

# JUST A GIRL

With a glam wedding to her rocker boyfriend and a gig with The Rolling Stones, Gwen Stefani's life is rock steady. TEXT: RENEE GOLD

**G**wen Stefani says she isn't feeling very cute this morning. Even after last night's solitary time in the tub, today's rare day off from her bustling European tour is quickly turning into just another hectic workday. After her morning yoga workout with the band and a session of approving edits for No Doubt's third video, *Underneath It All*, the 32-year-old singer is preparing for a day of interviews in her room at Manchester's five-star Lowry Hotel.

Long before the A-list parties and jet-set lifestyle, No Doubt was just a struggling garage band. Who would have thought that 15 years later, the group would be on top of its game, and more innovative than ever with the dance hall-tinged sensibilities of its fifth album, *Rock Steady*. "Making this record with these guys was so much fun, the chemistry has been ridiculous. We're so fortunate to be able to do what we love," says Stefani, who credits her "happy state" as the catalyst to the album's success.

One room over, her bass player—and former boyfriend—Tony Kanal is showing some signs of wear

and tear. There are still three shows to prepare for and Kanal is getting irritated because he's unable to connect to the Internet to confirm some dates. "Tony's neck is crooked, he's stressed," says Stefani from her adjoining room. "He's considered the caretaker; he's the one who makes sure everything gets done!"

After completing its tour of Asia and Australia in August, No Doubt will open for three of The Rolling Stones' North American dates, including the October 18 show in Toronto. "Just to be able to open for legends like that, I think it's going to be a beautiful experience," says Kanal. "We were very flattered to be asked."

A month before The Rolling Stones gig, Stefani will marry her long-time beau, singer Gavin Rossdale, in what will turn out to be an international wedding trifecta. In true rock 'n' roll fashion, Stefani and Rossdale will wed in London, honeymoon in Italy and then hold another elaborate reception in L.A. "Either you go really small or you go huge," says Stefani. "And we decided to go huge! We really wanted to share this moment with ▷



I Dream of Jeannie



Red-carpet starlet



Bindi-blue babe



Pink punker

"I FEEL LIKE THE LUCKIEST GIRL IN THE WHOLE WORLD. I'M IN LOVE. I'M GETTING MARRIED AND I GET TO WEAR A WEDDING DRESS BY JOHN GALLIANO."

everyone that we care about." Getting to this point in their seven-year relationship hasn't been easy. Stefani candidly admits she's a jealous person.

"When you're apart from the person you love, your imagination can go wild," says Stefani, who splits her time between her Hollywood Hills home and Rosssdale's London digs. "Jealousy is one of those horrible emotions that you have to try and control. Gavin and I went through some hard times and I'm sure there will be more in the future, but at least we know how to work things out. The last few years for us have been ridiculously great. To me, he just gets more and more attractive as he matures. He has become so sexy."

So what will the über-gamine, whose fashion sense is a combination of street punk and '80s fusion, wear when she walks down the aisle? "I feel like the luckiest girl in the whole world," says Stefani, giggling. "I'm in love. I'm getting married and I get to wear a wedding dress by John Galliano!"

Dior's chief designer wasn't her first pick. While she was attending Galliano's fashion show in Paris last January, she was still deciding whether she'd ask her mother to sew her dress or work with her stylist Andrea Lieberman to come up with their own design. "I was sitting next to Gwyneth Paltrow and a couple other girls, and they were like, 'You gotta ask John to do your dress!' I guess he heard that we were talking about it because

he called me later. He's the one person who makes me tongue-tied because he's so creative. I'm such a fan."

After sending Galliano some clippings of styles she liked, the bad-boy designer quickly sent her back a sketch of a dress that Stefani described as supermodern with some traditional elements. "I looked at it and I said, 'I wouldn't change anything, it looks perfect.'"

Named the most stylish female at the 2001 Vogue/VH1 Awards, Stefani is definitely a fashion chameleon. She has morphed from ska-chick punker, to red-carpet starlet, to platinum ghetto gal. A self-confessed girlie girl, Stefani says her earliest fashion influences were Cinderella and Julie Andrews in *The Sound of Music*. As she got older, Debbie Harry and Björk became her fashion and music muses. But some of Stefani's unique sense of style also comes from her mother.

"My mom sewed most of my clothes when I was a child," she explains. "I also spent a lot of time in fabric stores and that was a big influence on me. When I got to high school, I didn't want to be like everybody else, so I started shopping at thrift stores and making my own clothes." As a performer, Stefani continued to design her own outfits, often appearing onstage in baggy pants and cropped midriff tops. It was a look that spawned legions of "Gwennabes" who copied her sporty style. "I didn't have that perfect body that would fit into regular clothes, so my fashion ideal was based on ▷





Biker chick

Gavin and Gwen

Platinum ghetto gal

Gwen and Eve

showing off what I liked and hiding what I didn't," explains Stefani, who's particularly fond of exposing her toned tummy. Like other singers-turned-fashion designers, Stefani and Lieberman are planning on launching their own line of clothing next year. "Andrea is like the New York version of me," says Stefani. "We just connected as friends while we were working on the Eve video. I'm addicted to her. She just reads me so well."

But her enterprising efforts might not stop with just a fashion line. Famous for that pomegranate-shade pout, fans are always asking her what lipstick she uses. "The truth is I wear many different colours of red. It's always a mixture. But it would be fun to make my own lipstick. I wanted to do the Viva Glam line for M.A.C., but it didn't work out. Maybe next year."

Just because she has these other ventures on the side, including successful duets with Moby (*South Side*) and

fussions in such songs as *Happy Now* and *Don't Speak* chronicled her breakup with Kanal. Four years later, the band released *Return of Saturn*. While the critics were receptive, the album was considered a disappointing follow-up to *Tragic Kingdom* because it only sold one million copies. On the verge of breaking up, the band agreed to take a more relaxed approach with *Rock Steady*. The result is a reggae, trip-hop and house-infused record, specifically orchestrated with a dance-club audience in mind. Since its release in December 2001, *Hey Baby* hit #1 on Billboard's Hot 100 and was nominated for Best Group Video and Best Pop Video at the 2002 MTV Video Music Awards.

After The Rolling Stones gig, No Doubt has plans to continue its North American tour, but by early 2003 Stefani says she'll be looking forward to settling into her new role as a wife and, one day, a mother. "I want

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Eve (*Let Me Blow Ya Mind*), Stefani insists that she's not planning on going solo. "If I wanted to do more side projects, that would be interesting, but that wouldn't mean I would be leaving the band. The thing about No Doubt is that there's no limit. Anything can happen. I mean, look what's happened so far. It's insane!"

Together since 1987, the band toiled away anonymously for eight years before its third album, *Tragic Kingdom*, sold 10 million copies, garnered two Grammy nominations and spawned the monster-hit *Just A Girl*. It was also Stefani's debut as a lyricist. Her pop-poetic con-

to be a good wife and a good mother, and that means being around once in awhile," she says, alluding to the fact that her priorities will have to change.

Motherhood is something that Stefani says she has dreamed of ever since she was in junior high. "I feel like my children will save me from vanity," she says, laughing. "I know that I have so much love to give, and that's going to be a big distraction from, 'Oh, I've got laugh lines,' or 'Wow, where did that cellulite come from?' I'm not too crazy about getting older, but at the same time I really want to be a grandma!" □