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The Arizona Twin.
Photo: Max Klein

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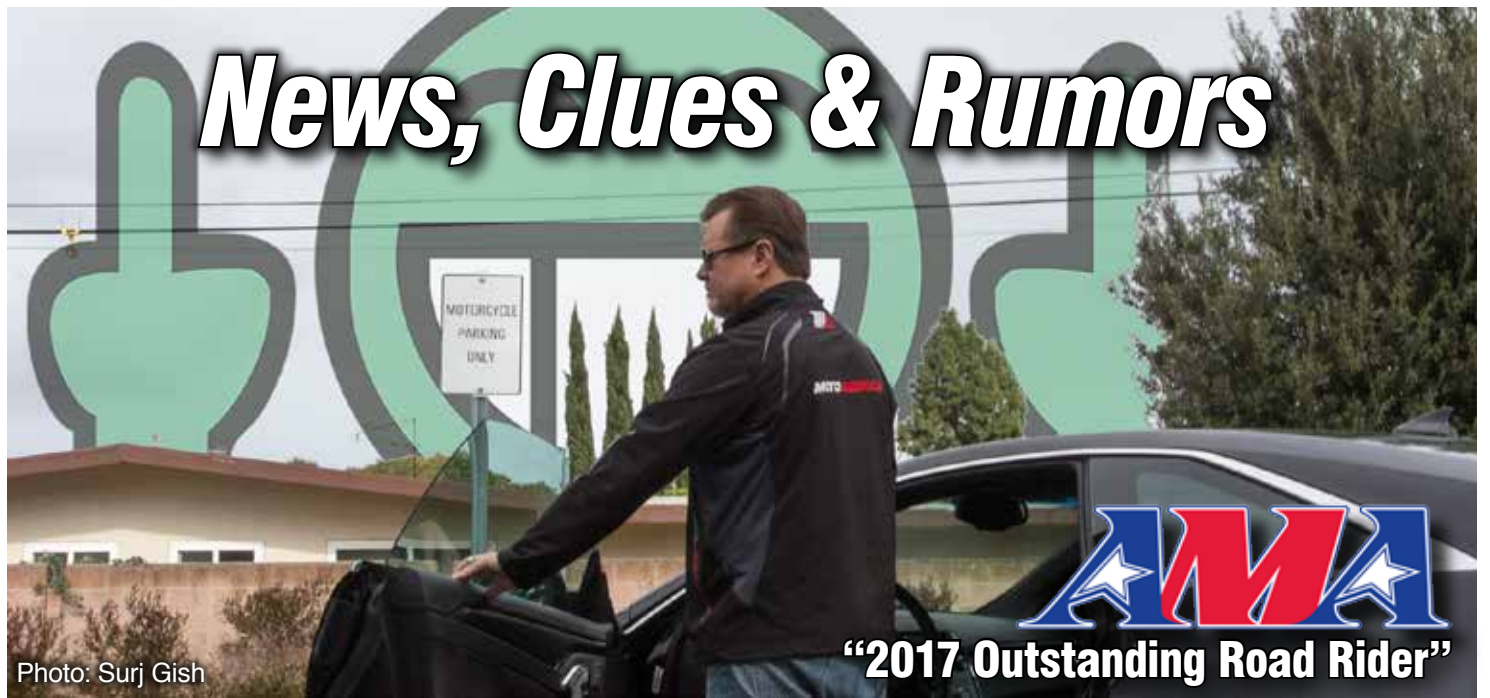
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Budman: AMA's Outstanding Road Rider Of 2017

This is getting to be a little ridiculous. Dennis "Budman" Kobza, previously dubbed the "moto-rights Wizard of Oz" in these pages ("Who Cares About Motorcyclist Rights? Dennis "Budman" Kobza" – April 2016) is getting even more love from the American Motorcyclist Association, after making a smiling appearance on the cover of American Motorcyclist Magazine (the AMA's member rag) back in November 2015. We're not complaining—there's no one more deserving, but goddamn, we're running out of good pictures of The Budman.

The AMA gave The Budman its 2017 Outstanding Road Rider Award, an annual award that recognizes those who have contributed to the promotion of the motorcycle lifestyle and the protection of on-highway motorcycling, and presumably includes a year's worth of extra-special roadside service from the AMA to say thanks.

The reasons for the award include Budman's "pivotal role in grassroots advocacy in California." We've listed this stuff out before, but here it is again in case one of our readers is still somehow head-scratching, like "Bud... who?" Budman owns and runs BayAreaRidersForum.com, was instrumental in getting AB 51 passed, serves on the California Motorcycle Safety Committee and the California Motorcyclist Safety Program advisory committee. He was a primary driving force behind the original lane splitting guidelines, and has somehow wrangled his way into having some input into SF's Vision Zero program.

Budman's official response? The AMA's press release quoted him saying, "I am actually both shocked and stoked to receive this award from the AMA. This [2016] was a big year for motorcyclists in California, and I am proud of BARF's influence on these actions. Working with the state in the committees I am on, and with the AMA and Assemblymember Quirk on A.B.51, the lane splitting bill, was extremely satisfying and successful. Thanks very much to the AMA board for this recognition and to all the riders who supported the efforts made by BARF. It is

really all you folks who deserve the kudos for allowing us to be an influence on our motorcycle lifestyle."

His unofficial response? Hopefully a well-deserved ride. Like many of the tireless folks sacrificing hours and days and weeks working on this stuff on behalf of motorcyclists, Budman is time-starved for time to actually ride. He *does* ride a Ducati, but it's a white one, so maybe that cancels it out?

Congratulations, Budman, from the entire *CityBike* crew.

New California Lane Splitting Guidelines Coming... Soon-ish?

Speaking of the Budman and lane splitting, word on the street, or rather emails and texts, is that there's a conference call planned soon to kick off the discussions for V2 of California's lane splitting guidelines. In the last CMSP Advisory Committee meeting, an audience member proposed "just using the old guidelines," an idea that was literally frowned upon by CHP Assistant Chief Chris Costigan. Besides, Berkeley / SafeTREC's research suggests that higher speeds are acceptable, up to 50 MPH at a 15 MPH delta, so ideally the guidelines will reflect that and we won't have just been dicking around for a couple years, only to reintroduce the original guidelines.

Spring CMSP Meeting: Are You In?

We reported last year ("CMSP Advisory Committee Fall '16 Meeting: Good, Bad, & Ugly" – Pit Stops, November 2016) that the suggestions of making CMSP meetings easier for regular riders to attend were met with resistance and constipated faces from some. And when we reached out for more information about the upcoming April 12th meeting, we were initially told it would just be a call, in spite of agreement in the fall meeting that it'd be in-person. After some complaining by our Editor Surj to CHP staffers, which probably did nothing more than piss them off while someone more patient worked on this behind the scenes, we're happy to report that the April meeting will be not only an in-person meeting, it'll be an evening meeting!

Another baby step for motorcycling-kind.

As noted in our calendar (page 11, yo!) we still don't know the location, but we know that the meeting will (probably) be in Sacramento, from 6 to 8 PM. We also know that we'll be looking to roll up on The Sac with as many riders as we can, to continue the show of interest and engagement we began at the last meeting. So tell your boss you're out the afternoon of April 12th, and stay tuned here or at our Facebook page (facebook.com/CityBikeMag) for details as we figure out a meeting time and place.

EBR Calls It Quits... Again

In a not-unexpected but certainly unfortunate case of "damn, that dude just can't get a break," Eric Buell Racing announced in January that it was shutting down again.

When EBR first shut down and then was purchased by Liquid Asset Partners and production restarted, we had perhaps-misguided hopes EBR would make it happen this time. Although EBR is still looking at other options, it's probably time to give up and move on: production equipment is slated to be sold off starting in March.

We're frankly tired of analyzing and looking for grains of hope in latest chapters of the EBR story. What else is there to say? Other than maybe, *well, shit*.

3 More Years For SCRAMP

Mazda Laguna Seca Raceway posted a press release on January 31st stating that SCRAMP, the Sports Car Racing Association of the Monterey Peninsula, has been given a three-year management agreement by the Monterey County Board of Supervisors in accordance with county staff.

Michael Smith, president of SCRAMP's Board of Governors, was quoted in the release, saying "We have been working very closely with County Staff over the past several months to develop a plan that builds upon this iconic facility's heritage of delivering significant economic impact to the Central Coast."

We're glad for some respite from concerns about management of Laguna Seca, Mazda or otherwise. *CityBike* will be at Laguna for World Superbike in July, and we hope to see you there. Gotta enjoy it while you can, folks.

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Now Taking Requests? 50 New Models Coming From H-D

The Milwaukee Business Journal reported on January 31st that Harley-Davidson plans to introduce 50 new models over the next five years, according to president and CEO Matt Levatich, presumably before packing up his Ultra Limited for a ride to DC, to sell his soul to President Trump in exchange for... a bunch of younger customers?

Anyway, rather than engaging in the facile "riiight, fifty new paint versions" banter that oh-so-clever and insight "motorcyclist" commentators fall back on online, we'll take this opportunity to ask for exactly what *we* want, since the 'Stich-wearing CityBike Wrecking Crew is exactly the demographic that Harley-Davidson is trying to reach.

These are our demands:

1. Bring back the XR1200. Yeah, you totally saw that coming, and yeah, we'll have to find a way to make all the people currently whining about the lack of XR1200, who *didn't* buy one when they were available, to put up the dough when it comes back. Orange, black and white,

please.

2. A street-legal version of the XG750R Flat-Track Racer. Also orange, black and white.

3. Something based on the excellent Low Rider S, but with ground clearance and more standard-esque ergos. Yes, it won't be a Low Rider any more—maybe just call it "S," for Editor Surj, because he'll totally buy one. This one can be black.

4. A modern production version of Fish's Redwood-owning FXR.

5. A police bike along the lines of the old Defender, available to regular folks.

Keep the prices reasonable, please. And we'll love you extra-long time if you produce a faithful version of Mert Lawwill's Street Tracker. We can dream, right?

Like this, but with better ergos and longer suspension please. Thanks!

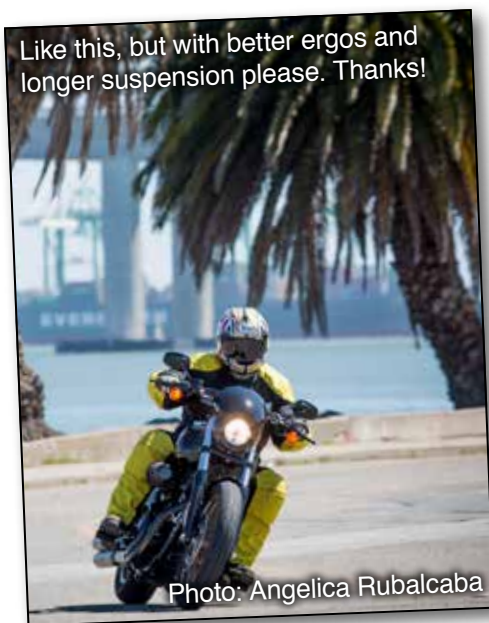


Photo: Angelica Rubalcaba

Legalizing It MORE: Lane Splitting Bills In Two More States

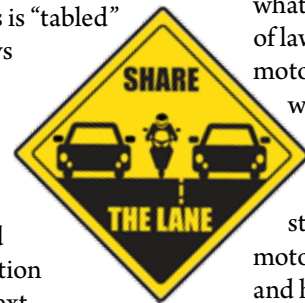
We reported last month on new lane splitting bills in Texas, Washington, and Oregon ("Legalize It: Lane Splitting Bills In Three States" – News, Clues & Rumors, February 2017) and quite frankly, we're

surprised to be reporting on *two more bills*, in Montana and Hawaii.

Wait... they have *roads* in Montana?

Anyway, Montana's Senate Bill 134 would allow riders to "drive between adjacent lanes of traffic under certain circumstances on certain highways where traffic is slowed or stopped."

Like Oregon's overly restrictive SB 385, Montana's law would allow splitting on highways where the speed limit is 45 MPH or higher and traffic has slowed to 10 MPH or less, at a delta of no more than 10 MPH. The bill's status is "tabled" in the Senate Highways and Transportation committee, so it's not looking good anyway.



Hawaii's House Bill 727 has already passed the House Transportation committee. This bill text includes three pillars of why splitting is good: rider safety, air-cooled bikes overheating, and "modest" alleviation of congestion. The bill specifically mentions both splitting in congested traffic and filtering to the front at stops, and adds language specifically prohibiting drivers "dooring" riders who are splitting according to the proposed vehicle code changes. Nice!

However, the language on speeds and delta is overly restrictive, essentially specifying splitting speeds of 10 MPH in stopped traffic.

As always, we'll keep you posted on these bills (all five of 'em) as they—if they—progress.

Ted Cabral Leaves AMA Board Of Directors

California Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation Commission Chairman Ted Cabral, who was elected to the AMA Board of Directors in January 2016, has left the board ahead of the December 2018 end of his term, citing difficulties balancing his State Parks / OHV and AMA commitments:

"I appreciate the opportunity I had to be on the AMA Board of Directors, and I have confidence in the direction the AMA is going as an organization," Cabral said. "I am going to miss my working relationship that I have developed with the AMA board. I have found it increasingly difficult to perform my duties as an AMA board member while also being the chairman of California's Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation commission. California State Parks is going through a transformation process that requires an incredible amount of dedication and focus going forward. With that, I think it would better serve the AMA if I step down from my position on the AMA board."

Ted is also on the California State Parks Transformation Advisory Committee. We enjoyed dinner with him after the State Parks / OHV Open House evening in Sacramento, and given the contentious issues facing the OHV commission—and motorcyclists in general—in California, we hope this refined focus allows Ted to

be even more effective as an advocate for us. And anyway, he rides a V-Strom, so we know he's trustworthy.

AMA: Profiling Is Wrong, Mmkay?

Speaking of the AMA, America's moto-rights watchdog has issued a position statement on motorcyclist profiling, saying "The AMA, in diligently scrutinizing government policies directed at motorcyclists, is concerned over motorcyclist profiling. This includes motorcycle-only checkpoints and what is a predisposition in many cases of law enforcement officers targeting motorcyclists solely because they are wearing motorcycle-related clothing."

The statement closes with this paragraph: "The AMA strongly condemns the profiling of motorcyclists by government agencies and has long championed the undeniable fact that the vast majority of riders and enthusiasts are upstanding, law-abiding citizens. Motorcyclists and motorcycling enthusiasts represent the full range of Americans and should be judged on their specific behaviors and actions, not their chosen mode of transportation or association with others."

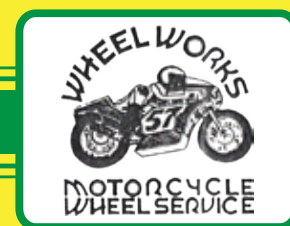
Look, we're on board. Our own Editor Surj went toe-to-toe with CHP Assistant Chief Chris Costigan at the last CMSP Advisory Committee meeting when Costigan attempted to justify checkpoints by drawing parallels between the drunk driver problem and the motorcyclist problem: "I'm sure DUI drivers feel like we target DUIs."

But it's hard for us to stifle our laughter at some of the anti-profiling efforts, which are mostly driven by capital-B Bikers that trade in tough guy imagery and cry out over and over, "no new laws!" while at the same time pushing for legislation to protect their special "lifestyle" from The Man's overreaches.

Yes, getting fucked with by Johnny Law is unacceptable, and the AMA is right to speak up on this. But also: "vest-wearing Harley rider" isn't a protected class, nor should it be.

Check out the Motorcyclist Profiling Position Statement in all its glory at AmericanMotorcyclist.com/About-The-AMA/motorcyclist-profiling.

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Shop Rag

DNA Motor Lab: Alive & Well In Hayward

Hayward's DNA Motor Lab, which suffered a devastating fire last fall thanks to an apparently cursed scooter's electrical system gone way rogue, re-opened down the street last November. We went by to see how they're settling in to their new shop space, also in Hayward, at 21739 Mission Boulevard. Also, we wanted to see some melted bikes.

DNA lost 50+ bikes in the fire—some melted into near-unrecognizable and semi-frightening mechanical monsters, like props from an *Alien* reboot. Parts, books, gear, and tools were also damaged or destroyed. But the crew are up in running in their sweet



Rodrigo, Daniel and Jack at the new, post-book burning DNA Motor Labs.

Photo: Surj Gish

Triumph's vision for the future, and ours of how to best achieve success for our family run business, are no longer in alignment. This time, we cannot stick with them."

We've observed that Triumph, like most motorcycle brands, aspires to Harley-Davidson-esque levels of "experience" in and around their dealerships, which we understand to be the result of onerous requirements from H-D. It's understandable that brands want to attach more experiential components to every "branded touchpoint" (ugh...sorry) in an attempt to achieve connections, emotional or otherwise, that

drive sales. But it's tough all over, and dealerships, even in moto-Mecca California, are often already operating near redline in the ongoing uphill challenge of running a successful motorcycle business.

Cal Moto will still stock parts for and service Triumph motorcycles, although warranty work ended February 4th. They will of course continue to sell and service BMW, KTM and Vespa motorcycles and scooters. Need more information? Cal

Moto has an FAQ for you on their website, CalMoto.com.



Addiction Motors: Born Again, Again

Addiction Motors, which re-opened in Richmond after a hiatus after their original Emeryville location, and then closed late last year, has returned again... sort of. Galen had started providing trackday transport / accommodations / chow services while Addiction 2.0 was still a going concern at the Richmond location, and is now focusing on that endeavor, what he calls a "bed and breakfast on wheels"—although if you've ever spoken with Galen you know he's always got a bunch of ideas

a-brewin', so there's really no telling what else is next.

If you like the idea of concierge-level service and accommodations at the track (or elsewhere) but don't have the budget for your own full-time staff, give Galen a call at 510.502.9881, and stay tuned for the proper launch of rollinghospitality.com.

New Shop: RX Moto In Belmont

What? A new shop? Not another shop closing?! Yep. Chris and Kate Adams, a husband and wife team, have opened RX Moto, at 401 Old County Road in Belmont, helping to fill in the somewhat barren moto-biz landscape between SF and SJ.

Focused on racing, RX Moto gear by Sidi, Alpinestars, EVS, 100%, Bell, and others, plus tires, oil, and parts. Get more info at RX-Moto.com.

And hey, for some fun, we'll give a free t-shirt to the first person to send in a photo of themselves with a copy of *CityBike* at RX Moto. Make it good, or we'll just act like we didn't receive it, ok?

Moved: Quickturn Cycles

Speaking of good news instead of news of another shop closing, Quickturn Cycles out in Concord, has moved from their old location on Erickson Road to 1751 Concord Avenue, still in Concord.

Why? Owner Steve Davis says, "We just outgrew our current spot. We heard our customers' complaints as far as no parking and we decided to move to a better location."

For Sale: California Choppers

San Francisco's California Choppers, known as the "original home of the Frisco style chopper," is up for sale. If you've got a desire (and the requisite insanity) to give a moto-biz with serious street cred a shot, Wayne will sell you the "whole cha-cha" for \$750k, inventory and all. That inventory, by the way, is ridiculously expansive, according to *CityBike's* resident V-twin expert, Fish. Interested? Give Wayne a shout at 415.431.8181, and tell him we sent you.

Hey! If you're a local shop and have new to share with the Bay Area riding community, shoot us a note at editor@citybike.com. And don't forget, we offer free help wanted ads for all local moto-businesses!



Photo: Surj Gish

new space, with the only downside being that the spot is easy to miss, so here's a tip: it's behind Star Auto Glass. Look for the breezeway at the southeast end of the building—cut in on that driveway and head to the right, and you're there.

Stop by for some bike maintenance, or just to check out the melted-down R1200C. It's not a Phoenix model—that'd be all too surreal, and inaccurate as well, because that bike is going nowhere.

Cal Moto Says Goodbye To Triumph

After 21 years as a modern Hinckley Triumph shop, Cal Moto has parted ways with the British marque, arguably the only true success story among the many attempts to revive storied, dead moto-brands. Cal Moto's press release tells the tale of sticking with the partnership through two decades-plus of challenges, and provides this background on this decision:

"Recently, Triumph has announced multifaceted changes for its dealership network. We have examined their vision carefully and with an open mind. To meet their vision would require many changes. Changes to our business hours, staffing levels, inventory levels and business capital requirements. In addition, significant and costly building construction would be

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PITSTOPS

AFM 2016 Season Banquet

By An DeYoung

If there's one thing AFM racers, crew and hangers-on know how to do, it's throw a proper party, and once a year this party is in a hotel banquet room instead of the pits at the track. I do enjoy both, but the hotel rooms are a nice change from my tent, usually set up on 157-degree asphalt. Plus, no frogs in the shower.

For this year's banquet, I brought my real camera in hopes of staying sober enough to get some decent photos. I quickly realized I take crappy pictures either way and opened my cider (shout out to Two Rivers for having giant bottles) in the room before heading downstairs for the festivities.

Max wasn't carrying a camera (wha...?) and asked me to cover him. After dinner, I positioned myself at the side of the stage, hoping to give myself half a chance at some good winner shots. This also got me in the perfect spot to get my head into just about every shot my buddy Koi tried to take, who, Max neglected to tell me he had also asked to get some good winner shots. So, apologies to whatever rag those pro shots end up in.

Speaking of Max, our very own *CityBike* cover model and beard #2 was called up to the awards stage and given the "Racer /

Worker" of the year award. I'm not totally sure, but I believe this is in recognition of all the work he does making sure there are programs, photos for banquet posters and trophies; serving as a director on the AFM board, delivering *CityBike* to AFM'ers on race weekends; and also being the racer who worked on his race bike(s) more than anyone else throughout the year.

Good job, Max. We're all proud of you here at *CityBike* World Headquarters. Now stop with

The 2016 AFM Top 10

1. Joey Pascarella – 328 points
2. Wyatt Farris – 306 points
3. Cory Call – 259 points
4. Chris Siglin – 247 points
5. Devon McDonough – 245 points
6. Bradley Champion – 361 points
7. Brandon Crawford – 352 points
8. Patryk Buchcik – 340 points
9. Dave Moss – 337 points
10. Ricardo Villegas – 335 points

the greasy fingerprints on the office coffee maker, ok?

Congratulations also go out to the 2016 top 10, hell, to *all* the people that put so much into the AFM—racers and workers alike. It's some major love of the sport, money, dedication, money, time, mild heatstroke, and more money, for a hobby that so few have the guts to try.

Auction Week In Vegas

By Andy Tallone

Every January, the classic motorcycle faithful make their annual pilgrimage to Las Vegas for what some call "Motorcycle



Photo: An DeYoung

Auction Week." It used to be the MidAmerica Auction, when that family-owned auction company ran the only motorcycle auction in Vegas. Since 1990, MidAmerica had been slowly building up their biggest motorcycle auction of the year, until the Vegas Auction became *the*

place to buy or sell a classic motorcycle. MidAmerica built it up from their early one to two and finally three-day events that would ultimately roll 700 bikes across the block.

Their success in Vegas attracted other auction houses, first Bonhams with a one-day sale at the Imperial Palace in 2009—and every year since. In 2011, RM Auctions showed up to run their three-day sale on the same days as MidAmerica, each with around 500 bikes. It was a contentious year, with three auctions competing for the same business. In 2014, the owners of MidAmerica Auction Co. sold their business to classic car auction giant Mecum Auctions and when the formerly-MidAmerica event returned to Las Vegas in 2015, it was called it the Mecum-MidAmerica Las Vegas Motorcycle Auction, to keep some continuity with 25 years of MidAmerica Auctions in Vegas. The goodwill wasn't bad either, I'm sure.

For 2016, Mecum brought nearly 1,000 bikes to the South Point Hotel & Casino for their first four-day motorcycle auction in Vegas, from Wednesday, January 25 through Saturday, January 28, 2017. Across town at the Rio Hotel & Casino, Bonhams Auction Co. was back with almost 200 bikes in a one-day sale on Thursday the 26th. This made for a hell of a week for any motorcycle enthusiast, just trying to get around to see it all. With almost 1,200 bikes on display, just checking them all out



Photo: An DeYoung



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in any detail at all took my entire first day there (of course, I was taking six pictures of each British bike for my website, *Classic-British-Motorcycles.com*).

It's interesting to contrast the styles of these two auction legends. Mecum runs a typical American-style sale: fast-paced, high-energy, with the auctioneer snapping off bids rapid-fire, ringmen jumping up and down screaming out bids from the audience. Bonhams is quite the opposite: being British, their style is very...uh, British.

Bonhams is the oldest operating auction house in the world, originally established in 1793. Their auctions are decidedly refined and very genteel, very much like the upper-crust art auctions you see in the

movies. The auctioneer speaks in clear, measured tones, calling out the bids slowly and repeating them several times, with a pause now and again to allow bidders to keep up. It's not nearly as intense as the



Photo: Andy Tallone

Mecum event, but the overall effect seems to be about the same: both auctions sold a lot of motorcycles in Vegas this year.

As a general trend over the years, British

bikes have been the largest segment of auction inventory. Today, it's Japanese bikes. Mecum's nearly-1,000 bikes broke down to 37% Japanese, 28% American, 20% British, and 15% European. This is partly due to many Japanese bikes aging into classic status, but mostly because the demographic of Japanese motorcycle fans is younger than the Brit enthusiasts, and

the British bike nuts getting older, retiring out of the motorcycle market.

Mecum's biggest sellers this year were Henderson Fours, making up the top three sellers at their auction this year. A 1912 Henderson Four sold for \$490,000, setting the record for the week.

Overall, Mecum sold \$13.7 Million at this year's Las Vegas auction, with an excellent 92% sell-through rate—a 53% improvement over the previous year. Both the total volume and the sell-through rates smashed all records set during the Las Vegas auction's 26 years.

As usual, prices were all over the board. As an example, there were five 1979 Triumph T140D Bonneville at the Mecum sale, all very similar (all T140Ds are nearly

identical), that sold for hammer-prices ranging from \$3,000 to \$13,000. How can that happen?

It's the power of the auction. Anything is possible, and it's all about timing. When that bike rolls onto the block, is there only one guy in the room who really wants that bike, or two, or three?



Photo: Andy Tallone

And it's the allure of the possibilities, the dream of maybe absolutely stealing some item of great value that draws people to auctions all over the

world, and motorcycle people to Las Vegas every January.

Andy runs *Classic-British-Motorcycles.com*, an online catalog of—you guessed it!—classic British bikes. He currently owns two classic Bonnies and an '08 Dyna.

UNEASY RIDER

WITH SURJ GISH

Good Night & Good Luck?

Last month, we reported on the death of Polaris's original cruiser brand, Victory Motorcycles, and Polaris's reasoning that one of America's original motorcycle brands was a better bet. Shortly after we went to print, EBR Motorcycles, now owned by Liquid Asset Partners, unfortunately but unsurprisingly announced that EBR was shutting down again, for what... the 27th time?

As underdogs ourselves, we here at *CityBike* really wanted EBR to succeed, though it seemed more and more unlikely every day. EBR's last new model, the Black Lightning, dashed our dreams for a last-ditch, brand-saving new bike that would turn things around. That damn thing looked deflated to me, like something was wrong with the suspension, like it had given up... perhaps it was an omen. But at the time I wondered why they didn't just go whole hog and put an extended swingarm on there, or at least call it a "power cruiser" instead of trying to make it sound like a proper motorcycle with what now sounds like disingenuous claims of "improved performance handling for all rider styles."

When two brands die in a single month, it gets people thinking, talking, pontificating.

Look, in many ways, we—motorcyclists, the industry, its offerings for us—are in way better shape than we were post-Great Recession, although it's worth noting that while the Great Recession is a socioeconomic waypost useful for marking the most recent bubble-bursting, that certainly did kick the nuts right off

the motorcycle industry, we were already riding a crusty, wobbly cruiser towards a certain, eventual crash. Sure, things keep looking up—we're even in better shape than we were just three years ago, and kickass, truly exceptional new models and game-changing technologies make the twenty-teens a no-bullshit golden age of motorcycles... but not motorcycling.

All this tech makes bikes more expensive, mostly just braggart toys for old boys. The industry is desperate to reach young dudes, and women too. Check out Honda's recent Rebel reboot, for example.

Cheap entry bikes like the Grom and Z125 would seemingly provide a starting point for new riders, but it seems they're mostly being bought as second or third or twelfth bikes—again, toys. And anyway, while these bikes have a seriously high fuck-yeah factor, if we're being truthful with ourselves, they're inadequate utility machines once you get beyond the skate park. And that's what the industry needs—bikes that people ride because it's cheaper, easier, better, and yes, more fun than sitting in traffic, taking the bus, or whatever.

We're no longer attracting youngsters with the sexy side of riding, the rebellion, the middle finger. But if we can trick 'em into riding because it solves a problem, they can't help but fall in love, right, at least some of 'em? Maybe?

Perhaps an apt comparison is the blues, a form of music built on and perfected

through real pain well before the turn of the century. The blues is so moving, so vital, that guitar players keep coming back to it, hammering that root-four-five thing into the ground, positively pulping that dead horse. Some of these players are really amazing musicians, but they're all doing the same fucking thing. The blues has become a mechanical, technical pursuit—devoid of the emotional component that created it.

And don't we have the blues? Manufacturers churn out blurry photocopies of previous models, hoping for a nostalgia-driven cash cow. I've written previously about how Triumph

or whatever misnomer we assign, keeps withering—sometimes frighteningly fast, like in the years following the Great Recession, and sometimes more slowly, like today, when things are good, at least if you're a relatively wealthy old guy with time, money, and garage space to spare.

I sure don't have the answers, so I'm sorry if you read this far in hopes of some big reveal. I fear that like human communication, passionate but thoughtful debate, privacy, critical thinking, guts and all the other good shit the old timers mourn the passing of, motorcycling is soon to be obsolete.

We can trash-talk the posers, the collectors, the wannabes, till we *real riders* are blue in the face, but the reality is that consumer majority—the motorcycle owners, arguably not *motorcyclists*—those are the people supporting the industry with their purchasing power. Whether they actually ride or not is immaterial. If we're not successfully introducing new people to motorcycling in a way that means they stick with it until they get old enough, successful enough to piss away their disposable income on bikes and bike stuff, motorcycling will be reduced to ren fair status—a weirdo subculture sideshow stuck in the past.

Maybe we're already in a societal tailspin, where interfaces—mechanical and human—and experiences continue to be abstracted to software, to taps and swipes, to app-summoned services built on the backs of a modern-day servant caste. But consider this: while the auto industry can continue through evolution, shaping itself around regulatory and economic forces, there's no real motorcycle equivalent of a self-driving car. Why would there be? ☹



Photo: Angelica Rubalcaba

and Harley-Davidson do this best, building bikes that look so *right*, while other marques' retro-authentic models look like castoffs from a Dali painting, tossed aside because they look wrong, but not wrong enough to be interesting.

Vintage-esque bikes are the root-four-five of motorcycling, and manufacturers hope that these fashion accessories, boldly termed "authentic" because no one even values truthful language any more, will revive motorcycling in America. But it's unlikely there will be anything new under the sun—bikes keep getting better, but the industry, or sport, or lifestyle,

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Big Sac O' Moto History

By An DeYoung

We've got a gem of a museum up here in the Sac—The California Auto Museum. Since September 2016 (through February 2017) they've had a small but interesting exhibit on the history of motorcycle culture in California. Worth seeing, if you can stomach a drone up 80 from The Bay.

This past January, as part of that exhibit, the museum hosted a night of motorcycle stories told by local moto-history buffs and members of local clubs that have been around for decades... many decades. There were stories from the turn of the century, featuring the Capitol City Wheelman bicycle club, which formed around 1886 and later morphed into the

NEW STUFF

In Soviet Russia, Bag Packs You: Mosko Moto's Backcountry 30L Duffel

By Surj Gish

I mentioned last month ("CityBike Project Bike: The Return Of Triple Black Beauty" – February 2017) that I'll be testing serious soft luggage by Mosko Moto along with the Bumot sidecases that replaced the OEM BMW luggage, and that my initial impressions of the Mosko were very good. I'll share more on the Backcountry Pannier kit—a soft sidebag / hard mount setup—in a future installment of the GS project story, but since the duffel works

on just about any bike, I'm reviewing it separately as something of a preview.



Photos: An DeYoung

Capitol City Motorcycle Club, in 1913. We heard of the Polka Dots formation in 1954 as a competition club, created by racers in order to provide support for each other while competing in the rough sport of motorcycle racing.

Mike Blanchard from Scooter City—one of the few, proud *CityBike* outposts in The Sac—shared a wealth of information and photos from the early 1900s, of a local club member and Excelsior dealership owner named William Langley. Other historians were on hand, and the stories were flying fast and furious around the room. All that was missing was s'mores and a giant campfire.



I became aware of Mosko Moto, a newish company based up north in White Salmon, Washington, during conversations with Gwynne about luggage for one of her Baja expeditions. They seem to be best known for their all-in-one Reckless luggage system. I was immediately impressed not just by their designs but also by the methodologies behind the designs. Mosko seems to approach bag design very methodically, with concern for



systems not just standalone components, and a serious, no-compromise consideration of actual, knobbies-in-the-dirt use cases. As a guy who alternates between boredom and disgust at the fashion-centric nature of so much moto-gear, I'm refreshed and engaged by this approach.

The Backcountry 30L duffel (also available in a 40L version) is clearly borne of this approach, with thoughtful features throughout that make it much more capable and usable than a typical drybag.

The 30L measures 18" wide, 13" deep and 10" tall. It's about the size of a backpack (a *real* backpack, not one of those bitchass little ones) or about 2/3 the size of a typical carry-on. Construction is *tuff*—misspelled for emphasis and cool factor, got it?—with beefy buckles, sturdy straps, and the bag is actually constructed of two layers: a nearly firehose-heavy, water-resistant nylon outer bag, and an internal, waterproof 22oz PVC bag with welded seams. There's a third bag, too—a 20-ouncer included for the purpose of keeping your dirty unmentionables separated from your maybe-less-dirty other stuff. The top panel and the inside of the beavertails are also 22oz PVC.

Beaver *what?*

Yep, one of the Backcountry's tricks is the beavertails, featuring adjustable straps which let them expand to hold a riding jacket, a tent, or maybe even a beaver if you get really... lucky? There's also a little wet / dry mesh pocket and removable map pocket inside the beavertails, and Mosko says that the PVC surfaces also serve as great work surfaces for prepping food and other tasks.

If you've never had to prep a meal somewhere that your only options for a work surfaces were dirt, mud, bear shit, or your bike's seat, you're obviously not a real adventure rider. Get thee back to Starbucks to browse ADV Rider, pretender!

The other thing about the beavertails—yes, we're still talking about those, and I haven't made a joke about beavers, or...

tail—is they're set up with cool li'l pass-through ports on each side so you can strap on (another missed comedic opportunity, dammit) the bag and still have access to some tail. The tail, I mean. Tails. Stuff *inside* the tails.

Let's move on, shall we? The outside of the bag offers an extensive array of additional attachment points for another small bag, or the miscellaneous crap that always seems to need somewhere to be bungeed on. There are three carry handles: one on each end, and another one on the side. The bag opens at either end, so you can access the contents from either side while its attached to the bike—a nice touch, even if this style of access isn't as easy as a wide-opening flap. This is a common compromise, though, gladly made in exchange for actually keeping the contents of the bag dry.

There are even hidden backpack straps, so you can walk out when your expensive

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European dual-sport gives up the ghost halfway between nowhere and nothingness because you didn't change the oil every ten minutes or whatever the required maintenance interval is on those things.

Everything about the bag says *overbuilt*, except maybe for Mosko's cute little lizard logo.

All this manliness in construction does make the bag a bit of a handful. It's true that any adventure rider worth their ADV sticker and rambling road reports will prefer a bit more complexity and toughness if it'll prevent a failure in the desolation wilderness between coffee shops, and the bag will presumably get a little easier to work with as it continues to break in. I'll personally take the repetitive *burden* of rolling up the slightly bulky ends of the bag over an unplanned side trip to replace a waterlogged camera or laptop every time... but that doesn't stop me from grumbling a little each time I close the bag, partly because my brain wants me to get the roll just right, and the stiff-n-sturdy nature of the bag makes that tricky.

This is clearly an "it's not you, it's me" kind of problem.

There's a lot more good stuff going on with the Backcountry 30L than I can possibly explore in these pages and still have room for our review of the Africa Twin (page 12, yo!), but if you're sitting there all, "Yeehaw, Surj!

This sounds pretty util-harcore, and I *have* been thirsting for some adventure..." I urge you to go to **MoskoMoto.com** and watch the 23-minute product video for the Backcountry duffels. Sounds crazy in this age of millisecond attention spans, but I watched the *entire fucking thing*, and I guarantee if you do too, you'll be asking yourself how you've managed to muddle through life without a beavertail on your goddamn pathetic normy dry bag. Seriously... the pace of the video isn't exactly *John Wick 3: Death of a Bagman*, but there's not a lot of



Photo: Angelica Rubalcaba



Photo: Angelica Rubalcaba

wasted tape. Or pixels, or whatever videos are made of these days.

Mosko is an Aerostich model company, meaning you buy right from them. They emphasize this on their website and in the included brochure, saying it allows them to deliver premium products at a lower price. While Mosko's gear is mostly outside the casual purchase, *just cuz* range, at \$199.99, the feature-packed, seriously stout Backcountry 30L feels like a hell of a deal, considering that good moto-specific dry bags—minus beavertails!—already run between \$100 and \$150.

One caveat—Mosko's website says they're out of the current Backcountry 30L, with a "new and improved" version currently in production, which will use "the same closure system as the Backcountry 40L Duffel, with the roll-top clipping to the side of the bag rather than clipping back to itself, which reduces the length of the bag by several inches without reducing capacity." Mosko says the new version will arrive this

spring. Since the relative bulkiness at the ends of the current 30L is my one niggling complaint, a similarly burly bag with less bulk sounds downright bitchin'.

\$199.99. Learn more and get your own at **MoskoMoto.com**.

CityBike Book Club: Harley-Davidson Knucklehead - Eighty Years

By Fish

There's always one legendary, marque-defining bike from each manufacturer.

For Honda, it was the CB750, For Kawasaki it was the H2.

Harley-Davidson made the Knucklehead—officially known as the EL, first sold in 1936. The iconic shapes and engineering of all things we know as modern Harley can find their roots in this bike.

If you were ever curious about all the things—and I mean *all the things*—that make the Knucklehead

what it is, this is the book for you. Author Greg Field gives us a comprehensive walkthrough, down to the production month, of the changes and developments that made the Knucklehead such an icon.

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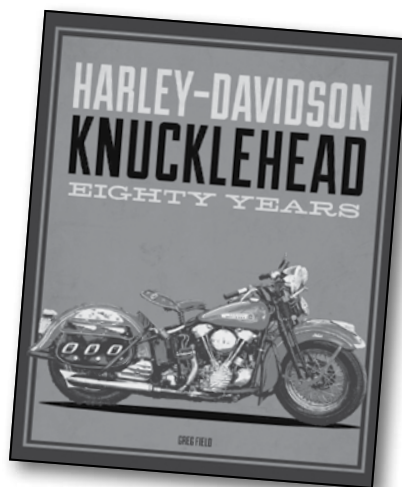
(Pre-1975? Come on in!!)

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If you're unfamiliar with the Knucklehead name, it refers to the shape of the rocker box section on top of the cylinder head. Harley has never officially adopted the nicknames that have been bestowed upon their bikes, but The Knuckle was the first.

Harley had produced overhead valve engines before, but this was their first venture into a production twin cylinder OHV engine. Beyond the technological advancements, the EL was the bike that really defined the classical H-D style and those classic lines.

We may have moved forward from foot clutches and tank mounted shifters, but



the Knuckle really defined much of what we think of as a Harley these days. The horseshoe oil tank is still used today on the Softail line.

Harley-Davidson Knucklehead is well arranged, systematically detailing the minutia that made the 1936 EL a turning

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point that established Harley as a cutting-edge motorcycle manufacturer: the specifics of overhead valves, a recirculating oiling system, and the iconic springer front end, and then on to the pre-war era Knuckleheads, wartime production, and post-war production.

While *Knucklehead* can serve as a lovely coffee table book, what makes it such an interesting read for an enthusiast like me (I'm *CityBike's* resident "Harley guy," after all!) is the wealth of knowledge and comprehensive technical details presented. In many cases the manufacturing operation changes are documented down to the month.

It's a great look back to the time when manufacturers were fixing flaws in new

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designs and able to update the production line almost instantly—back when “failing fast” and learning from it happened in hardware, not ones and zeros. There are breakdowns of oiling system updates, new hardware, dash and instrumentation updates, and Field doesn’t just go into the what, but also covers the why.

There are copious amounts of beautiful, detailed photos, and not just the standard stock photos or picture-perfect museum pieces either. Field went to great lengths



Photo: Angelica Rubalcaba

to find unrestored examples that are still correct, as well as bikes that have been ridden and show the working updates as flawed designs were corrected in the real world. Scattered throughout are sales flyers from the era detailing Harley’s ad campaigns and marketing slogans.

Even if you’re not a “Harley person,” this book is worth a read. It’s an incredibly detailed piece of motorcycling history that

shines a light on the foundation Harley built their legacy upon.

\$50. Hardcover, 200 pages, 12" x 9.75". Learn more and get your own at QuartoKnows.com.

Alpine Labs' Pulse: Get Your Duck Face On!

Expect Tankslapper to be full of “that shit ain’t even about moorsickles!” for the next couple issues after this one, but if there’s anything motorcyclists love (more than riding?) it’s taking pictures of their motorcycles—everywhere, all the goddamn time. This was a big part of the reason we added pro photography along the route for the 2016 Ride Friday Give Back—everyone loves photos, but instead of sweet motion shots they usually get poorly shot pics of their bike outside some restaurant or coffee shop. Yes, you, Ducati Bike Nights.

Here’s another thing—a big part of what we do here at *CityBike*, right behind the “pissing off the readership” is photography. And since a lot of what we write about is what we’re up to on and around bikes—think Pit Stops, for example—sometimes

that “what would a motojournalist, or at least someone from *CityBike* do?” stuff sneaks into things like product reviews, breaking the fourth wall or whatever that’d be called with print media.

Since we’re a low-dough operation and not one of the mainstream mags, where presumably rider / writer types are followed by Sprinter-loads of photographers and support staff wherever they may ride, we often end up out and about alone. Yes, it’s terribly sad, but it also means we must get creative with photography outside of the “real”—and *real bitchin’*—shoots we do with Bob, Max and Angelica.

So I was pretty excited when I received this lightweight Bluetooth gadget. In my mind, I’d figure out a way to be a self-contained solo-moto-journo-photo maniac, which would actually be kind of a game changer for us. Is the Pulse that magical device? Well... yes and no. But it’s still pretty cool.

More on that yes / no in just a moment. First, what’s this thing do? It’s basically a camera remote, but with a lot more capabilities. If you’re a serious photographer—or fancy yourself to be one—you likely have a remote trigger, which is helpful for all kinds of things, from getting shots of yourself, to avoiding shaky photos 17 hours into a well-caffinated SaddleSore 1000. But remote triggers are often simple go buttons—the Pulse gives you access to your camera’s basic settings: shutter speed, aperture, and ISO. In addition to a “smart” remote trigger mode, it has modes for controlling video, time lapse photos, long exposures, HDR shots and a “photo booth” mode that lets you act like an ass while the Pulse fires shots every few seconds. All of these modes have settings that can be controlled from the app—intervals, etc. In regular shooting mode, you can also review a thumbnail of the shot you just took, complete with histogram and shutter speed / aperture / ISO data.

The Pulse sits in the hot shoe of your camera, although that’s really just a mounting point—control happens via

a cute little curly-cable connecting the device to your camera’s USB port. There are Canon and Nikon versions, and it apparently works with some other brands too—Alpine says to contact them first to find out.

So back to the question of whether the Pulse can turn a lone rider into a self-sufficient photo-journo machine, which I should mention is not what Alpine Labs designed the device to be, nor do they sell it as such. Classic *CityBike* bastardized product review, right?

Anyway, as a remote, the Pulse is pretty killer, and since I always have my phone I no longer need to carry a remote trigger which makes my camera bag weigh something like 41.7 pounds instead of 42. But the holy grail would be the ability to get motion shots somehow, and try as I might with photo booth mode, it was just too haphazard to be reliable. And since long exposures and other such artsé fartsé pursuits are well above the low brows here

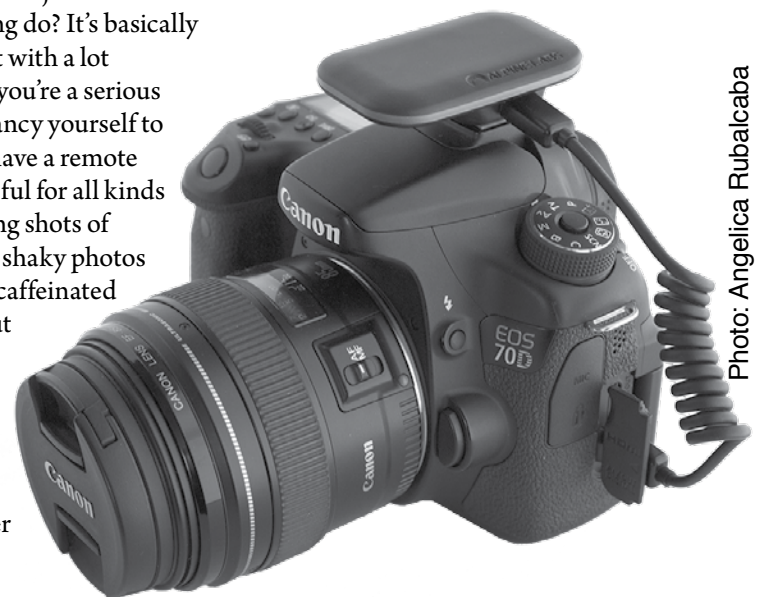


Photo: Angelica Rubalcaba


at *CityBike*, those features are lost on the likes of me.

It’s not perfect—at \$99, it’s expensive if you just want a remote. And I had issues with it disconnecting now and then, although a firmware update seemed to help it reconnect quickly.

But like I said, it’s still pretty cool, and for a normal photographer it’s a nice addition to the standard kit, more than a just a remote. And if you have one of the many pro-level cameras that doesn’t have wifi, it’ll give you wireless control.

\$99. Learn more and get your own at AlpineLaboratories.com. ☺

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EVENTS

March 2017

April 8, 2017: San Jose Pro Indoor Short Track Races (Santa Clara County Fairgrounds, Exposition Building, 344 Tully Rd. San Jose, CA 95111)

11th annual pro short track on polished concrete. Handlebar bashing, elbow to elbow flat track racing in a "cage." Tickets are \$25, not a bad seat in the house! SanJoseIndoor.com

April 8-9, 2017: California Nitro National Hillclimb (Carnegie SVRA, 18600 Corral Hollow Rd, Tracy, CA 95736)

The 30th annual Nitro, and opening event of the 2017 NAHA Pro Hillclimb Series, happens at Carnegie April 8th and 9th. NAHAHillclimb.org/schedule

April 12, 2017: CMSP Advisory Committee Meeting (Location still not confirmed—let's just say The Sac for now)

This event is getting a little hard to track. The date has changed from what we posted last month, based on information from the previous CMSP meeting. The good news is, it's now an evening meeting, from 6 to 8 PM, which will make it easier for more people to attend. The bad news is, we still don't know where the meeting is going to be.

So stay tuned here or at facebook.com/CityBikeMag. We'll share more info as soon as we get it, but if you care about

how our money is spent on motorcycle safety programs here in California, put this date on your calendar. It's extremely likely we'll organize a ride to the meeting.

April 30, 2017: Pacific Coast Dream Machines (Half Moon Bay Airport, Half Moon Bay, CA)

"The Coolest Show on Earth" runs from 10 AM to 4 PM at the Half Moon Bay Airport, just 20 miles south of San Francisco.

DreamMachines.
MiramarEvents.com/index.php

May 6, 2017: The Quail Motorcycle Gathering (Quail Lodge & Golf Club, 8000 Valley Greens Drive, Carmel, CA 93923)

The 9th annual Motorcycle Gathering celebrates the past, present and future of motorcycling, with special attention to 50 years of the Norton Commando, along the usual passel of Japanese, British, Italian, competition bikes, and more. 10 AM to 4 PM on Saturday, May 6th. General admission tickets, including lunch, are \$75. SignatureEvents.Peninsula.com/en/Motorcycle/Motorcycle.html

May 20, 2017: Hanford Vintage Motorcycle Rally (New venue to be announced in March—stay tuned!)

NorCal Short Track Summer Season



Nor-Cal Short Track's mission is to encourage participation in flat track racing and nurture youth involvement, and to keep the racing fun, family-friendly, competitive, accessible and affordable. The racing happens at Lakeport Speedway at Lake County Fairgrounds, 401 Martin St, Lakeport, CA 95453. NorCalShortTrack.com.

Round 2: March 12, 2017

Round 3: April 2, 2017

Round 4: May 7, 2017

Round 5: June 18, 2017

Round 6: July 23, 2017

Round 7: August 13, 2017 (tentative)

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ClassicCycleEvents.com

May 20, 2017: Sacramento Mile (Cal Expo, Sacramento, CA)

American Flat Track action in The Sac. Take the river road to Sacramento to avoid the drone of 80. There'll even be free motorbike parking! Tickets start at \$25; kids under 12 are free.

SactoMile.com

May 20-21, 2017: Sheetiron DualSport (Stonyford, CA)

The Sheetiron is a two-day, noncompetitive, ride hosted by the



Photo: Surj Gish

Oakland Motorcycle Club. Starts in Stonyford, breaks for the night in Fort Bragg, ends up back in Stonyford. Riders of all abilities are welcomed. Applications will be accepted starting April 1st. OaklandMotorcycleClub.camp9.org

June 16-17, 2017: Fort Sutter AMCA Chapter Annual Swap Meet & Motorcycle Show (655 South First Street, Dixon, CA 95620)

The Fort Sutter Chapter of the Antique Motorcycle Club of America hosts their 17th annual swap meet and motorcycle

AFM 2017 Season Schedule



The AFM has released its 2107 schedule. If you like racing, put these dates on your calendar! Get more details at afmracing.org/schedule.

Round 1: March 18-19, 2017
Buttonwillow

Round 2: April 29-30, 2017
Sonoma

Round 3: May 27-28, 2017
Thunderhill

Round 4: July 15-16, 2017
Thunderhill

Round 5: September 2-3, 2017
Sonoma

Round 6: September 23-24, 2017
Thunderhill

Round 7: October 21-22, 2017
Buttonwillow

show. Bikes and parts for sale must be over 35 years old. The show will include awards for best Japanese, European and British motorcycles, as well as best Rat, Competition and others. Camping, showers, and RV hookups available at the fairgrounds. FortSutterMCA.org

June 19, 2017: Ride To Work Day (Everywhere, damnit!)

Ride to work on the 26th annual Ride To Work Day (and hopefully some other days too) to help increase public and governmental awareness about the benefits of moto-commuting and riding in general. RideToWork.org

June 24-25, 2017: Bungee Brent's Backroad Bash (Long Barn, CA)

The CityBike Wrecking Crew goes to the BBBB every year—it's one of our favorite events, and in addition to being a freakin' blast, it raises money for A Song For Wellness and the UC Davis Cancer Center. We'll be there again in 2017, and you should be too. Seriously. Stay tuned for details.

July 15, 2017: OMC Three Bridge Run (OMC Clubhouse, Oakland, CA)

Annual poker run through SF and Marin then back to the OMC clubhouse for prizes, music, and dancing. There's a non-SF alternate route this year as well. OaklandMotorcycleClub.camp9.org

Send Us Your Event

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True Adventure? True Story. Honda's Africa Twin DCT

By Surj Gish, Max Klein & Fish
Photos by Max Klein & Robert Klein

Honda's marketing lead-in for its Africa Twin was one of the most extensive in recent memory—rightfully so, one might argue, with the rich history of the Africa Twin name. But it started out with “true adventure,” which caused us here at *CityBike* to alternate between barely muted snickering and outright guffaws. Adventure is one of the most overused buzzwords in the history of motorcycling, almost always used *quite* optimistically.

But as we waited for an Africa Twin to darken the tailgate of our diesel moto-transpo, it began to look like there might be something to this *true adventure*. Sure, the single-cylinder “real adventure bikes weigh less than 350 pounds” guys carried on with their conveniently context-free complaining, and the “Honda has lost the plot—so boring” peanut gallery continued to not look much past their own oh-so-insightful noses—but by the time the Africa Twin hit the streets, it was clear that this was not your rich uncle's adventure bike.

Sure, at 511 pounds wet—standard tranny—it's no lightweight 350 single, no “real” dirtbike. But only an extreme S&M enthusiast would ride such a bike very far on the pavement, and they'd probably have to rebuild the goddamn sensitive, touchy, *race-bred* thing just this side of Flagstaff. Meanwhile, Max would be dodging saguaros with nary a care about ludicrously short maintenance intervals—with no bruises on his ass.

So yeah, the Africa Twin is a real porker compared to a proper dirtbike—as if that's a legitimate comparison. Might as well bitch about how an R1 makes a shitty daily rider. Yes, we've done exactly that.

But let's say you're not a true grit *real rider*. You want a bike capable of some serious miles in somewhat serious comfort, but you'd like it to be manageable if you decide to take a ride on the wild, dirty side now and then. What are your options? Lucky for you, we have recently ridden a couple of the worthiest competitors, BMW's (still, arguably) class-leading R1200GS and Yamaha's Super Ténéré. You can check out our October 2016 issue (CityBike.com/back) for the whole story, but here's the short version: the Yammie starts at \$15,099 and weighs in 64 pounds heavier



Photo: Robert Klein



Photos: Max Klein





Photos: Max Klein

than the suddenly slender-sounding Africa Twin. You can drop 50 of those pounds by choosing the GS, getting within 14 of the AT—but you’ll need to come up with at least another \$1,400 for a stripper GS. Assuming you can find one so shamefully equipped. Sure, the AT arrives at the party with comparatively bare bones, with no luggage or even a centerstand—

I thought about Alaska, because 1) Alaska screams epic ADV (and I’ve never been), and 2) Alaska and Africa both start and end with the letter A. Symbolism.

That was back in May of last year, and trip after trip to Honda’s SoCal warehouse ended in heartbreak. No Africa Twin in the truck back to *CityBike* World Headquarters.

Actually, heartbreak is a little too dramatic. Honda gave us bikes. Great bikes. But no Africa Twin.

This went on for at least six months, while the *real* motojournalists gave the big CRF press fleet a right proper break-

leg over, and I figured heading back there on a bike that draws on Honda’s ADV history would make for a romantic tale of bike and rider chasing down their roots together.

Sure, the 998cc parallel twin is a bit different than the original Africa Twin’s 650-then-750 V-twin, and a bit heavier at 511 pounds. But I’m not the same rider I was when I started either, and I was eager to see just how far we had both come.

I hit the road bright and early, with 742 miles between me and Arizona, from where my dad warned me of the previous day’s snowfall. “Nothing stuck to the road, but be careful,” were the words of advice I received prior to my departure. So much for heading south for warmth. Fortunately, a quick look at my weather app convinced me I’d probably *just miss* the next storm.

Remember, we’d been given the automatic version of the Africa Twin, and for the first

tradition. On road, shifts are smooth (both up and down) and once you sort your preferred power mode the transmission is damn near omnipotent.

Like the DCT in our NC700X (“The Motorcycle You Deserve, Not The Motorcycle You “Need” -Honda’s NC700X” – December 2016) the AT has D and S modes, but also a G mode as well...

Confused? Honda calls the modes Drive, Sport, and Gravel.

Drive is economy mode, suitable for fuel economy and humming down I5 at 4 AM. Sport is the fun setting (with three levels of fun) for when you get to the twisty bits. And Gravel? It’s a supplemental setting for D and S, and makes the DCT shift even more seamlessly. It’s intended for off-road use, but it was happy to assist on road as well. The only bummer is that the bike defaults to Drive mode whenever you switch it off, forcing you to switch it back into Sport mode every... single... time... you start it up again. D is for *disappointing* in this case.

But that’s ok. Like I said: nearly omnipotent. No matter which mode I chose, the bike always knew what I was trying to do. Traveling downhill? No upshift, better engine braking. Longer uphill? Delayed upshifts, plenty of power to summit.

So back to the weather app, and why you should never trust the weather app.

About 80 miles from my dad’s place in Prescott Valley it began to rain. No problem, I had my ‘Stich on. As I climbed into the high desert the rain got a bit more... fluffy. So fluffy, in fact, that it began to stick to the windscreen, then my faceshield, and then the road. “No biggie, I



Photo: Robert Klein

seriously?!—but you see where I’m going with this, right?

You can fall back on “it’s the rider, not the bike,” and you’d be right—mostly. After all, Fish outrode most of us on a knobbied Honda Hawk 650 at Bungee Brent’s Backroad Bash last year. But a \$13,299 (6-speed), 511 pound bike with proper dirt-sized wheels is a compelling choice, if it’s true adventure you seek. And if our enthusiasm for Honda’s DCT has sold you ditching the clutch, you can get the auto version for another \$700 and a 23-pound penalty.

- Editor Surj

Max: Arizona Twin

As soon as I found out that Honda’s new Africa Twin was going to be *for reals*, I began scheming on doing something epic with one. All the Honda “adventure” bikes we’ve ridden, apart from Editor Surj’s village bicycle CRF250L of course, have the freaky ADV style down, but in my mind leave a bit to be desired in terms of truly adventurous performance, at least if your adventures take you off-tarmac.

But the Africa Twin is not an “adventure” bike, where the quotation marks are required. This bike continues the heritage of the original, the one based on the NXR-750—a bike famous for winning four Paris-Dakar races in the late eighties. This is a proper ADV machine, we were told—no air quotes or beak required to prove it.



Photo: Max Klein

in. And then, finally, we had our Africa Twin—gray, not red (dammit, again!) and DCT-equipped, which would be a subject of much debate.

Now, I’m up for some true adventure, but Alaska in winter time seemed a bit ambitious. So I decided to head to the next best letter A bookended state.

No, not Alabama.

Arizona.

I figured heading south instead of north would be warmer, and also a homecoming of sorts. Arizona was where I first threw a

time I was not worried about bringing a giant scooter home to the *CityBike* World Headquarters. In case you’re just tuning in, the Wrecking Crew has pretty much unanimously voted the Honda DCT as “bitchin’,” and the AT continues that



Photo: Robert Klein

have heated gear on. I've ridden in snow in two other states, on less capable machines."

Right as I had that thought I came upon an overturned Jeep.

Great.

No clue how the Jeep lost control of his fancy rig with less than an inch of snow on the ground, but there he was standing next to the officer that was also wondering the same thing. I waved at them, stood on the pegs and gave the throttle a bit of a twist as I went by. The back stepped out, traction control kicked in, and I giggled like an idiot as the Africa Twin made a glorious cacophony, fishtailing through the snow.

I rode the remaining 75 miles or so in the snow, marveling that even in Sport mode with traction control set to the most intrusive setting I had to try pretty hard to get the TC to interfere. It just didn't get in my way like it does on some other bikes. The crappy conditions gave me a chance to so test out the ABS on the dual 310mm front and single 256mm rear rotors.

With an inch of snow under the front tire, stabbing at the brake lever produced a bit of sliding before the ABS took over, but

applying the brakes in a non-Neanderthal manner resulted in minimal sketchiness.

The rear brakes took a bit more pressure to engage the ABS, which added to my winter

wonderland confidence. Later, I did panic stop testing on dry roads, and was equally impressed with how little the ABS made itself known.

For those of you that would rather not have ABS kick in ever, Honda has made it super simple to shut off the rear anti-lock assistance

with a simple

Rear ABS Off button—no scrolling through menus.

Genius, right? You don't even have to press it twice to confirm or sign some digital waiver. Traction control is just as easy to adjust—on the fly even.

The next day, my dad and I rode with one of his local riding buddies to the former mining town of Jerome. Instead of snow, the roads were covered in sand to help traction on the icy spots, so we kept a fairly mellow pace. The Africa Twin showed

its weight a little on some of the tighter corners, and seemed to require some muscle to get pointed in the right direction. Compared to other big ADV machines, turn-in felt a little sluggish, but there was nothing lacking in grunt out of the corners. Despite the occasional corner battle lost to my dad and his buddy, the rangy Africa Twin was pretty easy to manage—a credit much more to ergonomics than suspension geometry, in my opinion. You're not perched high(ish) like the R1200GS and similar beaked warriors. The height adjustable seat and relatively narrow knee placement

experience more of an *in* than *on* the bike affair, making the Africa Twin less acrophobic than some of the other big dogs.

For special "won't see that on the Dakar" cred, I wanted to get photos of the bike amongst the Saguaro cactus. Going to Arizona and not getting a picture of a mighty Saguaro would be like going to Africa and not listening to Toto on the plane ride over. Some shit just *has* to happen.

For these photos, I thought I'd be putting the fully adjustable Showa suspension to the test, but brisk runs down fire roads and crawling through rock gardens were a walk in the desert for the fork's 9" and the shock's 8.5" of travel. While I never ran out of travel, I did test the shit out of the (unfortunately) plastic hand guards and the (thankfully) metal bash plate on more than one occasion.

Encounters of the cactus kind achieved, my time in Arizona had to come to an end. After a delicious breakfast of chicken fried steak and eggs with my dad, it was time to hit the slab home. I'd have

plenty of time to reflect on not only the trip and the bike, but my entire "career" as a rider. I thought of the first time I followed my dad around his neighborhood years ago when he taught me the basics. I thought about all of the techniques I have learned over the years and realized how effortless it was navigating those same streets. I pondered the history of the Africa Twin and

engineers thought wondered what the significance of the name as they developed this new, much-advanced version, this next generation of Honda ADV.

My riding and Honda's tech came together as if fate had intervened. For the first time ever, I took off into the wilds—no tracks or trails, just me, the desert and a bike with a bitchin' transmission.

This is the part of the story where just about every person who's gone off into the desert on a bike *without* Honda's bitchin' tranny has told me I wasn't really riding in the desert. Sometimes those words were said explicitly, sometimes I just got a little side-eye from the critic, but DCT-equipped desert ride still gets belittled.

Why? Because I had an automatic?

Whatever.

Much of my free run found the bike in second gear, sometimes bogging, sometimes near the rev limiter, but here's the thing: keep the Twin in manual mode and control the shifting from the left hand controls. The fact that I didn't have to worry about the bike stalling—ever—gave me more confidence than I would have had on any other machine, even smaller more dirt-oriented bikes like my KLR.

I guess all those guys with Rekluse clutches are fakin' it too.

I went places and did things on our Africa Twin that I would be hard pressed to



Photo: Max Klein



Photo: Max Klein

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replicate on my trusty, lighter—yes, I hear your laughter—KLR, and I'm talking about more than just extended runs over 80mph. I maneuvered the 500+ pound CRF1000 around obstacles like it had one less zero in the name, and on-road, it ate up freeway miles comfortably, while still dancing in the twisty bits with the nimbleness of a cat. An older, paunchier cat, but feline nonetheless.

For most people that is all that this bike is going to experience, save for the occasional fire trail or gravel parking lot. The only drawback that I found to the automatic was not being able to easily clutch up a wheelie in certain off-road situations, a problem Fish worked tirelessly to find a solution to.

The Africa Twin isn't the most electronically advanced machine I have ridden. You have to manually adjust the suspension. There's no cruise control. But out there in the desert, dodging rocks and prickly pear cactus at an unrestrained pace over uncharted terrain, I felt unstoppable.

The Africa Twin might not be the best bike I've ever ridden, but it did move me to do some of the best riding I've ever done. In fact, I was so inspired that after I passed the bike on to Fish I started researching a big bore kit and Rekluse for my KLR.

Max is still the SF chapter Director of the AFM, and can be found mocking up his Arizona Single in CityBike's top secret dev facility.

Fish: DCT FTW

CRF1000L. Say it out loud. The letters C R F inspire dreams of massive tabletop jumps and huge doubles. Not to mention energy drinks and flatbill hats. Honda has built a pretty huge legacy with their off-road bikes, for good reason.

Slapping those letters on the new Africa Twin was a bold move. The good news is that the bike seems to be able to cash those checks. But since Max covered the off-road side of things, I decided to see how the biggest CRF handled the mean streets.

Off-road prowess is a boastful claim few adventure bikes get called on, because the platform generally makes for an incredibly useful daily rider or tourer. Who knew that wind protection and cargo capacity would be useful things?

My introduction to the AT was the *CityBike* "Ride Friday, Give Back" event. I was elected to lead the first group, and carried a passenger as well. Just to really get to know the bike, of course.

Generally, parallel twins don't excite me. The layout is conducive to boring and predictable power delivery and low redlines. I can't say that I feel any differently about the Africa Twin's engine,

but the whole package is really well thought out. Throttle response is perfectly linear and predictable. Fueling is spot-on. The exhaust note is just what you want from a bike that is supposed to carry you for 100's of miles a day. While not exactly a rocketship, it has all the guts you could ever



Photo: Max Klein

desire, and doles it out in a very good way.

There's a specific turn that I encounter on Pinehurst Road, a 180-degree steep uphill turn with a poor surface. It's a recipe for dropped bikes and bruised egos—in fact, one of the Ride Friday Give Back-ers drops his bike negotiating it. But the AT made short work of it, easily carting me and my passenger around and up.

At no time did I feel like I was asking too much of the bike on all the high quality roads throughout the Bay Area. The forks are beefy, with great out-of-the-box damping and spring rates. I did have to bump up the compression damping on the shock, but the OEM equipment was up to the tasks I gave it. I really couldn't ask for more—Honda got it right.

Like Max, I found braking and traction control to be good, and non-invasive. Wet pavement, gravel, dirt, panic stops in town... nothing fazed the riding aids. Even stupid muddy gravel parking lot antics were well within the AT's capabilities... or so I heard from other riders at Ride Friday Give Back 2016.

The windscreen is minimalistic, but effectively shaped for maximum protection. There's a power outlet, the forward placement

but and lack of nearby pocket mean that you'll have to route a cord to charge your phone while you ride. It is effective for a handlebar mounted GPS or other devices, though.

What a world we live in, where my biggest gripe is the placement of the stock 12v outlet on a bike. So far, anyway.

But it's the truth—in spite of its reasonable price, fit and finish is great, typical of what you'd expect from Honda. Solid switches, nice button placement, fantastic feel. The heated grip switch feels like something of an afterthought, unexpectedly placed on the left grip, just to the left of the switch pod. It's not intuitive, but not overly complex either once you get used to it.

If you read our review of the updated NC700X last year, you know how I feel about Honda's DCT technology. Short version: the pairing of the DCT with the NC's unusual powerband was a match made in heaven. On the Africa Twin, it's even better—nothing short of amazing.

While the lack of clutch lever can be unnerving at first, the DCT can shift faster than you can think about shifting. The gravel button does soften things up, but doesn't water down the experience. Sport mode keeps the bike in gear long enough to use all of the liter twin's torque. I never had to find the downshift button to get extra oomph for corner exits. As with the NC, sport mode level 2 suited me best, but even standard automatic mode was pleasant and fun.

The manual shift buttons, however, take some getting used to, and the bike could almost be better without them. This is only a problem for constant bike switchers like me, but looking for the horn button or trying to cancel the turn signal could cause an unintentional downshift if you're not familiar enough. It never got me, but when rode in pure in manual mode, I cancelled

more signals than I had successful downshifts.

My other real complaint is that the tires and sizing are not fun for true *hooligan* adventures on pavement. I'll sing the praises all day long of the 19" / 17" wheel combo, which generally has enough grip and feel to make on-road hooning fun, while offering competent off capabilities. The 18" / 21" combo on the AT is just skinny enough that pushing it gets a little uncomfortable.

It's not surprising—this bike is about more realistic off-road capabilities (for a big ADV bike) than maximum canyon prowess, but I need more rubber. Maybe a rapid-swap supermoto setup is in order?

The ADV segment continues to grow, but the direction for most of the latest offerings seem to be moving toward rugged-looking street bikes, in acceptance of the actual usage of these two-wheeled SUVs. The Africa Twin is truly the first big ADV bike that seems committed to realistic dirt use. It's light for its size, has a fantastic turning radius and a truly off-road oriented wheelset. It's more than adequate as a daily rider for sure, with real "getting out there" capabilities. It just lacks the rubber for beating up on 600 super sports in the canyon.

This is unfortunately the second version of this review. Fish reportedly wrote the first on some sort of 12v device, but the cord wouldn't stay connected to the bike, so his words were lost to the abyss when the battery went dead. ☹️



Photo: Max Klein



Daily Commuter? Weekend Rider? ☕️ Poser?

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AFM Round One • March 18 - 19

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
3:15	National Anthem / Mark Grids
3:30	Race 1: Formula III Sponsored by Spears Racing
	Race 1: Clubman Light
	Race 1: Vintage
3:50	Race 2: Formula 40 Heavy Sponsored by JPH Suspension
	Race 2: Formula 40 Mid Sponsored by JPH Suspension
4:20	Race 3: AFemme Sponsored by MCTechnologies
	Race 3: Formula 40 Light Sponsored by JPH Suspensio
	Race 3: 350 Superstock Sponsored by Feel Like A Pro
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: 650 Twins
	Race 1: 450 Superstock
	Race 1: Formula II
10:05	Race 2: 750 Superstock
	Race 2: Legacy Heavy
10:30	Race 3: 450 Superbike
	Race 3: 300 Super Sport
	Race 3: 250 Superstock
10:50	Race 3: Legacy 250
	Race 4: Open Superstock Sponsored by San Jose BMW
11:15	Race 4: Open Twins
	Race 5: 600 Superstock Sponsored by Keigwins@theTrack
11:40	Race 6: Open GP Sponsored by Fastline Cycles
	Race 6: Super Dino
12:00	Lunch Break
1:05	Race 7: Formula I Sponsored by Galfer Brakes
1:30	Race 8: Formula IV
	Race 8: Legacy Middle
1:55	Race 9: Formula Pacific Sponsored by Dunlop Race Tire Services
	Winner's Circle Presentation
2:40	Race 10: 700 Superstock
	Race 10: Lightweight Twins Sponsored by Spears Racing
	Race 10: Formula Singles
3:00	Race 11: 600 Superbike
3:25	Race 12: Open Superbike Sponsored by Pacific Track Time
3:55	Race 13: 750 Superbike
4:20	Race 14: 250 Superbike Sponsored by Catalyst Reaction
	Race 14: Legacy Light



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Welcome Back To Racing!

Where We Last Left Off...

If you missed last season's final round, you missed some of the best racing that Formula Pacific had to offer.

That is not to say that the rest of the season was a slouch—far from it—but round seven found Joey Pascarella and Wyatt Farris separated by only six points.

Add in the fact that MotoAmerica Superstock 600 champion Bryce Prince and Daytona 200 winner Steve Rapp were gridded up with the rest of the regular KFG's from the club and that should paint a pretty exciting picture. (Like that one on the right taken by James Carr.)

If that wasn't enough, the normally 12 lap race was extended to 15 based on a vote by the participants.

In the end it was Joey Pascarella taking the win and with it the privilege of running the number 1 plate with the club for the second year in a row. We should probably mention that the Friday before the race, a freak accident caused Joey's bike to be upside down on I-5 supporting the wreckage of a rolled over trailer. Here's to hoping he keeps all of the excitement on the track for 2017!

Contingency Plan

So it turns out that many motorcycle manufacturers understand that racing is expensive and that racers have a lot of choices in quality machines these days. Five of those moto-makers have ponied up a collective \$256,975.00 in payout cash if you do well on one of their machines. Yes, the decimal is in the right spot, we checked the math... three times. While there is not enough space here to go into complete details, here are the brands and what they are offering up.



BMW

BMW has put all their eggs in one very fast basket. They have \$53,200 total for the season in Formula Pacific. \$2000 for 1st, \$1600 for 2nd, \$1300 for 3rd, \$1000 for 4th, and \$750 for 5th.

Kawasaki

With \$50,925 total for the season spread across seven classes, competition should be heavy. Kawasaki will be paying for a podium finish in 300 World Super Sport, 600 Superstock, 600 Superbike, 700 Superstock, Open Superstock, and Open Superbike. Running Formula Pacific? They are offering payouts down to fifth place for you.

KTM

KTM has \$162,750 available for the season, and there is cash available for almost every podium finish. Seriously. 31 Expert AND Novice classes are eligible for their \$400, \$250, \$100 payout structure.

Suzuki

Suzuki is paying all the way down to 5th place in 600 Superstock, 750 Superstock, Open Superstock, and Formula Pacific with a total of \$28,000 for the season.

Yamaha

Yamaha has \$15,300 burning a hole in their pocket, and they are looking to give it to podium finishers in 350 Superstock, 600 Superstock, and Open Superstock.

Each brand has their own rules and restrictions as to how to get signed up and qualify for the cash money. For details check out the contingency link on afmracing.org or contact contingency@afmracing.org.

Share The Fun!

You know how much fun it is to come out to the races each round, so why are you keeping it a secret?

Everyone has that friend who is always bragging about how fast they are in the canyons and at track days. Why not invite them to come out and help you in the pits? Introduce them to the sport that you love and show them what fast really looks like! Once they see what they are missing, tell them about the New Racer Schools, and get them hooked! With any luck you will stop hearing stories about how they "owned highway 9" or "dominated A group" and start hearing about how hard it is to pass you!

All your riding friends already race? Introduce your non-moto friends to the sport by having them come and experience our family friendly environment.

If they want to get a little more hands on, they can always spectate from the best seats in the house as a turn worker!

Whether they are riders or not, the AFM has something for everyone!

Have Something To Say?

We all have a story to tell, and now you have a public outlet for it!

Each round we will have space to share just about anything that you AFMers want—what got you started, where you are planning to race outside the club, old race photos, bench racing tales of seasons gone by, why you named your bike Betsy—pretty much anything that is not a want ad.

We are a pretty tight knit club with a lot of history, and by sharing your stories here you are not only helping to preserve this history, but you also get to broadcast it outside of your racing family with thousands of loyal *CityBike* readers.

Here's how it works*. Email what you have to say to afmsfdirector@afmracing.org. Your content will then be added to the queue (first come first served) and printed in the centerspread of the next issue that features the AFM. Then people fall in love with your story. Sponsorship money starts rolling in, you drop 5 seconds a lap, and your fanclub builds up to Rossi proportions. Imagine the stands at Sears Point full of thousands of screaming people all wearing your team colors high-fiving each other and weeping tears of joy as you wheelie over the line a full 15 seconds ahead of second place.

It all starts with an email.

*Results not guaranteed, minus the "we will print your story" part.

Rules For The Pits

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

Be a good neighbor. Keep the noise down and consider turning off your generators after 10pm

Do not leave fuel cans, tires, or any other trash behind. This is a fineable offense.

Remember to have fun!

To Baja, With Love & Wrenches

Risa Rides The Baja 4000

Bamako Adventures calls their Baja 4000 non-timed, navigational and endurance race and/or road trip the “longest and most difficult Baja race ever.” It runs from Los Angeles, down the Baja peninsula and back, and is a “minimal assistance” event: no helicopters, no sweep trucks, no ambulances—you’re on your own, and must rely on yourself, luck, fortune, and the kindness of others.

Sound like a good time? Damn right it does.
Go to BamakoAdventures.com for more information.



Andy, one of the “Polish Boys,” somewhere in Santa Rosalita.

By Risa Strobel
Photos by Risa Strobel (and the occasional random helping hand)

Adventure bikes inspire Dakar daydreams. So, when a coworker asked me if I wanted to join an amateur rally race from Budapest to Bamako, of course I said yes—but then discovered that while there’d be no Budapest-Bamako in 2017 (it went biennial in 2016), the organizers, Bamako Adventures, were putting on a race in Baja instead.

Baja is close. Baja is cheap. Let’s do this!

One by one, my would-be accomplices bailed, so after months of wrenching and packing and fretting and excitement, I trucked my bike down to the start line alone.

I’m first in line to check in, eager to meet other racers. It seems to be a mix of local Baja vets and savvy Europeans who’ve shipped their cars from places like Estonia, Hungary, and Lithuania. I haven’t met or even seen another biker, but there aren’t many of us: I’m one of two bikes in the race class, along with a Finlander. There are seven bikes in the touring class: another Finn and six Polish dudes from Chicago.

My fellow racers are nearly unanimous in their assessment: “You’ve gotta be brave on a bike.” Brave, I think, or maybe just stupid. Nevertheless, I get a round of applause as the only biker at the first race meeting.

After a brief explanation of the navigation and scoring system, race director Andrew Szabo dismisses us with a reminder: this is not a closed course. “We’re not providing hermetically sealed conditions. You’re in the real world. You’re in real life. Deal with it.”

I’m also the first bike at the start line the next morning, though not the first biker. Kristian, my Finnish adversary, is here... but without a bike? His rental has a massive oil leak, and he’s taking it back to the shop as soon as it opens.

Bleary racers mill about, scoping out the competition. Finally, my first look at the Polish guys—basically a rolling adventure bike shootout: an Africa Twin, a Super Ténéré, a Versys, a matched pair

of R1200GSes, and the odd man out on an XR650R. Brief hellos, a few words from race direction, and then WE’RE RACING!!!

Over the start line in a flurry of confetti and we’re off! I immediately take a wrong turn and end up halfway—the wrong way—across LA. Clearly my GPS

navigational skills are... worrying.

I get turned around and head toward Mexicali. It’s chilly, but though I’m only wearing dirt gear, I’m thrilled and immune to the cold... until it starts pouring. Soaked through in seconds, I spend the next

100 miles cursing the rain.

Razvan, our marvelous support van driver (carrying gear for me and the Poles) is waiting for us Calexico. The Poles are also drenched. A brief discussion: will the van make it to camp at Guadalupe Canyon? Dirt road, water crossing... it’s not sounding promising. We head for San Felipe instead. I’m disappointed—it means missing the first points-scoring race day (today was a no points shakedown day) but we’re in this together. The rest of the day is a blur of rain and cold and more rain.

Day two is similar. I’m numb from cold when we finally make it off the pavement and onto dirt, but my elation is short-lived as things immediately start falling off my bike. I don’t notice until the Polish guys rip past (they’re fast!) and one of them pulls over to inform me he found my Rotopax on the trail and handed it off to Razvan. Fantastic luck. I make plans for some quality time with Loctite.

I’m an hour from the hotel and a hot shower when the rain *finally* stops. I’m still

soaked, but back on pavement, so I hunker down and crank it. Suddenly—fuck!—I hit reserve. I’m 30 miles out, pretty sure I’m not going to make it. Double fuck—yup, I’m outta gas. That Rotopax would sure be handy right now.

I wait, shivering. Thirty minutes later, the Poles roar up. When did I pass them?! In a flurry of Polish, they produce a hose and two bottles. I’m back on the road in less than 5 minutes.

Seven miles to the hotel. We pile into the lobby, shivering. “Do they have wifi here?” “There’s a password.” “Try BADWEATHER.” I enjoy a steaming shower, and after a quick trip to the corner store for beers for my saviors, I’m welcomed into their rooms with a chuck of canned meat off the tip of a knife and a teacup of mysterious sweet liquor. I sip and set it down to enjoy slowly, and am immediately accused of hogging the cup—we’re all sharing!

“What are your names?” Andrew, he’s Andrew too, but you can call him Andy, Luke, Peter, Yellow, Jerry. It’s several more days before I begin to remember them.

Dawn is all people fixing broken vehicles, making do since it’s Sunday and the local parts store is closed. “Yeah, my rear brakes

sand, shallow sand, it all looks sort of the same, and I quickly fall over for my first, second, third and fourth times of the rally. Eventually I find the first race point. It’s far more difficult than I hoped. What have I gotten myself into?

The second number is easier to find, painted on a cactus. As I stop to photograph it, I discover my taillight dangling by the wires. A few zip ties and I’m riding again.

After the sandy stretch, the roads turn to dirt. I’m flying—until I come around a corner and find the Poles stopped in the road. Jerry (on the Versys) has dented his front rim, and has a slow leak. Andrew bashes the rim back into shape with a hatchet. Someone points out that my taillight is gone. So much for my “repair.”

I see Kristian every so often, his leaky rental replaced by an apparently cursed F700GS that’s breaking nearly every day. He comes in really late every night, but perseveres with admirable optimism.

This is the first day it hasn’t rained, and Baja is showing me all its beauty: massive, dramatic rocks, azure seas, enormous cacti everywhere. I’m continually rewarded with desolate desert beauty at every turn.

Again I’m flying; again I encounter my Polish pals, this time stuck in yet more deep sand. I instantly join them axle deep in immobility. As we’re digging out, Kristian rips past, ferociously kicking the sand’s ass.

I enjoy more magnificent Mexican countryside as the sun sets, and discover my latest loss to the bumpy Baja roads—my license plate.

I’m up at 4:30 the next morning, intending to ride to the 6 AM race meeting, but it’s freezing.

I’m done being miserable in the cold, and back to bed I go, feeling guilty for blowing off a race day. But this is supposed to be fun, right?

Over breakfast, Andy and I decide to break off from the group. Tonight’s camp is in Ciudad Constitution, and we find a dirt road that loops off the main highway out to San Sebastian and the Sea of Cortez and back again—a fun little ride to get to know each other.



Hotel courtyard in San Felipe. Parked with the Polish boys.



aren’t working. I guess I just won’t follow that closely!” Today’s race meeting doubles as a birthday party for two entrants. Someone has brought a birthday cake all the way from the start in Los Angeles. It’s fared remarkably well and is only partly squashed.

Heading south out of town, I get lost again. The “road” is just a jumble of diverging tracks in the sand. Ugh. Sand. Deep

As soon as we turn off the highway onto the dirt, I'm lost again. We end up in San Nicolas, a tiny coastal fishing village that's not on my map. "Muy tranquilo," says one of the locals, and I cannot disagree. We take what the map calls an "improved dirt road," which actually means rutted all to hell and covered in softball-sized rocks. I have my first real spectacular get off. "No shame in falling down," Andy reassures me as he helps me out from under my bike. I hope not, because I do seem to fall down a lot.

I'm back to racing the next morning—solo, heading toward the day's first points in San Luis Gonzaga. As I pass small villages, schoolchildren run out of class to the fences hoping for stickers. I feel like a celebrity in these moments, instead of the slacker quasi-racer I'm turning out to be. Everyone is asking if I'm pre-running the Baja 1000, and I attempt to explain this rally, but my Spanish sucks. Still, their excitement is contagious, and after so much cold and wet and exhaustion, their enthusiasm is exactly what I need to get excited about racing again.

I head out of the settled area, opening it up. I've got a fair bit of speed on as I approach a car full of locals, and I'm surprised when they pull to the left and slow down. "I don't usually pass on the right, but sure," I think, and I lay on the throttle. As I pass, they swerve hard, RIGHT AT ME. I brake hard and immediately stack it in the sand. They speed away in a cloud of dust as I sit up, trying to catch my breath.

I right my bike and lean against it for a few minutes, shaking. I've ridden alone a lot, all over. I've crashed a lot in the dirt and on the street. This is the first time I've ever really been scared. Pissed off, shook up, and afraid.

I'm at a fork in the road. My attackers have headed east, down the race route. I'm not ashamed to admit that I turned west, back to the highway.

The rest of the day is long, boring highways and beating myself up for bailing on the day's racing. I've never been scared on a bike before—I'm uncomfortable and unsure, so I just keep heading on down the highway. I'm the first to arrive at the hotel in Cabo, with plenty of bike maintenance to fill the time.

In the morning, I find Kristian sharing my parking space. We catch up a bit—he got stuck on a beach for hours the night before until a fisherman helped him get his bike out of the sand. He didn't get to the hotel until 2 AM. He's exhausted and I'm still shaken, so we decide to ride together for the first part of the day. "Yesterday I realized when you are stuck in the sand and lost with angry dogs, it would be good to have some friends," he says.

Of course the day's points begin with more bottomless sand, so we nope the fuck out

of there and back to the main road. The race course and the main road run parallel, with lots of interconnectedness, so we pop back and forth between the two, trying to pick up race points as we can. We split up midday, but it's been an encouraging morning riding with my competition.

After yet another dramatic get off (silt this time!) I'm done for the day and head to camp. The signs to San Juanico point down pristine pavement, and the beach campsite is easy to find. I'm baffled to find neither the support van nor any other bikers. I wander around camp, visiting,

looking for news. Eventually I learn that the support van isn't coming; he turned around at the river.

The river? Turns out if you miss the signs

to the paved road, GPS route-finding takes you on a dirt road over a mountain and through a river.

Kristian eventually turns up, minus his team—they're broken down in La Paz. He lies down in the sand next to his bike to sleep, and we're immediately offered a tent. Andrew and Peter arrive, exhausted; they came over the mountain in the dark. They confirm the van isn't coming, and neither are the rest of the bikers. I offer space in our borrowed tent, but they end up sleeping in the back of an SUV that belongs to a Lithuanian team. "Our countries are neighbors, so we take care of them."

As I make my way from fire to fire, people offer food and drinks and fuel and I manage to come up with a loaner blanket. I offer to share it with Kristian. He insists he's fine, but in the middle of the night I wake to a tiny whisper. "Hello, I am very cold." I'm happy to share the blanket, and we fall back asleep instantly, grimy and exhausted.

Kristian's dedication so far has impressed, but the morning is a whole new level. The

first things he reaches for are maps and the roadbook. He's already planned his day before I find my first cup of coffee.

Sunrise on the beach is stunning, and people I've only just met hand me coffee and eggs without even asking if I want



breakfast. As I'm sipping coffee, the founder of the race comes by. "Hey, want to race on the beach?" Can't turn down an offer like that, so I abandon my coffee and throw on my gear. Drag racing in the surf as the sun comes up is something that I'll never forget.

We're 100 miles out of San Ignacio, and it's a great morning of dirt, sunshine, and desert. The afternoon is pavement to Gurrero Negro, then dirt roads through the salt flats to a whale watching camp where we are spending the night. I find Andrew and Peter there, but it's several hours before the rest of our crew shows up. Poor Kristian is still without his team, but Razvan has enough extra gear to take care of him.

The campsite has flush toilets and showers! Cold showers, but Andrew disappears for a bit and returns wearing just a towel and a satisfied smile. "I hacked the



shower." After sleeping in my filthy riding gear the night before, the hot shower is bliss. We're overjoyed to be together again, and the night is a blur of liquor and laughter and goofy Polish pop music and dancing on the beach.

We're all a bit rough around the edges the next morning, but Andy, Andrew, Peter and I head off into the dirt. Andy patiently sticks with me while the other two ride ahead, and we enjoy a morning of dirt and mud and collecting race points and goofing off on the beach. As the sky darkens, we cross paths with a rancher who points to a

road over the mountains. He says it goes to Cataviña, where we'll be camping.

Off we go into the mountains but the road is really muddy and we keep getting stuck and falling. It's getting dark fast. I'm lacking in skill. Andy's lacking decent lights. After picking my bike up yet again, I come around a corner to find Andy stopped behind an abandoned pickup truck. "I think we should stay here. The truck is unlocked and we can sleep inside and continue when it's light."

I attempt to raise the rest of the team on my (required) rental sat phone, but can only leave messages. We're in the middle of nowhere with very little food, but at least we have shelter—as soon as we shut the truck doors it starts

pouring. We exchange a wide-eyed look of "Holy shit, we are so lucky," and settle down to sleep. "This will be something to tell the grandchildren," he says, and then starts snoring.

At 2 AM, I am startled awake by... headlights? It's Peter with a big grin and an even bigger hug. Three teams have come out over the mountain to find us. There's some debate about what to do, but eventually we leave the bikes and head down the treacherous mountain road towards the coast. Andy and I fight against leaving the bikes, but the medical staff is part of the rescue party and we're overruled. I'm thanking everyone profusely and constantly, but Andy puts it best: "It was a tremendous thing they did."

At about 4 AM, the 4Runner gets stuck in a river that used to be the road. We try to pull it out, but the mud is deep and the Jeep is too light. The rain finally stops, and (ultimately fruitless) attempts are made to divert the river as we wait for daylight. After dawn and many more hours of trying, we're getting ready to give up and leave the 4Runner behind when I see trucks in the distance! It's the motherfuckin' cavalry, come to rescue the rescuers! Suddenly everything is a flurry of shoveling out under the tires and attaching a winch and handing out hot burritos to everyone who's been out all night.



In no time at all the truck is free, and I am chatting with some of the rescue party when Andy slides up. "The Hungarians are going to take me back up the mountain to get my bike." Emmett, who showed up this morning, turns to me, "Can I ride your bike out?" We've gotten to know each other over the past few days; he's an experienced



Coco's Corner, south of San Felipe.



My newest fans in San Luis Gonzaga. They ran across a field to mob me hoping for stickers.



Drag racing on the beach in San Juanico.



Cabo sunset. A gorgeous end to a rough day.

dirt rider, he'll be a lot faster than me, and he's not exhausted from being out all night. Abso-fucking-lutely. I hand over my gear, and try not to beat myself up for being a bailer. After the past 24 hours, I'm trying to make smarter choices. And this is supposed to be fun, right?

We're all greeted with joyous hugs and cheers at the hotel in Cataviña, where we settle in to wait for the bikes. Andy is back first. His account of the ride back is a bit chaotic, but it sounds like Emmett's crashed hard a few times, and his teammate Brian is riding the rest of the way back. Half an hour later Brian stumbles into the hotel wearing my gear. As he takes a long pull from the bottle of tequila I hand him, he asks, "Did you know your bike can go 105?"

The last day is a long one. Ready to be home, I whack open the throttle and try and keep up with the Polish guys on their big bikes. Turns out my bike can go 105. The finish line closes at 4 PM, and despite getting lost again trying to weave around protests at the border, we're on track to make it when the skies open up just north of San Diego.



One of the few race point photos where I don't look horrific.

It rained 4 inches that day, and I think it all fell on me. I didn't expect the last 120 miles of California highway to be some of the sketchiest riding of the whole race. I make the finish line around 5:30. It's closed, but Kristian is here. I shake his hand, honored to have ridden with such a passionate and dedicated competitor. Fitting somehow that he's the only one I see at the end, soggy and unbowed.

Despite everyone's exhaustion, the awards ceremony and closing party is a raucous night of drinks and stories and dancing and plans to race again next time... or in Africa. I'm shocked, delighted, and maybe a little offended

to receive a special award: "The Donald Trump Grab Them by the Cactus Award for Idiomatic Fearlessness." I also came in second place in the motorcycle class! (Out of two, but hey, that's still podium.) Kristian takes first, of course, well-



Andy playing on the beach in Santa Rosalita.

deserved. The night ends in drunken blur of hugs and promises to keep in touch.

After an intense 10 days together, it's weird to think that I'm not going to see these people in the morning, and even weirder that I'm not going to get on my bike and ride hundreds of miles through every sort of terrain, but instead load my bike into my truck for the drive home.

I'll be back, though. The next Baja 4000 is in 2019. Join me?

Risa lives in Oakland, has never met a road trip she wasn't up for, and is Founder and President of the Sam 'n' Fish Stupid Adventures Fan club. ♡



Making a (short-lived) taillight repair.

I Left My Part(s) In Mexico

This is a list of things that fell off my bike. I put some of them back on, only to have them fall off again. But I managed to make it back into the pre-wall US without even a license plate!

- Both auxiliary lights (separately)
- Both handguards (separately)
- The entire Rotopax system (2 tanks and mount)
- The entire Rotopax system again
- Tail light
- License plate
- 3 out of 4 bolts from the rear rack, which eventually broke anyway. And one of subframe mounting tabs cracked off at the weld.
- The muffler
- The right side cover
- Me (so many times I lost count)
- Emmett (at least twice, maybe 3 times?)
- Brian (only once!)



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with Peter Mars

Part Three: Box

Marching orders from Peter Mars in the third entry in his "Fast In Five Easy Steps" series, now channeling his distant lineage with Chingus Kahn, Tammerlane, Alexander the Great, Wellington and Douglas MacArthur.

By Peter Mars
Artwork by Jim Serfass
Photos by Mr. Mars, Lynn Norene Boulay, and the Peter Mars Collection

Racing is not necessarily a team sport. A team can help. And sometimes...

When I returned to the track for a second go in 1984 I befriended a fellow racer I dubbed 'the Road Rat.' Not sure why. It seemed to me colorful, and generous, on my part. I did not admit to him this, the name. For reasons unclear and never to be known, we pitted next to each other spring to late summer that season.

I grew to depend on the Rat. I had not been on track since '78, was coming off multiple knee surgeries, and appreciated the steady presence my slightly furtive new friend bestowed upon me so freely.

My wife—my first—even started referring to him with that verminous title. Short-ish. Hair slicked back ready for quick action. Wiry. (Him, not her.) Darting eyes. Always clear, most times far searching. Raced a two-stroke street bike of forgotten make and model. In several classes.

Traveled solo in a predominantly primer, sagging-swaying-frayed, seen-better-days Ford Ranchero. Stored his tools in I swear to God what looked to be a young boy's unpainted wooden bedroom dresser. Unit probably weighed close to the Rat's best fighting weight, but dude never needed a hand getting it down from the 'gate. There was one time I touched it. Only the once, at the close of an achingly hot Northern California Sears Point late summer's day, touched it from pit apron asphalt to Ranchero steel tailgate.

That was it though, and Rat didn't need any help hoisting his three trophies that same two and a half feet. He smiled, shook both our hands and drove off, sagging and swaying on his way.

You can pass people in the pits. Takes some work. Takes a different kind of work, different kind of program. Best to start at home, in your box, your pit, your



The Spinlads at the '88 WERA Western United States Endurance Racing Championship, Willow Springs.

Photo: Mr. Mars

garage, shop, dining room back yard deck sidewalk.

Here you can work on that program, uninterrupted. Calmly. Thoroughly. S'why it's called practice, cuz you never get it right when you're doing it.

Bike is ready—right? Not? Fix that. Ready? Good... What did you use to put it in that state? Pack that



shit up. Medium sized containers. Similar size, too. Avoid cardboard for the heavy items—crates, dude. Avoid the milk crate police—you don't have to worry about that so much now, having Home Depot, The Container Store and CVS... but back in the day! Troops would swoop down on us, dump our shit, collect the fine and depart.

Man, them troops was tough! S'okay, so are you. Even now, even with your snap-lid boxes and color-coded crates. You are an invading army, even if you are an army of one, these boxes and crates the bulwarks of your beachhead, the sandbags of your fox hole, the perimeter of your LZ.

Things will need be done behind that barricade.

Select your spot using Ouija, horoscope, moon phase, Feng Shui or séance. Own it, stake it down. Use the same spot whenever... Hot? Get shade. Cold? Get heat. Dirt? Get carpet, tarp, something. Chairs, table, food... duh! Dry? Drink water MF! But not so much that you're using the spinning door on the porta-pottie. You will be busy out there—best be ready for it.

Yoga, meditation, stretching, telling jokes, reading, pit stroll, talk to buds, gun metal rock 'n' roll in headphones. Whatever works for you.

Something that worked for me: Vitamin B-12. It's a blood oxygenator, and will help you keep your cool. Allows the blood to retain more oxygen. You will notice less fatigue upon your return to your box after practices. Stays in your system till you pee. Take another. Sublingual. Only way faster into your system is the needle. Hey! This is a family sport. Leave that shit on the street.



Put your tools on those squeeze rack things. Rivet those squeeze rack things down. One layer, two layer tops per drawer. See everything without looking. Foam sheets with cutouts for pliers, ratchets, wrenches and the like. Put it all back in its place. Always. Track box different than your at-home box.

There will be times when you are barking orders at your crew, your squad, all of you fully engaged in a firefight to make pre-grid for the sighting lap. Be clear. Concise. Firm. Grateful. This is your squad. They are here for you—and themselves. Do not leave them behind.

Or empty-handed. Lunch at least, fool! T-shirts in team colors. Jackets for the

Sears Point, '87.



Photo: Lynn Norene Boulay.

season opener... Look at how y'all be rollin' at morning meeting, standing together like a billboard a wall.

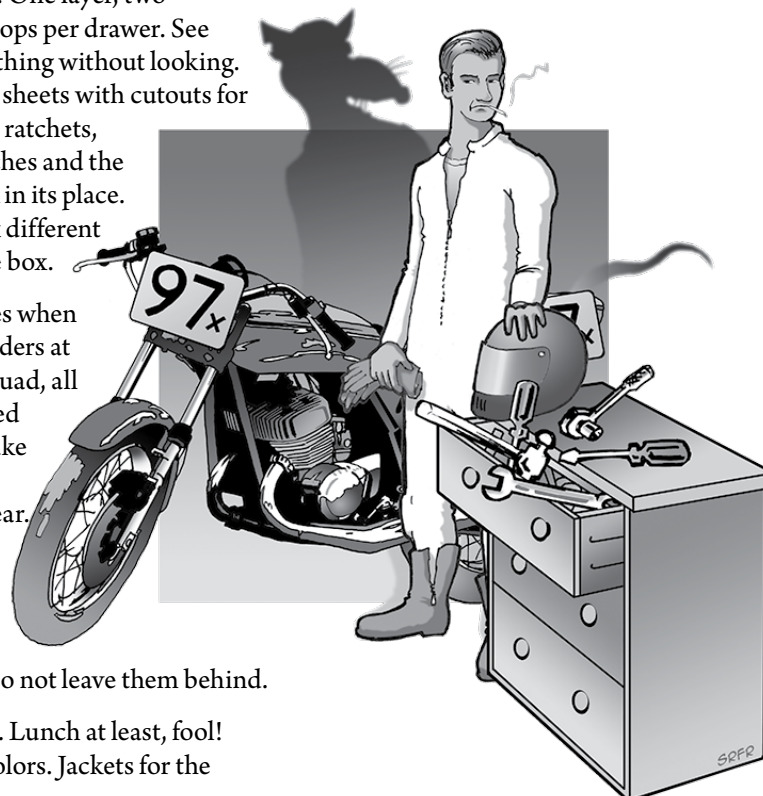
Things I did: front wheel yellow, rear wheel black. Day-glo orange seat. "Have fun" in hand-painted letters on back of tailpiece. White and blue in a sea of red and black. Color in my hair. Crash-damaged parts on racebike, shiny as the new ones. Stickers from actual sponsors, leathers bespoke, lettering on leathers from actual sponsors. Pit display with sponsors' products featured.

Opened a shop. Sponsored myself. Sponsored other racers. Made donations to club in exchange for PA announcements. Made friends with trackside announcer. Payed industry publications for space featuring myself, my shop and my sponsors. Set up racebike and sponsors' product display at non-race events and race events for other types of racing, not bikes.

Smile. Shake hands. That semi-hug pat on the opposite shoulder thing. Bump. Bash. Get it over with now... Mount up. We're going to war.

Peter Mars loves telling his war stories. He is currently not medicated, and is often accused of suffering from shell shock, battle fatigue and PTSD. If you missed the first two parts of "Fast

In Five Easy Steps," check out the January and February 2017 issues at CityBike.com/back.



Why Do We Ride?

This is the conclusion of TJ's lifelong quest to understand the motivations behind millions of motorcyclists' mindsets—and his own. Why do we ride? Why do you ride?

By TJ Noto
Artwork by Mr. Jensen
Photos from Moto Noto's personal archives

Part 2: "Maturity"

It's almost noon. Me and almost 400 other participants in the 2016 Distinguished Gentleman's Ride are searching for sparse shade in SF's Civic Center Plaza. We've spent 45 minutes going five miles on what must surely be the hottest day in the history of San Francisco, with temperatures rising to a Duc-roasting 97 degrees. There is no water, no food.

I'm wandering, looking at pretty bikes and pretty owners, hoping for feeling to return to my left hand, thanks to the fourteen million times I pulled in the clutch lever on my '86 Ducati F1, trawling downtown. Pull lever in. Click in to 1st, slowly let lever out. Pull lever in. Stop. Over and over, for 45 minutes.

Yes, it's ok for you to question my choice of motorcycles for the ride. The F1 is one of the most miserably uncomfortable bikes ever made. It was made for racing and

is physically demanding even on track. Heat, traffic and the Folsom Street Fair? Downright torturous.

In another fifteen minutes, we'd all strap our helmets on, mount up and roar off to our next destination. At least some

ScooterNoto aboard his '70 Lambretta GP150 with Toby Tuttle at Scooter Rage '86.



Photo: C. McIntosh

of us. The heat got to the F1 and the old girl simply gave up—when I turned the ignition and pressed the starter button I was dismayed to hear nothing but an unenthusiastic groan as the starter labored to turn the engine over even once.

The camaraderie of hundreds of riders roaring through the city began to fade as the entire group fired up and rode away, leaving just me and one other victim behind. Matthew's old CB had cooked its battery, and as I sat forlornly near my dead Duc he asked if I'd watch his bike and backpack while he went in search of water. Misery loves company—and I love fixing broken things—so together we worked toward getting his Honda running. I keep a small rechargeable battery pack in my old F150 and that extra juice was all the old girl needed to fire up. His trip home was a short ride across the Bay Bridge but I wasn't certain he'd make it home without needing another jolt, so without really thinking I said, "Here's my card. Why don't you just keep it until you get home and mail it back to me." The cost of the battery pack never entered my mind—I simply couldn't imagine that there was any real possibility Matthew would neglect to return it.

By the time I returned home, he'd already emailed to inform me he'd made it back to Oakland without incident. My battery pack arrived a few days later. We're friends on Facebook now, and unsurprisingly, we share many interests, not least of which is our love of Pit Bulls and Pit Bull rescue. I hope that I get to go for a real ride with him some day.

Rewind

The roads that connect young MotoNoto to a slightly more seasoned MotoNoto are more like Nürburgring than a drag strip. My post-minibike high school years were mostly devoid of motorcycles, other than the odd joyride on someone else's bike. After graduation, I began taking classes at De Anza—less than a half a mile from our house—and somehow convinced my mother that a scooter was a practical, economical and even vital transportation option. And so my adult life on two wheels began on a Vespa Rally 200. I rode that Vespa everywhere: bought a parka, dressed like a Mod, and listened to The Jam.

I played with scooters for a few years, before upgrading to vintage British machinery. After college, my new career working for a software company afforded me the income to buy my first modern motorcycle, a Ducati 900SS. Nearly every weekend my friends and I rode the same Bay Area Mountain and coastal roads you ride today. We thought we were fast, but eventually started going to track schools, where we learned in the most brutal of ways that we were not at all fast.

After a few years of trackdays I'd begun to meet the limits of the 2-valve, air-cooled



Photo: C. McIntosh

ScooterNoto with his Vespa 200 at Scooter Rage '86.

900SS and upgraded to a 916. It seemed inevitable that I'd end up racing the Ducati Superbike and I was proud to race it in the late 90s in AFM.

With marriage came new responsibilities, but the fact that I was now a husband did not mean the end of riding. The woman I married confessed to having always wanted to learn to ride when we first began dating, and in the subsequent years, many hours of *we* time were spent riding. I even began to explore motorcycles that didn't force my body into uncomfortable riding positions. I rode adventure bikes, came back to dirt bikes, and vintage machines. I took dirt track style schools from Rich Oliver and Colin Edwards, and I even bought and restored an old Lambretta.

Every kind of motorcycle and associated riding style is fun for me, and I'm guessing that holds true for most riders. I would argue that only the closed-minded rider would say, "Nah, I'm not interested in that kind of riding." For me, if it's got two wheels and an engine in between them, I wanna ride it.

Past the fashion statement—and you're damn right motorcycles are a fashion statement, even if one only other motorcyclists understand—the act of riding a motorcycle is itself incredibly rewarding. From the moment I swing a leg over, I become aware of my hands and feet searching for common touch points: clutch lever, brake pedal, shift lever, throttle. I settle in and take inventory, relax and feel the machine.

Once underway, the lessons begin—like a ballroom partner, the machine and I begin to dance. The same basic laws of physics apply, but they're tweaked in ways which teach us new things about the effects of engine configuration on engine braking, of frame dimensions and steering angle on turn-in, of tire size and contact patch.

All good motorcyclists consider themselves lifelong students of the art of riding. Perhaps what makes so many of us incapable of owning only one motorcycle, or the reason why so many of us migrate from one to another as years pass is a subconscious desire to recapture that magical moment when we first learned to ride. The great thing about motorcycling is that once you've gotten proficient in one style of riding, or at one level of riding, you can quickly realize how little you know by learning a new discipline or merely trying to go faster (hopefully on a race track). The single most challenging skill I've ever

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tried to learn as a motorcyclist is dirt track, and after five visits to Texas Tornado Boot Camp and thousands of laps spun on the little TTR125s, I'm only now just starting to see glimpses of how it's done. Talk about feeling like a kid all over again.

So motorcycles are cool, riding is fun, and despite being serious business—riding demands our full attention; it is not for the risk-averse—every time we go for a ride, there is a little boy or girl inside us, whether whispering quietly or screaming like a lunatic, “this is so fucking fun!” The bonus: there are a lot of other motorcyclists with their

Chasing Superbike racer Cory West around the TT track at Texas Tornado Boot Camp in 2016.



Photo: Louise Khoury

own internal kid yelling the same thing, and that makes for a strong sense of community.

In 2013, director Bryan Carroll released *Why We Ride*, a movie about “the passion of the riders and the soul of their machines.”

It is unquestionably a celebration of all the joy, love, and rich rewards that come from riding motorcycles, but it is the human element, portrayed so perfectly by the film's characters both young and old, that resonate with me. After all, riding alone is ok; sometimes spiritual in its own way—but sharing the ride with another is even better. It was this sense of “we” that is central to the movie.

Editor Surj had questioned whether the movie *created a movement* or simply tapped into existing community, so I spoke with Bryan about the movie in late 2016.

Bryan is justifiably proud of *Why We Ride's* online presence: nearly 1 million Facebook likes, 43,000 Instagram followers. This, and the growing popularity of the *Why We Ride* “moto-vational” events are signs that the movie has inspired significant social interaction based on our mutual love of motorcycles.

Bryan is the same person as you and I, the same kid you and I were. He loved riding minibikes, and he looks back with nostalgia on the childhood joy of first learning to ride a motorcycle. In 2011, after many years of editing, directing, and producing films he and his partner James decided to make a movie about Ed Kretz, the legendary racer who won the first Daytona 200 aboard an Indian Sport Scout. It was while interviewing Ed Kretz Senior's son Ed Jr. that the “tangentials,” as Carroll calls them, came out—these family stories of the

bond between father and son, travelling, camping and sharing the experience of riding motorcycles were the inspiration behind *Why We Ride*. To quote Bryan, “We weren't talking about the motorcycles... it had to be a story of ‘we’. It's our story. It's our passion.”

It's easy for us to become jaded and even cynical about riding. Those of us who've been around a while sometimes need to be reminded that it's ok to feel like a kid again, that we should allow ourselves to be inspired by people who do great things on two wheels. *Why We Ride* helps us to

not forget that despite the soul we see and feel in our beloved motorcycles, they only become flesh and blood once held up in front of the mirror of our own experiences aboard them.

I've owned many motorcycles, and I've been on thousands of rides. All were special at the time, some more than

others, but many have been relegated to the rarely visited corners of my memory. My old friend Kari Prager once put the words “Experience Shared” on his CalMoto shop tee shirts. Past the cool machinery, the perfectly executed downshifts, the track and race day

AFM glory days at Thunderhill, 2000.



Photo: Brian J. Nelson

triumphs and defeats, the most meaningful moments of motorcycling, the ones that give my soul succor, are those that involve another human being. The mechanics and aesthetics of motorcycles may be a large part of our community's culture, but they

“I WAS SO EXCITED TO KNOW THAT I WAS GOING TO RIDE MY BIKE THE NEXT DAY AND I STILL FEEL THAT TODAY...EVERY DAY.”
— JAY ALLEN IN WHY WE RIDE

serve as mere points of connection, for it is the unexpected moments of life, love, and joy that reinforce our shared passion.

Like the time during my rookie AFM season when I crashed during a free practice day at Thunderhill, one week before my next race. I destroyed my new helmet, leathers, rear wheel, and swingarm. A fellow competitor loaned me a wheel, and Helmut Kluckner offered me a set of leathers, so I wouldn't miss the race and my opportunity to gain Expert status.

The time at RawHyde Adventure Challenge when I ended up at the top of a mountain above Jawbone Canyon, front tire punctured and no way to fix it. A fellow participant stopped to help me repair it, even though in doing so he jeopardized his own chances at making it back to camp in time to compete in the skills challenge.

Or when I crashed in the desert, smashing my collarbone in to what my surgeon later called “bone dust” with only my friend Carl to help get me back to camp, then to the hospital nine hours later, and eventually home.

The day some random guy in the parking lot at Alice's (he wasn't even on a motorcycle) helped me repair my Mach 1's fractured exhaust hanger with some sort of magic tape, which was good enough to get me home.

Competing in the team challenge with Scott Redding at Texas Tornado Boot Camp, and watching him lift one of our 10-year-old teammates on to his shoulders when we won. That kid, like this kid, will always be a Scott Redding fan.

Or simply a moment of pragmatism and trust between two like-minded souls, stranded by the fickle cruelty of vintage charging systems on a hot fall day in the city by the bay.

These are just a few of the thousands of moments that keep me coming back to motorcycles. I ride because I like the sights and sounds, the feeling of speed and the

sensation of controlling the machine. It never occurs to me that adversity, moments of quiet introspection, or helping and being helped by strangers may be part of the deal, and sometimes they're not. But when they do, they're extraordinary, a perfect confluence of man and machine, of man with mankind—and they're a big part of why I ride. ☺

GREAT BEER!

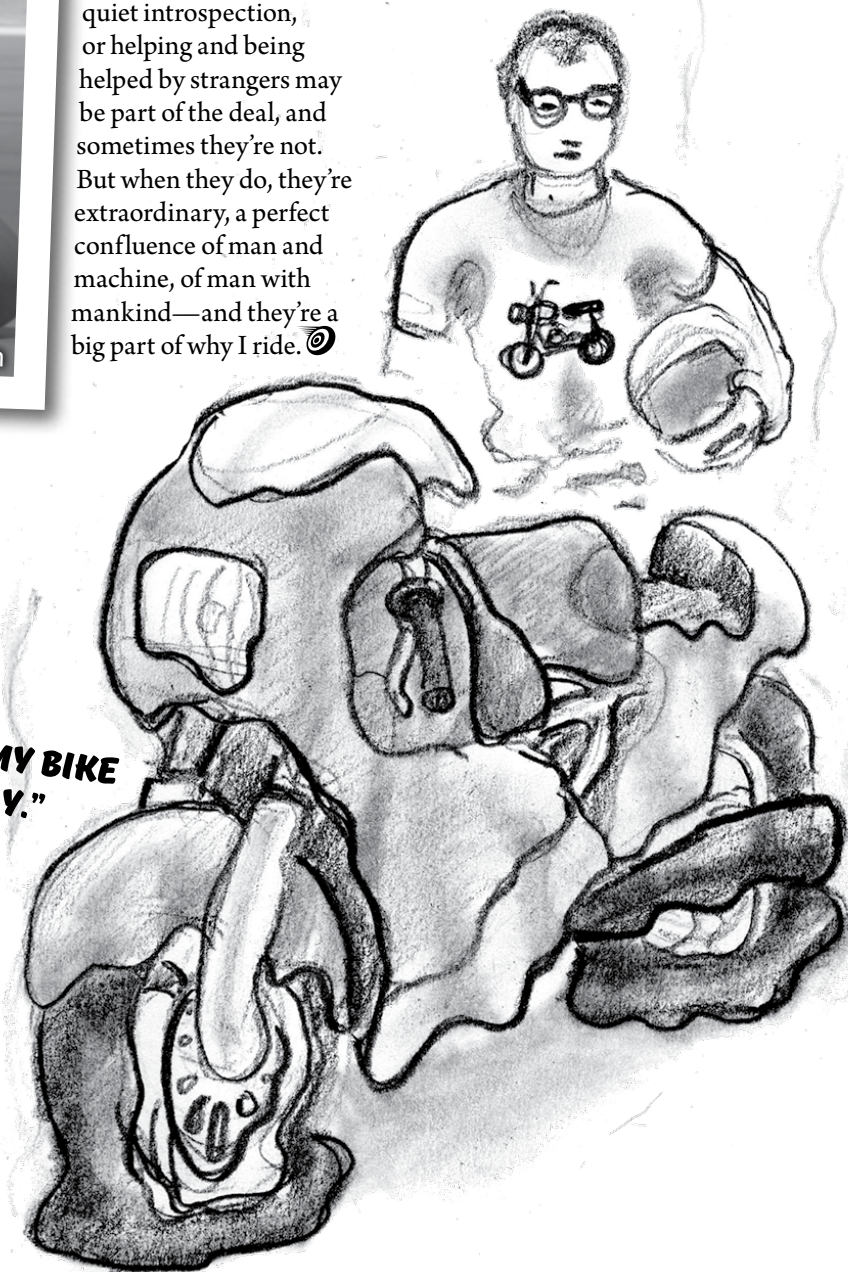
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CONTINENTAL GT

Artwork by Mr. Jensen



chain and who sells faux waxed cotton and unapproved helmets.

It's a commuter disguised as an Ace Cafe rocker's roadburner. So thirty horsepower is plenty. It's what the bike represents, not what it will do, that attracts young urban buyers, the future of motorcycling. Sigh.

The Continental GT, alas, is unsuited to our nearly endless interstate highways, especially here in Northeastern Colorado where your high-rise's underground parking garage is at 5,200ft.

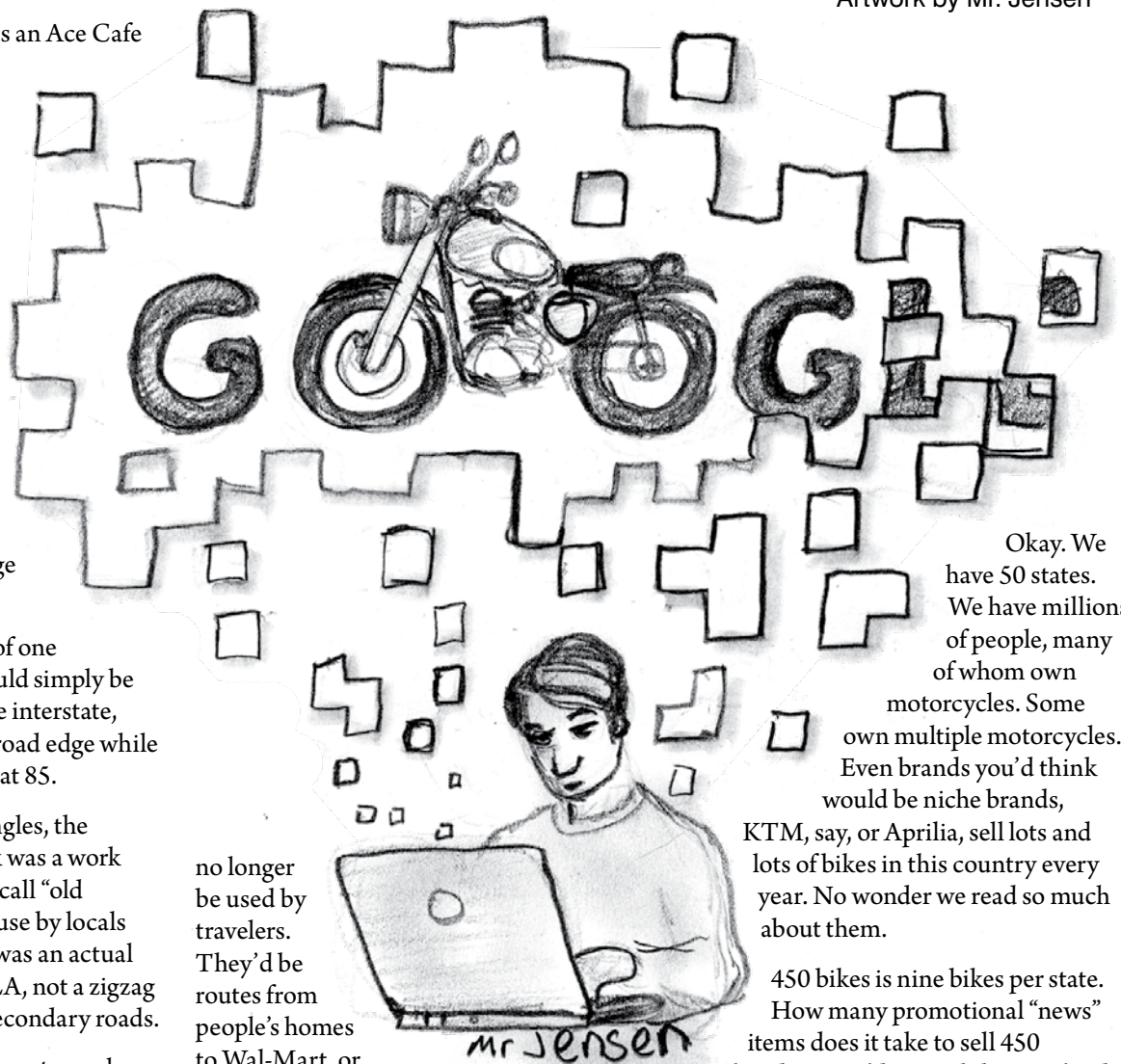
I have to think that a rider of one of those lovely Enfields would simply be *in the way* on a high-altitude interstate, hugging the fog line at the road edge while semi-trailer trucks blast by at 85.

When I owned my early singles, the interstate highway network was a work in progress. Roads we now call "old roads" were still in regular use by locals and by travelers. Route 66 was an actual highway from Chicago to LA, not a zigzag navigational challenge of secondary roads.

Back then a 30-horsepower motorcycle was suitable for any sort of journey. You didn't have to tell Google Maps you wanted to avoid the interstates—as if you were traveling by bicycle.

I live in central Denver. I can, I'm sure, find ways out of town on roads that would allow me to feel safe on a slow motorcycle, but those roads would be one stoplight after another for miles. They're local roads these days, shopping streets, not cross-town highways.

On trips I'd have to search for alternative routes around cities. Those routes would



Okay. We have 50 states. We have millions of people, many of whom own motorcycles. Some own multiple motorcycles. Even brands you'd think would be niche brands,

KTM, say, or Aprilia, sell lots and lots of bikes in this country every year. No wonder we read so much about them.

450 bikes is nine bikes per state. How many promotional "news" items does it take to sell 450 handsome, old-timey bikes in a land as vast, diverse and wealthy as this?

I have read 50 items masquerading as news in print magazines and online, just since the Continental GT was announced (and announced and announced) a few years ago. I have read at least one press release or not very newsworthy article for each of the Royal Enfields of any model sold in Colorado since they have been imported.

I read about the Continental GT before it was introduced, as it was unveiled and each time a new color has become available. Even riders who have no interest in Enfields—apparently meaning almost every US rider—has read about the red ones, yellow ones and black ones. As if the introduction of one more color was as revolutionary as the first Yamaha Enduro, Honda Fireblade or Suzuki GSX-R.

Sales figures notwithstanding, I still enjoy looking at Continental GTs. I imagine living somewhere that would showcase a Continental GT. And I imagine owning one as a second bike, so that I wouldn't wear it out and frustrate myself trying to travel on it.

Who knows, maybe there'd be 10 of us in the Colorado Continental GT Owners Club. And I might be the first who got his bike's oil thoroughly warm. Would those be lasting satisfactions—worth six grand?

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.



no longer be used by travelers. They'd be routes from people's homes to Wal-Mart, or the feed store.

But I wasn't really thinking about Royal Enfields until I saw an item featured on my version of Google News about the new RE

Himalayan. The Himalayan is a 400cc single-cylinder dual-sport. I have never seen a Himalayan, but (oh my)

have I read about them. Thousands of words...

Have *you* seen one? How is it that we know all about them: the broken footrest fiasco, everything, and no one's seen one? Isn't the internet wonderful?

The LA Times article I read was an informal test that was not entirely flattering. There was, no kidding, another rider footpeg disaster: They're welded, not bolted, to the bike's frame, so they're not easily repaired or replaced, and they fold, but not willingly. The tester reported a painful bruised shin.

He also thought to include a few paragraphs about the company's international successes. They sell thousands of backward-looking motorcycles all around the world—675,000 in 2016. Hooray for Royal Enfield!

Sadly they have not had great success in the US. In 2016, Royal Enfield sold just 450 motorcycles in This Great Land. Four hundred and fifty. There are enthusiast farmers in Nebraska with more bikes than that in their barns.

Like many of you, I fondly remember motorcycling in the '60s. I especially liked British singles in those days and I'm still interested in old British single-cylinder bikes and British bikes generally, current and ancient.

So I have told Google News that I am interested in Royal Enfield, the Indian company that has been building old British singles, sorta, for decades.

I like looking at the Continental GT, the Indian company's homage to the '60s 250cc cafe racer of the same name. I only saw one of those 250s fifty years ago, and it was a pretty thing. Even the larger, more celebrated Royal Enfields did not sell well here. Small ones were scarce indeed.

We Yank riders raved among ourselves about rare, focused, sporting motorcycles, BSA Gold Stars, Velocette Thruxtons or Royal Enfield 250 Continental GTs, say, and bought Bonneville's or 450 Hondas.

No doubt the Continental GT is a lovely motorcycle. It's a \$6,000 motorcycle in this country, and it boasts something like 30 horsepower, no more. Thirty is, I'm sure

HOW MANY PROMOTIONAL "NEWS" ITEMS DOES IT TAKE TO SELL 450 HANDSOME, OLD-TIMEY BIKES IN A LAND AS VAST, DIVERSE AND WEALTHY AS THIS?

you'll agree, not many horses. Vibration from the authentically vibratory engine limits cruising speed to 65 or so.

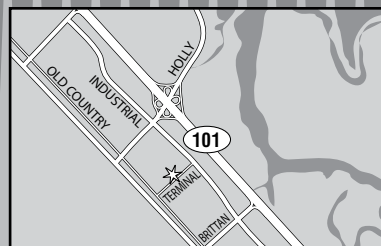
I feel sure the Continental GT was aimed at urban youth, bearded moto-commuters who're bored with bicycles and crave musty long-swinging-kick authenticity as long as there's an outlet or two for phone charging. And a nearby dealer who'll adjust the

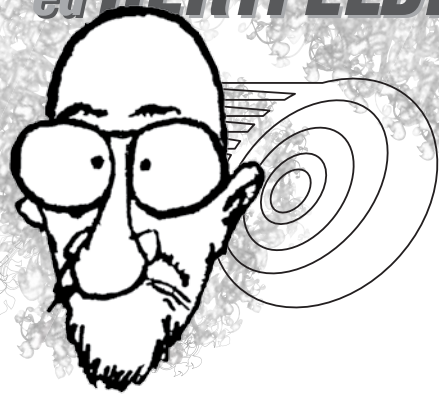
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There was a time, long ago, when the only things needed for staging a successful enduro were a staple gun, a few hundred arrows (homemade, with a stamp made from a rubber floor mat), a roll of white adhesive tape, paper, pencils and some old donated trophies.

These donated trophies were usually topped with the figure of a man about to deliver a bowling ball big enough to make a 7-10 split the easy way. We'd unscrew the figure and glue on an exceptionally flat motorcycle was cast from lead type slugs that'd been carried out of the Courier Post pressroom in lunch pails that weighed two pounds going in and forty-six pounds coming out.

In this era of product-liability litigation, it's almost comical to remember how we made those little flat motorcycles over the kitchen stove. Any growing boy without a casting set for lead soldiers, fishing sinkers and flat motorcycles, was grossly underprivileged and doomed to go through life without a single burn scar on his wrists, his eyes not permanently downcast in hopes of cast-off automobile wheel weights in the gutter.

We got the adhesive tape from the final few feet off the discarded rolls used to tape the ankles of semi-pro football players. The tape was unrolled—"Sticky side down, Harry, sticky side down!"—on the top of a reasonably clean picnic table and sliced into squares; then the riders' numbers were inked in with a laundry marker pen. Forty numbers were usually sufficient. If more riders showed, the adhesive tape squares were sliced progressively smaller, down to postage-stamp size.

The usual practice was for a rider to pick any number stuck to the table. I remember hanging back at my first enduro until a dozen riders signed up. I paid my \$2 and received—don't you know?—the only number left: *one*.

As a guess, I'd say 900 arrows were used on 80 miles of trail back then; today, due to the tight, twisting trails needed to slow the vastly improved motorcycles (and riders), almost 5,000 markers are used.

After one Sandy Lane enduro, someone volunteered me to gather up all the club gear and return it to Mike's basement. Used to be, check crews wrote a competitor's arrival time on a slip of paper and stuck it between his lips. Somebody else entered that figure in a copy book and the racer kept the slip as his receipt.

The newer checkpoints are packed with hardware: welded iron uprights for the flip cards, the flip cards themselves, electronic

timers, clipboards for the back-up sheets, replacement score cards for riders who lost the ones they started with (yellow, not white, to keep them honest).

All the gear from twelve checkpoints had to be packed into my son Tom's van (I'd borrowed his because someone had borrowed mine) along with boxes of pennants we'd used to jazz up the start line. There were also boxes of trophies that were not picked up by winners who left before the enduro ended, destined to be carried along to the next ten enduros before crossing paths with their new owner, and hundreds of metal and wooden stakes that held up the no parking signs. Last to go into the van, because we could slide them on top of everything else, were the scoreboards: 4' x 8' sheets of marine plywood painted white, neatly lettered for each class of competitors and numbered to show the top 10.

Nails on the boards held finishers' score cards which moved lower and lower as better scores were posted until, finally, the concerned competitor "dropped off the board."

On the way home Murphy—you know, the Murphy that makes the laws—caught up with me on Jackson Road. The borrowed van's left rear tire went flat.

Now, before we loaded the van, I'd noticed Tom had built a foot-high platform covering a good bit of the floor—a nice place to put an air mattress with storage space underneath. I opened the back doors of the van and unloaded all the gear I could reach easily. Then, opening a panel on the back of the platform, I found the jack and lug wrench, but there was a solid divider in the middle.

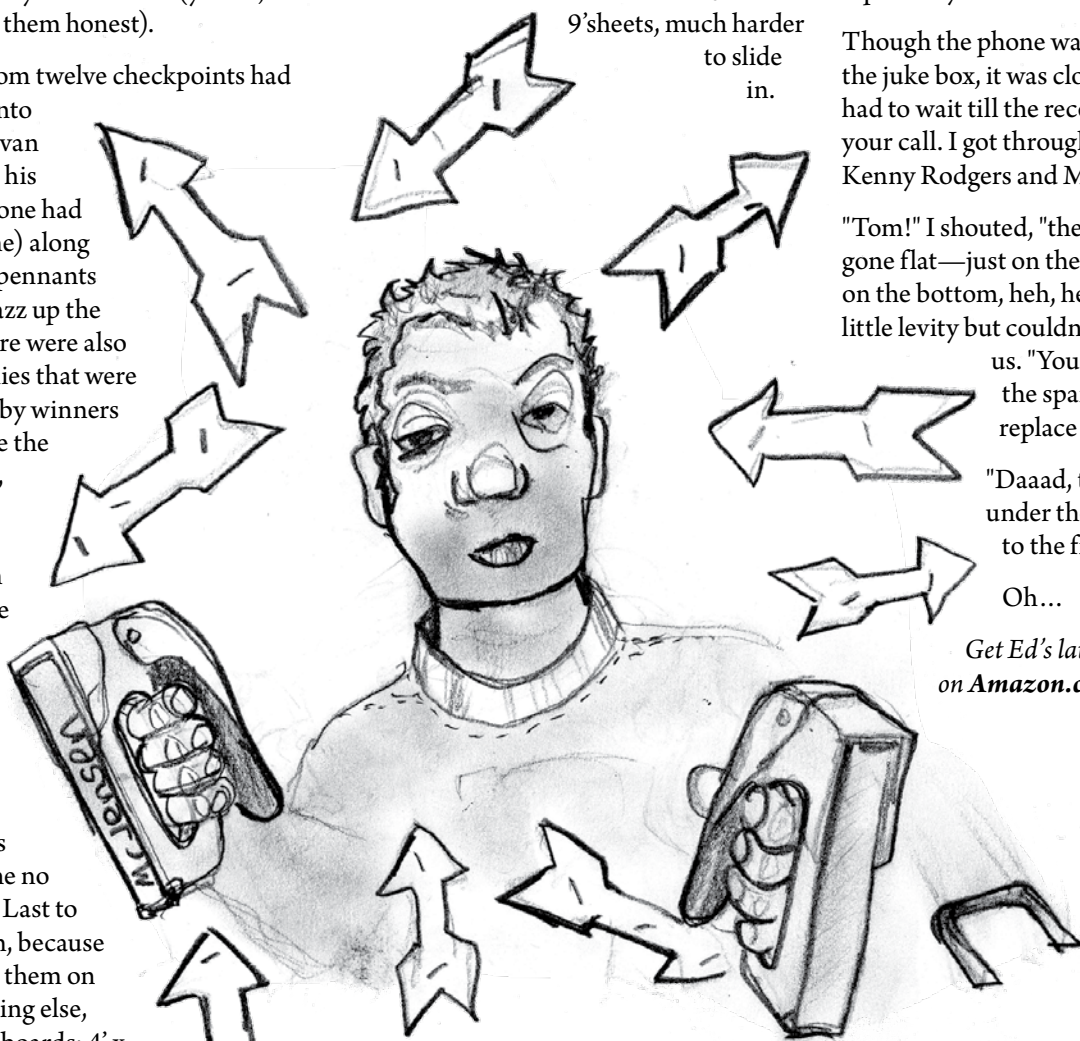
Great, just great. I had to unload the rest of the gear through the side door to get at the spare tire.

I was dripping with sweat from the heat and frustration. There was stuff strewn over every inch of the school bus stop I was parked in.

There was *no spare tire* under the damn platform!

Nothing, nada, zilch. Dust bunnies, empty paper cups, but no tire.

It took me almost an hour to repack the stuff. The 4' x 8' sheets of plywood had somehow turned themselves into 5' x 9'sheets, much harder to slide in.



I hiked back to the last bar I'd passed to use their restroom, phone, and whatever cool liquid they could offer.

Though the phone wasn't actually bolted to the juke box, it was close enough that you had to wait till the record changed to make your call. I got through to Tom between Kenny Rodgers and Merle Haggard.

"Tom!" I shouted, "the left rear tire has gone flat—just on the bottom, Tom, just on the bottom, heh, heh!" I tried to inject a little levity but couldn't convince either of us. "You must have taken out the spare tire and forgot to replace it."

"Daaad, the spare tire isn't under the platform! It's bolted to the front of the van."

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Artwork by Mr. Jensen



Chief, World Adventure Affairs Desk

“That’s the ultimate adventure riding motorcycle, if you know what I mean,” said the salesman as he approached the customer who was eyeballing a black BMW R1200GS Adventure model on the showroom floor.

The potential buyer quickly commented, “That’s the ultimate immediate divorce decree my wife needs to clean out the savings account and take the house. How about that F700GS over there—what can you say about how much adventure I’ll get if I buy that?”

“The F700GS is a very fine motorcycle, and a bit more affordable if you’re a budget-strapped adventurer,” answered the salesman. He then added, “But first, before we walk over there and check out that little 700, why don’t you sit on the 1200, see how it feels, and then you can try the 700.”

The customer handed his Harley-Davidson helmet and leather jacket to the salesman and carefully climbed on the 1200. He gripped the handlebars and squirmed around on the seat to settle in his 55-year-old buttocks. Looking down at the switches, buttons and indicators, he said, “Man, this looks like what the pilot of a Boeing 787 must see when he straps into his captain’s chair.”

The psychologically astute and well-trained salesman quickly offered a perfectly-timed positive affirmation to the potential customer’s opinion, saying, “Yes sir, you’re clearly on top of the adventure curve. When you take control

of this machine you are the ultimate captain of adventure. Look over the windscreen and imagine how you would look and what you would be seeing as you piloted it over the Alaska Highway or possibly Russia’s famed Road of Bones.”

The customer gazed ahead for a few moments, conjuring as suggested the vision of how he’d look standing on the pegs, dodging potholes on his way to Alaska as smoothly as the Boeing Dreamliner could fly over storms.

Returning to reality, the customer studied the forward body work and next the rear panniers, then said, “It’s feels a bit wide at the knees, looks wide in the back. It feels comfortable but must be heavy.”

His reality check included his subconscious whispering to him, “This thing feels like my neighbor’s Goldwing. I feel like I’m sitting in my Lazy Boy recliner while watching the Sunday football game with a beer in one hand and a bag of chips in the other. The only thing missing is the old lady yelling at me about falling asleep again and spilling beer on the carpet.”

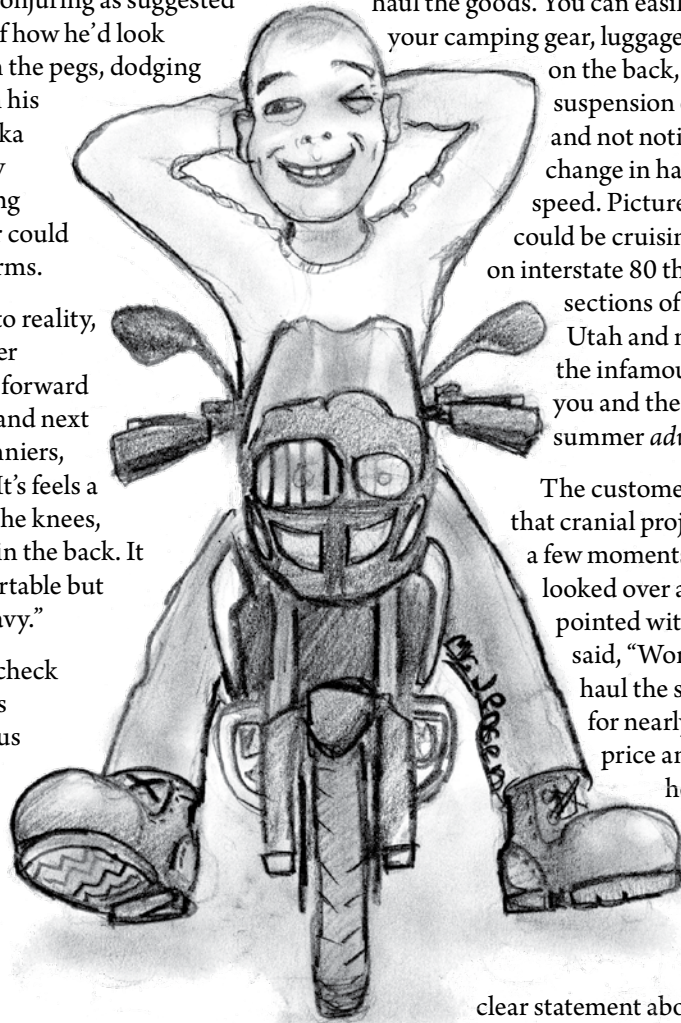
The salesman spoke with the smoothness of a slippery tip-calculating waiter in a restaurant when asked by an idiot

tourist what he recommended on the menu, saying, “In its class, the weight is comparable to others, but with the impressive 125 horsepower it’s made to haul the goods. You can easily carry all your camping gear, luggage and the Mrs. on the back, adjust the suspension electronically and not notice the weight change in handling or speed. Picture how you could be cruising at 80 mph on interstate 80 through rugged sections of Wyoming or Utah and not be fighting the infamous winds, both you and the Mrs. on your summer adventure.”

The customer pondered that cranial projection for a few moments, and then looked over at the F700GS, pointed with his chin, and said, “Won’t that 700 haul the same goods for nearly half off the price and over half the horsepower?”

“Well, yes it will. However, you are making a

clear statement about adventure when you are on the 1200 Adventure versus the 700GS. The looks you get on the 1200 from other real adventure riders, anywhere in the world, tells you they know you are in the ultimate adventure rider category because you have chosen the ultimate adventure riding motorcycle over the smaller, less expensive models.”



The customer carefully dismounted the 1200, took back his helmet and jacket from the salesman, and walked slowly around the motorcycle... twice. He unknowingly was making a less lustful inspection while the image of his wife’s booted feet on the rear foot pegs during his annual two weeks of solo holiday riding freedom kept flashing on his cranial flat screen, “Delete!”

He then walked over to the F700GS with the salesman in tow. As he walked around it the salesman described technical aspects of what he thought the customer was looking at, like tire size and oil filter location. He was careful to not offer any verbal suggestions for the customer to compute to a look of adventure.

“Let me sit on it. I want to see how it feels,” the customer said as he handed his helmet and jacket to the salesman.

Once on the firm seat, feet on the pegs and hands gripping the handlebars, he noticed there was no need to wiggle his buttocks into a softer mode. Looking over at the 1200, he asked the salesman, “Besides having the ultimate look, and spending twice the money, why buy that 1200 over this 700?”

The salesman, sensing twice the price slipping away, opted to go with his last best sales pitch, a final option that he’d been taught was a successful hook, the psychological deal maker. He stepped closer to the customer and softly said, “Some buyers find the 1200 their secret prescription for a solution to SPS, if you know what I mean.”

The customer, cold steely-eyed and with no smile, looked at the salesman straight in his eyes and held the deadly stare until the salesman blinked and looked away.

Dismounting the F700GS, the customer took back his helmet and jacket from the red-faced salesman, and said, less quietly, “Yeah, I know of Small Penis Syndrome. That final suggestion, added to the factors of the Mrs. and my unstrapped budget, has weighed heavily on my decision. I need this 700. Let’s go do the paperwork right now. I’ll be paying with USBF.”

“Ahhh, errr...USDF?” asked the salesman.

“United States Ben Franklins, as in the two wads of hundred-dollar bills, each a minimum of six inches long, that I will immediately pull out of my two tightly packed front pants pockets, if you know what I mean.”

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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Shadow, Sportster, Hayabusa. We catch on to their model numbers, those gobblediegoop, alphabet soup titles like CB750, K100, SV650, FXR. We even get wise to nicknames like the Flying Brick, the Widow Maker, the Big One, the Black Bomber, Gixxers, Bonnies, Bezas and Beemers that come in Airhead and Oilhead; the varieties of Milwaukee Iron: Knucklehead, Panhead, Shovelhead, blockhead and gimme-head. We get hip to calling Ducatis “Ducks,” claiming KTM stands for “Kick Til Midnight” translating BMW to “Big Money Waster.”

We try different bikes, find out what they can do—and what they can be tweaked to do. We discover that there are a thousand different ways to ride a bike, with infinite variations under each style. There are cafe racers; cruisers; sportbikes; track bikes; dual-sports; flat trackers; rat rods; scooters; naked bikes; scramblers; streetfighters; dragsters; baggers; sidecars; dirtbikes; dirtbaggers; two-smokers; Wankels; mopeds; customs; gussied-up turds; farkle-clad tourers, and gas, electric

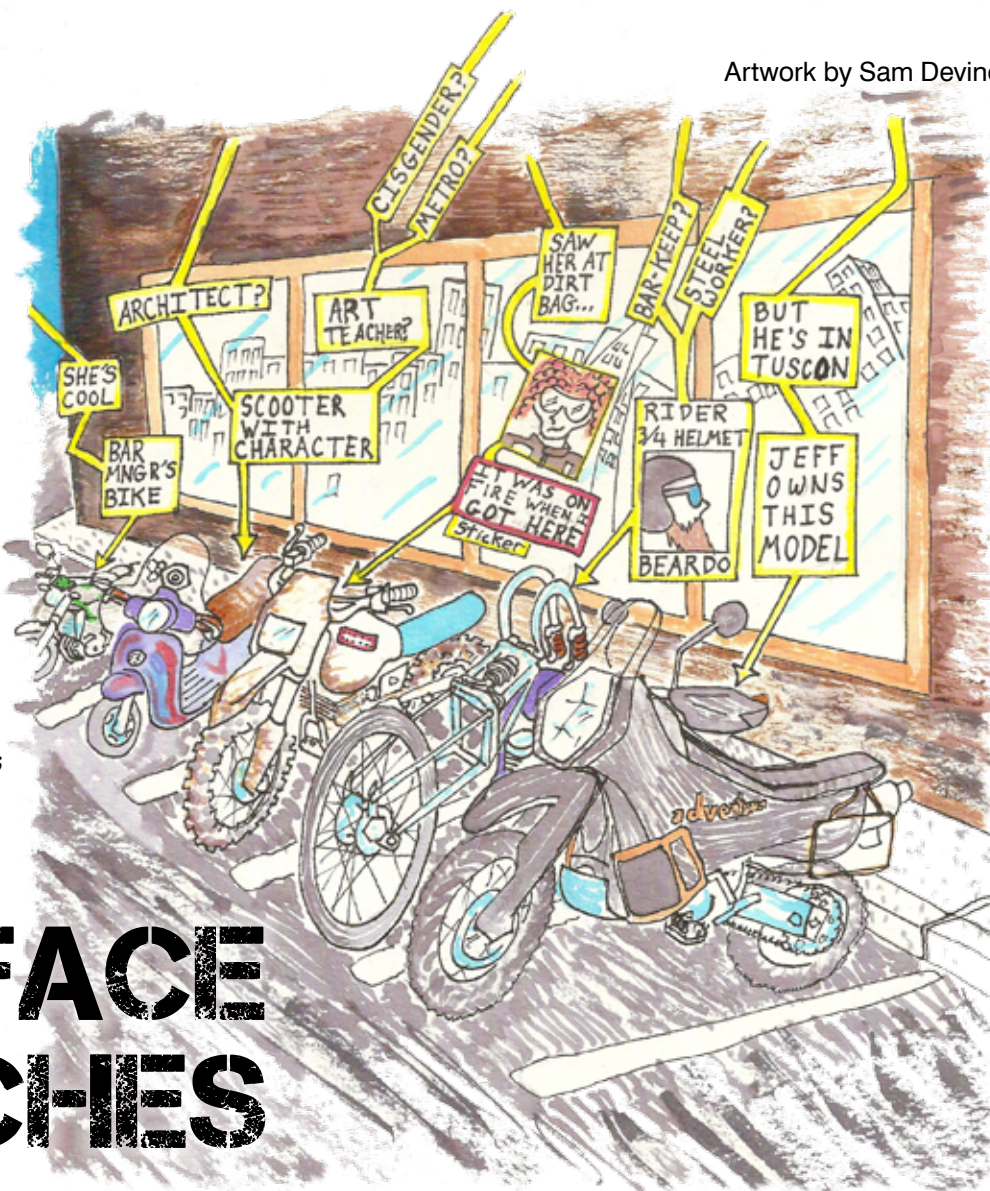
SURFACE SCRATCHES

and steam-powered contrivances for every intention. The details cake up like mud on a fender until we hardly even see bikes any longer. We don't just see make, model and serial number. We see memories, stories, lives. We imagine the rider that matches the bike. We picture ourselves on the bike, scheming new customizations.

We remember friends we've ridden with. Sometimes we actually recognize a friend's bike. Then, perhaps, we realize that friend was driven bonkers by the tech-boom—particularly the influx of the tight pants known as “Nantucket Reds”—and he rode that bike with his whole life away from Silicon Valley and into Tuscon.

The associations spiral out until there is no wizardly surgeon with any mystical scalpel capable of cutting bikes out of our lives. The water is murky with two-wheeled tire tracks. As the bikes dissolve into our day-to-day world, they lose all their call-signs, becoming nameless pieces of metal again—tools, rolling wristwatch puzzles that let people chase dreams. The parts we get from shops or in the mail—in their brown paper packages and stapled, plastic OEM bags—they start as float bowl gaskets and lowering links and meld into camping trips and conversations, early morning meet ups and empty, winding country roads.

To some folks, a bike is just a bike. They've never stopped to consider the differences between models, never pondered who the rider might be. And that's fine but it's also what separates bike nuts from the rest of society. If, when you look at a 350 EXC, your mind is whisked away to the side of a dirt road and three friends fixing a flat; or when you see a 1150 GS, you think of your roommate; or when you see a CL350 you remember pushing your friends wrecked



The fake woodgrain counters are cracked and chipped, fading to a strange nameless hue of pink. Smooth patches of luminous plasticity have been worn on them by packages and oily hands. There's a framed sign for a Star Trek stamp collection... they can't possibly still be selling it, can they?

Don't get your hopes up. This is the post office—and the second attempt at retrieving a package. Consider it lucky if the motorcycle parts are actually here this time. Dismiss any notion of “USA Forever” stamps with Spock's hand silhouetted around the Enterprise. Just hope there's no five-dollar penny-counting (“fifty-five, fifty-six, fifty-eight—oh, that's not right! Let me start over. Now: one, two...”) or bad noise from some junkie desperately seeking some care package from home.

Miraculously, after a little wait, the parts are actually here. Unbelievable.

Time to push the luck, just a little...

“You don't have any of the Star Trek stamps left, do you?”

“No.”

Dammit! Of course not!

“Ok, thanks.”

The package has come from Germany, bearing an import sticker declaring: “Two pieces of iron for motorcycle.” Gotta love zee Germans. No sense labeling the package more specifically than that. “DR350 lowering links” would be needlessly confusing to the customs agent—perhaps even alarming! “Just what type of explosive compound is DR350?” “Where is this ‘lowering link’ in the terrorist cell chain?”

Regardless, visiting this post office in the years to come will cause a certain nostalgia for these metal dog bones. The tedious process of waiting in line, the joy at obtaining them, the rewarding and delicious egg sandwich at the cafe next door. The cafe's strange red shrines and unfamiliar music... The memory of the bike will be pungent in these places, recalling where it was parked, how it behaved in the rain, wondering how the parts will change its feel.

We attach memories to things that affect us, both good and bad. As motorcyclists, we naturally associate memories with bikes. Not only do we remember the places our bikes bring us, but we paint invisible layers of memory on motorcycles we encounter. We learn their manufacturers and engine sizes. We learn their names:

ride onto a trailer; or perhaps when you look at a post office you think: “Two pieces of Iron for Motorcycle,” well, you just might be some kind of “motorcyclist.”

“I'll be seeing you...”

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

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-CityBike Classifieds Editor

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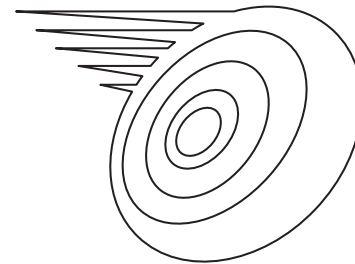
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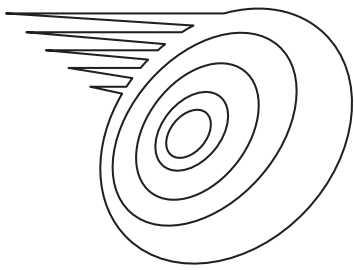
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I have been "The Voice" of Ducati Island at Moto G.P. ('98 - '06) the Wilseyville Hare Scrambles ('98 - '12) ...Most recently, La Ducati Day, La Honda, MOTORAMA Car Show, Lafayette, sub' Announcer at Continental Sports Car Challenge Laguna Seca, Santa Rosa flattrack for Circle Bell Motorsports... and more... References and resume available. Find me on Facebook: "Duffyduzz Promotions" for all contact info - or - call 510-292-9391 - or - E/M: duffyduzz@yahoo.com



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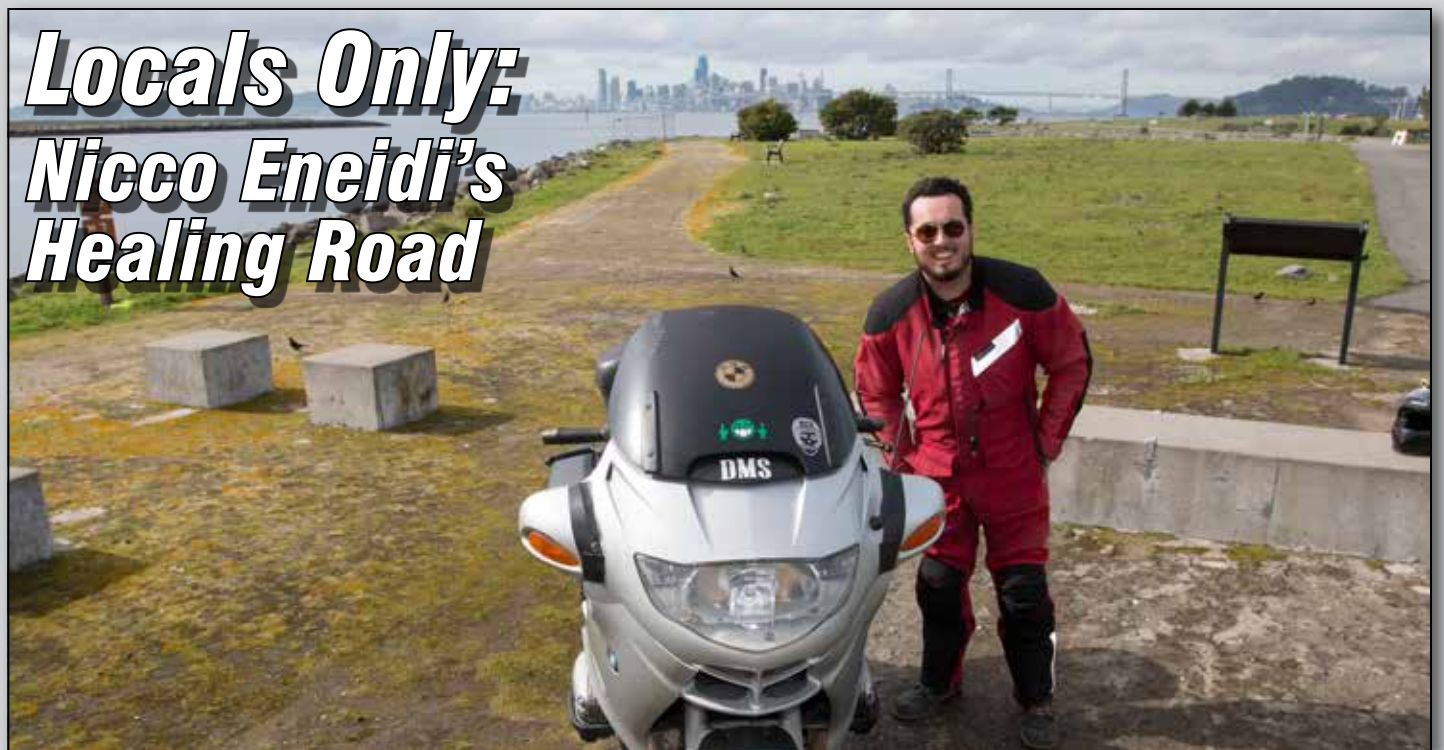
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Locals Only: Nicco Eneidi's Healing Road



By Surj Gish
Photos by Surj Gish

I first met Nicco Eneidi at *CityBike's* 2016 Ride Friday Give Back benefit ride. Gearing up in the parking lot, he told me he'd just returned to the Bay Area after being on the road for three months. I said something like "that sounds interesting, we should talk," and went about the business of running the RFGB. I later learned that Nicco wasn't just footloosin' about the country, fancy free, but that part of the ride had been about spreading his father's ashes.

In early February, Nicco and I met up at Middle Harbor Shoreline Park to talk about his travels and take pictures of him and the R1150RT he put 14,000 miles on over three months. We talk of his route, destinations, national parks... but I'm interested in his motivation.

Like many of us, he longed to escape the daily requirements of normal life, to disappear on a cross-country ride for a while, but found those shackles hard to break:

"I'd wanted to do a cross-country trip for the past few years, but then this last year, I kinda got to the point where I couldn't take that much time off from my job, can't afford to pay my rent the whole time I'm gone... it's basically not doable. And then, my father passed away in the summer and at that point, I was like: fuck it man, now or never. I could just work the same shitty job that I've hated for the past five years, be in the same place... or get on my bike and go."

He acquired the RT on the cheap from his housemate and hit the road, without much in the way of specific plans:

"It was pretty sudden. I quit my job, sold off my other bikes and decided to spread his ashes across the country... just any place that was beautiful and seemed right. But also, my grandfather had passed away

there... but we all just kinda never got together to go up there to do it.

"So I had my father's ashes in one saddlebag, and my grandpa's in the other saddlebag... I rode up as far as you can, and from there there's a chairlift you can take another thousand feet higher. I'd originally planned to spread his ashes while hiking around up there, but I'm on the chairlift, and there's no one around, and I'm like... might as well just do it here while I'm up in the air."

We share a laugh over the melancholic scenario, and then Nicco turns pensive:

"I had this misconception that when I got back, you know, everything would be like, *ok* again. It fuckin' wasn't, man. You know? It's still difficult, almost more difficult. Now I'm back, I'm no longer *on a mission*, and there's more time to think

about things.

"It definitely helped a lot to be on the road, it was definitely a healing road. For sure. I don't know why I thought everything would be better, magically, after I got back. But it was very much needed." 🌀

Nicco's onboard maintenance log.

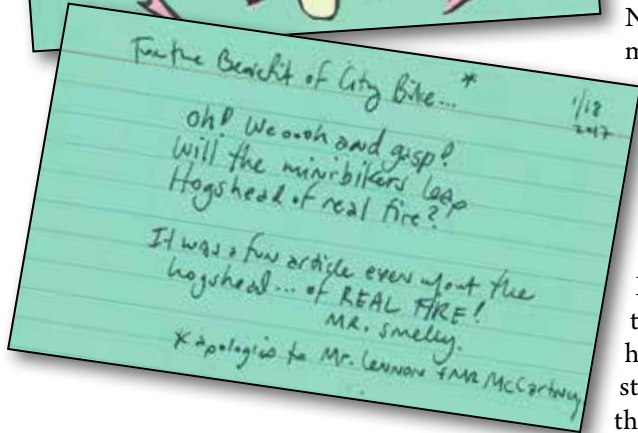


three years ago and originally we had this plan, we were all gonna get together and spread his ashes on Mount Hood, outside of Portland.

"My grandparents actually met on that mountain, got married on that mountain... there's a lot of family history



Tankslapper



Well Jeff, calling it a “study” might be churching it up a bit. But we did take a bunch of old helmets down to Bell’s lab in Scotts Valley and give them a good rogering, with professional guidance from the lab staff, or course. You can read that story (“The Truth About Helmets” – November 2014) in one of the many glorious PDFS available on our back issues page at CityBike.com/back.

Unsuitable

Andrew, from Berkeley, or Berserkely, as the rest of the US has undoubtedly started calling the home of 924 Gilman Street, wrote to ask about the Carnegie legal situation we wrote about back in January (“Surprise, Surprise: Carnegie Expansion Lawsuit” – News, Clues & Rumors, Janury 2017):

I just read your story on the lawsuit filed over Carnegie expansion. Who

has been sued, and what support can we send them to fight the lawsuit?



Photo: Angelica Rubalcaba



Editor Surj in the lab at Bell.

Photo: Angelica Rubalcaba

Good question, Andrew. This stuff is maddeningly difficult to keep track of. There are now three lawsuits, filed by Alameda County; an alliance consisting of Friends of Tesla Park, the Center for Biological Diversity and the Alameda Creek Alliance; and

SPRAWLDEF (Sustainability Parks Recycling and Wildlife Legal Defense Fund).

Mas Baja

We met Zeke at our man Sam Devine’s Any Two Wheels show a couple years ago, thanks to his striking orange Laverda. He’s been to Baja recently, too—and he took CityBike with him!

For the past three years I’ve been bringing my DRZ400S down to a place in Baja called Canyon De Guadalupe, on the edge of Laguna Salada, southwest of Mexicali. The first year, I had just bought the DRZ and had never ridden off-road. “At the age of 44” I thought, “Why not teach yourself off-road riding in a remote canyon 50 miles south of the border. What could go wrong?” I survived, and no Med-Evacs were needed.

I felt I could have done better, so I went to Dirt Bike Camp with Kevin Anderson, back when he had his track up in Orland. I learned that a DRZ400 is like riding Bullwinkle Moose around a motocross track, and anything in the 200cc and below range is more Rocket J. Squirrel. “Think Outside The Berm!” I would yell as the DRZ entered another wormhole and reappeared somewhere else on the track.



Second year in Baja saw a better suspended DRZ with a smaller front sprocket and some K270s cruising across the dry lake bed where I found these giant sign posts marking a path through the desert, each with a water cache. “Damn” I thought, “I wish I had a copy of City Bike. And a camera.”

Third year (this year) I again bought a dirt bike a month before the trip. A Yamaha TW200. A machine designed to make the most inexperienced dirt biker feel confident in sandy terrain surrounded by cactus and Burro shit. Hauling both there solved the “Who gets to ride the dirt bike today?” debate. So here it is, CityBike, myself and 2-time Dirt Bike Camp alum Jen “JD” Devine at Sign Post Seven, Laguna Salada, Baja California, Mexico, 32.20 N, 115.66 W.

Fun Fact: Under the armor, I’m wearing an “Any Two Wheels” t-shirt!

Boxed Out

We got an anonymous email from a North Bay reader:

FYI the Santa Rosa boxes at The Motorcycle Shop and Santa Rosa BMW are empty :-)



Photo: Surj Gish

Thanks for the heads up, nameless friend. Sad face indeed!

We try hard to have just enough copies in our racks without too many left over at the end of the month, but it’s hard to know. Someone spills some oil or cleans their birdcage, grabs a bunch of extra copies, and all the sudden we’ve got an empty rack crisis on our hands! 🙄

Keep A Lid On It

Jeff emailed to ask about our helmet-bashing history:

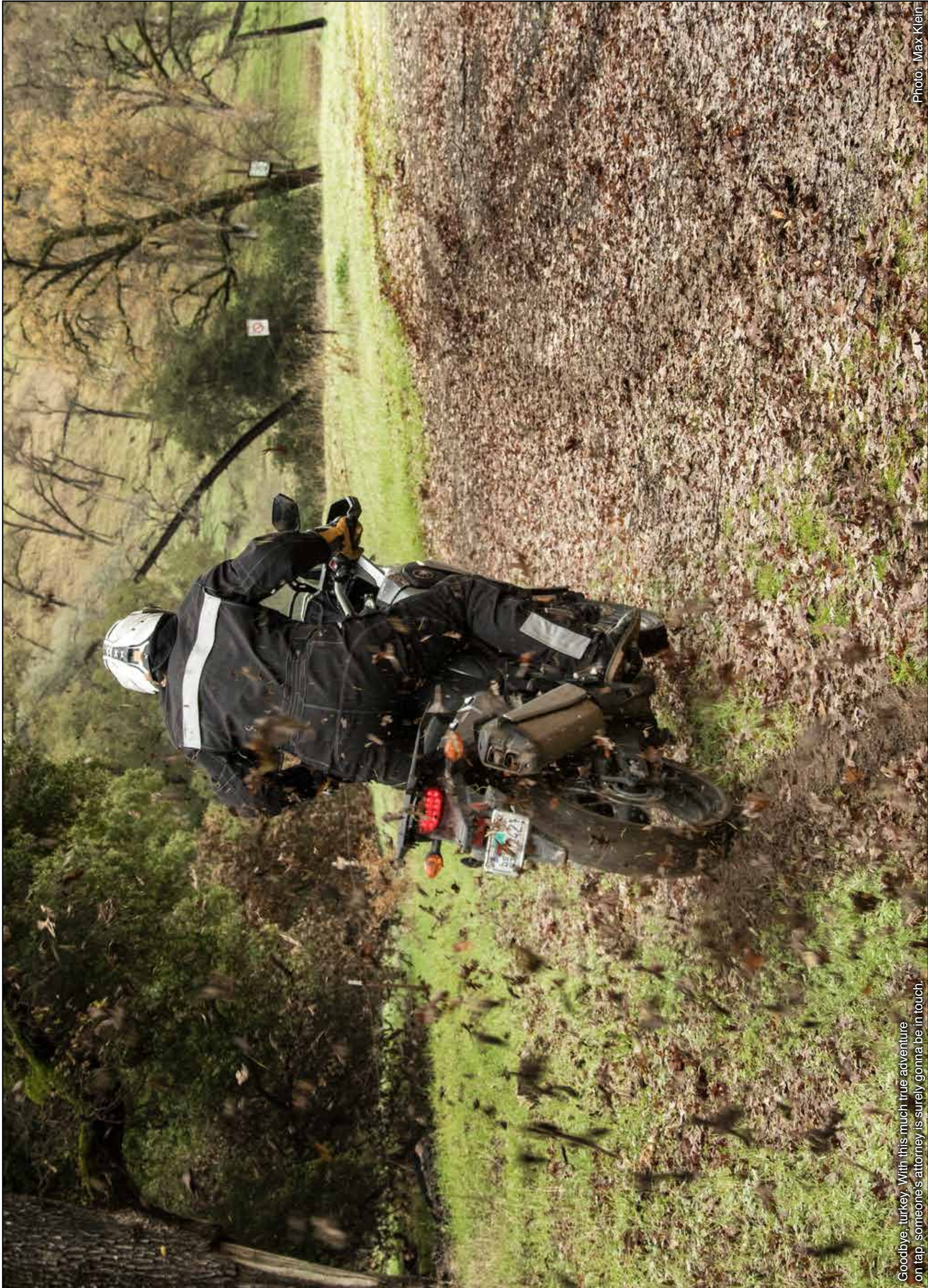
I understand you guys gathered up a whole bunch of helmets and had Bell helmet test them. I was wondering where I could get the results of that study please? Thanks! And thanks for doing your part to make Riders safer!

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Photo: Max Klein

PERSPECTIVE

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