

## **Catching up with Kim Rhode**

By Tammy Sapp

Kim Rhode, who has medaled in four consecutive Olympics in double trap and most recently skeet, has been on a whirlwind tour since she won her first gold medal as a teen. Turning 30 last month was no big deal, but Kim admitted it opened her eyes to the speed of life.

“It seems like things are going faster and faster,” Kim said. “It seems like I just met Mike (her husband) and just went to the Olympics.”

While Kim and Mike Harryman tied the knot in March 2009, they actually met through a mutual friend six and a half years ago. Their first date is something neither will ever forget as Mike invited possibly the best female shotgunner in the world to go target shooting. She beat him at that as well as subsequent dates where they played pool and went bowling. But when it comes to Kim’s other love, snowboarding, Mike is all air with his jumps and tricks. Meanwhile, Kim sticks a little closer to the ground out of fear of breaking a bone before a big shooting match.

In addition to being immersed in the snowboarding culture, Kim is also part rocker chic as Mike fronts a band called Fishing for Neptune in addition to his day job in residential and commercial heating and air conditioning.

“He was in the band Longfish, however, the drummer quit and they’re now reforming. The new band sounds like a combination of Sublime, OutKast and the Red Hot Chili Peppers. Mike has about 150 different songs, and they’re trying to get a demo out now.”

After the excitement of a wedding and the barrage of thank you notes that follow, the newlyweds now are getting into their matrimonial groove. There’s plenty of unpacking and other nesting work for the young couple to do. While she laughingly concedes that Mike doesn’t put the toilet lid down yet, they have developed a division of labor for cooking and dishwashing duties. Kim reports they’re having lots of fun doing the simple things in life such as backyard barbecues with friends and family.

Mike has gotten to travel with Kim, too, attending the Olympics in Athens and Beijing. Her schedule puts her on the road a lot, which makes Kim appreciate those home-cooked meals even more. Kim knows traveling often means mystery meals at hotels and jet lag. She recently returned from the Shotgun World Championships in Slovenia. Kim logged 20 hours one-way in the air alone, not counting the bus ride to the airport, layovers and airline delays. Another travel headache for Kim is packing.

“Packing for the unknown is the biggest headache, not knowing what to expect or what the weather will be like. In Slovenia, we expected it would rain every afternoon. However, it only rained at night so we didn’t need all that rain gear. You also might be expected to go to a black-tie dinner so there are dresses and shoes for that. And you’re limited to a certain weight. If I’m going to someplace like Egypt, the chance of getting sick is greater so you try to pack your own food, too. You’re always hoping you have enough foodwise and clothing wise.”

There's more than just the bummer side of travel, though. Kim said she's visited some wonderful places and uses those opportunities to reward herself for working hard to get there. Her favorite place by far is Florence, Italy.

"The food is fantastic and the lifestyle is easy going. You can just sit at an outdoor café and enjoy an espresso or cappuccino or in my case, hot chocolate. I love the homemade pasta and bread, the history and the architecture as well as the shopping. What can I say? I'm a girl. The markets in Florence are incredible. There's just something special about it."

Though there will be many stops in between, Kim will be visiting London in 2012, where she intends to medal in her fifth straight Olympic games, a feat that has never been accomplished by an American in any sport. If she succeeds, it would not only elevate the shooting sports, it would be an all-time record every American could be proud of.

Right now, she's shooting 500 rounds a day, which will double as they get closer to the big show. So, now she still has a bit of time to pursue some of her many interests, which includes rebuilding classic cars. What started as a daddy/daughter activity is now something that also helps her unwind from the pressures of shooting. She's done 13 cars already and is currently working on a 1929 Sportster with Mike.

Hunting is another love of Kim's and when asked how as a California girl she picked up a gun instead of a surf board or a backpack; she laughed and said, "I did pick up a surf board and a back pack as well as a shotgun. I did it all.

"My grandfather on my dad's side was actually born and raised in Montana and moved to California as a boy. He brought his outdoor heritage with him to Southern California. Everyone in the Rhode clan hunts. My dad taught my mom, and they taught me. It's very much a family thing. I've done it for so long, I can't even remember the first time I picked up a gun."

Kim also makes time to help others including a charity that's very special to her. She's the national spokesperson for the Kids & Clays Foundation, which helps children receiving medical treatment and their families by partnering with shooting sports groups to support Ronald McDonald House charities.

Today, Kim's life also includes college. She's finishing up degrees in agri-business, management and art, majors that allow her to keep up with her studies even when she's on the road.

With all that going on, you wouldn't think she could squeeze one more thing into her life, but she can and has. While she's just getting into Facebook and Twitter, she likes to play video games and has teamed with über game developer, Ethan Nicholas to create an iPhone game. Ethan, whose success story was documented in a big write up in the New York Times last April, is considered the ultimate poster boy for iPhone apps.

"He's just incredible. He's worked with Yahoo; he's a genius at design. He developed iShoot, the number one game on iPhone in just six weeks. We went shooting together and really hit it off. Next thing I knew, we were working on doing a game."

Kim provided lots of expert input into the new hunting and shooting game. Combined with the talent Nicholas provides, it's expected to be the best iPhone game ever helping Kim introduce even more young people to the shooting sports. This new iPhone app will be ready in time for Christmas.

It's little wonder that as Kim turned 30, she had the sensation that life was picking up speed. Between family, marriage, school, hobbies, charity work, and staying on top of the shotgun shooting world, Kim really is on the fast track and loving every minute of it.

**Contact:**

Kim's manager Tom Mills said her Olympic record quest is producing lots of interest from potential industry and consumer sponsors. For more information about Kim, contact Tom at 310-839-1996.