

# FAST FRIENDS

Country's **Blake Shelton** and NASCAR's **Elliott Sadler** are off-track buds having a blast

One races up the country charts. The other races around NASCAR tracks. But Blake Shelton and Elliott Sadler share the common bond of friendship, one they formed last year at the beginning of the 2002 racing season.

"I was opening for Hank Williams Jr. and there happened to be a NASCAR race that same weekend in Atlanta," explains Blake. "Elliott came out to meet me and I invited him to hang out with me backstage."

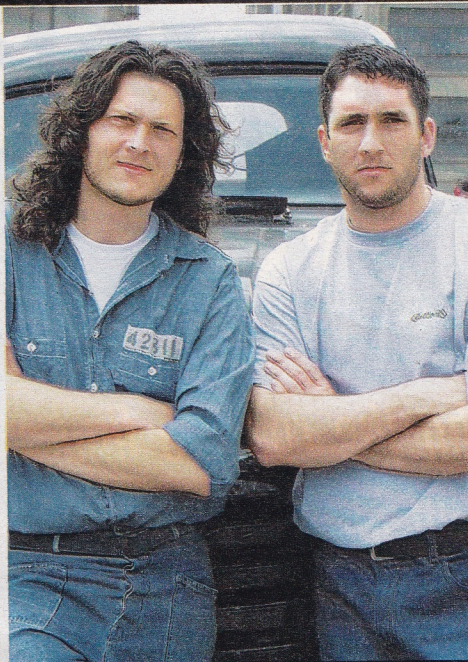
"Blake's a nice guy and he's fun to be around," declares Elliott, who admits to being "embarrassed" when Blake unexpectedly pulled him onstage during that Atlanta show.

Though they have different professions, the two twentysomethings have remarkably similar backgrounds. They're both from small towns — Blake from Ada, Okla., and Elliott from Emporia, Va. They both enjoy hunting and fishing. And last Christmas, Blake got a taste of Elliott's small-town roots when he was a special

guest at the Sadler family Christmas party. When their schedules permit, Elliott plans to let Blake show him around Ada.

Blake's fans will remember that the singer called on Elliott in August 2002 when it was time to shoot the video for "Ol' Red."

"He played my cousin, which was the



The fast-track buddies make a pit stop on the set of the "Ol' Red" video shoot, where Elliott played Blake's cousin.

guy who brought the blue tick hound to the woods so the warden's dog, Ol' Red, could be with her," notes Blake.

Elliott was impressed by what he saw on the video set. "I thought, 'Man, this is cool' — because I watch a lot of CMT all the time while we're on the road," he says. "It was neat to see the behind the scenes of what goes into making a video."

NASCAR and country music have a common denominator — hundreds of thousands of dedicated fans. Blake and Elliott are betting they share some of the same fans.

"Hopefully a lot of NASCAR fans saw us in the video," says Elliott. "It'll help Blake and hopefully help me, too. A lot of NASCAR fans really love

the songs he sings, and many of his fans love NASCAR.

"But the main thing is, we're just having a good time hanging out with each other," adds Elliott.

"We've had a lot of fun just passing stories back and forth about the different businesses we're in."

— Wendy Newcomer



Elliott hopes to avoid spins in his NASCAR Taurus — but Blake hopes to get as many spins as possible on radio!



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