

GLAMOUR

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December 2016

GRAHAM, STEFANI; MIQUEL REVERIEGO, OWN THE NIGHT; PATRICK DEMARCHELIER, ZENDAYA; VICTOR DEMARCHELIER, PRETTY LITTLE THINGS; BILLY KIDD, BILES; MARK SELIGER, OWN THE NIGHT; ALL CHANEL, OWN THE NIGHT; LOUIS VUITTON DRESS, SHIRT, SEQUINE EARRINGS; PRETTY LITTLE THINGS; VALENTINO DRESS; AUDELIE BIDERMAN EARRINGS; ANN TAYLOR BELL; ROCHAS CLUTCH; SEE GLAMOUR SHOPPER FOR MORE INFORMATION

Wow. Just Wow.

We all deserve a glass of champagne right about now. Let's celebrate everything good in the world, from our Women of the Year to, yes, some fun new going-out fashion.



“I feel like
I got
woken up
this year.
I’m really
alive.”

Gwen Stefani has had a lot of big years. But with a chart-topping album, a major solo tour, an expanding fashion line, and a new love after heartbreak, the 47-year-old is outdoing even *herself* in 2016. She breaks it all down for us here. By Jonah Weiner

Photographs by **Miguel Reveriego** Stylists: **Rob & Mariel**

Signature Style

"People will tell me, 'You're such a punk rebel'...but I was not that growing up," says Stefani. "I was actually a super-sheltered, conservative girl."

Alix of Bohemia jacket. **Kate Moss for Equipment** blouse. **Alexander McQueen** skirt. **Falke** fishnets. For a piecey updo like Stefani's, try **L'Oréal Paris** Advanced Hairstyle Boost It High Lift Creation Spray (\$5, at drugstores).





When Stefani has been making music since 1987, way back when she was just a teenage mall rat in Southern California who decided to start a ska band, No Doubt, with her brother. We all know what came next: Stefani led the group to pop glory and then carved out her own category-busting career as a solo artist, selling more than 30 million albums combined. The Grammy winner also branched out into fashion, glamming up wardrobes worldwide with her L.A.M.B. clothing line. And yet even with her incredible success, Stefani, like all of us, doubts her ability at times. Reclined on a couch in a Los Angeles photo studio, she recalls that when she began advising singers on *The Voice* a couple of seasons ago, “I had to talk about my story and try to convince people how good I am. And I was like, Wait a minute—yeah, I did *that*, I did *that*, I did *that*. Wow! It gave me all this confidence. It helped me write again, helped me recognize my gift.”

That confidence boost kicked off a series of new milestones for Stefani: There’s her triumphant solo album *This Is What the Truth Feels Like*, her first in a decade, not to mention her first to debut at number one. She wrote it in the wake of her divorce from longtime husband Gavin Rossdale, transforming heartbreak into a set of pulsating, dance-your-ass-off pop songs. Armed with those hits, Stefani went out this summer on her first major tour in years (her three boys—Kingston, 10; Zuma, 8; and Apollo, 2—joined her on the road). Meanwhile, she oversaw the expansion of her fashion empire into two new eye-wear collections and a line of high-end kids’ clothes. And as the world knows, she also found a new love: Blake

Shelton, the country music star she got to know on *The Voice*. In May the two performed their country song, “Go Ahead and Break My Heart”—Stefani’s first foray into the genre—on the show, prompting fans to beg for a full album of duets.

But the best thing about Gwen Stefani is that the woman does her own thing—always, every year, every decade. She has thumbed her nose at societal restrictions placed on women (lamenting, “I’ve had it up to here!” in the 1995 song “Just a Girl”). She has championed eccentricity with her let-your-freak-flag-fly fashions. And by writing uncompromising music, including her heartrending new songs, she’s shown us all how to summon strength through self-expression. “Sometimes to be woken up again in life, you need to go through some really bad, hard times,” she says. “I feel like I got woken up this year.” The *Glamour* Woman of the Year reflects on 2016—and the future—here.

GLAMOUR: Let’s start with your recent highlights. Your new album debuted at number one. Your fashion line is expanding. Your work on *The Voice* introduced you to a whole new audience and a new love, Blake Shelton. Am I missing anything?

“Gwen shows that youth
is a mind-set.
She’s curious. She grows
sweeter with time.
And she continues
to change the game.”

—Pharrell Williams, Grammy-winning artist and one of Stefani’s fellow judges on *The Voice*

GWEN STEFANI: I got to go on tour! I *never* thought that would happen again.

GLAMOUR: Why not?

GS: Being a mom—like, I think I overdid it. The timeline’s crazy: I got pregnant with Kingston, my oldest, on tour for *Love. Angel. Music. Baby*. I stayed on tour till I was four and a half months along. Gave birth. Went in the studio, made *The Sweet Escape*. Went back on tour when he was eight months. When I got home, I got pregnant with my middle boy, Zuma. Went on tour with No Doubt when he was four months, and when I got home, I didn’t feel good. There were too many plates spinning.

GLAMOUR: Then you had a third son, Apollo. How did touring come to feel manageable again?

GS: [This time] I needed to tour for my own triumph! To be like Rocky at the top of the steps, like, “I just did three shows in a row. I’m *that* mentally healthy, physically healthy, strong, and I can do it with three boys on a tour bus!” And I did it!

GLAMOUR: Is life on the road still as fun for you as it was starting out?

GS: Yeah. And it’s amazing with the boys. I thought they’d want to go off and, you know, go to Disney. But they all wanted to be at the venue, working. My middle boy, Zuma, literally worked every

night: He had a light, and he walked me on and off the stage, and opened the curtain when I’d run back to change outfits.

GLAMOUR: Your little roadie.

GS: At one point I asked him, “Do you want to come out and do a bow at the end with us?” He really wanted to. He did it one time and was like, “Uh, I have stage fright—I’m not doing that anymore!” But he loved being in the wings.

GLAMOUR: Speaking of outfit changes, let’s talk about L.A.M.B. It’s more than a decade along now. How did you first get into fashion?

GS: It’s in my blood! My mom was always making me clothes. We’d go to the fabric store, pick out patterns, and it was a creative process. I heard that word a lot growing up: *creative*.... You should have seen my room. It was a pigsty with a sewing machine. I would get stuff, and then I would change it. Alter it. My mom would help me.... At the same time, I was so naive. I didn’t know anything about fashion, growing up in Orange County. I just knew about it through music, how ska bands dressed.

GLAMOUR: Early on in No Doubt, you had a very tomboyish look, and you poked fun at gender restrictions in songs like “Just a Girl” [“I’m just a girl, little ol’ me, well, don’t let me out of your sight / Oh, I’m just a girl, all pretty and petite, so don’t let me have any rights”]. It seems like part of the subtext of how you dressed was rejecting how a woman “should” present herself to the world.

GS: People will tell me, “You’re such a punk rebel,” this or that, but I was not that growing up. I was actually a super-sheltered, conservative girl. Now, there was probably a bit of me that was like, “Why do I have to be like that?” Because when you discover your sexuality—like when you’re little, (continued on page 236)



From Hurt to Hits

"We all go through hard times," says Stefani. "How can we improve when we have these challenges?"

Safiyaa blouse. **Alexandre Vauthier** pants, belt, sandals. **Falke** fishnets. Love her shiny red lip? Try **Urban Decay** Revolution High-Color Lipgloss in Gash (\$22, urbandecay.com). **See Glamour Shopper for more information.** Hair: Danilo at The Wall Group; makeup: Gregory Arlt at Exclusive Artist Management; manicure: Shelly Hill; production: Portfolio One.

WOMEN *of the* YEAR

Gwen

The Icon

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 204)

you don't notice it. Then suddenly you're walking down the street and you're whistled at. And you're like, Oh, I have this power I didn't know about. And you also discover you're kind of prey. And you're like, Wait, that's confusing. So I wrote "Just a Girl," and I think that song is still relevant today. There are limits put on women, but why should there be?

GLAMOUR: Zooming out, when you take stock of the past year, how do you place it within the course of your life?

GS: Mind-blowing. I don't understand my journey. It's so crazy. But one thing I learned is, that's what life is. We all have to go through hard times. Tragedies. Those are given to us to see what we're going to do with them. How can we give back? How can we improve when we have these challenges?

GLAMOUR: In reading what you've said about your divorce, one thing in particular struck me: You used the word *embarrassed* a lot. Why did shame enter into the equation for you?

GS: I don't think you'll talk to one person who didn't make it in a marriage who's not gonna feel that way. The intention of being married is the vow, right? You want to put everything into it to make it a success. And all I had to look at was the huge success of my parents: They just had their fiftieth anniversary. I had to work really hard at marriage, all the time, like everybody, but ours was extra hard, when you add that we're from different countries, both of us being in music, and celebrity. [Marriage] was the one thing I didn't want to fail at. People can say whatever they want to about me...and I don't get too affected. But I didn't want them to think I was a failure. There's nothing weird about how I felt.

GLAMOUR: You've referred to that period as several months of "hell" and "torture."

GS: [Laughs and nods.] But you know what? I'm in a different place now, [and] that is the past for me. I'm in such a new place. It's all about the future for me. Not really just the future—but the moment right now. Like, I'm Woman of the Year, right here on this couch!

GLAMOUR: Hell yeah! On the theme of living in the moment, you've said that the process of writing the new album saved your life. How did it save you?

GS: It released me from that feeling of hopelessness. When I was in the studio for *This Is What the Truth Feels Like*, it was like, I need to be here right now. This is the only place I feel good. It

doesn't matter what comes out of this, as far as my career—this isn't about a hit. It's about saving my life. And it was interesting, because I know you're going to ask me about Blake, but finding somebody who was going through the exact same experience? [Shelton divorced country singer Miranda Lambert at about the same time.] That was an inspiration. He was a friend to me when I needed a friend. An unexpected gift. And that became an inspiration in the songwriting.

GLAMOUR: From the outside, your relationship seems like an opposites-attract situation. You're pop; he's country. You have a fashion empire; he has a ranch in Oklahoma. It's like a rom-com premise.

GS: It's definitely two different cultures. But there are many similarities, in things that we love and our morals. But it's really fun when you can learn about so many new things and share those differences.

GLAMOUR: For instance?

GS: I've learned a lot about country music from him.... But my first concert ever was [folk/country singer] Emmylou Harris.

My parents took me out of Girl Scouts to go to that show.

GLAMOUR: You've described your success as double-edged. You said a number of months ago that at a certain point you got so big that you felt trapped by your success, that you felt like you owed everybody. Do you still feel you owe everyone something?

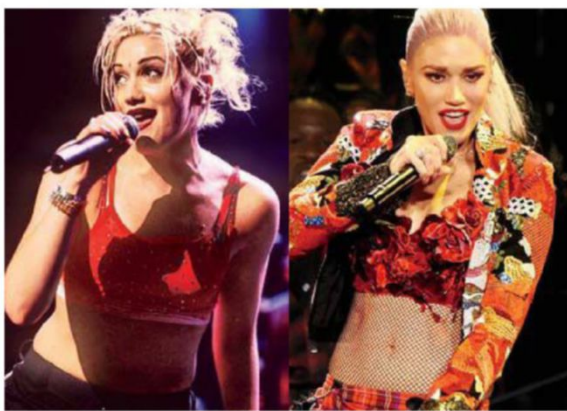
GS: No, I got rid of that. I had to, because otherwise I couldn't do anything. Thank God that I get to do what I get to do; there's no way to tell you how grateful I am.

GLAMOUR: Do you ever think about your legacy? The mark you'll leave?

GS: No, that's ridiculous. When

I think of a legacy, I think of the legacy of being a mom. When you're a parent, you're just like, God, I hope they like me when they grow up. I hope that I did a good job. I hope they're gonna be happy. The moment you get pregnant, you're tortured by the fear of not doing it well. But I feel at peace with that right now. I'm trying to be present, not thinking and worrying about the past or the future. That's such a waste of time, you know? **G**

Jonah Weiner is a contributing writer at The New York Times Magazine and Rolling Stone.



Gwen, Then and Now Stefani performing with No Doubt in the nineties, left, and on her solo tour this summer. Still rocking her signature crop tops!