

Gucci suit, [gucci.com](https://www.gucci.com);
Esse Studios bra,
[essestudios.com](https://www.essestudios.com);
Tiffany & Co. jewellery
(worn throughout),
[tiffany.com.au](https://www.tiffany.com.au).
OPPOSITE PAGE
Salvatore Ferragamo
dress, [ferragamo.com](https://www.ferragamo.com).
All makeup by Revlon.



DELTA FORCE



Stepping away from touring, television and work travel has given Delta Goodrem space to breathe and plan her next chapter. The prolific creative explains how her perfect present was shaped by the bold choices of her past

PHOTOGRAPHED BY HOLLY WARD STYLED BY NAOMI SMITH WORDS BY RACHEL SHARP

It's 1996 in Dural, way out in Sydney's green pastoral west, and 12-year-old Delta Goodrem has just been presented a choice by her parents. She could save the money squirreled away during five years of doing television advertisements and sporadic child-actor gigs on shows such as *A Country Practice*, *Hey Dad!* and *Police Rescue* to eventually buy her own car. Or she could use it all to record a demo CD of the songs she'd written at her piano since the age of seven. "I picked the music," recalls Goodrem with a laugh. "I remember finally getting behind the microphone after that and thinking, 'I feel like Celine Dion right now. This is the best thing ever.'"

It's a decision that every Australian knows paid off for the now 37-year-old award-winning performer. By the time Delta was old enough to drive, she'd landed the Logie-winning role of Nina Tucker on *Neighbours* and signed a prized deal with Sony Records. Her 2003 debut album, *Innocent Eyes*, topped the ARIA chart for 29 non-consecutive weeks and is the second-highest-selling Australian album of all time. Today, she's second behind Kylie Minogue for the most number-one albums by a local female artist on the ARIA chart. (Goodrem has five to Minogue's seven.) Just as well she didn't listen to her adored younger brother Trent at the time. He wanted the car.

It's been a quarter century since her tweenaged self – all full of chutzpah and an intrinsic self-belief – made that life-changing decision, but it still underpins the conversation she's having today. Sitting in her stunning city apartment's spare room turned home office, Goodrem's doing what comes so naturally: staring into a camera looking radiant and giving off all the utterly relatable, we-could-be-best-friends feels. There have been many highs during her incredible 25-year career – including her recent announcement as the first Australian brand ambassador for beauty giant Revlon – as well as some seriously low lows, including a well-documented battle with cancer in her late teens and spending the latter part of 2018 learning to speak again after surgery led to the damage of a nerve in her tongue.

The past two years, however, have been especially profound. "This recent chapter was a very precarious time for everybody, and it was hard on the heart for what everyone was experiencing," she notes sombrely of the two years since the pandemic began. "For me, it meant a massive reset. I'm trying not to always look ahead but just embrace the present and enjoy the small things. The last two years have taught me so much about living life to the fullest.

"Also, on a practical level," she adds, laughing to lighten the mood, "it's been about learning how to use my phone and computer in being creative from home. I had no idea how to use the technology back when we started 'The Bunkerdown Sessions,'" she admits, referring to the weekly live-streamed music sets she and Matthew Copley, her partner of four years, performed from their living room throughout both Sydney lockdowns. Goodrem was at her baby grand piano, Copley beside her on guitar, and 35 sessions and 350 songs later, they had a format down pat, taking live song requests and writing new songs in real time. "It came from a place of [us] just wanting to give back to everyone during the pandemic," Goodrem explains. "I



Common Hours coat,
commonhours.co.uk.



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– Delta Goodrem



OPPOSITE PAGE Prada
dress (sold with slip),
prada.com. THIS PAGE
Delta wears Max Mara
dress, au.maxmara.com.

couldn't believe how many people were tuning in each week from all over the world. All my family in different parts of Australia watched, too – they'd get their cheese boards out, a glass of wine, and be there for the show. It was really special to me in the sense that I learnt how to connect to people through the internet, because [before then] I was a very in-person person."

She's also enjoying the impact of another personal epiphany during the past two years: that there's no shame in admitting how much heavy lifting you still do after achieving success. "Right now, we can say, 'Hey, as a woman, I produce my own songs, I record, I write, I create my own shows. I always wrote my songs, and always produced my songs, but I'm glad to be in a world where I can write about it in a book and say yeah, I am the one behind it all.'" (Goodrem wrote her first book, the number-one bestselling *Bridge Over Troubled Dreams*, in 2021 to accompany her sixth studio album of the same name, which dives into her past, her working process and the inspiration behind each album's songs.)

She's had more time to commit to creative legwork in the past 12 months, and not just because her 2021 national arena tour to support the new album was postponed twice due to the pandemic. Ending her nine-year stint as a coach on hit show *The Voice* in 2020 freed up her schedule and headspace. "It took up a lot of the year for me but I loved the show," she says. "I gave it my absolute everything. I gave the artists everything I had. I was there from the very start and I was proud to be an anchor on the show."

While it wasn't shown on air, the producers, crew and live audience marked Goodrem's 150-episode milestone with a surprise celebration, featuring video messages from every coach who'd appeared on the show. "In my heart I was like 'thank you for this, now let's finish the season,' then it's time for me to find a new chapter creatively. When I first started [in the industry], I was the girl from *Neighbours*. Then I was *Innocent Eyes*." Now, she notes with amusement, she's the girl from *The Voice* – particularly to its youngest audience. "I was on tour in Canberra and all these little kids ran to the front of the stage creating a little-kid mosh pit," she recalls. "Oh my gosh, they were cute, and I thought, 'Where did all these kids come from?'"

Much as she's ready for new adventures that may one day fill chapters in a future biography, extended time at home during lockdown – the longest period she's spent in one country for decades, let alone in her own house – gave Goodrem the opportunity to reflect on the past two decades of phenomenal achievements. It also gave her time to dig through the mountains of scrapbooks, photos and memories she has saved over the years. Then there were the clothes. "I have them all," she admits of keeping the outfits she's worn for her music videos and standout performances over the years. "My mum was amazing like that. She kept everything."

A chance discovery of the striped crop top she wore for her debut video *I Don't Care* in 2001 inspired her to re-create the video featuring Copley, who looks eerily similar to the model in the original version. On

November 13 – 20 years to the day since the song's release – Goodrem posted the new version to Instagram next to the original, split-screen style, with the caption, "How it started/ How it's going. Yes, it is the same top. But not the same boyfriend. Shocking I know!"

That made-for-laughs re-creation with Copley isn't the only collaboration Goodrem has unveiled over the past few months. As well as a follow-up deluxe edition to her 2020 Christmas album, *Only Santa Knows*, which features a duet with close friend Olivia Newton-John, plus four new Christmas classics, Goodrem has been announced as the first Australian brand ambassador for global beauty megabrand Revlon. The partnership sees her join a phenomenal cast of dynamic, strong and fearless women over the years who've embodied the brand's philosophy to Live Boldly. "Some of my greatest moments have been when I've been my boldest," she says. "Living boldly is really how I approach my life. Revlon has always stood for women's individual power and strength, supporting everyone's unique beauty and brilliance. To live fully, freely and with purpose – whatever that looks like to them. They are trailblazers in their field, and it just feels like the perfect timing to align."

Makeup, like music, she says, is about self-expression: transformative and liberating. "I've lived my entire life on camera. Makeup has always been an important part of that creativity, showing the different expressions of ourselves."

Indeed, it's hard to imagine an Australian artist who's consistently embodied Revlon's Live Boldly mantra for the entirety of her public life, but for Goodrem the sentiment has never been more important to remember than now. "I've been proud of being my authentic self the whole way through my career. Living boldly is how I want to approach my life and, for now, first and foremost, that means getting back on stage and doing live music," she says of the major

13-show Australian and New Zealand arena tour she's kicking off in March. "Lockdowns mean I've had more time to evolve the show and I'm very proud of it. Having more time to bring it to life just means it has to be the best show anyone sees in 2022."

Something else Goodrem is determined to do more of is embrace the precious things that we all took for granted before lockdowns. "Being amongst nature, being with my friends, being with my family," she says. "Being at the beach and being able to get that Australian fresh air. Obviously, I have an incredible partner, a wonderful support system in my family, and my girlfriends in my life are phenomenal – seeing my girlfriends is like oxygen. I've had my best girlfriends since I was at school and from growing up, then kindreds I've found through the course of time. I couldn't be more in a place where I'm so proud of the women in my life: they lift me up and I lift them up."

And while she might have a new-found appreciation for living in the moment, Goodrem remains eternally grateful for the decision she made at 15, when she signed her first record deal with Sony. "I was bold," she says. "I came into myself quite young and I'm grateful I've been able to keep challenging myself with the many different projects I do. I want to be true to myself as a person and continue to live boldly on this incredible journey."

"I have an incredible partner ... but seeing my girlfriends is like oxygen"

– Delta Goodrem

HAIR BY DIANE GORGIEVSKI/THE ARTIST GROUP. MAKEUP BY NONI SMITH. MANICURE BY JOCELYN PETRONI.



Louis Vuitton dress,
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