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2016 Husqvarna FE350
Long-Term Test

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in Morocco**
From the Sahara
to the Sea

March/April No. 115

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Far-Rider Comic
"The Ranch" and "Bad News"

Small Miracles on the Road
to Real de Catorce



THE BASILISK

ENDURO TOURING KIT

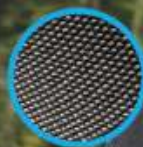


Photo by
Drew Ruiz

Jacket Also Available in Green

ENDURO REDEFINED.

The Basilisk is our waterproof/breathable enduro-touring kit, for long-distance, multi-day trips through primarily off-road terrain. It combines super-premium materials with clean lines and minimalist design. With an articulated fit for freedom of motion and easy layering, the Basilisk is designed to work with stand-alone armor systems for superior protection and versatility. It packs smaller than a traditional ADV jacket, for stashing on your bike when things get hot.



FEATURES

- Double layer Super Fabric® abrasion panels
- Fully taped construction with 20 mm seam tape
- Articulated anatomical over-armor fit
- 6 Mesh lined vents with flow-through venting
- 'Dirt Skirt' internal weather seal with silicone gripper elastic
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MATERIALS

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- Cohesive® embedded cord adjustment



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Editor's Saddle

Everyday Adventures

How often do you go on adventures? That probably depends on your personal definition of adventure and the type of riding you enjoy. Daily commuters, weekend dual-sport rippers and vagabond overlanders all have different senses of adventure. While what's normal for one rider could be unthinkable to another, I'm sure we can appreciate the key to a good adventure is change and new experiences.

ADMoto features stories of people who have made tremendous sacrifices to race or travel on two wheels, but adventure takes many forms. Because adventure is largely relative, it doesn't have to be grand or expensive. Maybe it's as simple as turning onto that gravel road you've always wanted to check out. I've spent many hours scrolling around satellite maps to find nearby unpaved roads just to keep in practice. Moreover, a lot of people often find interesting bits of history or landscapes are much closer than we think. Our "backyards" are often full of surprises.

Not all of us are fortunate enough to be surrounded by people who ride. More than a few of us had to learn impelled largely by our own desires. Even as a new or mostly solo rider, finding a good community to share your experiences with is extremely important. Attending rallies and events is not only a great way to meet kindred spirits, but find new roads, learn new skills and hear some amazing stories to boot.

Motorcycling is fun, so keep it that way! I believe every adventure seeker understands life is a short and precious opportunity to be happy. Spring is here so take that weekend trip, check out that new road and set sail for a rally. Whoever you are, however you ride, be sure to sneak a little extra adventure in to your life. Let us know how it goes... we love to hear about it!

Ride Safe, Have Fun,

Carl Parker, Publisher

Let us know your thoughts on this editorial by contacting us through the **AdventureMotorcycle.com** website or sending an email to **Info@AdventureMotorcycle.com**.

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- Patented Design



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ON THE COVER: Lennart takes a moment to love life on a new *Ténéré 700*. Photo by Lennart Andreas. Artwork by Carl Parker.



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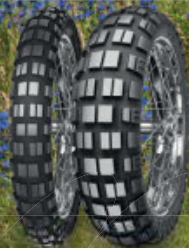
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STAFF

PUBLISHER **Carl Parker**
SENIOR EDITOR **Paul H Smith**
ASSOCIATE EDITOR **Susan Dragoo**
WEB EDITOR **Alex Marsh**
CONTRIBUTING EDITOR **Sam Manicom**
ADVERTISING DIRECTOR **Dan DiMaio**
ACCOUNTING **Wenling Parker**

CONTRIBUTORS

FEATURE **Tim James**
RIDE REPORTS **Manu Torres**
Stephen P. Thomas
Cheryl Jones
BIKE REVIEWS **Lennart Andreas**
Neale Bayly
PRODUCT REVIEWS **Pablo Espinosa**
Andrew Nguyen
Aleena Wilson
Alex Marsh
PHOTOGRAPHY **Liam Nuhning**
Ray Mackenzie
Ivana Colakovska
FAR RIDER COMIC **Deniz Gulmez**
CROSSWORD **Eglé Gerulaityté**

CREATIVE SERVICES

AGENCY **Penn Creative**
CREATIVE DIRECTOR **Sierra Skidmore**
MANAGING DIRECTOR **Jenny Strauss**
GRAPHIC DESIGNERS **Matthew Deegan**
Amy Scheidegger Ducos

EDITORIAL OFFICE

14506 Lee Rd, Suite G, Chantilly, VA 20151
Info@AdventureMotorcycle.com
AdventureMotorcycle.com
571-485-2910

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MOVING? Send address changes to Info@AdventureMotorcycle.com or write to Adventure Motorcycle, 14506 Lee Rd, Suite G, Chantilly, VA 20151

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2020 FirstGear Heated Gear

by Pablo Espinosa

I recently tested heated gear from the folks at *FirstGear*, specifically a few bits from their 2020-year lineup: *12V Jacket Liner*, *Pant Liner* and *5V Puffer Vest*. Though I'm pretty old school (K.I.S.S.), when it comes to my approach to ADV motorcycling gear, I was curious about how these items would incorporate into my lifestyle, both on and off the bike. The following are some of my insights after putting the gear through real-world situations.

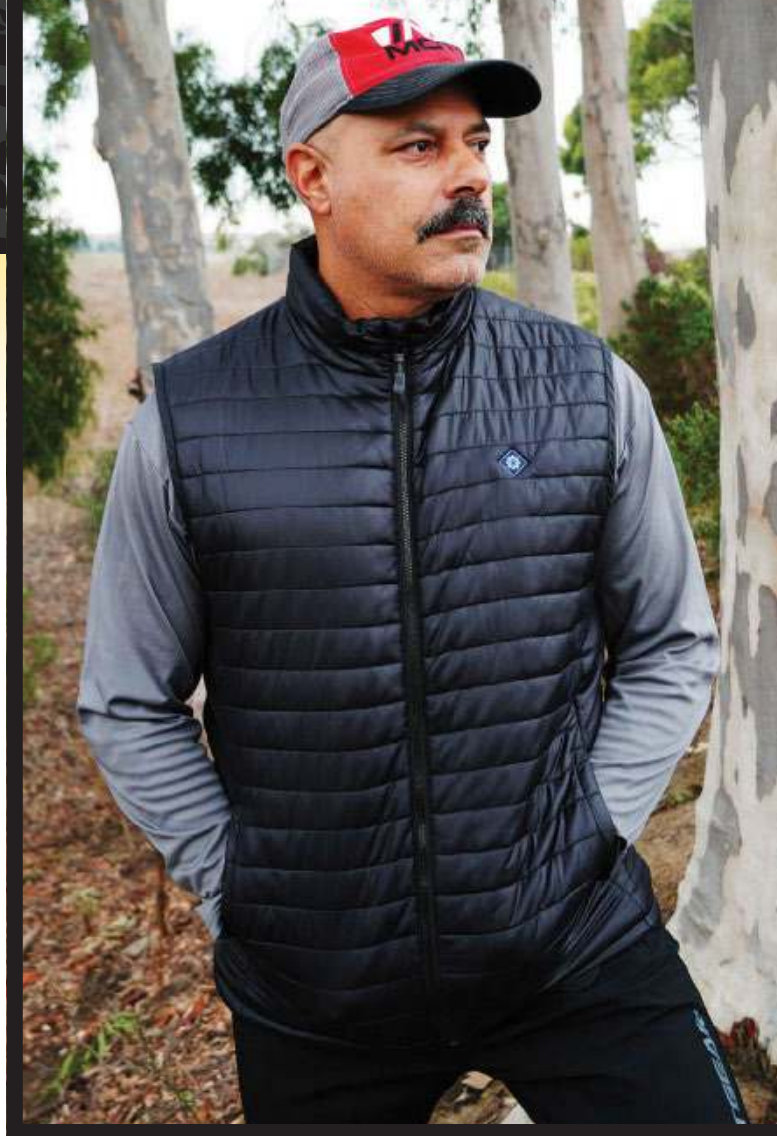
When using the *12V Jacket Liner* and the *Pant Liner*, you have the option to use this gear as standalone heated clothing powered by a proprietary 5-volt lithium battery pack that's charged via an AC outlet. Charging takes approximately three hours. The battery pack level is gauged by a set of four tiny lights.

I noticed that if you plug in both the pants and the jacket and choose the medium level of heat, that the battery depletes in about four hours. Heat levels are shown visually by a variable-colored LED button on the clothing (separate from the battery's gauge). The same button also cycles the heat levels or turns the gear on/off. It's a simple and intuitive design.

However, with the *Puffer Vest*, you can power it with *either* the proprietary battery pack or substantially extend the time with any off-the-shelf USB type of lithium battery pack.

All three articles of clothing I tested have pockets which can also be used to store the rechargeable battery pack. The power connectors appear to be solid, with positive connectivity; I don't think they'll come undone with typical body movement.

I tested the gear while riding in 48-degree temps along



mountain highways and noticed a significant difference in warmth when the gear was powered up. And, it was nice to have the option to run the gear off the portable battery once I got to the campsite. When riding, you can connect the heated gear directly into the bike's battery and charging system via an SAE connector.

Besides the *Puffer Vest*, pant and jacket liners, *FirstGear* also offers heated gloves, glove liners, and over-sock liners. All of this gear can be daisy chained to create an entire outfit covering your toes to your torso to your fingers with comforting electric heat. I doubt the battery pack would last long with all these items tethered at the same time, but with just the *Puffer Vest* alone, you can stay warm for a fair amount of time independent of the bike.

Another accessory that I found convenient is the handlebar-mounted remote control. It puts the heat controller easily at your fingertips while riding rather than having to fumble around to locate the control button on the garments.

FirstGear's 2020 heated gear system is a collection of handy gadgets that will keep you warm and toasty, both on and off a bike. **MSRP:** 12V Jacket Liner: \$375.95 | Pant Liner: \$217.95 | 5V Puffer Vest: \$179.95 **FirstGear-usa.com**

PROS

- Can use any "off-the-shelf" 5V-battery bank on the *Puffer Vest*
- Easy to operate
- Indefinitely powered heated gear when attached to your bike

CONS

- Lithium battery doesn't last too long when connected to two or more articles of heated gear
- Battery pack feels heavy and bulky when in the pocket

Alpinestars SMX-1 Air Gloves

by Andrew Nguyen

There's no hiding the fact that I love *Alpinestars* products, and they're the only brand I've consistently purchased since I got into riding. While shopping for tie-downs at my local dealership, I stumbled upon the *Alpinestars SMX-1 Air Gloves*. They were in the "street bike" section of the shop, surrounded by road-tailored gear and sport helmets. And despite the "Road Sport" logos on the gloves' packaging, I knew just by handling them that they'd be a great option for dual-sporting. So, I swiped my card, gladly spent money I didn't have, and was on my way.

What first attracted me to the *SMX-1 Air Gloves* were their overall styling and construction. Imagine motocross gloves with hard knuckle protection, palm padding, reinforced grip zones, and layered materials to protect abrasion zones. They're more robust than off-road gloves, but more breathable, lighter, and more comfortable than typical street gloves.

The pre-curved fingers have touchscreen-compatible fingertips, a feature I didn't know existed until I forgot to pull them off at a gas station. The gloves are optimized for ventilation, so they aren't waterproof. As expected, they don't breathe as well as motocross gloves, but the *3D Mesh* provides good air flow. The trade-off for durability and safety is worth it for the type of riding I do.

Close attention to detail and thoughtful construction in *Alpinestars* products have always impressed me. There's no extra material hanging off the fingertips to snag on levers, or stuffed inside to create discomfort. There's even a small stretchy insert between the palm and thumb to create a snug fit while still offering a good range of motion. Abrasion zones are double stitched and I counted no fewer



than 11 different materials in the gloves' composition. This product is extremely well made and a bargain at its price point.

It takes a couple of rides in warm weather to break in the gloves. As the goat leather stretches, the glove gets softer and more comfortable. On the trail, I've found that my hands won't get toasty as long as I stay moving. The foam in the palm really does reduce stress and vibration, most noticeable on long rides. I haven't tested the durability of the molded knuckle protection in the *SMX-1*, but it's the same unit as found on my *SP-2* road race gloves, which have held up after taking multiple impacts at high speeds during track days.

These gloves check off all the boxes, and I wouldn't hesitate to buy them again once they wear out. If you're looking for an option with more protection than motocross gloves but offering comfort on the trail, take a hard look at the *SMX-1 Air Gloves*. **MSRP: \$59.95** **Alpinestars.com**

PROS

- ✓ Durable construction
- ✓ Comfortable, pre-formed fit
- ✓ Great ventilation
- ✓ Much safer than thin motocross gloves

CONS

- ✗ Check the forecast
- ✗ The *3D Mesh* traps dirt





Schuberth E1 Long Term Helmet

by Pablo Espinosa

With only a few manufacturers producing modular ADV-style helmets I had to see how this highest-priced model by *Schuberth* compared to the less expensive ones, and whether the price tag was worth the extra dough.

The *Schuberth E1* seems to be in a league of its own, with high-end features such as a micro-lock ratchet chin strap, *Pinlock* anti-fog membrane, and *SRC* (*Schuberth-Rider-Communications*) capability. Typically, you would find one, maybe two of these features on an ADV-style lid, but the *E1* has all these and more.

With *SRC*, you can internally install either a *Sena SC10UA* or the *Cardo SRC System Pro*, thus giving you two options for *Bluetooth* communications. And when installed, the helmet appears stock, without any protruding components. It even has a built-in antenna! No other modular ADV-style helmet has this. (To be clear, I'm only including the modulars with a peak.)

Though only having two shell sizes in this 4 lb., 2 oz. "Intermediate Oval"-shaped lid, *Schuberth* provides internal sizes ranging from XS-XXXL. On the inside, you'll find *COOLMAX* and *THERMOCOOL* liner material to aid in comfort and cooling, and it's easy to remove for washing. You'll also find *EPS* foam for optimum shock absorption.

A safety feature created by *Schuberth* is *A.R.O.S.* (*Anti Roll-Off System*) which helps keep the helmet secure by means of a neck gaiter. On the neck roll area are reflective panels for added safety. Another safety feature is the construction of the shell. *Schuberth* uses a compression molding process that yields a relatively lightweight, yet highly protective, helmet. I found, however, that the *Schuberth* was on the heavy side compared with similar products.

Another interesting touch is the removable air filter in the chin vent. I don't believe anyone else has this. Speaking of vents, there are a total of three closable air inlets: on top center, at the the chin, and another above the chin. While testing, I found the air flow just okay, which may be due to the helmet not having exhaust vents.

As far as helmet configurations, there are several to choose from. The easily removable peak and face shield (in six colors) give you options. And



the articulated peak, which is easy to adjust or remove, can be placed into three height positions. A nice added touch is the easy-to-manipulate drop-down sun visor (with five tint options).

One issue I had during the months I rode with the *E1* was difficulty finding the chin guard release button with riding gloves. And over time the lock wouldn't release easily. This was remedied by adding a little grease to the metal locking tabs. The *Schuberth E1* is one of the quietest I've ever worn. This could be due to the snug fit around the neck area, blocking ambient noise.

Schuberth backs its products with a five-year warranty and if you were to have an accident, they offer replacement helmets at a third the price. For more details about the helmet and warranty check their website.

Overall, with so many features and options not found in other ADV helmets, you might be able to justify the hefty price tag. **MSRP:** \$749-\$849 | Available in 11 Graphics/Colors **Schuberth.com**



PROS

- High-end features
- Multiple configurations
- Top-quality build
- All-day comfort
- Quiet helmet

CONS

- Heavy
- Expensive
- Venting could be better

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Kore Adventure Motorcycle Boots

by Aleena Wilson | photo by Liam Nuhring

In today's adventure riding market you could easily spend more than a thousand dollars on riding gear and, frankly, it's sometimes difficult to find high-value riding apparel. For budget-conscious riders, it's easy to "call it good" with just a pair of hiking boots, sacrificing proper protection.

Kore Adventure Motorcycle Boots provide adventure riders with one of the highest value boot options for those seeking maximum protection, both on and off road. Out of the box their construction quality is immediately apparent. They feature a bonded non-slip, lug-type sole and split-grain leather on the upper half and in the high-stress areas, and they're double stitched. The inner lining is made of anti-abrasion, breathable mesh nylon to combat water absorption. Speaking of water, in the mud and rain, the boots are surprisingly dry, even though most motocross boots aren't known for their water resistance. Anti-abrasion material reduces friction between the boot and the rider's foot and leg, reducing the possibility of blisters forming on the user's foot, ankle and calf.

As Benjamin Franklin once said, "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure." Being prepared is something adventure riders value. We embrace opportunities to see new and exciting locations and cultures, and to do so, we need to be prepared to leave in the dust the familiarity of asphalt. Recently, a ride to the North Shore region of Minnesota unexpectedly turned into a weekend of dirt on unmarked National Forest "roads." Although anticipating only pavement riding, wearing the *Kore* boots turned out to be an excellent decision, as I unexpectedly ended up navigating unmarked dirt trails for the majority of the time, at one point finding myself in the Boundary Waters.

With increased protection comes increased confidence. While in the saddle, the boots feel beefy despite their slim styling and heavy-duty plastic shin guard. Just knowing that you're wearing these boots creates peace of mind



while crunching miles on the asphalt and navigating off-road single-track trails, even in bad riding conditions, as the *Kore* boots have a well-designed closure system at the top of the boot.

Off the bike, the *Kore* boots require a short break-in period but they're ready to ride straight out of the box. The top cam lock buckle is, however, a bit too short for riders wearing heavy wool socks or knee guards. This can be remedied by swapping the top and bottom buckles, as the bottom ones are slightly longer.

As a woman getting into adventure riding, I've had to start from scratch in acquiring the proper gear without breaking the bank. While generally the options are growing for women's motorcycle apparel, finding boots can be more difficult. There simply are not many female options, so I decided to try the men's *Kore Adventure Motorcycle Boots*. One thing to keep in mind when shopping men's boots is that, for women, the boots can generally be looser in the ankles and instep. If you need a slimmer fit, you may want to use insoles and inserts to compensate.

Bottom line, *Kore's Adventure Motorcycle Boots* are worth every penny. You'll be hard-pressed to find a higher value boot. *Kore* offers its *Adventure Boots* in black or brown leather. **MSRP: \$149** MotoNation.com

PROS

- High-value motorcycle boot
- Full height protection
- Enough flexibility for off-the-bike use

CONS

- The top strap may be too short for some riders
- There is a break-in period, although this applies to all footwear



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(MATTE GREY FINISH)

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Weiser Technik UltraBRIGHTS 2-in-1 Turn Signals

by Alex Marsh

Additional lighting is undoubtedly one of the most useful additions to any motorcycle. It not only helps you see better in the dark, extra lights can also make you more visible to other road users. However, adding lights often requires brackets to hang them on the bike, extensive wiring for power, relays, and extra switches that will crowd your handlebars or cockpit. *Weiser Technik* has come to the rescue with their *UltraBRIGHTS LED 2-in-1* turn signal inserts which utilize existing housings to add driving or brake lights to your bike with a bare minimum of wiring or effort.

Weiser offers kits for a variety of motorcycles to allow a nearly plug 'n' play installation, even on bikes with the fickle *CAN bus*. The kits include nearly everything you'll need: high quality *Posi-Twist* and *Posi-Tap* connectors, a pre-wired relay, zip ties, and leads with plenty of length to make connections a breeze. Unlike many other LED turn signals, you won't need to wire in additional resistors or load equalizers. For most installations you'll only need a couple of screwdrivers, wire cutters, wire strippers, and a little electrical tape. It's possible, in some scenarios, you may also need a multimeter to locate appropriate wires or additional tools to remove your fairings and/or turn signals. The included instructions are clear, detailed, and very understandable; *Weiser* also has their full instructions and a suite of installation videos online.

My installation on a 2019 *Triumph Tiger 800 XCA* for this review was a little more involved but not any more technically difficult and could still very easily be completed in the 1–2 hours *Weiser* suggests for most installations. For *Tigers* built between 2010–2017 the *EXTREME* signal shape is a direct fitment, but with the 2018 and 2019 models *Triumph* moved to a new incandescent signal shape for the U.S. while the rest of the world got very slim LED indicators. Luckily, *Weiser's LEGACY I* signal shape fits the 2018 and 2019 housings and *Weiser* is developing a new part to allow direct fitment with no modifications to the existing signals.

Once *Weiser* has the new part available, 2018 and 2019 *Tiger* owners in the U.S. will have two options for installing *UltraBRIGHTS 2-in-1* LEDs: the *LEGACY I* shape will be an easy direct fitment, and for those desiring a slimmer look the

EXTREME shape requires only minor modification. Both shapes result in a clean look and extra functionality of the turn signals. *Weiser* has new signal housings available to add to your order if you're interested in changing the signal shape on your *Tiger 800* or adding *UltraBRIGHTS 2-in-1* LEDs to any other motorcycle.

Personally, I prefer the slimmer look of the *EXTREME* signals, and installation required a set of *BMW* housings and a minor modification to the OEM turn signal stalks. The *BMW* housings fit on the *Triumph* signal stalks, and the modification is just cutting a small notch out of the signal stalk to provide room for the new signal lens tab to seat in the housing. I experimented with a few different tools for cutting the notch, but found a utility knife/razor with a fresh blade to be the most efficient tool for the job.

After installation, I have to say I'm very happy with the *2-in-1 UltraBRIGHTS* LEDs. The driving lights in the front signals provide an impressive amount of light for their size, particularly providing extra low and side illumination which could really help you see gravel in a turn or deer lurking on the shoulder. The brake lights in the rear signals have effectively doubled the amount of light under braking and the amber turn signals are noticeably brighter than the OEM incandescent bulbs. Both are welcome improvements to help others see me when I most need them to. I asked *Weiser* about the possibility of the rear signals operating as running lights in addition to turn and brake indicators, but their philosophy to provide a more effective extra brake light requires the signals to be completely dark prior to being illuminated rather than being partially lit before. Think of the third brake light on a car or truck; when it lights up, you know to slow down.

This is a premium product which is priced accordingly but does exactly what it advertises, and *Weiser* has really stepped up to make installation as easy as possible. *Weiser Technik* is confident enough in their product to provide a 60-day satisfaction guarantee as well as a four-year warranty, both of which are completely backed up by the performance, quality of the product, and the price at which they're offered. **MSRP:** \$249 per pair | \$449 combined front and rear **Fitment:** *BMW*, *Triumph*, *KTM*, *Aprilia*, and more. **WeiserTechnik.com**



PROS

- Enhanced visibility and conspicuity to other road users
- Easy installation on many bikes
- Four-year warranty

CONS

- Premium products come with premium price tags
- Limited direct fitment

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Photo: F. Lechner

Please make an attempt to imitate the illustrated riding scene. Always wear protective safety gear and observe the applicable provisions of the road traffic regulations. The illustrated vehicle may vary in selected details from the production model and feature optional equipment available at additional cost.

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**DON'T RUN AWAY
FROM YOUR PROBLEMS.**



**RIDE AWAY FROM THEM.
IT'S A LOT FASTER.**



YAMAHA

The adventure market is h-o-t. The versatility of these motorcycles is being embraced by many, and the market is seeing an increasing number of high-end machines in the category. While most manufacturers dish out top-spec motorbikes, *Yamaha* chose a different approach with their 2020 *Ténéré 700*. Simplicity is the keyword—but do we really need such a bike? And who is it for?

Doing what the *T700* does best: bringing joy.



TÉNÉRÉ

by Lennart Andreas

700

Yamaha's legendary *Ténéré* family doesn't need much introduction. Named after the unforgiving north African desert, the *T700* is the latest generation in this rally-inspired line. First revealed as a prototype back in 2016, the highly anticipated *T700* will finally be launched in the U.S. as of "early summer" 2020—the North America wait is nearly over. And, I haven't been this excited about a new motorcycle release in a long time!

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

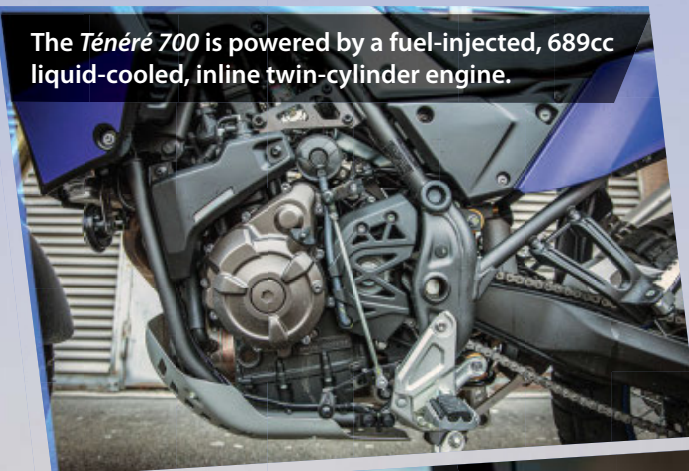
Seeing the prototype, I originally wasn't that impressed with its looks. But as time passed it grew on me and, upon seeing the final production bike, I now love the sleek profile and the futuristic front, dominated by its four LED headlights. Looking closer, the 9.4-inch ground clearance combined with the 21-inch front and 18-inch rear spoked rims equipped with *Pirelli Scorpion Rally STR* tires certainly make this bike look very capable of conquering the world.

Swinging a leg over this European spec *T700*, the first thing I noticed is that this bike is quite tall. However, I'm six foot and it suits me perfectly with the regular production seat. Should you require it lower, there's another seat option along with a lowering kit available.

All handlebar controls are straightforward and the various buttons and switches provide great feedback. There's an accessory bar ready to mount a GPS or phone. The cockpit's LCD screen looks old-fashioned when compared to all the fancy LED screens so common these days, but still does the job. Readability both in direct bright sunlight and at night is excellent. But don't expect many menus or electronically adjustable options such as ride modes, adjustable engine braking, or any of the fancy stuff such as wheelie control (FYI, the *Ténéré 700* happily does power wheelies in second gear).

The power of the *T700* lies exactly in the absence of all those electronics and options. Not only does the simplicity keep the costs down, it's also somewhat of a relief to just get on a bike, start the engine, and ride away without having to deal with all that "flight control" stuff. It's extremely straightforward and makes you feel at home right away. So, let's take it for a ride....

The *Ténéré 700* is powered by a fuel-injected, 689cc liquid-cooled, inline twin-cylinder engine.



Straight to the point LCD dash with great readability.



No-nonsense handlebar controls.



/ CONFIDENCE

What's the first thing you notice on the *Ténéré 700*? The smile on your face! This bike is pure, smooth and agile, and you feel in total control from the very beginning. It's not overwhelming, not too powerful, yet has plenty to offer. There is a tendency of falling into corners, which requires a little getting accustomed to, but once that's out of the way it's pure joy!

The height isn't a problem due to its low wet weight of 452 lb. The *T700*'s engine, a 689cc fuel-injected, liquid-cooled, DOHC inline twin, provides linear torque development and the gearbox provides exacting mechanical feedback. The *T700* is, when speaking of raw power, certainly not the most exciting bike out there, but who needs that when you have one of the most comfortable engines (and don't forget that smile on your face)?

There's easy handling of hairpins in third gear or cruising at 30 mph in fourth or even fifth gear. It does not stutter and still has plenty of torque when accelerating out of turns and curves. At first I had a hard time believing that the *Pirelli Scorpion Rally STR* tires would provide enough grip on tarmac, but they stuck to the road at all times—even in wet and cold conditions (brilliant idea to test a motorcycle in Switzerland during the winter!). The ABS, about the only electronic system on the bike, works very well without intervening too quickly. When hard braking, ABS kicks in after the tiniest slide possible, giving you a very good idea of current grip levels.

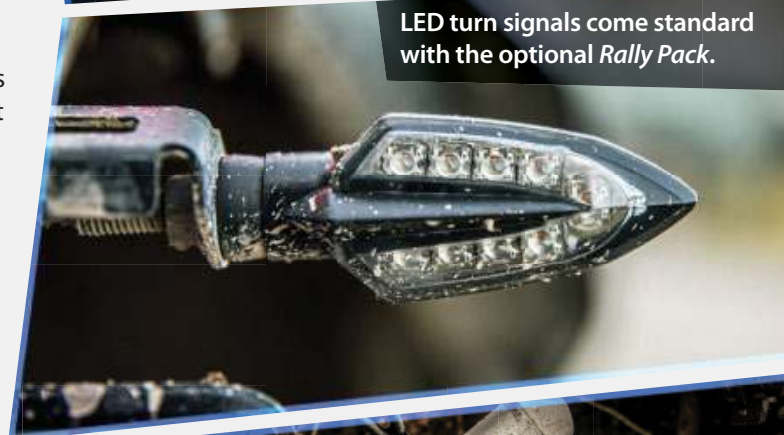
The bike is stable at all times, even at speeds exceeding 90 mph. Wind protection is far more decent than I originally thought it would be; I can comfortably cruise extended periods without wind-related fatigue. And the actual 53 mpg, combined with a fuel capacity of 4.2 gallons, should give you just over 220 miles. In a nutshell, this bike just works. Keeping things simple clearly paid off.



The standard skid plate provides solid protection.



Looks great, sounds great and saves weight on top of the Akrapovič slip-on muffler with T700 badge.



LED turn signals come standard with the optional Rally Pack.



A rugged look: the chain guide and chain guard.

/ OFF ROAD

Riding on the road is nothing but fun, but what about the dirt? Let's just say I've taken the *T700* to places that I've never taken any other motorcycle. It needs to be said that clearly I'm the limiting factor when riding this *Yamaha*. However, the *T700* gave me exactly the confidence I needed. No more "what if"—just jump onto a trail and see where it leads. Explore. This motorcycle has your back and brings all that it needs to ride off road.

The fact is, this *Yamaha* simply invites you to take it to new territories. Of course the *T700* isn't a dirt bike, but it perfectly slots in between the heavy 1200cc powerhouse ADV bikes and smaller bikes. Indeed, the *T700* opens a whole new range of possibilities.

/ ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

It isn't all sunshine, and there's certainly some room for improvement, although the following are more nitpicky than serious issues of any kind. The luggage mounting options, when just using elastic straps, might be a bit limiting. The LCD screen vibrates somewhat at certain RPM ranges. The button that cycles through the trip computer (*Trip 1, Trip 2, Fuel Consumption, etc.*) is located on the right side of the handlebar, making it a little awkward to maintain a steady throttle when switching modes. At the same time, the emergency lights button is located on the left side, where it would make more sense to swap its position with the mode switch. And, the ABS can only be turned on or off; it lacks other variables which would come in handy when riding off road. Keep in mind that none of these "issues" took anything away from the smile on my face, and are offered more as recommendations than faults with the bike.



Headlights can easily be adjusted.



Explore new places;
including fairytale-like
winter landscapes.

LONG STORY SHORT

The T700 is a field trip back to the roots of motorcycling, something it does so very well. Being inspired by the long line of *Ténéré* heritage, this bike has a “can-do” attitude that allows riders of all levels to step out of their comfort zones. It might not carry all the bells and whistles of the more expensive machines out there, but it will boost your confidence and invite you to venture off into unknown territory, and all at a price that’s very hard to beat. **MSRP: \$9,999 | [YamahaMotorSports.com](https://www.yamahamotorsports.com)**



Lennart Andreas hails from Switzerland and has ridden all types of bikes since 2008. Andreas and his wife, Maïke, plan to take a six-month African motorcycle journey in 2020. For more information please visit [LennartAndreas.com](https://lennartandreas.com)



Key to the great handling: the slim profile.

Ready to take you anywhere.

ABOUT THE TEST MOTORCYCLE

The black & blue (“Ceramic Ice”) T700 is equipped with the *Rally Pack*, consisting of a rally seat (higher and smaller than the original), an Akrapovič slip-on muffler, chain guard, chain guide, radiator protector, more rigid number plate holder, LED turn signals and a protective tank pad.

PROS

- Simplicity—get on and ride
- Confidence due to light weight and easy handling
- Control buttons with great feedback
- Can-do attitude and capabilities
- Price and value for money

CONS

- Menu switch button on the right side of the handlebar (hard to operate)
- Few basic luggage securing options
- Vibrating LCD screen at certain RPM range
- ABS can only be disabled in its entirety



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2 Weeks Around

ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW!

How much time do you need to enjoy a motorcycle trip? For some it may be years, and for others a week or two does the trick. For us, even though we're experienced multi-year overlanders, we believe that two weeks is the perfect minimum time to explore a new country on two wheels.



Morocco

by Manu Torres

Given two weeks, what country would we choose? The list that offers a varied repertoire of attractions for travelers in such a short time isn't long, but if you desire a country that will never disappoint then we highly recommend Morocco in north Africa.

In just one day of riding you can go from the dunes of the Sahara to the frozen and winding routes of the Atlas Mountains, or from the calm, warm waters of the Mediterranean Sea to the exciting waves of the Atlantic Ocean. You can stretch your legs with a walk through

the forests of the Rift, ski the Ifrane Mountains, search for fossils through desert sands or lose yourself in the amazing medinas.

Those reasons and many more have turned Morocco in recent years into one of the favorite destinations for riders. It's hard to believe that only 14 kilometers of the Strait of Gibraltar separate it from Europe.

If you're considering this amazing country for your next motorcycle adventure, the following is a basic guide to help you plan the trip.



We stop to ask for the best way to get to the Atlas Mountains from a man who lives in the desert taking care of the ancient waterways in southern Morocco.

// RENT A MOTORCYCLE

It's not always practical or affordable to ship your bike to an overseas destination. Fortunately, there's an alternative—rent one there. Our recommendation is to do this in Spain where there is a huge selection of bike rentals of all kinds. You'll only need your passport, an international driver's license and your driver's license.

// HOW TO GET TO MOROCCO FROM SPAIN

Due to its proximity, one of the most popular ways to get to Morocco is on a ferry from Spain. Depending on where you take the ferry the time will vary. In the south of Spain you can embark from the ports of Andalusia, Málaga, Motril or Almería, although the most common are Tarifa and Algeciras. We recommend Algeciras using the company *Balearia*, one of the most reputable in Spain. They provide several trips a day between Morocco and Spain with very good prices and service. The trip takes about an hour and 20 minutes. Be sure to get your passport stamped on the boat so that when you arrive in Tangier there's no time wasted.

The documents you'll need to cross to Morocco are a passport, Moroccan visa, a driver's license, the green card provided by the insurance company, motorcycle documents, and a form the border agents will provide.

We're about to cross the gates from where we leave the desert behind and begin riding the Atlas Mountains, highest peaks in North Africa.

// GASOLINE

- Gas in Morocco is considerably cheaper than in Europe, about \$1.07 per liter.
- Note there's plenty of poor-quality gas in Morocco, so stick with the established chains, such as *Shell* or *Total*. Otherwise, you run the risk of damaging your engine.
- Always carry cash because the gas stations outside of the big cities often do not accept credit/debit cards.
- Remember to fill your tank *every time* you have an opportunity, especially if you're traveling long distances in remote desert areas. It is not uncommon for stations to be out of gas in those areas. And that could lead to waits anywhere from a few hours to days.

// WHERE TO PARK A MOTORCYCLE IN A MEDINA

You'll want to include visits to some of Morocco's most famous medinas, which are the non-European parts of a north African city. Meknes, Marrakech and Fes are some of the most popular. But where do you park your motorbike?

Accommodations within medinas are quite an experience. Usually you'll find "riads" (in Arabic this means "Garden of Eden") composed of a patio in the center surrounded by rooms on two or three floors. It's a building design that holds pleasant temperatures very well. Some have swimming pools, fountains, gardens, ancient carpets... but *never* parking lots, and often not even a proper road to reach them.



The solution to where to park is at the entrance gates of the medinas. Usually there are large open spaces to park for \$2–\$3 a night. Those areas are protected by guards and security cameras 24 hours a day. They're so safe that you can even leave the bags on your motorcycle, and not have to worry about getting your gear stolen.

✓ POLICE CONTROLS ALONG THE ROUTE

As soon as you start traveling through Morocco you will notice that police control points are common. They're always at the entrances and exits of the cities, but you'll also find them in the middle of nowhere—where there's a greater likelihood of corruption.

To detect this, watch what's happening at the head of the line. Cars will be moving forward slowly and you'll notice each of them handing over small "gifts" or graft to the policemen. Sometimes it's coins, other times it's a Coke, a cigarette, sweets or a box of tea.

However, in these instances the police almost never stop riders with foreign registrations. Instead, they will either ignore you or tell you simply to keep going. It seems the reason is that they know many foreigners traveling on motorcycles have small cameras attached to their helmets or elsewhere on their bikes that record *everything*. And there have been instances where policemen have lost their jobs because of this. As a result, it's now easier to travel without having to deal with this kind of corruption.

✓ COSTS

- Exchange: \$1 will get you almost 10 dirhams.
- Gas: One liter, 11 dirhams.
- Hotel: One night starts from 100 dirham per person.
- Meal: *Tajin* for one person (typical Moroccan menu) from about 35 dirhams.
- Beer*: 30 dirhams.

**It's a Muslim country so they do not usually consume alcohol. You will not find alcohol in stores or supermarkets but normally you can find it in some of the hotels. However, prices are higher than you might be accustomed to paying for alcohol.*

✓ TRAVEL TIPS

- Drink plenty of water, stay hydrated to avoid problems with high temperatures.
- Do not ask anyone where there is a good place to buy a souvenir such as a carpet or lamp. If you do, they will take you to a store where the price will automatically be increased by at least 30 or 40%, which is the commission of that person. Always go to the stores by yourself to ask for prices, and then haggle a little.
- Be careful when riding busy routes. The Moroccans don't seem to be aware of safety distances and tend to overtake others a little too carelessly.
- As a health precaution, avoid getting ice in your drinks or eating raw vegetables.

A stop to check the GPS in front of an abandoned Kasbah in Tinghir.



There can be some confusion when choosing which direction to take in a country where almost any road will take you to a beautiful place.

Crossing the deepest aisles of the famous Marrakech market.



RECOMMENDED ROUTE FOR A TWO-WEEK TRIP THROUGH MOROCCO ON MOTORCYCLE

Starting from Tangier, Morocco:

- DAY 1** **Chefchaouen**—The “Blue City” in the Rift Mountains.
- DAY 2** **Volubilis—Meknes**—A Roman city with one of the most beautiful medinas in the country.
- DAY 3** **Fes**—Tanneries, one of the hardest jobs in the world.
- DAY 4** **Er Rachidia**—Scenic route through the Er Rachidia Valley.
- DAY 5** **Erfoud/Risani**—Fossils and a Martian-like landscape used in many Hollywood movies.
- DAY 6** **Merzouga**—Dunes of Erg Chebbi.
- DAY 7** **Tinghir**—Todra Gorges and great artisans of the famous Moroccan carpetmakers.
- DAY 8** **Dades Gorges**—A very special route to travel by motorbike, you can't miss it!
- DAY 9** **Ait Ben Haddou**—Undoubtedly the most impressive Kasbah (Berber fortified cities).
- DAY 10** **Imlil**—Atlas Mountains, remember to ride through the Tizi n'Tichka mountain pass.
- DAY 11** **Marrakech**—An explosion of life in the market and its great square.
- DAY 12** **Essaouira**—Perfect place to rest near the sea after the tough ride across the desert.
- DAY 13** **Casablanca**—Economic center and most cosmopolitan city in Morocco.
- DAY 14** **Asilah**—Small city by the sea with lots of street art in its medina. **ADV**

One last look before descending the Dades Gorge.



Manu Torres (Spain) and **Ivana Colakovska** (Macedonia) have been traveling the world since 2007. Meeting the diversity of humankind is one of their main motivations for being constantly on the road. After an experience with a Royal Enfield in India back in 2011, they decided it was time to dream big and in 2013 they acquired a Yamaha Ténéré XT660Z to hit the world's roads another way. It was a journey that so far has taken them to 69 countries and over 170,000 km. Around Gaia: **AroundGaia.com** also on Instagram / Facebook / YouTube

Visiting one of the many stores where they sell handmade carpets in Tinghir.





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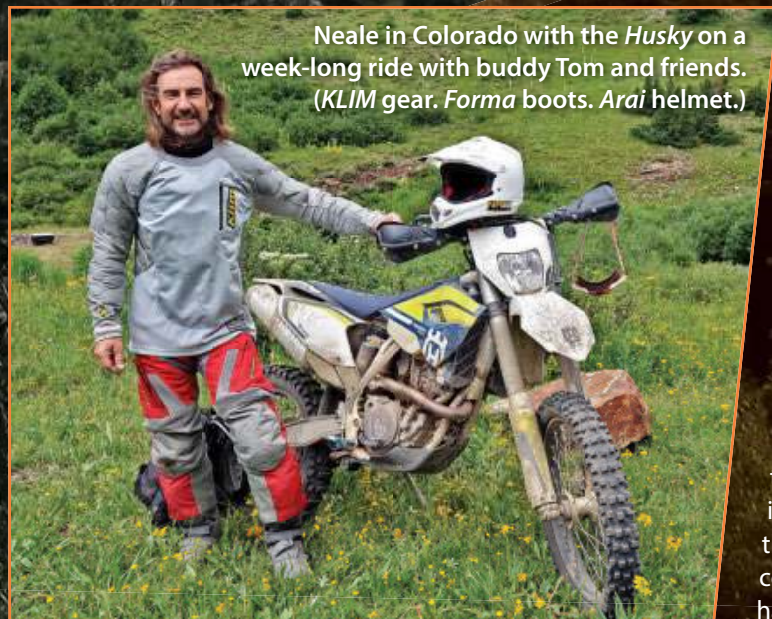
2016 HUSQVARN

Malcolm Gladwell says it takes 10,000 hours to produce true expertise. While I'm nowhere near close to expert on anything unless procrastination is a thing, I can say that after 200-plus hours on Husqvarna's 2016 FE350 I'm a significantly improved dirt bike rider, and a whole lot more comfortable riding off road.



FE350 LONG-TERM TEST

by Neale Bayly



Neale in Colorado with the *Husky* on a week-long ride with buddy Tom and friends. (KLIM gear. *Forma* boots. Arai helmet.)

Riding with my friend Tom, I moved into his low-hour *Husqvarna FE350* when he purchased the *FE*'s big brother, the fire-breathing *Husqvarna FX350*, which is altogether too much motorcycle for me. The *FE* had been purchased for around \$10K new. With similar levels of riding skill—well, similar lack of skill—Tom and I have regularly ridden together over the last two years and put in the aforementioned 200 hours of riding, which included six days in the mountains of Colorado with a group of very competent dirt riders.

Over this time, my respect and admiration for the *FE* grew, as it's without a doubt one of the best and most stylish motorcycles I've ever ridden. If you are a motocross racer, or expert off-road rider, I'm sure the 240-pound *Husky*, with 46 hp coming from its 349.7cc engine, is not going to totally set your hair on fire. For me it's as close to perfect as it gets.

Discussing all the positive attributes of the *FE350* will take some time, so let's start with the fueling. The system is close to perfect, and that means the slightest touch of the starter button instantly brings the engine to life—hot, cold, wet or dry. Start the bike on a cold winter's day after it has sat for a few weeks in the garage, or at 13,500 ft. in the



Rocky Mountains when it's hot enough to fry an egg on the casings and you'll get the same result. While that's exactly what we expect from a modern motorcycle, it's the precise way the *FE* fuels throughout the rev range, up and down, that's so magical to me. And it's what makes the bike so easy and predictable to ride. I've tested literally hundreds of different motorcycles of all denominations over the last two decades and it's no secret that fuel injection was a black art when it first arrived. Not now.

While it might seem like raging on about the fueling is redundant, it's the key to the entire riding experience because it allows totally predictable throttle input, whatever the riding conditions. You can tractor through mud, streams, and rock fields on the most minimal throttle, giving solid traction with the engine barely off idle. This means with little wheel spin, unless you want it, and when things open up, there are stacks of usable horsepower to run hard and fast. I often watch my two-stroke riding brethren on slippery climbs and the like, engines screaming, wheels spinning, and I'm right behind chugging up the hill like the *Little Engine That Could* with no drama. I like to think of it being an extremely polite motorcycle.

Where the strong low-end delivery also makes itself very welcome is the *FE*'s ability to run tall gears at lower RPMs. This keeps the suspension settled, the ride smoother and less stressful, and adds miles to the amount of riding I can handle in a day before wearing out. Part of this was gaining

enough confidence to go a little faster, but being able to be a gear higher doesn't have the bike feeling tight on and off the throttle, and more brain power goes to navigating and choosing lines. Making progress is also helped by the *DDS* clutch system and *Brembo* hydraulic master cylinder. We replaced the clutch lever with a *Midwest Engineering* unit, but it's so light and easy to use the stock version I'm not sure this did any more than improve the looks. The original clutch plates are untouched at this point. One item I'm glad we replaced was the *Tusk* rear brake pedal, which has seemed remarkably adept at being bent back into shape. Say no more!

Out on the trail the stock exhaust system keeps the *Husky* fairly quiet. I like that, especially in the tight woods and on longer rides, as it doesn't interfere with your senses the way an aftermarket pipe can. The tank holds 2.5 gallons of gas and it will go at least 50 miles without adding fuel. We've changed the oil and filter every ten hours, and cleaned the air filter more regularly than that. The oil always comes out looking brand new, and there is rarely anything on the screen when it comes out for a clean.

Husky apparently recommends a rebuild at 100 hours, and we replaced the piston and rings at 150

High in the mountains around Telluride. Left to right: Tom McKittrick (*Husqvarna FX350*), Greg Cocks (*Husqvarna FE350*), Bob "Hollywood" Percival (*Husqvarna FE350*), Kenny "Turbo" Andejar (*KTM 300*), Tom Shoup (*Husqvarna FE350*) and the author.





MVR Suspension settings from last service.



hours. There were few signs of wear inside the engine. The bike didn't feel in any way down on power, but we went for the "better safe than sorry" route and changed it anyway. We used all stock *Husqvarna* parts, but there are some aftermarket options available if you trust them and want to save some spending coupons. I feel fairly sure my pedestrian riding habits have taxed the engine way less than a more expert rider or racer, and the consensus of opinion from my mate, Stones, who does all the mechanicals, is that I could easily have ridden it another 50 hours without problem.



Neale and the FE at our training facility in Charlotte.



We upgraded the foot pegs for some wider after-market items by *Evolution Air*, added radiator guards from *Bullet Proof* designs, a *Boysen* water pump, and converted to the excellent *Tubliss* system for the tires. The stock suspension was overhauled and re-valved by *Motivations Racing*. Owner Mark Hilton is a multi-time national champion and knows suspension, so it came home dialed and perfect. I've barely touched any of the adjusters, only adding a little pre-load in the rear when I started picking up the pace recently. The way it soaks up bumps, jumps and ruts is quite amazing to me and all adds to my riding confidence knowing it can take more than my limited skills can throw at it. Just don't forget to take it in for servicing every 50 hours, unless you want to ride a bike with subpar suspension.

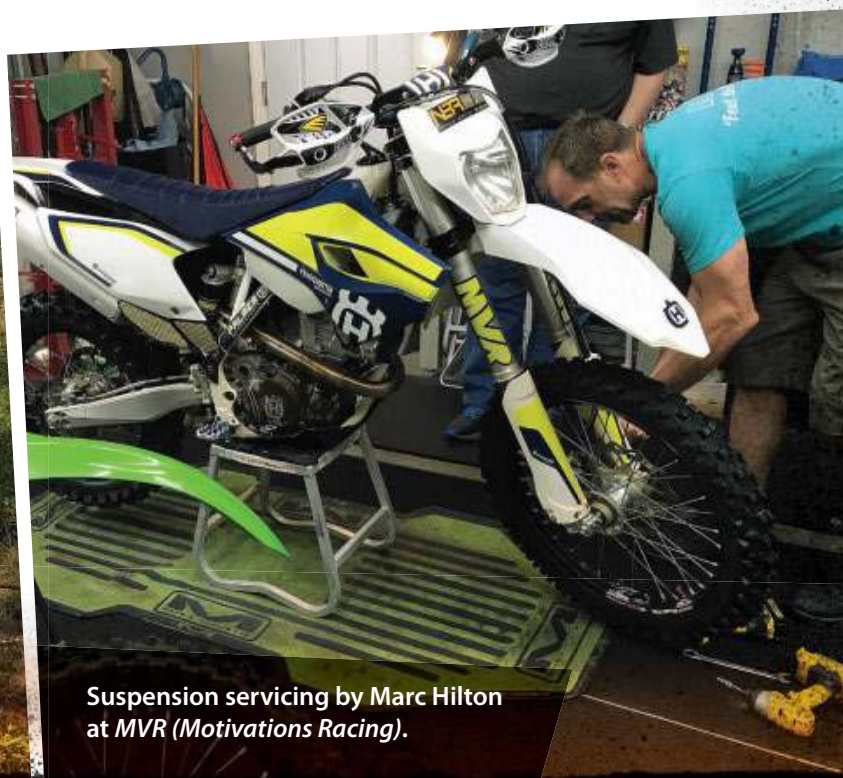
Over the 200 hours we've ridden together, the *FE* has blown one starter solenoid fuse, which took a bit of work to get at under the panels, and we had to turn the idle down recently, but these are the only issues to detract from the bike's phenomenal reliability. I did replace the stock side stand, which gave out around 100 hours, with a *Fast Way Pro Moto Billet* version that is much superior to the stocker.

The *FE* is also still on the original battery and has gone through only two chain and sprocket sets so far. We did re-cover the stock seat, which had taken on some wear and will sit you 38 inches from the ground. All the body panels, bar one that a friend managed to rip off one day, are still original if not a bit scuffed. I did upgrade the brake pads to *SBS* units and have to say I love the predictability and feel they give over the stock items, much more progressive than the originals and an excellent upgrade if you're in the market.

As I mentioned earlier, we went out to Colorado riding last year, and between the 13,500-ft. mountains, the crazy sand dune area of Montrose, and the rock, rivers and mud around Telluride, it felt like we rode every type of terrain available. As you can imagine, the *FE350* handled it with aplomb and made everything we tackled manageable for this novice dirt rider. There is a fairly high price of admission, but the overall quality and reliability more than make up for it as heading toward the 215-hour mark my *Husqvarna FE350* is riding as well as it did when I first rode it. And, with its striking blue, yellow and white color scheme it certainly doesn't look half bad either. Of course, I've got some ideas for freshening up the looks and performance a little, so stay tuned. **ADV**



Neale Bayly has been a moto-journalist photographer for more than twenty years now. During that time he's contributed to more than 100 publications around the world. He's had two national television shows on Speed TV riding motorcycles around the world, and is currently working on a documentary about a 1978 Laverda 1200 Mirage he's owned for more than 35 years. He's ridden in more than fifty countries, and also leads adventure motorcycle tours in South Africa and Peru. Check him out on YouTube: [YouTube.com/user/Neale786](https://www.youtube.com/user/Neale786)





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Small MIRACLES ON Real

by Stephen P. Thomas

Most riders take a positivist, mechanical, factual approach to riding. Bikes are machines, reducible to assorted piles of steel, nuts, bolts, springs, levers, reservoirs, fuses, wires, and molded plastic. Every observable phenomenon can be traced to the interactions of these parts and materials. But I take a fabulist, metaphorical, mystical view of riding.

Motorcycles are miracles (or curses). I honor my vehicle, of course, by maintaining the chain tension and cleanliness, by changing the oil and greasing pivot points, as any supplicant attends to a shrine, but I don't pretend to understand the transubstantiation of riding, in which my spirit seems to rise out of my body, which itself is flying above the ground.

Which is why, on my first morning in the Sierra Madre Oriental Mountains of Northeast Mexico, as the rain poured down in the Hotel Magdalena parking lot, the empty oil sight-glass on my *V-Strom* might as well have been the sun eclipsed by a cloud of locusts.

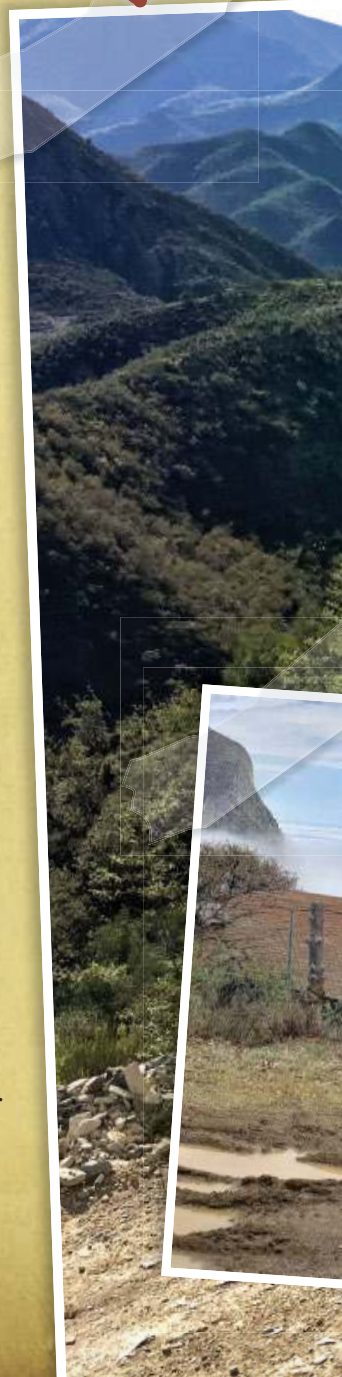
I thought I had fixed that drip with a new crush washer and some *Teflon* tape; it had seemed snug on the ride down, but now it appeared to have a slow bleed that was likely to seize up my bike at the most dangerous and cartel-haunted mountain pass. Since it was raining and everything in the tilting parking lot was wet, greasy and dirty, it was hard to tell for sure. My fellow

riders—positivists to a man—appeared and explained through a tedious accretion of physical details (uneven ground, cold engine, etc.) that the bike would probably be fine. Yet I could hear in that “probably” a note of doubt, and when we got to a gas station on flat ground 10 minutes later, only a sliver of oil had appeared in the window. I was faced with a decision: ride and pray or wait and fiddle. I decided to ride.

Outside of Galeana, we snaked through a mountain pass, then turned south at the town of Iturbide onto a dirt road. The rain eased off and we bumped along under thick, dripping foliage as we contoured a narrow river. I was feeling uneasy, the overcast and unresolved weather mirroring my warring sense of hope and dread as I tried to concentrate on the rutted road and avoid thinking about oil hemorrhage.

At the town of Cuevas we made a river crossing near some bridgeless piles and long-dormant construction vehicles, then motored through hardscrabble ranch and farmlands to Camarones, a tiny town amidst the yuccas and prickly pears, low scrub pine and pacingo trees. The town was shuttered and still, but a radio was playing somewhere, a skittish mutt padded past us, and eventually a friendly campesino greeted us and gave us directions to the hamlet of La Luz. I put my bike on the center stand and checked the sight-glass, that glass portal into the *Suzuki's* soul. And lo, I saw the honeyed, heavenly light of Castrol 10w-40. It was $\frac{3}{4}$ full. It felt like a miracle. The seal was good after all.

This was my second motorcycle trip to the Sierra Madre Oriental Mountains of Nuevo Leon, Mexico. On my first, I'd found that if one could get past the *rumors*

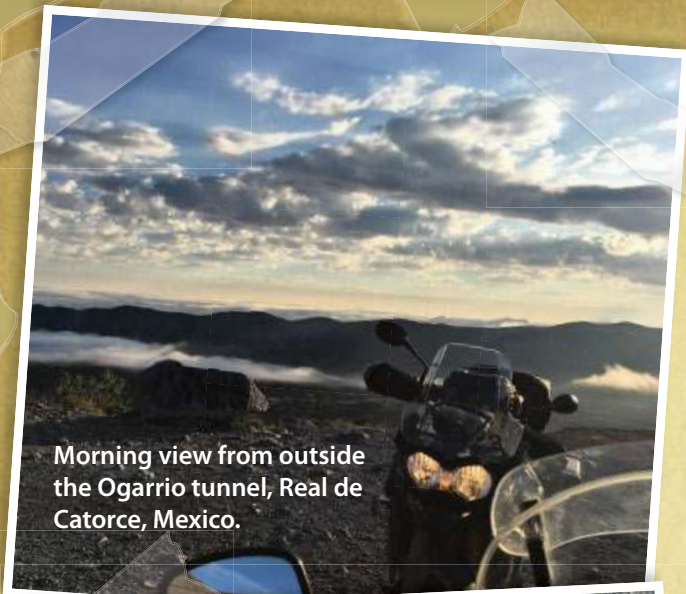


THE ROAD TO *de Catorce*

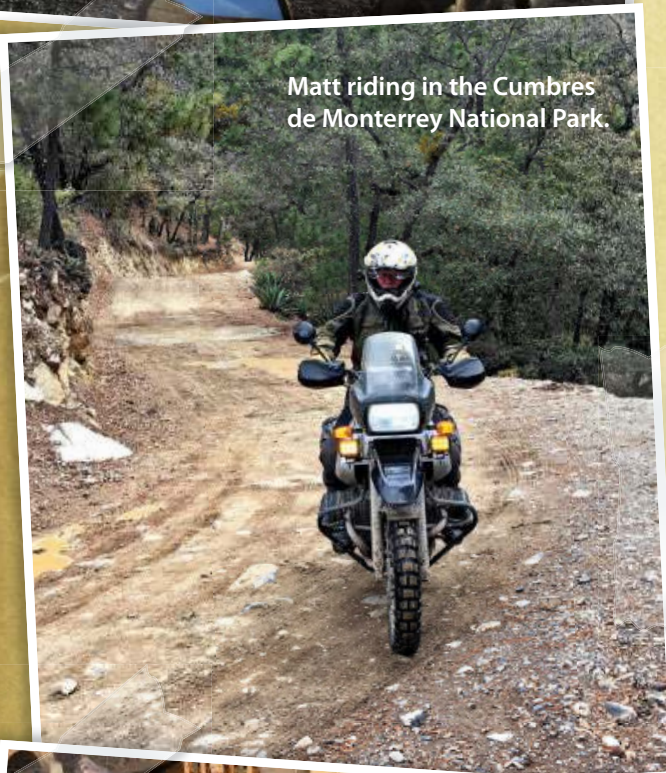
On the twisting mountain road between Rayones and Galeana, Nuevo Leon. (Photo courtesy of Matt Davis)



Smiles of relief from Rodd (left) and the author atop Mesa del Oso.



Morning view from outside the Ogarrio tunnel, Real de Catorce, Mexico.



Matt riding in the Cumbres de Monterrey National Park.



Saints, cobblestones and tchotchke: the streets of Real de Catorce.

about Mexico—gas shortages, cartel shoot-outs, heads made into soccer balls, etc.—a landscape of miraculous beauty awaited: rocky two-tracks, towering waterfalls, cobblestone roads through ghostly mining towns. An ADV paradise. Any wounds a rider gets in northeastern Mexico will most likely be self-inflicted—the product of too much adrenaline twisting the throttle hand.

And so it was on this day, which took us on a beautiful, isolated loop, crisscrossing a stream multiple times, up onto bluffs overlooking a valley, through a tiny cluster of homes. Avoiding feckless goats, suicidal piglets, and one maladjusted bull, we skidded and splashed our way back to the river crossing at Cuevas, then to the blacktop. It rained again, then it poured, then in the high pass to Galeana it hailed. My nominally waterproof riding gear was soaked through. At one point I adjusted my stance and it felt like I'd dipped my nuts into ice water. I was soaked, shivering, but elated when we arrived back at the Hotel Magdalena in Galeana. Liquid gold had refilled my window.

The next day was overcast but the rain held off and we tried the “Gold Standard” route to Mesa Del Oso, from rider Rich Gibbens’ excellent guide of the area. Javier, our kindly doorman at the Hotel Magdalena, had warned us that the jeep road to Mesa del Oso was so steep a motorcycle would inevitably flip over backwards and crush its rider. He was sure of it. An experienced Texan rider had told me not to attempt the route if it was wet. Which it was. But we went anyway.

The route took us to Rayones, then Casillas, then onto a muddy two-track along the Rio Pilon, a lucid and fast-moving stream. Soon we climbed into a series of exposed, rocky switchbacks, at times brain-rattlingly bumpy and at times cinder-like and slick as butter, all on a steep pitch. A few wet, scabbed sections of striated concrete were almost worse than the dirt. We wrestled our bikes up the incline, pausing occasionally to rest, piss, and say, “Well, that was probably the worst of it,” only to find that it got tougher around the next corner. Clouds thickened and rain was imminent. I didn’t want to say anything, but I wasn’t sure I could go much farther on my *Strom*.

Suddenly we emerged over a rocky shoulder, past a rugged little farmstead with scrawny livestock. The road flattened out, and—perfectly timed—we ascended through the cloud cover and into a bright day. We found ourselves in the Cumbres de Monterrey National Park, a Mexican Switzerland of towering peaks, tall pines and log cabins. We’d flogged our bikes and taxed our bodies, but we’d pierced the clouds and made it to Mesa del Oso—and that was only the first half of a ride that guided us through slot canyons and curvaceous paved roads, past cascading waterfalls and roadside shrines, up a second mountain pass, and deposited us giddy and exhausted at the Magdalena at dusk. The rain had held off and we hadn’t flipped our bikes over backwards. We hadn’t even dropped one sideways. That felt like Miracle No. 2. And the mead flowed that night.

The next day we rode south out of Galeana to the town of Real De Catorce in San Luis Potosi, with a brief out-and-back detour toward a place called El Alamar. We had no

idea which of the unsigned, twisting dirt roads led from Pablillo to El Alamar until a friendly, courteous older man with glittering dental work and a cowboy hat appeared. He led the way to the turn-off on his squeaking bicycle, our collective 3700cc of motorcycle muscle prowling along in first gear behind him like obedient lions following a house cat. The weather was clear and sunny. Eventually we took off on a spectacular mountain road that folded gently over itself like poured batter until it stretched out along a ridge line with wide vistas opening to the north, branches and long hanging vines tunneling overhead, my loaded *V-Strom* rattling along the sun-dappled road like typebars on a platen.

By late afternoon we had traveled south across the Central Mexico Plateau, back up into the mountains of San Luis Potosi, and we reached the famed Ogarrio Tunnel outside the historic mining town of Real de Catorce. It was our last destination before the road home. The Ogarrio Tunnel was built for ore carts and retains the look of a horizontal mineshaft. Riding it is like traveling through a time portal; the amber lights of the ceiling shoot past overhead, periodically illuminating the battered stone walls and rough-hewn wood support beams and miners' shrines. Sealed in a sonic envelope of muffled engine reverb, you cruise through the dark until a pupil of burning white light ahead of you widens and then you're cast out into a dusty market area and the engine sounds scatter outward and you find yourself on narrow cobblestone streets hemmed in by steep, rocky hillsides with crumbling 200-year old stone buildings. It feels like you have arrived not only in a different place but also in a different time.

Real de Catorce was founded in 1779 among silver-veined mountains, and the mines brought wealth and elegance—theaters, grand hotels, salons, newspapers, brothels, a granary, a mint, and a neo-classical Catholic church worthy of a major city—but falling silver prices, political turmoil, and the Mexican Revolution made it nearly a ghost town by the early 1900s. The town has reimagined itself since. It's the site of a sacred pilgrimage of the indigenous Huichol people, who harvest peyote from the surrounding desert, as well as devout Catholics who honor Saint Francis of Assisi in a fall festival, and international travelers looking for a spiritual escape in this high-desert, Sergio-Leone-meets-Carlos-Castaneda landscape."

We spent the next full day—our last before we returned—off the bikes, hiking up to somnolent ghost towns above Real, then perusing the cultural center housed in the old mint, where daguerreotypes of gaunt miners and stern silver barons battle for space with post-modern paintings and peyote exhibits. At the Church of the Immaculate Conception, I

saw the famed and historical *retablos*: folk art visions of miracles hand-painted on square tin plates. There were thousands of them, some hundreds of years old. Each retablo told a story of Saint Francis' intervention: the survival of a stabbing or a surgery, the health of

livestock through a hard winter, a release from prison, or the arrival of a loved one after a long journey. This tapestry of miracles lined the walls of the refectory, each retablo about the size of a license plate, each describing the greatest miracle in one life's journey. In this era of endless, ephemeral,

often meaningless electronic communications—*Tweets*, *Snapchats*, *Instagrams*—I found the simplicity and permanence of the retablos profound.

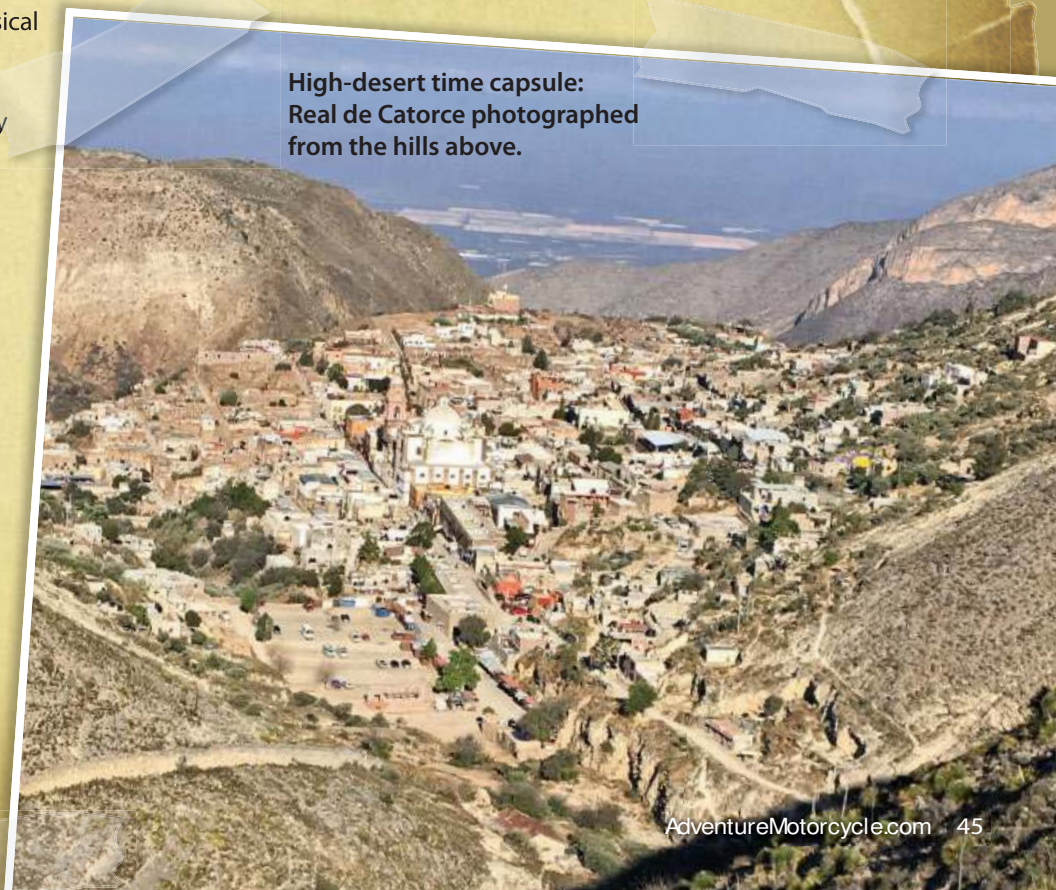
On our last night in Mexico we met traveling ex-pats—a glamorous Chilean couple and an insouciant, long-haired Englishman who was cruising the Americas on a *DR 650*. The moon was full, and their plans involved a peyote ceremony. Ours involved more beer and cigarettes. The Englishman and his girlfriend had ridden the *DR* up the infamous back route to Real—a hellacious rough-hewn rock passageway not much wider than a sidewalk. It was not too hard, he said, as long as you wheelied most of your way up. **ADV**

The moon was full, and their plans involved a peyote ceremony. Ours involved more beer and cigarettes.



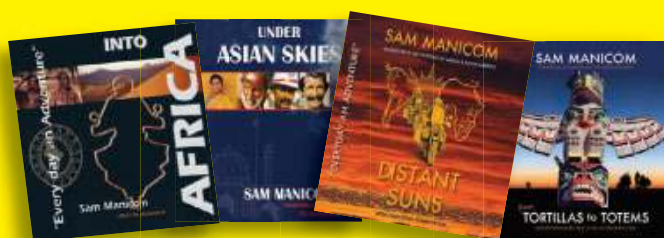
Stephen Thomas is a father, a writer, and a speech-language therapist in the Austin, Texas area.. He gets away from it all on a Suzuki V-Strom 650.

**High-desert time capsule:
Real de Catorce photographed
from the hills above.**



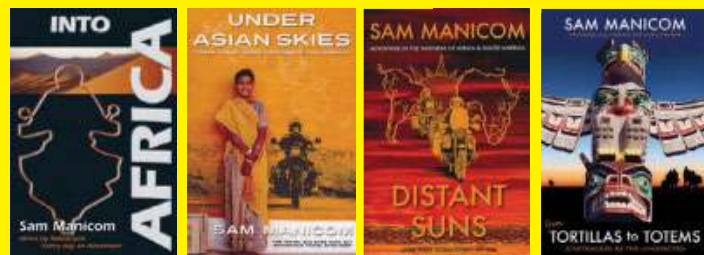
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To quote *BMW GS Trophy* team member Jocelin Snow: “The *NEBDR* is a variety pack... it’s the best of the *BDRs* all rolled into one.” As head of route development for the *NEBDR*, hearing that at the end of our 10-day expedition was music to my ears.



Mike Lafferty and Eric Milano exploring the countryside of Vermont’s Green Mountains.

Putting together a 1,400-mile adventure route that crosses seven state borders from New York to Canada was no small challenge. The northeast is densely populated; on top of that, the pressure was on to increase the technical riding from that of the *Mid-Atlantic BDR*. Luckily, I’ve been living and riding in the northeast for decades, so I had some good experiences and connections to draw upon.

BDR routes are a group effort. So, I reached out to a local from each state the route would run through and assembled the *Northeast BDR Development Team*. These

five individuals had several things in common: involvement with the northeast ADV community, solid routing experience, in-depth knowledge of and passion for their state, and most importantly, a clear understanding of the *BDR* mission.

I know the backcountry of New York state pretty well, but I brought in a Catskills region resident, Todd Polonsky, a long-time explorer on two wheels. Victoria Zandonella, founder of *Northeast Dual Sport Riders*, was an obvious choice to scout Connecticut and Massachusetts. To get us through the Green Mountain region, there was no better candidate than Eric Milano, owner of *MotoVermont*. If you’ve ever heard of the *Hampster*, you may know the name Andrew Phillips, the architect of that route

IN A BIG WAY

and long-time friend who served as my New Hampshire guru. Rounding out the team, pilot and *BDR* supporter Bryan Pullen would expertly navigate us through Maine. This team, once perfect strangers, came together and bonded over hundreds of hours of selfless hard work developing what is now the *North East BDR*. And *THEY* are the people to thank for this route.

The "Expedition" of a *BDR* is when members of the *BDR* organization and a few special guests experience the route for the first time, this included *BDR* President Paul Guillien, Director of Operations Inna Thorn, and myself, VP and Creative Director. Our special guests were Jocelin Snow and Mike Lafferty.



NEBDR Expedition Team: Paul Guillien, Jocelin Snow, Tim James, Mike Lafferty, Bryan Pullen, Inna Thorn.



The team leaving NYC across the George Washington Bridge as we embark on our 10-day adventure.

A LITTLE BITE OF THE BIG APPLE

New York City is not actually on the route, but I wanted this group to experience the feeling of heading out to a *BDR* from one of the most congested areas in the U.S.

A few hours later we arrived in tiny Hancock, NY, the start of the *NEBDR*. The Hancock Hotel is a comfortable spot to have dinner and spend the night. Nearby, you'll find good eateries plus fuel and supplies to get you squared away for the journey ahead.

An early breakfast and an Irish blessing from Rosie, the gracious hotel manager, and we were off. Hancock sits right on the Delaware River near the Pennsylvania border, so within minutes you're into the second state of the route. You hit dirt at about the two-mile marker and stay on mixed-surface, tarmac-free roads for most of PA.

Day one of any *BDR* ride always starts with some jitters, and leading this seasoned team of adventure riders on a brand-new route amplified that feeling. Plus, I had Mike Lafferty (eight-time *AMA National Enduro* champ) right behind me as we embarked on the first tricky section on a ridge high above the Delaware River. My nerves were instantly settled at the next stop though by the giant smiles on everyone's faces.

The route jumps back over into NY in Callicoon, a quaint village where we stopped for an early lunch. With full bellies, we meandered through Delaware County, crisscrossing the Delaware River several times on a selection of dirt and gravel roads on our way to Andes, NY.

There's nothing overly challenging in the NY section of the route; however, we did this ride in September when seasonal roads are at their best. In late spring when the

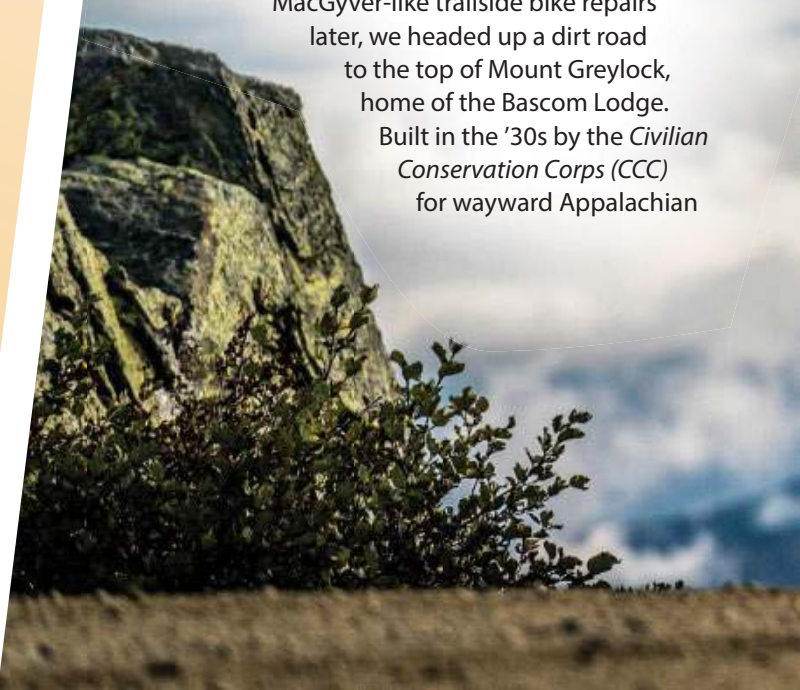
NEBDR becomes rideable, sections of the route are wet, muddy and rutty, making for an entirely different experience.

You'll have a few choices for breakfast in Andes. For us, it was the diner across from the hotel and then a scenic ride to the Tremperskill Country Store to gas up, grab supplies and head into the Catskill Forest Preserve. After crossing over the Pepactin Reservoir, twisty dirt roads were just ahead and continued throughout the day through a series of lush state forests. Our campsite that night was at North-South Lake, one of the oldest and largest state campgrounds in NY.

WELCOME TO NEW ENGLAND

The chilly 35°F descent into the town of Catskill in the morning on Route 23A, an exquisite, twisty ribbon of tarmac, was nothing short of thrilling. We met up with Victoria, who would guide us across the Rip Van Winkle Bridge over the Hudson River and into her section of the route. Thirty miles later, we reached the Massachusetts border ascending a quintessential New England gravel road out of Copake, NY. A perfect forested two-track then took us south for a quick dip into some picturesque Connecticut gravel roads. Massachusetts' terra firma was soon under our knobbies, an abundance of dirt forest service roads through the Berkshire Mountains. These off-pavement highlights include Beartown State Forest and the menacing October Mountain, which would start to raise the bar on the technical riding along the *NEBDR*.

A few significant crashes and some MacGyver-like trailside bike repairs later, we headed up a dirt road to the top of Mount Greylock, home of the Bascom Lodge. Built in the '30s by the *Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC)* for wayward Appalachian



Trail travelers, this stone and timber lodge is a must-stop. As the highest point in the state, the views are outstanding.

The way down Greylock on pristine tarmac, replete with tight corners and switchbacks, was just as fun as the way up on dirt. Next was a spirited ride through state forests that included some pretty technical riding. Bannis Road through Savoy State Forest includes a go-around for those not up for the challenge.

VERMONT—A REAL CLASS ACT

The Vermont state line was marked by an old sign on the side of a forest-lined dirt road. Eric Milano, who met us there, briefed the team on what to expect, and within minutes we faced the first of the many Class 4 roads he'd just described. Class 4 roads are public roads that are no longer maintained and may not have been for a hundred years or so. After hitting a couple of these jewels, Mike Lafferty leaned over to me and said, "I think I'm going to like Vermont."

We spent the next two and a half days on some of the best roads in the Northeast—from freshly paved tarmac to dirt roads that have never seen a grader. We experienced pastoral settings, historic sites and architecture dating back to the Revolutionary War.

During our last night in the state, we pitched our tents in a campground in Lincoln and feasted around an open fire on organic local fare purchased at a nearby farm stand.

The Class 4 roads in Vermont are what left the biggest impression on everyone. They are tough but rewarding when you make it through. They are not for everyone, though, and *BDR* offers two versions of the Vermont tracks: easy and hard.

BEAUTY ABOUNDS

It always confused me that you have to cross over the Connecticut

River to get from Vermont to New Hampshire—but you do and, in this case, you land in Woodsville. We spent the night at the rustic Nootka Lodge and met up with our New Hampshire expert, Andrew Philips.

After getting beat up in Vermont (in a good way), New Hampshire offered a 230-mile reprieve from technical riding. However, what it lacked in challenge it over-delivered in jaw-dropping beauty through the White Mountain National Forest. We thoroughly enjoyed a handful of hidden gems before hitting the granddaddy of all mountain roads in the east, the Mount Washington Auto Road.

At nearly 6,300 feet, the Mount Washington summit is the highest point in the Northeast and quite possibly the highlight of the *NEBDR*. This steep, windy toll road is mostly paved but goes to dirt for a stretch at the top. While sunny and clear at the bottom, by the time we got halfway up the mountain it was completely fogged in, cold, rainy and slippery. With visibility not more than 20 feet, we didn't stay long at the summit and carefully made our way down.

YOU CAN GET THEY-AHH FROM HEE-YAHH

It was time for Maine, the seventh and final state of the *NEBDR* and the state that Jocelin Snow grew up in. I don't know what was instantly magnified more as we entered the state, the brilliant fall foliage or the twang of Jocelin's Maine accent.

Bryan Pullen, our Maine expert, looked ready to go as he pulled up to our motel in Gorham. The first day in Maine was one of the most challenging. It starts out fairly sedate on some twisty forest roads but ramps up quickly as you enter an ATV recreational area. The area offered a little of everything: loose rocks,

muddy ruts, ledges, water crossings and even some sand. A couple hours of *brapping* around this ADV playground and we were ready for a short break at Melby's General Store in North Waterford. Bryan had warned

the group of what he considered the ultimate challenge:

The extremely primitive road leading from Willis Mill to Bethel. So technical, we considered excluding this section but in the end, we left the track in



as an optional expert-only section. When you watch the *NEBDR* film, you can decide for yourself if this nasty bit of trail is right for you. The expert and main tracks converge in Greenwood, where we stopped at the Local Hub for lunch and a review of what just went down (literally). From there, we headed north on more flowing and wide-open dirt roads through the lake region and into the town of Oquossoc where there is food, fuel and lodging. We stayed slightly off route in the nearby town of Rangeley at the historic Rangeley Inn.

TAKE ME TO THE BORDER/DROP ME IN THE WATER

On the morning of the final day, we mounted up in anticipation of completing the route. The final leg of the *NEBDR* takes you deeper into the backcountry and the most remote part of the route. There is one last opportunity to get fuel in Eustis. Take it.

Two-tracks alternating with dirt logging roads dominated the remainder of the route and the distant views were filled with mountains and trees, giving us the feeling of extreme remoteness. The terrain is rugged but not overly technical—just enough to keep you on your toes.

And then the rain came. We had spent the last 10 days riding in perfect weather but paid dearly for that in the last 100 miles. The tracks got slimy and some of the water crossings got deep and long. We finally made it to the Canadian border, cold and wet but with huge smiles on our faces. Fifteen miles to the south is the town of Jackman where

we got warm, fueled up and started our journeys home. The *NEBDR* is long, but like any *BDR*, a few sections can be done over an extended weekend. However, my advice is to commit and ride the entire 1,400-mile route. I promise you, when you reach the end, you'll truly feel you had an adventure of a lifetime. **RideBDR.com** **ADV**



Tim James quickly recognized the significance of the work that BDR is doing for the ADV community after riding the Utah BDR in 2013. Living in the congested northeast just a few miles outside of NYC, he fully understands the importance of fighting for off-highway riding opportunities. Tim started his involvement with BDR as a volunteer offering the services of his creative agency pro bono. His firm, James Howard Creative Group, works closely with the rest of the BDR team on all aspects of the organization's marketing, branding and promotional initiatives. He currently serves as BDR's Creative Director and Board VP. In 2018, Tim assembled the *NEBDR* Development Team and led the creation of the route.

Inna Thorn, leading Tim James and drone videographer Jon Beck up the unpredictable Mt. Washington.

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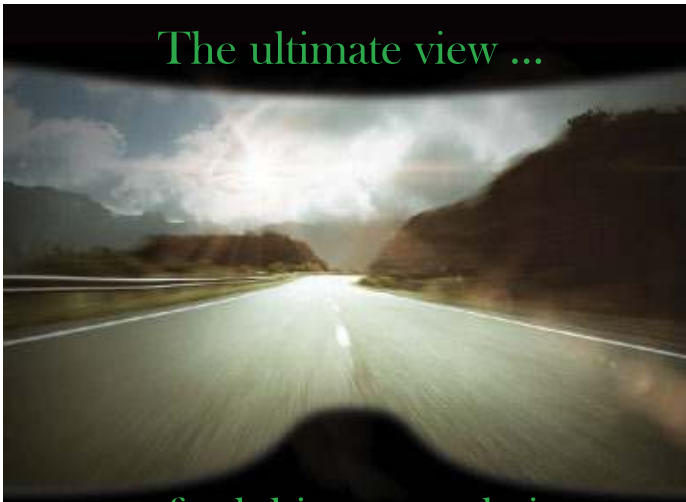
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EMBRACING

Ray ascending Heckman Pass leaving the “Wild” of Bella Coola behind.



OUR Wild

by Cheryl Jones | photos by Ray Mackenzie

Untamed... without restraint, uncontrolled, passionate, extreme ... this is what “wild” means to us. As such, we were excited to plan our next adventure, a trip that would push us to our limits to embrace our wild, both within us and around us.

Inspiration was readily found—and it was the majestic Grizzly who spoke to us. The allure of these magnificent beasts and their unscathed habitat in the northern British Columbian and Alaskan rain forests became the driving force behind our planning. Despite their large numbers, the Grizzly can be somewhat elusive. These regions can be very cold and wet in mid-May, leaving us at the mercy of Mother Nature, where the unknown and unpredictable can create its own sense of *wild*.

We packed light. It was to be a trip of content and quality, not distance. Thus, our dry bags contained relatively sparse personal items, but our photo equipment was substantial—loaded for bear (so to speak).

The ride up Vancouver Island was via highway. As always, snow-capped mountains surrounded us as we glided through the corners of this breathtaking region before reaching Port Hardy, our departure point and gateway to the Inside Passage. From Port Hardy to Prince Rupert, it's a voyage of 18 hours aboard a B.C. Ferry, which provides magnificent views of the islands, along with remote villages tucked offshore, the mountains that guard a bounty of fjords,

and waterfalls cascading the slopes into the ocean. Dolphins, orca and humpback whale migrate through these waters and if one is lucky enough, bears can be seen at the water's edge.

Unable to avoid highway travel between Prince Rupert and Terrace, we were greeted with a breathtaking road through the mountains, many still snow covered, with gentle curves that trace the Skeena River. We made the bold turn north on 113/Nisga'a Highway, coursing along lakes, through mountains, open stretches and tight tree-lined sections eventually leading to the lava fields. The last 50 kilometers were ridden on a fabulous dirt road where I heard Ray call out excitedly over the *Sena*, “Babe, a Grizzly!” I caught a glimpse of its backside as it bolted directly across our path. The noise of the *Ducati* proved to be a mechanical bear repellent for much of the trip.

We continued on toward Stewart, B.C. Waterfalls drooled down mountainsides and our first glimpse of the magnificent glaciers in the area hit us as we rounded a bend to behold the awe-inspiring Bear Glacier. Nestled between two high, craggy peaks, the blue hue of the ice was brilliant against the green of the lake below. Despite heavy rain, we were unable to resist stopping, lost in thought as we enjoyed this spectacle of nature.

We reached Stewart late in the day, a quaint town of around 500 people, next to Hyder, Alaska, a mere two kilometers away. The only unmanned border in the U.S., we entered without issue but would meet with Canadian Border Patrol on the way back. Our goal today was to see the famous Salmon Glacier, a remnant of that last great age of glaciers, 37 kilometers away through 10 kilometers of paved road and 28 of dirt in the Tongass National Forest.

The rain kept things interesting as we reached the glacier's tail, where avalanches led to impassable snow drifts. Mother Nature ensured that any further travel would be on two feet. The view from the tail was epic! We stayed for a few hours, taking photographs, walking toward the summit and praying not to meet a Grizzly face to face. The sheer number and size of bear paw prints had me quite nervous. Ray reassuringly touched the bear banger we brought just in case we came across one.

Over the next two days we made our way to Williams Lake via Prince George. Although it was highway riding, the views remained stunning, as mountain vistas steered our path. The ride to the wild Cariboo-Chilcotin Coast would become our favorite. Highway 20, known as the Chilcotin Highway,

also officially dubbed the Alexander Mackenzie Highway, is a must-ride for travelers in B.C. The GPS indicated 453 kilometers between Williams Lake and Bella Coola, equating to eight-plus hours of saddle time, and compensating for below average speed in certain stretches.

The road began with beautiful sweepers that led us through devastation left by wildfires which consumed thousands of hectares of forest. Riding past multiple First Nation reservations and burial grounds, we spotted many dirt roads that begged to be explored. And there, 57 kilometers of unpaved road, a precarious delight, slowed the pace somewhat.

Until 1953, Freedom Road, as it was known, ended at Anahim Lake, 137 kilometers from Bella Coola. The province considered the terrain too difficult to engineer and refused to extend it, leaving Bella Coola accessible only by air or water. The community took it upon themselves to bring in bulldozers to extend the road from either end, creating this now-famous portion of the westernmost stretch between Anahim Lake and Bella Coola. Locals called it *The Hill* or *The Precipice*.

From its summit of 1,487 meters, where the road crosses the Coast Range via Heckman Pass in Tweedsmuir South Provincial Park, the road descends 43 kilometers. It's steep and narrow



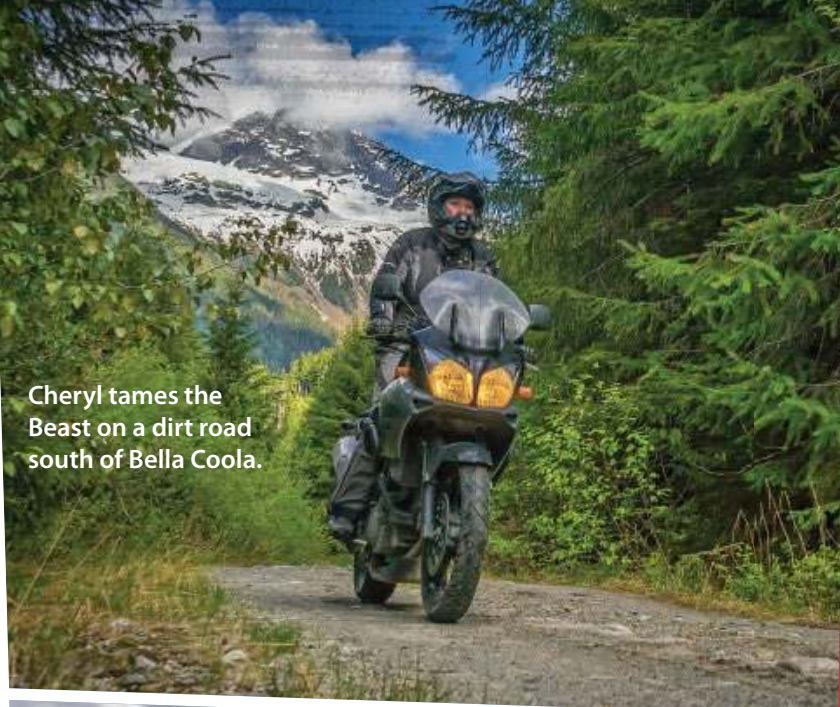
in places, with sharp hairpin turns and two major switchbacks leading to the Bella Coola Valley below. The descent includes a 9-kilometer section with a grade of 18%. Throughout the descent there are areas bordered on one side by cliffs and on the other by sheer drop-offs of hundreds of feet—there are no guardrails and the surface is all hard-packed gravel.

Entering the valley, you're immediately taken by the lush green vegetation surrounded by immense mountain peaks in all directions; it's absolutely breathtaking. At this time of year, the bears make their way down from the mountains to the valley floor and we glimpsed a large male before the beastly *Ducati* scared it away.

Exhilarated and exhausted, we happily rolled into the quaint village that is Bella Coola. Exploration of the village over the next couple of days revealed its remote nature. It has few resources but seems to thrive with what it has. Be certain to take a bit of cash, not every business has the ability to accept debit or credit cards (we learned that the hard way). The people were warm and inviting, often taking the



Enjoying our love of waterfalls on the way to the Salmon Glacier.



Cheryl tames the Beast on a dirt road south of Bella Coola.



Hamming it up while crossing a small bridge on the north side of the Bella Coola River.



What a view! Linger at the summit of Heckman Pass.

time to wave, ask about our journey and offer information about the history of the village, its indigenous people and local customs and traditions.

We fell in love with the people and the landscapes, and the off-road riding opportunities screamed out as well. Wild, abundant, accessible, covering all manner of terrain, they led us to some of the most stunning vistas we've seen to date.

Our first experience took us 30 kilometers up into the mountains on a tough dual-track path quite by mistake. Looking for Hunlen Falls, Canada's third highest single-drop waterfall, our mantra of "no wrong turn" saw us crossing paths with another bear. Getting there pushed our riding skills to new heights, traversing some brilliant water crossings, and navigating rocky paths. The reward, as it has been on all of our off-road excursions, was unmistakably the views.

We extended our stay by a day just to continue exploring new trails. Always on the alert for bears and ever awestruck by the snowcapped giants that protected this region, we were caught in a rain deluge but managed to outrun a thunderstorm. Battling both low and high temperatures we came across a bear along the side of the road, who allowed us to capture it in all its reverence. Did I mention Ray "Fred Flintstoned" the *Ducati* into position to avoid scaring it away? The very nature of this area was epic in and of itself.

We reluctantly left Bella Coola with fond memories, taking the long way home, exploring as many of the aforementioned dirt crossroads as possible. Not a one disappointed... even when the soft soil saw Beast and I take a quick dirt nap. There is so much more to explore near Bella Coola that we've vowed to return.

The *wild* we were looking for was ever present as we traveled where Mother Nature and two wheels would allow. From the unrestricted access to nature and the bears we saw daily, to the pack of wild horses we rode alongside as they raced across a meadow, we were once again free to embrace our wild! **ADV**



Cheryl Jones and Ray McKenzie are adventure riders, writers and photographers based on Vancouver Island, Canada. Preferring a road less traveled, they have ventured to many countries, some via two wheels, some by other means, with the notion that there are no wrong turns. Recently they rode Nepal as the locals would, bringing a different flavor to their story and images. Cheryl is a registered nurse and Ray is a professional photographer, and together they have embraced storytelling on the wild side of life.

Bidding a fond farewell to Bear Glacier on our way back south.



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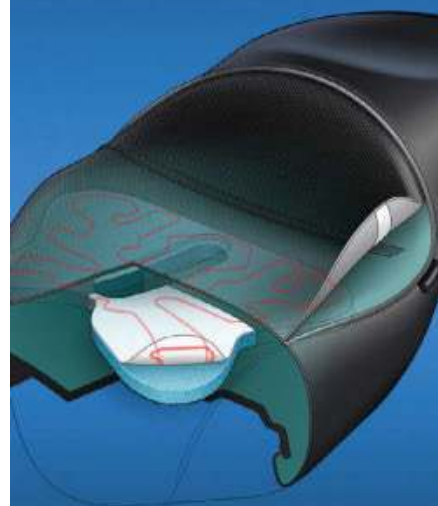
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