

LET'S GO TO VEGAS WITH...

If you'd been at the ACM radio remotes in 2006, you might have seen a tall, energetic teenager passing out cards with the name of her single on them, explaining that, yes, the song is called "Tim McGraw," and earnestly working to meet every radio station she could. A year later, Taylor Swift's single has proven itself a hit and helped push her debut album past the 700,000 sales mark. Country Aircheck tagged along as the New Female Vocalist nominee navigated a hectic week that included her first major awards show appearance as well as a nationally-televised introduction to the namesake of her first hit.

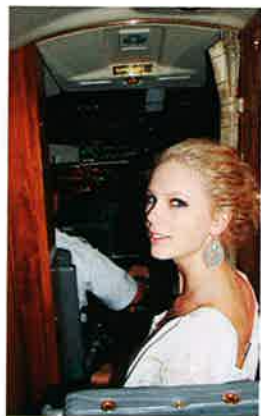
TAYLOR SWIFT

Saturday

Taylor's ACM experience starts in Dallas where she's opening for Brad Paisley. "I finished the show, signed autographs for 500 people and got on a [chartered] plane for Vegas," she says. "I got to sit in the cockpit with the pilots as they were landing. It was the most beautiful thing I've ever seen. I told the pilot, 'That was awesome. You did great!' He was like, 'Can I have your autograph?'"



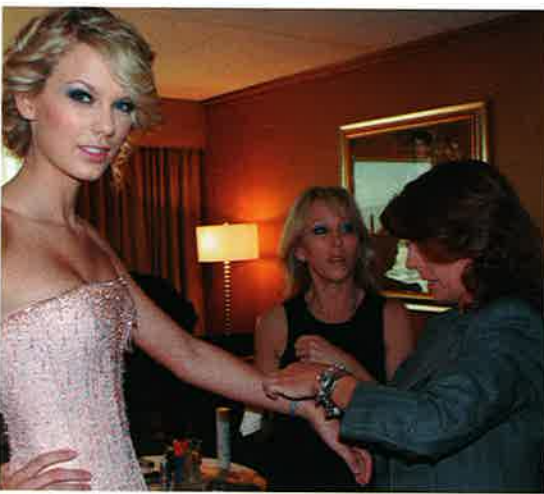
SWIFT KICK: Taylor flies private from Dallas to Las Vegas late Saturday (below) and ends the week at the All Star Jam (left).



Monday

"This morning I did phoners, then I went to go see all my stations at the remotes," she says. "This is the most fun I have. I love the ACMs, CMAs and CRS, and I really love the radio remotes. It's kind of obnoxious that I'm so happy being at remotes, but it does feel like I'm going to see friends."

After a full day of interviews, receptions and rehearsals, Swift performs at the New Artist Party For A Cause. "It's kind of like CRS for me tonight," she says. "Even though I couldn't play at the New Faces Show, I was so happy to have been voted in."



GIRLS BEST FRIENDS:

Preparations for Tuesday night's show included hair, makeup, and original dress from Big Machine's Sandi Spika (at left, center) and \$100,000 worth of jewelry from a Tiffany's rep (at left, right).

Sunday

At rehearsals for her performance of "Tim McGraw," the planned and super-secret introduction was center stage. "We did five passes through the song," Swift says. "The important thing was to get the stepping right because I walk a good bit while I'm playing."

"After the first chorus, I'm going to walk down and sing the song in front of him. We still have never met. So when the song's over I'm going to extend my hand and introduce myself."

McGraw isn't the only country singer Swift would meet in Vegas. "Being an artist is the best backstage pass you can get, and I'm still a super-fan. I went right up to Craig Morgan and told him his new song 'Tough' made me cry. I went home and bought his album after the first time I heard it."



MEET WEEK: Her long overdue introduction to Tim McGraw started with a rehearsed handshake with a seat filler (left), the main event (below) and a commercial break photo op with McGraw and Faith Hill (bottom right). Swift: "They were so nice!"



Tuesday

After an 8am wakeup call, show day is all about getting ready. There's the Sandi Spika original dress, hair, makeup, a final rehearsal, a visit from Tiffany's and an interview with *Entertainment Weekly*. The jewelry, valued at \$100,000, comes with a Tiffany-employed bodyguard. "I am so not cool enough to wear \$100,000 worth of jewelry," Swift says.



MEANT TO BE: Swift shared her awards show audio gear with Faith Hill.

Swift says her first major awards show appearance was exactly what it should have been. "It's just me, a guitar and no band. That's symbolic because when this all started I took my guitar out on the road and introduced myself to radio. Because they took a chance on me, a year later I'm here. And it's still just me and my guitar." **CAC**

