

# my family life

→ BY PATTY A. MARTINEZ



## Pat Benatar

She may be a groundbreaking female rocker, but these days the 57-year-old Grammy Award winner is singing the praises of daughters Haley, 26, and Hana, 17.

**In your book *Between a Rock and a Hard Place* you talk about living a fairy tale: Thirty-one years ago you met your writing partner-guitarist-husband, Neil "Spyder" Giraldo, and you're still together. Has your love inspired your daughters?**  
I'd like to think it has—Spyder and I are mad for each other. But sometimes

my girls worry about finding their true loves. Who wouldn't, given the current state of the world? I hope they still believe in the possibility, though. We try to teach them not to settle and that happiness is attainable.

**What other lessons do you hope to pass down?**  
I want them to be loving but tenacious and to know they

have to be fierce out there as females. When I was starting as a singer, sexism was rampant. I grew up in a household where women worked, so I couldn't understand how the male-dominated realm of rock music didn't want to let me in. It made me angry, but I used that anger to break through the barriers.

**How else has your career—and Spyder's— influenced who the girls have become?** Ha! We're their parents, so they try to make us think we have no influence whatsoever! In reality, we're hard to escape; they've been with us for every album and on every tour. Hopefully they've seen how gratifying it can be to pursue dreams, but also the amount of work and dedication that's required to bring them to fruition.

**Do their friends like your music?**  
Yes, much to their chagrin!

**You've said you're a total Type A person. How do you reconcile that with being a mom?**  
Perfectionism and motherhood don't belong in the same sentence. I'm always second-guessing myself: "Did I do the right thing? Did I make the smart choice?" I try to do my best, but it's one part of my life where I'm not Superwoman.

## it's all relative

**Sunday at my house** "We're half-Italian so there's a big meal. Hana likes to make pasta and Haley is a baker. Spyder is usually watching football until we call him to the table."

**Rules of motherhood** "There aren't enough hours in the day. You don't have enough hands. You're never going to be right all the time, and you're going to screw up!"

**Secret talent** "Stain removal. Last year I got mascara off of Hana's prom dress. Thirty seconds before, I'd told her not to apply makeup with the dress on—then she dropped the wand down the front. But I got it off!"

**Hardest part of being a parent**  
"Hearing the words: 'You're the worst mother—ever!' Of course, they've only said it when I enforced curfew, said no or told them they were grounded."

**My proudest accomplishment**  
"It's a tie. Staying in love for 31 years and raising ethical kids."

"Parenting is a lot like the Peace Corps—it's the hardest job you'll ever love."

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