



Legendary singer Stevie Nicks, 57, at her LA oceanfront home. She has survived the ups and downs of the music industry to forge a successful solo career.

# bohemian rhapsody

Enter the magic world of famed Fleetwood Mac singer Stevie Nicks. It comes complete with the bohemian trappings of a seasoned rock chick, as **Sharon Krum** discovers when she visits the original witchy woman at her Los Angeles home.

**THE ONLY THING** you're hoping as your car climbs the sweeping driveway to Stevie Nicks' Los Angeles oceanfront home is that you won't be disappointed, that the house will be as you imagine it. When its owner is the ultimate rock poet, a woman who has spent 30 years channelling gypsies, sprites and goddesses, it's only natural to envision velvet surrounds and lace shawls – bohemian meets heavenly.

So as you make your way past the hedges blooming with bougainvillea, roses, honeysuckle and jasmine, up the white steps inlaid with Spanish tiles, your heart starts to beat a little faster, your curiosity gets the better of you. What if, privately, Stevie Nicks keeps things simple? Then you step inside and immediately start smiling, relieved. It's everything you hoped – only better.

It's early afternoon and there are candles lit and dripping, the sweet smell of incense fills every room. There are fairy dolls and life-size sprites, gold scarves and velvet couches, beaded pillows and antique lamps. The Pacific Ocean outside provides the perfect soundtrack, as the sound of waves lapping the shore seeps into every corner of the house.

"I designed this place, it's all me," Stevie says proudly, showing *The Weekly* around her 1927 two-storey, Spanish-style abode. "But the thing that makes it for me is the ocean. I could never live in a forest. I need the roar of the ocean; it gives me energy. One of the things I love about going to Australia is that I can stay by the ocean wherever I go."

Meet Stevie Nicks and you learn it's impossible to separate her from her home (she has another in her birthplace of Phoenix, Arizona), which for her is both a cocoon and source of inspiration. "My idea of a good time is right there," she says pointing to a desk in her study. "I sit here, the ocean crashes outside and I write in my journal, then go to the piano. That, for me, is heaven."

It might be summer, but we are sitting in her living room with a fire roaring, with Stevie's Yorkshire terrier Sulamith at her side, and it feels perfect. Stevie was in Australia in November for the Victorian Racing Carnival – she had a race named for her, The Stevie Nicks Stakes – and to promote the Australian leg of her Gold Dust solo tour, which begins in February,

including performing separate concerts with John Farnham and the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra.

"What I love about my life is that you never know what surprises come up," she says of the fact she has inspired a horse race. "I've been to the Kentucky Derby and loved it, all the excitement and drama. But my own race, in Australia! I'm just thrilled."

As for the tour, I'm looking for a delicate way to mention her age – a number at which most female rock stars have long packed it in – when she happily beats me to it. "I'm 57!" she cries. "I know what you're going to ask. Why do I keep going? Firstly, it keeps me young. I love performing," says the woman whose hits *Rhiannon*, *Sorcerer*, *Stand Back*, *Landslide*, *Gold Dust Woman* and *Edge of Seventeen* are all certified classics.

Yet, in the age of Britney and Beyoncé, isn't she feeling a little too old to still be a "rock chick"? She shakes her head. "I know there will come a time when I'll feel too old to have my picture taken in flimsy rock clothes, I already don't wear short skirts anymore, but I'll never feel too old to go on stage, because I'm proud of the songs and the music is always fresh for me."

"You know, *Edge of Seventeen* was about John Lennon dying, then it became about September 11. I feel *Landslide*, which was about me deciding whether to continue doing music with Lindsey Buckingham [her ex and Fleetwood Mac guitarist], is now about Hurricane Katrina."

"But I do wrestle with ageing, don't get me wrong," she continues, her frustration clear. "I don't like it one bit. I'm aware I'm looking older, [she actually looks fantastic, more 47 than 57, and slim, having just lost 10 kilos at Weight Watchers], but I don't want to have a facelift. I did not spend my whole life working to be Stevie Nicks to alter my face so people will say, you know, you kind of look like Stevie Nicks."

From the moment she stepped on stage in 1975 as a member of Fleetwood Mac, all long blonde hair, platform boots, top hat and swirling robes inspired by the legends of gypsies and fairies she always loved, you knew you were watching the birth of a star. Stevie had a voice like velvet gravel and the sex appeal to match, but like many rock stars, her upward >>>





A self-confessed homebody despite her rock chick credentials, Stevie sees her home as a cocoon and sanctuary from the world, to write and think.



trajectory was punctuated by devastating cocaine and tranquilliser addictions, now long-conquered.

Amazingly, in an industry where sustained success with one band is hard enough, Stevie has also carved out a phenomenal solo career, testament to her talent as a songwriter, not to mention a romantic history, which included singers Lindsay Buckingham, Mick Fleetwood and Don Henley, that she says she will one day chronicle in an autobiography. "But not yet, I'm not done yet," she says with a laugh.

In person, Stevie presents as an engaging tangle of contradictions. She's a deep thinker but a voluble talker, an artist who loves performing, yet is a self-confessed homebody. When not on tour, she says she retreats to write, compose and spend time with family and a close-knit circle of female friends. "That's why my home is so important to me."

Though each room has a different colour scheme, the house collectively does have the sense of being a sanctuary. In the red living room, which Stevie says was inspired by the painting of a gypsy girl that hangs over the fireplace, rich red velvet couches sit atop a crimson Persian

carpet, while palm fronds, red roses, a crystal ball and white candles add a sensual touch. In one corner is Stevie's piano and images of sprites line every wall. Only one gold record hangs here – for the Australian release of Fleetwood Mac's *Say You Will*.

"I feel she sort of rules the room," Stevie says staring up at the gypsy painting. "I built all the red around her. It's funny because when I got her in 1998, I didn't feel like she was that much younger than me. Now I feel I'm getting older and she's getting younger. It's very Dorian Gray."

Curiously, while she loves the red room, Stevie admits "the green room is where I live". A study outfitted with cool green velvet couches, a desk, TV and a fairy doll ensconced in a birdcage, it offers 360 degree views of the ocean. "It's really my salvation. If I wake up and I'm not in a good humour, I rock into that room and – boom! – I'm in a good mood."

They don't call Stevie the gold dust woman for nothing; her bedroom makes it clear why. Gold-beaded pillows and a gold quilt decorate the bed, while overhead, a canopy made up of glittering scarves gives the room an unbelievable glow.

Her second bedroom, all in white, >>>

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Above: The colour in the red living room was inspired by the painting of a gypsy, which hangs over the fireplace. Stevie uses the piano in this room to compose.



**“I chose not to have children because I didn’t want to compromise my art.”**

Above: Despite loving her current home, Stevie is planning to move to another house two blocks away and recreate the rooms, so she has plenty of space for family and friends to come and stay.

boasts a four-poster bed, a “fainting couch” and antique lamps.

Like a true gypsy, Stevie moves often (on tour she often changes rooms in the same hotel after a while) and is actually leaving this home for a new house two blocks away, where every room, she says, will be recreated as it is here.

“This house was a great bachelorette house, but there’s not enough privacy if I want to have a man here, or friends to stay, or my family. We would all be on top of each other. I have god-daughters and a niece I adore, and I want to have them with me.”

Indeed, framed photos of her god-daughters and niece are everywhere, and the joy in her voice when she talks about them reveals what a great mother she would have been. Yet motherhood, Stevie says, was not for her. “I chose not to have children because I didn’t want to compromise my art. That’s selfish, but that’s how you have to be.

“My mother always said to me, ‘You came here to make people feel better and take away pain, and give people warm hugs with your music.’ For me to be a mother,

with my life, would have meant having a nanny and I could never have my children run across a room to another woman.”

Men, she says, have long presented a different dilemma. Oh sure, there were relationships, many passionate, but ultimately she believes her life is too much for any man. Currently single, her last relationship ended a year ago. “I have been out with everyone from a waiter to famous rock stars,” she says, grinning. “And none of them could handle it. It’s hard when the limo pulls up and you get in, and leave them behind.

“For me to be in a relationship, it would have to be with somebody who found my life totally amusing and loved all my girlfriends, and is okay with me leaving – and that man is very hard to find. We’ll see,” she says philosophically.

“I tell people I live in a world of possible romance at any time. But honestly, I don’t care if it doesn’t happen, because I love being by myself.”

Yet Stevie has long made it clear that hers is a solitude she is willing to forgo at a moment’s notice when it comes to charity. A truly generous spirit, she raises funds for the Arizona Heart Institute (where her late father, Jesse, was treated for heart disease), the City of Hope Cancer Center in LA and has recently made repeat visits to injured soldiers at Walter Reed Army Hospital in Washington.

“I think it’s very important for rock stars to be involved, to give our support to causes,” she says, dismissing naysayers.

At Walter Reed, Stevie delivered 450 iPods programmed with music. After Hurricane Katrina, she put the demo of her song *Touched by an Angel* on the internet, with all proceeds going to the victims.

“I believe music is the great healer, the thing that connects all of us,” she says.

Stevie confesses that in the days before *The Weekly* arrived, she was having more than a touch of anxiety. About getting the house ready? The interview? No, hats.

“I’ve heard how fabulous the hats and clothes are at the races in Melbourne,” she says, admitting that she had spent hours on the internet staring at pictures of past winners in the fashion stakes.

“I’ve taken lots of notes about the hats,” says the woman who actually has her own fabulous collection. “I want to make sure I do it right.” ■

**STEVIE NICKS GOLD DUST TOUR**  
February 18, 2006: Melbourne, Rod Laver Arena, with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra

February 20: Brisbane Entertainment Centre, with John Farnham.

February 24: Newcastle Entertainment Centre

February 25: Sydney Entertainment Centre

February 28: Perth, The WACA, with John Farnham.



