



photo courtesy JAMES FUNDERBURK

HIS IDOL: James Funderburk meets Kelly Clarkson at L.A. eatery.

Charlotte entrepreneur **James Funderburk** and partner **Jim Hock** were in Los Angeles recently to attend a green-building conference and bumped into an American Idol.

The fledgling developer hopes to begin building modern condos that are eco-chic and sensitive to nature

through his new company, Origin Development. Funderburk, who also owns a chain of local boutiques with **Effie Loukas**, spends a lot of time in L.A. because it is where the shops' Lotus clothing line is manufactured.

And where Funderburk goes, so do the stars. While lunching at Swingers Coffee Shop at the Beverly Laurel Motor Hotel in West Hollywood (where Vince Vaughn movie *Swingers* was filmed) the pair wondered about the identity of the perky young lady sitting next to them singing to her band mates.

"She sounded like Kelly Clarkson but didn't have the blonde hair I expected," Funderburk says. "What a voice."

Clarkson was in the coffee shop trying out some new songs on some fellow musicians. Not known to be shy, Funderburk couldn't resist leaning over and asking her if she was indeed Kelly Clarkson. "We had a very nice conversation," he says. "She has great energy, and after hearing her sing and feeling her positive energy, it's easy to see why she has three No. 1 hits on one album."