

# The Sacramento Bee

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## CD Review:

Jason Aldean

*Relentless*

★★★★½

Broken Bow Records

By Dixie Reid - Bee Staff Writer



Thank goodness Jason Aldean didn't have to repair car windshields for a living, after all.

The poor guy was turned down by every record label in Nashville and thought he was about to lose his songwriting deal. But things turned around and, with *Relentless*, he's now two fine albums (the first was *Jason Aldean*) into the job he wanted most of all: country singer-songwriter.

The cut on *Relentless* that must have seemed close to his own struggles is "I Use What I Got": "Nobody ever thought I could make it in this town," the lyric goes. "They said I didn't have what it takes." It's about making do with what you have and not getting discouraged.

Aldean, 29, turned to other songwriters for *Relentless*, in particular Big & Rich's John Rich, who wrote Aldean's previous hit "Hicktown." This time, Rich co-wrote "Who's Kissing You Tonight" and penned solo the rockin' road-trip-to-Vegas saga "Johnny Cash."

*Relentless* is the CD to have in the car for your own road trip, especially if you're running from a broken heart. To make you feel better, Aldean offers up the sympathetic "Do You Wish It Was Me" and the great cinematic images of "Back in This Cigarette." Best of all is the Brett James-Hillary Lindsay scolding called "Grown Woman."

"It's OK if you want to give up, but there's a way to leave someone, and you don't have to be so cruel," sings Aldean. And who wouldn't feel better after hearing this great line: "I ain't no old lipstick you use up and throw away 'cause you're ready for another shade."

Here's to future loves and Jason Aldean.

## Newsday

"CASH"-ING IN. Everything about the new Jason Aldean album *Relentless* (Broken Bow) goes down as smooth as that first cold beer at a summer picnic. Whether he's playing the bad boy in the first single "Johnny Cash" or yearning for a lost love in "Do You Wish It Was Me," the country singer keeps his laid-back cool with easygoing vocals and an everyman charm from Tim McGraw's early days. Unlike most country albums these days, *Relentless* builds to a powerful close, with the clever "Back in This Cigarette," the gorgeous duet "Grown Woman" with Miranda Lambert, and the honky-tonk warning "I Break Everything I Touch." After landing country's best newcomer awards with his debut, Aldean shows he can hold his own with the big boys on *Relentless*.

(Grade: B)

# The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

## COUNTRY

Jason Aldean

*Relentless*

Broken Bow

Grade: B

Jason Aldean grew up in Macon listening to George Strait, John Anderson and Keith Whitley. But it's apparent in the sound of his second album — and his first, for that matter — that there was some Southern rock sinking in somewhere, too.

This follow-up to his platinum-selling 2005 debut album begins with guitars blazing on the first single, "Johnny Cash," which is already a top 20 country hit.

It's the tale of a man who ditches his job for what sounds like a never-ending road trip, as Johnny Cash blasts from the car stereo. "I Break Everything I Touch" even has a Rolling Stones vibe about it, but it's the ideal backdrop for Aldean's trebly twang.

One of the best tracks comes near the end. "Grown Woman" is a real winner. Over a simple guitar riff, Aldean delivers a heartbroken vocal from the point of view of a lover kicked to the curb. Like the rest of the album, it's nothing fancy. That's probably why it works so well.

**HOT DOWNLOAD:** "Grown Woman"

— Shane Harrison