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APRIL 2012

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CONTENTS

COUNTRY SPECIAL • APRIL 2012

6 ON THE SCENE

Kenny makes a toast, **Brad** hits Broadway, **Luke** makes a new friend and more!

10 ROUND UP

Reba chats about her TV comeback, **Kix** horses around, seven things we love and other news from Nashville

18 IN THE STUDIO

Rascal Flatts share their musical milestones

22 SUMMER TOUR PREVIEW

A sneak peek at this year's hottest tickets

30 HOT MUSIC FOR FREE!

Free iTunes songs from **The Band Perry**, **Chris Young**, **Scotty McCreery** and more

32 BEHIND THE LYRICS

Taylor Swift talks about the inspiration for "Ours"

42
COUNTRY'S
HOTTEST GUY!
BLAKE SHELTON

ON THE COVER Photograph by Andrew MacPherson. Groomer: Amanda Craig; stylist: Trish Townsend; shirt: Zenga. Inset: Joe Buissink; top insets, from left: Gregg DeGuire/PictureGroup; Frank Micelotta/PictureGroup; Scott Kirkland/Globe; Tammie Arroyo/AFF; Janet Gough/Celebrity Photo. (Chesney) Andrew Southam; (McGraw) Jeff Lipsky/CPI

COUNTRY'S HOTTEST GUYS 2012

FEATURING

★ **BLAKE SHELTON** ★

— **PLUS** —

**TIM ★ KEITH ★ KENNY AND
23 MORE
MEN WE LOVE**



By JULIE JORDAN
Photographs by
ANDREW MACPHERSON





IT'S

JUST AFTER NOON, AND BLAKE SHELTON IS A MAN ON THE MOVE. HAVING JUST FLOWN TO L.A. FROM HIS HOME IN TISHOMINGO, OKLA., THE SINGER HAS A FULL DAY IN HOLLYWOOD BEFORE FLYING TO NASHVILLE THAT NIGHT AND THEN HEADING TO OHIO THE NEXT DAY FOR TOUR REHEARSALS.



Now sitting on a couch in a trailer before a photo shoot, Shelton sighs, stretches out his lean 6'5" frame and nurses a Diet Coke. It quickly becomes clear he'd prefer something just a little bit stronger. "My life is crazy right now," says the singer. "But my wife is going to meet me in Nashville tonight. We used to say a month apart would be too much, but now it's like two weeks is the limit. We both just have a lot going on right now. I'm looking forward to just relaxing a bit."

"If you'd told me two years ago that I'd be in this position now, I'd have laughed at you," says Shelton. "I feel like it's just now starting for me for whatever reason, and it's fun."

It doesn't look like Shelton is going to be kicking off his boots anytime soon. After racking up 10 No. 1 hits, a mantel full of music awards and more than 1.2 million Twitter followers, the 35-year-old singer is now winning over millions of new fans each week with his chair-turning charm on NBC's hit singing competition *The Voice*. His marriage to Miranda Lambert, 28, last May cemented his status as half of country music's cutest couple, and we have one more accolade to add to his résumé: He's PEOPLE Country's Hottest Guy 2012. "I think it's funny," he says. "It's just funny to me, because there is nothing about me, if I was a girl, that I would think is sexy. Miranda's like, 'Man, I can't believe there's actually other people out there besides me that like you! I mean, there must be something wrong with them!'"

Actually, Miranda finds that self-deprecating sense of humor just one of his charms. "When you see him, he's obviously very tall and striking, but the minute he opens his mouth and starts talking to you, he makes you smile," says Lambert, who met her husband in 2005 after they

sang a duet together for a CMT special. "That's what made me think, 'Oh my gosh, this guy's awesome.'"

Settling down with Lambert in a former hunting lodge they share with their seven rescue dogs ("She has five, I have two, and I only have those two because she reached over and slammed my foot on the brake as we were going down the highway last year"), Shelton insists all his new fame won't go to his head. "I don't take myself too seriously," he says. "I just like to have fun, maybe that's what it is. I don't think anyone can ever say that they were around me and I wasn't having fun. Life is too short, you know? And I know how lucky I am." **Are you a romantic?** I don't think so. I'm sentimental about certain things. Not Valentine-y sentimental, but I'm not like some jackass that doesn't tell my wife I love her all the time. **No rose petals on the bed?** Noooo. Then we got to clean that crap up afterwards! [Laughs] But you know, Miranda isn't a romantic like that. She just wants to hang out and be together, and I do too. I tell you, if it wasn't for Miranda, I would be screwed. I would be.

What would your life be like if you hadn't met her? Man, I can imagine what it would be like. It would be bad. I'd be doing just stupid stuff. I'd be one of those guys in Nashville in a bar at 3 a.m. trying to take a swing at the bartender



because he told me he was cutting me off. I'd be *that* guy. **What's your perfect date night entail?** Uh, it entails dogs. She loves to sit on the couch and watch movies and drink all night, and there will be at least four dogs piled up on us, and she gets in a blanket, puts her computer and her iPad on her lap, and then she's shopping on the computer and reading Twitter and watching a movie at the same time. And then she'll pick up her cup every once in a while and do this [*shakes his hand like he's holding an empty cup*] to me, and I go get her a drink. I'm sitting there with her the whole time. Just slavin'. Whatever she needs. And she loves it. So that's an easy way for me to keep her happy.

What are your thoughts on getting older? Lately I've been thinking a lot about it. I can't believe I'm headed to 40. I don't like it. Hell, I don't want to be! I think I was 24 when my first song came out, and my life has been at such a fast pace since then, you know, I just kind of laugh and think, "Well, s---, at some point I got old. I don't know when it happened." But I can't complain about it.

Do you work out and watch your diet? [Laughs] I go in phases. I'll see myself on an awards show and go, "Damn! Where the hell did that chin come from?" And then I'll go on a diet for two months and then see a photo shoot of myself and I'm like, "All right, man, I can live with that!" And then I get a little too comfortable with cheese dip and Doritos and pizza, then that awards show happens again and it's "Aww, fatass!" But no, there is no pattern to my eating.

Do paparazzi follow you now? Not in Tishomingo! But Miranda and I were in New York City, and she'd been

working out and had her hair in a ponytail and looked like she'd just rolled out from under a car, and I did too, and of course they took 100 pictures of us. I learned my lesson. You need to at least put something on that you won't be mortified by if they take your picture.

What advice would you give the 25-year-old Blake? Get some sleep! I can remember going two days without sleeping when my first single came out and was a big hit. I'd just go sit in my truck and wait and see if my song would come on the radio. I went pretty hard for a couple of years around 25. I definitely got it out of my system. I go to bed at 8:30 now.

Describe your life in one word. Chaos. But it will slow down ... at some point. ●

FIVE THINGS I LOVE ABOUT BLAKE

BY MIRANDA LAMBERT

NO.1 "His sense of humor. He loves to laugh. It's contagious. I laugh a lot more with him in my life."

NO.2 "His character. He's very caring and loyal and always puts everyone else first. When he lost his father, all he did the whole time was make sure everyone else was okay."

NO.3 "His gorgeous blue eyes. As a little boy they made his mom melt, and they still do—just like every other woman on the planet."

NO.4 "He's a man's man. He's always got his hands dirty, and I love that."

NO.5 "I love him because he loves me more. To have someone that knows everything about you and loves you for who you are is priceless."

BLAKE

FILLS IN THE

BLANKS

I always compliment my wife on her

“Cooking. Especially her hamburger steak. But anything that has to be grilled is my job.”

Miranda hates it when

“My hair gets too short. She likes it a bit longer. She wants it to be like Bradley Cooper.”

On my iPod I have

“Wang Chung. And Dean Martin.”

If I wasn't a singer, I'd be “Screwed.”

Every man should know how to “Change a flat.”

My food vice is “Any kind of dip. Guacamole or cheese dip or spinach, anything. Dipping. I love it. All of it.”

My fridge always has

“Coconut water. Adam Levine made me try it and now I'm addicted. But I feel like a wuss. People in Tishomingo are like, ‘What are you drinking?’ and I'm just like, ‘Oh, something's wrong with my well. It's water. It's just gray-looking.’”

My guilty pleasure is

“Wipeout! I don't see how people don't die on that show. I laughed so hard that drool and snot were just coming out of me.”

My father taught me “Patience.”

My mother taught me “To be thrifty.”

I feel most comfortable when “I'm home.”

