Well, I play rosiereque baseball on it. Tell me about the first Rush gig ever. With Neil Peart? 1974. Aug. 16. Pittsburgh Civic Arena. We were the opening act for Uriah Heep. And Manfred Mann’s Earth Band was the special guest. We were given 24 minutes, exactly, to play. It was over very quickly. Did you kick ass? Well, most of the people were still shuffling to their seats. What did you think of the new Rush tribute album? I haven’t heard it, to be frank. But it’s been out for months!
around on some self-righteous cloud.
What is it with your rabid fans? We always try to take the attitude that our fans are intelligent; therefore we try to progress, experiment. Some of them tolerate it, some of them don’t.
Do you communicate with fans? Very rarely.
Where are the female fans, for crying out loud? Surprisingly, the last couple of tours, there has been a noticeable increase in the female population.
What’s up with your live album? We have stuff from 1979 in the can, stuff from the last tour, and we’re going to record on this tour. I’d be hopeful if it came out before next Christmas.
A nonsensical goal, please.
I just started running, and one of my goals is to start entering a few small races and get a decent time. I’m fairly athletic. Tennis, I’m pretty fanatical about it.
What are you listening to these days?
I love the Tragically Hip. And there’s an artist from Toronto named Hayden that I like a lot. I like Tricky and Massive Attack. Björk. I like this record by Tripping Daisy.
Do you enjoy your old albums at this point? I only listen when I’m preparing to tour. Then I start getting nostalgic. It’s like a combination of looking at a picture of yourself from 5 years ago and reading material you’d written at that time; you’re embarrassed by some aspect and impressed by another. Then you’re going, “Oh, my God, look at those glasses I was wearing.”
Why no opening act on this tour?
When you have 16 studio records out, we decided the only way we could do it is be so self-indulgent that we have the whole show to ourselves. We do about two hours and 45 minutes of music.
What do you spare no expense on? Exotic travel. To me that is the whole purpose of having a bit of extra cash. One year we went on safari to East Africa with my son, and it was just fabulous. It began a yearly thing—India, Nepal.
What’s been the biggest rock-star moment in your career?
Whoa. That’s a toughie. [Brightens.]
Well, let’s face it: Every time you get a police escort, your gonna feel a little rock-starish.