



Naughty or nice?



23 December 2003

Santa's a busy man. Does he really have time to follow the chutes-and-ladders-style behavior of the average pop star? We, on the other hand, have been making a list – the DUIs, the backstage misbehavior and the secret good deeds – and checking it twice. We've got gift tips and substitutes for that old lump of coal – why should Santa get his hands dirty?

Here now, our lists of who's been naughty and who's been nice.

Lists compiled by Thor Christensen, Rob Clark, Teresa Gubbins, Mario Tarradell

NAUGHTY

MADONNA, for blabbing on about how great motherhood is, then feigning a bogus lesbian kiss with Britney Spears that looked as if it came straight from a badly acted porn film, all to sell her crappy album, which tanked anyway.
COAL: A week's employment at a seedy stripper dive.

JA RULE, who spent most of the year trying to prove he's tougher than 50 Cent but failed miserably.
COAL: Humility lessons from MC Hammer.

GLEN CAMPBELL, for that embarrassing, dangerous and stupid drunken-driving episode last month, when he crashed, tried to flee the accident and then kneed a sergeant in the thigh.
COAL: A sturdy new wagon. Obviously, he fell off the one he had.

EMINEM, who made headlines for songs in which he dissed black women and rapped about killing the president (He apologized for the former, but not the latter).
COAL: A weeklong "sensitivity training" seminar.

CLAY AIKEN, notorious cat-hater who claimed in Rolling Stone that he once drove his car over a kitty.
COAL: A framed copy of PETA's ad that says, "Get Neutered: It Didn't Hurt Clay Aiken."

DAVID LEE ROTH, for his rude behavior in concert at NextStage, where he poured a bottle of Jack Daniels all over a girl in the audience in a really crude way.

COAL: Subscription to Ms. magazine.

CHER, whose endless, 18-month-plus "farewell" tour kept coming back two and three times to cities she had already played. Still, the trek is not over.

COAL: A new dictionary, to look up the word "farewell."

NICE

TERENCE TRENT D'ARBY, whose first album in forever, Wildcard! , was one of the year's most impressive.

GIFT: A boost in sales. Maybe direct withdrawals from R. Kelly's album sales profits.

KID ROCK, for sticking by Pamela Anderson after she announced she had hepatitis C and for being genuinely in love with her. And she still broke it off!

GIFT: Box of chocolates.

DOLLY PARTON, for her last four wonderful, largely acoustic albums, from 1999's The Grass Is Blue to this year's For God and Country .

GIFT: More makeup, wigs, flashy dresses and stiletto-heeled shoes.

ALAN JACKSON, for giving pop icon Jimmy Buffett his first No. 1 single on any chart with the hit country duet, "It's Five O'Clock Somewhere."

GIFT: The tallest margarita in Key West.

THE REV. AL GREEN, who finally treated fans to an R&B album after years of recording only gospel music.

GIFT: A free pass through the Pearly Gates and a spot in the front row of heaven's choir.

BONO, who spent much of the year helping third-world countries battle AIDS and debt.

GIFT: Lifetime exemption from cynics who mock him for trying to save the world.

JENNY TOOMEY, for her continued campaigning as leader of the Future of Music Coalition, a musicians' advocacy group that seeks to improve public policy as it pertains to music.

GIFT: The continuing implosion of the major labels.