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SUMMER 2006

Lala

MTV'S HOTTEST VJ



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ith a waste-no-time outlook, LaLa Vasquez is prompt and on schedule for our meeting at the W Hotel in Midtown Manhattan. She's wearing sunglasses; her hair hangs long, bangles jingling on her delicate wrists. A cream-colored cotton shawl, draped across her shoulders, wards off the cool air-conditioning blasting in the lobby. Like most tiny women, she's says she's always cold.

LaLa's demure as she starts her day, but she can turn the charm on in an instant, with her throaty, familiar voice, which makes her seem both at ease and glamorous all at once. In an instant, she perks up, and the extroverted television personality emerges—that of the starlet who can pull up in a hot pink 2006 Range Rover Sport, with her name stamped on it's rear cheek.

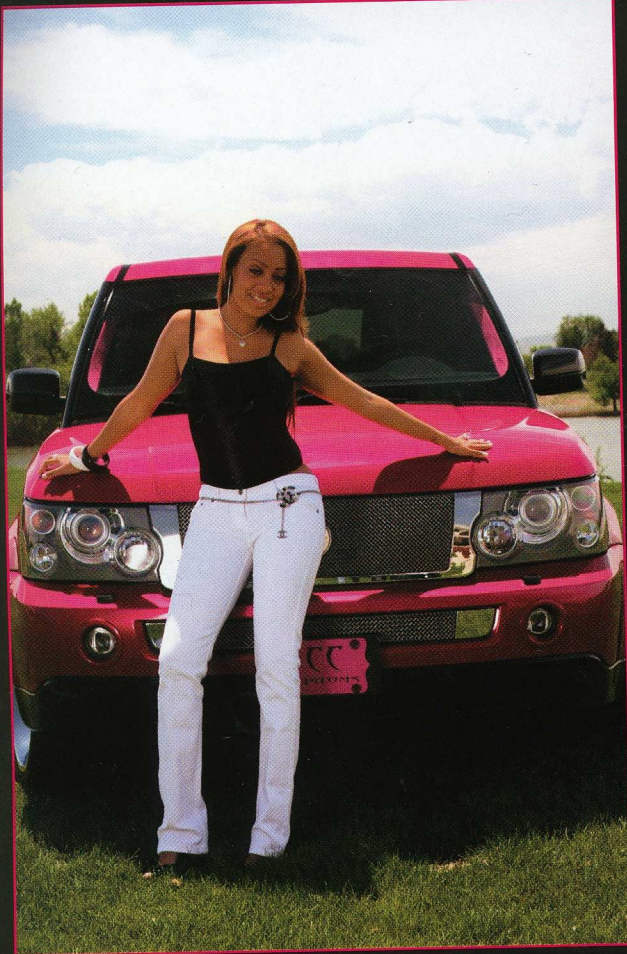
LaLa manages to balance her girl-next-door sensibility with B-girl cool, endearing her to MTV's *Total Request Live* viewers. And soon her next foray—the big screen. She's hush-hush about the project, as details are being finalized, but we hear it'll be in theaters next year.

She props her sunglasses on her head, revealing large, luminescent hazel eyes which look made for camera close-ups, despite the fact that she's still yawning. Her fiancé, the Denver Nuggets' Carmelo Anthony, is upstairs sleeping, but LaLa has to be up and at 'em anyways—she's on her way to MTV studios to interview Halle Berry.

Though they share a house together in Denver, she and Anthony have arranged for their paths to cross in New York City while Anthony is in town training and she is in town taping—he leaves for Olympic training for two months.

"We make it a point to make time for each other," she explains. "As much as work is a priority for me, my personal life is a priority for me."

It wasn't always jet-setting like this for LaLa, who cringes at the memory of the old Subaru her mother picked her up from school in when they lived in New Jersey after moving from Brooklyn.



2006 Range Rover Sport

"I actually used to hate getting picked up from school in that car, it was kind of beat down," she remembers.

She was determined to have her own wheels by the time she hit high school. The family moved to Atlanta, and to keep a little money in her pocket, she worked three jobs. "I was able to afford a Jetta, a really beat down one, but it was good," she recalls. "At that, I was interning at the radio station, but I was also working at Baskin Robbins, a telemarketing company, and I also worked at a tattoo shop. I did so many things."

With Jay-Z, Nas, and Brandy on heavy rotation, she drove the Jetta on the 35-minute car trip from school to the station to meet her cohost Chris Bridges, better known as Ludacris.

After high school, she attended Howard University to study communications, but left after a year to go back to radio, when she realized she already had what most students were aspiring towards—airtime.

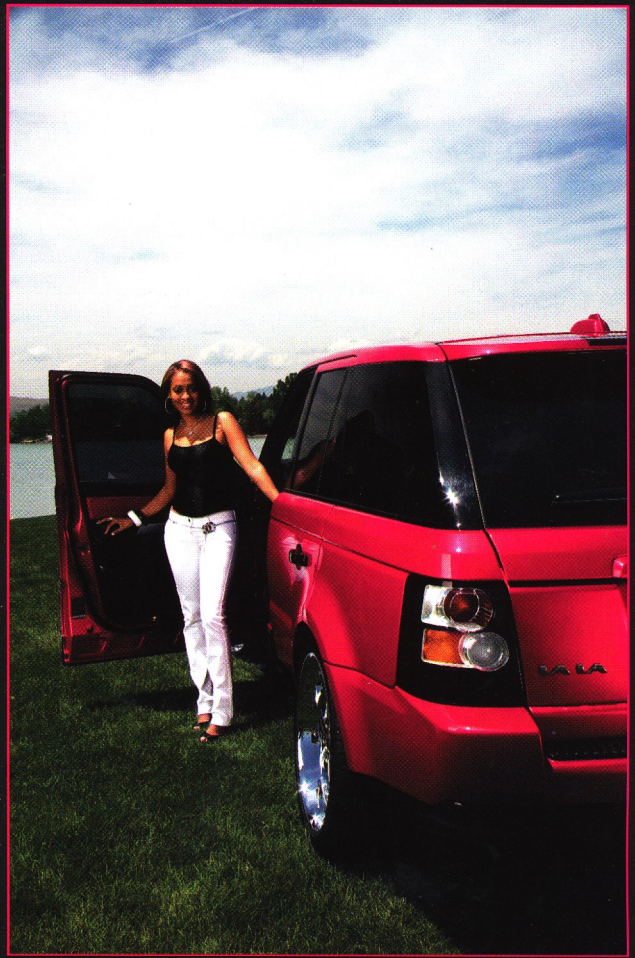
"When I came back I was able to afford a Mazda MX-3," she says. "It was a stick shift. To this day I love that car. It was real sporty. I would see my friends with the old-school cars. For a girl that wasn't really a big thing. I was happy with my MX-3."

With willingness to try new things, LaLa headed west to Los Angeles, where she landed a cushy radio job at the KKBT-FM, which afforded her the trappings of success—a Mercedes G-Wagen. "That was a big deal to have a Benz at such a young age," she says.

When MTV hired her, five years ago, she moved to New York and brought the G-Wagen with her. Some might remember her customization job from *Unique Whips* on the Speed Channel.

"I loved the G-Wagen, but sometimes it was hard to drive because it's such a heavy car. When you make turns, it's not a smooth car," she says.

When she hooked up with Anthony, she moved her home base out to Denver, where she and "Melo" stand out as local celebrities. "I like Denver because we work so much, by the



time you get to Denver, you want to take it down a notch and chill. But at the same time it's crazy for us in Denver.... It's not like we can go outside and just hang out," she says.

The hot pink Range, designed to match her phone, fits her prominent profile. "Pink's my favorite color. I didn't want it to be cotton candy pink. This pink is so deep it's almost like red. I said I wanted the pink lights and I wanted big wheels," she says.

Anthony's investment in CC Kustomz with customization guru Capone helped make this job a smooth one. "I'm around a lot of car people," she says.

Capone took special care of LaLa's Range Rover. "I had to paint her car four times. It took three months. I didn't want anyone touching that truck," he says. "Almost every nut and bolt came off."

LaLa picked out everything for the car, including the Dub Shoreline wheels and Pirelli tires. "I learned about stuff, like the Strut grille, and now when I see other Range Rovers I'm looking for different things. Now I know what to expect now that I got mine all customized," she says.

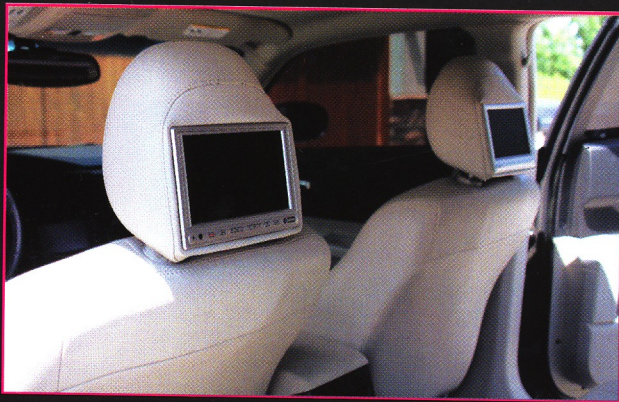
LaLa's version features special suede in Majestic Pink with two microphones stitched on the headrests, tinted windows, JL Audio speakers, a Procharger supercharger, and air-bag suspension for added height.

She also has a 2005 Dodge Magnum that is part of the fleet parked outside of her home. "My driveway, sometimes you can't even drive up in it. Sometimes it's just like cars everywhere," she says.

Between her job at MTV, spending time with her man, running their Denver-based charity—the Family Resource Center, and playing with her two rottweilers, LaLa has a lot on her plate.

Her easygoing approach helps her take it all in stride—as she does behind the wheel as well. "I try to give myself enough time so I'm not in such a rush," she says.

Precisely why she's the type of celebrity who gets there on time. **Celebritycar**



2005 Dodge Magnum RT