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**GWEN
STEFANI**

**Spring
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Gwen's Secrets

Her cutting-edge evolving style inspires fashion trends everywhere. Here, Gwen Stefani speaks candidly about her evolution from offbeat rocker to chic sophisticate, her introduction to couture and why John Galliano made her cry

By Phoebe Eaton

Photographs by Alexi Lubomirski



Owen looks to the future. Lace
pinaf coat, \$475. L.A.M.B. Henri
Bentley, 600-HBENDEL. Pearl
earrings (worn throughout),
Cartier, 800-CARTIER. See
Where to Buy for details.

Fashion editor:

Andrea Lieberman
BEAUTY BAZAAR

Hair stylist Danilo used the new
L'Oréal Professionnel Platinum
Lightening System to get
Owen's signature white-blond
hue just right. Available
exclusively in salons this spring.

Her eyes cast toward heaven in one of her trademark blessed-virgin-in-ecstasy poses, Gwen Stefani is feeling secretly jet-lagged as she mambos through *Harper's Bazaar's* photo shoot, where three security guards are on hand to monitor the glistening piles of jewelry that—these days—Gwen's retrosexual looks seem to demand.

Her hair is defiantly platinum, her eyelashes comb-ably thick and her mouth painted a subtle, meet-the-parents pink. As she dances to her first solo album, *Love. Angel. Music. Baby.*, No Doubt's 35-year-old lead singer-songwriter shows she still has those wicked washboard abs and hard-won tummy dimples that Pilates instructors like to refer to as Apollo's belt.

Away from the camera, Gwen reverts to a delicate and vulnerable Fay Wray in the leathery palm of an upstairs couch. Hot coffee and Kleenex to dab away the sniffles are produced, and a man-mountain of a bodyguard (Gwen's very own) lurks nearby. Gwen wastes no time kicking off her '70s-style suede rock-chick mules so she can wiggle those gunmetal-gray-painted toes.

There has been little chance to take a load off recently. "I feel like I've been running and running for the past two years," says Gwen. "But if I get excited about something and the passion comes over me, then I can't stop myself." Growing up in Anaheim—whistling distance from Disneyland—Gwen was something of a tomboy, whose parents always helped their kids whip up prize-winning Halloween costumes. Her father worked in marketing for Yamaha, but none of his four children was allowed to own a motorcycle. He did take Gwen to one of her first concerts: Emmylou Harris at the Palomino club.

Her mother and grandmother always sewed their own clothes, and it wasn't long before Gwen was stitching her own midriff-grazing, suspender-dangling stagewear out of bras, balloon pants and kilts. Going to all those industry awards shows at the beginning was a lot like getting ready for Halloween, Gwen once said, and there was something Kabuki about that early crop dusting of face powder, those ballpoint eyebrows and the gash of red lipstick. (She admits lipstick is the one thing she'd pack for a desert island—with a toothbrush and toothpaste.)

Why all the trowel-applied makeup? Gwen hired her first makeup artist in the '90s, "and I thought, *He is so-o-o-o talented*," she says with a musical little giggle. (Even in the course of regular conversation, Gwen has a talent for holding a note.) "I was like, 'This is great! Put on *more*.'"

It was high camp, but it worked for her, as did the henna and bindis, the rhinestone-studded bra straps, the pizza-guy undershirts with camouflage boy pants and that black headband. Just like Madonna, Gwen has a talent for

keeping her fans guessing. And just like Madonna, Gwen was determined to emerge from the chrysalis of her 20s as a fashion icon.

Right now, Gwen is genuinely engaged in L.A.M.B., her edgy clothing line stacked with wacky-waistline pants, Old English-lettered sweaters and va-va-va-vintage-looking halter tops and dresses. But it's true there has been something of a glorious transformation. That can perhaps be traced to Gwen's yen for the kind of longevity that making movies can provide. "But, just to get a part, it's so competitive, it's crazy," she says. Still, it never hurts to dress for the job you want. Gwen credits stylist Andrea Lieberman, who collaborates on L.A.M.B., for escorting her through the looking glass to the loot to be had on the Paris, London and Milan runways. At last year's Golden Globes, Gwen's street style gave way to a vintage Valentino gown, and there would be more magic red-carpet rides in her future: Cast as Jean Harlow in *The Aviator*, Gwen swans through an onscreen film premiere as if she had been born wearing diamonds, white satin and Leonardo DiCaprio on her arm.

But even as she got busy selling 26 million albums worldwide with No Doubt, Gwen battled her body. "If I had my laptop, I'd show you pictures of me in eighth grade," she says. "That's the fattest I ever was."

Yoga didn't do it for her: "I'm old school," Gwen says. "I like to run around and sweat, jump rope, run three or four times a week. Before our greatest hits tour last summer, I started weights again. By the end, I got so buff, I thought I was a man!"

And now she's even more buff than ever. One guesses her recent investment in the latest elliptical trainer—"Whooo-ooo! That thing is *hot!*" she says—is partly responsible. People are fixated on her incredible shrinking waistline and how they might replicate the feat, but Gwen says she's tired of indulging the chatter: "I wish everyone would just shut up about it, but I understand why people want to know, because half of my conversations are about working out. You talk about it with your friends all day long."

Fashion has also been propelled to preoccupation now that Gwen has more of a bank account to speak of. In her latest single, "Rich Girl," Gwen fantasizes about cleaning out a Westwood boutique in her Galliano gown. The David LaChapelle-directed pirate-themed video was inspired by a Vivienne Westwood ad from the '80s. "I am a Vivienne Westwood maniac!" Gwen says. "She is so magic!"

Gwen remains big on the Westwood bustier, but it was Dior designer John Galliano who was drafted to create Gwen's cream and pink wedding gown and her 2001 and 2002 Grammy dresses. She has called Galliano her muse and notes that they are both exercise obsessives. "John >



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All the right moves. Harness, \$1805, and lace blouse, \$1795, Alexander McQueen. 212-645-1797. Shorts, \$460, Viktor & Rolf. Ikram, Chicago; 312-587-1000. Belt, \$740, Blumarine. Saks Fifth Avenue, NYC; 212-753-4000. Gloves, \$155, Shaneen Huxham. 212-947-4255. Vintage lace cuff, Early Halloween, NYC. Brooch (on belt), Lorraine Schwartz. 646-274-2008. Set of diamond rings (worn as one), \$38,000, Munnú/The Gem Palace. Barneys New York; 888-8-BARNEYS. Pumps, by special order, Viktor & Rolf. See Where to Buy for details

has a hot body," Gwen observes admiringly. The first couture show she ever went to was Galliano's. "I cried," she remembers.

Someone at the shoot suggests that the music be turned to something upbeat "so that Gwen won't get depressed."

"I am *not* depressed!" she insists. Because of what appeared in recent papers, it's easy to assume that Gwen is feeling slightly peaked. In October, tabloids snatched that Gwen's husband of two years, Gavin Rossdale of the grunge band Bush, had fathered a daughter (now a teenage model) before he met Gwen. London gurgled that Rossdale had always denied any dalliance with the child's mother, which is why Gwen is now believed to be, quote unquote, devastated. There were even rumors that the Gavin-Gwen merger was in trouble.

Gwen's eyes drift when the subject of Rossdale comes up: "Anything you've read about Gavin is not true. I don't even like to talk about him because I've gotten into so much trouble mentioning him in my interviews. Our marriage is so sacred that the idea of sharing it with the world, and people judging it, is just gross."

"They are dealing with this between the two of them," says a source close to the couple. "But it hasn't ruined the relationship, ruined the marriage. Gwen and Gavin remain very, very committed."

Once, after they had split up years ago, Gwen dyed her hair fuchsia, "because that's what you do when you break up with someone," she remembers, laughing. "I saw a poster of some '50s girl with cotton-candy-beautiful hair." Instead, she ended up with a shade of flamingo she lived with for an entire year: Some fans had dyed their hair pink, too, and she reasoned it would have been cruel to turn up at



Glamorous in Jean Paul Gaultier in 2001



In her John Galliano-designed Dior wedding gown in 2002



Eclectic with a Miss Sixty jacket and custom Levi's in 2003

On dressing for Rossdale: "You want to look good for the person you are hot for"



Sleek in Louis Vuitton at the 2004 MTV Video Music Awards



Shining at the 2004 Golden Globes in vintage Valentino

in Los Feliz, and one in London's Primrose Hill—"I feel super-duper lucky to have both," she says—there is now the necessary square footage in Gwen's life. She considers this: "Having children is going to be probably my biggest collaboration ever." ■

concerts with her old meringue hairdo.


"I look at it [now], and I go 'uccch,'" she says softly, "but it so perfectly reflects exactly where I was, which was very unsure of myself. But if you read the lyrics of that record [*Return of Saturn*, released in 2000], they are some of the best I've written in my life!"

Rossdale remains a constant inspiration. Gwen is always pillaging his closet, and it was he who turned her on to Comme des Garçons and Yohji Yamamoto. "Gavin's got really good taste," she says. "I try to impress him, so when I go out to buy something, I think, *Will he like it?*" she says, "because you want to look good for the person you are hot for."

Right now is the first time in a long while that Gwen doesn't see her future. Gwen does want kids, and the backbeat of her debut solo single, "What You Waiting For?" is a ticking clock: "Your moment will run out 'cause of your sex chromosome," the song chides.

Gwen allows that having children might help restore some perspective: "I always say that my children are going to save me from my vanity." But there's some fear of the unknown, too: "It's just like being engaged or married. People can try to tell you what it's going to be like, and you can watch movies, but until it happens to you ... I think that's kind of how it's going to be with children."

With a house on the West Coast, in Los Feliz, and one in London's Primrose Hill—"I feel super-duper lucky to have both," she says—there is now the necessary square footage in Gwen's life. She considers this: "Having children is going to be probably my biggest collaboration ever." ■



About future
motherhood:
"I always say
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Green is picture-perfect in white lace, leather and fabric jacket, \$497.95. Dior by John Galiano, 800-929-6108. Lace and rhinestone jabot, Early Halloween, NYC. Black shorts, \$460, Viktor & Rolf. Ikram, Chicago; 312-587-1000. Large baroque pearl and diamond necklace, \$65,000, three-strand diamond necklace, \$275,000, and set of diamond rings (worn as one), \$38,000, Munnu/The Gem Palace, Barneys New York; 888-8-BARNEYS. See Where to Buy for details. Hair: Danilo; makeup: Kathy Jeung; manicure: Elle