locations slated to open at the end of the year. He's even turning his talents toward branding his new West concept in his own private label, aptly coined Cowboy Cool, which will include jeans, shirts and leathers, and be sold in his retail locations and through luxury retailers. Not bad for a guy with zero prior retail experience.

"I haven't made many mistakes yet," says Calhoun, animated and gingerly knocking on wood. But his entrée into retailing hasn't been without a few glitches. He tells of his first misadventure, where he landed at the Denver livestock market instead of the Western apparel market. "There were horses and cows everywhere and I was looking for belts and boots," he laughs. "...I didn't know what the hell I was doing!" ■

HOTS: Shelly (My Wife), Originality, Cowboy Boots, Range Rover, St. Barts, Golfing, Riding my Harley, Anything Tom Ford Designs. **NOTS:** Big Hair, Lots of Makeup, Egos, Mullets, Round-Toed Boots, Over-Accessorizing, People Talking in the Movies, Skin-Tight Jeans