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THE ULTIMATE MUSIC MAGAZINE

GWEN STEFANI

AND THE

50

SEXIEST ARTISTS OF ALL TIME

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HER CRAZY
NIGHT WITH
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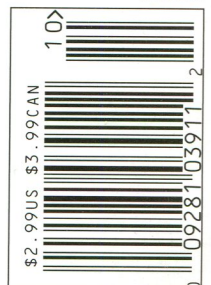
"I DRANK
FURNITURE
POLISH!"

THE STROKES

KINGS OF
NEW YORK

ROCK

ISSUE 2



“MUSIC IS SEXY

So says Gwen Stefani, and who is *Blender* to argue? But what else does this ska-singing, rock star-dating, Eve-supporting California mega-blond find sexy? And what does she think of our list of the 50 sexiest artists of all time? *Blender* turned up on the doorstep of her Los Angeles home in order to find out . . .

BY GAVIN EDWARDS
PHOTOGRAPHY BY
FRANK OCKENFELS 3



Gwen Stefani:
"I love this head-
line so much, I'm
going to kiss it!"

DON'T GET HER WRONG — Gwen Stefani is flattered to be named one of the 50 Sexiest Artists of All Time by *Blender*. It's just that she thinks someone else should be on the cover. A certain short, reclusive genius from Minneapolis. "Prince," she nods firmly. "He makes the sexiest music. Total make-out music."

Mightily carnal as Prince's catalog is, though, the blond lead singer of No Doubt is being far too modest: Valley Girl—cute, aerobics-instructor fit and movie-queen glamorous, Stefani is among music's sexiest and most likeable stars. "She's like a homegirl," attests rapper Eve, who recruited Stefani to sing on the chorus of her Top 10 hit "Let Me Blow Ya Mind." "You'd want to hang out with her." Stefani's other recent Top 10 partner, Moby, concurs. "I expected some really self-involved rock star, but she's lovely and down to earth. She's the reason our video for 'South Side' got played so much."

While No Doubt's 2000 album, *Return of Saturn*, posted only modest sales, Stefani has given her career a hip-hop-style jump-start via turns in other people's videos. It's been a deft move, as the 31-year-old has catapulted herself back onto pop's A list in time for the release of No Doubt's new album, scheduled for November and tentatively titled *Rock Steady*. "I've been in a good mood," she affirms, "so there's a lot of happier songs."

Grabbing a lime Popsicle from the freezer, she scoots across the kitchen floor to give *Blender* a tour of her Hollywood digs. All archways and

pressed tin, it's a tasteful Spanish-style abode with manicured courtyards, a tiled pool and a trickling waterfall. Amid all this pop-star elegance sits a large silver pagoda on a hill overlooking the pool. It's a prop from No Doubt's "Simple Kind of Life" video, she explains, leading *Blender* to the shade of a large umbrella.

For the past three months, Stefani's been sharing her home in the Hollywood Hills with her longtime beau, chisel-cheeked Bush frontman Gavin Rossdale; his band has been recording its new album in Los Angeles. Stefani and Rossdale hooked up five years ago when No Doubt's breakout single, "Just a Girl," was climbing the charts and the band was touring as Bush's opening act.

Despite living eight time zones apart, they've been a couple ever since. It's quite an achievement. Mind you, No Doubt's last disc resembled a concept album about dreamy grunge boys who can't seem to commit. Perhaps it's no coincidence that Stefani has rediscovered upbeat pop just as Rossdale has shown a newfound willingness to cohabit.

The tousled Englishman, though, is absent today; he's out working on his tennis game. But Tony Kanal, No Doubt's bassist (and Stefani's ex), has dropped by, looking relaxed and handsome in a vintage Live Aid T-shirt. But all is not quite right — something's amiss with the top of his head. A tufted blond stripe runs skunklike down the middle of his otherwise dark hair. It's a rather unorthodox "look." Understandably, Kanal is a little anxious.

"It looks great," Stefani offers.

"You mean it?" Kanal replies. "I had a

mohawk that didn't work out. We had to fix it."

"No, it's excellent," Stefani assures him.

Kanal grins broadly. Male ego suitably soothed, the agreeable bassist lopes off for a dip in Stefani's pool.

Stefani and *Blender* are alone at last. The blond chanteuse shifts her chair into the shade, settles herself and sticks out her tongue. It has turned bright green. *Blender* takes this as a signal that our gracious hostess is ready to begin. So, in the immortal words of Salt-N-Pepa, let's talk about sex . . .

Ready to face the world?

Yeah, it's fun. I love talking about myself. And it's yummy right now in the heat.

Extremely. Is that a bruise on your wrist?

No, that's a steam burn from the tea kettle. It doesn't look like a burn, huh?

Does Gavin have you drinking tea now?

No, but you have to remember that Tony and I went out for eight years, and he's English. He moved here when he was 11, so I always used to drink tea at their house. I can drink tea all day, but Gavin has one cup right when he wakes up, and that's it.

As an expert witness, what makes musicians sexy?

I don't like the word *sexy*. I get embarrassed. It was only recently that I felt comfortable wearing high heels. But I'm more of a woman now. I'm not so girly. It's hard to talk about what's sexy, because it's all about someone's particular point of view.

Right.

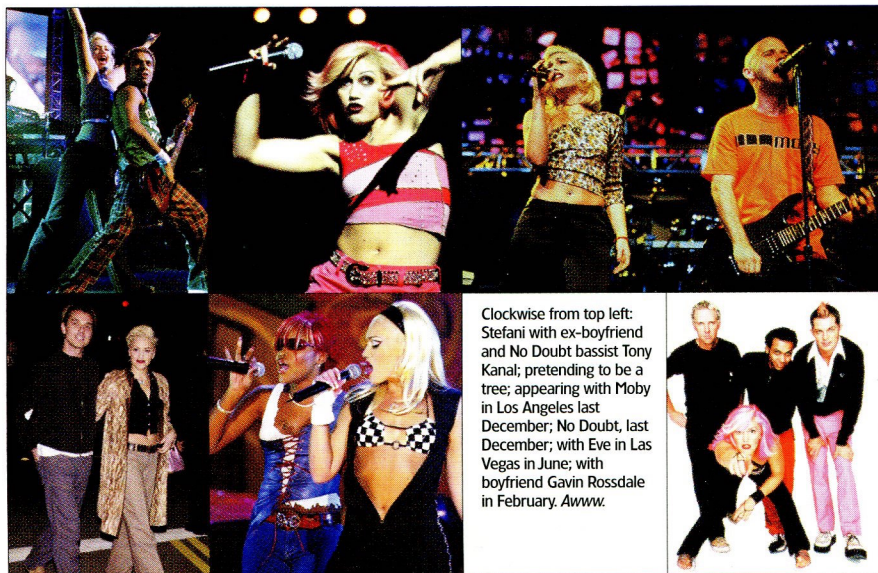
I guess you're asking me what my point of view is, huh?

Yes. From your point of view, why are musicians sex symbols?

Music is sexy, that's why. If I'm listening to a Prince song and I hear "Is the water warm enough? Yes, Lisa" [a famous snippet from *Purple Rain*'s "Computer Blue"], I just think of making out. In a song like "Simple Kind of Life," for instance, when I say, "You seem like you'd be a good dad": That's intimate. It brings out emotions, so it's sexy.

Who's the sexiest performer out there? Aside from Gavin, naturally.

My all-time favorites are Suggs from Madness and Angelo Moore from Fishbone. Those two guys have just melted me my entire life.



Clockwise from top left: Stefani with ex-boyfriend and No Doubt bassist Tony Kanal; pretending to be a tree; appearing with Moby in Los Angeles last December; No Doubt, last December; with Eve in Las Vegas in June; with boyfriend Gavin Rossdale in February. *Awww.*

Opening spread: Photography, Frank Ockenfels 3. Styling, Brooke Dullen for Margaret Maldonado; makeup, Mithu Andersen for The Wall Group; hair, Ray Allington for Bumble & Bumble/Magnat LA; manicurist, Cecily Carrington for Fred Segal Beauty; Headband, Stefani's own; earrings, White Trash Charms. This page, clockwise from top left: Kevin Winter/ImageDirect; Peter McAoy/Newscom; Jen Lowery/LFI; Interscope/Newscom; Michael Cailliediff/WireImage; Readers' Choice; opposite page: Bikini from Neiman Marcus; necklace and earrings, White Trash Charms; Paris: Louis Vuitton from Curve, LA; scarf, Crissy Luckett; turquoise bracelet from Think, Vox, LA.



Says Stefani, "My niece and I look pretty much the same in a bathing-suit top." *Au contraire*, my friend!

What makes Suggs and Moore so luscious? Their darkiness, their silliness and their energy. *[Pauses to think]* And obviously, Chris Cornell looks hot as hell, but what really makes him sexy is his voice and his talent. It's like when Gavin played me his record. I was like, "Wow, honey. You're hot." 'Cause it was good.

Who's sexier: Elvis Presley or Jim Morrison? Elvis. I love that whole '50s look.

Kurt Cobain or Robert Plant? Kurt Cobain.

What can a regular Joe like me do to be more rock-star sexy? Don't shave, don't shower, don't care. Be really stinky and wear the same clothes every day. I think what makes a man sexy is not being self-aware. That's what's really cute to me.

As a self-aware girl, what have you learned over the years about how to be sexy when you need to be? Everybody wants the perfect body, even though there's no such thing. You just have to be happy with what you've got. When I look at the video for "Don't Speak," all I see is my stomach rippling like a jelly doughnut in slow motion during the live performance. I asked my girlfriend who directed it, "Can you cut that part out?" And she said, "No. That's all the guys in my office are talking about." So is my jelly-roll stomach sexy? I don't know. But they thought so.

Well, your stomach is flat as a pancake. Have any "gentlemen's magazines" ever approached you? One time, a guy said he worked for Hugh Hefner and gave me a card. I thought it was funny. But sometimes you walk down the street and there are catcalls and guys yelling at you and you're just like, *pffff*. And the next morning, you walk down the street and no one whistles and it's like, "No one thinks I'm hot today" *[pouts]*. When the band started, I was in this all-guy band in Orange County, and there weren't a lot of girls in bands. So my goal was to get up onstage and to not have guys say, "Show me your tits."

What about the "Lady Marmalade" girls in lingerie? Some think the hottie thing's gone too far. There's room for everything, but when you start so young, where do you go from there? When I was that age, I was in a

band, but I had my dad saying, "You're not wearing that." As soon as I was on tour, I was showing my belly button, because he couldn't tell me not to. You flaunt what you think is your best quality to try to get attention. Maybe I've lived too long, but some of these younger girls seem like too much too soon, even lyrically. I watch my niece going, "Oops, I did it . . ." and gyrating, and I'm like,



"ONE TIME A GUY SAID HE WORKED FOR HUGH HEFNER AND GAVE ME A CARD. I THOUGHT IT WAS FUNNY."

"You're only 5. Stop it." But then again, I go around in a bathing-suit top. I don't have a boob job, so I can get away with it. My niece and I look pretty much the same in a bathing-suit top *[laughs]*.

Is there an outfit you wear to feel sexy? If I wear high heels, I suddenly feel like I'm that girl . . . 'cause it makes you walk like that *[attempts to wiggle seductively in her chair]*.

Have you ever listened to your own music while you're making out with someone? I don't think so.

How about Gavin's? *[Quickly]* I think we made out to his music one time. But you know what we

used to make out to? The Goo Goo Dolls, because they were the opening act when we were on tour together.

I saw the two of you sneak off to Gavin's tour bus together — you were ridiculously cute. Five years later, have you and Gavin merged books and records? We still don't really live together. He lives in London, and I live in Los Angeles. While he's been here making a record it's

been perfect, because we get to really spend time together for the first time in five and a half years. He's leaving next week, and it's going to suck.

Is marriage in the future for you and Gavin? I hope so, yeah. The funny thing is we talk about it, and that ruins it all for us. Some guy in England, not even in an interview, said to Gavin, "Are you guys going to get married?" And Gavin said, "Of course I'm going to marry her." And I swear to God, I was getting calls from Germany, France, everywhere around the world, going, "Oh, my God, congratulations!" My mom called me. It kind of spoils it if Gavin's planning a surprise.

How is life different being in your thirties? I love my age right now. Being 28 sucked. And 29 was really hard for me, and I don't know if that was just coming off the *Tragic*

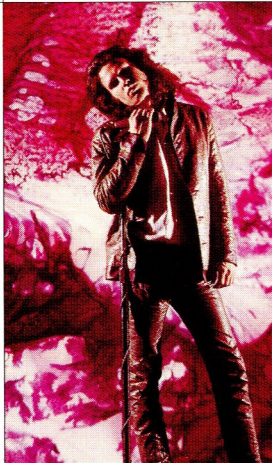
Kingdom tour, or if it was just that age. As you get older, it's not that you're so smart, it's just that you don't have to worry about the stuff you used to worry about. And there's so much to look forward to — I still need to get married, I still want to have a family, major things.

TOMORROW IS A big day for Gwen Stefani — it's her father's birthday. Her family is driving up from Orange County for a celebratory barbecue, and there's grocery shopping to be done. Pulling on her shoes, she begins to scribble out a shopping list. "I've volunteered to make the birthday cake," she beams, before explaining that this is the limit of her culinary abilities. Usually, this kind of thing is very much Rossdale's department, and sure enough, he will be handling the rest of the menu.

"We're a perfect couple," smiles Stefani, starting back for the house. "He cooks, and I eat." **[BLENDER]**

The eyes: Bkint; Cesty Lucken; Opposite page: Bkint from Neriman Marcus; necklace and earrings: White Trash Charms; pendant necklace and cuff from Jennifer Kaulman; LA scarf: Cissy Lucken





20 GWEN STEFANI

Bindi + pink hair + ripped body + sexy purr = every skate punk's poster girl of choice

Sexual peak: Her midriff-baring, whipped-cream coiffure—reviving turn in No Doubt's video "Just a Girl"
Sexiest track: "Don't Speak" (from *Tragic Kingdom*, Interscope, 1995). What a delectable sob.

Amazing quote: "I've been able to fool a lot of people because I know I'm a dork. I'm a geek."
 (Yeah, a geek who lands on magazine covers.)

19 JIM MORRISON

People are strange.
 Self-destructive people are

Sexual peak: Post-skintight pants; pre-ugly beard
Sexiest track: "Light My Fire"
The Doors, Elektra Records,
Amazing quote: Grace Slick: "My cock was slightly larger than your age, and he was young enough to maintain the engorged silencer connection right through the residue of chemicals that can threaten erection." Thanks for diagnosis, Dr. Slick.