



## Gretchen Peters “Burnt Toast & Offerings”

*Twenty years later and Peters is still delivering quality.* Having released four critically acclaimed albums, winning numerous awards including the CMA Song of the Year (for Independence Day) and ASCAP Country Awards on a number of occasions and had her songs covered by dozens of artists including Trisha Yearwood, Martina McBride, Patty Loveless and Neil Diamond you would think that Peters has done all she wanted to do. And said all she wanted to say in her musical career; but no she hasn't and this album adds to her continuing story. Covering her personal and professional “mid life epiphany”, ‘Burnt Toast & Offerings’ is simply excellent. From the opener ‘Ghost’ to the closer ‘To Say Goodbye’ each track grabs you from the off and doesn't let go. Even the jazzy (of which I have an intense dislike) ‘Thirsty’ and ‘The Way You Move Me’ have something about them that makes you want to continue listening. And it's an extremely rare event for me to listen to anything even vaguely jazz influenced particularly when the fast forward button is so close at hand. Every song is a mini novel. Telling tales of the UK (in the upbeat driving ‘England Blues’), or her expectations of the new love in her life (‘The Lady of the House’), or drinking in a bar in the early hours of the morning feeling melancholic (on her cover of ‘One For My Baby’). Simple pleasures like what's going on her neighbourhood (‘Sunday Morning’) whilst she spends time alone with her lover enjoying their company and especially their smile. How she feels when her (presumably the same) lover has walked out along with the ‘Summer People’ that she's so fed up with and has been for a while. ‘Jezebel’ also has that feel of melancholia that drifts along with the warmth of a lazy sunny afternoon. In her interview in the May edition of Maverick (<http://www.maverick-country.com>) Peters outlines what motivated her to write such an intensely personal album. She's gone through some turmoil recently during her divorce after being with her husband for more than 20 years and this sadness is reflected in some of her songs. As she says “I was determined not to lose any of that sadness – I really thought, well am I really going to write about all of this, but then I thought, well what else do I write about? What else am I going to have to say?” But this album is not only about doom and gloom. It's also about happiness and looking to the future and forming new plans. On the inside cover of this cd you could be forgiven that Peters looks a little like Barbra Streisand. But that's not where the similarities end. Both are consummate professionals who constantly deliver the goods. That alone is praise indeed. I saw Peters at The Borderline some years ago and Bryan (no not Ryan) Adams got up on stage and sang a couple of numbers with her, including of course ‘Rock Steady’ and it was simply mesmerising. Not that it wasn't

before he jumped up there, it just showed the respect she has from her fellow musicians and the ease with which she can handle different types of music and the personalities involved. Peters is in the UK in May with fellow songwriters Matraca Berg and Suzy Bogguss on the "Wine, Women & Song" tour that aims to provide an intimate 'front room' setting to really allow the audience to fully appreciate the music. Details can be found on her website. This cd was released on 9 April in the UK and is slated for a July release in the States, do yourself a favour. Buy it.

**Date review added:** Monday, April 23, 2007 **Reviewer:** Phil Edwards **Reviewers**  
**Rating: 9 out of 10**