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Why Jason Aldean Won't Stop Singing About Pick-Up Trucks and Dirt Roads

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Why Jason Aldean Won't Stop Singing About Pick-Up Trucks and Dirt Roads



In the two years since Jason Aldean released his last album, *Old Boots, New Dirt*, country music went through a period of self-examination. Artists and critics alike debated the merits of "bro country," as it was dubbed, questioning the direction of a genre awash in songs about trucks and beer and dirt roads.

Aldean, however, was not among the navel-gazers.

"The whole idea to me is just ridiculous," Aldean, 39, tells PEOPLE exclusively.

So just how much did the bro-country debate affect the making of his new album, *They Don't Know?* "Not a bit. I promise you when I go in to cut records, that's the last thing I think about. I sure as hell am not influenced by what some writer from New York who is obviously a half-way country music fan says. I want to cut a record I'm proud of, that I feel like my fans would like and something that I want to play every night."

And yes, that includes a few more tunes about girls and beer – and trucks.

"Look at 'Coming in Hot,'" Aldean says of one of the songs on his new album, which just became his third straight to top the Billboard 200 chart. "You're talking about going to pick up a chick, in your truck, you got a koozie and a beer in the console. But if a song is good, it's good. I'm sorry but I didn't grow up in a city. I grew up in Georgia, in the country and that's what we did as kids. That's what I can relate to. I didn't go to Studio 54 on the weekends."

But the singer, who recently played for more than 60,000 fans at Boston's Fenway Park (see video above), is quick to point out that the album is not all boozy nights on a tailgate. Take "Plane Don't Go There," an aching tune about love lost, and one of a number of new songs on the album that mine heartbreak.

"That's one of my favorite songs," Aldean says. "You have great lyrics and great melody. Neil Thrasher, one of the writers, is one of my favorites in town and he has a knack for those melodies that just sound familiar."

The song is also "not sappy. It's said like a man would say it." And that's important for Aldean, a guy who, given a choice, would rather scowl for a picture than smile.

"I'm not a warm and fuzzy guy. I can be with my daughters, but when it comes to singing that stuff, it's not a natural thing," he says. "I don't sing the soft, sappy, gushy love songs that well. For me, it's country rock or it's a heartbreak song."