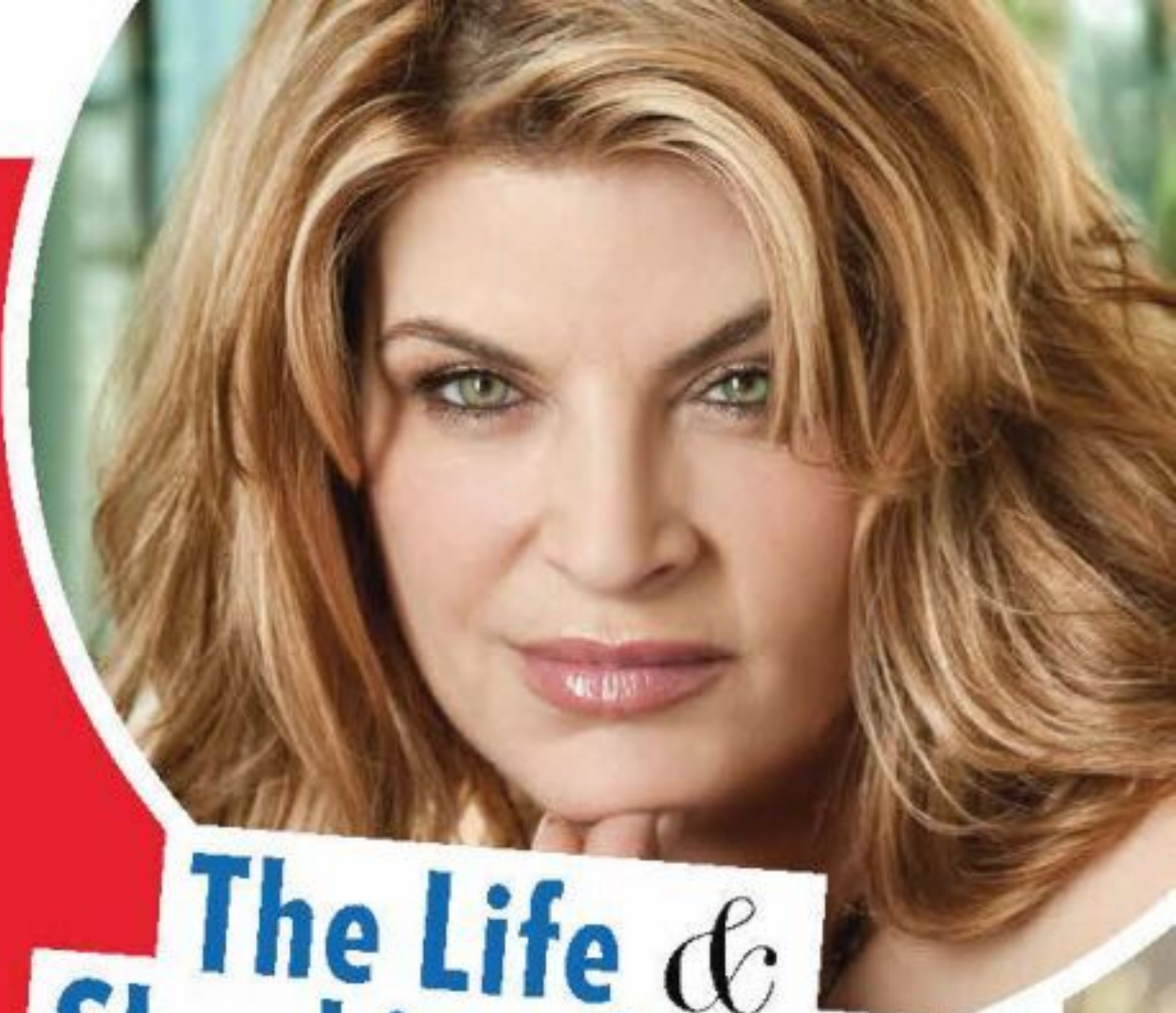


People

Exclusive Photos!



Kate & William
BRING THEIR EARTHSHOT PRIZE TO THE U.S.



The Life & Shocking Death of Kirstie Alley
1951-2022



Exclusive!

Blake Shelton

I'm Putting Our Family First

Plus
ALL ABOUT HIS
NEW SHOW
BARMAGEDDON

After 12 years, the country superstar will be leaving *The Voice* to spend more time with wife Gwen Stefani & his three stepsons: 'They've taught me a different kind of self-worth'

December 19, 2022

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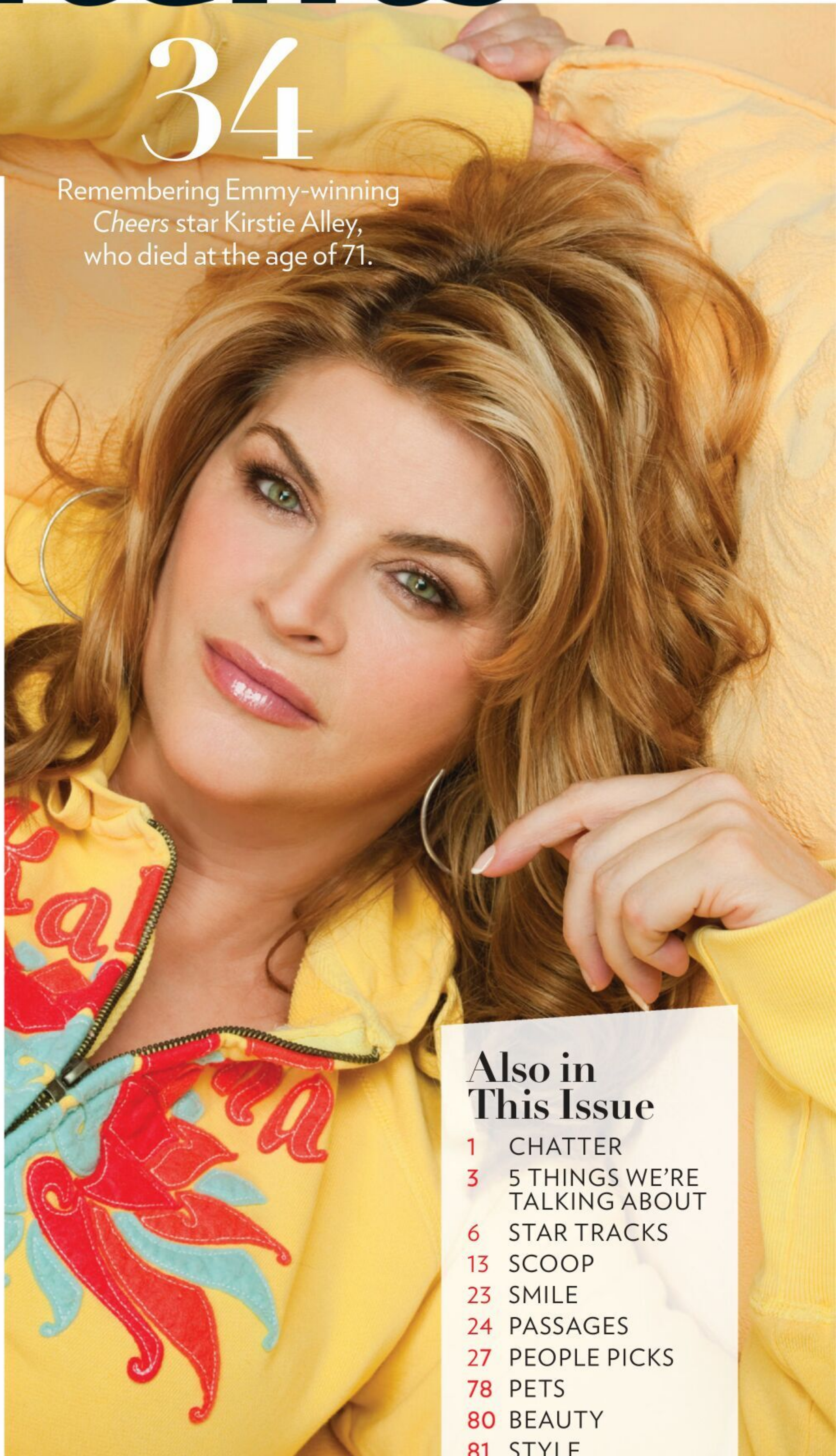
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CORRECTION In the Dec. 12 issue of *People*, the Puzzler clue for Luci Baines Johnson should have been "LBJ's younger daughter." *People* regrets the error.

ON THE COVER (Blake) Photograph by David McClister. Stylist: Suzy Perry. (Kirstie) Photograph by Michael Grecco. (William & Kate) Photograph by Samir Hussein/Wireimage



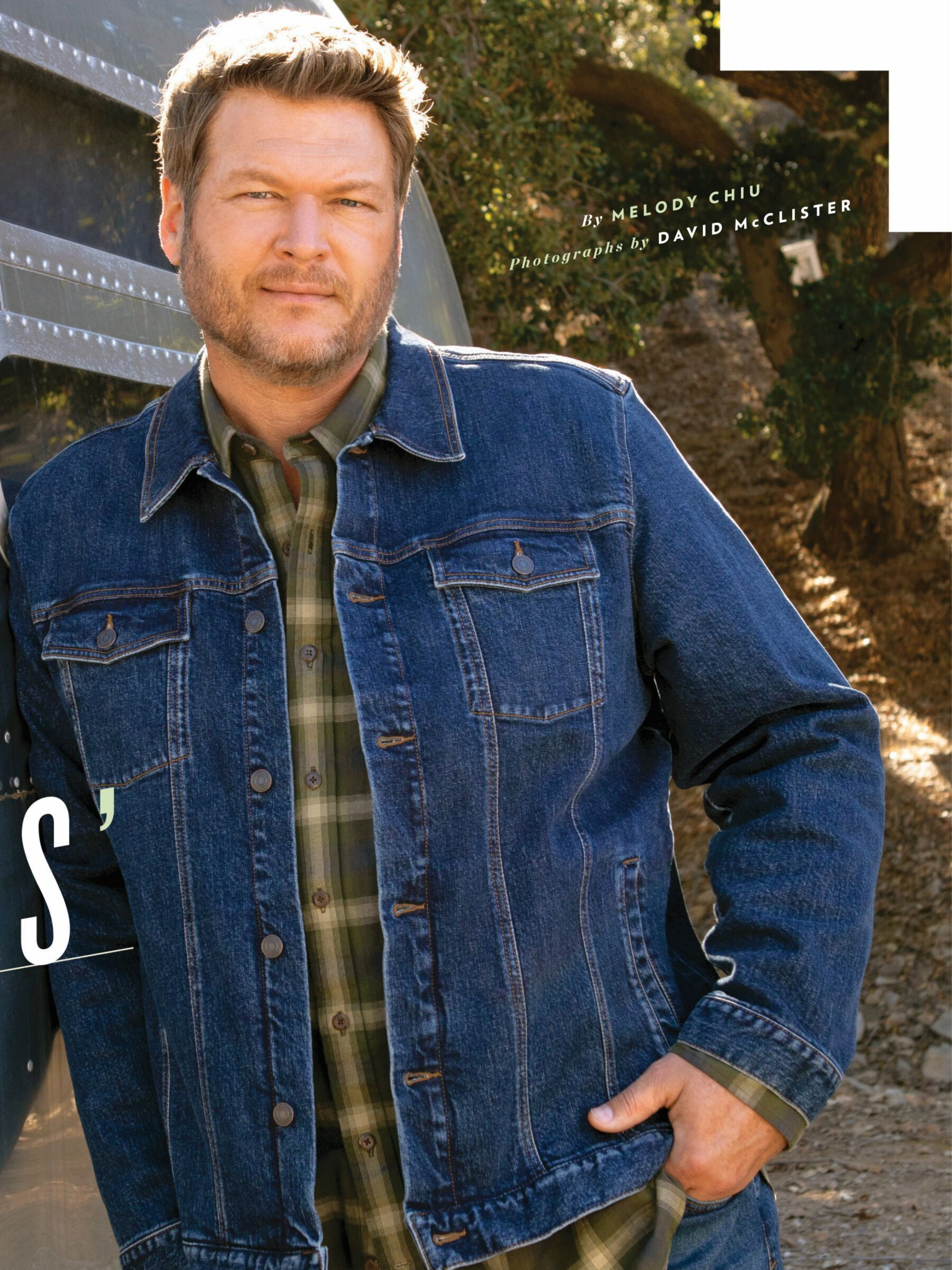
Blake
Shelton

I DON'T
WANT TO
HAVE ANY
REGRET

THE LAST DECADE HAS BEEN A WILD RIDE FOR THE COUNTRY SUPERSTAR. NOW HE'S FINDING JOY IN THE LITTLE THINGS WITH HIS FAMILY

By MELODY CHIU
Photographs by DAVID McCLISTER

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FOCUSING ON FAMILY

1. “Each kid has something different to teach me,” says Shelton (with, clockwise from left, Kingston, Zuma, Stefani and Apollo in June). **2.** “There was never a time where I thought, ‘I wonder if this doesn’t work out,’” says Shelton (with Stefani in 2020). **3.** At home Shelton (with Stefani in 2021) forgets his wife is a “superstar.”

There are few things the admittedly frugal Blake Shelton is willing to splurge on, but since marrying Gwen Stefani, the country superstar has shelled out a small fortune on... flower seeds. The couple have grown multiple gardens’ worth of

zinnias and sunflowers, and the Icelandic lilies are still a work in progress. “We go way over-the-top,” he says of their blooming bounty. “It’s embarrassing how much we spend on seeds. Besides music, gardening has been our biggest bonding activity.”

After a busy decade during which Shelton weathered personal highs and lows (including a divorce) while becoming a TV staple as a coach on *The Voice*, he’s ready to reap the harvest in a different way. “Gwen and I have done so much traveling and touring and work the first half of our lives that now we’re like, ‘Hey, I’m good to put my sweatpants on at 6 p.m. and watch *Ozark* eight times,’” he says. “That’s our life now, and we love it.”

Earlier this fall Shelton shocked fans when he announced his plans to leave *The Voice* next year after 23 seasons. Often described as the heart of the singing competition, Shelton, 46, admits leaving his TV family of 12 years is bittersweet. But after decades of tending to his career, he’s prioritizing time with Stefani, 53, his on-off fellow coach on *The Voice*, and her sons Kingston, 16, Zuma, 14, and Apollo, 8. (Their dad is Bush frontman Gavin Rossdale, Stefani’s ex-husband.) “This isn’t about me anymore and never will be again,” says Shelton, who celebrated his first wedding anniversary with Stefani in July. “Even though I’m a step-parent, I take that job very seriously. The kids see me as a very important person in their life.



↓
**'IT'S SO
NATURAL
AND NORMAL
TO BOTH
OF US'**
— ON BEING
MARRIED TO
GWEN

[When they ask], 'Why isn't Blake here?' I take that stuff to heart. I've made plenty of money, but you can't buy time back."

Here Shelton talks about life as a family man and his raucous new game show *Barmageddon* (airing Mondays at 11 p.m. on USA Network).

You've been on *The Voice* for what seems like forever. Does it feel like a risk to leave?

The truth is, it's been a long time coming. The

holdup over the years has been that it's a hard thing for me to let go of. I've been here literally since the first minute. I almost said it's scary, but it's really not, because I wasn't looking for this job when I found it. Maybe I'll look back in a couple years and go, "Man, that was it. That was my moment. And, damn, I made the most of it." I've far exceeded anything I thought I could ever accomplish in the entertainment world.

How has your focus shifted in the last decade?

When I started on *The Voice*, that was 10 years into my career as a country artist. I never really made it to the A-level of country artists until I became a coach. The show did a hell of a lot more for me than I brought to the table at the time. If I walked away from my career at this point, the only thing that I run the risk of is having regrets that I'm missing out on some more important things in life. For now, that's our kids. As the boys get older, there's more stuff to not miss.

What have they taught you about yourself?

They've taught me something about myself that I never knew: I'm more than just a country singer or a goofy guy. I'm someone they actually lean on, and that's not a responsibility that I ever had and not something that I ever considered even being into. It's a different self-worth. Maybe it's the opposite of self-worth because you put



2011



2022

23 SEASONS IN THE RED CHAIR

"I'd had enough success that I was a credible coach, but I surely wasn't a household name [before *The Voice*]," says Shelton, who's coaching with Kelly Clarkson, Niall Horan and Chance the Rapper for his final season in the spring. "When the show started, it was a breath of fresh air. We had fun and helped build these kids up along the way."

yourself way down on the rung, and they move up ahead of you.

You're not going away just yet. You've teamed up with *The Voice* host Carson Daly on the new game show *Barmageddon*. How did that happen?

We were filming *The Voice* [earlier in the pandemic] when nobody was allowed to even be in the building. We would just sit in our dressing rooms, drink and watch TV. That's really where the show came from. You remember the movie *The Hangover*? We wanted to try to capture that in a show with people we know. Gwen and Sheryl Crow were the very first episode we taped, and they just let their hair down and went for it. It gave us the confidence that we could really do this. If these two icons are willing to do shots of gross stuff and play absolutely stupid games and let us film them, then we know we have something.

You and Gwen have been together seven years now. Does it feel different being husband and wife?

It makes me feel settled, but nothing's really changed. The relationship that we have is so natural and so normal. This feels like the easiest thing I've ever been a part of. I forget every day that she's Gwen Stefani. Well, yesterday when she came out of the dressing room, I almost fainted when I saw her. Or if I bring her out onstage with me to sing or go to see one of her shows, it's not until those moments that it's like, "Oh yeah, I forgot you're an

BEST BUDDIES

"Blake and Carson make everyone feel like you're having drinks with them in their home," says *Barmageddon* host Nikki Bella (middle). "When we met, it was just instant chemistry." Adds Daly: "Blake and I could be at an insurance seminar and we would find a way to have fun. No moment's ever serious!"

international icon." To me, she's my best friend and everything that I need and lean on. But it's supercool that she's also Gwen Stefani.

We see how she's adapted to life in your native Oklahoma. How has she rubbed off on you?

Strangely enough, architecture. She's super into that. I never heard of a subway tile or crown molding until I met Gwen. We built this house together in Oklahoma, and I can tell even the architect's going, "Wait, what? I got to look that up." She's so smart about all that stuff. That's something where it's like, okay, I can get interested in this—not so much what you're going to wear to the Met Gala or whatever that's called. But architecture? I've learned so much from her, and I'm really interested in it.

What are some of your happiest times now?

It's the easiest question to answer: when we all go back home to Oklahoma. We get away from everything [in L.A.], and we're just *us*. It truly does feel different. You can just be a family there. Not that we're not [a family] here, and maybe the rest of the family would go, "Well, I don't feel that way," but I'm born and raised in Oklahoma in the middle of nowhere. That's where I feel the most comfortable, happy and safe.

You've released 12 studio albums. How do you approach music now?

Music is something that I'm always going to keep a foot in the door if I can. [The thought of] walking away from music—you might as well just poison me! That's not something I can go without. As far as recording, I'm at a crossroads. I see the country music lane changing so rapidly. There's some really good stuff out there and these young kids coming up. It's amazing to see how creative they are. That's another reason I'm excited to get some time back away from *The Voice* and concentrate





'I'VE
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more on “What kind of record do I want to make? Is it going to fit in? Do I care? Do I not care?” I got a lot to figure out, but I’m not getting away from music. I’m just not on anybody else’s schedule.

Now that you’ve achieved professional and personal fulfillment, are you still striving for anything?

There is nothing on the horizon for me, I swear.

I’ve had people say, “Man, come on. You’re not quitting *The Voice* [to do] nothing!” But I really am. Please, I’m accepting ideas. [Laughs] I [just] have *Barmageddon*—we can do a whole season in a couple weeks, and it’s a blast for me—and my Lands’ End clothing line. It’s time to push some of this [work] stuff out and let more family and personal life in. ●