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Celebrity Edition!

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Gwen

**ROCKS
TO HER
OWN BEAT**

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For a look like Gwen's, try: Paints in Graphito, Eye Shadow in Krisp, Liquid Liner in Boot Black, Pro Lash in Coal Black, Powder Blush in Fleur Power, Lipstick in Media, Lip Liner in Vino and Nail Polish in Scarlet O. All makeup by M.A.C. Clothes by Stephen Sprouse for Target. Hair: Danilo for Magnet L.A. Styling: Paula Bradley. Prop styling: Nick Tortarrici. Sittings editor: Gigi Solis Schanen. Photograph by Eika Aoshima.



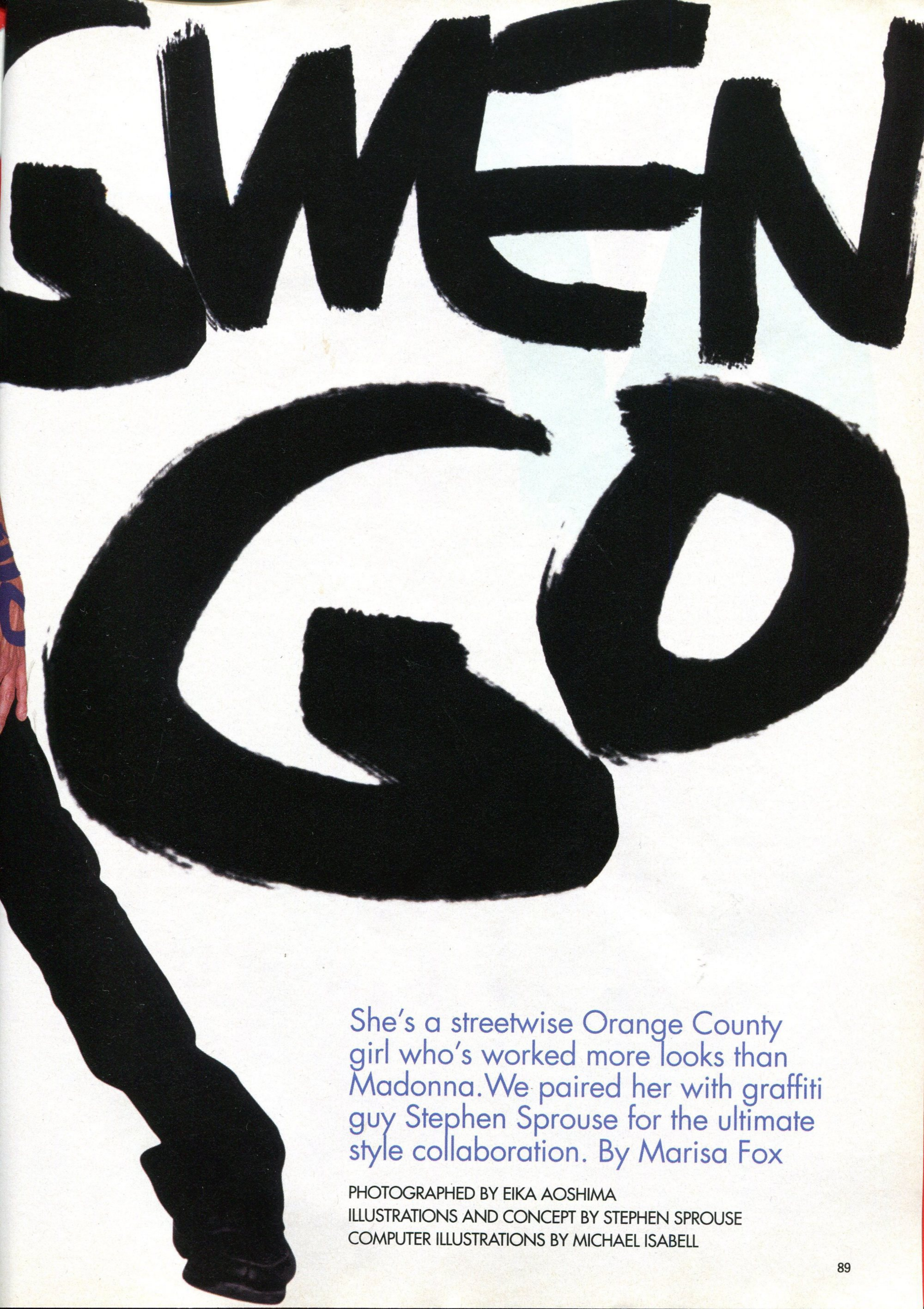
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Stephen tags Gwen. Graffiti dress (\$16.99) and bikini (\$16.99), Sprouse for Target; Target stores. Boots customized by Stephen Sprouse for Gwen.



She's a streetwise Orange County girl who's worked more looks than Madonna. We paired her with graffiti guy Stephen Sprouse for the ultimate style collaboration. By Marisa Fox

PHOTOGRAPHED BY EIKA AOSHIMA
ILLUSTRATIONS AND CONCEPT BY STEPHEN SPROUSE
COMPUTER ILLUSTRATIONS BY MICHAEL ISABELL



No Doubt's lead singer arrives at our photo shoot and her jaw practically drops. "You know how much I'm inspired by you, right?" says Gwen Stefani, rushing over to shake hands with a shadowy figure—who's one of her idols. No, she's not going to meet Debbie Harry, the peroxidized lead singer of new-wave band Blondie, whose style Gwen has emulated. It's Stephen Sprouse, who looks more like a goth skate punk in his black knit cap than a famous designer. Who's Stephen Sprouse? Just for starters, he created those slashed T-shirts Debbie Harry used to wear onstage in the early punk days. He's also outfitted Courtney Love, Axl Rose and countless other rock stars. Whether he was silk-screening Andy Warhol prints on dresses, making neon, glow-in-the-dark suits or putting graffiti all over clothes, Stephen was to '80s fashion what Marc Jacobs is to 2002. And that brings us right to the present: When Marc wanted to add a funky new twist to the classic Louis Vuitton signature bag, he called on Stephen. Turns out that Gwen, the girl from Orange County, California—who's decked out in a red-sequined Bob Marley T-shirt, black-and-green striped cap, and slip-on Vans spattered with No Doubt's *Rock Steady* graphics—was totally into those graffiti-print bags. "When I was going to do the artwork for *Rock Steady*, I really wanted to call Stephen to do it, but I didn't think he'd touch it," Gwen tells me. Instead she had a friend copy the style, and she's feeling a bit embarrassed about the whole thing now. "You saw my album cover?" she asks him. "Sorry about that, dude."

Stephen—who's on hand to custom-graffiti a pair of boots for Gwen—shrugs it off. "I would have done it," he says nicely. The slightly awkward moment blows away; Gwen invites Stephen to one of No Doubt's upcoming New York shows and all seems cool. This hard-working girl—she's leaving town on No Doubt's tour bus at 10 A.M. the next day—cues up the "Hella Good" video to get everyone amped, and goes off to slip into one of the graffiti-print minidresses Stephen made for Target. That's right: The once-underground and totally rad designer came up with a cool limited edition stars-and-stripes line for Tarjay this summer. How does it feel to go from totally high-end chichi stuff to designing \$4.99 flip-flops? "I love expensive and really cheap," he says. "I'm not that interested in the middle ground." Neither is Gwen, for sure.

Who has half her cool quotient and originality? What other star would think of adding '40s starlet hair to homegirl nail tips and Latina-looking red-red lips? Who else wore a *bindi* before Madonna and slashed punky T-shirts years before they were all over H&M? For that matter, who in the pop world but Gwen sews her own threads—not to mention writes her own songs, jumps around onstage night after night like a wildcat and holds her own among a group of guys for 15 years? She's sung with everyone from Moby to Eve and refuses to be categorized, going without a pause from ska to new wave to hip-hop to reggae. And while we're giving musical props, you have to love a girl who rhymes "sex appeal" with "chamomile."

Despite her notice-me outfit, Gwen's no diva. Up close, the part-Tank Girl part-Marilyn Monroe of the videos is just a suburban L.A. girl who worked the makeup counter at a mall near her hometown of Anaheim when she was in high school. And she still does her own makeup, painting her lips to perfection, penciling in her brows with precision, as if she's playing dress-up. When she emerges from behind the clothing racks in Stephen's little outfit, Gwen looks like punk Barbie—but if you're not used to seeing this athletic singer (hey, she wears tube socks on her *arms*) in a mini, you're not alone. "My thighs are private," she says, with a shy grin. "And my style has been about hiding what I don't like and showing what I love." Huh? It's hard to believe the midriff-baring singer has any body issues. But she does. "My whole family consists of large Italian people," she says with a laugh. "It was always a struggle for me. When I was little I was always 10 pounds overweight. So I really exercise for the shows." Stephen hands her a pair of thigh-high white boots, which cover up a lot of her legs. Then he takes out a fat marker and starts scrawling *Rock Steady* song titles and lyrics, like "Hey Baby," all over them. "I can't believe I'm getting painted by Stephen Sprouse!" Gwen gushes. "I want someone to take a picture so I don't forget this." The only other picture she asks for is a Polaroid for her fiancé, Gavin Rossdale, from the British rock band Bush. At 1 A.M., it's a wrap. And Gwen is the only one who shows no signs of slowing.

Hey, Baby

Three weeks after the shoot, No Doubt hits New York City. The Gwen look-alikes snake around the block outside Roseland, where the band has sold out its three nights. Finally Gwen and company hit the stage—a houndstooth-patterned one at that. It's easy to see how Gwen can get a mosh pit going, between her Rockette kicks, acrobatic leaps, sexy vocals and high-octane energy. She also knows a thing or two about reaching out to fans. She looks into the audience, picks out a girl dressed in a crocheted-bikini-top-over-tank-top getup just like Gwen's and pulls her up on the stage. "Would you look at her?" Gwen beams, like a proud big sister.

Three days later, she's nursing strep throat at her hotel—she's had to cancel some dates, in fact—but looking no less funky in a beaded tank top, pinstripe trousers, glen plaid jacket, black-and-white-striped Kangol, with a bright pink, orange and green scarf tied around her neck. Gwen tells me her fans definitely inspire her. "There was one girl the other night, I mean she had my whole thing down," she says. "The hair like in the video, I was like, 'Wow!' When they show up with their *Rock Steady* stuff, it's just so cute. And they really put the time into it."

But where did Gwen learn how to mix animal prints with houndstooth?

"Some people become cheerleaders and some people become artists. I didn't want to be like anyone else," she says, sipping tea (chai, not chamomile!). As a teen Gwen began making her own stuff—starting, appropriately, with a dress patterned after the one

Julie Andrews wore when she belted out "I Have Confidence" in *The Sound of Music*. Gwen based her prom gown on the black-and-white dress Grace Kelly wore in Hitchcock's famous thriller *Rear Window*. Do we detect an AMC fan? "I was always into really old movies," she says. "I love those classic looks. But as a teenager I was antidesigner; I wouldn't even look at fashion magazines—I'd think, I can't buy those clothes anywhere and they're thousands of dollars, and it was really frustrating for me." She's gotten over the antifashion thing—as you might guess from the red dress made for her by John Galliano (Christian Dior's wild creative guy) she wore to the Grammys. It turns out that Galliano is also making Gwen's wedding gown.

"I'm obsessed with him," she says. "Every time I meet the guy I can't speak." So what's the bridal dress going to have—tube-sock sleeves and a crocheted corset? "John says, 'It's going to be like a sculpture and we're going to mold it onto you and it'll be totally couture,'" Gwen says breathlessly. "And the best part is I get to wear it twice!" Yep—two weddings: Gwen's marrying Gavin in London in September, then zooming back to California to recreate the ceremony for the relatives who couldn't make it across the pond. All this will be followed by the world's shortest honeymoon so she can get back on the road.

"In some ways it's bad that we do the same thing," she says about Gavin. "Sometimes we're too tired to take care of each other. I'll ask, 'Can you get that?' And he'll say, 'No, can't you?'" She switches instantly from jokey to serious. "It's really difficult

Dior sunglasses. "In fact, I can't even believe I'm talking to you. Everything we have ever done in the band has always been about doing it for ourselves first, and we never really considered what other people would think. It's easy to get caught up in that, like when you get dressed in the morning—you just have to do it for yourself." And you could never accuse the 32-year-old of conforming to any norms. "In the early days when we were playing with a lot of punk and ska bands, there were no girls in the groups," she says. "I was always competing against these guys. And because our shows were so wild, there were only certain things I could get away with wearing.

"Back then, the guys wanted a pit to stage-dive into, and the girls were like, 'Who is *she*?' They could be really catty," Gwen says, revealing some much-earned toughness. "But then I remember it slowly turning around until I was representing the girls. And it was a really good day when that happened!"

Maybe that's partly why it's taken Gwen a long time to feel comfortable with a sexy image. "I was never about being sexy onstage," she says. "It was all about makeup and being a tough girl. Only now am I getting more comfortable with that. I feel sorry for all these young singers who feel they have to be totally sexy right out of the box. I mean, where do you go from there?"

Gwen chalks up her distinct, cartoony style to the fact that she's from Anaheim. "It's such a strange place," she says. "It's basically Disneyland, and all the hotels and motels—and that's all! It's also really close to Mexico, so I grew up with a lot of

"I was never about being sexy. . . . Now I'm more comfortable with that."

being apart right now. I'm not going to see him for six weeks. It's the hardest part about the band." For a minute there she looks like she's going to cry. And that's another thing you have to love about Gwen: She's not afraid to wear her heart on her sequined sleeve. Some of her best songs are about mushy emotions, whether focusing on the breakup with her former boyfriend ("Ex-Girlfriend")—No Doubt's bassist Tony Kanal—or her desire to settle down and have kids with Gavin ("Marry Me"). "I want it so bad," she says in that half-street, half-sweet voice. "But it's such a huge responsibility. And I'm a really selfish person right now because I'm in this band."

The Homegirl-Next-Door

Maybe Gwen deserves to be a little selfish. After all, it's taken a lot to get to where she is. "Nobody thought that we were going to make it," she says, playing with her gold-rimmed Christian

Latina homegirls. To me that style is so classic. They do '20s eyebrows, outlined lips, they never take off their mascara and it's bright-red lips all the time. They wear Dickies with a tank top, socks and tennis shoes. Real simple fashion with a heavily made-up face—I think that's the basis of my whole style."

Now that Gwen's given away her style secrets, does she have any plans to market her look? Well, as it turns out, she is working on a line. The white tank top she's wearing, with a little lamb outlined in beads on it, is a sample. "My label will be called Lamb," she says. Lamb? "I used to call my dog 'lamb,' even though her name was Megan, because lamb means cute. I call my niece lamb. The song 'Platinum Blonde Life' has a line in it that goes, 'And where did my lamb go?' which I wrote after my dog died."

Lamb? Maybe it's not the designer label you'd expect from a girl who sometimes drapes on more gold than Mr. T. But, hey, that's the charm. Keep us guessing, Gwen. □







All-American rock chick.
Left: AMERICANLAND tee (\$10.99)
and flag skirt (\$10.99),
Sprouse for Target; Target
stores. Right: Rock Steady ND
necklace, \$25; Nodoubt.com.

