

Kelly Clarkson, Season 1

Just recently Kelly Clarkson scored her first number one Country hit with Don't You Wanna Stay, a potent duet on Jason Aldean's platinum album, My Kinda Party. Because Of You (a confessional track from her multi-platinum pop album, Breakaway) became a surprise Country hit as an emotional duet with one of her musical heroes, Reba McEntire.



Casey James, Season 9

A guitar-slinger from Fort Worth, Texas, Casey James may incorporate his blues influence into his Country debut which is due out later this year on Sony Music/19 Recordings. Curious fans will get a sneak peek as he tours with Sugarland or during a free show in Las Vegas prior to the ACM Awards.



Josh Gracin, Season 2

The first American Idol contestant to land a number one Country hit. The former Marine topped the chart with his second single, Nothin' To Lose in 2004. His other top 10 hits include I Want To Live, Stay With Me (Brass Bed) and We Weren't Crazy. He's working with indie label, Average Joe's Entertainment to relaunch his career after an extended chart absence.



Americ Country Stars



Diana DeGarmo, Season 3

If you caught the touring production of 9 To 5: The Musical, you couldn't miss Diana DeGarmo charming the audience as bubbly secretary, Doralee Rhodes. Of course that film role and the infectious title song was created by Dolly Parton. The upbeat Georgia native also appeared in CMT's Gone Country with John Rich.



Carrie Underwood, Season 4

This all American girl from Oklahoma has emerged as one of the most recognisable Country artists on the charts today, ultimately earning an invitation to join the Grand Ole Opry in 2008. Nearly every time she accepts an award (virtually a full-time job in itself), she graciously thanks American Idol and its viewers for giving her a chance.



Crystal Bowersox, Season 9

On her first Grand Ole Opry visit in February she was watching from the wings until Vince Gill invited her on stage to sing. Clutching her acoustic guitar she stood in the famed circle and sang Mine All Mine, a song written for her husband. The impromptu performance earned a standing ovation. Also her striking Farmer's Daughter video landed in rotation on CMT.



Danny Gokey, Season 8

A former truck driver with a recently deceased wife, this Milwaukee singer stood apart on Idol with his soulful voice. My Best Days Are Ahead Of Me and I Will Not Say Goodbye cracked the Country top 40 and he is now working on a new project. After introducing himself to Sugarland's fans on tour he will be opening select shows for Taylor Swift this summer.



an Idol



American Idol has been responsible for 10 singers with Country success. Although Carrie Underwood emphasised her dedication to Country music as soon as she won American Idol, she's certainly not the only one who found success in Nashville after the show. Here are 10 finalists who met an enthusiastic audience among Country fans.

Chris Sligh, Season 6

As he makes progress in the contemporary Christian market, this singer/songwriter landed a number one hit by co-writing Rascal Flatts' Here Comes Goodbye. Although eliminated early, he realised his goal of joining the American Idol Live Tour. He lives in Nashville with his growing family and blogs on his website about the ups and downs of the music business.



Bucky Covington, Season 5

He reached number six on the Billboard's Country songs chart with his debut single, A Different World. He followed that with satisfying singles like It's Good To Be Us and I'll Walk but suffered a serious blow when his Disney-owned record label shut. This spring he's targeting small cities on his Hometown Tour named for his latest single.



Kellie Pickler, Season 5

A sparkling personality and a powerful voice helped this pretty North Carolina girl land a record deal in Nashville. She kick started her career with Red High Heels and landed her first top 10 with The Best Day, a song she wrote with her friend, Taylor Swift. Being a Dolly Parton fan, Kellie has suggested that her upcoming album will have a traditional Country influence.

