

# billboard Country Update

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## KIP MOORE DIGS INTO HIS PAST FOR A LOOK AT HIS POTENTIAL FUTURE IN 'SHE'S MINE'

East Coast girls are hip, **The Beach Boys** once declared, and Southern girls with the way they talk, they'll knock you out.

One thing about **Brian Wilson** and **Mike Love**, they took a stand when they created a now-classic sexual travelogue, professing their preference for "California Girls."

**Kip Moore's** new country single, "She's Mine," takes a similar route, searching major cities and small towns in the Western Hemisphere. But the guy in the song has no preconceived notions about what the woman of his dreams might look like or where she might be waiting.

"I'm not just looking for a certain type," says Moore. "I wanted to make it very clear that the spectrum is broad — every ethnicity, every walk of life. I didn't want to narrow it down to just these supermodel-type people."

"She's Mine" owes a lot to the early part of Moore's career. Its pulsing, eighth-note guitar foundation leans on the heartland-rock influences that earned him frequent comparisons to **Bruce Springsteen** during that era. And its jet-setter hodgepodge of far-flung locales is directly tied to his original radio promotion tour in 2011, when he visited programmers across America to support his debut single, "Mary Was the Marrying Kind."

the late '60s and '70s. 'Hippie girl' comes up a lot in my songs over the years. She always will have a place in my heart."

While those female archetypes offer a one-dimensional view of a potential mate, some of the others — a God-fearing girl with a devilish streak, a lonely woman in a crowded city cafe — are

immediately more complex.

"I don't know who that girl is going to be

that Kip ends up settling down with," says Couch. "But I think it could be any one of those mentioned in the song."

The chorus trims the space between the phrases, and when they launched into the bridge — Stepakoff singing, "Tell her I'm running, I'm coming, I'm sorry I'm late" over Moore's off-the-cuff melody — the thoughts are comparatively piled on top of each other, changing the texture of the song and adding some urgency to its message.

It seemed like a winner, but Moore couldn't quite settle on how best to arrange the song, and didn't want to rush it if it wasn't ready.

“People would think that part is the simple part,” says Moore. “But a lot of times, the songs that feel simple, like ‘She’s Mine’ — it just has such a straight-forward feel to it. It’s the hardest to capture that.”

Moore left it off his *Up All Night* album but recorded a version for his sophomore set, *Wild Ones*. The label thought it was a potential single, but Moore considered it “too slick,” he says, and declined to include it on the album. Finally, while touring the United Kingdom in May, he started playing it backstage and figured out a sinewy approach to the intro,

which essentially has the lead guitar playing a heavy version of the verse melody atop a drum beat that resembles **John Mellencamp**’s “Hurts So Good.”

Within two weeks, Moore headed into The Castle in Franklin, Tenn., to record it with a band that featured guitarist **Tom Bukovac**, keyboardist **Dave Cohen**, bassist **Rich Brinsfield** and drummer **Matt Bubel**, laying down a scratch vocal for the group to work with while Moore produced the session himself. Guitarist **Danny Rader** came in at a later date to stack the eighth-note pulsing guitars, creating a fuller sound. And Moore did a bunch of his own backing vocals, finding ways to disguise his voice and keeping it low in the final mix, creating the kind of spirit that accompanies a mass singalong at the end of a concert.

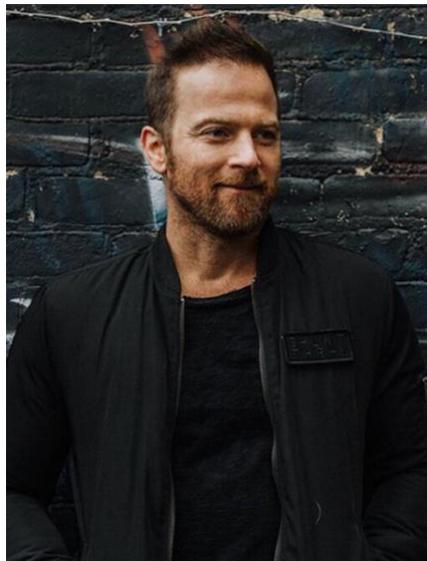
“Feels like little old pieces of American rock’n’roll, doesn’t it?” asks Moore rhetorically.

Moore had several options for a first single, though “She’s Mine” won out, finally making it into the market about eight years after it was originated.

“We always kind of felt like it was a hit, and Kip never forgot about it,” says Stepakoff. “He always believed in it. It’s one of many things that makes him such an effective artist. He’s just so laser-focused and deliberate about what he does.”

MCA sent it to terrestrial radio through PlayMPE on Aug. 12, and it appears on the current Most Added and New & Active charts. Meanwhile, Moore has grown more accustomed to the touring lifestyle that was new when he wrote “She’s Mine.” The words are still relevant — he’s still single, and still uncertain about what lies ahead in his love life.

“And,” he adds, “I still don’t have a type.”



“Living in South Georgia, the blueprint is already kind of laid out for you,” he says.

“You know that you’re going to end up with somebody down there, and that’s cool.

There’s no knock on that, it’s just that that’s all I knew. Then all of a sudden, I get thrust

into this world where I’m meeting so many different walks of life, so many different cultures, and it’s a lot to take in. What was going to come at me as far as life? Where was this all going to take me?”

And the most important question of them all: Who was he going to end up with?

With all that going on his head, Moore pulled into a Music Row writing appointment during that period with two frequent co-writers, **Scott Stepakoff** (“Mary Was the Marrying Kind”) and **Dan Couch** (“Somethin’ Bout a Truck,” “Last Shot”). He started strumming a guitar at the session and instinctively sang what would become the first line: “Love,” then a five-beat vocal pause before the follow-up thought: “I’ve been looking for a while.” That led to the introduction of a map and a continent full of possibilities that gets explored fully in the chorus: “Maybe she’s in Dallas,” sang Moore, pinning the first top in Texas. “Cheering for the Cowboys,” Couch chimed in.

“There’s such an iconic connection to the Dallas Cowboy cheerleaders,” Couch says. “Everybody would get that.”

The trip continued across three different choruses: maybe she’s vacationing in Mexico, working on Wall Street, dealing blackjack in Las Vegas or living like a hippie on the West Coast.

“I lived in Los Angeles for nine years; I was single, and I played in a band,” says Stepakoff, suggesting that California image is likely from his experiences. “There was a period in my life where I went to a lot of **Grateful Dead** shows, and I’ve always been very inspired and brought up on music of