

Where Are You Going?

Saturday August 5th

What a perfect day. All is right in the world of motorcycle day trips. You see motorcycling is really a head game. In order to ride safely, one's head needs to have his head on right. One's head is directly connected to the state of the motorcycle world.

Having the right mental attitude is especially true if the circuit includes miles of severely twisting, winding and technically demanding roads. This is especially true when you are on a brand new Ducati Hypermotard S.

Oh yeah, it is a good day. The weather is Colorado perfect!! Above is a neon blue sky that can only be had when humidity is less than 30%, temperatures are in the low 60's and not a chance in hell of rain.

Val, Finney and hiked hard yesterday so they are just fine staying at home and enjoying quite time that only no TV mountain living provides. Erin has checked in and all is calm on the home front. Domestic world is good, check. Yes sir, this is one fine day to take that Ducati with new Termi pipes out to play in twisty heaven.

It is with a good mental attitude that I looked forward to losing myself to the mentally demanding focus and attention required of mountain riding. The day started with the usual run down to Reynolds open space park. The road is a combination of brand new and worn, but great shape asphalt. The road is rarely traveled offering broad sweepers, moving into turns that become tighter and tighter. The road goes downhill to the river so acceleration is gravity enhanced. The turns get tighter and tighter until you are presented with a three mile series of 10-15 mph posted switchbacks. The last downhill thrill ends and puts me onto a gravel road that parallels the Platte River which is one of the most beautiful rivers, I have ever seen.

What great warm up ride and the morning is still young. The river road is a combination of gravel and a hard packed asphalt type surface. Did I mention that I

was riding a Motard? On the left is the fast moving wild Platte River with fly fisherman in complete LL Bean gear; I didn't realize western trout were so fashion conscious. On the right are mountains with indescribably beautiful rock formations, and I am on a road special made for the Ducati. Does it get any better?

Do I look at the river, the rocks, the road? Looking at the road seemed to be the appropriate focal point, although I did slow it down in order to take in the river and mountains occasionally. Yes sir, all is right with the motorcycle world.

The river road intersects into a two lane road. I go south on what I think is CR 126. CR 126 takes me through miles of forest lost in a fire a few years ago. It is amazing to see beautiful houses still in perfect shape surrounded by forest that are burnt to the ground. What skill the fire fighters must have. As I head south, I see the forests are turning into meadows and reforestation, but it is going to be a long time before a real forest emerges from the ashes.

The road is in beautiful shape, once again with little traffic. I proceed thru landscapes devoid of trees then onto lush Ponderosa pines forest. The road provides several opportunities to park and view broad open mountain vistas then opens up into four lanes and starts to descend. The curves are wide open, high speed sweepers, leading down the mountain.

Once you get to the bottom of the mountain the road reverts to two lanes and begins an uphill climb with miles of, once again, technically demanding curves. As I climb the river gets farther down the mountain until I summit and head back down to wind up at Decker's.

Decker's is the local spot for bikers, fisherman, sport car guys and locals to hang out and show their stuff. You can get a hamburger, chips and drink for \$5 and make new friends. But this day, Decker's is very slow so I proceed to continue south to the gas station in Woodland Park. The Ducati fuel light comes on around 100 miles and that means in a very short time, if it the machine is not fed, I will be pushing. As gas stations can be scarce, I refuel in Woodland Park and head back to Decker's.

The ride back to Decker's is another beautiful ride thru Ponderosa pines, tall mountains and few cars. I arrive at Decker's and still no bikes. I just keep going over the mountain and I notice my backpack is slapping my shoulder. Like I said, having the right mindset is important in motorcycling and I do not like to be distracted by things that are so easily remedied.

Cheesman trailhead offers a parking lot and safe place for me to pull over and adjust my backpack prior to continuing the journey. The pack was easy to fix so I just sat in the parking lot soaking up the day and looking for bikes headed to Decker's. It was still slow so I put on my helmet and started to exit the parking lot.

I was stopped waiting to pull out when two bikes coming down the mountain, rode straight at me. They pulled right next to me and a guy pulls up his face shield on his full face helmet. All I can see is a big bushy white mustache and eyeballs when he asks in a gruff voice, "**Where are you going?**"

The other guy pulls up his shield and all I can see of him are two blue eyes and lines in his face that have to be connected to a huge smile on his face concealed by the full face helmet. They were both on Hondas. Wouldn't you know it, they were from Florida. We talked bikes a while, until Mr. Mustache decided it was time to put on sun screen and head down the parking lot. We said goodbye and parted ways.

I pulled out onto 126 headed north when I started thinking about my life philosophy that believes we are given opportunities every day. Sometimes we recognize the opportunity, sometimes we don't. Sometimes we recognize the opportunity and don't act on it and sometimes we do.

Given my life philosophy, I work hard to recognize the opportunities given to us and started thinking, **Bruce, where are you going?** Here is an opportunity for you to meet a couple of interesting guys who live in Florida, have a place in Colorado and share the love of bikes bringing me once again to the big question; **Bruce where are you going?** Well I guess I am headed north.

Is turning around and seeking out unknown riders other than through a five minute parking lot conversation an action consistent with **where I am going?** Has

this brief meeting with these motorcycle riders been an opportunity? Are you going to ignore the opportunity? The answer to whether this is an opportunity or not lies totally within the answer to; **Where am I going?** And, I know the answer to that one; I go where I can be with engaging, interesting, kind, open people.

Are these that type? Had I been given an opportunity consistent with **where I am going?** I think so. I had darn better recognize the opportunity and do something about it or lose the opportunity altogether. Ok then, turn this bike around and head south. I had to see if these guys are at Decker's and learn their stories.

Coming down the hill to Decker's I spot the Yellow and Black Hondas parked in the dirt lot. I am in luck. I pull up and park next to the bikes and start to look around. All I have seen of these guys is two blue eyes encased in laugh lines, and a guy with white mustache. Not too worry; there they are seated on the bench drinking some tea.

We shook hands and introduced ourselves face to face, which is different than helmet to helmet. George Skaggs has been a Honda dealer in Florida, is former racer of all sorts, 59 years old and knows everything there is to know about Colorado. His friend Curt Cooke has come out with his wife to visit George and Cindy and ride Colorado. It is like old home week. After visiting a while, Curt said that motorcycles were meant to be ridden so I lead them to some back roads that are twisty filled. At the end of the ride we stopped.

After talking with and riding with folks for a while you sort of get a sense of people. I guess that what happens on a golf course, but I never could get the hang of that one. I liked George and Curt; I guess they felt the same way because George invited Val and me to come over to their house that evening to meet his brother-in-law and wife. They are full time Denver residents and also ride. As I was curious as to winter riding, George said Larry could answer all my questions.

Later that afternoon Val and I jumped on the BMW GS and met George at the bottom of road leading to his mountain home in Bailey. We walked thru George's garage which had six parked motorcycles. Another good sign. On the walls were

pictures of Jennings track days, old motorcycles and the sweet smell of chain lube. It's just like home.

We went inside, sat down, were offered tea and immediately became friends. Within minutes we were exchanging motorcycle stories and having big laughs. It is clear these families are engaging, interesting, kind, and open people in direct alignment with **where I am going**. We had a great evening and we look forward to having George, Cindy, Curt and Karen over for some chicken on the grill soon.

Where am I going? Seems a little thought to that question goes a long way in determining our journeys from a lot of different aspects. As for me, I am going to turn the Duc around and ride toward every opportunity I have the sense to recognize. My wish for you is that your bike is always headed in the direction you are going!

Motorcycle people, aren't they fun!!!