

Blast It Trash It Smash It Rip It Kick It Couture

Text by **SORINA DIACONESCU**
Photograph by **KURT ISWARIENKO**

When U2 circled the globe on last year's Vertigo tour, Bono delivered every night's sermon clad in an apple-red leather jacket with white stars shooting down one sleeve and buckles from a military-issued parachute grafted onto the chest. The jacket had been a humble tan number dozing in a thrift store until it was rescued—and torn apart, sprayed with a fresh coat of paint, reassembled, bruised and embellished—by L.A. rocker-turned-couturière-to-the-rock-world Corey Parks.

Couturière? That's a \$10 word for the bass-playing, profanity-spewing Parks, whose tattoos include a Luger pistol on one hip and a gagged-and-bound damsel on one shoulder. "The [expletive] that I make is so [expletive] dirty rock 'n' roll you have to be a [expletive] pig to wear it to the Grammys," she'll tell you in her smoky growl. "I sometimes run over clothes with my car to make them look dirtier, because that's how I wear 'em."

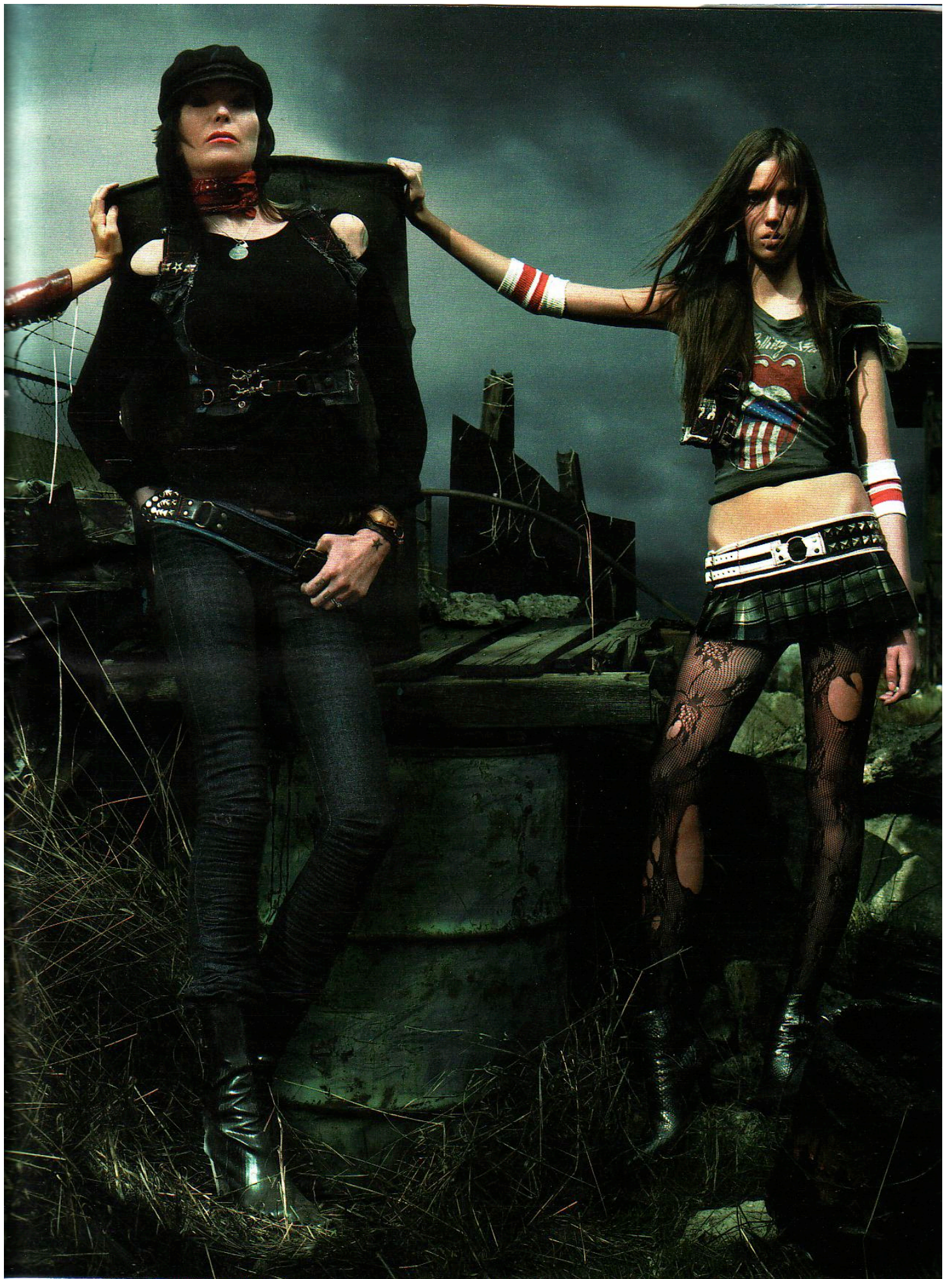
But her creations are couture. The 35-year-old Parks wants to be known as an outlaw seamstress, but she's so in vogue that one of her \$695 custom-patched micro-minis was touted in this month's Elle. Her snarky denim vests and exquisitely trashed velvet blazers share rack space with Rochas and Balenciaga gowns at Maxfield in Los Angeles, Colette in Paris and Harvey Nichols in Hong Kong; her label tickles the necks of Lenny Kravitz, Cher and Britney Spears.

"Hilary Duff was wearing one of my velvets in a video she did with her sister. And I'm like, what is the world coming to?" Parks said recently. "Maybe I should put a little disclaimer in-



THE WARDROBE

Corey Parks, center, first defined her look with the '90s punk band Nashville Pussy. Her one concession to girly glam: plaid skirts with bondage straps.



side the jackets: 'I will not be held responsible for who ends up wearing it.'

Parks makes clothes that reflect the persona (part nasty hellcat, part bordello tart, part trailer-park princess) that she developed when she toured with the hillbilly punk-terror band Nashville Pussy in the '90s. She often defaces denim, leather and fur with American outlaw insignias: screaming eagles, snakes caught in a buzz saw of Stars and Stripes, leering skulls, motorcycle patches straight out of "Easy Rider." Each piece comes with the tag "Customized by Corey Parks" stenciled onto slivers of python skin above a design of a bleeding heart encircled by barbed wire.

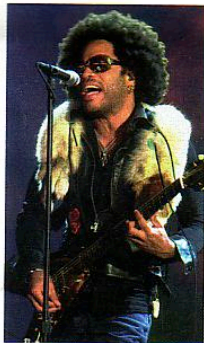
She likes to say that she's an Orange County gal from an old-fashioned hippie clan, born with a lifelong affliction: "terminal uniqueness." After an itinerant childhood (nine elementary schools in eight years), she moved to Hollywood in the late '80s to try a career as an anti-model. Her bass playing and fire-belching stage act eventually got her the gig with Nashville Pussy, which was nominated in 1999 for a Grammy in the best metal performance category. For the awards ceremony, Parks squeezed herself into custom-made black leather pants and vest. "It was still a little more rocker [chic] back then," she recalled, "but in the last few years it's become very glamour."

After she got off the rock 'n' roll road five years ago, Parks worked the door at the now-defunct Les Deux Cafés in Hollywood, where she mingled with L.A. fashion wunderkind Rick Owens and wowed Maxfield owner Tommy Perse with her homespun threads. Perse gave her the big break, commissioning several pieces for his influential boutique and introducing her to her first sewing machine for leather.

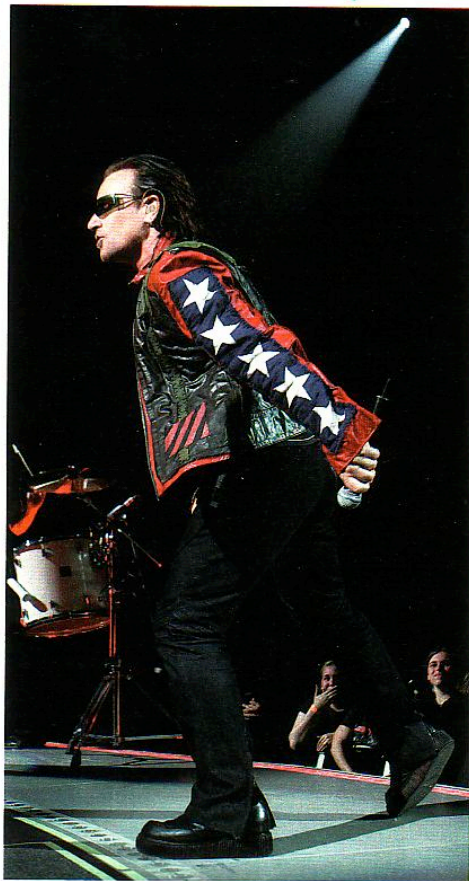
Parks regards playing bass with the punk outfit Die Hunns, and her bassist gig with the psycho-billy group Charley Horse, as missions truer to her heart. But, she explained, "making clothes is what pays the bills. Rock 'n' roll doesn't pay—not real rock 'n' roll, anyway."

Three years ago, Parks bought a home by the water in Long Beach, which she shares with her pro-skater husband, Duane Peters, their 14-month-old son, Clash, and their teacup Chihuahua, Chopper. Her atelier is in the garage, where you'll find her amid the treasures she has amassed over a decade of touring, such as the Motörhead patch the size of a giant tortilla bequeathed to her by the band's frontman, Lemmy Kilmeister. (She recently cobbled together an outfit based on it, which she wore on a pilot for Jenny Shimizu's new reality TV show, "Tutu's Motorworld.")

For most of her garments, Parks starts with a vintage denim or leather piece that she dyes and then roughs up and embellishes. Sometimes she has a specific image in mind: "Mick Jagger at Altamont: A red-and-black outfit with this ridiculous



JOHN MCCOY/WIREIMAGE



KEVIN MAZUR/WIREIMAGE

The boys in the band: Corey Parks' designs are on U2's Bono, above, and Lenny Kravitz, left. Bono's jacket was a vintage leather piece that Parks tore apart, sprayed with paint and further embellished.

fringe hanging to the floor."

Most often it's personal. She'll pick up "a jacket that I have at the end of the tour, after I've been on the road for a couple of months," and find herself "just sittin' in the van and sewing and hand-stitching on it and putting studs in."

"As it gets dirtier and dirtier from wearing it every day," she said, "it takes on a life and a personality of its own."

Her latest commission is stage outfits for a Pussycat Dolls-type revue led by Ace Harper, the girlfriend of Matt Sorum from Velvet Revolver. She does fittings by looking you over and sizing you up. Harper rates a "tiny" on Parks' special scale. "She's basically the size of one of my legs," says the 6-foot, 3-inch Parks. "I could hang her from my key chain."

When there's a big job at hand—it can take 24 hours to produce one garment—Parks will recruit girlfriends or her mother, and they'll hunker down in the garage to attach studs, zippers and pelts until the right amount of rude excess is achieved.

Plaid skirts decorated with safety pins and bondage straps are some of Parks' concessions to girly glam. Maxfield stocks items from the ladylike end of her spectrum: a rich plum velvet blazer with three diamond clusters for buttons, a real bullet pinned to the lapel and, over the heart, a patch that sneers: "I hate your band." w

Juke Joints That Really Ju

By GARY CALAMAR

Many of them have gone digital and you two tunes for two bits anymore, but jukeboxes. If a joint has a jukebox, I can social excursion. I can eat chicken vindaloo. Waits as background or suck down a Coors. Zafiro's sets the mood. There are hundreds of them in the L.A. area.

Here are some of my favorites:

The 101 Coffee Shop

6145 Franklin Ave., Los Angeles

Known as the "last cappuccino before it gets points for a fabulous breakfast to a machine with super-groovy selection of two tunes: "100 Years From Now," by the Who, Kraftwerk, the Music Machine, Seboung, Holly Golightly, Johnny Cash, Lee and Laura Veirs.

Short Stop

1455 Sunset Blvd., Los Angeles

A former watering hole for cops, it's co-located with Afghan Whigs/Twilight Singers frontman. There's no sign, but the music slips and the street. My favorites: "Creep," by TLC #2," by Elliott Smith. Also playing: Frank Bobbie Gentry, Prince Buster, Howlin' Wolf sampling of locals, including the 88, De and Autolux.

Malco

4326 W. Sunset Blvd., Los Angeles

Nothing goes with the Rose Petal and C grilled chicken like this eclectic mix. My faves: "Portions For Foxes," by Rilo Kiley, and "I by Jonathan Richman. Also playing: Arc Drake, Sufjan Stevens, Parliament, LCD the Beatles, Snow Patrol, M.I.A., the Flyin' Bros., Tom Waits and Dr. Dre.

Swingers

802 Broadway, Santa Monica

With its Andy Warhol cow paintings and love-girl waitresses, it's got something fitting along to. My favorites: "We Will Be ettes," by the Postal Service, and "God C by the Beach Boys. Also playing: Funkad Sinatra, DJ Krush, Humble Pie, Morphine and New York Dolls.

Jones

7205 Santa Monica Blvd., West Hollywood

This is the place with the highest decibel box in town. My favorites: "4th of July, As by Bruce Springsteen, and "Y Control," by Yeahs. Also playing: PJ Harvey, Spoon an

Gary Calamar hosts "The Open Road" and is a Grammy-nominated producer of "Feet Under" soundtracks.