

Jon Bon Jovi: Working class

 AP Associated Press

By ARI BENDERSKY, For The Associated Press

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Jon Bon Jovi is like any typical dad with four kids under the age of 12.

Except that when he leaves home in northern New Jersey to go to work in New York City, he takes a helicopter.

But that has more to do with the singer's busy schedule than it does with him living a decadent lifestyle.

"I live in Jersey. There's no Joneses to keep up with," Bon Jovi said while driving his BMW to fetch his son. "I'm not out mowing the lawn, but I am picking up my kid and then hopping in the chopper and flying up to New York. My time is so busy, that's the only way."

Bon Jovi, this NJ dad's group, has been one of the top-selling rock acts for nearly two decades, following the skyrocketing release of its breakthrough 1986 album "Slippery When Wet," which has sold more than 25 million albums worldwide. They have played on almost every continent and have toured relentlessly. But it was all in the name of getting their music out to the masses, according to the act's namesake.

"We earned our living playing live and we weren't afraid to go places like Africa, Asia and South America - the old adage was, 'if you don't have electricity, we'll bring our own,'" he said. "That's how we built our reputation and sold 100 million albums."

On top of that, their song, "Who Says You Can't Go Home," from Bon Jovi's 2005 release "Have a Nice Day," landed at No. 1 on Billboard's Hot Country Songs chart in April. Country? It was a first for any rock band. Ever.

"It's pretty neat and groundbreaking," Bon Jovi said with a nod of modesty. "I appreciate that because ultimately it's a testament to a good song that defies formats."

The song shot to the top thanks in some measure to a smart collaboration with country singer Jennifer Nettles, who fronts the country band Sugarland. Initially, Bon Jovi and his bandmate and writing partner, Richie Sambora, shopped the video to Country Music Television to see if they could make it fly without any associated promotion. Then they approached Nettles and ultimately made history.

Making history is becoming commonplace for the band, which also includes Tico Torres and David Bryan. A few years ago, Bon Jovi (the man, not the band), purchased the Philadelphia Soul, an Arena Football League franchise. What set this team apart from others in professional sports is their willingness to give back, not only money but also manpower, to their community.

The Soul is now the top-rated team in the league with their philanthropic work serving as a model for the AFL, according to Bon Jovi.

He's accomplished a lot. But even with his larger-than-life persona, Jon Bon Jovi still sees himself as a regular guy involved with his family and his community.

Just like any other dad. Who happens to be a rock star.

"I guess the joke is that everyone wants to be a rock star," he said. "I got to be one."

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