

Booga Booga ... Back Roads to Chattanooga !

by Dan Stubblefield

I had been needing to get my K1600GT's fuel pump replaced. There's a factory recall involved (ask Ian).

I am aware that potential fuel leaks are not to be sneezed at, but I'm also a bit surprised that BMW didn't ask me to kick in any matching funds either. I mean, my bike is over 10 years old, and sitting on 96K miles.

Anyway, I made the appointment and decided to let my REVER app pick the route this time. I opened it up, selected "my house" and "Pandora's European Motorsports" in Chattanooga ... then picked "twisty roads".

Sunday 02/06/2022

Left the house mmm ... 9 ish. Took Hwy 43 up towards Kosciusko. Beautiful, crisp skies, with temps in the lower 40s, it was a perfect day. The only "glitch" was that I had a deer cross the road in front of me just shy of Thomastown, but I saw him in time. Ahh, I thought ... this really is a nice section of 43.

However, from Kosciusko east to the Alabama line ... it was just the opposite. A long straight line (yeah, it was gonna have to be, at some point), but fortunately there was an abundance of interesting scenery along the way to break things up.

Note to self: Balaclavas are great for cold weather management, but then the Cardo struggles with my commands. Grrrr.

(I know, I know ... 1st world problems, lol)



A couple of cool mailboxes along Hwy 14



The Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway

I was hoping to enjoy a few minutes overlooking the Ten-Tom just across the bridge at the Pickinsville Recreation Area ... but it was closed. What the ...?



Down the road it was approaching mid to late afternoon, and just as my fuel gauge began to nag at my inner sense of peace ... I happened onto Hwy 24. The last leg of the day, it brought me into Jasper with a nice rhythmic feel, and turned out to be a perfect wrap to the first day.

Got fuel, an early dinner, headed to the hotel, yada yada.

Speaking of which, the Portico at the Holiday Inn Express looked awfully tempting ... so I pulled up, unloaded my bags, and walked through the front door like I owned the place. No issues or grief at all from the front desk about my "secure parking".

Monday 02/07/2022

Day 2, and I awoke to one of my favorite road trip alarms ... Wagner's "Ride of the Valkyries". Now if THAT won't fire you up, nothing will!

Things got started with a full breakfast. Hey, it's not Cracker Barrel, but it's not a banana and a bottle of water either (and yes, I've stayed at those hotels before)



I fired up the big K and was out of town in a heartbeat with a twist of the wrist. I never tire of that sweet 6's throttle in dynamic-mode ... it's just pure joy. A symphony to the ear too! It's Ferrari-like siren song building with RPM's, punctuated only by the briefest of tonal changes as each new gear is toed in ... what a nice start to a new day.

As I was climbing through foothills I ran across a sight that I was surprised to encounter. So odd, that I decided to stop and document it. It appeared to have been abandoned just on the side of the road, and from what I could tell, there didn't seem to be any water or rail lines nearby either. Just didn't make sense ...



That is one HUMONGOUS crane! The photo really doesn't do it justice.



Down the road, it just kept getting better (heh heh)

These particular roads were memorable in part because they were silky smooth with constant radiuses (radii?). And it didn't hurt that a handful of "caution 10 MPH" switchbacks were thrown in for good measure.



Bwah ha ha ha ha!

Goats and pigs and geese, oh my ! And even a pony for Tommy and Steve ;-)

I managed to stray from the route a bit along the way (hey, y'all know me) and enjoyed some really small roads.



Hmmm, which way do I go

But - there were some real beauties in the planned route too:



Next up, almost as if a penalty for having too good of a time ... the next thousand miles (it seemed like) were a pencil-straight two lane highway full of traffic. Russin' fussin' cussin' ..

It did get better again though, as I neared Chattanooga



(the obligatory scenic view, close to the day's end)

I scarfed down an early dinner and called it a day.

Tuesday 02/08/2022

Rolling out of the second night's secure parking zone (portico again), I'm finally ready to get this puppy to the Dealership and get the Mothership's recall addressed.

I found Pandora's European Motorsports to exceed my expectations. The non-descript outer building revealed an impressive showroom inside. It combined an upscale feel with a warm and inviting vibe from the very moment I opened the door.

Once inside, my eyes cut furtively across the sea of bikes ... Triumphs ... Ducatis ... Beh Em Vehs! (sniff sniff) ... even a trio of one-off customs on loan from Analog Cycles.

One example from AC:



I was told that this Royal Enfield has been dynoed at 71 hp! An incredible feat of hot rodding, considering it's agricultural-like roots.



Nice touches throughout. The dual under seat exhausts typify the level of detail found in this custom street-tracker.

But wait, there was more! KTM's, Huskys, and Gas Gas models all around! You could even get your Beta itch scratched there. A good selection of accessories, both street and dirt, were neatly displayed everywhere I looked ...

One of the most interesting things that I quickly caught ... well, besides the obvious (there wasn't any chinese crap around), was that there were NO four wheelers there either! Or Jet Skis. Or lawn tools. THIS was a motorcycle enthusiast's Toy Store, not a powersports dealership. Niiice ...

So anyway, I'm relaxing, drinking their coffee, feeling more and more at home when Jeff (the Service Manager) comes out and says "ok, you're ready".

What? NO! I just got here!

Actually, it had been around two and a half hours ... but time flies when you're having fun!

When I had said goodbye to my new friends, I set my bike's GPS for home, and pulled out onto the main drag looking to make a bee line for home. It was a wonderful two days getting there, but it was time now to just get on back.

I fully expected to set the cruise control, crank up Pandora (and set it to shuffle), and then "assume the position" for the next five or six hours. Yawwwn ...

But no sooner did I get 5 miles out of town on I-59 when a blue Honda sedan blew by me, almost sucking my paint off!

... ;-)

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