





LAST YEAR, NO DOUBT TRAVELED TO A SECLUDED RESORT IN JAMAICA AND DRANK RUM, SWAM IN THE BLUE LAGOON, SCHMOOZED DANCEHALL LEGENDS, AND PUT FROGS IN THEIR MOUTHS (DON'T ASK). THE RESULT IS THE EXOTIC, REGGAEFIED ROCK STEADY. PASS THE SPLIFF...

BY VICTORIA DeSILVERIO

PARTY

OUT OF BOUNDS

No Doubt are surviving yet another breakup. But it's not like Gwen Stefani and Tony Kanal's famous Nicks and Buckingham-style melodrama, which threatened their happy family. This time, the SoCal new wavers abandon ska for a more modern reggae lover—dancehall—on their dubby, dance-floor-friendly fourth album, *Rock Steady*. Written and recorded in a year that saw genre-hopping singer Gwen Stefani's side-project turns help both Moby and Eve win MTV Video Music Awards, the record captures No Doubt in an ecstatic mood. So do we, catching up with Stefani, Kanal, drummer Adrian Young, and guitarist Tom Dumont at home in L.A. after the band's stint touring with their heroes, U2.

Spin: So how was opening for U2?

Gwen Stefani: It was rad. The first time we step out on a stage after a year making our record, and we're opening for U2 at Madison Square Garden. It was intense. Every night, as soon as they were done, we'd all go straight to the airport and get on their plane.

What's on U2's private 727?

Adrian Young: Food and alcohol. Shrimp, lobster, and Bloody Marys.

What was it like hanging out with Bono?

Tony Kanal: He's amazingly normal, but at the same time he's like—

Stefani: —magical.

Kanal: But very down-to-earth. Those guys pretty

much set the standard for being in a rock band. They raised the bar for everyone. Each record is different from the last but still sounds the same enough for you to go, "Fuck, this is my favorite band in the world."

Is that what you tried to do with *Rock Steady*? It has a lot of really unusual sounds but still feels like No Doubt.

Kanal: Making *Return of Saturn* [2000] was sort of a torturous, labored process. But when we toured, we had a really good time. Every night we had these dancehall parties backstage, and it inspired us to make a record we could dance to.

Stefani: Tony was a star on this one. He was willing to try anything, and I was like, "Whoa, my best friend is getting me off right now!" There was

"We had to earn our reggae stripes," says Gwen Stefani, shown with bandmates Adrian Young, Tony Kanal, and Tom Dumont. "For years we've been trying to do reggae music, and for the first time we got it right"



"Can you believe he made me lick his head?" Stefani and Eve present the "Best Male Video" VMA to Moby in September 2001

a real chemistry. With only four songs written, he said, "Let's go to Jamaica! I can make it happen!" And before we knew it, we were there.

How was working down there with reggae heavyweights Sly and Robbie?

Stefani: It felt really good to have the source itself. Sly and Robbie are responsible for, like, 80 percent of the hits that came out of Jamaica in the last 20 years.

Kanal: We would have family-style dinners and would listen to the radio, and they'd be like, "Is this us? Did we play on this?" They've played on so much they can't even remember.

You also hooked up with dancehall producers Steely and Cleve. It's really hip-hop of you to use so many people.

Tom Dumont: It is. It was really nice to break out of the rock-band rule of one producer per album. A week with William Orbit. A week of Ric Ocasek. Two weeks in Jamaica. Nothing ever got boring.

Stefani: One thing that's inspired us is that we've been partying all the time—especially Tom and Tony because they don't have girlfriends. And when you're out listening to music and watching people dancing...well, that's what we wanted to put in this record.

So, Gwen, are the lyrics all about [longtime boyfriend] Gavin Rossdale again?

Stefani: I haven't been able to make up songs about miscellaneous subjects. I want to get to that place because it takes a lot of talent, but every song on this record is based on experiences I've had in the past year. I also wanted to write more upbeat songs. I mean, there's some complaining, but mainly I'm saying I'm in love and really happy. Obviously, everyone knows I still go out with Gavin. But my theme—a real love survives a rock steady vibe—fits with the whole band. We feel really stable, aside from the fact that there's a crazy war going on.

What is the first single, "Hey Baby," about?

Stefani: It's about these guys [in the band] and

my experiences backstage for 15 years hanging out with all boys. I've had such a strange life. I feel really lucky because not only am I in a man's world, but I'm in a *man's* world with all men in the band.

Have you always tended to have more male friends than female?

Stefani: I have always been a one-on-one person. I've never been a pack type of girl. When I met Tony, we were best friends and that was that. I was all about Tony for eight years, and all of a sudden that's my life. I can count my girlfriends on one hand.

Speaking of girls, what was it like working with Eve on "Let Me Blow Ya Mind"?

Stefani: That was fun. At first I wasn't sure I should do it, but then I couldn't say no because she was such a cool girl. And I really wanted to work with Dre [who produced the single]. He was really sweet, but I was so intimidated. I showed up, and he was pretty much like, "Get in the box." He really pushed me, and I almost gave up. After singing two hours of the same part, he had something in his head that I wasn't hearing. I was like, "Why am I doing this? This is stupid." Then I finally got it, and it sounded incredible. He said, "You did good. I've had people walk out." And I was like, "Dude, I was *this close* to walking out." And he said, "You should have seen Eve do it. She was in tears."

But you didn't have to lick her head in the video like you did with Moby for "South Side."

Stefani: I would have preferred to lick her head! She's like a little piece of chocolate candy.

What does Moby taste like?

Stefani: I can't remember. I'm trying to forget. Just kidding! Maybe like carrot juice?

Adrian, what happened with you and an amphibian in Jamaica?

Young: Basically we were sitting at dinner one night outside on a patio, and there were a bunch of frogs everywhere. These guys will ask me to do

things for money. Silly, dumb things. Eat a bunch of mayonnaise. Get naked. So someone offered me \$100 to put a frog in my mouth for five seconds.

That's \$20 a second! How drunk were you?

Young: Fairly drunk. I had some Red Stripe and Appleton rum. There might have been space cookies.

How much pot did you guys smoke in Jamaica?

Dumont: You know, I don't smoke too much pot.

But it's hard to avoid there.

Dumont: That's true. People would come by the studio bearing gifts. One guy brought this huge wad of weed-plant bud things. It's like a local gift. The staff at the recording studio baked us cookies, and I suspect there was something in them.

Will Adrian ever wear diapers again?

Young: I did last night.

Why?

Young: Because I'm running out of ideas? I used to pee in them and throw them at the audience. I'm inspired by G.G. Allin.

Will you, like him, graduate to sticking bananas up your ass?

Young: No, I'm not taking it that far.

How have you guys managed to stay so normal?

Kanal: It's because we've gone through everything together. We started as a garage band. When someone needed 50 cents for a burrito, we'd have to dig around the car for change. Then we went on this amazing trip around the world for 27 months, for *Tragic Kingdom*. Then there was the very hard and humbling period of following up that success while writing *Return of Saturn*. And now we've come full circle and are having fun again. The whole time we've kept each other in check. Every day we tell as many jokes as we can. And do just as many farts in front of each other.

Dumont: I'll be the first to admit that when we go to a club and cut the line and get a VIP booth, and there are free drinks and chicks everywhere, it's really easy to get excited. It's such an ego stroke. Yesterday, we had a police escort because we were with U2. But we know that all of this will come to an end someday. We'll be normal and fat, and we'll be chasing our kids around Kmart.

So, do you have hobbies like normal people?

Stefani: No Doubt is our hobby. We made our hobby our life thanks to *Tragic Kingdom*. And I hang out with my boyfriend. Is that a hobby?

Kanal: That's a hobby. ■