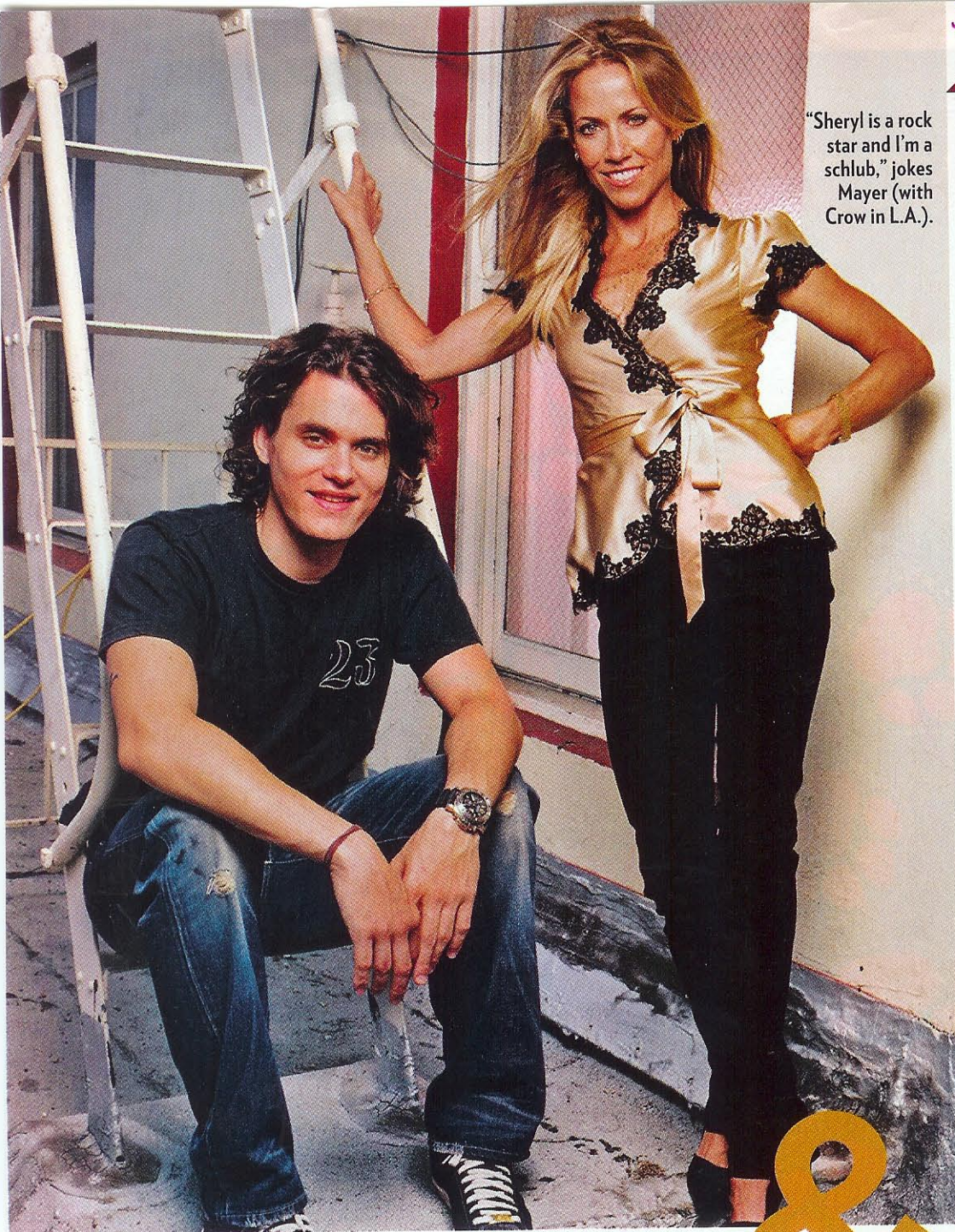


## DOUBLE TALK

"Sheryl is a rock star and I'm a schlub," jokes Mayer (with Crow in L.A.).



# SHERYL CROW & JOHN MAYER

"I thought he was cute and just wildly talented," says Crow, 44, of Mayer, 28, explaining why the Grammy winners are co-headlining a cross-country tour that kicks off Aug. 24. Between gigs, they'll be indulging their passion for Ping-Pong on Crow's own table. "I just hope it doesn't get nasty," Crow jokes. "We've been

known to not talk to the other band for winning." The duo warmed up with verbal volleys as PEOPLE's Carrie Borzillo-Vrenna refereed.

**Any touring pet peeves the other should know about?**

**CROW:** I hate it when the other act plays better. [Laughs.]

**MAYER:** I'm going to be challenged every single night to really focus and give the kind of show that Sheryl does.

**CROW:** Awww. That's so nice.

**MAYER:** Sheryl, I have a question. You're at a place in your life where making it isn't an issue. How much of what you do feels like an obligation?

**CROW:** I just went through [breast] cancer treatment and it set up my life differently. The things I used to dread, I don't do anymore. I don't feel guilt for saying no. And it's reintroduced me to that joy of playing where you walk out and it feels like an epiphany, inspiring.

**What else has changed?**

**CROW:** I sleep quite a lot now. I just live a healthy life—exercise, eat right. Not like the old days—sex and drugs and rock and roll. If you looked at my tour rider before the cancer, you'd be shocked. I'd eat Fritos and powdered sugar doughnuts every night.

**Rumors of a romance are inevitable: two hot, single people on tour together...**

**CROW:** I was asked a month ago about us being involved. And I was like, "Wow. We're not even touring yet."

**MAYER:** If there's a rumor about it, that just makes you cooler. Let 'em talk.

**So how are your love lives?**

**CROW:** I'll have my press agent John answer that.

**MAYER:** Nobody really wants to be single. Everyone's looking for the right thing. I'd be willing to give up anything, anytime for that and I'll bet Sheryl would too.

**CROW:** You're so sweet. And I'm pleading the Fifth.

**Other than being single and loving Ping-Pong, what else do you have in common?**

**MAYER:** Great hair! ●