



"I live about as country of a lifestyle as you could have," says Shelton (at home in Oklahoma).

Thank God I'm a Country Boy

Singer Blake Shelton dishes on kicking back on his Oklahoma spread and dating Miranda Lambert

AGE: 30

HOMETOWN: Ada, Okla.

WHERE YOU'VE SEEN HIM: On tour supporting his new album *Pure BS* and as a judge on *Nashville Star*

■ **SINGLE, SORT OF:** Divorced last year, Shelton says, "I just really don't think I was ready to be a husband. And maybe I never will be." Which might just work out for him and his girlfriend, country singer Miranda Lambert, 23. "Our personalities are so much alike that it's really hard for us to get along for long periods of time," he admits. "So we have a rule where we try not to see each other but once every couple of weeks. . . . But I do have a lot of fun when I'm with her."

■ **LEST YE BE JUDGED:** In eight years struggling in Nashville before he hit with '01's "Austin," Shelton says the worst advice he ever got was to start smoking to develop the lower registers of his voice. (He did—for three months.) He was on the other end of the advice-giving as *Nashville Star*'s Simon Cowell (but, he says, with "a better sense of humor"): "Every now and then I'd get on the message boards, and, man, I'd just be getting demolished. But if people are paying close enough attention to get either that upset or that excited, I guess that's a good thing."

■ **COUNTRY CASTLE:** He calls his new 1,200-acre ranch in Oklahoma "the quintessential bachelor pad," with its no-maintenance concrete floors, deer-head decor and flat-screen TV tuned to the Hunting Channel. "Every passion I have is right here around me—my guitar in the corner, deer and turkey in the woods, crops growing in the field. I just want to be here listening to the CB and drinking. . . . It's a shame that I'm telling the world just how boring and worthless I am."

By Darla Atlas in Oklahoma

Photograph by ALISON DYER