

Justin's trip to California

Hello everyone, I just wanted to send out a somewhat brief rider report describing my travels to California this summer for the "Born Free" motorcycle show, to visit friends and see some of the west coast countryside.

The original plan was to ride my motorcycle over there but because I had recently acquired Special and under advisement of many friends, I decided to trailer the motorcycle. It was a very good decision seeing is how temperatures in Arizona and New Mexico got up to a 110°

It was the 12th annual Born Free motorcycle show held in Silverado, CA in which chopper builders from all over the world enter their builds into competitions for several different categories. The motorcycles were beautiful, the people were friendly and fantastic, and there was nothing but motorcycle talk all around. And I was lucky enough to get invited, through Instagram, to ride in with this awesome group of guys from the area. They even gave me a "Grass Pass"!! No, it's not what you're thinking. It was basically VIP parking close to the competition bikes. I'll definitely be going back next year if anyone wants to join.



Of course, I had to spend a couple extra days to ride up-and-down Pacific Coast Highway from Dana Point (the start of Hwy 1 on the south end) going through Malibu up to Oxnard for some vegan sushi. Trust me, it's delicious and the ride never gets old.



From there I traveled northerly to visit friends in the Napa Valley area but it wasn't an exciting commute because we used the trailer again. Other than being a little smokey from the Lake Tahoe fires, the weather was perfect for riding in the mountains, through the vineyards and around Clear Lake, CA.



My friends and I spent several days in Napa Valley touring the wineries and some even let Special come along.



From there, we left the trailer and rode west to the coast starting with spending the night in Bodega Bay at a cool motel my friend suggested. It's a small port and fishing town that closes up at 6:00 p.m. so be sure to get your dinner early if you're there. Seriously.



The next day, riding up the beautiful PCH with dreams of pitching camp on cliff sides over the ocean, I soon realized that it was really cold riding the motorcycle along the coast and that nights on the ocean we're going to be even colder. Burrrrr, I did not have the gear for that so I started thinking about camping more inland.

After riding through Avenue of the Giants and the drive through tree we stayed in a motel one more night in Crescent City while visiting more friends and drinking delicious craft beer from the local brewery.





The next day we found a beautiful camp spot along the Smith river that was completely unoccupied because it was closed off for covid. But it was too easy to sneak my motorcycle around the barricade and so we just went in and spent the next 6 nights camping next to the river by ourselves in one of the most beautiful spots in northern California. It was amazing!



From there we headed back down PCH, fully relaxed, mind you, and landed in the quaint little town of Benicia, which I found to be surprisingly fabulous. So much that we stayed an extra two nights. The historic "Union" hotel was "granny-like" comfortable, with its antique furniture in the rooms and each room is different. And, within walking distance, are many very nice restaurants and shops. But the best part was that the town was super dog friendly. Nearly every person on the streets had a dog with them. It was awesome!

At that point we had been gone for 3 weeks so we decided it was time to start trekking home.

Using a trailer again to come home, we just had to make a visit to the Big Hole in the Ground and as always, it was soulfully inspiring.

They wouldn't let me ride my motorcycle to the rim for a pic. I don't know why not.



Back on the road by that afternoon we then stopped in Santa Fe for a couple of days, pulled the motorcycle off, and rode some of their beautiful countryside. We took a suggested motorcycle route called the "High Road to Taos" and it was o.k., but it wasn't nearly as impressive as the ride back on hwy 68 along the Rio Grande River, I thought. A fellow Instagramer took this pic and sent it to us.



We humped it back home from there with the whole trip lasting 4 weeks. It was a great time, the bike did great and Special did great as well. She is definitely a biker bitch now.

Thanks for reading and, as always, live free and ride safe.