

Patty Loveless

Back In The Limelight

By Michael McCall

Most people look forward to getting away from home. But singer Patty Loveless, who spends the majority of her life on the road, considers being at home a luxury, she loves to indulge whenever she can – which, she says, isn't as much as she'd like.

Patty and her husband, record producer Emory Gordy, spent an evening talking about how rarely they had ever vacationed together. Because she spends more than half of her life traveling, she prefers the comforts of a familiar home when off the road. "Anytime I'm home, it feels like a vacation," Patty says with a gentle laugh.

She and her husband came up with a solution: Why not invest in a vacation home? They built a large, resort-style cottage on 150 acres in a wooded valley in Georgia, 45 miles northwest of Atlanta. The couple loved the place so much, they now spend more time there than they do in their primary residence in Nashville.

"I love it there because it allows me to spend time getting connected back to the earth again," says Loveless, who grew up in rural Appalachia in the mountains of Eastern Kentucky. "It's very secluded. Most people would say it's in the middle of



nowhere, and it is. We like to go out at night and lay back on the truck bed and stare up at all the stars. When you're that far away from things, the heavens are so bright – brighter than being in the middle of Atlanta."

These days, with a new album (*On Your Way Home*), Patty says the couple might average two or three days a week at the Georgia home, which is about as much as she can spare. "I live on the road more than anywhere else," she says.

But the two decompress by spending nearly all of December and January at the home, which is nestled near Red Top Mountain. "The winters are mild," says the

veteran country singer. "There's no snow or ice storms or anything like that. It's enjoyable. One of my favorite activities is to go four-wheeling, and the winter's are great for that, because I don't have to worry about snakes."

It makes sense that this mountain-grown redhead would love getting away from it all. A cousin to country music legend Loretta Lynn, Loveless has always represented the down-home side of country music.

In her non-grandstanding way, Patty has served as modern country music's female counterpart to Alan Jackson. She's a commercial country artist of rare integrity and consistency, always stepping forward with material that pulls on all of the genre's greatest strengths. And her voice – fragile yet strong, aching yet sure of itself – is one of the most compelling instruments of its time.

She's got a great sense of timing, too — one that likely prolonged her career just as it looked like she was about to leave the mainstream with Dwight Yoakam, Pam Tillis and other peers. But as country music concentrated on pop-crossover sounds in recent years, Patty took a back road. She recorded a career highpoint last year with *Mountain Soul*, a bluegrass-flavored album that came out just as the soundtrack of "O Brother Where Art Thou"