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GWEN

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GWEN STEFANI IN
ALEXANDER McQUEEN
PHOTOGRAPHED BY
MERT ALAS &
MARCUS PIGGOTT

WELCOME

TO GWENOPOLIS

HAVING JUST COME OFF OF A WORLD TOUR PROMOTING HER RECORD-BREAKING SOLO CAREER AND RIGHT BEFORE SHE STEPS INTO THE STUDIO WITH HER OLD COHORTS NO DOUBT, SINGER GWEN STEFANI IS FLYING TOO FAST AND BRIGHT TO SLOW DOWN. IT'S SAFE TO SAY THAT STEFANI HAS BECOME ONE OF THE GODS OF TODAY'S POP MUSIC WORLD, WITH PLENTY OF DEVOTED FOLLOWERS. WELCOME TO GWENOPOLIS

Photography
MERT ALAS & MARCUS PIGGOTT

Dress and belt
Alexander McQueen
Headband Coco de Mer



Dress Alexander McQueen
Headband Coco de Mer

On eyes and lips, Max Factor
MAXeye Shadow in smooth
sailing and MAXwear Lip Color
in red appletini

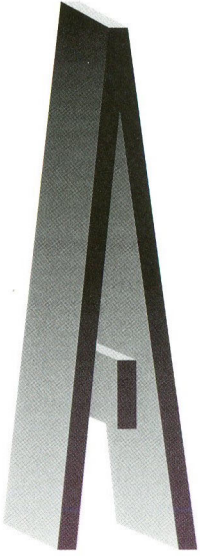


Max Factor



**"MY SENSE OF STYLE ISN'T INSANELY PREMEDITATED.
I DON'T REALLY WORRY ABOUT IT OR THINK THAT HARD ABOUT IT...
USUALLY IT JUST HAPPENS." -GWEN STEFANI**

Bodysuit Maison Martin Margiela



few days before I'm supposed to meet Gwen Stefani in Los Angeles for this interview, I just happen to run into her in a Virgin Megastore. Not surprisingly, Gwen is striking—movie-star blonde, impossibly big brown eyes, impeccable style. She also happens to be standing in a clear plastic box and is approximately 12" tall. It's the "Hollaback Gwen" doll, a fascinating (and, in this case, adorable) barometer of fame. It's one thing to acquire international pop-star status, your own fashion empire, a level of wealth unimaginable to most humans, and what appears to be an enviable level of domestic bliss (right after this interview took place, Stefani indeed became pregnant with a second child). It's quite another to actually see yourself immortalized in toy form.

When the real Gwen Stefani strolls onto the patio of The Beverly Hills Hotel a few days later, it's easy to see how she might inspire the creation of a whole fleet of impossibly big-eyed dolls. Just home from a massive world tour in support of two hit solo

records—2004's *Love.Angel.Music.Baby.* and 2006's *The Sweet Escape*—Stefani has none of the pretense or guardedness that one might expect from someone at the top of their game. Most pop stars coming down from more than a year on the road would probably be on an exotic, well-deserved vacation, but Stefani is happy to spend some time "being a real person again" in L.A.—which for her means running errands, working on her fashion line L.A.M.B., and spending quality time with musician husband Gavin Rossdale and their almost 2-year-old son, Kingston. Being a real person again also means getting back to the business of being a rock star. Rather than rest on the laurels of her newly established solo career, Stefani is also gearing up to re-enter the studio with her old band No Doubt. She's so casual and friendly, it's easy to forget that the woman sitting across the table just happens to be a globe-trotting supermom who has sold upward of 30 million records and has one of the most recognizable faces in the world. This is why people love Gwen Stefani. More than just pretty and talented, she is someone you might actually want to know—the kind of sweet California girl who still loves makeup and old thrift stores, and isn't afraid to admit she occasionally plays with dolls...even the ones created to look exactly like her.

T. Cole Rachel

T. COLE RACHEL The last time you were on the cover of *V* was in 2004. No Doubt was on hiatus, and you were anxiously putting the finishing touches on a little solo project...

GWEN STEFANI Wow, has it been that long? So much has happened since then. It's so odd that we're having this conversation today. I've only been home from my world tour for a few days and earlier this afternoon I had to go and finalize my will. So, it's like this one big chapter of my life came to an end, and then I had to come home and basically take stock of my entire life. Like, now what? It's a really strange time.

TCR Were you shocked by the response to your first solo album, *Love.Angel.Music.Baby.* and then *The Sweet Escape*?

GS You know what shocks me the most? It really was just this goofy thing that I did on a whim. Like, why not make a silly dance record just for fun? No Doubt was going on a break, and I wanted to record a few songs to see what would happen. I could have easily not made a solo record. It was purely the result of following my heart.

TCR Did the experience of making these two records outside of

No Doubt change the way you write songs and make music?

GS I still feel like writing songs is the hardest thing I've ever done and also the most rewarding. I love designing things and I love the creative process involved with that as well, but there's so much more magic involved in making a song. You never remember how to do it or how you did it before, but when you emerge at the end with this song...it's literally like magic. I mean, I hate the process most of the time and it's so daunting to think about going back into the studio to make a record. But a good song will still be around after you're dead and gone. It's permanent. Still, going in to work with all of those really talented people...I just felt like such an asshole. Like, I don't know what I'm doing and I don't really play an instrument and suddenly I'm in a room with Dre and Pharrell and André 3000. It was the most intimidating experience of my life. Obviously I'm glad I did it though. [Laughs] I don't know yet how this will affect my creative process with No Doubt, but I'm sure it will in some way.

TCR "Hollaback Girl" was also the first song in the States to sell a million copies as a digital download. That's crazy, girl.

GS Pretty historic, right? Me and Pharrell were just like, Yeah!

TCR The experience of touring on your own must have felt strange too, not to have the band up there behind you.

GS It was very different, but amazing. I played for over a million people and we did over a hundred shows. Because I've been doing this for so long I've had the experience of playing in front of all kinds of different audiences, but the audiences for this tour were like nothing I've ever seen. Success as a musician can seem really abstract until you actually go out on tour and see the crowds. Even then, it's hard to grasp it sometimes...walking out on a stage in front of thousands of people every night and realizing that this is their big night out and they've bought a ticket to see YOU. Every night I'd go through the same thing—"I'm too tired, I don't want to put these tights on, I can't sing, I don't wanna get ready." Except for putting my makeup on—which I always enjoy—I'd just dread it. Then you walk out onstage and see the way people react and what the songs mean to them and it's just incredibly rewarding. Every night I'd run out through the audience and have some kind of hands-on experience with the fans...and I mean that literally. I actually have scars from doing that. I loved it. Plus, I had nine costume changes! I'm not like Cher or Madonna—it wasn't that huge of a production—but still. I wouldn't do nine costume changes in a No Doubt show.

TCR So the boys in No Doubt weren't pissed when you were out on the road for so long?

GS They have been very supportive and cool about it. I mean, they've been my friends since I was 16. They knew I'd come back and do another No Doubt record, plus they were all busy as well. It's not like they were just waiting around for me to come back. They actually went into the studio ahead of me to start working out some ideas and getting tracks ready. They've been really working, so I don't even know how much material is going to be waiting for me when I go in to start playing with them. We did a photo shoot together as soon as I got back from tour. I was like, let's get together and take a picture before my body gets destroyed by this next baby that I want to have. [Laughs] It was also a nice way for us to get together and do something as a band. It was a little weird, but we looked really cute. Now we just have to make the record.

TCR No Doubt has been a band for twenty years now.

GS What? Do we have to say that? Can't you just tell people that we're a brand-new band? You know, this hot new band called No Doubt. Check them out.

TCR You should be flaunting it! Very few bands last that long. Still, the musical landscape has changed a lot since the last No Doubt record came out in 2001.

Top and skirt
(worn as turban) Chanel



"NO DOUBT WAS GOING ON A BREAK, AND I WANTED TO RECORD A FEW SONGS TO SEE WHAT WOULD HAPPEN. I COULD HAVE EASILY NOT MADE A SOLO RECORD. IT WAS PURELY THE RESULT OF FOLLOWING MY HEART." —GWEN STEFANI

Top Louis Vuitton
Headband Coco de Mer

On face and lips, Dior Capture Totale High Definition Serum Foundation in light beige and Rouge Dior Lipstick in plum plot





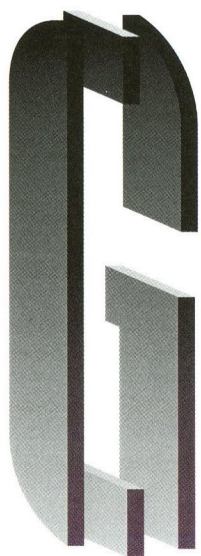
"IT'S HARD TO GRASP SOMETIMES... WALKING OUT ON A STAGE IN FRONT OF THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE EVERY NIGHT AND REALIZING THAT THIS IS THEIR BIG NIGHT OUT AND THEY'VE BOUGHT A TICKET TO SEE YOU." –GWEN STEFANI

Dress Louis Vuitton

On lips, L'Oréal Colour Riche Lipstick in tickled pink
On hair, Redken Rewind Pliable Styling Paste

Dress Miu Miu
Headband Marc Jacobs
Shoes Devios





S Yes, for sure. It's daunting for us, but it's also liberating. I feel like all our records are very different from each other and we've never really fit into a specific category. We evolved a lot from record to record, but it always still sounds like us. It's weird that way. There's a certain chemistry between us that can't be faked. We don't have the same sorts of problems that we used to have. We've grown up. I think this record could be the most inspired thing we've ever done as a band.

TCR In No Doubt it's not you calling all the shots.

GS Yeah, it's back to the democracy of being a band. I'm like, Are you serious? I'm voting right now?

TCR This is such an obvious question, but did your life feel radically changed after having Kingston?

GS I don't feel like I really changed all that much. Kingston didn't really change me so much as he just has made my life better. He makes me so happy. It's hard to imagine until you have a child of your own... it's just one of those miraculous human things that

you have to experience for yourself. God, I'm gonna start crying when I talk about this because it's just so...it's so intense. I put him to sleep at night and, you know, I'll be rocking him to sleep and he'll be playing with my hair and...it's just the most amazing feeling in the world. To have this little guy who loves me so much automatically, it's just crazy. I'll put him to bed and then, you know, enjoy having this quiet time when I can do stuff like go online and check my e-mail, hang out with Gavin, whatever, but then I find myself thinking that I can't wait for him to wake up again so we can play. My favorite time of the day now is six-thirty in the morning. We all get up and spend the morning together. Now, you can ask Gavin and he'll tell you that I am a sleepaholic. I love to sleep. If you had ever told me that I'd be waking up at six in the morning and enjoying it—for any reason—I would have never believed you. The last time I got up that early on a regular basis was when I was in high school! So yes, he's changed my life. I have to be more protective of my time now. I have to be more organized. But those aren't bad things to be, you know?

TCR Do you ever find yourself having total Momzilla moments, where you suddenly realize, oh my God, I have become the crazy mom screaming about organic carrots at the grocery store?

GS [Laughs] Not too much. I think you start to relax after a while. I think we're super relaxed about everything compared to other people with kids that we see. You realize that they are going to grow up and make messes and whatever. You can't be psycho about it. Still, I understand the whole crazy mom thing because after you have kids you want them to have the best things—even if it's the perfect organic carrot—because you love them so much. It just happens. Everyone should become a little bit crazy over their kid because kids deserve it. It's the greatest thing that's ever happened to me and I've had a lot of great things happen to me. And yes, I definitely want to have more...and it's fun trying to get pregnant.

TCR How do you juggle the music career, the family, and the fashion stuff?

GS It's tough. You know, I'm going into my fifth year now of doing L.A.M.B. and it's like a full-time job. Sometimes I'm afraid that I'm going to get fired from my own fashion line if I don't do what I'm supposed to. There are days when all I want to do is relax and the baby will be asleep and even though I just want to do nothing I know that unless I do my work, no one else can do their work. So, I'll tell Gavin to sit tight and I'll spend the next few hours looking at old patterns online—which, by the way, is my favorite thing in the

world to do. Looking through old patterns, going to thrift stores, visiting costume warehouses. I love it.

TCR You've always had a very defined sense of style, even from the earliest days of the band. Now that you have this successful clothing line and are looked at as a style icon, do you find that you have to be more protective of your image?

GS Not really. I've always been in total control of my image and how I've been presented. No one ever told me how to dress or that I needed to be more sexy or more fashionable or whatever. For the longest time, I didn't even let anyone else do my makeup or hair. To be honest, my sense of style isn't insanely premeditated. I don't really worry about it or think that hard about it...usually it just happens. I'll accidentally curl my hair a certain way. Sometimes I'll see a girl in the audience who is copying my look but rocking it way better than I ever could and that will inspire me. I get inspired by everything around me. I was always the little girl locked in the bathroom putting on makeup, singing, and getting a million burns from the curling iron. I'm still that girl.

TCR As far as media attention goes, you and Gavin seem to fare pretty well. I don't see gossip mags predicting your divorce every five minutes like they do with some celeb couples.

GS It's just so weird that people feel free to comment on your marriage. I guess we all do it, but it's usually in regard to someone that we actually know. For complete strangers to weigh in on my private life is incredibly weird to me. As for me and Gavin...you know, we fell in love twelve years ago and we have had the rockiest, craziest, most amazing relationship. It's sort of a miracle, actually. We work very hard at it. Plus, you know, having a baby is just about the most romantic thing in the world you can do with somebody. We were together so long before we had him and he's such a funny blend of us. We're really lucky and very blessed, but not because it isn't difficult. Gavin is awesome. Oh god, what a quote...he's awesome!

TCR So, I was walking around the Virgin Megastore in New York and discovered that they had this huge island of Gwen Stefani merchandise—a total Gwenopolis right in the middle of the store.

GS Wait, did you say "Gwenopolis"? Can you please make sure that goes in this story? Actually, I want that. My next solo record is totally going to be called *Gwenopolis*.

TCR Well, I'm looking at all the stuff—Harajuku Lovers bags, unauthorized Gwen Stefani biographies, DVD's—and I picked up one of the Gwen Stefani dolls. As I'm holding the doll in my hands, I look over and I notice that the person standing across from me is Chris Rock. He's the only other person around in the entire store and he totally clocked me playing with the Gwen Stefani doll!

GS Are you serious?

TCR Well, it got me thinking about all the various celebrities who have their own doll. It's a pretty elite group. I mean, it's one thing to be famous, but to have a doll...

GS Yeah, it really takes it to the next level. Let me tell you, it was a long, difficult creative process creating those dolls. The outfits are exact replicas of what I wore onstage for the tour...the shit is crazy. Plus, they'd bring all these doll head mock-ups of my face over to my house and I'd be talking about how the eyebrows needed to be thinner....

TCR That has to be one of those moments when you step back for a second and think, My life is insane. This is insane.

GS Uh-huh. But you know, I was one of those girls who played with Barbies a lot as a kid. A lot. So strangely enough, it didn't feel that weird to me. It was like a fantasy. The funny thing is that they keep sending them to me, so now I have a bunch of them at my house that I don't know what to do with. I don't want people to come over and think I just keep dolls of myself scattered around the house. That would be crazy.

Makeup James Kaliardos for L'Oréal Paris
Hair Oribe

Photo assistants Angelo Pennetta, Semra Russell, Gareth Horton
Stylist assistant Jaime Fruge Makeup assistant Christine Nguyen
Hair assistant Judy Erickson Location Pier 59 Studios West, Santa Monica
Production Lalaland Digital capture Dtouch

Styling Andrea Lieberman

Mask Louis Vuitton
Bodysuit Danielle Scutt

On eyes and lips, M.A.C
Pro Lash Mascara in coal black
and Lipstick in lady danger

