

“I’VE GOT
A CRUSH
ON STEPH
CLAIRE
SMITH...”

INSPIRE A SONG LYRIC? YOU’VE MADE IT. HERE’S WHY
THE WORLD IS CRUSHING HARD ON STEPH CLAIRE SMITH

By Alex Davies Photography by Steve Baccon Styling by Charlotte Stokes

Nike jacket,
\$130; Under
Armour crop
top, \$55;
L’urv bikini
bottoms, \$45



A few months before her song *Drink Too Much* came out, musician G Flip slid into Steph Claire Smith's DMs to let her know that she was namechecked in the opening line of the track. After giving the OK, Steph also appeared in the music video. "G did a festival and put the mic to the crowd, so thousands of people were singing 'I've got a crush on Steph Claire Smith,'" says the 25-year-old Melburnian, when we chat before our photoshoot at a Sydney surf club. "Everyone was sending me videos. It's surreal, but super cool!"

Song muse, entrepreneur, author, podcast host, speaker. Steph's resume has grown since she first starred on our cover in late 2017. She still models - for brands such as Baby-G, Bras N Things and Bondi Sands - but it's in the business space that she now spends most of her time. There's sunnies brand Soda and swim label Midnight Co., both of which she co-founded, but her number one baby is Keep It Cleaner (KIC).

Launched by Steph and best friend Laura Henshaw, the KIC empire now includes a lifestyle program (workouts, meal plans, mindfulness), app, podcast, book (*A Girl's Guide to Kicking Goals*), wellness retreat and foodie products from protein bars to pasta. Not bad for what started back in 2015 as a recipe ebook. "We had about 20 spelling mistakes that my mum liked to point out to me when we launched," recalls Steph, laughing. "So apologies to anyone who had the original ebook! Any mistakes ... we learn from."

It's that attitude of always learning and listening that's proving to be a kickarse success formula. In one of her biggest years yet, Steph reflects on being taken seriously as an entrepreneur, falling in love with weights, what's in the KIC pipeline and the other babies in her future.

* SHE'S A NOSTALGIC FOODIE

"Most mornings I start with a protein smoothie with peanut butter and cacao in it. If I'm hungrier, toast with avocado and eggs or porridge. Then, for lunch, I'm obsessed with pho or I'll have a chicken salad. Snack wise, our [KIC] protein bars or bliss balls are favourites. I could also have popcorn five days a week - I love it! Dinner is meat and veg. I don't have red meat more than once or twice a week, but a nice steak and mushy peas or sweet potato chips - that's my kind of meal. I'm massively nostalgic, so any time I have roasted vegies with roast chicken it reminds me of Sundays with my mum when I lived at home. It's the same reason I have porridge, because it reminds me of my nanna.

* SHE'S A STRENGTH CONVERT

"I like to go to [our KIC trainer] Danny [Kennedy] once a week and do a heavy strength workout. I had the total misconception that it would make me bulky, but now I love the way it makes me feel, and I love feeling stronger.

I'll go on walks, jogs or runs three times a week, then I'll do a KIC HIIT workout up to three times a week. My only reason for fitness when I first started modelling was to look a certain way. Nowadays, exercise is something that makes me feel happy. It makes me tick. If you'd have asked me a year ago ... I hated the thought of running one kilometre, let alone pushing myself to run three times a week! I like to see where I can build up my strengths and work on my weaknesses. It's about celebrating what my body can do. I'm much healthier now I have that mindset.



Tommy Sport top, \$89.95, Stylerunner; L'urv bikini bottoms, \$45; Baby G watch, \$219

* SHE'S A TOTAL BOSS

"The biggest challenge [in a business sense] is that Laura and I are bosses, which is so weird to say. We've got such an amazing team [at KIC] and we're lucky that we've found people who are so passionate about our baby. But it has been difficult for us to navigate how [to manage people]. To put that serious head on and take my heart out of it sometimes is hard - for both Laura and I. I think it's going to be a forever-learning thing, which we are totally fine with.

For a long time, Laura and I were just called models and influencers. People put us in a stereotypical category, [ignoring] all the hard work we do. Being a model and an influencer is still hard work, and I still love doing that, but - for us - when we were putting so many hours into the business but never quite being called 'businesswomen' or 'entrepreneurs' [was disappointing] ... or, if we said we were, people would look at us [strangely]. But now I think it's pretty well known how hard we both work.

My advice? Just stay true to yourself and really do your best to surround yourself with people who do support and believe in you. If there's someone who's bothering you with the way they treat you, it's OK to say, 'Hey, I don't appreciate how you're making me feel.' It's not a weakness [to voice that]."

* SHE PUTS FAMILY FIRST

"Everything's underway [with planning my wedding to fiancé Josh Miller]. It'll be in November this year and a big party! Josh is everything to me. Ever since the engagement last year, it's brought us together more as a team. I'm very excited about starting a family. I've wanted to be a mum basically since I knew what a menstrual cycle was [laughs]."

* SHE'S A STRESS CRIER

"Modelling is still a dream I'm living, and I've ticked off goals I've had since I was a little girl, but it's a roller-coaster. Working in the health space, the rewarding part is meeting the girls who are changing their lives or feeling better in their own skin and finding that balance. The [KIC] community is what keeps us going, because if we can do that for even a handful of people - let alone thousands - it's just incredible. So, I love that KIC has now become my full-time job and my main priority.

[This shift in my focus] has improved my mindset for sure. I'm a lot better at pulling myself out of my down times. I go through stages of being totally OK and then totally stressed out. I'm the kind of person who, if I'm having a stressful week and someone asks how I'm going, I'll just cry. But, having people like Laura and Josh around brings me back up. I also make sure I have time where I can totally switch off, like [while] taking my dog for a walk.

Not everyone wakes up feeling 100 per cent every day. As much as there's a journey to self-love, there's no end point. You're continuously working on yourself and trying to find that happiness. Right now, I'm in the best and happiest place I've ever been in. I've found the most balance and it's sustainable."

* SHE'S INSPIRED BY WOMEN

"I take inspiration from so many different women. I'm really close with my mum. She's an HR manager, so she's helped me with how the workplace should be running. Laura's a massive mentor for me. She's superwoman. She has always put 110 per cent into everything she's doing and makes sure everyone else is feeling amazing."

* SHE'S KIC'ING WORK GOALS

"Our [KIC] podcast is a place where Laura and I can dive right into our emotions and opinions. Sometimes the things we post on Instagram can be taken the wrong way, so it's nice to have that platform now, too. When I listen to myself on a podcast, it's kind of intimidating, but I've been getting used to it.

We're also launching into Woolworths ... with 20 sports and diet products. The main thing I'm super excited about is our protein powder, because that's something we get asked about almost daily in the community. Ours is clean, it's yummy, it blends well. We've got five flavours: berry, chocolate, vanilla, which is my favourite, plus salted caramel and espresso. And then we've got more protein bars, bliss balls and electrolyte waters.

Every time we do something like a fitness expo or workout event, we love meeting and working out with the girls. So, we're also thinking about doing an Australia-wide - and even New Zealand [wide] - tour towards the end of the year."

* SHE'S ABOUT POSITIVE VIBES

"Laura and I are constantly telling people, 'If you're finding social media isn't a pleasant place ... then it might be to do with who you're following.' If there's anyone who you're following who's making you feel bad about yourself or question something in a negative way, then removing that from your feed can be helpful for your mindset.

I used to struggle with worrying about doing right by everyone [on social media]. It's come to a point where now I understand that you can't please everybody. As long as the people around me are supportive of what I'm [posting] or reassure me that what I'm doing is OK, then I'm OK." **uh**

WANT DAILY WORKOUTS, A RUNNING PROGRAM, HEALTHY MEAL PLANS, MEDITATION AND MORE?

To celebrate Steph's cover, KIC is offering a discount for Women's Health readers. Which means? You'll score a sweet 50 per cent off your first month of Keep it Cleaner! Head to keepitcleaner.com.au and use the code KICWH. You're welcome! Conditions apply*

*OFFER VALID FOR NEW MEMBERS ONLY. TO REDEEM, HEAD TO KEEPITCLEANER.COM.AU AND SELECT THE MONTH-TO-MONTH OPTION, ENTERING THE UNIQUE WOMEN'S HEALTH PROMOTIONAL CODE. CARD DETAILS ARE REQUIRED TO VALIDATE MEMBERSHIP. CODE ENABLES NEW CUSTOMERS TO 50% OFF THEIR FIRST MONTH SUBSCRIPTION. FOLLOWING THIS, MEMBERSHIP WILL CONTINUE AT THE FULL PRICE OF \$19.50 AUD PER MONTH, UNTIL OTHERWISE CANCELLED. OFFER EXPIRES AUGUST 31, 2019.

Nike crop top, \$45, Stylerunner; L'urv bikini bottoms, \$45; Baby G watch, \$249

HAIR: GAVIN ANESBURY, MAKE-UP: KATIE ANGUS

FAST FOUR

DREAM PODCAST GUEST?

"MY LATE POP. I WOULD'VE LOVED TO GO OVER HIS WHOLE CHILDHOOD AND THE WAR AND EVERYTHING."

ENERGY BOOSTERS?

"COFFEE, EXERCISE, SLEEP."

FUN FACT?

"I EAT CHICKEN BONES. WHEN I GOT BRACES AS A KID, THE DENTIST TOLD ME I COULDN'T CHEW ON THEM AND I STARTED CRYING!"

TOP TUNES?

"ANYTHING FROM THE 1980S TO EARLY 2000S."