

Jewel

THE SIMPLE LIFE SUITS HER

By Gina Roberts-Grey

In the mid 90s, then 19-year-old singer, songwriter and yodeler (yes, yodeler!), Jewel, burst on the scene with her smash debut album *Pieces of You*. Now 38, the mega talented monosyllabically named songstress (who was born Jewel Kilcher) continues to pour her heart into every song. It's no wonder she's scored numerous top prizes over the years from *Billboard Magazine*, MTV, the American Music Awards and more.

Music, it seems, has always been in Jewel's blood. Her paternal grandmother, Ruth, was an aspiring opera singer who gave up her career to move to the Alaskan wilderness. "My grandmother taught all eight of her children to sing, and they kept themselves entertained with music. It helped pass the long work days of clearing that rugged country by hand," she says.

Prior to becoming an internationally known performer, as a kid Jewel sometimes performed with her father, singing in bars and taverns in Alaska. But music wasn't always her first priority.

"I grew up in the woods in Alaska," she says. "We didn't have indoor plumbing; living off the land was part of our life." Making butter, milk, jam and bread, along with weeding an immense potato field and cutting grass for hay in the fall were all part of her typical day.

These days the singer lives with her real-life cowboy and pro rodeo star, husband, Ty Murray, and the couple's 1-year-old son, Kase, on a ranch in Texas.

"Life on our ranch is much simpler than the one I grew up on, especially for me. For one thing, we have indoor plumbing, which is nice," she jokes.

But it's the simplicity of her roots that fuels Jewel's passion and nourishes her soul. *BELLA* got a firsthand look at the life of this former "ranch kid," why Jewel says she's glad she was on her own at 15 years old and what guilty pleasure she's dying to indulge in.

***BELLA's* tagline is beauty as defined by you. What is your definition of beauty?** I think beauty is embracing what's unique about you and knowing that's going to be your greatest beauty strength. It's beautiful when women turn a flaw into an asset like Lauren Hutton's gap in her teeth. When women own something like my snaggletooth or unusual noses like Barbra Streisand's, it shows confidence. That confidence is empowering and beautiful.

What would you like to teach your son about beauty? That the more you can support a woman's confidence, the more beautiful she's going to feel. And that it's important to help preserve and enhance her self-esteem.

No matter how long you're married, a woman wants to know that her self worth is important to her husband because self worth and self-esteem are often tied into beauty. They're a big part of making women feel secure.

It's also important to have pride in how you look; that's a great thing and pride in a healthy sense is nourishing. There's a difference between pride in your appearance and looks, and vanity. Vanity isn't as nourishing; it's a circular parasite because when you're vain you never feel beautiful enough. Vanity breeds insecurity, it's an addiction. However, taking pride and being proud is great and feels good.

How has being a mom changed your outlook on life? It has had a profound impact that's impossible to describe until you have a child. It can be so healing.

My mom left when I was 8, and I had a tough relationship with my dad. That love you get as a parent – that unconditional love – is remarkably healing.

It's also taught me that even if your parents aren't perfect, you can be a great parent. The things that are innate in you and your own goodness can help you be a good parent. Parenting is not just about what you get in life, it's about how, through self-analysis, you can learn to be a different parent than your parents.

What family traditions are you and your husband looking forward to sharing with and passing on to Kase? I'm teaching him to yodel. I was taught when I was young and my whole family does it. My brothers and cousins yodel when they're coming home from being in the woods or when they're at someone's house.

I hope to pass on words to him. I wrote a book for him to inspire a love

of words in him. And also using his imagination, which as a kid was one of the biggest thrills for me. I found creativity to be very empowering and loved the fact that I could make things up and have fun.

My husband wants to pass on roping ... that's important to him. It was fun for him to learn as a kid and he spends a lot of time with Kase teaching him.

What was life like growing up in Alaska? The beauty is staggering. For me it was wild. I grew up in a wild part of Alaska – not everyone does ... there are very modern places like Anchorage.

The outdoors became my church; I felt so connected to God when I stood outside and looked out at the overwhelming beauty of the natural world.

It was hard work, though [since] we lived off the land. We canned our vegetables and salmon, weeded gardens, milked cows and butchered a cow every fall to get through the winter. It was a lot of hard work but it was also good to know where food comes from.

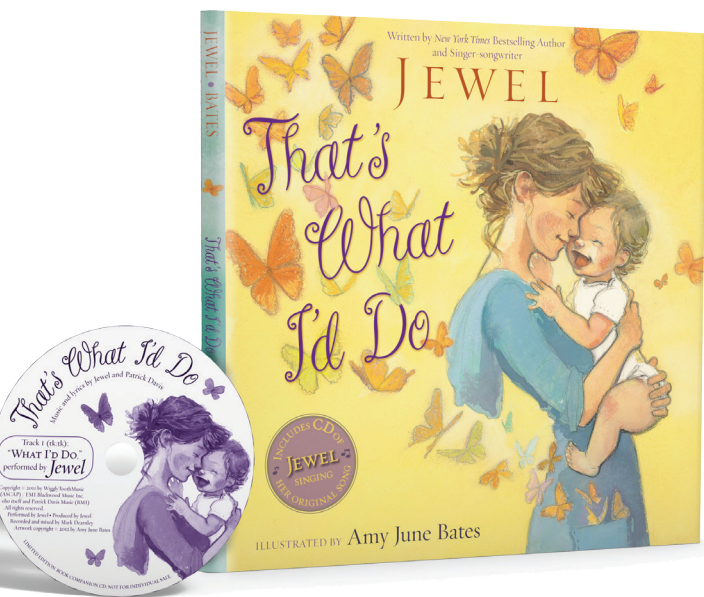
Life there is so grounded and there are some of the nicest, most genuine people there. They're such nice people to be around and be raised by, so down-to-earth and good. Growing up as a ranch kid and living on a ranch now is so close to the natural order of things.

What was it like to have your family be the focus of a Discovery Channel show about life in Alaska? My family was so surprised when the Discovery Channel show "Alaska: The Last Frontier" went up there. My last name isn't used a lot so I'm not sure that everyone even realized it was my family until the episode aired and got some publicity.

I'm proud that my family was part of that show and viewers got to see how I was raised. It was really neat to get to see the episode and share that part of my life with people. In the past, I tried to describe Alaska and how I grew up, but it seems like people thought 'yeah...sure!' But I really did grow up around bears, with an outhouse and a coal stove for heat.

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CHILDISH AND SWEET



You're an author, songwriter and musician, not to mention a wife and mom. How do you find time for yourself? Taking time for me is hard. New moms are at the bottom of the list for themselves and they really have to work to make themselves a priority. That's hard; I'm not the best at it.

I haven't read a book beyond a baby-raising book since I had Kase. I look forward to reading again. I really miss those simple indulgences.

What's your favorite way to relax and unwind? Taking a bath without the baby is amazing. I haven't done it yet, but I'm thinking it would be wonderful. Shaving my legs is a miracle these days, and to do both in the same shower is really something (laughs). Right now it seems like I haven't done anything that lasts longer than three minutes in ages. But I cherish my son and family so it's worth it. And I'll have time again for myself soon because kids grow so quickly.

You experienced success at such a

young age. Do you ever feel like you missed out on any part of adolescence? I don't think I got famous too young; I was an adult. I was 19 or 20 but had been on my own since I was 15. I had already spent years in a grown-up world in a lot of ways. It was good.

Being ranch-raised and moving out so young might have robbed me of some of my youth, perhaps. But overall, I think it was good. I wouldn't recommend doing what I did, and I don't want other 15 year olds to support themselves or hitchhike to work. But honestly, looking back, I think I had a leg up. I knew how to do laundry and grocery shop. I know it sounds ridiculous that ranch kids are taught to drive a tractor at 8, but I think we don't give kids today enough responsibility. So when they're on their own at 18, they don't know what to do ... they don't have good work ethic or realize there are hardships.

When and why did you pick up a guitar? At age 16, I wanted to hitchhike to Mexico, like all parents hope their

Jewel has diverse musical and artistic interests. So to feed her creative appetite, she branched out into children's albums in early 2009. "I wanted to make a record that was an indie one, that wasn't part of any one genre and wasn't compiled of radio singles. This was a passion to write and produce at the ranch," she says. The result: "Lullaby."

"I was trying to get pregnant when I wrote 'Lullaby,' so I was thinking of a child sleeping and not waking. It's a mood record, not necessarily a children's album. I've been told college kids like to study with it and dads stuck in traffic listen to it on the way to work."

The album's lead single, "Somewhere Over The Rainbow," was released on iTunes in March 2009, and was No. 1 on the Top Children's Songs the week of the full album's release later that year.

Her second children's album, "The Merry Goes 'Round" was released in August 2011.

"I wanted so much to work at the ranch. I have several nieces and nephews and I wrote "The Merry Goes Round" because I wanted to produce something with value for kids. I was pregnant and wanted to write stories for songs with morals and lessons that I hoped to teach my son after he was born."

Those projects led to Jewel branching out to children's books. "I was writing the lyrics to the song "That's What I'd Do" and seeing the words written without a melody just instantly struck me. I thought the words were better without melody. So I decided to get it illustrated and make it a children's book. It's a love story for my child and all kids," she says.

kids do (laughs). I was on a scholarship to a fine arts school in Michigan and I didn't realize I couldn't stay at the school for spring break. I didn't have enough money to get back to Alaska so I came up with the genius idea to hobo across the U.S. border in San Diego and go to Mexico. I thought I'd do the street thing and learn guitar. I did, and I wrote, "Who will save your soul?" on that trip. And I didn't die, so there you go (laughs)!

Do you consider yourself a writer first or a musician first? I think I'm probably a writer. I think musician is a term that can be used loosely. There are great ones out there and I'm not one of them.

What was your inspiration for your greatest hits album? I hadn't done one and it was time, finally. Nowadays you can make one yourself on your iPod – you don't need actual product.

I just wanted to do duets with some artists and voices I really liked, so it was nice to be able to do that, too. We recut

BEAUTY ON THE GO

Life as a busy ranch mom and wife, coupled with nurturing her creative career, leave Jewel little time for primping during the day. If hours at the spa aren't on your radar, these products will help you look great while sporting Jewel's natural look.



"Foolish Games" with Kelly Clarkson, who sings amazingly. And we also did "You Were Meant for Me" with Pistol Annies. There's also a brand new song "Two Hearts Breaking."

What's your favorite track on the new album and why? The new one; I like whatever is new. I wrote this one. Sometimes I co-write, sometimes not, but it seems like the songs I do myself are more unique.

What keeps you grounded and centered – especially when things get hectic? The values I was raised in keep me grounded and connected to what's real in life. And what's important in life. I was taught to live a simple life and to focus on what matters to me. That I shouldn't let things get so complicated because that robs you of happiness. I won't let all the bells and whistles that can be so exciting distract from what makes me happy. I continue to ask myself am I doing what makes me happy and am I a good person?

I think the meaning of life is to be happy and good to people around you. I don't want to be on my deathbed and say, "I sold 27 million albums." Instead, I hope I can say I loved well and was loved. That's how I live my life, to be able to say that at the end.

What's next for you? I have a lot of albums in mind, and I'm not sure which will be first. I have a country album written but I have to see which way I decide to go. 🐾 🐾



Jewel's GREATEST HITS is now available in-store and digitally