

## A beautiful (and typical) Mississippi ride ...

Richard Palmer and I set out for the Natchez trace early on Monday, Aug 9, enjoying the smooth road and interesting sights of the western edge of the big lake. Crossing the North Bay bridge, I was surprised to see a 6-7 foot gator in the center of the channel, swimming lazily out to the deep end. I later mentioned to Richard "It looked like he owned the place!" to which RP responded "Yep ... 'cause he did!" Lol !

Crossing the Pearl River on Hwy43, I snickered silently when we rode past Tommy's Trading Post and saw the funky green gator painted on the side of the building.

A small back road east of Hwy25 provided a little unexpected fun, as they sometimes do. This one deteriorated into a dirt/gravel/black-rock section that I'll guess was maybe a mile, a mile and a half long ... before eventually returning to pavement. Interestingly enough, it seems that a lot of my rides tend to find a GS road at some point ;-)

We next encountered a "ROAD CLOSED 1.8 MILES AHEAD" sign on Hwy483 ... so we naturally had to ride on up to it, to see if it *really* was closed. Had a brief conversation with some hard hat guys, and realized that we weren't gonna sneak past this downed bridge without skis involved. But, having to re-route wasn't really bad at all. It allowed for us to discover this little gem:



Later, cutting through Bienville National Forest on Hwy13 was a pleasant change. I kept eyeing dirt roads snaking their way back into the woods every so often. Tempting, but we stayed the course

Enjoyed an *outstanding* home cooked lunch at The Garden Patch in Forest. ROM may never get to meet there because the restaurant's hours are 11-2, Mon-Thurs only. But if you're ever in the area at one of their open times, we highly recommend it

Being a straight shot, Hwy80W to Brandon seemed the easiest way to return, since we didn't have the luxury of sleeping off that lunch. With little to no traffic, it allowed us to compensate for the warming temps, by getting some sustained air without having to resort to the slab.

Closer to home, we soaked up a slow cruise over the Rez's Spillway Road. Lake traffic was almost non-existent, which meant that the water was as smooth as glass across most of it. Very pretty.

While fueling up before heading back to our homes, I thought ... this ride was special. Special because it wasn't hurried or forced, we just let it come to us. No clock, no agenda, just a desire to re-experience some of the little things that we tend to take for granted. Mississippi really does have a lot to offer. Even more so when shared