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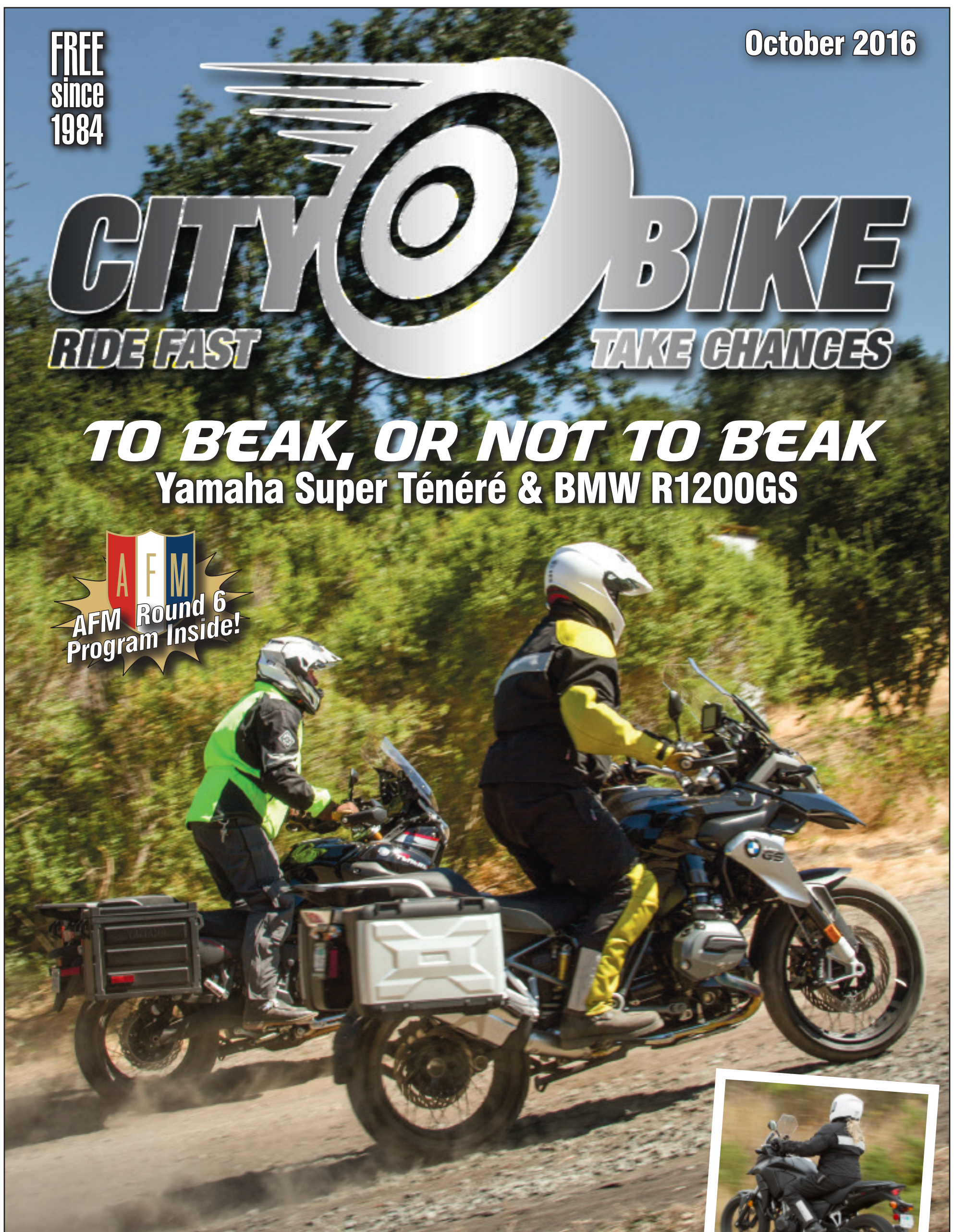
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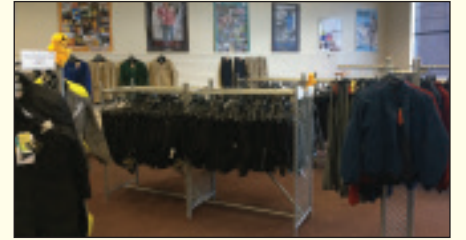
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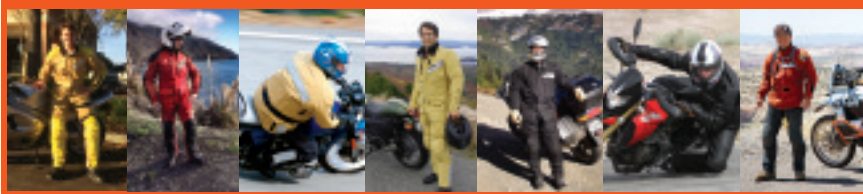
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Volume XXXIII, Issue 10
Publication Date: September 18, 2016

On The Cover:

Fishco and The Gish get dirty on our Super Ténéré and R1200GS; Gwynne has her own little adventure on our CB500X. Photos: Max Klein.

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CityBike magazine is published on or about the third Monday of each month. Editorial deadline is the 1st of each month. Advertising information is available on request. Unsolicited articles and photographs are always welcome. Please include a full name, address and phone number with all submissions. We reserve the right to edit manuscripts or use them to wipe our large, fragrant bottoms.

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News, Clues & Rumors

AB 51 Has Passed—Lane Splitting Is On The Books!

Last month, we reported on the progress of AB 51 with a little more optimism than you're probably used to seeing in these pages, saying, "By the time you read this, AB 51 will likely have become a law." Surprisingly, that statement didn't jinx the bill and turn it into a ban at the last minute—the bill was signed by Guv'na Brown on August 19th, meaning that lane splitting is officially on the books in California.

The bill, oops, the *law* formalizes the ability of the CHP to develop "educational guidelines relating to lane splitting in a manner that would ensure the safety of the motorcyclist and the drivers and passengers of the surrounding vehicles" by working with DMV, DOT, OTS, "motorcycle organization focused on motorcyclist safety" and others. We haven't heard anything official yet, but we expect that the CMSP Advisory Committee, or at least members of the committee, to be invited to the guidelining party. Stay tuned for more on that is the situation develops, or whatever journalists are supposed to say.

Since we love to say *I told you so* but rarely get to, we're gonna take this moment to point out that we've now scientifically proven that hard work and direct involvement can drive results beneficial to motorcyclists. With that in mind...

Get Your Ass To The CMSP Advisory Committee Meeting

Why, you ask? See above. Sheesh... everyone has such short attention spans these days.

We mentioned this last month, but we're mentioning it again, this time with a bit more uh... emphasis. Short attention spans and all... what were we talking about? Oh yeah. CMSP Advisory Committee Meeting. In Sac.

The 2016 meeting is at 10 AM on October 5th, at CHP HQ at 601 N 7th St, Sacramento, CA 95831. You have to ask up front for *clearance* to attend by emailing cmsp_unit@chp.ca.gov.

You're gonna need that clearance because you're gonna ride to The Sac with us on October 5th to meet up with Red Boots An and help us show The Man that motorcyclists care enough about what the CMSP is doing to take a day off from work (or gun running or whatever) and show

up. You can get more info about the ride at facebook.com/CityBikeMag/events, but basically get your ass to the Christie Avenue Starbucks in Emeryville by 7:30 AM on the 5th, and we'll get your ass to The Sac for the meeting.

Shit! We Almost Forgot The Party!

Now that we've crossed the finish line for AB 51 and lane splitting is officially on the books in California, it's time to celebrate! We're working with Mr. Lane Splitting himself, BARF's Budman, to throw the official AB 51 party at DNA Lounge in San Francisco, on October 8th from 1-4 PM. There's even an ad for the party elsewhere in this mag—we got a deal on the ad space. We know a guy...

This isn't some half-ass little shindig with a boombox and a bag of chips. We're going *whole ass*, son. AB 51's author, Assemblymember Quirk, will be joining us and saying a few words, as will Budman and Nick Haris from the AMA, and (hopefully) at least one more very special guest.

Speaking of the AMA, they're generously sponsoring the event, along with Cycle Gear, Choulos, Choulos and Wyle, and SF Moto. This is a 100% free event, and to make it even better, there will be door prizes too. We're talking about a \$250 Aerostich gift certificate, an Aerostich Dispatch messenger bag, a Nexx helmet, a Helite Airnest airbag vest, luggage from RKA, an Advanced Rider Clinic from 2 Wheel Safety Training, a rider training session from Monkey Moto School, a bunch of locks from ABUS, a couple of \$100 gift certificates from Moto Guild, his-n-hers bandanas from D-Store SF, and more.

We're also doing a special event-only "thanks for sharing" sticker, and we'll have tons of the standard "share the lane" stickers as well. Again, this is all free, so RSVP at facebook.com/CityBikeMag/events, tell your friends, and join us in raising our voices in victory!

Word On The Street: Helimot Shorties

It's a well-known fact that we *CityBikers* (and smart, attractive people everywhere) love our Helimot gloves. The Buffalo Pro are the best gloves since sliced bread, which doesn't even make sense... but what else can we say? They're really good gloves!

Helmut was apparently listening when Editor Surj said, "Golly gee, I'd sure like

a set of short-cuff Buffalo Pros." That's what Editor Surj has been telling everyone at *CityBike* World Headquarters is how it went, although we're used to him claiming credit for everything short of the things he should be taking the *blame* for.

The long, or rather *the short* of it is that as of this writing, Helimot has all sizes of their new Buffalo Shorty in stock, and there's even introductory pricing of just \$169.95 through October 1st!

Bello Moto Goes Modern

Sweet San Francisco scooter heaven Bello Moto ("Bello Moto: Italian for *Scooters Galore*" – March 2016) has previously limited their service department to vintage scoots, but local demand for expert work on newer, post-2001 Vespas has led them to reconsider. Wait... *vintage* is up to the year 2000 now?!

They've just installed a new tire mounting machine and stocked up on service parts for modern Vespas, so SF scooterists (and plain old scooter riders) now have a new option for tires and service on all Vespas.



Photo: Angelica Rubalcaba

Get more info and check out all their crazy-cool scooters at bellomoto.com.

So You Think You're A Biker?

Santa Cruz's Re-cycle Garage crew cooked up this simple test to help you understand how much of a real biker you really are—apparently they didn't have enough to do between running their Sunday community moto-repair sessions and doing the Motorcycles and Misfits podcast, which you can check out at MotorcyclesAndMisfits.com. Their most recent guest was Richard Hatfield, Founder and CEO of Lightning Motorcycles, which is pretty impressive. On the other hand, they'll basically let anyone grab a mic: Editor Surj and Master of Puppets Angelica were guests a while back, too.

Here are the test questions. Be honest!

1. Have you completed an Iron Butt?
2. Have you had sex on a bike?
3. Have you ridden in another country?
4. Can you wheelie?
5. Have you crashed?
6. Have you ridden a Harley?
7. Do you own more than 3 sets of gloves/boots?
8. Do you know your tire pressure?
9. Do you own more than 2 bikes?
10. Have you attended a rally/show?
11. Have you ridden for more than 10 years?
12. Do you wrench on your own bike?
13. Have you rescued a broke down biker on the side of the road?
14. Do you own rain gear?



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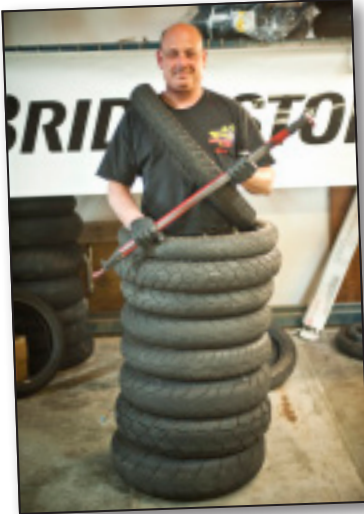
15. Have you ridden in snow?
16. Have you ridden more than 300 miles in one day?
17. Have you ridden to another state/province?
18. Do you cruise Craigslist motorcycle ads more than porn?
19. Do you own *On Any Sunday*?
20. Do you have a friend who died on a bike?
21. Are you a patched member of a motorcycle club?
22. Have you rebuilt an engine?
23. Have you rejettied a carb?
24. Have you motorcycle camped?
25. Have you ridden your bike in a parade?
26. Have you ridden a bike with a sidecar?
27. Do you have a motorcycle themed tattoo?
28. Have you gone dirt biking?
29. Are you confident riding other people's bikes?
30. Have you been on the track?
31. Have you ridden faster than 100mph?
32. Have you ridden with a group of 10 or more bikes?
33. Do you have a troll bell?
34. Have you done the ton?
35. Have you built your own motorcycle?
36. Have you broken a bone in a motorcycle crash?
37. Have you ever received a JC Whitney or Dennis Kirk catalog to your house?
38. Have you ever attended a motorcycle race?
39. Have you ridden while injured?
40. Can you lift your bike off the ground?
41. Do you own a scooter skirt? (If you answered yes to this, you automatically fail.)

As real riders ourselves, we think the test puts a little too much emphasis on the trappings of motorcycling, and not enough on actual riding. We might add questions like have you jumped a street bike? Have you ever crashed and ridden the wrecked bike home? Do you commute by motorcycle? Have you ridden a street bike in the dirt? Have you helped someone learn to ride? Has your mom cried because you ride?

And most importantly, do you read *CityBike*? Well, do ya, punk?

Moto Tire Guy Has Moved

You all know Robbie, and many of you know him as *the Moto Tire Guy*—partly because that's the name of his business, and partly because he is *the* moto tire guy in SF.



Robbie sent us a note to let us know that he's moved his shop to Dirtbag territory, at 1064 Revere Avenue, San Francisco, CA 94124—presumably because that's where all the burnouts happen, and there are lots of tires that need replacing. Robbie also probably picked Hunter's Point / Bayview as his new hood because it's one of the few remaining neighborhoods in The City where cool people with motorcycles haven't been

driven out by wannabe-Zuckerbergs and their companies willing to pay \$100 per square foot for office space.

You can get more info about Moto Tire Guy and his new digs at MotoTireGuy.com.

Remembering JJ

Jim Vincent Lucas, known to most as JJ, was a hell of a rider. On one of the Dames Don't Care Sadie Hawkins Rides, I remember JJ wheelying up the hills of SF and stoppying down them. He was a soldier and volunteered for a tour in Iraq, saying that if he didn't volunteer, a less experienced soldier would have to go instead.

On September 4th, a hundred motorcyclists gathered with friends and family on what would have been JJ's 50th birthday, to mourn the passing of an impressive, courageous, and caring man. It was quite clear that he had lived an exemplary life—in the chapel, images scrolled of him: jumping a motorcycle over a fire, another riding through a river, one of him in a bodybuilding competition, and one of him dressed up like a dragon with his daughter.

JJ died on August 29th after being hit by a u-turning minivan up on Skyline Boulevard. Dan Rubenstein was with him right before his last ride—here's his story.

- Sam Devine

JJ's Last Ride

We eyed the man standing ramrod straight at the end of the bar.

JJ sized him up. His woven leather belt suggested he was either a cop or a firefighter. From where he stood, all areas of the roadhouse were visible.

"You saw that too, didn't you?" I said.

"What did you see?" Said JJ.

"His belt. He's a cop, isn't he?" I said.

"Yes. What else?" Said JJ.

"He's standing at attention. He probably has PTSD."

"That's called ready position. It puts you in a position to best react to threats. Legs hip distance apart, abdominals tensed slightly," JJ said.

I don't like cops and JJ's instincts were sharpened by several tours of duty in Iraq. As such, we both noticed the plainclothes cop immediately and made our own assessments as to any possible threat.

"He's a retired cop. Comes here all the time. He rides an old cop bike. I'll bet he parts traffic like Moses and the Red Sea," JJ said.

We walked outside. JJ's leg was stiff from a recent surgery and he needed to stretch. Last fall he crashed, went under a semi and had his legs crushed. It should have killed him or at least left him crippled, but amazingly, just two months later he was walking on crutches.

"Have you heard of *The Book Of Five Rings*?" he asked. "It's the story of Samurai Warrior Miyamoto Musashi. He was a master swordsman who was unbeaten in 60 duels. Musashi wrote *The Book Of Five Rings*. It's about strategy, tactics and philosophy. It was written in the 1600's. People still read it today. You should read it."

We walked down to the river and sat on an old bench by the train tracks.

"Musashi beat one of the finest swordsmen with a clever trick. He was late for the duel and showed up unkempt, which is very

disrespectful. He didn't have his sword and looked like he'd been up all night drinking. His opponent was caught off guard and with a single blow to the heart it was over. The lesson? Sometimes you have to break the rules."

It was Monday and it would be JJ's last ride. Blue skies and traffic-free roads made for a perfect ride to Port Costa. JJ was in good spirits and seemed especially laid back. Gone were his long stories of military exploits that always seemed a bit braggadocious. We were equals—a couple of middle-aged guys just hanging out, enjoying each other's company. This was the first time I spent any real one-on-one time with him and I saw a different side of the man. There was a softness I had never seen in this warrior and those good feelings lingered.

I met Jim Lucas, known as JJ, in the late 90's. He was filling up his GSX-R 750 and I noticed his racing slicks. Why anyone would use race tires on the street was beyond me and I struck up a conversation. I was initially intimidated but the muscle-bound man cheerfully explained his

choice of tire and it became clear he was a fast and competent rider. It was as if he went out of his way to put me at ease and I always looked forward to seeing him again.

Heading back, we took a brisk but restrained pace. JJ was taking it slower than usual

due to his leg and that was fine with me. We stopped for coffee and I suggested a bite to eat but JJ declined, citing dinner plans with his girlfriend Marlene.

An hour and a half later his girl called me. JJ never came home and wasn't answering his phone. She was worried and wanted to know when I last saw him. I knew something was wrong, as he should have been home minutes after we parted ways.

I quickly put on my leathers and set out to look for him. I could retrace his



path, but what was I looking for? Skid marks? Disturbed underbrush? JJ was an experienced rider and a Motorcycle Safety Instructor. If he was off the radar for that long, I doubted I could help.

Marlene called again. This time her voice was shaky. JJ had crashed and did not survive.

Boom. Just like that. The unthinkable had happened to the man who seemed unstoppable. Just ten minutes after we said our goodbyes, a minivan carelessly made a u-turn out of a parking spot, striking his bike.

Like Musashi's opponent, JJ was taken down by a single blow. Was he caught off guard as well? Was he not in ready position, the state of total awareness and vigilance all motorcyclists must observe? Or was it just bad luck? The words he spoke earlier still echo in my mind.

- Dan Rubenstein

PITSTOPS

Humboldt Green With Envy: 2016 Moto Envy Show

In the beginning, there were two ideas percolating at the Black Lightning Motorcycle Cafe in Eureka, CA: let's shut down the streets and have a bike show, and let's build a bike and auction it off for charity. The former became the Moto Envy Show, the latter the Phoenix Project—and the two are inextricably intertwined.

Followers of our Instagram account ([instagram.com/CityBikeMag](https://www.instagram.com/CityBikeMag)) are aware of our love for the Black Lightning Motorcycle Cafe, and what's not to love? You ride north, hit some bitchin' roads, eat some German pancakes at the Black Lightning, ride some more bitchin' roads, eat some more, continue until you have to return to work. It's practically motorcycle Nirvana.

I try include a stop at the Black Lightning whenever I have a press bike capable of that kind of distance at rapid pace, and I was a judge at last year's Moto Envy Show ("From Eureka, With Envy" – News, Clues & Rumors, October 2015), presumably due to qualifications consisting mostly of being *very judgmental*. I wasn't asked back this year, because I got a little crazy last year and rode a motorcycle off the stage, into the crowd. Fortunately, no one caught it on video.

Just kidding, of course. Jeff and Cassandra, who run the Black Lightning and the Moto Envy Show and are pivotal in energizing a

kickass moto-culture in and around Eureka asked if *CityBike* would like to come cover the show again.

I didn't want to hurt their feelings, and after all, the Black Lightning is the



Photo: Angelica Rubalcaba

northernmost official *CityBike* distribution outpost. So I said yes.

Duh. The show is awesome, the bikes are awesome, the people are awesome, and I think slow races are almost as cool as fast races. No brainer.

There were a lot of rad bikes again, of course—*two* Tritons, one of which picked up an award—and get this: a super-clean SRX600, a bike I absolutely love, and hereby bestow upon the Editor Surj's Best In Show award. Just 'cause, ok? Other awesomeness included not one, but two bikes built by Bruce Lee Hawkins, the unassuming old timer who built the evilest-looking blacked-out Sportser-based custom at last year's show. This year, he

had a long, low, flamboyantly red sidecar rig based on a Honda Twin of some sort, and a beautiful board track replica that I'm not sure was based on anything other than the pile of metal he started with. When I asked him if he still had the black death machine from last year, he smiled and replied, "Oh yeah. I built that one to keep."

Craig Marleau of Kick Start Garage brought his "Taco Truck," a BMW R75/S with a platform sidecar—the "taco" in the name is because it originally carried a Bultaco, but on this day had a... hell, I'm not sure what it was. Red, single-cylinder cafe racer type thing. There was a third

side rig—an ancient, desert-toned military BMW with not one, but two trailers attached—because the sidecar just didn't offer enough additional storage.

Beyond the sidecars, there was a multitude of cool stuff ranging from an immaculate Honda Mini-Trail to a Kenny Roberts RZ350 with the bodywork removed and laid out alongside the bike, and of course the requisite

assortment of vintage British oil puddles and American iron.

The star of the day, though, was the Phoenix Project build—a lovely silver, red and blue Yamaha XS650-based street tracker, built with help from local companies and national sponsors alike. The Moto Envy Show and Phoenix Project had raised \$22,000 in the previous two years, and raised another \$12,000 this year, for Humboldt CASA. Not bad for a small town bike show, right?

By not bad, I mean motherfucking amazing and awesome.

There we go. Nice and clear.

It'll be a little weird for *CityBike* to say this, especially after using *motherfucking* to describe the impressive financial benefit to Humboldt CASA, but the vibe at the Moto Envy Show is family-friendly and jubilant, an All American Good Time that even this misanthropic editor will head north for every year. I hope to see you there too.

- Surj Gish

Losing At The Vintage Show

In 2012 I saw her on Craigslist, an '81 gold and black muscle bike that dreams are made of. Well, my dreams... the Ducati Darmah wasn't the most popular bike in the bevel lineup, but it's always been my favorite.

And there it was, for sale. I jokingly sent the link to my husband, who then planned for the owner to bring it out to A&S

Motorcycles (where my Mr. works) for me to take a test ride.

Hell. Yes.

One ride was all it took. She was meant to be mine—mine in

the "you're going to be poor for your rest of your life if you buy me" kind of way. I rushed to get her registered and insured before that year's vintage show at A&S.

The morning of the show I met up with friends at a local cafe and as we prepared to leave, the Darmah sputtered, spat and backfired to the point that one group of gentlemen (I use the term loosely) requested I push her to the other side of the street because the exhaust smoke was

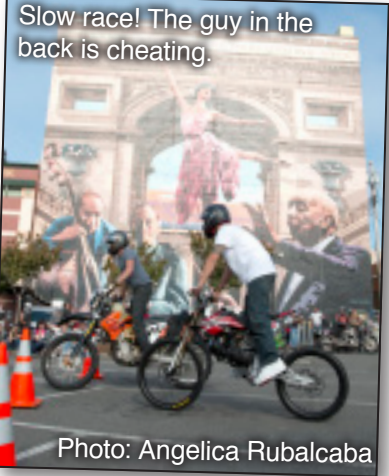


Photo: Angelica Rubalcaba



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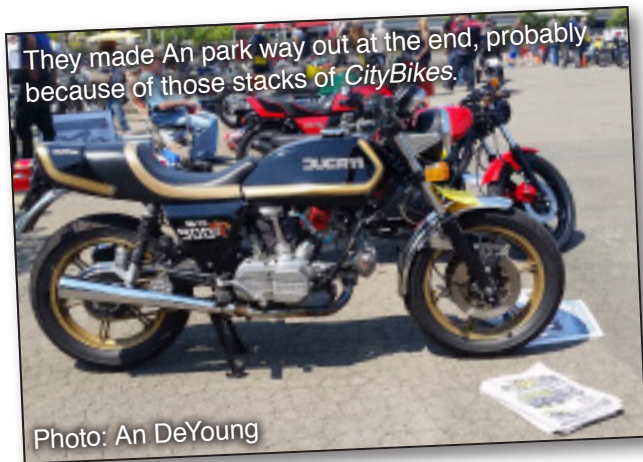


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bothering them and it was “too loud.” I made it about a mile before my friend Sean, who had been following me, dodging the flames and smoke exiting my exhaust, told me to it might be time to think about taking the bike home, time to give up the dream of winning this time around.



And so it was, year after year—fix one thing, something else breaks.

Finally, this year I was finally able to spring her from her home away from home, Pasta Performance Motorsports. I polished her up for her grand debut at this year's Vintage show. Battery charged, full tank of fresh gas, I planned to ride out with my fellow badass friend Shiree on her little red vintage Yama-hot rod.

I brought a tow rope, just in case.

We pulled into the lot early and got prime spots. My Darmah was looking good, feeling good, ready to rock. Then a red Moto Guzzi LeMans rumbled in

and parked nearby. Hmm... I had some competition in the Italian class.

The A&S Vintage show is always a good time: music, barbecue—and this year Ducati stopped off with their XDiavel Xperience semi on the way back from Sturgis and offered up test rides.

Unfortunately, there were no test rides on the Roland Sands XDiavel, which was every glitter lover's wet dream.

The infamous motorcycle designer Glynn Kerr was the judge this year. When he stopped to give my Darmah the once-over, he mentioned he had just sold off the last of his Ducatis. I thought this might work to my benefit—feeling nostalgic, surely he'd crown the only

Ducati entered in the show with the top prize.

Yeah... didn't happen. An unassuming little Gilera was given the Italian honors. I didn't even see it running. Yeah, I'm sure it was charming. Whatever.

Even though I didn't leave with an award, I still won. I got to ride home on my dream bike, which was purring like a tiger the whole way. I even took the long way home, right past a certain little cafe. Rawrrr.

- An DeYoung

Apparently KISS Played The West Oakland Motorcycle Review

My mouth is on fire and I'm surrounded by motorcycles. A paper plate littered with scraps of taco is sitting on a rusty car lift and there's a Faction Brewing pilsner in my hand. It's the third annual East Bay Rats West Oakland Motorcycle Review and I'm shooting the shit with Brett Bye when Jason Pate shows up on his Dirtbagger from last year. He says he's not entering because there's no category for fastest chopper.

Then he asks if I want to take it around the block.

It's a gorgeous day in Oakland and I'm full of spicy tacos and not too much beer. I've already enjoyed some of the slide-guitar infused rockin' country of Shelby Cobra and the Mustangs and I can see no pressing reason not to tear around this semi-industrial neighborhood on an inline-four, hard-tailed rocket. Moments later, I'm weaving past Monte Carlos and Impalas, struggling for a reason to shift into second as the 1200 Bandit's straight exhaust wails like an air raid siren.

After riding around just long enough to let Pate start to worry, I park the chop dangerously close to a beautiful blue Harley.

We head inside for some more beers and check out the band. Sitting on the bar are the epic trophies made by Ted Wellman. Two of them are post-apocalypse-worthy battle axes made from sharpened brake rotors and some quality pine. The bar is being tended by two gorgeous blondes, one of whom I understand is dating Timmers, the East Bay Rat organizing today's event.

But let's get back to the tacos. These are spicy, fiery delicious al pastor street tacos getting sliced off the spit and thrown on a

plate for \$2 a piece. They make it into my top three tacos of all time.

Meanwhile, Kiss is setting up. Yes, the band Kiss showed up to play.

Now, I know what you're thinking: “Sam, surely this is a Kiss cover band. Perhaps the cover band ‘Creatures of the Night?’” That would sure make more sense, but it's a much better story if

it's actually Kiss, so let's go with that.

Besides, they're really good! They play a ton of hits and have a fog machine and flashing lights. Steve Russel even gets to sing “All Night Long” with Creatures of the... err... Kiss. The band Kiss.

“I've seen Kiss like 75 times,” says Russel. “When they gave me the mic, I'm like, ‘Fuck yeah! This is rad!’”



The boxing matches were scheduled to start around 7:30, but some light sparring gets going early. Out front, Noble's 2001 R6 is wheelying down San Pablo. This is by no means a stock R6. Chopped free of any and all body work, running dual-sport tires, ProTaper bars, a Leo Vince titanium pipe, horns off a Crown Vic and tuned up with an Ivans jet kit, this is one mean machine.

As the Yamaha turns the corner, Miles Miller pulls up on a rusty old BSA that he bought for a song and was surprised to find that it ran.

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“It started up while I was looking for top dead center,” he says. He’s planning to give it a complete restoration once it stops running but in the meantime, the minor repairs will involve nothing permanent. “It meets pure rat bike rules.”

In the end, the glory of Best Ratbike goes to Beth Holly and her stripped-down 2003 SV650. Brian Wright takes home Best Original with his big cruiser that started life as a Kawasaki Ninja. The Pre-80’s Custom award goes to Jimmy’s 1954 Panhead Harley while Post-80s Custom award goes to Nick’s FXDWG. And Viewers’ Choice goes to Carlos’s ‘83 Honda.

You’ll have to excuse the lack of specifics. Somewhere between the tacos and the wheelies, the boxing and the babes, the music and the beer, well, I accidentally had a good time, and I’m ashamed to say that my notes suffered for it. What is clear is that the East Bay Rats Motorcycle Review is a darned good time and I plan to attend next year. I recommend that you do the same.

- Sam Devine

Doing The Inaugural Tom Perkins Legacy Foundation Ride On The Wrongest Possible Bike

You’ve got an NC700X with a fresh new rear tire—and let’s not talk about how suddenly losing pressure in the rear on the Bay Bridge, finding your phone’s battery is dead, and then being bitched at by Caltrans

tow for stopping in an unsafe place after slow-rolling well off to the side after the end of the bridge, and then being forced to slow-roll well into West Oakland because

Christopher Perkins welcomes riders to the first Tom Perkins Legacy Foundation ride.



Photo: Surj Gish

“you can’t stay here”—and a Saturday afternoon to yourself. What do you do?

I’ll tell you what I do. I take that thing on the inaugural Tom Perkins Legacy Foundation ride, put on by Dudley Perkins Co, the Bay Area H-D dealership that puts the *real* in that word that everyone loves to use these days: authentic, what with a hundred-plus years of history here in SF.

Some background on this ride: Tom, known to many as TP, lost his lower right leg after being hit by a truck at eighteen years of age. He rode the rest of his life with a prosthetic, until he passed on December 15th, 2015. The DPCHD crew created the Tom Perkins Legacy Foundation to continue TP’s tradition of generosity and support for others who have lost a limb, primarily by funding

specialized secondary prosthetics. This ride was the first event to raise funds for the newly formed Foundation, an attempt to “turn something shitty into something good,” as fourth-gen Perkins man—and TP’s son—Christopher said during his pre-ride talk.

Attendance wasn’t quite at Love Ride-ridiculous levels—forty-something riders, mostly on big Harleys (of course) with a smattering of “other” bikes: an XR1200, an FJR, an H-D sidecar rig, and of course me on the oddball NC.

The DPCHD team closed up shop a bit early, Chris said a few words and we hit the road, meandering into SF the long way: Skyline, Great Highway, through Golden Gate park through the Panhandle and downtown, ending up at Don Ramon’s on 11th Street.



Photo: Surj Gish

Response to the NC was surprisingly warm and interested. One grey-haired, pony-tailed capital-B Biker on a black Harley with a superman sticker on the tank pulled up next to me on the way out of South SF

and smiled: “I like that bike. Cool-looking, man!” We shared a thumbs-up and rolled on. On the way into SF, another rider asked, “That’s an automatic, right? Perfect for this kind of shit!” Another shared smile, laughter, and thumbs up.

I spend a lot of time up to my ears in moto-hate (at worst) and ambivalence (at best). It’s easy to feel like it’s us against the world, and sometimes it’s us against us, with different factions of riders ignoring or outright hating on each other—witness the difficulty of getting non-Harley / MC riders to show up for the annual Unification Rally in Sacramento, for example. So some regular riders hanging with regular riders good vibes for a good cause felt.... well, good. Damn good, actually.

Even better—response from surrounding pedestrians and drivers in SF was overwhelmingly positive, something I’ve never experienced before. Sure, you get a few thumbs up, the occasional “wheelie!” shout out, but this was different. I don’t know if it was the sheer volume of rolling Americana or my bright yellow helmet that did it, but all sorts of people were smiling, waving, and taking photos at every turn.

The positivity doesn’t stop there—I checked in with Chris post-ride and he told me the TPLF raised over \$26,000 dollars between the event, raffle tickets, and donations. Turning something shitty into something good, indeed!

- Surj Gish

Learn more about the foundation and sign up to be notified about next year’s ride at [TomPerkinsLegacy.org](#). ☺

UNEASY RIDER WITH SURJ GISH

The Death Of Fast

Fast used to feel fast—rapid acceleration and high speeds were frightening and exhilarating. Now, fast is measured with gauges, not feelings of “Oh shit, I’m real close to getting in real trouble.”

If you’ve been riding a while you know what I mean, and you also know that fast is relative—relative to things like experience, equipment and gear, surrounding traffic and environment, and of course one’s current level of insanity and / or stupidity.



Photo: Angelica Rubalcaba

My first several motorcycles were cantankerous junkers with barely functional brakes and unpredictable acceleration—when they ran. Ancient, cracked tires with often unknown (unchecked) PSI offered surprises in nearly every corner, and creaking, short-travel suspension made even small bumps dramatic.

On such machine, hitting 45 MPH in a t-shirt, jeans and Doc Martens was sketchy, and getting to 80, 90, 100 MPH felt balls-to-the-wall fast, a magical blend of terror and “man, I’m so alive!” Motorcycles that are likely as not to cooperate feel fast, and sketchy, plotting somewhere near one of the points of the Bermuda Triangle of scary, unpleasant and bitchin’—depending on that insanity / stupidity ratio.

The insanity / stupidity ratio is important, because we build up a tolerance for dumb shit as we progress as riders—or at least some of us do. If you split extensively every day as I do, it’s all too easy to become comfortable with higher and higher deltas, which flips the splitting-is-better-than-not equation the wrong way and risks severe consequences, both in personal injury (or death) and driver

perception. Similarly, if you always ride a motorcycle that barely stops and pisses gas on your leg, you eventually inure yourself to the danger of becoming an unstoppable human fireball.

Modern motorcycles have tamed the equipment-induced component of feeling fast to some extent, but there’s still plenty of it. It may surprise you that among recent visitors to *CityBike* World Headquarters, it’s the “slow” bikes that felt fast in very noticeable ways. Yamaha’s Bolt C-Spec is one of those, with its thick, torquey acceleration in a chassis that ain’t quite up to trackday spec. H-D’s Sportster Roadster is another, which we’ll tell you more about in our November issue. Both are favorites of the Wrecking Crew.

At the other end of the spectrum, remember how the moto-media was all aflutter at the launch of BMW’s S1000RR, proclaiming how its amazing electronics made this incredibly capable machine remarkably manageable for riders of all skills levels? Some even thought that while previous literbikes were off limits for novices, an S1000RR might even make an ok first bike, because it was capable of keeping the rider out of trouble.

Whack the throttle wide open with no concern for impending loopiness, strangle the front brake with equal abandon—no worries. The electronics will cover for you.

I pondered that notion—that a world-beating literbike might be a suitable bike

for just about any rider—and tentatively agreed that it might be so... for a while. But I don’t any more.

It’s one thing to wax poetic about the olden days of speed, when motorcycles were more exciting, but there’s more to it. Bikes like the S1000RR have lost some of the hallmarks of feeling fast, while at the same time becoming faster. Ridiculously so.

The signals that tell us we’re going fast—arm-pulling acceleration, unintentional lofting of the front—these are feedback that we’re not totally in control, a reminder to reign it in, to manage the situation. When we believe the motorcycle will take care of us, we ride as though it will. Riders that haven’t benefited from the sometimes painful lessons that fast, unpredictable, even unsafe motorcycles provide don’t know that this belief is a dead end.

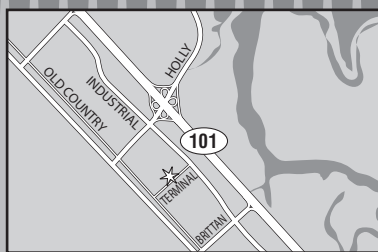
I still strongly believe in the value of things like ABS and traction control. Such technology provides a safety net for both accomplished and new riders. In the case of new riders, technology can help prevent some of the painful lessons that often prematurely end a budding rider career. But these lessons have value, serving as triggers to taking stock and developing skills, and in some cases filtering out people that aren’t able (or willing to commit) to develop those skills.

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New Stuff

1-2-X-0: EXO-AT950 Modular Adventure Touring Helmet

By Surj Gish

Modular helmets are one of the best moto-compromises going, at least for daily riders, touring riders and the like—people who value utility over style, coolness, and we must admit... perhaps a bit more safety. I'm one of those riders—my go-to daily lid for the last 3 or 4 years has been a bright yellow Shoei Neotec.

A while back I developed an appreciation for a dirt-style peak on street helmets, maybe thanks to a nudge from Sam, who pointed out how useful the peak is to him at sunrise and sunset—when I usually drop the internal sunshade on my Neotec. But I love the ability to pop up the front at the gas station, the post office, or sometimes even at low speeds around town, and I can't see switching back to a standard full-face for most of my riding—peak or no.

Wouldn't it be rad if there was a good modular helmet with a peak? Hell yeah it would!

This is a rather new concept, probably because it's difficult to make work.

There are currently three modular adventure helmets that I'm aware of. Caberg pioneered this concept back in 2013 with their Tourmax, which has a peak and an internal sunshade. Problem is, you have to import it yourself—there's no official distribution in the US. Schuberth followed suit with their E1, also with a peak and internal sunshade, in 2015. Touratech sells what looks to be a slightly modified version of the E1 as the Aventuro Mod, but I'm counting that with the Schuberth because it looks like a basic rebrand job.

So number three is Scorpion's new EXO-AT950. I'll cut right to the high-speed chase: this is a pretty good lid, and unlike the other Schuberth-atech (the only other easily available in the US ADV-ular), it won't cost as much as a beater dirtbike—solid colors are \$269.95. That's a sweet deal for a helmet with this many features.

About those features: like the other adventures, the Nine-fifty comes with both a peak and an internal sunshade. Venting is



Photo: Angelica Rubalcaba

handled by a two-position mouth vent and a single forehead vent, with two exhaust vents at the back. The faceshield uses Scorpion's Everclear anti-fog tech, and has an anti-scratch coating and 100% UV protection.

The polycarbonate shell comes in three sizes, and wraps around dual-density EPS with pockets to allow easy installation of your favorite comm system. The liner is antimicrobial, removable and washable. Block-off plates are included so you can wear the helmet with the peak removed.

It is of course DOT approved, not SNELL, and is available in sizes from extra small to triple extra large.

I went with a large for my *cabeza grande*, and fit is almost dead-on “intermediate oval”—think Arai's Corsair-X or XD4. Compared to my Neotec it's a teensy bit tighter around the crown of my noggin, which can result in a bit of a hot spot on my forehead after a couple hours. It's so minimal that I'd expect it to probably go away, further into break-in.

The liner is comfortable, if not quite luxurious. Scorpion says the cheekpads allow for easy on and off of “most styles of eyeglasses,” but the two pairs of glasses I tried with the 950 didn't seem to go in any easier than with other hard hats.

Venting works pretty well on the road, but the chin vent is most noticeable. I'm not sure if it's the shield's antifog tech or the airflow from the chin vent that keeps the shield from fogging, but between the two of 'em, the shield stayed clear most of the time, even with some serious mouth-breathing. The internal sunshade is easy to actuate, even with gloved hands, once you memorize the location of the lever. The eyepoint is *huge*, offering excellent vision to the sides, and up and down, and the shield has tabs on both sides for easy opening with either hand—something some of the *premium* brands somehow still haven't figured out.

I opted for the Neocon design in high-viz yellow. It's a tasteful design, if not quite as high-viz as a solid yellow or white helmet. The various greys and yellow look good from afar, but viewed close-up it's clear that the paintwork is one of the reasons the helmet is such a deal. That's not to say it's bad—it just looks kinda printed-on when you look closely.

The 950 does not feel heavy when I pick it up, but I do pick up a Neotec every day, so I threw it on the *CityBike* scale for some real numbers. The large weighed in at a pretty typical modular weight of 3 pounds, 15 ounces—less than an ounce less than a Neotec of the same size, which

coincidentally weighs about the same as a Schuberth E1. Not bad, really.

The modular mechanism is easy-peasy, with a protected actuator in the middle of the chinbar. When you open it, the peak goes up part way and stops, while the chinbar keeps going, sorta collapsing into the peak. There's a nice positive detent at the top so the whole thing doesn't surprise you by crashing down at an inopportune moment.

So how 'bout that peak? Has it piqued your interest? Want to take a peek?

Groan. You knew that was coming.

The 950's peak feels significantly less substantial than the peaks on my non-mod dirt and dual-sport helmets. I haven't put a micrometer on 'em to see if it's a thickness issue, because it's most likely due the lack of attachment in the center of the visor—required for the modularness to happen. Out of curiosity, I went out and found a Schuberth E1 to fondle, and was surprised to find it felt similarly—I'm just gonna say it—*flimsy*.



Photo: Angelica Rubalcaba

The actual (not perceived) stability of the peak turns out to be heavily bike-dependent. On a naked bike, it doesn't flex much at all. Ok, cool... but on a bike with a shield (like most adv bikes) it's kind of a crapshoot. On an

NC700X (spare us the “that's not an adv bike!” emails—our Gwynne's done more ADV'ing on an NC than most *real* ADV bikes will see in their lifetimes) it wobbles a bit. On our R1200GS, which you can read all about starting on page 14, it's surprisingly hyperactive with the bike's shield in the high position.

In short, if your windshield generates some turbulence, the peak is gonna dance. I've considered fashioning some kind of internal bracing to help stabilize it, maybe adding a bit of strategically placed Sugru, but it's pretty low on my priority

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list. Basically, I noticed it the first couple times, went “aw man, that sucks,” and then promptly forgot about it.

The peak isn’t as hole-y as the louvered visor on Shoei’s Hornet X2—our gold standard for a peak stability—but doesn’t seem to care. It’s almost unnoticeable facing forward at close-to-legal speeds, unless you look upward. You’ll feel it when you turn your head, too—but again, it’s about as expected—not particularly dramatic.

You can remove the peak easily, if you’re going to be doing a lot of freeway riding, for example. It’s a simple matter of turning two (metal!) screws with a coin, or that big knife that real bikers all carry, and the block-off plates neatly clean things up *sans* peak.

Here’s the thing: this helmet is all about the peak, but unfortunately, it falls short in that area—and by that I mean the peak is too short. Without going full dirty-long, the peak essentially becomes a fashion statement. To be fair, most dual-sport helmets have this same problem, and the much more expensive E1 certainly does. The 950’s peak isn’t completely useless, but you have to drop your head pretty low to block the sun.

So where does that leave us? In pretty much exactly the same spot as most ADV stuff—somewhere between function and fashion. You can’t really fault it for that.

If you want an adventure-oriented modular, the EXO-AT950 is a functionally good helmet that really looks the part, and is especially compelling at its price point—which in case you missed it is less than *one-third* the cost of its only real competitors in the US.

\$269.95, \$289.95 in Neocon color scheme. Get some at ScorpionUSA.com.

Who’s Got The 37 ½?
First Gear Kilimanjaro Jacket & Pants
By Fish

I recently got my hands on a set of Firstgear’s updated 37.5 Kilimanjaro jacket and pants, and while the focus of the Kilimanjaro line seems to be staying dry

in wet weather, I am truly impressed by the versatility of this set—this stuff works year round.



The Kilimanjaro jacket and pants are near the top end of Firstgear’s offerings, second only to their TPG Rainier gear. This is high-quality textile gear that works equally well for touring or running errands. Exceptional features include D3O armor and waterproof / breathable 37.5 micro-particle technology (think Gore-Tex or eVent) in the laminate liner, all wrapped up in 420-denier nylon for abrasion resistance. That D3O armor is placed in the knees and hips of the pants, and the shoulders, elbows, back, and chest of the jacket— a nice bonus compared to other jackets that offer shoulder and elbow armor, and empty pockets with a back protector ought to be, or maybe a crappy piece of foam if you’re “lucky.”

Color options on the jacket include grey, hi-viz yellow, or white. All color options are trimmed in black with well-placed reflective panels.

The Kilimanjaro is very comfortable and less bulky than others in this price range, thanks in part to the premium D3O armor, which is substantially more compact than standard hard shell / foam combinations. Well-designed pockets are abundant, with a pass-through for heated gear plugs or headphone cords. All external openings are equipped with waterproof zippers.

The Kilimanjaro jacket comes in a refreshingly broad selection of sizes: small to 4XL with large to 2XL offered in tall sizes as well. Additional nice touches include a drawstring waist pull for customized fit, as well as hook and loop pull tabs to adjust fit in the arms, shoulders,

and waist. Standard shoulder vents and back vents are expected, but there are some really slick 2-way sleeve vents too. The addition of a concealed hood makes this great rain gear off the bike as well, or you can wear it under your helmet if you’re one of those guys.

As a daily proposition, the jacket is fantastic. The pockets are well placed, and items of reasonable size stored in them do not become cumbersome. It took me a bit to get the fit just right using the extensive adjustability, but once sorted it’s really comfortable. The ventilation is what really shines—the sleeve vents allow you to get good airflow while still wearing gauntlet style gloves.

The versatility of this jacket continues to amaze me. While a lot of my riding is local weekday errands with some weekend pleasure cruising, I do get to take off for a long trip now and again, and the Kilimanjaro works great when I’m out *on the road* proper. The pockets allow you to keep things like a small camera or phone handy, and the compact armor makes it easy to store in a very small amount of space. The flexibility of the vents mean that you can ride through lots of temperature changes (the Sierras, for example) without having to add or remove layers. I haven’t experienced any full on torrential downpours yet, but the water I did run into was a non-issue.

The pants are equally well thought-out, though less feature-packed—a good complement to the jacket. Again, the D3O makes them far less bulky than many textile options out there.

The cut and style is very casual, something of a blend between jeans and work pants. Pockets are placed like traditional jeans and non-zipping. Standard belt loops are helpful, but the pants also include a suspender/bib attachment if you prefer. Hidden elastic-trimmed gaiters keep water out of your boots, and fold out of the way when things are dry. You know, like pretty much all the time in California lately.

They are a little tight in the waist, and you’ll need to compensate for the hip armor when choosing your size. I opted for a true fit instead of an overpants fit, which does prevent me from wearing shorts or jeans underneath. The good news, in addition to the fact that I have thus far managed to refrain from any Donald Duckin’ on *CityBike* outings, is that these work well as regular pants: the fit is very comfortable both on and off the bike, and the side zippers are almost completely invisible when closed.

The lack of visual remarkability is really the best compliment I can give the



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Kilimanjaro pants. They work seamlessly both on and off the bike.

As a set, the Kilimanjaro suit is a great option for those of us who prefer riding gear to work well both on and off the bike.

Overall quality is excellent—stitching is consistent and solid, and the zippers are high quality YKK units. The friction lock zippers on the sleeves are particularly innovative—when folded over, they lock into position, controlling the size of the vent.

Even better, the 37.5 technology is really effective.

I won’t get too theoretical science-y here, but I’ve been wearing my Kilimanjaro suit in environments ranging from 50-degree foggy coastal areas to 100-degree-plus Nevada deserts. I’ve never needed more than a T-shirt under the jacket to remain comfortable.

Jacket: \$399.95, pants: \$299.95. Learn more and find out where to get some locally at FirstGear-usa.com. @

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October 3, 2016: Britton Adventures Presentation (Piston & Chain, 1285 Folsom Street San Francisco, CA 94103)

The Britton team leads moto-adventures all over the world. Hankerin' for a RTW ride? Come get inspired. PistonAndChain.com

October 5, 2016: Ride To The CMSP Advisory Committee Meeting With CityBike (Starbucks, 5767 Christie Ave, Emeryville, CA 94608)

Ride to The Sac with us, to prove that motorcyclists care about the actions of the CMSP and the Advisory Committee. It's not a particularly fun ride—freeways to Sacramento... yawn—but it's an important ride. Meet at Starbucks in Emeryville with a full tank of gas and be ready to roll at 7:30 AM! Get more info and RSVP at facebook.com/CityBikeMag/events

October 8, 2016: BARF & CityBike Present: The AB 51 Party – Lane Splitting Is Officially Legal! (DNA Lounge, 375 11th St, San Francisco, CA 94103)

We've reached the finish line for AB 51—lane splitting is officially on the books in California and it's time to celebrate! BARF and CityBike are hosting the official (because we said so) AB 51 party at DNA Lounge in SF on October 8th from 1-4 PM. Entry is 100% free and there will be special guest speakers and door prizes. Get more info and RSVP at facebook.com/CityBikeMag/events

October 8-9, 2016: Lost Coast Dual Sport Adventure (Ukiah, CA)

Start and finish in Ukiah, overnight in Fortuna. This is a non-competitive event, approximately 200 miles/day. Bikes must be street legal, meet current 96db sound requirements and be capable of 100 miles between fuel stops. \$95 per rider, 250 rider limit. NorthBayMC.org

October 8-9, 2016: Carnegie Classic (Carnegie SVRA, 18600 Corral Hollow Rd, Tracy, CA 95376)

Motoclimb action all weekend long! Main event happens at 3 PM Saturday, with CORVA BBQ fundraiser and live music afterward, followed by Sportsman and Factory Pro Stock on Sunday. Admission starts at \$25 for adults, \$15 for kids. ElevatedAction.com/the-carnegie-classic

October 14-16, 2016: Big Bike Weekend (Win-River Resort & Casino,

AFM 2016 Season Schedule



Get more details at afmracing.org/schedule.

Round 6: October 1-2
Thunderhill

Round 7: October 22-23
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Lodi Cycle Bowl 2016 Schedule

Flat track racing at the home of the blue groove, where the Lodi Motorcycle Club has been running races continuously since 1953. LodiCycleBowl.com.

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October 15: TT

October 16: ST

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Three-day event for all riders, with a poker run, bike show, dinner and dance, plus activities for bicycling enthusiasts in partnership Shasta Living Streets. Benefits One SAFE Place (OSPShasta.org), an organization providing legal services, safety, and emotional support to intimate partners, children, and seniors affected by domestic violence and sexual assault. BigBikeWeekend.com

October 25-26, 2016: Dainese Custom Works (D-Store SF, 131 South Van Ness Ave,

San Francisco CA 94103)

If you've been eyeballing our man Max Klein's sweet custom white Dainese suit, you can get your own when Dainese's fifth annual North American Custom Works Tour stops in San Francisco. There are four levels of customization available and in addition to racing suits, custom leather jackets and pants are available. DaineseCustomWorks.com

November 25, 2016: Ride Friday Give Back (TBD, East Bay... probably)

Also known as the "Fuck Black Friday Ride," our apparently annual, post-Turkey Day ride will benefit Alameda County CASA and involve coffee at the beginning and pizza at the end. Save the date and stay tuned for details at facebook.com/CityBikeMag/events

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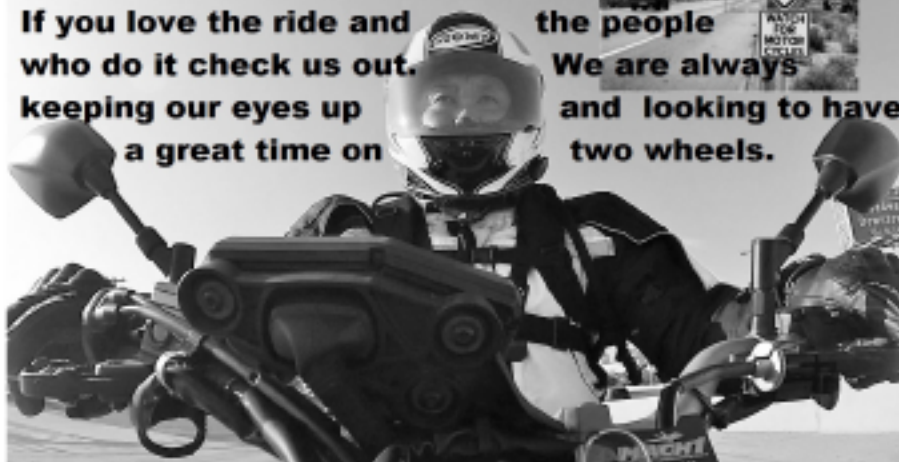
Barf has been there since somebody first said that



lanesplitting should be

made illegal. We helped fight that off and helped create the lane sharing guidelines. When AB 51 came out we fought hard for the version we see under the new law. We continue to educate many new riders on the best ways to not only share the lane, but on ways to become better riders. For more than 14 years barf has had the passion for two wheels and the desire to share it with other like minded people.

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Ten The Super Way 2016 Yamaha Super Ténéré ES

By Max Klein
Photos by Max Klein

I'll admit that I've poked fun at adventure bikes from time to time. OK, every time.

After all, I own a KLR which provides a double helping of actual adventure... Will I have enough power to make it up that hill? Will the brakes stop me once I get to the other side?

Every ride is an adventure, every puckered, doubting second.

The liquid-cooled 1199cc inline twin found in the Yamaha Super Ténéré has enough power to get it over mountains, and ABS-equipped dual 310mm disc brakes paired with a single 282mm disc in the rear? You know you're gonna stop... Adventure bike my ass.

All kidding aside, I was looking forward to Super-Tenning home from LA. I decided to put the adventure aspect into play and started my ride home with a run through Death Valley... in the summer.

I never claimed to be smart—I do own a KLR, after all.

After enjoying what was arguably the best burrito I've ever bought from a gas station, I made my way into Death Valley proper. For an hour I saw literally no other living things. No people in cars, no lizards, hell not even a buzzard waiting for my stupidity to take its toll.

At 8AM it was already 95 degrees so I was looking to get in, take a picture by the Death Valley sign, and GTFO before my tires melted to the 19" front, 17" rear spoked, tubeless wheels.

I had the cruise control set at somewhere just shy of *felony* and got a bit concerned when after an hour of no nothin' no how in my mirrors I spied a headlight gaining rapidly on me. I dialed it back a bit just in case this apparent Chippie had a similar

death wish as me, and to my surprise another random motorcyclist blew past me at well over the 80mph I'd slowed to. I gave him a hundred-yard buffer and then wicked it up to his closing speed and



played a bit of follow the leader... That is until the road disappeared.

The only warning I got was the brakelight of the guy in front of me as he fishtailed wildly in his transition from pavement to naught. I did have plenty of time to adjust the suspension as I slowed for the spontaneous gravel section, though.

Say what? You heard me correctly.

Fortunately for me both the shock and 43mm forks are electronically adjustable with the push of a button. Softening up the 7.5 inches of travel took less time than it took for the guy in front of me to disappear into a cloud of dust.

The pavement returned after a while, as did my speed. My dusty friend and I both wound up stopping to take a pic with the Death Valley sign at the same time. It turns out he was a German tourist celebrating his 60th birthday by riding out here—here being the western half of the US, maybe beyond. After leaving the sign, we rode together until we split up at the intersection that would take us our separate ways. He was headed to Vegas, and I still had eight hours ahead of me to get home, via Yosemite.

I got to know Big T's motor quite well over that next eight hours. Fuel delivery is controlled by the all-knowing, all-seeing Yamaha Chip Controlled Throttle (YCC-T), known to less brand-focused individuals as ride by wire. Combined with the Transistor Controlled Ignition (TCI), you can think of these two as the dynamic duo, battling against the evils of cornfed gas, giving you the precise fuel mixture needed to rail this thing on or off road. Power is delivered to the 150/70-17 rear tire via a minimal maintenance shaft drive.

Wait... no trailside chain lube action? Where's the adventure in that?

The power delivered via that oh-so-civilized shaft comes on smoothly, with a good amount of grunt down low. It's as tame or aggressive as you want it to be thanks to the multiple power modes available.

Yamaha says that T-Mode stands for touring, and S-Mode stands for sport, but I gave these two modes new names.



T stands for "tame"—perfect for off-roading, wet weather, and—yes, ok, Yamaha—touring. I left the bike in this setting all throughout Death Valley, then switched to S mode once I got away from dirty temptations.

S stands for "snappy," and is good for wheelies, burnouts, and—yes, I'll let you have this one too, Yamaha—sporty riding.

It is also great at inspiring spontaneous smiles.

The difference between the two modes is striking—enough to make you wonder if you somehow magically ended up on another bike after pushing the button. Both do a good job of moving the roughly 585 pounds of Super through time and space, but they have a completely unique way of doing it. T-mode tiptoes timidly through twisties, while S-Mode swiftly spansk subadjacent sportbikes... or something.

In addition to the power modes there are also three levels of traction control. Señor Editor Bob Stokstad dug the traction control, and maybe a few holes with it turned off, when we reviewed the non-ES version ("2014 Yamaha Super Ténéré: One Man's Take" – July 2014) a while back, and it's safe to say ('cuz it's all about safety, right?) we feel the same way now. Fish will tell you the traction control is too much, Editor Surj will say that sort of thing is a nice backup for commuting in the rain, and I guess I'm somewhere in between.

Stopping is done through a pretty trick set of linked brakes... or mostly linked. Yamaha calls their system UBS, or Unified Braking System, and it works in conjunction with the better known acronym of ABS to stop you on your coin of choice—we mostly have pennies at *CityBike*, and we need all of 'em we can get, so we stop for every piece of copper (or zinc, nowadays) we see.

UBS applies a touch of rear brake *almost* every time you pull the front brake lever—perfect for all you pegging enthusiasts, err... peg-standers out there. If you're more of a conservative traditionalist and want full control of the back binders, you can override this by applying some rear brake first.

All the tech in the world doesn't mean a thing if you don't have fun on the bike. Fortunately, Yamaha is known for revving one's heart—at least that's what they tell us. Here's what my heart did: the day after I

rode the Super Ténéré home to the Bay Area, I wanted more. I decided to day-trip Highway 36. Yes, after 721 miles in the saddle and a short night's rest, I went off and rode another 621 miles the next day.

Sure, it wasn't an Iron Butt and I certainly didn't get saddle sore, but it does say

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For \$16,190 with electronic suspenders, I'd totally go buy one tomorrow—but after looking through the parts catalog Yamaha, I realized I must first come to terms with the fact that Yamaha does not offer a milk crate.

Max is the SF chapter Director of the AFM shoots racers and trackday riders under the Oxymoron Photography banner. He also probably has some explaining to do about some of the terminology in this review. Better to just not ask, believe us.

Sorry, The Funny Part Is In The Sidecase, Which You Need A Key To Open

By Surj Gish

My first experience with this specific Super Ténéré started with rejection, like so:

Editor Surj: “Hang on... you’re saying I have to use the key every time I want to open or close these sidecases?”

Max: “Yeah... it kinda sucks. But it keeps you from locking your keys inside, which coulda turned Death Valley into the place I actually died.”



Editor Surj: “That’s stupid. I should be free to make my own questionable choices. I don’t need The Man making decisions for me. I’ll go ride this GS instead.”

So offended was I by the key action required to do anything with the sidecases (other than prop up the bike when dropped) that we considered making a joke about that as my part of this review, something like: “Surj didn’t ride the bike, because it pissed him off to have to unlock the sidecases to source more sugar free

Rockstars when crashing. He’s sure it’s a fine bike, but that’s just unacceptable.”

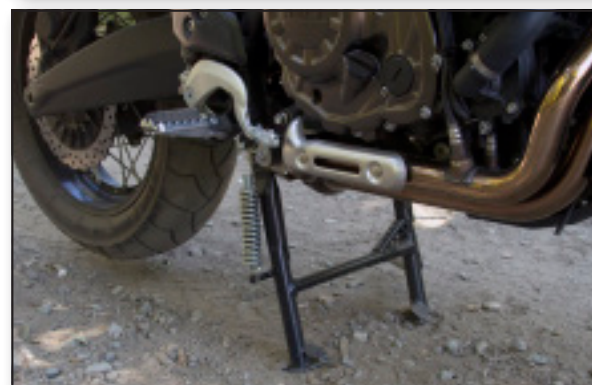
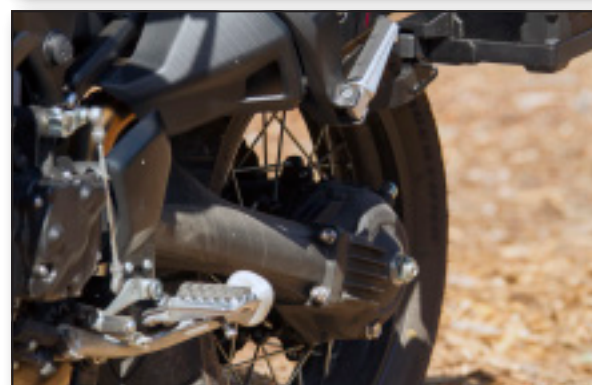
“Joke” and subsequent funniness (or lack thereof) being one of those “eye of the beholder” things, of course.

Anyway, I’d like to say I’ve always liked Yamaha’s Super-T, but I haven’t. To be clear, I do like the bike, and if I wasn’t inclined towards arguably overpriced German motorcycles with confusing but strangely awesome suspension solutions, there’s a good chance I’d own one. It’s a great bike, in an unassuming way, and you can even get it in that bitchin’ yellow / black / white Yamaha paint scheme, if you don’t care about getting the electronically adjustable suspension.

I first rode a Big T a few years back, on Kingsbury Grade, which was closed at the time—can’t remember why. I’d ridden up on Aprilia’s Caponord (“Adventure or Touring? 2014 Aprilia Caponord 1200” - July 2014) to hang with the dudes behind the Carson Tahoe Moto. We were shooting photos on the supposedly-closed road, and one of the fine gentlemen suggested I take his Ténéré for a spin on the undulating sweepers of Kingsbury.

It was near-magical—the T was tight, taut, and quite frankly, tempting. It hunkered down in the fast corners, the wide bars made it easy to control, and the seat felt like it’d be good for hours at a time.

Coincidentally, when I returned from Nevada on the Ape, we also had a Super Ténéré waiting in the expansive garage complex of CityBike World Headquarters. I rode that one too, and didn’t like



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it as much—the fueling felt funky, and the seat more brick-ish.

I didn't get a chance to be offended by the "must love keys" nature of the sidecases on either bike. East of the Sierras, I'd had no reason (or opportunity) to rummage through that Ténéré's cases, and to the west, we had a Super-T sans sidecases—some previous editor guy didn't want to split out of LA with luggage on.

Pffft, whatever. The Super's sidecases are slim. Svelte, even.

So here it is, 2016, and we've got another Super Ténéré, this one electro-suspenderized. I got the bike after Max took it to Death Valley and Fish took it to the Sunday Morning Ride and who knows where else. How's the biggest XT hold up to the latest crop of high output adventure-sport-touring mounts?

Pretty well, actually—although it depends on your preferences.

It does feel a teensy bit dated but if I had to say exactly why, I'd blame the seat / tank junction. It just feels a little more rubenesque than newer adventure bikes' waspy waists. Part of the reason for that, though, is the 6.1 gallon fuel tank, which combined with the 40-ish MPG we saw when we weren't being unusually rough on it—which it seemed the really dig, by the

way—gets you to well over 200 miles of skipping gas stations before you even have to think about worrying.

But it still looks great—Yamaha hasn't caved to the silliness of overwrought angularity with this model (yet?) that's so popular nowadays, so the Big T retains its simple muscularity and smooth lines. The only visual miscue—in my opinion,



of course—is the shaft drive. With most manufacturers wrapping their shaft drives in visually massive, swooping metal shapes, the simple tubular design of the 1200's shaft looks a little... well, I'll just say it doesn't look like the toughest part of the bike.

It's common to cry about massive exhaust pipes, and while the can on this bike is certainly giant, it's treated tastefully, nearly invisible if you have sidecases on.

It'd be really easy to make a case for the Super-T versus the more expensive ADV'ers if it was a few bucks less, but at \$16,190 with electronic suspension (\$1,100 less for the non-ES version) it's not exactly cheap—although it is a *good value*. But add luggage and you're in GS territory, although good luck finding a GS at a dealer without every single goddamn option already installed, and a correspondingly high price. A better comparison might be Suzuki's excellent, if slightly workhorse-y, V-Strom 1000 Adventure, which comes in at \$13,999 *with luggage*, or even the stripped down standard 'Strom, which comes in at \$12,699. Saving that couple grand also saves you roughly 80 pounds, although you'll give up nearly a gallon of fuel capacity too.


I tend to be most fond of motorcycles that can hit the road and do serious miles straight off the showroom floor. The Super Ténéré is such a bike—the passenger seat and luggage rack form a nice flat area for strapping your dry bag on, and the optional sidecases are capacious—although I'd probably get a set of Bumots or Jesses, so I don't have to mess with the goddamn keys every time I want to grab something out of the sidecases.

Surj is the Editor of this here ShittyBike, and grudgingly accepts the blame for everything.



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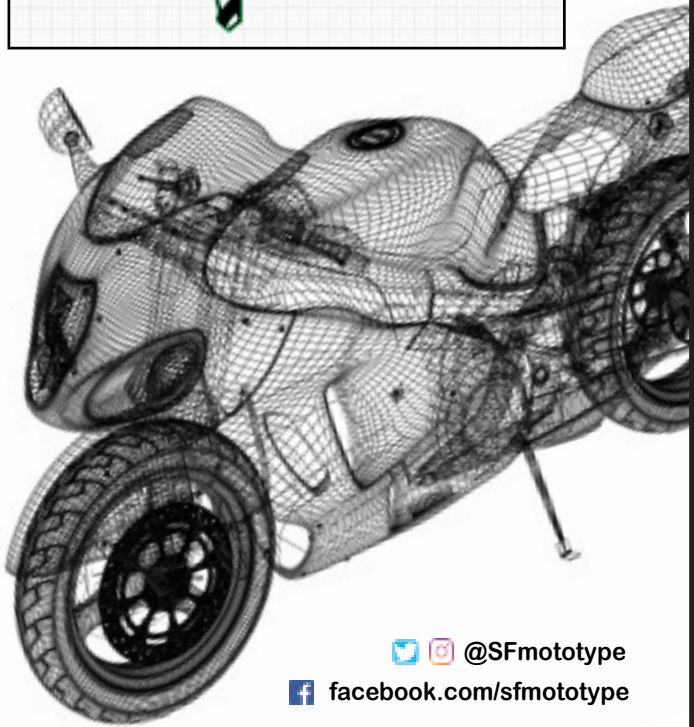
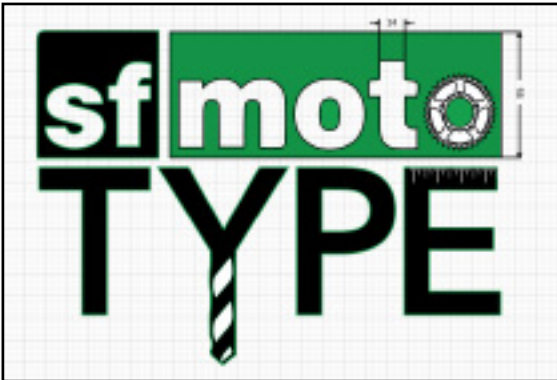
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Triple Black Beauty

2016 BMW R1200GS

By Surj Gish

Photos by Max Klein & Surj Gish

We've ridden an awful lot of adventure motorcycles in the last year or so, from middleweight near-legit dirtbike type things like Triumph's Tiger 800 XCX, to Aprilia's charmingly surly Caponord 1200, to Suzuki's high-value, low-dough V-Strom 1000 Adventure.

But we somehow hadn't given the granddaddy of all these bikes the official *CityBike* review treatment. Sure, there was a press launch kind of thing ("First Ride: 2014 BMW R1200GS" – October 2013) around the time of the last Santa Rosa Mile, but you know how those things are: controlled environments, limited time on the bike.

We were impressed: "You owe it to yourself to test-ride the new bike if the opportunity presents, if only to experience what thoughtful technological progress feels like."

As something of a BMW guy, or more accurately a guy that rides BMWs, I was interested in the new water-cooled motor from the moment it was announced, but as something of a contrarian I turned up my nose and focused on other motorcycles while everyone else alternated between oohing and aahing about the power delivery, bitching about the "vague" Telelever, and parroting shit from the press release like how BMW moved the exhaust to the other side of the bike to keep middle-aged adventurers from melting their expensive textile adventure pants on the pipe.

My perspective on the GS and its ilk is colored—jaded, even—by the trails of my youth. I grew up with old Ford Broncos (and crappy dirt bikes) and as such, have been mocking SUVs as milquetoast posers for cityslick wannabes hoping some of that ruggedness would rub off on their painfully civilized hides. Also, the "sport" in sport utility vehicle always seemed like bullshit, because sport means at least *some* brisk cornering, and if you corner fast in your typical SUV you're as likely to end up on your roof as you are to arrive at wherever you were originally headed.

There's an uncomfortable similarity between four-wheeled SUVs and these tall rounder ADV / SUV bikes. It's no secret that the majority of adventure bikes rarely see more dirt than the occasional stop on an unpaved shoulder, and as such

could certainly be described as milquetoast power-mobiles for... well, you know. This helps explain the move from hypothetically dirt-oriented adventure bikes to more honest sport-touring

motorcycles like BMW's own S1000XR—essentially a barely disguised sportbike with kinder, gentler ergos. This also mirrors the

four-wheeled migration to these *crossover* vehicles, basically high-powered luxury ADV, oops, AWD station wagons.

But while "sport" is utter horseshit in the context of SUVs, it's actually applicable with bikes like the GS, and even more so when you make it all black—we all know that's the fastest color. As Fish and Max can attest to, it's possible and in fact very *enjoyable* to haul some serious ass on these two-wheeled SUVs. Plenty of power, generous ground clearance, easy maneuverability thanks to truck-wide bars and a super-comfy upright riding position... we're talking about damn near perfect motorcycles.

Back to our black beauty Beemer. I was forced to stop ignoring the GS this summer when BMW released a special edition "triple black" version (actually "Black Storm Metallic" / black / "Agate Grey") with black tubeless spoked wheels (like on the Adventure version) instead of the standard cast aluminum jobbies, plus

a gel seat (with GS logo on it!) for just \$500 more than the standard GS price of \$16,495. That price assumes you can actually find a GS without a bunch of options preinstalled on it, which may prove difficult—unless you want to special order one that way.

So the GS we ended up with is predictably optioned-up, not that any of the Wrecking Crew had any complaints. In particular, the integrated Garmin GPS, AKA BMW Motorrad Navigator IV, was universally loved by everyone that rode the bike—enough to get *certain people* to briefly shut up about the Telelever. More on that in a bit.

Since we're not just reviewing a special edition GS, but rather a loaded special edition GS, I figure we oughta set the record straight right up front on how this here *murdered-out* GS differs from your standard garden variety GS.

less sexy items, including hand guards, sidecase mounts and an upgraded on board computer, also branded "pro." Can't have any amateur computer on your adventure bike, after all. In case you're scribbling numbers on a notepad, this package will add \$2,950 to the price of your GS.

Our bike also came with Keyless Ride (\$295), Gear Shift Assist Pro (\$475), an alarm (\$395), the aforementioned GPS (\$799), BMW's Vario topcase and sidecases (\$1,978 with mounting for the topcase), and BMW's clear plastic headlight guard (\$151). This, with the \$500 upcharge for the triple black special edition treatment—basically the spoked wheels—puts the cost of this bike at just over \$24,000. We double-checked a few times, because our math ain't so hot, but in spite of our best no-college try there was just no way we could make the bike any less holy-shit expensive with all that good stuff on it.

"Ouch!" I hear some of you saying, quickly followed by the question, "is it worth it?" We'll come back to that—keep reading.

There's a lot to talk about here. I'm gonna try to avoid just stringing together acronyms and "pro" and quotes from the marketing material and instead focus on what it's like to ride this thing in (and out of) the Bay Area. That means three very specific things: commuting / utility riding, local twisties, and hittin' the road.

First, a bit of an overview. The GS weighs in at 525 pounds wet, pre-Touratech catalog treatment. Seat height is adjustable, and the standard seat puts your bum either 33.5" or 34.3" off the ground. Lower (31.5") and higher (35.8") seats are available, too. Payload is 467 pounds, and "usable tank volume" is 5.3 gallons, with 1 gallon of reserve—meaning you can put your not-so-svelte-any-more middle-aged ass on there with a couple hundred pounds of gear. You know, like that ultralight folding camp chair, that



Our bike came dolled up with the Premium Package, which gets you Dynamic ESA (electronic suspension adjustment), a nice bright LED headlight, Ride Modes Pro, GPS prep, heated grips, tire pressure monitoring, cruise control, ABS Pro—BMW's cornering ABS, and miscellaneous other



adv-spec tarp to rope up over your moto-glamping campsite, twenty or so of those MSR bottles of fuel conspicuously attached all over the bike, and so on.

The 1170 cc Boxer twin puts out 125 ponies and 92 lb-ft of torque. There's a bunch of old-ish news about this motor, which replaced the previous 1200 motor in 2013, but I'm not gonna focus on that too much because unless you *only* read *CityBike*—and God bless your soul if you do—you've heard the moto-media singing the praises of this engine loud and proud for a couple years now. The big news is that it's air and liquid cooled, with four valves per cylinder, two overhead cams, and wet sump lubrication. A couple of other big deals: ride by wire, and a wet clutch, which is one of those big deals because it's on the front of the engine, so you don't have to basically break the bike in half to replace it.

And yeah, you heard that right: this Boxer has a wet clutch and liquid cooling.

You know, in case you somehow missed those pieces of information in every other motorcycle magazine and website over the last three years. Imagine a winko-faced emoticon here, if that's needed to convey that I'm just being sassy.

As usual, that motor is hung between a Telelever front end and a single-sided swingarm with a drive shaft hiding inside it in the back. We could probably devote several pages to discussing (or more accurately, arguing about) the Telelever setup... we're not gonna, but it's not because we don't think you deserve it.

The sum of those parts is a pretty kickass bike, whether you're slicing your way into The City, ripping up Redwood, or bombing north, fully loaded.

My initial impressions of our GS were heavily influenced by utility riding: grocery runs, the daily commute, even delivering stacks of *CityBikes* here and there. In this context, I found the bike to be supremely competent, but not necessarily inspiring—which is admittedly kinda hard to do.

Incidentally, another bike that initially hit me with a heavy dose of *very-competent meh* was KTM's 1190 ("KTM 1190 Adventure" – March 2014). My first impression was very similar: "perfectly good bike, but a little underwhelming considering it puts out 150 horsepower."

In the daily grind, the GS ticks all the boxes in a very utilitarian way. It's quick, whether in Road or Dynamic mode—Dynamic just makes it more abrupt down low. The bolt-upright riding position and not-exactly-low seat height give you excellent control and an easy view of your surroundings, whether they're stationary or stupid.

The Vario luggage is very functional for this environment. The sidecases, when collapsed, make the bike amenable to splitting in all but the tightest car-canyons. Sure, the GS is wider than a Ninja 300, but so is either Olson Twin's unhealthy ass. Point being, if you've got the gumption, the GS can get you through without scraping surrounding paint jobs, and you still have three boxes worth of storage when you get where you're going—when expanded,



they'll hold a full-face helmet. Well, the left and top ones will—the right one has a big cutout to accommodate the exhaust, but it's big enough to jam a 'Stich in there.

A couple days in, I started to notice that I was definitely hitting higher speeds in traffic than usual—that smooth new liquid-cooled Boxer was sneaking up me. Note to self: watch for the fuzz. Note to reader: check out my "Uneasy Rider" column on page 7 of this issue for more on this "...but officer, it didn't *feel* fast" phenomenon.

A week or so in, I got enough of a break from the daily grinding and hit the twisties, and all the sudden the GS made sense, in a "so that's why those north bay guys ride so fast on these" kind of way. I've spent most of the last few years on an R1200R—a very capable, balanced motorcycle in its own right. Surprisingly, I found myself instantly riding familiar roads more swiftly on the GS than on the R, with seemingly *less* effort.

That confused me. After all, while the GS is up on power compared the previous-gen Boxer, it's also heavier than the R and just

a *bigger* bike overall. I'd also never experienced this faster / less effort thing with other big ADV's.

But the smoother, more powerful, torquier motor, coupled with the very effective suspension and Texas-wide bars makes for a confidence-inspiring, easy to manage platform... for me at least.

Yep, here it comes—the part about the Telelever.

I believe the Telelever is uniquely well-suited for serious street duty, especially if you often find yourself on roads you don't know—you know, like might happen on an *adventure*—primarily because it doesn't freak out when you have to brake mid-corner, or anywhere else. Imagine if we hadn't been conditioned by lifetimes of telescopic forks, that we didn't accept that divey bullshit as "normal." That's how a Telelever-equipped motorcycle feels.

Yes, I'm perhaps a little too dismissive on this topic and have a tendency to scoff at less *enlightened* riders' takes on the Telelever, like a typical 'Stich-clad, bearded old guy with a \$50 titanium coffee cup in hand: "Oh my, the sheeple who've never ridden a proper motorcycle have read in the lamestream moto-media that the Telelever is *vague*, and just parrot that ludicrous nonsense because they're too dumb to know for themselves. How very droll. Hah! Hah!"

But Fish and Max didn't love the front end, and I know they're smarter than the average glossy reader. Also, I'm not sure either one of them have read a mainstream mag in years. So maybe there's something to it.

Or maybe it's an acquired taste, which I usually think means something like "this tastes like ass, but I'll say I like it because polite society says smart people should enjoy wine." Or maybe it just takes some time, time to learn its ways, to meld with the Telelever.

Perhaps we'll just agree to disagree, the haters and me. And I'll accept that as tacit admission that they're wrong. Might need to imagine another winko-faced, sassy emoticon here, too. Just in case.



So our triple black beauty is eminently rideable and makes a solid, commuter... but where it really shines is out on the road, on those rides when you don't have much of a timeline, if any timeline at all, when you don't have to be home for dinner—today at least—or at the job tomorrow. Expand the sidecases, fill the tank, and put the seat in the high position—'cause lower is a little better 'round town but a little more legroom is nice on the road—and GTFO.

This is an adventure bike, *the* adventure bike, so you don't even have to stay on real roads. The 525 pound GS is reasonable off-road, never mind conversations about how a *real* off-road motorcycle ought to weigh 230 pounds and somehow also have 150 horsepower and serious luggage. One warning, though—if you make a habit of tossing the bike on its side, you'll eventually, permanently collapse those nifty collapsible sidecases. They're super cool, and look kinda tough—but they're unlikely to hold up to repeated dirt naps, especially if your bike tends to get narcoleptic at speed.

The stock windscreen is easily adjustable while underway—although you're not supposed to do that, and frankly I'm not sure why you'd need to very often—and it does a nice job of controlling buffeting and keeping the wind off my chest at 5'10". The upgraded seat is excellent for longer days, probably because of the GS stitched on it. Mo GS, mo betta, right?

Ergos continue to shine 500, 600, 700 miles into the day. There's lots of room to move fore and aft, increasing saddle time. That saddle time is somewhat limited by fuel range, though. Sure, that 5.3-gallon tank ought to give a tad over 300 miles of range at BMW's quoted 57 MPG... but that mileage quote is at a "constant 55 MPH." The last time I went 55 MPH for any length of time was through the school zone on the way outta my neighborhood this morning.

If you're riding this bike the way it wants to be, you're going to be slotting your debit card a lot more frequently than every 300



AFM Round Six | October 1 - 2 |

8:00	Riders Meeting
8:25	Practice Groups 1-5 RD 1
9:30	Practice Groups 1-5 RD 2
10:50	Practice Groups 1-5 RD 3
12:00	Lunch Break
1:00	Practice Groups 1-5 RD 4
2:10	Practice Groups 1-5 RD 5 NRS Practice Starts
3:15	National Anthem / Mark Grids
3:30	Race 1: Formula III <i>Sponsored by Spears Racing</i> Race 1: Clubman Light Race 1: Vintage
3:50	Race 2: Formula 40 Heavy <i>Sponsored by JPH Suspension</i> Race 2: Formula 40 Mid <i>Sponsored by JPH Suspension</i>
4:20	Race 3: AFemme <i>Sponsored by MCTechnologies</i> Race 3: Formula 40 Light <i>Sponsored by JPH Suspensio</i> Race 3: 350 Production <i>Sponsored by Feel Like A Pro</i>
4:40	Race 4: Formula 50 Race 4: Clubman Heavy Race 4: Clubman Middle



8:00	Practice Groups 1-5
9:15	Riders Meeting
9:45	Race 1: Legacy Light Race 1: 250 Superbike <i>Sponsored by Catalyst Reaction</i>
10:05	Race 2: 750 Superbike
10:30	Race 3: 700 Production Race 3: Lightweight Twins Race 3: Formula Singles
10:50	Race 4: 600 Superbike
11:15	Race 5: Open GP <i>Sponsored by Fast Line Cycles</i> Race 5: Super Dino
11:40	Race 6: Formula I <i>Sponsored by Galfer Brakes</i>
12:00	Lunch Break
1:05	Race 7: Open Superbike <i>Sponsored by Pacific Track Time</i>
1:30	Race 8: Formula IV Race 8: Legacy Middle
1:55	Race 9: Formula Pacific <i>Sponsored by Dunlop Race Tire Service</i> Winner's Circle Presentation
2:40	Race 10: 450 Superbike Race 10: Legacy 250 Race 10: 250 Production
3:00	Race 11: Open Twins Race 11: Open Production <i>Sponsored by San Jose BMW</i>
3:25	Race 12: 600 Production <i>Sponsored by Keigwins@theTrack</i>
3:55	Race 13: 650 Twins Race 13: 450 Production Race 13: Formula II
4:20	Race 14: 750 Production Race 14: Legacy Heavy



Pit Rules:

Speed limit in the pits is a walking pace (5mph).

No intentional wheelies, stoppies, or other exhibitions of speed.

Kids under the age of 16 may not ride or be a passenger on any pitbike.

Pets must be leashed at all times.

Please be aware of traffic in the pits at all times.

Riders are responsible for their pit crew and guests.

Alcohol abuse and drug use is prohibited.

Only entered riders and race officials may enter the racing surface.

Catalyst Reaction Suspension
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If you have ever wondered how the AFM came to be, wonder no more! Thanks to Paul Ritter, author of the book "Racing the Gods" (Available from Octane Press) we are going to get you all caught up on AFM history. The article below is an excerpt from his blog (paulritterblog.wordpress.com)

Part 4, 1973 - 1978:Years of Growth

The end of the 1972 season found the L.A. chapter in stable condition, with some minor sponsorships and a decent racetrack at Orange County International Raceway in Irvine, CA. It wasn't perfect for the AFM as there was stiff competition from two other amateur road race clubs, the ACA and the CMC. One bright spot was the running of an exhibition race at Ontario Motor Speedway during the weekend of the 1972 USAC Ontario 500, witnessed by 177,000 people.

Up north it was very different. The two race tracks that had been the mainstay of racing in Northern California, the abandoned airfield at Cotati and Vacaville Raceway, were gone. The Cotati airfield was being torn up to make way for a housing development, and Vacaville's surface had deteriorated so badly it had become unsafe. In the 1972 season the club had to put orange traffic cones on the main straight to warn the riders of the potholes. Neither the owner nor the local SCCA region was able to secure the \$15,000 required for repaving and other improvements. There was a real possibility that there would be no racing in Northern California. The Sacramento chapter was even offering a cash reward to anyone who could find a location suitable for a race track. A racing club without a track is little more than a social club, which interested very few.

Early in 1973 two things happened that were real turning points for the AFM. First was the re-opening of the Sears Point Raceway near Sonoma, giving NorCal AFMers a place to race. When the track was built in 1969 the owners had grandiose plans and wouldn't talk to groups as small as the AFM. There was an AMA National road race there in 1969, won by Art Bauman on Suzuki. The bike, whose motor was based on the 500cc two-stroke twin from the Titan, was the first time an AMA road race National was won by a Japanese 2-stroke.

The original vision went bust and the track lay idle from 1970-1972. The new owners in 1973 had lowered expectations and were happy to negotiate race dates with both the S.F. and Sacramento Chapters of the AFM. The club ran several events at the track in 1973 including a 250-mile production race.

The second big development was the first AFM race held at Ontario Motor Speedway (OMS) in late January 1973. That exhibition race in 1972 left a favorable impression and the track owners were now willing to talk to the AFM. OMS was definitely a step up from the Orange County track.

Perhaps the good showing at OMS led to the L.A. Chapter staging its first race at Riverside Raceway on May 20th, 1973. Prior to 1973 the Riverside track wouldn't talk to the AFM, considering them too small to be worthy. This gave the AFM three tracks in SoCal and one in NorCal for racing. The S.F. Chapter was also talking

with Laguna Seca, although nothing came of that in 1973

On the political front things were improving, but there were still problems. The by-laws of the AFM had the Board of Directors being one person elected from each chapter. The Chairman of the Board was appointed, I think, but this arrangement gave the two northern chapters a 2-1 advantage, even though the L.A. Chapter had more members than the S.F. and Sacramento chapters combined. This sometimes caused some bad feelings.

The way it worked when I joined the club was the Board of Directors (aka National) collected all membership fees from the members, and each chapter got a portion (as I recall it was \$500 in 1974) so they could get started organizing races. National was responsible for setting the rules, printing and mailing the rule books, and publishing and mailing the Lap Times newsletter. Each chapter put on races, and collected entry fees. The track got its share by charging admission to riders, crew and spectators alike. As long as there were enough people to race, cash flow was always slightly positive so there would be enough money to start the next race.

The club had affiliated with the AMA to get a good deal on insurance. This caused massive headaches at registration because AFM memberships ended on Dec. 31 of the year, but the AMA membership was for 365 days from the date they processed your paperwork. This meant the racers had to show both membership cards before they were allowed to race.

The L.A. Chapter ran 10 races at Ontario and Riverside, including the very first Ontario endurance race. It was a 300-mile Production race, a forerunner to the very popular Ontario 6-hour event. The S.F. and Sacramento Chapters held eight races at Sears Point. OCIR was dropped from the schedule - with races at Ontario and Riverside there was little need to continue to compete with ACA and CMC for race dates at Orange County.

The 1974 schedule did include something that is missing today. On Sept. 15th the S.F. Chapter ran the one-and-only AFM race at Laguna Seca. Earlier in the year a few racers had an exhibition race during lunch break at the Oly Sprints, a popular sports car event. The bikes made a good impression and a bike-only race date was arranged. The lure of the famous Monterey track drew over 200 entries, which was quite a few in 1974. There were hopes that the AFM would have an annual event at Laguna Seca but a change in ownership and noise complaints from the nearby residents made it impossible.

As an all-volunteer club I wanted to do my part, so I ran for and got elected co-treasurer of the S.F. Chapter. My job was to collect race receipts, square the amounts with the number of entries and report on gross income for each event. My co-treasurer handled the checkbook, and was supposed to pay the bills and make a monthly report available to me and other Chapter officers. As things turned out, getting a monthly report from the guy was like pulling teeth. He finally came up with one, late, and I demanded one for the second month. When the 2nd report came in there was something wrong. Some of the expenses he listed were clearly duplicates

from the first report. In fact only he knew how much money was left in the bank. After a short investigation it was clear that my counter-part was not doing his job, and could very well have been stealing from the club. He denied it all except one thing - he had taken \$500 from the club's bank account and put it in his own account. His excuse was the \$500 was the original amount of start-up money for the chapter and he wanted to protect it from being "stolen back" by National. Nobody thought this made much sense. He was replaced by someone who actually did monthly reports.

They say about academia that the infighting is so vicious because the rewards are so small. Maybe this applies to not-for-profit volunteer clubs too.

There was one other event in 1974 that significantly altered the make-up of the club. After some behind-the-scenes maneuvering the charter of the Sacramento Chapter was pulled. All the chapter members were informed that they would be members of the S.F. Chapter, which changed its name to the Northern Chapter. There were a number of reasons given why this was necessary but it was basically, in my opinion, a power-play.

Regardless of the reasons, the Sacramento Chapter, a part of the AFM since 1964, ceased to exist. This action left only two voting members on the Board of Directors, not a very stable situation. The AFM by-laws were re-written for 1975, led mainly by then Chairman of the Board Dick Lewis, to allow each chapter to elect two board members. In addition there would be three positions elected from the membership at large, giving the board seven members. This situation eventually was accepted by the membership and the organization was fairly stable for the rest of the time I was involved with the club.

At the end of 1975 the the club terminated its affiliation with the AMA. The club would still be an AMA charter club but would no longer run AMA-sanctioned races. The underwriter of the AMA's nice insurance package decided not to renew in 1975, so the AFM had to buy its own insurance for the riders. Aside from the insurance there was very little tangible benefit in having an AMA sanction and it wasn't worth the effort of enforcing dual membership and putting up with the problems of race-day registration.

One of the important changes during this period has been the evolution of the AMA's class structure. In 1973 there were 15 officially supported classes, nine in Grand Prix (50cc, 125cc, 200cc, 250cc, 350cc, 500cc and Open) and six in Production (125cc, 200cc, 250cc, 350cc, 500cc and Open). Occasionally there would be a Thumper class for single-cylinder bikes or a Superstreet race (for bikes with accessories such as aftermarket pipes, custom bodywork, or cast wheels), or an endurance race but these were optional put on by the sponsoring chapter. During the last five years the following changes have taken place (not necessarily in this order): 100cc GP was added as an official class, the Open Production class was divided into 750cc and Open classes, the Superstreet class was made an official class with two divisions: up to 600cc and 601cc and above. The 350cc and 500cc GP classes were combined into a single class, and the 350cc and 500cc Production class

limits were upped to 410cc and 550cc, respectively, to accommodate the new non-traditional displacement bikes from some manufacturers. Most recently three "box-stock" classes were added for bikes exactly as off the showroom floor: 410cc, 675cc and Open. There are now 20 official classes with enough variety to have a spot for just about any motorcycle. [Note that all classes were by displacement - there were no performance-equalization Formula classes like today.]

The other significant change has been the steady growth in membership, which has nearly doubled since 1973, from 600 members to over 1,100 this year. Race entries have gone up correspondingly. In 1974 the record entry was just over 200, today the record is just under 400. Imagine 400 racers competing on a single-day event!

By 1978 the AFM had grown from a few dozen members in 1954 to become the largest road racing group in the country. The club has certainly had its ups and downs through the 24 years since its birth, and it's on an up cycle right now. The club is probably in the best shape it's ever been in, with the largest membership, the best racetracks, and the most stable financial condition since the beginning.

To read more about the history of the AFM (and for other great articles) visit paulritterblog.wordpress.com. Be sure to pick up a copy of his book "Racing The Gods" available from Octane Press.

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October

5 Wed	2 Day Intermediate
6 Thurs	Thunderhill East
7 Fri	Thunderhill West
8 Sat	Thunderhill East
9 Sun	Thunderhill East
22 Sat	Thunderhill West
23 Sun	Thunderhill West

November

1 Tues	Laguna-Seca
2 Wed	Laguna-Seca
14 Mon	Sonoma
29 Mon	Laguna-Seca
30 Tues	Laguna-Seca

Pacific Track Time

October

15	Thunderhill West
16	Thunderhill West

November

5	Thunderhill East
6	Thunderhill East

miles. In mixed use, I got mileage in the mid-30s, and regularly filled up at around 180 miles—sometimes earlier if I was really going hard in the paint in Dynamic mode.

Even with that “limited” range, which you can fix to some extent by not being such a throttle-whacker, and keeping speeds in the “fine might be high, but you’ll still have a license” zone, the GS is still a phenomenal distance mount.

So what about all that tech?

The cornering ABS is very transparent, and the traction control is fairly gentle in its behavior modifications, at least in Road or Dynamic modes—to a point. Aggressive acceleration with the front skimming the ground? Totally cool. But get the front wheel more than a few inches off the ground, or keep it up there very long, and the TC will reign you in.

The Dynamic ESA is pretty interesting, in that it’s almost unnoticeable. I’ve had significant complaints about other systems, perhaps due to their constantly changing feel, but I don’t notice the BMW changing things up much at all—it’s just not as obvious, perhaps due to the Telelever’s “vagueness.” Whatever... I’ll take it.

The Dynamic ESA is tied to the modes, too—meaning the suspension automatically adjusts to match the character of the selected riding mode, from Enduro to fuck-yeah Dynamic.

Those modes (remember, we went Pro!) are very good. While the Dynamic mode

is a lot of fun, Road is really fun too—to the point that I mostly ride in Road unless I’m feeling especially froggy. It’s just as fast for real world street riding, and the slightly smoother response down low is more manageable. Dynamic will let you get a little loosey-goosey accelerating out of corners, though, if that’s your thing.

Rain mode is predictably uh... mellow—“soft” (BMW’s word) throttle response and early intervention from the ABS and traction control. Enduro uses that same “softer” throttle response, while Enduro Pro mode disables the rear ABS and gives you the power back, let’s you cut loose. BMW says: advanced off-landers only.

I have mixed feelings about Gear Shift Assist Pro. It’s certainly cool—and some GS owners seem to really love it—but it didn’t materially improve the GS experience for me. It also encourages problematic behavior—it only works well in the higher gears, and if you get caught up in the seamless wide open throttle, snick-snick-snick cycle of assisted upshifting, there’s a good chance you might also get caught up in taking the bus for the next twelve months—and that’s if you’re served and protected by a sympathetic officer.

In the end I grudgingly accepted the presence of the shift assist, and I use it now

and then. At least BMW didn’t put hill start assist on the GS—that *shit is unacceptable*.

So to answer the question of whether the bike is worth it, whether it makes sense to add nearly 50% again to the price of the bike... in a word, yes. If you’ve got the



scratch, of course. The technical *tour de force* of the tightly integrated ride modes, suspension and ABS make for a very rideable motorcycle, with an engine that overcomes all that nerdery with some seriously kickass fun.

Editor Surj is CityBike’s radical commute and Telelever activist. He’s sorry for saying “adventure” so many goddamn times.

R1200GPS

By Max Klein

I’d originally planned to ride our Honda CB500X, which you can read more about starting on page 21 of this very issue, on a three-day BARF rally out to Weaverville—but thanks to a lost wallet, a generous editor, and the fact that the same generous editor needed a second take on our Triple Black Gelände / Straße, I swapped the X for a GS.

Best decision ever.

Don’t get me wrong, the Honda is a fine bike, but the GS? The GS is a *mighty* fine bike.

And perhaps I should clarify—that “BARF rally” was three days of riding with like-minded motorcyclists from **BayAreaRidersForum.com**, not three days of vomiting in the Shasta-Trinity National Forest.

I departed the *CityBike* East-East Bay Satellite Office in Pittsburg, headed for the coast via Highway 20. After a few choice twisties I noticed that the front end felt, for lack of a better word, heavy. Don’t get me wrong, the front wheel came up with minimal effort under power—at least after I switched the power mode into Dynamic. It wasn’t heavy in the sense of needing extra effort to make the bike behave, but in that there was something different about the front end—it felt like no other bike I’d ridden before.

I guess that’s because the front end of the GS is, indeed, different than the front end on any other motorbike I’ve ridden. That’s right, this was my first dance with BMW’s Telelever front end. It took a while to get used to, but once I did, the GS-Dubya diced through corners like it was making julienne fries. It felt planted.

I enjoyed the grunty low end of the water-boxer as I powered out of corners on Highway One, and the power curve worked in my favor as I rejoined 101 on my way up to my planned route, which was to include a pass through Eureka and then 299 into Weaverville.

The BMW’s GPS had other plans for my trip.

Since I was on an ADV bike, I figured letting the GPS mounted on said ADV bike was the best way to have an ADV. When it said to take Alderpoint Road, I made sure I had a full tank and followed the instructions like a resident of Jonestown.

Alderpoint was the first unfamiliar road on during this trip, and it was glorious. Few cars, sections of fresh pavement

connecting sections with potholes that made Oakland’s gaping crevices look like something a Chihuahua dug while searching for chalupas, and other sections with absolutely zero pavement.

Like I said, glorious—at least on this bike. Transitions from pavement to gravel to pavement to potholes were seamless.

Every. Single. Time.

No matter what surface I was on, I could not shake that Kool-Aid smile.

I loved the accuracy of the GPS, and the ease of swapping its display to show me just about anything I wanted to know about the current status of the bike. I loved the expandable top and side cases, the keyless ignition, the bitchin’ spoked wheels, rock solid cruise control, and the fluid power delivery.

But it’s not perfect. Even with the seat in the high position I felt a touch cramped after a couple hours in the saddle. The gas cap has a recommended closing procedure, since it is apparently fragile enough to break if you push it closed like every other motorcycle in the history of motorcycles. Seriously, BMW? Is that part of the adventure?

Anyway... I don’t know if it was the Telelever, the flat twin, the shaft drive, or some combination of the three but every time I got into a good groove I noticed something else about this beast: when ridden aggressively, it stands up much quicker than any other 500-pound bike I’ve ridden. I repeatedly gave it inputs that should have put me in the middle of my lane, but time and time again found myself against the double yellow exiting left handers, and almost in the ditch exiting rights.

I thought it was my imagination for a while, but when I got back on my trusty KLR I confirmed the phenomenon. Nothing corners quite like a KLR I guess.

First Harleys, and now BMWs. What’s next? Will Max give up his gig as the SF chapter Director of the AFM for a life of Ducati Bike Nights? 🍷

A Harley-Davidson advertisement for the "Smoke Break" event. The image shows two Harley-Davidson motorcycles parked side-by-side, with smoke rising from the exhaust pipes. The text "SMOKE BREAK" is prominently displayed in large, bold, white letters. Above it, social media handles "@NocturnalFeeder", "@kdoylem1989", and "#StereotypicalHarley" are listed. Below the motorcycles, the Harley-Davidson logo is visible. At the bottom, the text "DUDLEY PERKINS COMPANY HARLEY-DAVIDSON®" is followed by the address "333 COREY WAY, SSF, CA 94080" and the phone number "650-737-5467". The website "WWW.DPCHD.COM" and the Facebook page "WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/DPCHD®" are also listed. A small "11" logo is visible on the right side of the motorcycles.



Fish On!

Daily Adventure: Super-T & The B

By Fish
Photos by Max Klein

Look, I'm not the only one who has decided that these fancy-but-rugged adventure touring sport utility bikes make for fantastic daily transportation here in the Bay Area—and beyond, if you actually ride the damn things. I've recently had the pleasure of living with both Yamaha's Super Ténéré ES and BMW's R1200GS back to back. You can read some *seasoned motojournalist* type shit elsewhere in this issue, but here's a spoiler alert: I like the Yamaha better, and not for the reasons you think, either.

I'll start with the Beemer, mostly because I've been waiting for *weeks* to complain in print about the Telelever front end, to the point that Editor Surj stopped taking calls from me.

But you know, if you can't say something nice... so I'll say the GS is good. Not just good, it's *great*. If you've not familiarized yourself with the particulars of the Beemer, I suggest you head over to page 14 and do so. Beyond the "standard" stuff, the optional integrated GPS is quite useful. The grip wheel interface is intuitive and takes very little mental conditioning to get good info from.

The damn thing (the bike, not the GPS) is also pretty quick. It'll hand the Yamaha it's slightly porkier ass in a drag race every time, and perhaps surprisingly wins the exhaust note contest as well. As a Harley owner, I have an appreciation for a highly-tuned agricultural powerplant and the Beemer fills that niche. After putting some serious miles on Yamaha's power windscreen-equipped FJR1300 a couple months back ("2016 Yamaha FJR1300A—Now With Six Speeds!" – August 2016),

I felt a little deprived to be have to turn a little knob to adjust the screen on the GS, although it can be worse—more on that in a minute.

The last thing that stuck with me was the optional, variable-size BMW Vario luggage—a very thoughtful, useful feature. I'm not a fan of the side opening cases, but quickly overlooked that issue in exchange

for the ability to lock my helmet in a sidecase without having to split lanes with box vans attached to each side of the motorcycle. I'll just ignore the useless eurotrash-spec Powerlet that requires an expensive adapter to charge my phone.

On to the Yammie. I'll be honest, the Ténéré doesn't immediately reveal just how super it is. It's somewhat bland, with the most

memorable feature being the pain I felt in my ass every time I was required to use a key to open and close the sidecases. I guess if I were a brain dead idiot, I could appreciate Yamaha making it impossible to lock my keys in there.

Also on my "What the Fuck, Yamaha?" list is the windscreen, or more specifically, the adjustable bracket. Between turning fasteners and squeezing brackets, I can live without that shit, and at nearly 600 pounds, I kinda feel like it should be electric.

I heard ya, though: "Enough of the features, Fish!" Riding both bikes for hooligan duty is where things got interesting. Yamaha's understated personality got real outgoing real fast on the sometimes-quiet backroads of Marin. Both bikes have electronic suspension, although the Yamaha's is not dynamic. This meant that the bike never changed how it felt, and was super predictable. The Ten's narrower Bridgestones didn't slow me down a bit—I

managed to touch down a peg or two, but it wasn't a chronic problem. Its ABS required some pretty hammy ham-fisting to coax it into action, and the traction control was similarly not-too-invasive. The bike was super accommodating for backroad shenanigans, trail braking was super effective, and power delivery was super smooth. Super, super, super.

Had I not ridden the BMW, I'd have been totally cool with the Yamaha's power—it's more than adequate, even with a passenger. This bike offers a rare balance of price, features, and low maintenance and as such could be a great daily. Not being a BMW, its low key styling and relatively nondescript look make for a low-profile bike that lets you arrive and depart with zero fanfare.

On the other hand, I feel like the BMW hates fun. I was not given the "Enduro Pro" dongle, or rather wasn't told it was under the seat the entire time, so I never got to turn the nannies completely off. Even the most relaxed settings still had the ABS attempting to correct my attempts at trail braking. Wheelies were not allowed.

But here it is: the Telelever "fork" has to be my biggest point of contention, with a feel that I can only describe as vague, or more bluntly as "does this bike have a front wheel?" I'm very aware that there is a large contingent of riders that worship the bizarre, over-complicated front end setup, but I'm not one of you, and I don't want your newsletter.

To be fair, I'm aware that the cornering ABS and dynamic suspension are to blame as well—the GS is just adamant that it knows more about

what you're doing than you do, and to be honest, maybe it does. That doesn't mean I want to be reminded that I'm doing something inadvisable all the time.

I'm not saying you can't haul ass on a GS—it's plenty capable of extra-legal speeds, but it has to be dragged, kicking and screaming, into anything that isn't a drag race or a jump. Coming in too hot and trying to tighten a line with the rear brake results in the bike staying on course, but going slower. That weird suspension was never overwhelmed, and I never felt unsettled—but I also never felt truly planted or at ease. For me, there is a disconnect when things get rapid on the GS.

The truth is that neither bike has a real advantage in the lawful world. It's so close that I can't even say I have a preference between the two bikes' seats. You could say that the BMW has more options in the aftermarket, but that's like saying Harleys are better because of the Screaming Eagle catalog.

So while either of these two bikes really do make fantastic all-rounders, the biggest benefit of the Yamaha is that you'll never be asked to join a BMW riders' club. That right there is pretty special.

Fish sent this rant to Editor Surj on a parchment scroll via carrier pigeon, in response to Surj's request for Fish's email address. That'll learn him. 🐦





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Too X-y For My Adventure 2016 Honda CB500X

By Surj Gish
Photos by Max Klein

Let's get this out of the way right up front—if you're looking for an in-depth, fact-based review of Honda's CB500X, you're in the wrong place. You know this is *CityBike*, right?

I'm really interested in the second-gen CB500X, but mostly because of what it might be, as opposed to what it is.

What it is, if you must know, is a perfectly serviceable, nice-looking in an ADV-kinda way, street bike—a reasonably sized, not too big, not too small street bike. The 477 cc parallel twin is liquid-cooled and Honda says it shares their usual “reassuring reputation for reliability.”

It costs \$6,499, which is an incredible bargain when right here in this very issue we're talking about bikes that cost more than a double-wide home will cost you in other parts of the US. Add \$300 for ABS and “hope it's got a good personality” paintwork, and maybe another \$300 for heated grips and \$130 for a centerstand. There are also luggage options, handguards, and a “light bar,” which is what I generally call crash bars that aren't really intended to hold up in a crash.

The point is, for a little over \$7k, you can hook up with a hell of a middleweight motorcycle. But what if you want more?

Max compares the Five-X to his KLR, and that's kinda where I'm going with this—the venerable Killer has a lot of strengths, but man, it could sure use a motor with... well, horsepower. Fuel injection. You know how the sportbike guys dig at Harleys? “How do they keep selling bikes with seventies technology?”

How come people aren't saying stuff like that about the KLR, instead of loading 'em up and riding 'em just about every damn place?

My point is that Honda's recently-updated half-liter X-y MFer has so much



potential. Ever since it was released, I've been scheming on how to convert one to a reasonably dirt-capable long-way-somewhere kinda bike. What are my other options? A 690? A DR? Sure... both good options at different ends of the “it costs *how much?*” spectrum, but why buy a motorcycle that'll do just what you need it to when you can buy a less suitable machine and endlessly fuck with it to make it work?

I'm not alone in this line of thinking, it turns out. Rally Raid offers a surprisingly broad assortment of stuff to turn your

500X into a proper ADV bike. Hypothetically, at least.

For about \$3,000 at today's exchange rate, they'll sell you a “Level 3 Adventure Kit”—not just next level, but the level *above* the next level. This kit contains a 17" / 19" spoked wheelset, long(er) travel suspension components, a new triple clamp, front fender, longer sidestand and a steering damper. You can also buy these and other components to customize your X-to-ADV build.

Of course, if you spend \$3k on converting the bike, you're well into what we call *serious* money—over \$10k. Sure you'll have the baddest 500X on the block, or maybe the continent, but you'll still have a 500X.

You have to decide for yourself if this is a sensible plan. For me, it certainly seems like one—and I have a similarly overbuilt, baddest-on-the-block CRF250L to prove I'm serious about that.

Look, imagine you show up at whatever weekend ride you go to, and instead of trying to clown your GS-riding buddy with wisecracks about how his bike is too porky, and how a small bike is all you really need, you have a 500 cc serious business ADV bike that weighs in at around 430 pounds and offers legendary Honda reliability. And not only that, *you made it yourself*.

How's that for adventure, Mr. Gelände / Straße?

Editor Surj is responsible for making sure our press bikes go back in the same shape they arrived and coming up with dumb, stupid-expensive ideas like “how to turn a \$7k bike into a \$10k+ bike.”

Half-Liter Adventure-esque

By Max Klein

A quick glance at Honda North America's website (powersports.honda.com, mostly



to prevent the usual “you don't give us all the information” emails) will reveal an *Adventure* section, which lives, perhaps tellingly, under the *Street* category. If you adventurously click the *Adventure* tab, you will find a handful of mostly beak-endowed bikes that at least look the part. The CB500X is one of these.

Honda suggests that it is for “adventures of all sizes.” Hmmm. All sizes? Are we talking size of the rider? Or the adventure, like going on a quest for a loaf of bread at the supermarket, all the way up to a circumnavigation of the globe?

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That statement left me a little confused. *CityBike* doesn't have a long way 'round budget, so I started with the loaf of bread. A man's gotta eat, right?

Around town, the 500X is plenty capable. With an upright riding position and enough power to get out of its own way, it reminded me a bit of my KLR... only without the suspension travel (and the associated creaking sounds). This ADV-

esque machine only has 4.7 inches of suspension travel in the rear and 5.5 inches up front. For those of you doing the math at home, a modern KLR (hah!) has 7.3 inches in the back and 7.9 inches up front.

I bring up this comparison because a trip to the grocery store from my house involves about 30 feet of dirt followed by a small jump off of a curb, and I've never bottomed out the KLR. The Honda was a handful in the dirt section with both front and rear being fully compressed separately, and the curb jump made a noise more commonly associated with me doing something stupid. The bike was fine, but my back wasn't expecting that much of a jolt, and neither were my knees or ass.

For the record it was me making the noise, and that noise was me shouting expletives. Point KLR.

Loaf of bread (and bottle of Scotch) acquired, I hobbled out into the lot and saddled up. I decided that the normal return route, the one where I cut through a gravel lot and hop another curb, would not be in my best interest with my payload of "groceries," so I decided to see what the 500X had to say about the freeway.

Again I was reminded of the KLR. The Honda, much like my KLR, will do 85 on the freeway... but you'll keep toeing up in hopes of another gear. For giggles I wicked it up to the ton (eventually) and much like the KLR, it was very unhappy with this activity.

Unlike the KLR, the 500X did not seem to burn any oil at higher speeds. Point Honda.

The Five-X is a no-frills bike: no cruise control, no power modes, no heated grips, no navigation, no center stand. I knew what I was getting myself into and had no delusions that it would actually be a capable ADV dominator worthy of Charley Boorman, but I figured it'd at least be worthy of Charlie Brown.

I keed, I keed.

If you take this bike out of the adventure category and judge it for what it actually is—a sweet entry level machine—you begin to understand its existence. Sure, it's a bare-bones appliance, but when your adventure is getting to work? Accept no substitute.

As a commuter, it is surgical steel, slicing between lanes thanks to its narrow width, the tallish bars and upright riding position helping you both see and be seen. The seat height is manageable for inseams of all sizes, and if you never washed it you could chat up the object of your affection about how freakin' ADV you are when you stop for coffee.

Fuel economy for me was in the mid-60 MPG range, which means (thanks to its 4.6 gallon tank) I could get from London to New York—the long way round—and only have to stop for gas about 64 times. Less if I wasn't wound out at freeway speeds the whole time.

How many times did Ewan and Charley need to fill up? No idea, but I'm gonna say point Honda anyway.

Max is the SF chapter Director for the AFM and a core member of the CityBike Wrecking Crew. We didn't bother to check his math on number of fill-ups required to ride a CB500X from London to NY, because we ain't got budget for that shit anyway. 🍷



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Yuri Barrigan Returns To The Isle Of Man (With More Cylinders)

By Nikki Doré

Photos by Jim Gibson & Barry Clay

People said he'd never qualify—let alone finish—but Yuri Barrigan made his own little piece of history in 2015 by becoming the first competitor complete an Isle of Man race on a supermoto-style motorcycle.

"I live at the bottom of Highway 9, a road that's identical to the course," Barrigan explained. "I've lived there for 44 years... But growing up, doing that kind of riding, you can't say, 'Ok, I'm going to go and apply to the TT.' You have to go to short course racing in order to make your bones. I started racing AFM in 1994. I did '94, '95, and '96. Then the money ran out and I just went back to riding on Highway 9 because that's all I could afford to do."

Wringing the Gooseneck.



Photo: Jim Gibson

It was these humble beginnings—riding the twisting roads of the Santa Cruz Mountains from the age of 15, competing in AFM, eventually winning a championship in the AFM expert class in 2012—that led Barrigan to the next step in his racing journey: his attempt on the mountain course; a 37-plus mile stretch of narrow road with more than 200 corners that takes riders over undulating pavement, through towns and villages flanked by stone walls, buildings, and telephone poles that they call *furniture*; where any mistake or mechanical malfunction can be deadly.

"In 2014, I contacted the organizers and I told them, 'I have these 450 singles and I've noticed that no one has ever brought a supermoto-configured bike to the Isle of Man and tried to compete on it.' Their response was, 'That's true, we talked about what you have going on and the machinery you have. If you're accepted and get a mountain course license issued, we won't bar you from coming, but it's our opinion that they're not viable. You will never qualify the bike, and it won't last through the fortnight to make the main event.'"

The fire had been lit. In an effort to make the engines as robust as possible, Yuri began building motors in his garage, using a towel illuminated by flashlights as a makeshift workbench.

"Any person who has any sort of skill or sense about how to do a race program would look at that and go, 'That's a recipe for disaster,'" Barrigan joked. "But it's all I had, just the drive, holding a flashlight while I installed pistons and adjusted valves."

"I was 100 percent self-funded and did everything myself... An experienced Isle of Man person told me, 'The first thing you've got to know about this race is you

can't do it by yourself. You've got to have a group of people or a core to help you do the event.' I thought to myself, 'I don't have that; all I have is myself.'"

With no backing and no crew to help him during the race, Yuri made the arrangements to ship his bikes and embarked on the 5,087-mile trip from San Francisco to the Isle of Man.

Yuri tasted adversity on his first night out when the first bike died on the grid. Returning to his pit, he swapped components, had his backup bike inspected, and returned to the grid before practice ended—only to discover that it suffered the same problem and refused to start.

Between his bikes not starting and rain hindering completion of his led lap—wherein newcomers must follow a marshal around the course, a prerequisite to moving forward—Yuri's window for qualifying was quickly closing. The wet weather pushed his laps back and with only two days of practice remaining, he still didn't have a qualifying time.



Yuri speeding through Ballacraigne on the Irish Ago Racing ZXR400. Photo: Barry Clay

Eventually, Yuri got on the course for his first real attempt to qualify.

"What I planned was to lower the fuel level on the bike to half a tank and just put my head down and try and do it," Barrigan said. "I went out, did one lap and got the green flag for a second lap. I could tell by looking at my transparent tank that the fuel level was getting low. I got up to Cronk y Voddy, which is about a quarter of a lap, and switched over to reserve.

"When I got over to the hill to the Creg, coming down past Kate's Cottage the bike started cutting out. It was already on reserve, so I know I was out of gas. I got down to the Creg Ny Baa; it died and I pull off to the side. All these people came pouring out of the pub. Half were yelling, 'What's wrong?!' and the other half were saying, 'You've done it!'"

Yuri sloshed the fuel, restarted the bike, and crossed the finish line. Back at the pit, he was greeted by a crowd shouting, "You've done it! You've done it!"

The laid-back racer from Santa Cruz had finished the race, succeeding on a motorcycle that wasn't even expected to hold together. His tenacity and unorthodox choice of racebike captured the attention of fans and marshals alike, and Yuri was invited as the Guest of Honor to the Marshal's Banquet, a Marshals-only event, a gesture that is rarely extended to any rider.

With that personal victory under his belt, he returned to the Manx Grand Prix this year, this time on a Kawasaki ZXR400 with support from Irish Ago Racing.

The Kawasaki wasn't quite ready, but the team was able to improve it after the initial practice sessions. "The bike never really got solid, 100 percent the way I would have liked. We just kept getting closer and closer and kept trying to hit that mark. We had meltdowns along the way but we went through it and got into the main event."

All this work resulted in another finish for Yuri in the Lightweight class. The support system of the team made a big difference from his previous year but was not without ups and downs. "It was difficult but there were a lot of people that stepped in to help... We got the finish and that's what we came here for: to get more experience, get a finish and gain more course knowledge. I didn't think that it would be as hard as last year and it turned out to be every bit as hard."

Yuri continues to live his passion, with plans to climb the ladder on this racing journey, eventually racing super twins, making the jump to the junior and then the senior classes.

"It's all I think about... how to do the next thing. It's all like a chess game going on in my head."

"This is a continuation of what I've started here," says Yuri of his love for road racing on The Isle. "That's what it's always been about for me... There are no constraints, no being told what to do or what direction

Preparing to leave the start line.



Photo: Jim Gibson

you need to take. There's a meld of adventurism, freedom, and ownership of your own destiny while involved in a speed contest. The Isle of Man is one of the last places on earth where you can be truly free."

Nikki is based in Marin but you're just as likely to find her riding to (or in) places like Bonneville and the Isle of Man. Follow her adventures on Instagram or Facebook @ridingnikki. 📷

Pity The Fool

By Peter Mars

Illustration by Mr. Jensen

Photo by Alan Lapp

Back in 2013, we got our butts on the seat of a then-BRD, now-Alta development mule, which we were warned was a “priceless prototype.” It didn’t go so well—Peter Mars comes clean:

I’m going to out myself here...

This admission, made publicly, may very well damage my San Francisco Bay Area, minor league Moto Rock Star status.

This admission that has been hovering around the fringes of the internally broadcasted image I carry of myself; my own personal autobiography; my as-yet unpublished personal essay; my story, taken full swallow and accepted as real: myself. Indeed—as far as I am concerned, most of the time—this is who I am.

Decades of data, piles of statistics, sheaves of lists, a litany of accomplishments: my results for God’s sake! If I am not these things, then what else could I possibly be? An invention of my own generous and self-serving interpretation of my personal catalog of data? As sole archivist, curator and docent to the collection am I not able to craft, sculpt and in the end present the piece? Framed, now hung and well-lit, accompanied by a small tag nearby, listing title, media, and artist, my final piece is placed on display. When found, available for public viewing and scrutiny, most of you will accept it as real. Is it real, is it me, or a mere fabrication?

You see, I’m being called out...

I am that fool. And that bike did not suffer me, did not suffer this fool, this crash test dummy.

My first experience on an electric motorcycle was atop a tiny kid’s dirt bike at one of the infamous East Bay Motobro’s

Christmas Potluck, Bike Show and Drinking and Storytelling Contests.

Hunkered down, legs bent double at the knee, I whacked the throttle and got myself ready for a full grin mini-bike wheelie that would go down in history as top ten, at least. That little thing spat me right off onto my ass and shot, whining—shwwwWWweeEEEEeee—dead laser straight across the warehouse, crashing a mostly emptied table onto the dance floor.

The band was not amused.

This go, my second ride on an electric—invited by then Editor and old Sunday Morning Ride pal, Gabe—to photo-model for an *exclusive first ride* (“Electric Slider” – May 2013) of the BRD Redshift supermoto—did not go any better.

I arrived early at BRD’s Potrero Hill / Outer Mission gritty (by SF standards) office / R&D center, with time enough to work half a cigarette into my underdressed, shivering self.

Following the initial meet ‘n’ greet, and editor-piloted road portion of our test, it was my job to model—look cool—on the bike at the end of the session, the “set” being Pier 30, behind Red’s Java House.

We started out on the lower large flat area in the middle of the pier: backing it in, wheelies and stoppies in large, lazy, egg-shaped ellipses at first. Then for some reason—insert foreboding music—I focused on the raised, narrower on the South edge of the pier. Which, as it turns out, was strewn with gravel.

Unlike the as-yet-developed street version (still in R&D) this bike was set up by BRD for Pro-level Supermoto competition, had been ridden recently in a Supermoto

USA event on the Sears Point kart track by a rising young pro hopeful whose name I can’t recall. Throttle response, when closed, was programmed for lots of back torque—somewhere between whoa and *whoa*, while forward motion was programmed for serious *WOW*. A touch on the front brake lever gave the feeling that a 6 x 6 steel I-beam had been inserted between the spokes of the front wheel, just behind the fork tubes.

Inadequate time to develop feel for the new and unfamiliar bike, to understand how this new and different technology responds to my petrol power-derived habits and my historical understanding of rider-induced inputs.

Ingredients stockpiled for delivery of half-baked goods now made a recipe for disaster... wheelie towards SF, north bound 180-degree hack, wheelie back towards the Bay, south-bound 180-degree hack, stand-up wheelie towards SF. Numerous car-sized stacks of lumber in front of me—where did those come from? Rolling off, still more go than whoa, thoughts of slowing, something associated with the front brake, the aforementioned 6 x 6 now fully in play... locked front wheel touches gravel-strewn surface; the priceless prototype hits the ground.

Looking back, all the signs were present. Strange reactions to my input, unexpected delivery from unfamiliar technology. My responses wooden, creaky, inappropriate—the likely culprit a long history of head-smacking impacts delivered from one mistake or another, a baker’s dozen of retired helmets crash-etched, shattered. Add to this my five-and-fifty years, and I’m left with a muddy brew, a fog lying low and deep, a conundrum, a mystery; an enigmatic equation whose sum will not be found through diligent calculations with slide rule, calculator or abacus.

Moto-journalists report deep concern over the specter of binning the priceless, one-of-a-kind prototype, the fear of being the guy that wadded the irreplaceable. Pranged the project, brought R&D to a dead, bent and smoking stop.

Can apologies be sufficient?

Generous grace and forgiveness were forthcoming from all parties attendant,

concern expressed for my well-being, assurances accepted that indeed my injuries are minor, not requiring medical attention. My intactness, while surely changed, is—I insist—not too far from its state at the beginning of the test. I rely upon the comfort to be provided by my imminent retreat to the cave, to lick my wounds.

At least I’m in pretty good company. I remember pictures of John Ulrich, his racing leathers tattered, walking away from a drag strip testing session holding the only piece of the bike still intact, the throttle housing and cable. I’ve read numerous stories over the years, different versions of my own. Stunned bewilderment, humble admissions, coded messages of ignoring the signs of impending mayhem and wreckage.

In the end it must be said, and said by me—I am not the rider I once was. Recent experiences have garnered mixed results: the pleasure, the ecstatic lust for more, the glowing warmth shared with accompanying riders now hovering dream-like on some far horizon. My collection of bikes, project bikes and questionably-valued parts *collection* now sit idle, in darkness, in my unattended shed, draped with cobweb, dust and dry bits of mowed grass pushed under the shed door by winds whipping across my property.

Do my bikes miss me, do they long to be out being ridden? I don’t know. I stay away. The steps needed to traverse the distance of my back yard sufficient to turn me towards the street, to travel by truck *this time*.

Perhaps I *will* ride next time. They do wait, the bikes—so loyal and patient, needing only small ministrations: a top-off charge, a few pounds of air in the tires, a few turns of adjusters followed by a spritz of lube on the chain...

In the interim I will search for the tools and equipment needed for the ministrations needed to fettle myself.

Following a lengthy, self-managed, stern talking-to (finger pointing at a glaring reflection of himself in the bathroom mirror) a properly sorted Peter Mars continues to offer motorcycle test services to CityBike, and the motorcycle industry at large. ☺





you too. They're not based on experience, nor on reliable testimony, nor on anything trustworthy. They're not learned; they're absorbed.

I was raised in Indiana. Somehow I learned that people from Kentucky—just south to the south—were different from us: not as intelligent, not as evolved, not as sophisticated. They were likely to be racist, redneck bullies.

After the concert in Nashville, I rode north 75 miles to Bowling Green, Kentucky. In Bowling Green, I toured the Corvette factory and visited the National Corvette Museum, both of which were totally worthwhile. Wonderful, really. I especially enjoyed the factory tour.

I left Bowling Green headed for rural western Kentucky, south of Nicky Hayden's home town of Owensboro. I was looking for Paradise, Kentucky, because of a John Prine song. I rode on the Everly Brothers Boulevard, John Prine Avenue and the Merle Travis Highway. There was one of Merle's guitars behind the desk at my motel in Central City, Kentucky.

I woke up early and rode to Paradise, only a Tennessee Valley Authority power station. Nothing to see. The motel clerk had suggested I have breakfast in tiny Drakesboro, halfway to Paradise, so I stopped there on the way back, at the Paradise Cafe. A counter, five or six booths.

I ate my biscuits and gravy and spoke briefly to the waitress. When I asked her for directions to a highway that might take me toward Bloomington, Indiana, she pointed to a guy sitting in a corner booth, wearing bib overalls and smoking a cigarette. He had a full beard and looked like that Kentucky archetype I described a few paragraphs back. He'll know, she said.

The guy turned out to work for a motorcycle repair shop in Central City. We fix anything, he said. He and I had what I'd call a great conversation. We talked about our fear of Donald Trump, our misgivings about both of our presidential candidates, his sincere wish not to see his grandkids die in some war. He said he felt that as soon as our economy sags, we go to war. He'd been a big Bernie Sanders supporter, he told me.

He told me to ride through Owensboro and across the Ohio River bridge into Indiana, a lovely bridge I must to add. We

Telling Us Who They Are

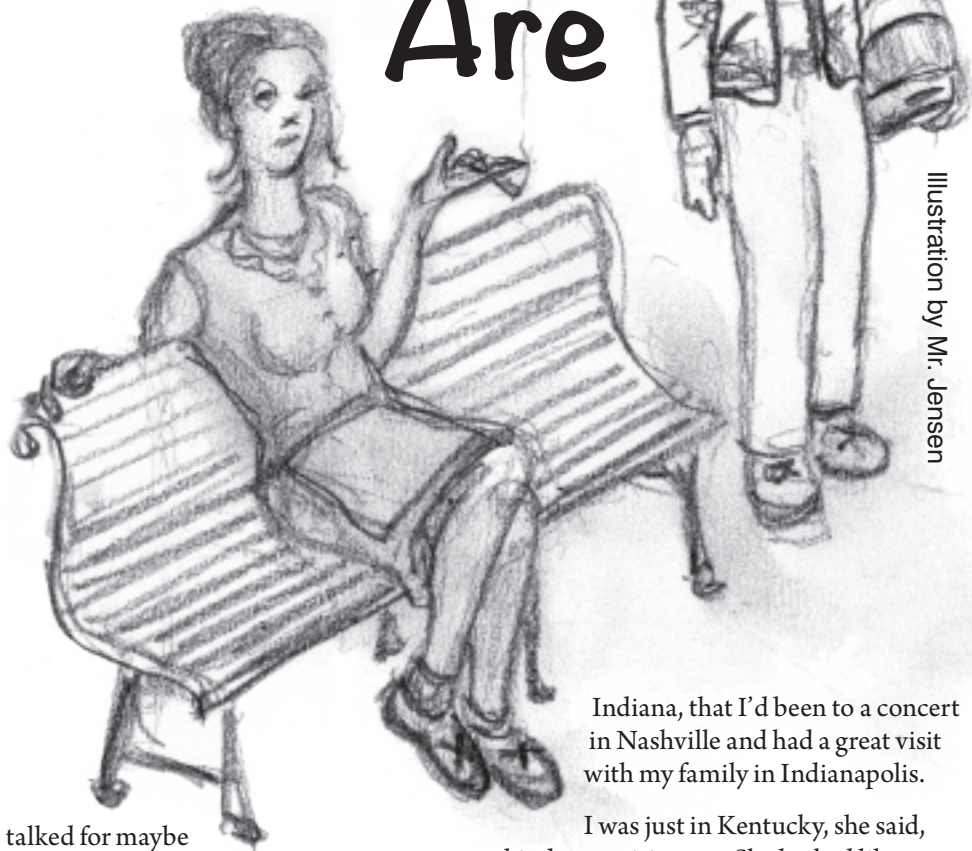


Illustration by Mr. Jensen

Indiana, that I'd been to a concert in Nashville and had a great visit with my family in Indianapolis.

I was just in Kentucky, she said, kinda surprising me. She looked like a Kansas farm wife, a woman who'd worked hard all her life and hadn't found the end of the rainbow, hadn't been a hundred miles from home but maybe once.

No kidding, I said, expecting to hear that she had also visited family, maybe someone ill.

I went to Muhammad Ali's funeral, she said.

I was stunned, I'll admit it. Did you drive, I asked. Yes, she said. I thought, that's 700 miles. As I looked at her, I knew she didn't give a damn about a prize fight. She admired the man, what he stood for, and wanted to be there, to be part of that huge, sad goodbye.

My hat's off to you, I said, thinking of her driving her old Chevy across Kansas, Missouri, Illinois and Kentucky, to cry for a brave man she'd never met, to salute him for being who he was. We talked a few more minutes. As I was about to put my earplugs in and my helmet on, I told her I was gonna think about her all the way to Denver.

She watched me put on my stuff, back my bike out of the space and wave goodbye.

I kept my promise. I thought about her and the guy in the bib overalls all the way home. Evidently I'm still thinking about them.

Maynard started a Facebook page for motorcyclists and road cyclists that use blood thinners, but have continued to ride despite the added danger. If you ride despite it all, please go to [facebook.com/WarfarinRangers](https://www.facebook.com/WarfarinRangers) and post something: a story or a photo. And be careful out there.



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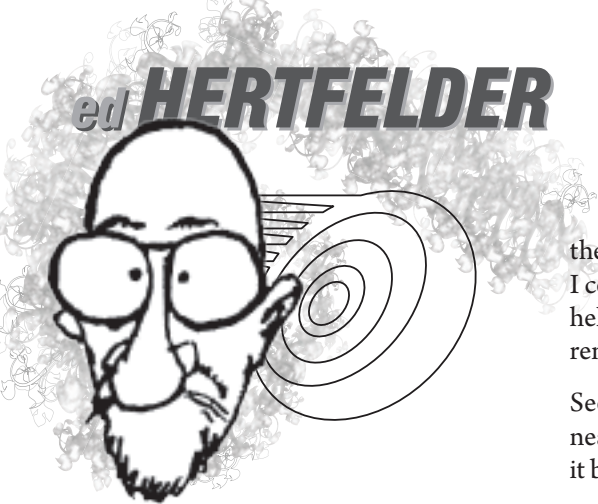
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THE THRILL AIN'T GONE

Illustration by Mr. Jensen

the passenger seat with my helmet still on. I could lift my hands enough to reach the helmet strap but couldn't for the life of me remember how to get the D rings apart.

Seeing as I was slumped over with my head near the door lock button, Woody thought it best to leave the helmet on.

Three hours later he opened the door and woke me up; we were outside my house. The terror-stricken look on my face made Woody take a step back, and I was almost sobbing as I said, "Woody, I'm paralyzed from the waist down. *I can't move!*"

He said, "You silly bastard! I was afraid you'd hit the windshield if I stopped short, so I fastened your seat belt!"

It certainly is a thrill to realize you're not crippled for life.

My most recent thrill happened in the mountains near Prescott, Arizona, on one of Byron Farnsworth's infamous trail rides. I found myself running dead last because I was taking photos of the magnificent scenery while everyone else was hammering along to make the lunch stop before Brad Lackey ate all the ribs.

While bopping along a dry creek bottom I saw the trail going up the side of the gulch at a reasonably steep angle. Halfway up the 200-foot climb was a big root sticking out at a 45-degree angle, *the wrong way*. Hitting the thing with the front wheel could put you over the side right nicely.

As could lofting the front wheel over it and knocking the back wheel over the side.

me; what I actually had was a sweat-it-out situation because Farnsworth wouldn't come looking for anybody unless the person was wise enough to carry Farnsworth's car keys with him.

So I spent the better part of half an hour shoring up the root with rocks so it would be a straight-across hit. Hyperventilating and praying a little, I slammed up and over the root like I actually knew what I was doing.

Next time I'll carry Farnsworth's car, house and safety-deposit box keys with me at all times.

Regardless of the thrills we experience while riding, there is none to compare with the one all dirt riders have experienced, the exquisite thrill of handing over some money (in my case, \$200 for a

Triumph Cub), throwing a leg over the seat and reaching down with tingling fingers to unfold the kickstarter on *your* motorcycle.

You only feel it once, and you never forget it.

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All dirt riders come to experience one or more Big Thrills along the way. Unusual happenings that are not supposed to happen often do, such as sweeping around a well-known curve on a gravel road and meeting a fellow teaching his wife how to make a K-turn in a stick-shift Volkswagen that stalls easily and has one dead and two seriously ill cells in its battery.

In my part of the country, a little less mountainous than Holland, those thrills often involve downhills that are invariably *straight down*; motorcycles with six gears and 12 false neutrals, and brakes that are either full on or full off, nothing in between.

Some of these experiences are not thrills so much as remembered terror—and there is a difference.

Sometimes you can be doing something really dull and monotonous and a thrill will hit you out of nowhere. Once I was just chugging nicely along a wide fire road after a Sandy Lane enduro with Doug Benson behind me, and don't you know we met a hot dog on a Kawasaki coming the other way on a wide left curve. Benson had swung quite a bit wider than I had, and the hot dog figured he'd be cool and slice between us.

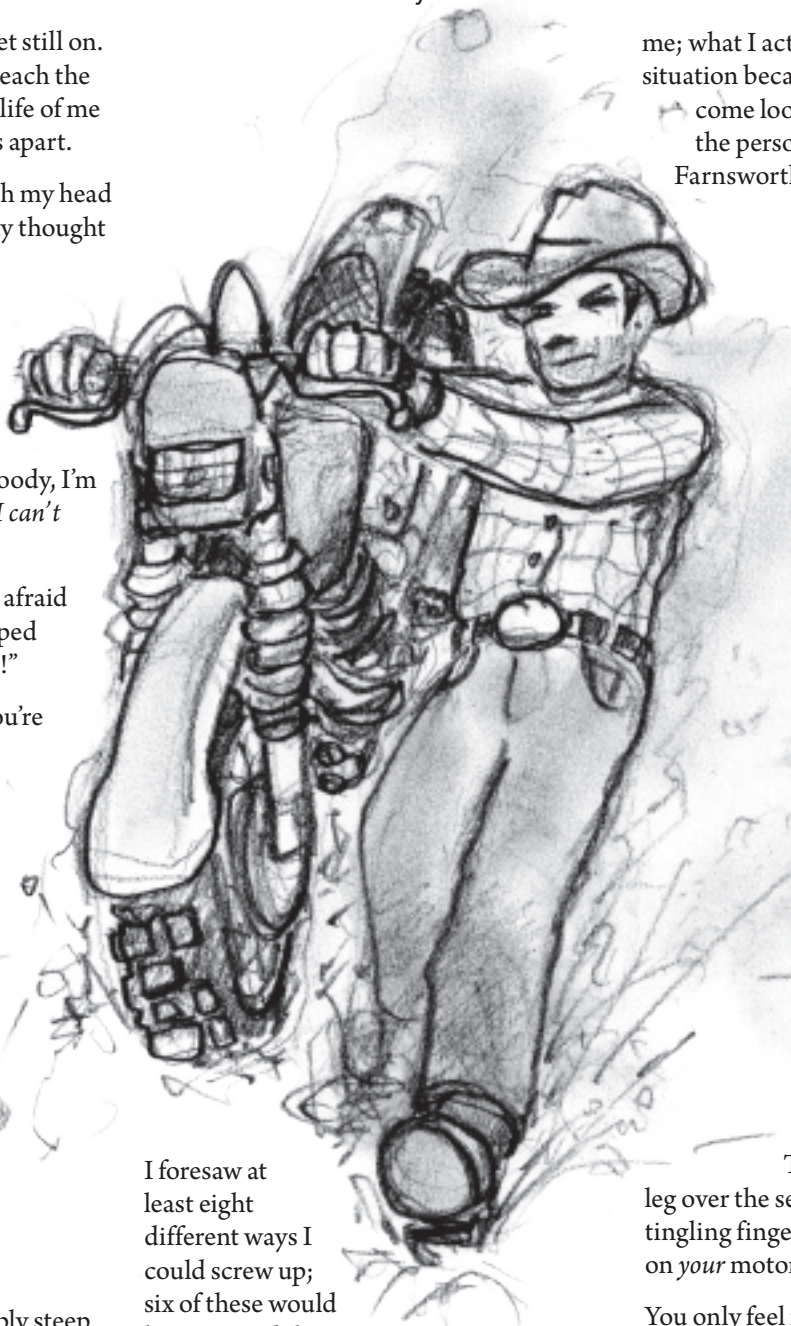
This would have been fine except Doug's motorcycle was tied to mine with 20 feet of nylon parachute cord!

But it was while sitting in a van that I got one of my biggest motorcycle-induced thrill.

My friend Woody had hauled me and my motorcycle to an upstate Pennsylvania enduro that would tax even a veteran competitor with the latest equipment and four sick days coming. My total experience at the time was eight hours of dirt riding interspersed with eight hours of panting, kicking over a stalled engine, picking up the motorcycle and wiping sweat out of my eyes.

That enduro was two laps of a 40 mile course that was supposedly laid out by tying a 50-pound bag of lime to the tail of a nearsighted goat. Finishing one lap was the best I could do and I spent very little time actually on the motorcycle. Most of the time I was either bulldogging it down a steep hill or pushing it up a steep hill. There is very little level ground in that part of Pennsylvania; what there is of it has been reserved for bowling alleys.

Somehow I managed to load my motorcycle into Woody's van. When he returned, he found me snoring loudly in



I foresaw at least eight different ways I could screw up; six of these would have me and the motorcycle going ground-sky-ground-sky into the gulch; the other two were me on the trail and the bike in the gulch; the bike on the trail and me in the gulch.

What I would have preferred was 50 ladies who had just signed up for an Elaine Powers course waiting on the slope to catch

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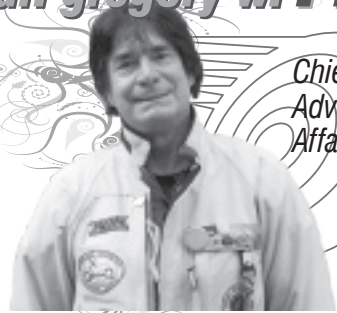
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NO WAY ADVENTURES

Illustration by Mr. Jensen

“No way to drive through,” said the truck driver in the Brazilian jungle, and then added, “but you might make it because you’re on a motorcycle.”

I’d arrived at the back of a long line of trucks that had been waiting a day for the red jungle mud of a steep incline to dry out enough for their tires to get traction. I could see the nasty ruts and twisted tire marks going halfway up the hill. It was easy to imagine the several attempts made up the slippery surface, only to end up losing traction and having to back down.

My heavily laden BMW R80 G/S had Metzler Enduro tires which worked fine on dry dirt, but I questioned how much bite they would have in the red snot of the wet jungle track up the hill. The one English speaking truck driver kept prodding me on, saying things like, “You look like you are an experienced motorcyclist,” and “If anyone can make it up that hill you’re the only one who can show us how it is done because you’re on a motorcycle.”

My decision to make an attempt was based in part on my not wanting to spend another day in the hot and wet jungle, dealing with possibly more rain and an unruly group of truck drivers that had been drinking alcohol for the previous 24 hours. The other part was my wanting to prove that the motorcycle had an advantage over the trucks and therefore I was a better driver. I had three options: make it to the top of the hill and move onward; believe there was no way through the slop and turn around to

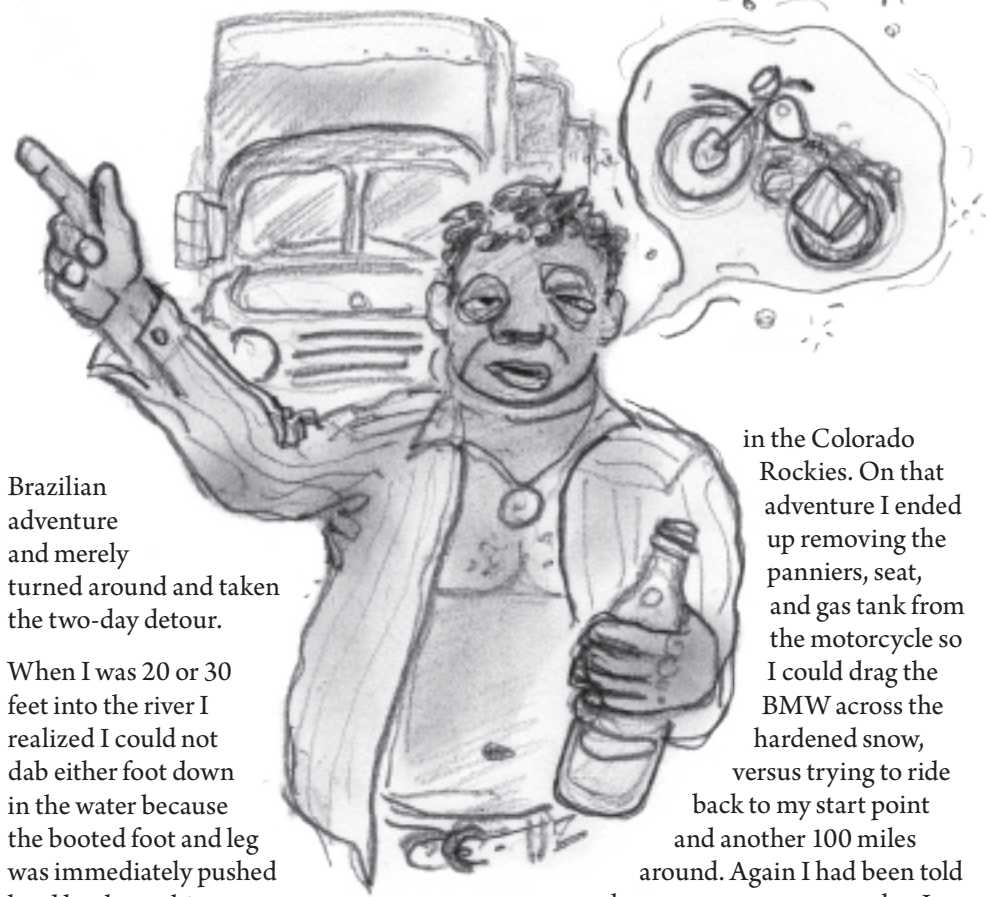
make a two-day detour using other roads; or stay there with the truckers who looked like they might use me for a boy toy once darkness came, until the mud dried out.

I made a running start up the hill and remember getting to about the halfway point when I lost traction and stalled the motorcycle. For several seconds I sat there with my left foot planted in the muck, thinking about how I was going to roll backwards down the hill until the motorcycle made that decision for me and started to slide backwards while I had both front and rear brakes locked. I remember screaming into my helmet, likely sounding similar to a chimpanzee being chased by a lion, as I went airborne backwards off the side of the road and crashed into the jungle below, the motorcycle landing on top of me.

Upon reflection, I should have believed the trucker’s first comment about there being no way to reach the top of the hill and just tossed in the adventure towel, turned around and made the long two-day loop.

In Mozambique, I was faced with a similar situation: wait with a long line of trucks for a flooding river to recede enough to allow passage across a submerged road, or turn around and make a two-day detour. The truckers had said there was “No way!” to drive through the foot-deep, fast-flowing water, fearing that the sideways pressure of the rushing water against their tires might force their trucks off the slippery and narrow cement road. They all suggested and opined that my BMW’s spoke wheels would allow the water to pass through and I would be able to drive across because I was *on a motorcycle*.

I walked the submerged road for about 100 feet of the 500 feet of submerged pavement and felt some pressure against my boots, but my moto-ego concluded I could ride through. I should have remembered the



Brazilian adventure and merely turned around and taken the two-day detour.

When I was 20 or 30 feet into the river I realized I could not dab either foot down in the water because the booted foot and leg was immediately pushed hard by the rushing stream, making driving the motorcycle straight nearly impossible. That realization brought another chimp-like scream as I envisioned clinging to my motorcycle as it was swept off the road, downstream, to eventually end up in the Indian Ocean.

My Mozambique river adventure ended when I successfully reached the far side, where I could hear the trucks on the riverbank behind me honking their horns to celebrate my success—likely the best entertainment the truckers had in the previous 24 hours. I’d succeeded but it had been a stupid decision based mostly on motorcyclist ego.

A third “no way” adventure was across a snow field covering a mountain pass road

in the Colorado Rockies. On that adventure I ended up removing the panniers, seat, and gas tank from the motorcycle so I could drag the BMW across the hardened snow, versus trying to ride back to my start point and another 100 miles around. Again I had been told there was no way, except that I

might be able to make it because I was on a motorcycle, the advisors thinking I could ride across or around the snow. That was a long and laborious afternoon, with me as beast of burden instead on my motorcycle.

My conclusion from these three adventures has been to now ignore the urging of others, suggestions that my attempts would be successful simply because I was *on a motorcycle*, to not let my motorcycle ego override common sense.

The next time someone suggested that I could do what they could not with a car or truck because I was on a motorcycle, I loudly replied, “No way.”

Dr. Frazier’s all-color coffee table book, *DOWN AND OUT IN PATAGONIA, KAMCHATKA AND TIMBUKTU*, available at MototorBooks.com, is the first-ever first-hand chronicle of a never-ending motorcycle ride by “the world’s most cerebral motorcyclist,” and is highly recommended by Grant Johnson of HorizonsUnlimited.com.



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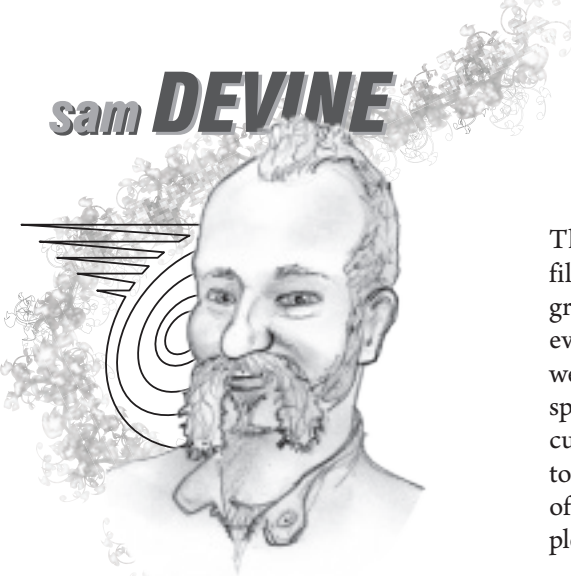
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PRIORITIZATION OF SELF

Illustration by Sam Devine



The Bay Area motorcycle community is filled with every type of rider—good, bad, great, mediocre (“MEDIocre!!!”)—of every different discipline. We commute, we take it to the track, we tour, we dual sport, we trick-out minis and mopeds, customize electric bikes, get dirty and get to the Dirtbag. It’s the most eclectic bunch of generally good humans I have had the pleasure to interact with.

The riding community has welcomed me more than any group I’ve run with. It’s trite to say it, but it feels like where I belong. I came to riding late, mostly out

of respect for my family, who didn’t want to see me engage in such a dangerous activity. But it seemed

amazing enough that I made it a priority despite my family’s objection.

Perhaps you know how that is? If I had a

dollar for every woman that mentioned she hasn’t told her dad that she rides yet, I could buy myself a nice lunch.

There was a funeral for a motorcyclist this weekend and the brother of the deceased spoke. He said he had been opposed to his brother riding motorcycles but knew now that when his brother rode, he disappeared and became part of the bike, that the bike was in him, a part of his heart. Perhaps you know what he means?

Who we are is partially what we prioritize despite what the consequences may be. And as I spent a day brapping around the brown and ragged trails trying to develop my dirt-riding abilities, I found my mind wandering to priorities. Personal priorities are dictated primarily by where we want to go. Do you want to go dirt-biking? Do you want to go to the bar? Do you want to go to the couch and watch hours and hours of Star Trek? Eventually, where we want to go turns into how we want to go.

The phrase “live by the sword, die by the sword,” gets tossed around a lot, but with good cause. Whatever we choose to do most in life has a good chance of taking us out. Spend most of your time eating and a heart attack might getcha. Drink all the time and liver failure just might take you out. And motorcycling can definitely punch your card (although one could also say that living in a nation that has cars everywhere can get you run the fuck over, but that’s a discussion for a different time).

We all discover what we love in life, weigh the possible consequences and then

choose whether or not to keep after it. Honestly, having the lights go out after getting three-fourths through thinking, “Oh Shit!” doesn’t sound that bad to me. I certainly don’t feel done with life. I’m not ready to go and I doubt that I’ll ever feel ready, either. I also don’t want to end up Captain No-Legs piloting the SS Wheelchair.

But despite the potential and as much as it’s a burden to my friends and family, what I do know is that motorcycling is the most I’ve ever felt like myself—like I’m not pretending to be somebody else. Sure I’ll always have more to learn and I’ll probably only ever be a ‘B’ rider, and it may kill me one day, but I don’t care. I’m ok with that. It feels to me like who I am.

It helps me understand how other people choose to identify. Take transgender people, for instance. In the past, I’d been tolerant but honestly couldn’t wrap my head around it. I’d never had the impulse to swap my downstairs equipment or add any aftermarket headlights. I couldn’t relate to the idea of someone identifying as being in the wrong body. But then it occurred to me that for a long time I was told that motorcycling was dangerous and wrong and that I couldn’t, shouldn’t be a motorcyclist.

So how would we feel if someone told us that we weren’t riders, that we shouldn’t

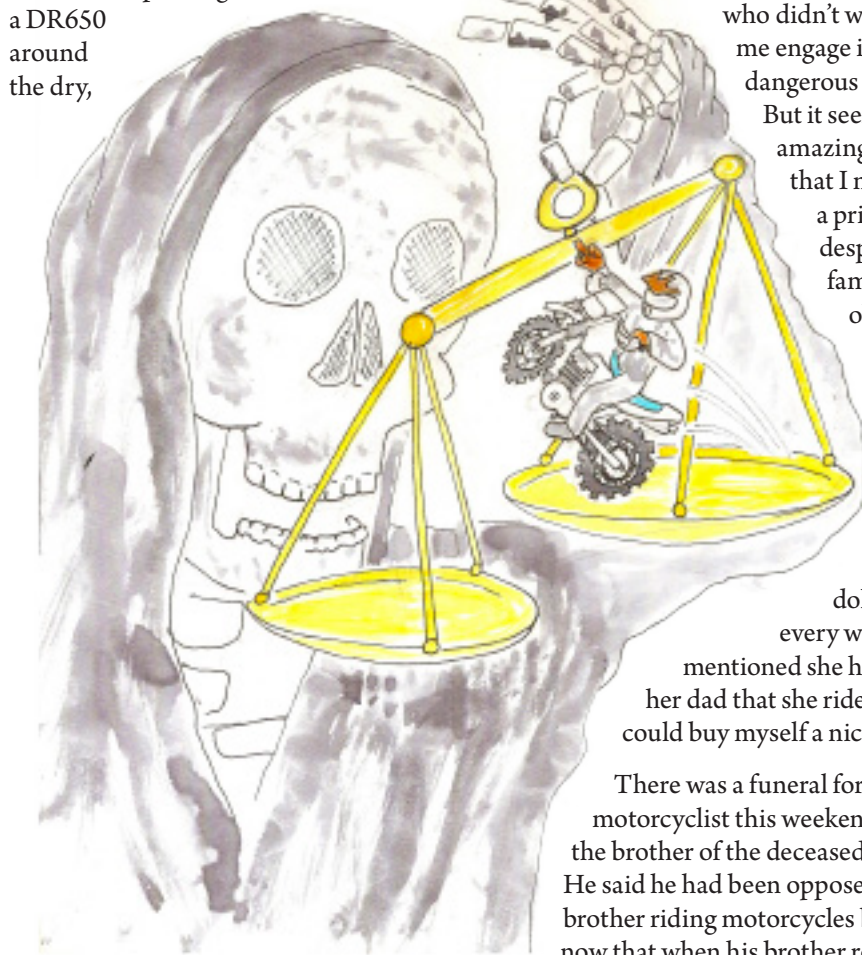
be motorcyclists? That we were born car-drivers and would have to drive cars and sit in traffic and listen to talk radio until we got too old to see and wrapped our Chevies and Fords and Toyotas around trees and telephone poles, sending our lapdog companion animals flying through the windshields?

Maybe the same way that some folks feel when they’re told they should adhere to certain gender norms, that their place is in the kitchen or that their actions are an “abomination.”

When someone tries to tell us who we are or should be, we can simply walk away... or flip them the bird... or give ‘em the old one-two. Or we can look them calmly in the eye and say: “That may be your perception, but I understand my priorities and why I identify this way. This is the most alive I’ve ever felt and the people I meet while doing this are the best people I’ve ever met. This is who I am and I’m willing to die for it. And that most likely won’t affect your ability to be the person you want to be. So either figure out how to relate or get out of my way. I’m going riding.”

Sam is our SF-based columnist. He motorbikes, kitesurfs, and picks guitars. Get a copy of his book, “Fifty Rides,” at SamDevine.com. ☺

An oily Suzuki is bumping up a single track trail in the Hollister Hills. I’m following a friend and thinking about how we’ve both progressed as dirt riders. She’s piloting a DR650 around the dry,



weedy twists and turns and I’m impressed. At the same time a little distressed that it’s not easier for me to keep up. Should I be developing faster? Am I a good rider?

Suddenly a memory from high school flashes in the ole brain pan. It’s an old moment that comes up a lot, one of trying to convince a friend to cut class and go do I-forget-what. Even though he was pulling solid ‘A’ grades and had already been accepted to a college, he didn’t want to skip class. As our lives have unfolded, I’ve looked back on his decision as a barometer for personal priority.

When it comes down to it, I’ve always been the kind of student that’s pleased with a solid ‘B.’ And that’s—not coincidentally—about where my riding is: decent, far from the best but certainly not the worst. I ride street, track and dirt and I don’t dedicate myself purely to any of them. I also write and draw and bartend and play music. Am I really a motorcyclist if I do all those other things? And as dry brown dirt clumps come skittering down the hill from the rider in front of me, I ponder who we all are.

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Locals Only: Liza Miller & The Recycle Garage

By Surj Gish

Photos by Angelica Rubalcaba

We're sitting in the shade just beyond the shack and the canvas building that make up the *garage* part of Santa Cruz's Re-Cycle Garage, talking about choppers.

"I built a custom chopper," says Liza, with emphasis. "It was a Rev-Tech Panhead replica with a Paughco springer front end, six over. Wide fat tire, you know... all the chrome, custom paint with sparkles. It was the *real deal*."

I'm surprised. "I wouldn't have thought that was something you'd be into."



"You can either take money and invest into motorcycle school, or you can take money and buy a bunch of parts. And for me, on most of the builds I do, it's more about the journey than the end product."

This hands-on mentality is the foundation of the Re-Cycle Garage, which Liza started about nine years ago. She was working on bikes, building bikes—by herself—and people would ask, "Hey, I've got \$500 bucks for a bike—can you help me buy a bike?"

She'd always say no. "I can't help you, and here's why. Every person I've ever helped who had a \$500 budget, then did not have the \$3-400 needed to get the tires and battery and carb cleaned for that \$500 bike that's been sitting."

"So if you don't have the money for that, and you don't know how to do it, you're gonna buy that bike and its gonna sit in your yard and rust... the cycle repeats. Either you need to come up with more money, and pay a mechanic to maintain it..."

She pauses. "Or, I can just teach them."

"So that's why I started doing the garage. I had this concept: 'Wouldn't it be fun to take donated bikes—free bikes—which we can find, and take somebody who wants to learn and help them fix that bike up?' Now they have—at the end—about

\$500 invested in a bike they know how to maintain."

It grew from there, quickly spreading to people she didn't know, both students and "teachers," helping new riders become real riders more quickly, riders with purpose, that are "all in."

One of these riders is Naked Jim, who came to the garage because his 15-year old daughter Jake was hanging at Re-Cycle, learning to ride and wrench. He didn't ride, but started coming to the garage and eventually took the MSF class with his daughter—solidarity, right?



Jim says, still clothed at this point, "Motorcycling has always been like... that would be really cool to do. It just wasn't part of my upbringing. Once I met Liza, I could tell the vibe was cool... and there were women here, which is important. I'm like, 'She's gonna ride anyway, and I can't teach her.' This is probably the best thing I could do, to give her freedom in this part of her life from an emotional standpoint, but then empowerment, being part of a garage and a community that'll teach her to ride safely. Which was really the ultimate goal."

That was two winters ago. Jim now has five motorcycles himself, "And they all run!"

Liza explains, "I created a place where I don't have too much control and I let it be what it's gonna be. Everyone helps each other."



The *Motorcycles and Misfits* podcast grew out of the garage, to capture all the conversations that were happening.

"We've got this amazing community, and I was saying, 'How do we bottle that and share it?' Sometimes I just sit back and watch, and it's fascinating to see the interactions and conversations and sharing of resources here."

Motorcycles and Misfits is always a good listen: raucous and loosely structured, conversational and fun, and often hilarious. It's attracted enthusiastic fans all over the US and beyond, and was recently featured on the first episode of the new moto-lifestyle TV show, *Ride*, With Norman Reedus.

Check out the podcast at MotorcyclesAndMisfits.com, or better yet cruise down to Santa Cruz on any Sunday to check out the Re-Cycle Garage and hang with the crew. 🍷

Tankslapper

Multipurpose

Risa, founder and president of the Sam 'n' Fish Stupid Adventures Fan Club, shared some her environmentally conscious uses for CityBike:

I grabbed a copy to read on a recent trip up the Lost Coast. Turns out CityBike has many uses! It's soft & absorbent, too! (But I'll spare you that picture.)

Amusing photos aside, I think this was my favorite issue of CB ever. Send Sam and Fish off on stupid adventures more often, please!

Thanks for the kind words, Risa, and trust us—the daring (or just willing) duo is cooking up more crazy as we speak. Or write. Read. Whatever.

Splitting, No Headache

Joe (#3, specifically) wrote in to share his stoke on AB 51:

Thank you Surj Gish and other activists for successful effort to get Lane Splitting by motorcycles into law! Saw your letter in Cycle News Aug. 23, '16 issue, excellent! Veteran of Lane Splitting commuter wars in 1980's and 1990's, Los Angeles Metro area; lived in SF Bay Area in 1960's.

Thanks Joe! We're glad to help, mostly because we split every day and we're selfish. If you're anywhere near the Bay Area (or feel like taking a ride to the Bay Area) join us on October 8th at DNA Lounge in SF—we're throwing a party with **BayAreaRidersForum.com** to celebrate! More info at facebook.com/CityBikeMag.

Dead Man Riding

An anonymous reader (come on people, put your names on these things!) wrote in about what often feels like an unending stream of bad news:

Can you please write an article on the safety needed to commute the freeways? I'm tired of

hearing about riders down every morning. I commute daily to and from Marin. I see the same people riding daily. Many of them ride like they're in a video game. Weaving through traffic at unsafe speed or splitting lanes at unsafe speed. If you're not riding predictably you're going to be hurt.

I call them "dead man riding." It's only a matter of time. The new generation of riders need a wake-up call. Or they're dead! Ride fast but don't be stupid in traffic, you won't win. Please forward the article to the local news media and get it on the news. I'm tired of hearing of our brothers dying.

We're as dismayed as anyone every time we hear about another rider down, and if we

On the set of Cabin In The Woods 2: Anyone Seen Fish and Sam?



Photo: Sam Devine

thought that a single article—or a bunch of articles—would make a difference, we'd write that shit all day long. But the truth is, while we love to lecture, the people that need to hear it most are generally not listening, not to us, and damn sure not to the evening news.

Making a difference on rider safety, keeping riders alive long enough for them to learn real skills and strategy instead of crashing out or giving up, isn't about editorializing—it's a Herculean task, requiring more involvement than just

writing an anonymous email to CityBike, and we have to reach more than just the youngsters. There are plenty of unskilled old guys, too, whose luck just hasn't run out yet.

Hey Buddy, Want A Date?

Some dude named Jay—well, at least we *think* Jay is a dude—wrote in to join the long list of people that think we make it too hard to know when or where something is happening. At least Jay signed his name, right?

You have this great grand FULL PAGE advert for the Santa Rosa Mile, BUT NO DATES! Okay, yeah, the dates are a little footnote on the previous page at the end of the article about the Santa Rosa Mile, but, geez, who's the knucklehead proofreader? Shit! Your profanity-prone editor is rubbing off on me.

Other than the date omission, I love your mag, look forward to it every month and read it from back to front. Whoa, a couple of beers have scrambled my synapses. I actually read it from front to back. Every page. Okay then. Small nit to pick. Keep up the bitchin work.

We told Jay in a very polite email response that there were actually *two* great, grand ads for the Santa Rosa Mile in our September issue—one with dates in *HEEYUGE* fonts, and

another that was more subtle, whatcha might call advertorial, if you were some kind of douchebag.

In other words, y'all better be going to the Santa Rosa Mile, but we're not gonna say when it is, because goddamnit, you already have it too easy.

Help For Our Knuckleheaded Proofreader

Another dude named George—although we've heard that George can be a woman's

name too, so who knows—wrote to express his (or her) new and undying love for CityBike:

Just found out all the wonderfulness that is CityBike recently. I just got back into riding after a 20 year hiatus and found your rag outside of Road Rider a couple of months ago. I'd like to help out: both by subscribing and by contributing articles. I was thinking something from the POV of a daily commuter ("Daily Grind"?) or something like that - or I'm open to

ideas if you have readers looking for specific ideas. Let me know if this is something I can help with or you guys are cool with enough written material.

George, first, thanks for subscribing. We genuinely appreciate that. Second, thanks for your offer. We can always use more material, although there's probably some debate on how "written" our material is. Hey, do you think you could write something about what date the Santa Rosa Mile is happening on?

Full Custom

John from Concord, who will henceforth be known as Johncord, wrote in about the bitchin' HPT featured in last month's Locals Only ("The HPT, By BMW Motorcycles Of San Francisco" – Locals Only, September 2016).

Enjoyed seeing the HPT in Locals Only in the Sept. issue. I know it's good for you guys to feature new bike reviews which I like, but would be great if you did more custom bike stories like that.

Are you in Eureka next month for the Black Lightning show?

Johncord, keep an eye on Locals Only for more cool bikes. And hell yes! By the time you read this, you will have seen—or maybe just smelled—us at the Moto Envy show. 🍷

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Moto Envy Show slow race with the most epic backdrop.

Photo: Surj Gish

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