

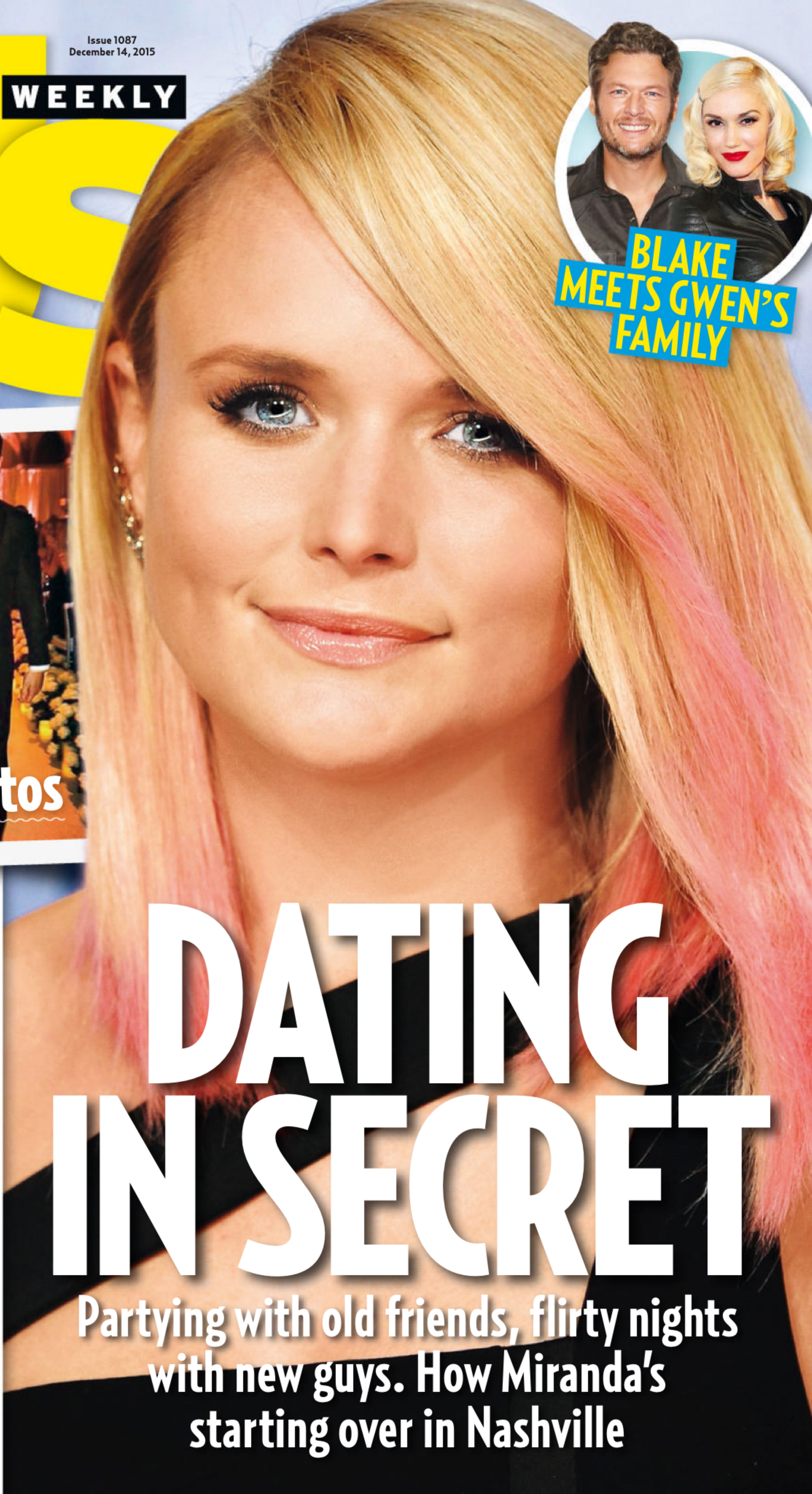
Issue 1087
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WEEKLY

US



**BLAKE
MEETS GWEN'S
FAMILY**



DATING IN SECRET

Partying with old friends, flirty nights
with new guys. How Miranda's
starting over in Nashville



SOFIA & JOE'S

Wedding Photos



NEW ROYAL PORTRAIT!

**At Home With
Baby Charlotte**

Miranda MOVES ON

As **Blake Shelton** flaunts his new love, **Lambert** dates undercover

BY ERIC ANDERSSON

To hear Miranda Lambert tell it, her life is the stuff of country songs. “I had a great relationship with an amazing man, so I know what good is,” the 32-year-old star, who divorced husband of four years Blake Shelton in July, told *Cosmopolitan* for its January issue. “I will never take that for granted.” Imagining how she will forge ahead alone, the “Little Red Wagon” singer painted a bleak picture: “Some of that might mean nights on my porch crying, drinking whiskey and going, ‘Man, this sucks.’”

The rest of it, however, means hot dates with admiring men. Friends are marveling at Lambert’s brisk postsplit recovery. “Miranda is actually doing amazingly well,” shares a close Lambert friend. “Being in a public marriage, she felt so boxed in. Now she is free to be herself.” And test the waters of the dating pool. While her ex, 39, and his new girlfriend, *The Voice* co-coach Gwen Stefani, 46, flaunt their romance for TV cameras — Stefani gushed “I love you” to Shelton on *Entertainment Tonight* November 23 — Lambert is opting to play the field privately. “She has started going on a few dates,”



Lambert called joining pal Ashley Monroe (left) on stage at her Nov. 20 show at Nashville's City Winery "magical."

Text



"We gave it our best college try," Lambert (in 2014) told *Cosmopolitan* of her marriage to Shelton.

continues the source, “and she’s really enjoying it.”

THE DATING GAME

Lambert’s preferred singles scene is a neighborhood bar. At home in Nashville, she frequents adjacent watering holes Winners and Losers, both known for their tap beers and Southern fare (think fried pickles and smoked tuna dip with saltines). Even when she’s at Losers, Lambert is a blue-ribbon reveler. “She hangs around there a ton, drinking and partying,” an insider says of Lambert, who purchased a new Nashville home postdivorce and bought Shelton out of the upscale log cabin they kept nearby. Often joined by longtime pal April Lewis, 32, who manages the Miranda Lambert Store and Red 55 Winery in Lindale, Texas, and Pistol Anni’s bandmate Ashley Monroe, 29, Lambert “dances and flirts,” says the friend. “Miranda’s enjoying reconnecting with her girlfriends. She’s a lot of fun.”

Guys have taken notice — and a few brave souls have asked her

out. “Miranda has been on a couple of dinner dates and gone out for drinks,” says the source. “They were just guys she met around.” But Lambert, still smarting from having her marriage under a microscope, is keeping mum about the details — including the suitors’ names. “She’s single for the first time in more than 10 years,” the friend says, “so she’s not looking for anything serious.” Indeed, Lambert and Shelton’s marriage failed, in part, because “she felt rushed to have kids and do the things you’re ‘supposed’ to do,” says the pal. “So she’s not rushing into anything.”

HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS

Another perk of being unattached: calling the shots on where to spend Thanksgiving. In Novembers past, Lambert and Shelton marked the occasion by hunting boar on his 1,200-acre Oklahoma ranch. This year, Lambert treated herself to red wine and Cheetos at the home of her parents, retired private investigators Beverly and Rick, in her native Lindale (population: 5,323). “She had a great time with her family,” says

the friend. “She just chilled. It was a lot of eating, talking, seeing friends, drinking and hanging out.”

And one quickie road trip. Following a feast with her family, Lambert, her younger brother Luke, 27, and Lewis piled into the clan’s Airstream RV to go “glamping” for two days over the weekend. “They drove around Texas, relaxing and letting off steam,” says the friend. After taking in a concert by country crooner Hayes Carll at Gruene Hall in New Braunfels November 27, they drove 266 miles north to Terrell, where they were recognized the next day. While loading up on supplies (fruit, iced tea and Doritos) at convenience store Buc-ee’s, Lambert chatted with fans and obliged requests for selfies. “Miranda was smiling and telling one little girl how pretty she was,” says witness Carol Nolan. “Miranda looked really carefree and happy. She was being really nice to everyone.”

BACK TO WORK

After the road trip, Lambert returned to Music City, where she will

Shareworthy Snaps

Lambert posts her single life on Instagram



A wine and Cheetos-filled welcome from Mom greeted her in Texas Nov. 25.



“Jessi and Waylon just had spa day!” she wrote of her rescue golden retrievers Nov. 18.



“Drivin’ my life away,” she captioned a Nov. 27 shot of her Texas “glamping” getaway.

Lambert posed with her likeness (and her ex’s record!) in a Walmart Nov. 20.



continue recording her upcoming sixth album. The two-time Grammy winner, who has already collaborated with country singers RaeLynn and Clare Dunn, “is taking her time working on the album, but she is putting everything about the marriage and divorce into it,” the friend says of Lambert, who wrote 2014’s “Two Rings Shy” about being overshadowed by a lover. “Her truth will be in her music. She always keeps it real.”

But the songs may not be all breakup anthems. The friend says that despite being initially resentful that Shelton and Stefani confirmed their romance November 4 — the same night Lambert won Female Vocalist of the Year at the CMA Awards — Lambert has let her emotions cool. “She doesn’t care about Blake and Gwen,” says the friend. “She’s on good terms with Blake. They don’t talk or text every day, but they are friendly. They are both happy.” Especially Lambert, says the source: “She’s really taking time to enjoy her life right now. She’s in a very good place.”

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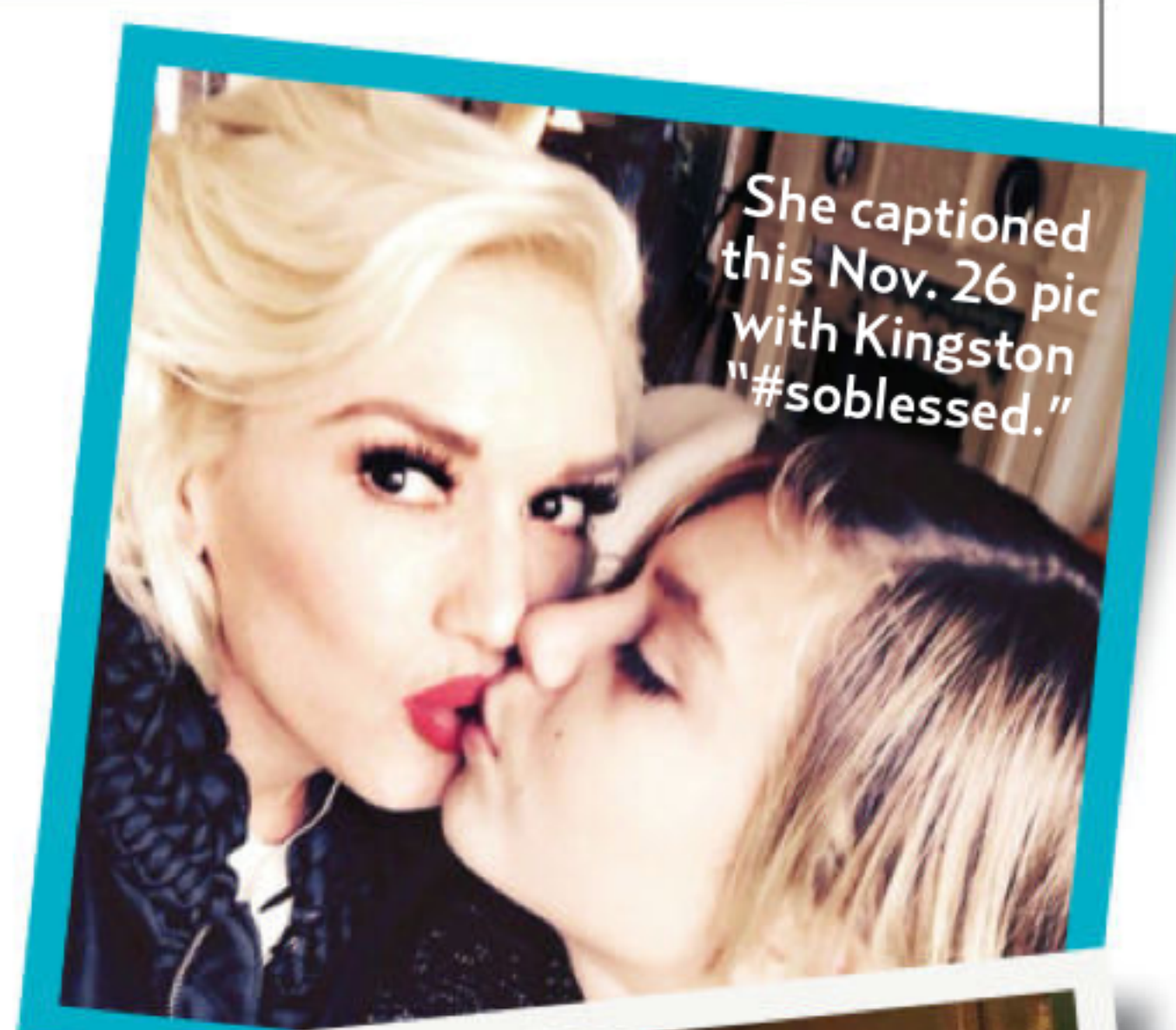
Post-Thanksgiving, says a source, “Blake spent the night at Gwen’s.” The pair (Nov. 30) carpooled to the Voice set the next morning.

Stefani FaceTimed with Shelton during a family Disneyland trip Nov. 27.

GWEN & BLAKE: NEVER APART!

Stefani and Shelton keep close over the holiday break

» Gwen Stefani and Blake Shelton may have had separate Thanksgivings, but the couple still got plenty of face time. While the country star, 39, celebrated with his mother, sister and friends in his native Oklahoma, he video-chatted with the “Used to Love You” singer, 46, November 27. As Stefani — who split from husband Gavin Rossdale in August — strolled through Anaheim’s Disneyland with sons Kingston, 9, Zuma, 7, and Apollo, 21 months, she kept her eyes on Shelton’s mug (topped with a camouflage hat, of course). Also witness to their virtual date: Stefani’s parents, Dennis and Patti. “Blake has met her parents. They’ve been on the Voice set a bunch,” says a Shelton source of the retired duo, who talked with Shelton between takes at the November 23 show. “Blake gets along great with them, and they really like him!”



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