



**Released: March 18, 2023, Lodi, Italy**

Mike Travelletti has released a new record under the pseudonym Oklahoma Mike that oozes with Sooner State references, Osage County, Oklahoma icons and more.

Listening to Old Country brought back fond memories of my youth. There was Gene Autry singing "Back in the Saddle Again." Then there was the time Mom let me mail order a Lone Ranger gun and holster, and with it came a silver -bullet where you could open it up and hide important things such as one of your teeth.

He grew up in Bartlesville, but now lives in Sapulpa, Mike has been a lifetime member of the Blues Society of Tulsa for the past two decades. He has performed with Tulsa blues icon David Berntson over the years (who plays on this new release), and Mike once wowed an audience in a solo performance wearing an iconic black t-shirt with the Blues Society's infamous logo stickman at the Oklahoma Blues Festival.

Transitions from one genre to another are nothing new. Rocker Leon Russell created his series of country and bluegrass albums under the moniker “Hank Wilson.” Mike Travelletti is a successful business man and is blues through and through. But his real passion is traditional country music.

The result is the release of *Old Country*. It follows several years of hosting a music jamboree in Elgin, KS, near where he refurbished an old cabin nestled in the rolling hills. A photo of it is in the record sleeve. The album cover is a photo of World Champion Steer Roper Jim Snively from Osage County with his new Oldsmobile Super 88 Coupe that he won in 1954 at the first ever Ben Johnson Memorial Steer Roping.

Similar to many American blues artists whose music and live shows have prospered in Europe, Oklahoma Mike has established himself with live shows in Oklahoma and Kansas, as well as Europe. In 2023, he did two, four-week tours. In September, Mike went back to Italy and traveled up to Switzerland to play a concert at Cafe’ Travelletti with his best friend Andrea Ciminelli. Andera is an Italian Western music performer, who plays all the European shows with Mike.

With my first listen, *Old Country* brought back fond memories of more innocent times. If you like spaghetti westerns, you’ll love this album.

*Old Country* has 15 tunes covering some of the most beloved artists and songs of the genre. While a dozen tunes are famous covers, there are three originals by Jimbo Snively and Mike that certainly stand their own ground.

The album opens with original *Sissy and Bud*, which certainly gets you in the mood for what’s to come. It’s a fun little story about Bud who acts and looks like a cowboy, but he’s being honest about not being one, while putting some moves on little Sissy.

Mike’s vocals and guitar work so well with his rhythmic cowboy song selections.

Fiddle player Bill Taylor of Tulsa is outstanding and takes the lead though out this record. In the background, you can subtly hear David Berntson tastefully adding his “Mississippi sax” in the opening tune, plus the two other originals. It would be remiss to not mention the talents of Perry Overstake of Wichita, KS on bass guitar, and Paul Huskings of Broken Arrow on drums. Both add a depth of rhythm which should not be understated.

In the second original, *Right Some Wrongs*, Mike becomes a story teller reminiscing about going back to another time. He references Pat Garrett, Billy the Kid, Jessie James and other legends from the old west singing, "I don't want to change the truth, just want to *Right Some Wrongs*."

The record wraps up with Mike's original song and wonderful biographical tribute to Osage County native an Oklahoma cowboy hero, actor and Academy Award winner, titled *The Ballad of Ben Johnson*.

As for the classic tunes covered by the band, each is certainly done justice. Among my favorites are *Poncho and Lefty* (Townes Van Zandt), *Doggone Cowboys* (Marty Robbins), *In the Jailhouse Now* (Jimmie Rodgers) and *Oklahoma Hills* (Woody Guthrie). There's also a mighty fine tribute to Hank Williams (*Mind Your Own Business* and *Hey Good Lookin'*).

### **Billy Austin Martin**

Old Country is available at: <https://tulsalivestream.com/okmike/>