

# RIDLEY BENT



Channelling the high-energy performance ethic of artists like Dwight Yoakum and Little Feat, Ridley and his band tear a deep strip off the joint with tracks like "Square Your Hat", which features a guest appearance by renowned Canadian guitarist Luke Doucet (Veal, Sarah McLachlan), "Good Looking Country", a song inspired by Ridley's one and only, who he moved from Vancouver to Manitoba to be with, and the album's closing track "Burning Down Barns", on which every player in the band gets a chance to wail.

As ever, there are quieter moments as well. Ridley's never afraid to pepper his records with a few thoughts on love and loneliness - and his evolving cast of moonshine-running, race car-

driving malcontents tend to know their way around the ladies as well as they do the back roads of the west. Of course these are love stories told the way only Ridley can; tracks that run the gamut from hard and bitter to hardly better, including a beautifully rendered, deliberately down-tempo take on the classic Dickey Lee song made famous by George Jones in 1962, "She Thinks I Still Care".

While much of Ridley's new material is drawn from real life experiences he's gathered up on the road, *Rabbit On My Wheel* still has its share of shady characters, jackknifing tractor-trailers and whiskey-fuelled bar fights. And for those who identify strongly with Ridley's less reasonable characters - the ones who tend to prefer to stir things up with a pistol in one hand and a bottle in the other - there's *The Blood Trilogy*. A companion EP recorded during the same sessions and co-written with Dunn - a highly satisfying three-song western epic of violence and vengeance informed by Ridley's ongoing fascination with the bleak worlds of writers like John Steinbeck and Cormac McCarthy.

Simply put, whether it's love going strong but wrong in "Livin' With Her Ex", the straight up hooks of the album's title track, or the three way struggle between Junior Johnson, the whiskey and the wife, on lead single, "I Can't Turn My Back On the Bottle", *Rabbit On My Wheel* has everything listeners have come to expect from Ridley Bent and more - A smoking twelve-song set chock full of fast cars, fine looking ladies and fist fights that finds Ridley burning through a landscape of big country skies, with one hand on the steering wheel and one eye on the bottle every mile of the way.