



On September 30th 2014, Sam Fischer popped a message on Twitter. “Just booked a one way ticket to LA,” he tweeted. “Phwoar.”

LA, it turned out, was less aroused. Things got pretty bleak, pretty quickly, and it wasn’t long before Sam had trouble making ends meet. But a mere five years, a couple of false starts and millions of streams later Sam has found his place, his voice, and his audience, both through his own naturally charismatic songs and those he’s written for artists like Ciara, Keith Urban and more. “I try to write uncomplicated, honest truths about myself,” he says of his own work. “Honesty and vulnerability should be celebrated, and if the last five years have taught me anything it’s that you should never be afraid to be your honest self.”

Sam spent the earliest part of his life in Australia, on a small farm in the picturesque town of Grose Vale, just outside Kurrajong, just outside Sydney. “I used to come home from school,” Sam reports, “get my kit off and run around the farm naked.” School itself was an hour’s drive away meaning Sam spent plenty of time with his parents’ collection of three compact discs: Whitney Houston’s *Bodyguard* soundtrack, Michael Jackson’s *HISTory*, and a random rock compilation album. “That’s it right there on three pieces of plastic,” Sam laughs. “My entire musical education.” He joined the school choir (alongside a pre-fame Delta Goodrem — a fact Sam only recently discovered during a songwriting session with Goodrem two decades later) but the family relocated to Sydney when Sam was seven. Sam still has fond memories of Grose Vale: “It’s a beautiful place that everyone should visit,” he states. “I mean, I haven’t been back there since I was seven, but still.”

By his late teens, following a gap year in the UK, Sam took up the offer of a place at Boston’s prestigious Berklee College of Music. He’d been writing songs for years, but the Berklee scholarship was Sam’s “first real taste of musical validation”. Just as significantly he joined the college’s spectacularly-monikered vocal troupe Pitch Slapped — which was where Sam met his future wife, who now tours as part of his band.

After college Sam booked that one-way ticket to LA. As one does. As *everyone* does, in fact. LA not exactly being short of musicians hoping to make it. “I moved to LA with stars in my eyes,” he remembers. “I really thought the music industry would open its arms to me.” Unfortunately the music industry didn’t so much open its arms as use both of them to flip Sam the bird. After two months Sam had run out of money; part time work delivering meat pies didn’t pay the rent. He spent half a year couch-surfing then when he ran out of acquaintances with welcoming sofas a friend lent him a car to sleep in. “It was a sink or swim time,” he recalls. “I’d lie to my mum back home and tell her I was killing it.” At night he’d go to bars and clubs, attempting to meet anyone involved in the music industry. “The next morning I’d email and set up a lunch meeting,” Sam adds. “I’d eat one meal a day, in the lunch meeting. When I look back I go: how the hell did you do that?”

Sam's scheme paid off and he signed to a small indie label. Suddenly, things were looking up. Everything would be fine. And it was, for a while. Then after ten months and precisely zero releases, it was over. The split was as amicable as these things generally can be, which meant that Sam was allowed to keep the songs he'd been working on. One of them, "This City", which Sam had written about his earlier struggles making it in LA, took on a new meaning. The song took further significance when Sam released it the following year and saw it soar to 75m streams (and counting), launching his career in the process. "I'm forever grateful for 'This City'," Sam smiles. "When I wrote it, it was simply a light for me when I was in a dark place. Nowadays I see it as a sign that everything's possible."

But it wasn't just Sam's artist career that was skyrocketing. During lean times in LA, during which he'd found himself insisting to well-meaning but skeptical friends that his music was more than just an aimless pursuit — a period that later gave his Not A Hobby EP its title — Sam found comfort in "surrounding myself with amazing people with amazing energies". This involved performing backing vocals for the band Holychild, and collaborating with producers on music he described at the time as "disarming pop for the night-time crowd" — a motif that continues in his most recent work. Crucially, it also involved writing with other artists. There was something about Sam's reflective pop that struck a chord with a diverse array of vocalists. "I've been lucky that artists have connected with my songs and wanted to put their voices on them," Sam adds. "Ironically, I found my own voice again by working with others."

"This City's" slow-burn success also led to further well-received releases, as well as a pivotal tour with Lewis Capaldi — although Sam had to swerve the opening date as it fell on his wedding day. "The tour made for a strange honeymoon, but Lewis is an absolute icon and a very dear mate and I probably wouldn't be here without him," Sam adds. The success of Sam's music has also resulted in a new deal with RCA Records with plans to release a deluge of new material in 2020.

Among the new songs is one called "Ready" which, like "This City" and a number of Sam's other tunes, is an unconventional take on a love song: it's a love song that isn't a love song, but it's also sort of a love song. "It's unrequited love," Sam begins. "It's 'I know I can be good for you, I know we can be good for each other, but you don't see it and it's killing me'. But it's not about romance."

Sam adds that seeing fans and listeners decipher his lyrics and insert their own experiences into his work is one of the most rewarding aspects of songwriting. "It's so beautiful to see people find their own meaning in my songs," he says. "I want my music to be a safe place for people to feel their own feelings and to talk about themselves when they haven't yet found their own way of doing it. I want people to feel they can take cover in my words."