

Photographer **Mark 'Weissguy' Weiss** was right at the heart of the action throughout the '80s when rock'n'roll was all of wild, brash and loud! On the eve of the release of an amazing coffee-table book, *The Decade That Rocked*, featuring the best of Mark's photography, *Jon Hotten* catches up with the snapper and his close friend, **Twisted Sister** frontman **Dee Snider**, to relive some incredible times...



THE DECADE THAT ROCKED

BACK IN THE 1980S the rock magazine was king. In the pre-Internet age the only chance fans got to see and connect with their favourite acts was when the artists came to their town and played live, or when they appeared in the press. Mags like *Circus*, *Hit Parade*, *Creem*, and *BAM* in the United States; *Kerrang!* and *Sounds* in the UK; *Metal Hammer* in Europe; and *Burrn!* in Japan became shop windows for the mayhem and excess of the era's biggest, noisiest bands. Record companies had piles of cash to throw at journalists, and especially photographers who could create and refine an image. Even after MTV had hit its straps in the middle of the decade, the visual impact of a heart-stopping, OTT picture pinned to a bedroom wall and gazed at night after night while records spun on the turntable was still hard to beat.

The photographers who were good enough to capture a thrilling live shot, a voyeuristic glimpse of life backstage or, best of all, a full-blooded studio spectacular, became a crucial conduit between band and fan. This in turn meant that the savviest of rock stars found their favourite lensmen and built long-term artistic relationships with

them, working arm-in-arm to get the essence of their visual appeal down on film. For David Lee Roth, Ozzy Osbourne, Jon Bon Jovi, Mötley Crüe, Twisted Sister, Aerosmith and many others, photographer Mark Weiss – who worked primarily for *Circus* – became the go-to guy on America's East Coast, equally capable of producing a brilliant, off-the-cuff snap or delivering a day-long shoot on a purpose-built studio set.

Weiss has finally captured the very best of his work in *The Decade That Rocked*, a killer coffee-table book that brilliantly tells the story of 1980s rock'n'roll excess, mainly in arresting images, of course, but also in the photographer's own words. The book opens up with Van Halen and Mötley Crüe, and signs off with Guns N' Roses and Skid Row. Across all of its 380 pages it captures not only the stars, but also the look and the texture of an era now long-passed.

"I was only 17 when I started out," Weiss tells *Rock Candy Mag*. "My first big band backstage experience was with Van Halen in 1979. I was kinda feeling everything out, and it seemed to me that music was changing. Right at the beginning of the '80s you could tell that



All photos: Mark 'Weissguy' Weiss

The iconic cover of Twisted Sister's 'Stay Hungry', shot by Mark Weiss in 1984