

Southwest Airlines
Spirit

october 1998

**hip
Chicks**

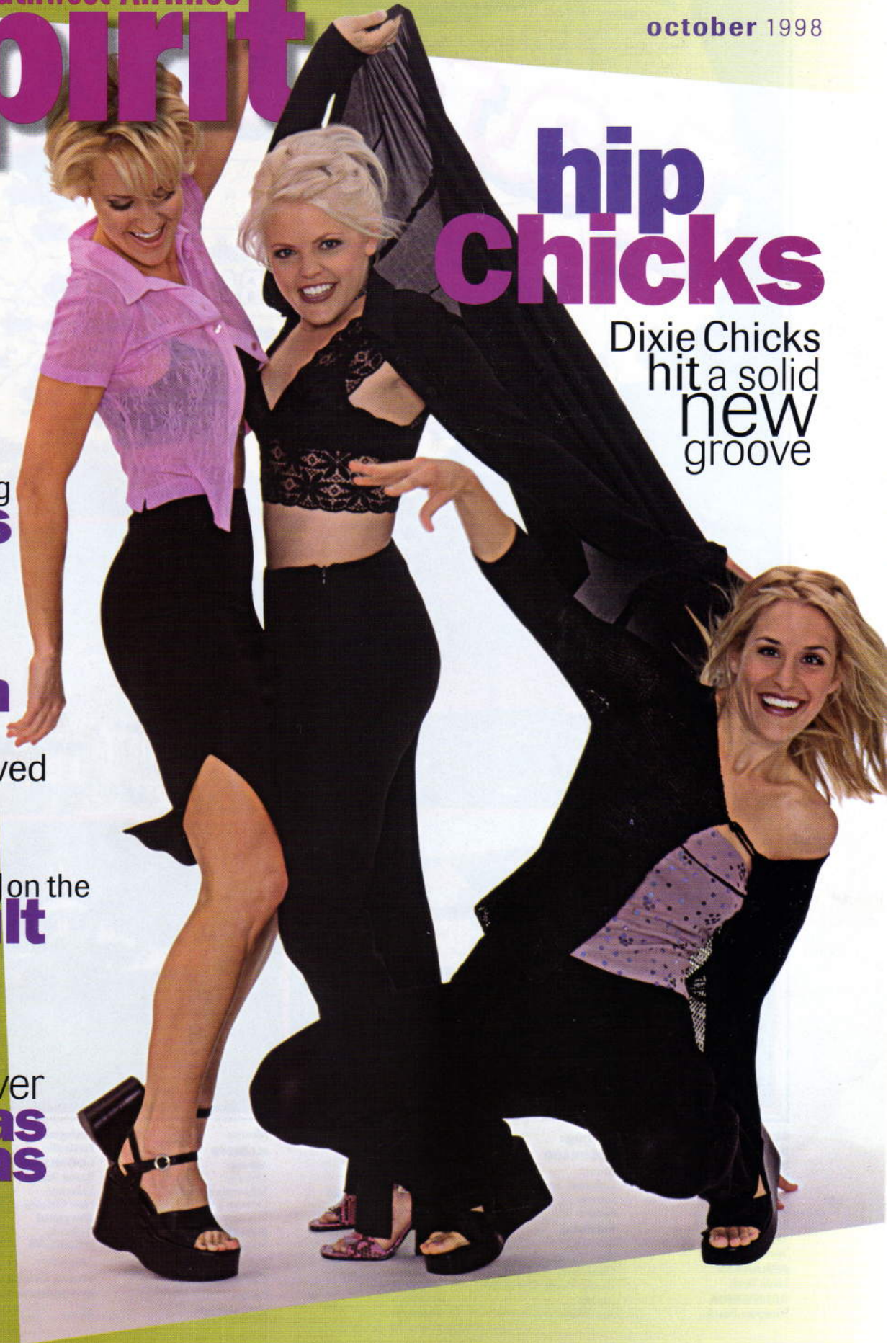
Dixie Chicks
hit a solid
new
groove

prowling
Poe's
haunts

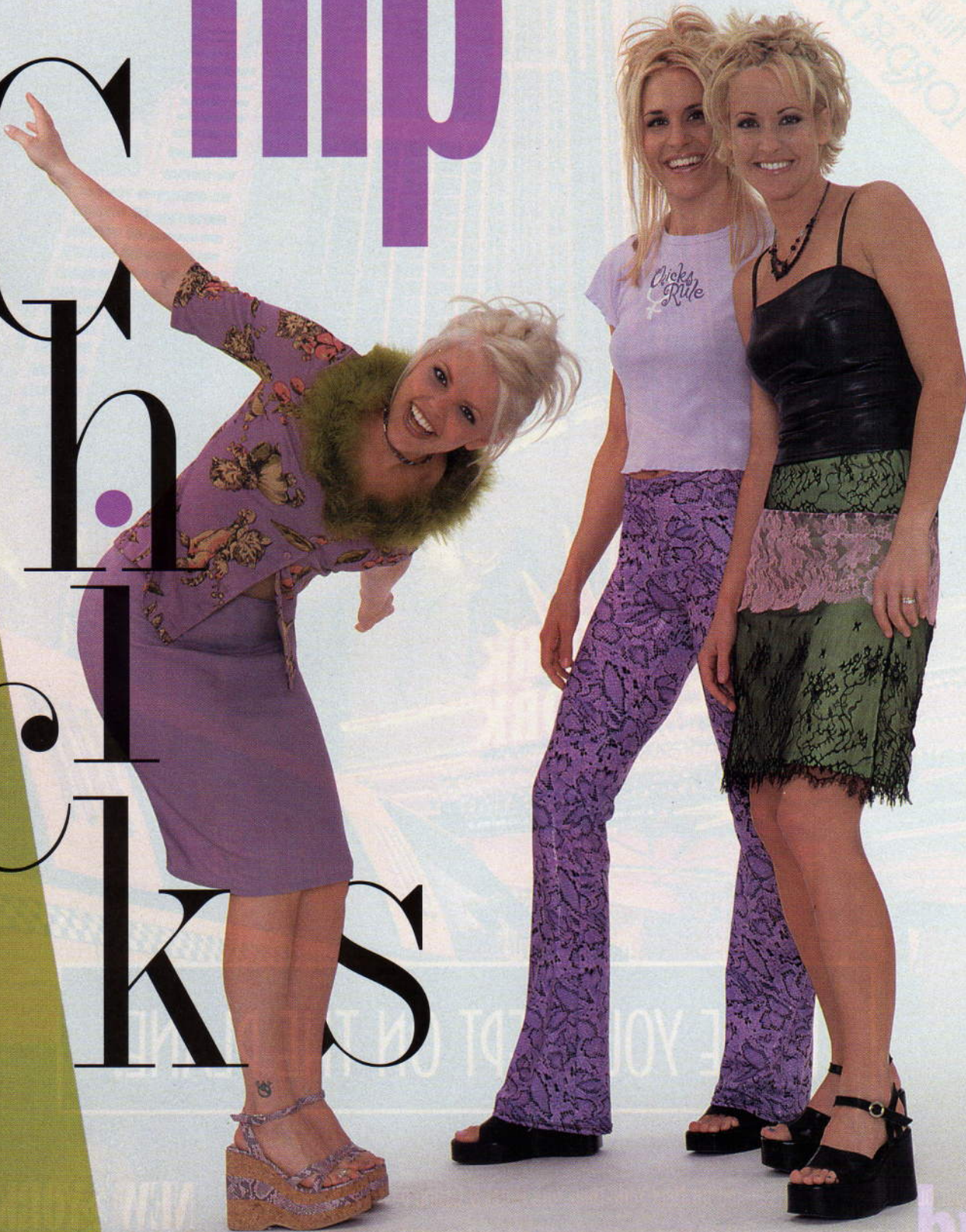
**Latin
Art**
preserved

living on the
**fault
line**

discover
**Las
Vegas**



Chip Chicks Chicks



photographs by Caroline Greyslock

by
Eric

Even cowgirls
pay their dues, but the

Dixie Chicks

have finally shed
the Texas-music stereotypes and are suddenly red hot.

If you're one of the last holdouts, a naysayer who refuses to give the Dixie Chicks proper respect as a serious country-music act, if you see them as a three-blonde gimmick that impresses only those interested in pretty faces or shapely thighs, this Buck Owens story should shut you up.

The Crystal Chandelier, Buck Owens' famous museum/restaurant/C&W venue in Bakersfield, California, was hopping one night early this year because the Chicks were in town. Bigger-name acts (Dwight Yoakam, Marty Stuart) have played the quaint stage with the small dance floor, but they tend to draw a slightly older crowd: thirty- and forty- and fiftysomethings who appreciate real-deal country. This night, the CC was packed with a younger, hipper set of fans: a group that skewed female and was more into screaming than swinging. In the middle of the Dixie Chicks' set, Owens surveyed the crowd. The former *Hee Haw* host is a true country legend, architect of the Bakersfield sound. He is not easily wowed.

Owens sat next to Blake Chancey, a Chicks co-producer who had helped make the group's major-label debut, *Wide Open Spaces*, the fastest country-music entry into the Top 10

in SoundScan history. Owens tapped Chancey to get his attention. "Hey, Blake," he said, "Look up." Lining the white-wood rail outside the dance floor were packs of young girls, singing every word of songs that had never been in radio rotation. They had memorized the album cuts. Owens smiled. "See that?" he said to the record company exec. "When that happens, you know you've got a hit."

The Chicks look back on that appearance — and the many like it during a meteoric rise since *Wide Open Spaces* was released in January — with awe. "My dad [Texas steel-guitar legend Lloyd Maines] was on-stage with us, and Buck Owens is one of his idols, so it was special. Just a blast," says lead singer Natalie Maines. "And I know how much you have to listen to and love a CD to know the words to every song. The entire year has been like that: wild."

As has been the storybook rise of the Dixie Chicks. Two sisters, Emily Erwin and Martie Seidel, began the group in 1989 after making more than \$300 singing on a downtown Dallas street corner. The Chicks went through various incarnations (an early bluegrass-only phase, lineup changes), but managed to build

Celeste

