

BITS & PIECES

TOURING TO MT. WASHINGTON ON A DUKE.

BY KEITH QUINN

Now we have the long dark days of winter here in Canada and if we want to ride we have to wait till the roads get dry and there is a warm spell. Even then warm-up stops are necessary and wearing a snowmobile suit is advisable. Take many coffee breaks and warm up your gloves on the engine. It isn't wise to travel too far nor too long when temperatures dip near the zero degrees F mark, unless you want the smile to freeze on your face. Zero is nothing you say?

My friend John and Sharon have a new Harley FX1200 and I have a Ducati 750 GT. Both are good road machines and 7000 miles last summer just on week ends will attest to that. John and I are 35 and 42 so our wild hot dogging days are over.

Last summer we toured through five states of which I will give you a typical trip.

After a stifling hot week at work we left Montreal on Saturday, enjoying the cool air as we crossed the St. Lawrence Seaway. Off to our right was the Caughnawage Indian Reserve which we drive through on our mid-week evening rides. We smiled 'cause we were back in the saddles again.

We headed through flat apple orchard and farm country to Bedford, Quebec. About 80 miles out, we stopped for a snack and watched a turtle in the river. He seemed to be racing his shadow. It looked like he'd be practicing for 150 years. I think his sponsor was Shell. (pun)

From Bedford, we wound down two lanes route 237 using the Green Mountains of Vermont as a sight gauge. A few miles after Frelighsburg we hit the American Border Customs Office. Ouch! The routine questions were answered. Then the officer asked John if we had seen Evil Knievel on TV the day before. Everytime we cross the border they ask John the same question.

Route 237 becomes Vermont 108 and after an hour passing through small towns like Bakersfield where there are several unrestored antique cars and truck on display, we reached a pass called Smugglers Notch. Vermont until recently had a higher population of cows than people. In the early 1800's we Canadians used to herd stolen American cows through this pass. We gave that up when we discovered that the cows were giving milk in U.S. Gallons. The road climbs to about 2800 feet and late in the afternoon the sun is behind the hills leaving the notch cool and dark. Looking up another 500 feet we saw climbers hanging off a rock face on ropes. From here the road descends to Stowe Vermont in a series of switch-backs lined with fallen boulders as big as houses where two cars cannot pass. Needless to say this road is blocked with snow in the winter but skiing is fantastic. So far we have travelled 130 miles which is an easy days drive to and from Montreal.

Stowe is a quaint rural small town in a fairly large valley protected by the mountains. The town is busy summer and winter and full of arts, crafts and good watering holes.

Back on the road, we flow through the curves like mercury running down an open tube. Here we are, drinking in the scenery, sun and air and getting high. Not an artificial chemical high but a real natural high. John lets out a "Ya hoo" and we both laugh.

Now we turned east toward New Hampshire. The rumble of our engines echoed off the hills but the traffic ahead was coming to a stop. We worked our way up to the front and discovered that someones pony had broken his rope and was standing in the middle of the road. The sound of bikes scared him into moving off the road and the traffic jam was over.

Over to Barrie where the Granite Quarries are. Speak civil around here in case you end up under a stone. OK Barney?

Crossing the Connecticut River brough us eventually to Lincoln New Hampshire another mountain resort area. Here the White Mountains rise to an average of 5500 feet. The Kancamangus road sometimes called the Passaconaway or Route 112 (look that up in your Atlas you lazy bums) winds for about 34 miles into Conway. You won't see any sign of a town or a building of any sort but you will see mountains lookouts, covered bridges boulder strewn rivers and swimming holes.

From Conway we turned north to North Conway in the shadow of the Presidential Range. At White Mountain Airport I spotted two old

Waco open cockpit biplanes, freshly rebuilt three-placers with flashy paint jobs. The local Waldo Pepper will show you the sights if you don't think its too dangerous. Or you can browse through the local Mountaineering shop. The well-known Carroll Reed Ski shop is located here. His ski creations can be seen in the affluent "New Yorker" magazine.

After staying overnight in Intervale at Perry's Rest Motel we shot up to the Mt. Washington tool road \$3.00 per bike. Past Pinkham Notch Camp for climbers we hung a left and got in line with cars carrying members of the Audubon Society. There people are for the birds, one hundred per-cent.

The tool road wound for eight miles to finally reach 6300 feet. It used to be all gravel when they held the annual car race to the top. Now it is half paved (where they don't have wash-outs.) We soon discovered that our bikes could pass the cars without trying.

At about the half-way point we stopped to look at a building that has chains running over the peak and anchored to the ground. The buildings without foundations must be held down so they don't blow away. Mt. Washington claims to have had the highest recorded winds in the world; 230 MPH. And the storms can blow up mighty fast at times. This day was clear and crisp and with a marvelous



DUCATI

NORTON-MOTO GUZZI-LAVERDA-MOTO MORINI

- ✓ COMPLETE MACHINE SHOP
- ✓ PRECISION BORING
- ✓ ROADRACING AND TOURING PARTS
- ✓ UPS SHIPPER
- ✓ TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE
- ✓ 10% DISCOUNT TO D.I.O.C. MEMBERS
- ✓ NEW PRODUCTS COMING SOON

Cycle Specialties of Athens

220 Oak Street

Athens, Georgia 30601

404-543-0235



The rest of the guys ought to be here soon. They should know those mountain passes by heart by now. I hate leaving them so far behind. I guess my Ducatis' too much for them.