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EXCLUSIVE
**GWEN
STEFANI**

'HOW I
RESHAPED
MY BODY'
HER SECRET
REGIME REVEALED

elle picks
THE BEST
HIGH-STREET
JACKETS, TOPS
& DRESSES





THIS PAGE: WOOL DRESS BY
VIKTOR & ROLF. GOLD
EARRINGS, GOLD BRACELET
AND GOLD RING, STYLIST'S OWN.
LEATHER SHOES BY DIOR
BY JOHN GALLIANO
OPPOSITE: COTTON CORSET BY
ROBERTO CAVALLI. COTTON-
JERSEY BRIEFS BY CHANEL.
GOLD EARRINGS, AS BEFORE.
GOLD NECKLACE BY L.A.M.B



blonde ambition

From pop-punk queen to fashion icon, Gwen Stefani has forged a one-woman empire. She exclusively tells ELLE's Kerry Potter about her rock-star marriage, being a beauty junkie and how hard she's worked for that body

photographs by vincent peters. fashion by anne-marie curtis

Four hours in hair and make-up and Gwen Stefani, 37-year-old multimillion-selling rock star and fashion icon, finally takes centre stage at the ELLE photoshoot. She's immaculately painted, cartoonishly flawless and Amazonian in stature. White-blond hair fiercely straightened, wearing a tiny pair of shorts with giant heels, she glares at the camera as her entourage (stylist, hairdresser, make-up artist, US record company execs, nanny) look on silently. So far, so intimidating, until we're introduced and she immediately breaks into a broad, sunshiney smile. 'Hey there!' she says in a girlish all-American drawl and takes my hand. A few days later, we meet again, at a hotel, and this time I remember not to judge a book by its cover. Gwen turns out to be remarkably unassuming, chatty, free of pretentious pronouncements about her 'art', and strangely honest about everything – from how hard she works to stay trim to the problems with a long-distance love affair (she's married to Brit Gavin Rossdale, former singer in rock band Bush).

Beneath the laid-back Californian exterior, though, there lurks a steely-eyed determination and control-freakery that comes with the territory when you've spent 20 years being

'ALL OF MY LIFE I'VE HAD TO WORK HARD TO STAY IN SHAPE. I WAS CHUBBY AND I DIDN'T WANT TO BE *THAT* PERSON FOR EVER'

famous and building your one-woman empire (see also: Kylie, Madonna).

Gwen Stefani may not overtly act like a megastar, but off-duty she still looks like one. Stefani is never knowingly underdressed. Today she's resplendent in tight indigo Stella McCartney jeans, a blue cashmere jumper from her clothing line L.A.M.B and black lace-up Alexander McQueen stiletto boots. The hair is artfully piled high, her face punctuated with the neatest eyebrows ever and a slash of sheer red lip gloss. An unashamed grooming fanatic, she's one celebrity you never see papped looking spotty, drunk, picking her nose or buying a pint of milk in her pyjamas.

'If you're going out of the house, it's better to realise that you're probably going to have your picture taken, to get ready properly, and think, well, it's just part of my life,' she says, helping herself to a bottle of water before sitting demurely next to me on the sofa. 'And even if I'm not getting my picture taken, I've always enjoyed the process of getting ready. I have a high tolerance of the make-up chair. I'm the kind of person who spends most of my time getting ready for a party, but when I finally get there I have to leave within half an hour because I'm bored!'

It's a good job Stefani is so Zen about those prying lenses, as her pregnancy and subsequent arrival of son Kingston, now six months old, were the source of a million paparazzi shots. 'It was weird being pregnant in a fishbowl situation. Especially on the days when you feel really fat and disgusting and not cute. Pregnancy was challenging in a way I didn't expect. I was on tour and I was so sick. It was like PMS times a million.' Of course, we don't like our celebrities to be fat, baby belly or no baby belly. Stefani admits she felt the pressure. 'I worked out with my trainer throughout the whole pregnancy until about two weeks before. I cried during my last session. I was, like, "I can't breathe, I can't do this any more. What am I doing?" It was crazy. All of my life I've had to work hard to stay in shape. I've always struggled with it. I was a little chubby when I was younger, and I didn't want to be *that* person for ever. I became a swimmer at school – but only because I wanted to be skinnier! I'm extremely vain – I like wearing cute clothes,' she grins. On cue, her sweater rides up an inch or two to reveal abs that'd give David Beckham a run for his money. Six months on from giving birth she looks so toned and healthy it hurts. How did she do that? Boring, old-fashioned hard graft, I'm afraid. 'There aren't any tricks, it's simple maths: you put this much food in, you burn that much working out,' she says. 'I gave myself three months – but if I didn't have an album coming out, there's no way I would have got back into shape in that time. I worked out with my trainer five days a week, with weekends off. I would really recommend doing weights. I'm not into yoga and Pilates – they don't work for me and I don't have the patience. I'm more like a man, I like going to the gym and lifting weights or doing a little boxing.'

Stefani got back into a healthy eating regime thanks to her mum, Patti, and dad, Dennis. 'Gavin was away working, so my parents came to stay with me and Kingston, and we all ate healthily together.

Once you start seeing the results, it's great – like when I could actually fit into my size Large sweatpants again! And I had three collections of L.A.M.B [her clothing line] sitting in my closet, size 6 [UK size 10], going "Wear me, wear me!"

Now back in her size 10 jeans, what does she make of the size 0 debate, I wonder? 'It sucks that that's what is supposed to look good and that's what everyone strives to be. There's more to life than being on a diet. Clearly, I spend time thinking about it and it's something I've had to deal with in my life. As I get older I try not to focus on it, it's boring, it's a waste of life. What I have learned is that whether I'm fatter or thinner, people seem to not mind, they like me either way. It's more in your own mind than anyone else's.' She's similarly level-headed on womankind's other current favourite body obsession: cosmetic surgery. 'Each to their own. I enjoy a great surgery TV show as much as anyone – I watched a *lot* of those shows when I was pregnant! But it's pretty bizarre that that's where we're at – that you can place an order for how you're going to look. People take it pretty lightly, but it's a big deal. I've thought it over but I'm not at that stage yet.'

When she's not making records or designing clothes for L.A.M.B, Stefani likes 'laying around watching TV, doing nothing' with Kingston and Gavin in their new LA house (they have house number two in London's ►



DENIM AND PATENT-LEATHER
DRESS BY DOLCE & GABBANA.
GOLD NECKLACE BY L.A.M.B.
GOLD BRACELET AND GOLD
RING, STYLIST'S OWN

**'I'M NOT INTO YOGA AND PILATES – I DON'T HAVE THE PATIENCE.
I'M MORE LIKE A MAN, I LIKE THE GYM, WEIGHTS AND BOXING'**



WOOLDRESS BY VIKTOR & ROLF

VINCENT PETERS

Primrose Hill but are spending the majority of their time on the West Coast at the moment). Stefani and Rossdale, 41, met in 1995, when she was touring with her ska-punk band No Doubt and he was doing the same with Bush (although British, they were huge in the States, but not at home). After conducting an on-off-on again romance for years – they were often kept apart by touring commitments – they eventually got serious and married in 2002. Is it hard having a two- rock-star household? ‘There are negatives and positives but, for the most part, it works. He can tell me about things going well or badly and I can totally relate to that. But when we’re both working it’s hard to see each other.’ They try to keep those job-related absences down to a minimum. ‘We know that after three weeks it starts to get messed up. We were very lucky to find each other and we have this ongoing crazy love affair, with its hills and valleys, like everyone else.’ Presumably one of those valleys was the discovery in 2004 that Rossdale was the father of his old friend Pearl Lowe’s then 15-year-old daughter, Daisy. The DNA paternity test and subsequent court case, the outcome of which has never been made public, were said to have deeply upset Gwen – unsurprisingly – but the marriage survived and she’s clearly moved on. ‘Having Kingston has been the most romantic thing to have happened to us,’ she smiles.

As is often the case with new parents, the Stefani-Rosdales enjoy hanging out with other couples with kids. One of those couples is Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie. ‘We saw them one time after we had our babies, which was really fun.’ Did Shiloh and Kingston play together, I ask. Gwen goes gooey: ‘Yeah! They were like two little blobs when they met.’ Maybe they’ll get married when they grow up? ‘That’d be cute!’

Stefani’s new album, and the thing she keeps politely but firmly steering our conversation back to, is called *The Sweet Escape*, the delayed (blame Kingston) follow-up to 2004’s *Love Angel Music Baby*, Stefani’s phenomenally successful solo debut, which saw her branch out from No Doubt’s trademark ska-punk sound into hip-hop, dance music and pure pop. Stefani has been in No Doubt, currently on hiatus, since she was 17. It was her older brother Eric’s band (he later left to become an animator on *The Simpsons*) but, after the suicide of depressed singer John Spence in 1987, the band decided to regroup with little sister on lead vocals. They plugged away on the local California rock scene for many years, living on a smelly tour bus and out of a suitcase. Stefani was certainly no overnight teen pop sensation. It wasn’t until 1997’s Number One single *Don’t Speak* (remember Gwen’s blue polka-dot vintage tea dress in the video?) that No Doubt struck gold, and Stefani found her songwriting mojo. The song detailed her painful split from Tony Kanal, her bandmate and boyfriend of seven years but, despite effectively washing their dirty relationship linen in public, the two remain firm friends to this day.

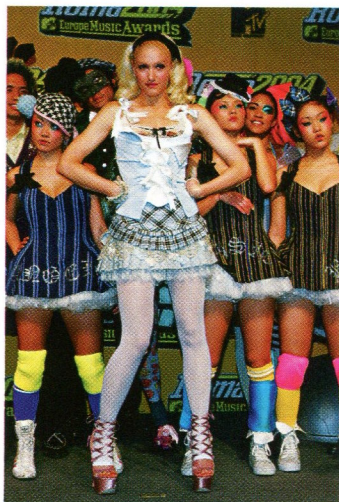
Although Stefani has been on our collective radar for a decade, it was *Love Angel Music Baby* that propelled her to superstardom in Britain, selling 1.2 million copies along the way, thanks in no small part to genius first single *What You Waiting For?* and its ubiquitous, trippy *Alice in Wonderland*-esque video. Musically, *The Sweet Escape* sees Stefani sticking with what she knows (insane single *Wind it Up* aside, with its *Sound of Music*-inspired yodelling), and many of her collaborators ➤



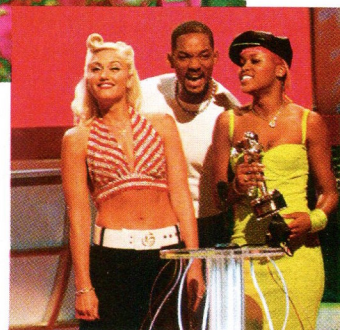
ABOVE: LEADING LADY IN PUNK-SKA BAND NO DOUBT
RIGHT: JOHN GALLIANO DESIGNED STEFANI'S WEDDING DRESS

the gwen style file

Gwen Stefani, 37: fashion icon, rock star, designer, wife and mother...



LEFT: WITH HARAJUKU GIRLS AT THE MTV AWARDS, 2004.
RIGHT: GWEN ANDEVE WIN THE MTV BEST FEMALE VIDEO AWARD, 2001



BELOW: GWEN'S DESIGNS FOR THE L.A.M.B. SPRING/SUMMER 2007 SHOW AT NEW YORK FASHION WEEK



ABOVE: A PREGNANT STEFANI, WITH HUSBAND GAVIN ROSSDALE, IN L.A.M.B. AT THE 2006 GRAMMYS

remain on board, notably Pharrell Williams and Linda Perry. The latter, a former rock singer who's sprinkled her writing and production gold-dust on the work of Christina Aguilera, Pink and Courtney Love of late, has known Stefani since the mid 1980s, when they were the only two girls in bands on their label, Interscope. 'Gwen is very humble, very intelligent and very dorky – and I really like that about her,' says Linda. 'She's like a secret weapon – her humility means you don't realise how powerful, talented and focused she is at first.'

Visually, like any self-respecting pop chameleon, Stefani has moved things on for this record, binning the Alice stuff and Harajuku girl dancers who trailed her during the last campaign (the result of a longstanding love affair with Japanese fashion), plumping instead for a trashy-sexy new look inspired by Michelle Pfeiffer's character Elvira Hancock in the classic 1983 gangster movie *Scarface*. 'I was in Lake Como filming a video, and went out for dinner with a girlfriend who was wearing a really long, clingy, peach polyester dress. It really reminded me of that movie. I worked the look into my spring/summer 2007 L.A.M.B. collection, and it rolled over into the music, too.'

Although the celebrity clothing range is often shorthand for ego gone wild, Stefani, who launched her quirky streetwear line in 2005, does seem genuinely enthralled by the process of designing clothes. Yes, it's an extension of Brand Stefani, a lucrative merchandising opportunity, but, to give the girl her due, Stefani does have previous experience. With a grandmother and mother who loved to sew, she grew up in unremarkable southern California town Anaheim (Orange County – but less *The OC*, more Swindon) making her own clothes and scouring thrift stores, gradually developing a sense of style, that, in a world of glossy

Hollywood clones, is unique. As her stylist Andrea Lieberman puts it, 'She touches on the glamorous, the tomboy, the rockabilly girl, the disco queen. Without a shadow of a doubt, she's the most innovative woman in music.' Believe it or not, though, Stefani's entry into the world of fashion was a nerve-wracking time. 'I was so naïve growing up. I knew about buying fabric from the store and making clothes, but I didn't know about real fashion. I didn't go to a fashion show until I was 30, and that was Vivienne Westwood in New York. I met her and it was so scary – it was like meeting the Queen. She's got such an edge, I was shaking when I met her.'

But the respect is mutual. 'I love that she loves clothes and getting dressed up. You have a much more interesting life if you wear impressive clothes,' says Westwood. Around that time, Stefani also attended a John Galliano Dior couture show and admits to being reduced to awestruck tears. 'That show was mind-blowing – that someone can have those ideas... It's like a living, walking art show.' She composed herself enough to meet and become friends with Galliano, and he designed her wedding dress in 2004, which she wore to her LA

and London ceremonies. John seems shy at first and you wouldn't believe he had all that in him. But then, when he starts to talk about what he loves, it's just... the passion.'

Stefani sees L.A.M.B. as a long-term career, not a short-term cash-in. 'It's something I want to do for the rest of my life. I've always done it, but I'm doing it on a larger scale now. And I don't care if anyone criticises it. It's not going to make me give it up if someone says "Oh, you're a celebrity." I know I'm right at the beginning and I have a long way to go. But I've got really far, really fast compared to the music. Every collection gets better.'

Inevitably, Stefani has also dabbled in the movie world. She auditioned for *Mr & Mrs Smith*, the film that brought Brad and Angelina together. How different the celebrity landscape might have been if Stefani rather than Ms Jolie had played Mrs Smith... 'I don't know if I nearly got it but I certainly put a lot of effort in. They were clearly looking for a certain girl, and you couldn't get more opposite than me and Angelina,' she says. Stefani eventually made her movie debut in 2004 in Martin Scorsese's *The Aviator*, playing 1930s screen siren Jean Harlow to Leonardo Di Caprio's Howard Hughes. Yes, it was a 30-second cameo, but it became an Oscar-winning Scorsese movie.

Have the offers been flooding in ever since? 'Not at all!' she pouts hammily. 'Of course, if Scorsese calls me up again tomorrow, I'd be there in a second, but it's not something I'm thinking about all the time. A film is a big commitment. Right now, I'm enjoying the music, the fashion and the baby.' And so she must leave, to tend to said baby (she's the first new mother I've ever heard describe her child as 'rad!'). Life, she concludes, couldn't be sweeter. 'I still read a menu and go, "Look at the price – I can get that. I still think, "I'm in First Class, this is awesome." It's insane what's going on in my life – I just can't believe my luck.' ■ *Gwen Stefani's new album, The Sweet Escape, is out now. Get all the latest celebrity style news at elleuk.com*

gwen's look: the lowdown

Q What handbag are you carrying?

A A.L.A.M.B. Kingston bag

Q Your favourite item of jewellery?

A Anything by Cartier.

Q The sexiest fashion item you own?

A A G (for Gwen!) string.

Q Favourite designer store?

A Vivienne Westwood in London.

Q Favourite high-street store?

A Topshop.

Q Got a hot fashion tip?

A Watch Michelle Pfeiffer in *Scarface*.

Q Must-have beauty product?

A Red lipstick.

Q All-time favourite designer?

A It's a toss-up between Vivienne Westwood and John Galliano.

Q Your most expensive fashion buy?

A It was my first designer purchase – a Westwood corset that cost \$850. At that time, that was a lot of money!

Q Style icons?

A Bob Marley and Suggs from Madness.

Q Your biggest fashion mistake?

A I don't believe in fashion faux pas!

SILKLAME SHIRT BY DIOR BY
JOHN GALLIANO. SILK SHORTS
BY PRADA. YELLOW-GOLD
NECKLACE BY BULGARI



**'I STILL THINK, "I'M IN FIRST CLASS, THIS IS AWESOME." IT'S INSANE
WHAT'S GOING ON IN MY LIFE – I JUST CAN'T BELIEVE MY LUCK'**