



PAPER MAGAZINE October 2004: New York Dolls

New York City private schools are known for churning out S.A.T.-tutored, Aspen-Vacationing, Park Avenue princesses, but there are exceptions. Take the band Spalding Rockwell; Nicole Lombardi (pictured right), 26, attended the Professional Children's school before she was shipped to boarding school in Jersey. "My friends and I would have champagne parties, and I would wear my mother's couture," Nikki recalls. Her band mate Mary Louise Platt (pictured left), also 26, attended Brearley, the exclusive all-girls school on the Upper East Side. "I was the pretty girl who the older kids put makeup on and took out to clubs," she says. The girls met in high school, but only after they reconnected at a party in 1998, did their friendship turn professional. ML had just dropped out of Johns Hopkins University, and Nikki was a jaded acting student at Tisch. So the two girls did what any self-respecting mis-guided soul would do -- they wrote songs. After moving from hip-hop to punk to rock n' roll, electroclash god Larry Tee took them under his wing in 2002. Their song "White Cotton Panties" was a hit at Tee's electroclash festivals, but Spalding Rockwell knew the scene wasn't really for them. They branched out collaborating with Armand van Helden on his chart-topping dance number "Hear My Name" and completing "Kate" (Defend Music Records), a full-length album of their own. Explains Nikki, "It's derivative of nothing and derivative of everything at the same time." More important, ML stresses, "It's tight and it's ours." By Alexis Swerdloff. Photographs by Alex Thompson. Shot at Lit, NYC



