

## *The B.O.L.D.F.A.R.T.S. OR 22nd Annual MMOC Ride?*

A disclaimer: The following is a semi-official recap of the officially cancelled 22<sup>nd</sup> Annual MMOC July Ride scheduled for August 17-20 but convened August 3<sup>rd</sup> thru the 7<sup>th</sup> in conjunction with a previously scheduled Brotherhood of Oddball Loquacious Dinosaurs with Fractionally Advanced Riding TechniqueS non official MMOC ride to Show Low, Arizona. Got that in your memory bank, Reggie? You'll be quizzed later!

For a short history lesson, MMOC rode to Show Low, Arizona, in October, 2007, one of 3 years we had a July and October ride. Getting there was a pain-in-the-ass; the riding there anything but, with spectacular scenery and great roads in most quadrants. So it was, LAPD retiree and resident Baron "the German" Laetzsch and I started conspiring on a return trip almost 2 years ago. Maps and Google Earth paint an abstract picture, his wealth-of-knowledge of the region, a 3D *Monet!* We plotted a couple of new routes differing from our earlier visit, and the B.O.L.D.F.A.R.T.S ride became reality.

From the Bay Area August 3<sup>rd</sup>, Rhoda and I, along with Al Luenow and Mary Ann Mann motored to Bustling Barstow where Doug Wayne and polar opposite Dewey "Motor- Mouth" Presnell rode in from Minden, Nevada. Hot, yes, but not unbearable thanks to an early arrival, the cool pool and cold suds under the canopy of umbrellas.

Monday, we departed on our remaining 500 mile journey at 0600 to beat the heat through Needles and lower elevations east on I-40 until we climbed up into the 5-7 thousand foot mountain passes. Enroute, Needles was comparatively cold an hour earlier, with Havasu City @ 108 around 0900! It cooled off back to the mid 80's as Cliff Heanes' group merged with us in Winslow, Arizona. They started days earlier in SoCal's Beaumont, venturing to Buckeye, Arizona, and then on to our meet and greet. Who were these adventurous elite riders with suspect Beverly Hills Hillbilly's backgrounds? Cliff's wife Mickie, his brother Jeff, and Mickie's brothers Lynn and Joe Waid. Throughout this day's journey, strategic combined fuel/food/hydration stops allowed us to get to Show Low at 2:00 pm, the 5,500' elevation keeping the temperature at a very comfortable seasonal norm of 85.

The German met us at our host hotel, the excellent Days Inn, and pointed out several very good restaurants within walking distance. While the anal among us polished their chrome, throbbing American-made V-Twin wonders; this BMW mounted scribe, the ever bodacious Ms. Nishiyama, Honda mounted Lynn and Mary Ann kicked off the celebratory pool party before a gourmet Mexican dinner across the street. With 3 days of area rides ahead, time to hit the hay.

Sunrise Tuesday the 5<sup>th</sup> was crystal clear and crisp. I had flashbacks of why I skipped the National Parks Petrified Forest leg N-E of Show Low in 2007. With a mental picture of moonscape, I couldn't envision beauty. Let's go find out. Baron led us on our 55 mile journey to the park entrance, and as we descended to the toll-booth in the middle of nowhere, it hit me. *Damn His Own Self, you're freak'n brilliant!* Contained inside this kiosk, the size and appearance of a 40's era wooden-plank two-holer outhouse with an air conditioner tacked on the side was Ms. Grumpy Official Rangerette *manning* the barren outpost. It took her 15 minutes to get our 11 bikes through as the sun bore down on us. To quote Broom Hilda, "if you have a National Parks Pass, our regulations require picture I.D. too or you have to pay with cash, that's what my boss said." Then there was the 2 hour slow-speed crawl amongst the thousands of cars, SUV's, motorhomes and busses traversing this federally funded pothole infested roadway. The smiles on the faces of the "cagers" spoke to their glowing approval of 75 square miles of nuclear wasteland; my opinion was slightly different. No one asked. I do recall seeing 3 green trees, a like number of semi-verdant cacti and 3 or 4 cementacious-looking prehistoric logs laying horizontal in this vast dust bowl. There was no partridge in a pear tree; neither could survive in this inhospitable wilderness!

Back at the ranch and more pool fodder. Much of this afternoon's hilarity centered on the sights, or lack thereof, during today's ride; the German stayed out of earshot. True to life and with beauty in the beholder's eyes, nine Nays, 2 Ayes and 1 martini addled abstention. Gorge palates, quench thirst or just luxuriate in the confines of our rooms? Those are tough questions to answer as the sun sets once again on Show Low.

Mornings are fantastic this time of year in Show Low, with pine scent wafting through the air as billowy white clouds drift above. We're on a middling journey this early Wednesday as we head southwest on US 60, the brilliant sun thankfully rising to our rear. Ten miles of aspen and pine canopied roadway with narrow shoulders give way to 60 miles of fantastic tarmac following the Salt River Canyon; a majestic and strikingly colorful view from the well maintained winding and undulating asphalt far, far above. Numerous vista outlooks offer us spectacular Kodak moments, the pictures on display @ [www.mmoc.org](http://www.mmoc.org). They fractionally depict what our craniums digest; granite, sandstone and red rock melding to paint a wonderfully vibrant and brilliant picture. We ascend, descent hundreds of times in thousand foot swings as the blacktop attempts to follow the deep canyon. Snaking and on camber, this wonderment of engineering oftentimes requires hard input into the bars to negotiate the beautiful sweeping roadway, of course dependent on your enthusiasm, exuberance and, *ahem*, pace.

All too soon we're in Globe and a short ride brings us to Az. 188 where we once again drop-the-hammer past Roosevelt Lake, the largest body of water in Arizona.....excluding their deep sea port on the Atlantic. Mostly high plains and traffic free, we own the road and are quickly at Baron's favorite countryside diner, the Butcher Hook at Tonto Basin. A single dwelling oasis set back 50 yards from the road, it *don't look like much*, however this Tajmahal is a wonderful respite from the blazing sun. And the food? Phenomenal, mom and pop or otherwise! After gorging for over an hour, we soon merged onto Az. 87 and then Az. 260E from Payson, setting course for our hotel. Ninety miles of bucolic green-belt, small quaint bergs and many-mini forests in this pastoral setting prove relaxing, satisfying our inquisitiveness graphically. Back at the ranch, we grade this day's 250 mile spectacular ride and scenery. Eleven Ayes, zero Nays and one martini addled Abstention. German and I soak in the accolades but truth-be-told, it was his vision of another Monet.

Our last and final day was to be a short ride through the Pine Top-Lakeside region S-E of town before the promise of an afternoon BBQ at Baron's house. AAA maps depict a bleak picture of road quality or surface type through the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest, German knows better. From Az. 260E we set-sail at a casual droning pace, Baron leading us to Az. 273W towards Sunrise Lake, then a promise of Az. 261 and the Big Lake Overlook. What a revelation! I can't take the sightseeing pace early on and soon Rhoda and I blow past the group, tilting the horizon proving too tempting for immeasurable distance. The gently curving and undulating roads bisect green and lush, almost manicured golf-course-quality cattle grazing land for as far as the eye can see. The wide road surface is consistently *PERFECT* with nary a tar strip, great line-of-sight, squiggly enough to make it marvelous in the shallow valleys and no traffic. Yes, the Missus and I did miss a group turn off the highway, but back-tracking just added to the excitement as we arrived at the overlook with a Cheshire grin from ear to ear. Words cannot describe this last 40 mile stretch of pictorial racetrack through State/Federal/Indian land. Motorcycling nirvana! A hotel-bound reverse-route sashay found us early afternoon cleaning up and dressing down from riding gear to shorts and de rigueur Hawaiian shirts.

Ron Stringer is a retired LAPD Motor and MMOC member with more than 30 years standing. He and wife Lieda winter in Lake Havasu City and summer in Show Low.....refer to paragraph #4 for rational! They offered to ferry us the 4 miles to and from the Laetzsch estate; we gladly accepted their gracious offer! At casa German, Baron and wife Kathy were relaxing, savoring the aroma wafting through the kitchen and foretelling of our pending feast. To ensure perfection, he hired the head chef from their local Elks Club and his sous chef girlfriend who were busy preparing the huge slabs of ribeye steak, tri-bean chili and what else, German potato salad. Steak preparation alone required 3 days of "cowboy dry rub" marinating and then last minute slathering of freshly diced garlic. The pungent fragrance of simmering chili and other foodstuffs had us crying for fulfillment, but first an outdoors democratic discussion on next year's ride intertwined with suds enhanced war stories and self-proclaimed accolades. By unanimous vote I won "Rider Of The Century", Dewey Presnell was awarded "The Walking Encyclopedia" trophy and Lynn Waid a gift certificate, redeemable at any English speaking speech therapist far, far removed from his Arkansas state of birth. As for the 23<sup>rd</sup> Annual MMOC Ride, ya'all find that choice elsewhere in this issue, ya'hear?

With steaks on the barby and cooked to order, time to gorge. Absolutely phenomenal flavor, texture and tender beyond belief; the 3 bean chili and potato salad greatly accentuating this gourmet dinner. You just don't get this flavorful bouquet outside a very specialized, read: EXPENSIVE, restaurant! For hours we chomped, jawed and heaped well deserved praise on Baron's edict of a professionally prepared banquet, and the day's ride. All too soon it was time to bid adieu to our leader-of-the-pack and most gracious host, thank the Stringers and partake of one last poolside frolic while reflecting on the beauty and wonderment of this region's tour. Oh, and pack for our sunrise departure.

Reverse route for those of us bound for the Bay Area had a smattering of rain with only one noteworthy shower high in the Arizona mountains of the Kaibab National Forest approaching Williams, none requiring rain gear. Another overnighther in Bustling Bodacious Barstow and home the next day. Sniff.

So, was this the **B.O.L.D.F.A.R.T.S.** (we are) ride OR the **22<sup>nd</sup> Annual MMOC Ride**? Your choice dear reader, but judging from the miles-of-smiles on the kissers of my brother and sister participants, we don't give a cow-chip, meadow-muffin, barn-biscuit crap; it was a beautiful and memorable experience with great co-horts and riders; the weather and scenery mere icing on the cake.

That's all folks.

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