

# Debbie Watson

BY LEON BECK

**Y**ou can find more than just country music in a Texas honky-tonk on a Saturday night. There's also beer, boots, belt buckles, and, of course, you've gotta have that big hair.

When Debbie Watson was a member of Houston's Sugar Creek, a trio of honky-tonk angels, she saw a lot of big haired honeys boot-scootin' across the hardwood dance floor. And she also saw big hair when she looked in the mirror.

"The girls in Sugar Creek used to go to the bathroom at the gigs and we'd put on our makeup and tease our hair," Debbie says. "It was completely natural for us." One night she told fellow band member Monique Grezlik that she should write a song about big hair.

"Yeah! Big hair down in Texas," Monique laughed.

"Monique is extremely talented and witty," Debbie says, "and she came up with the song."

That song eventually ended up as the title cut of Debbie Watson's new CD, and, as Debbie says, "I've always worn my hair big. It's just who I am. The girl from Texas with big hair.

When you look at it that way, what else would I have called it?"

The girl from Texas now calls Music City her home, and she says she's been singing the song in her shows in Nashville for several years and "people love it. So, I decided to put the song on my CD. It's a very simple song," she states. "It just describes going out dancing in Texas on a typical Saturday night with makeup on, and, of course, wearing big hair."

Released on an independent label without the benefit of a major promotional campaign, the CD has garnered the attention of radio, and the title cut has received airplay in Texas, New Mexico, Florida, Michigan and Connecticut, as well as radio play in Germany, Sweden, France, Denmark, Austria, Croatia, Belgium, the Netherlands, Australia and New Zealand. And, Debbie, says, she just might pick up airplay in France.

Debbie, who moved to Nashville in 2001, returns to her Texas roots for a *Big Hair Down In Texas* CD release party on Oct. 28 at the Lone Star Club in Pasadena. "I can't wait to be among my Texas

fans again," she says. "I may live in Nashville now, but Houston will always be my home. I'm coming home to my friends, family and peers -- and there's nobody else I'd rather play for.

"Sandy at the Lone Star Club has been so very nice to me. She believes in me and has graciously invited me to hold my CD release party at the Lone Star Club. And I'm very fortunate to have one of southeast Texas' most popular bands, Al White and Chaparral, back me on my sets."

Debbie, who describes the CD as "western swing meets rockabilly meets bluegrass," says she will visit radio stations in Houston, Austin and San Antonio during her visit home, and she has plans for an extended Texas radio tour.

Her next single will be "My Baby Thinks I'm Just Right," and she's currently writing songs for her next CD, which she will start recording in 2006.

Born in the "tiny East Oklahoma town of Idabel," she grew up in nearby Broken Bow. She says her "fascination with music began early. One of the earliest memories I have is, at the age of 5 or 6, sneaking into the next-door neighbor's house and playing their piano. I'd get a couple of minutes of playing time in before I'd wake the baby and the neighbor would catch me.

"I begged and begged my parents for a piano, and when they finally bought me one, I sat out at the end of the driveway all day until the delivery men brought it. I spent hours and hours sitting around playing and singing."

Her family moved to Houston when she was 8, and growing up, she was exposed to her parents' music (Glen Campbell, the Kingston Trio and Roger Miller), and she later discovered the likes of Linda Ronstadt, Emmylou Harris, Bonnie Raitt, Jackson Browne and the Eagles. "Probably my greatest influences have been Linda Ronstadt, Patty Loveless and Pam Tillis, and I learned to sing harmony singing along with Jackson Browne and the Eagles records."

At 16, she visited some musician friends at a club in Bacliff who invited her to get up and sing. "The first time I sang in front of a crowd," she recalls, "I felt complete bliss, like this was where I belonged and what I was meant to do." At 17, she started performing as one-half of a duo that played Shakey's Pizza Parlor on Nasa Road One.

Over the years she has played with many Houston area bands, including Cool Morning, Second Nature, No Exit, the Larry Callis Band, Deep River, Shiloh, and the female trio, Sugar Creek. "Before I joined Sugar Creek, I did a stint with an almost-all-attorney party band called the Ambulance Chasers. That was a fun nine-piece band complete with horns. We did Motown, soul and R&B." In '93, she formed Debbie Watson & the Hot Watts, and in 2001 she left the band to make that trip to Nashville.

She made that move, she says, because she felt she had done all she could do in Houston. "Or maybe I was ready for a change. I came up here on a wing and a prayer. I didn't know anybody and had no contacts. I just trusted that God would guide me in whichever way I should go."

And with the release of the *Big Hair Down In Texas* CD, Debbie's on the right road.



**big hair down in texas**  
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