

# MMME

**MUSIC**  
**FILM**  
**STYLE**

**WHAT 2017  
REALLY  
TAUGHT US**

## **HOLLY-BACK GIRL!**

**HOW GWEN STEFANI  
DOES CHRISTMAS**

**PLUS!  
CHRISTMAS  
TELLY**

**AND...  
NEW YEAR  
INSPO**



1  
GWEN STEFANI



# HOW GWEN GETS HER JINGLE ON!



**Gwen Stefani bloody loves Christmas – so much so she’s put out an album, ‘You Make It Feel Like Christmas’, to celebrate. Leonie Cooper talked about the perfect Christmas with California’s most festive woman**

PHOTOS BY JAMIE NELSON

## THE MUSIC

When Gwen’s in charge of the Christmas tunes, it’s golden oldies galore. “I like a lot of the Motown stuff and all of the classic Christmas songs – the Andrews Sisters and things like that,” she says. Her favourite festive album of all time, though, comes from country-folk queen Emmylou Harris. “It’s a gorgeous record and probably one of my greatest albums of all time, let alone just Christmas,” she says of 1979’s ‘Light Of The Stable’. “It’s the record my parents would play and that’s the one that gives me that nostalgic feeling.” Wham!’s ‘Last Christmas’ – which she covers on her ‘You Make It Feel Like Christmas’ album – will also make it onto the party playlist, as will ‘A Charlie Brown Christmas’. “It’s so good! So, so good!” she says, grinning.

## THE FOOD

“Your Christmas is different – your stuffing is different,” says Stefani, slightly concerned about how we do Yule in the UK. “You guys weirdly put sausage in there – what the hell! You’ve got meat inside of a meat inside of a meat!” We mention the mythical bird inside a bird inside a bird that the Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstalls among us might attempt at this time of year and she looks unimpressed. In fact, in the Italian-American Stefani household you’re more likely to get lasagna on Christmas Day. “Last year we did everything – homemade gnocchi and my mum’s lasagna and manicotti for the vegetarians.” The last time a turkey was attempted it almost ended in disaster. “Blake [Shelton, Stefani’s country music star partner] had a turkey in one of those smokers and he went out to check on it and the entire thing was on fire. We saved them – we put them in the oven and they turned out really good – but the house almost went down!”

## THE BOOZE

If you’re expecting a massive piss-up at Gwen’s, then you’re out of luck. You’ll need to pre-game. “My parents didn’t drink at all. I know you guys are like, ‘whaaat?!’” Indeed we are. “They were super-strict and conservative, but now we do [drink]. We all drink wine mainly, but we also do this one drink, I don’t know what they’re called, but my friend that’s English turned me on to them. It has mint and prosecco and this liquor that goes in it.” Intense Googling could not uncover what the hell Gwen was talking about, but we think it’s a Hugo. If you do know this delicious-sounding drink, please tweet us using the hashtag #gwensmysterybooze.

**“You put sausage in stuffing – what the hell! You’ve got meat inside of a meat inside of a meat!”**

**THE FILMS**

“Elf with Will Ferrell is my favourite ever,” says Stefani. “I love him. He’s the greatest thing ever.” She’s also a fan of the classics, with *It’s A Wonderful Life* and *Miracle On 34th Street* her childhood faves.

**THE DECS**

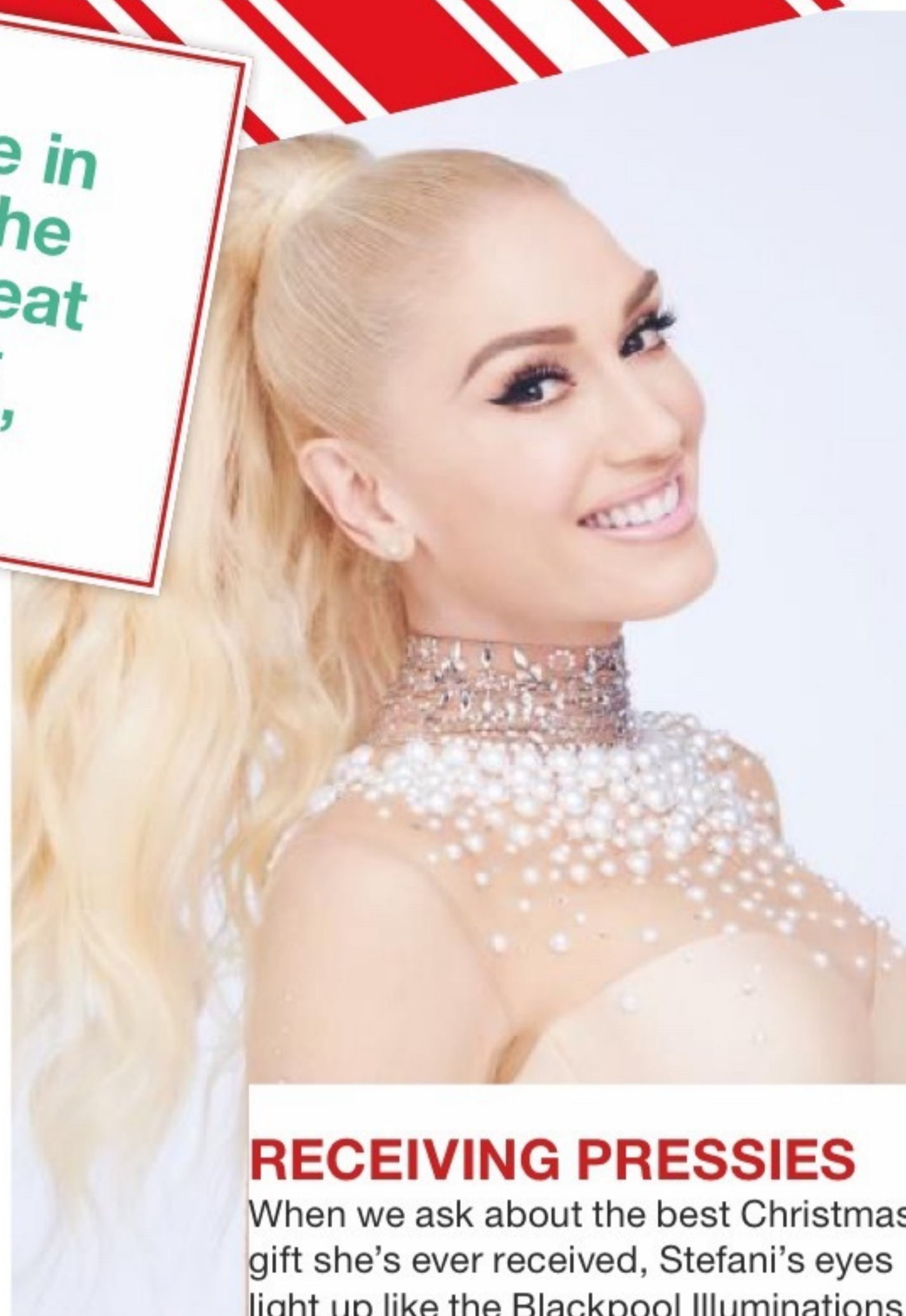
For Stefani, it’s a case of go hard or go home when it comes to Christmas decorations. “My old house was 1928, Spanish and the Christmas there was so gorgeous – there were candles everywhere, it was very romantic,” explains Stefani. “My [current] house is quite modern and full of colour, so I struggle with my Christmas decorations. I went out and I got all these pink and yellow trees but they look like Dr Seuss trees. I just go big.”

**THE SANTA QUESTION**

Asked when she stopped believing in Santa, Stefani looks at me like I’ve just run through the local garden centre torching their entire stock of Christmas trees. “I don’t want to put that in the interview!” she squeals. “What if somebody reads that? You’re gonna ruin the whole thing. She’s trying to ruin Christmas! Where’s your Christmas spirit?”

**GIVING PRESSIES**

Gwen has some advice about giving the best gifts. “I have so many people to buy for because I am so blessed by all the people I work with and my family, everybody, so what I’ve done – and I think this is a really good idea – is to have something made,” she explains. “You can do it without having to spend tons of money these days, because there’s Etsy and a lot of ways to do custom personalised things.” Stefani’s all about getting people a custom-made sweatshirt. “Nobody’s seen it yet but I’ll tell you what it is because it’s so f\*\*king good – it says ‘Anaheim Hillbillies’ on the front in Olde English [font] and on the sides it says ‘love is old school, truth is gangster’.” Alternatively, impress your mates by bundling together some twigs from the local park, which – bonus – is totally free. “This year I also gave a lot of live Christmas wreaths – people really love that,” confirms Stefani.



**RECEIVING PRESSIES**

When we ask about the best Christmas gift she’s ever received, Stefani’s eyes light up like the Blackpool Illuminations.

“I got a horse saddle from Blake – that was pretty shocking!” This wasn’t just any old horse saddle. “It was crazy but so beautiful – it looks like something a unicorn would have. It’s sparkly with colours and fringe.” Do you use it regularly? “Yeah, [but] I fell off my horse – I don’t know if you can see the scar, but this whole hand was torn up,” says Stefani. “I can’t believe I didn’t get smashed underneath her.”

**THE GAMES**

There’s only so much eating, drinking and rampant consumerism you can get through on December 25 before you start to feel just a little bit sluggish. This is where the games begin. Kinda. Stefani’s kids might be into Monopoly, but she’s more reticent about getting her hands on the old boot and popping a spanking new hotel on Park Lane. “I hate board games – I’ve always hated games my whole life,” she says. “It is fun to do with the children, so I’ve started to try to get into it, but I’m very non-competitive.” Best to keep Gwen out of your post-Queen’s Speech game of Pie Face, then.

**THE TRADITIONS**

Your family tradition might be based around the annual attempt to get your drunk Uncle Gary out of the house before he starts saying something Tory, but things are a little classier in the Stefani household. “We have a really cool thing that we do,” she says. “My parents are amazing and every Christmas morning we’d wake up and all four of us would be in the hallway. The archway going into the living room would be completely gift-wrapped and we’d crash through it. I think it’s awesome.” Get to Poundland now and put in a bulk order for wrapping paper if you wish to recreate this idyllic scene.

**AND A FINAL MESSAGE FROM GWEN ON THE TRUE MEANING OF CHRISTMAS**

“When you really look back, all you have is your memories. You don’t realise that at the time, but now that I’m older and I have children you realise that it’s about making memories. The holidays is an interesting time – it’s a time that you reflect on yourself, on the year, what you have done, what do you want to do, your dreams. There’s a lot of reassessment, there’s a lot of pressure and pain and joy.”

**NME**

**Gwen Stefani’s ‘You Make It Feel Like Christmas’ is out now**

**Xmas albums that don’t suck**

Gwen’s doesn’t, and neither do these

**A MOTOWN CHRISTMAS (1973)**  
Who: The Jackson 5, Stevie Wonder and The Supremes.  
Why doesn’t it suck? Soaring soul and unfettered joy. Lil’ MJ singing ‘Santa Claus Is Comin’ To Town’ – what’s not to love?

**CHRISTMAS ON DEATH ROW (1996)**  
Who: Death Row Records’ finest, including both Doggys – Snoop and Nate.  
Why doesn’t it suck? Because a grooving G-funk Christmas is the best kind of Christmas.

**A VERY SHE & HIM CHRISTMAS (2011)**  
Who: Zoey Deschanel and M Ward’s easy listening project.  
Why doesn’t it suck? It plugs into a time when Christmas was free of cynicism and it always snowed on December 25. As smooth as your mum’s bread sauce.

**Secret Santa**

We asked Gwen what she’d buy these muso types

<b>GARBAGE'S SHIRLEY MANSON</b> “I’d probably give her some make-up – we’re both make-up girls.”	<b>GREEN DAY'S BILLIE JOE ARMSTRONG</b> “Oh my gosh – the last time I saw him I would have probably given him some manners, because he was out of control!”	<b>MILEY CYRUS</b> “She’s an animal lover so I’d give her one of my chickens.”	<b>TAYLOR SWIFT</b> “I would get myself something – I would want to write with her, she’s such a talented songwriter.”	<b>EMINEM</b> “He would be really hard, he seems very particular. But he is a Detroit man, like my dad, so something to do with Michigan.”