



CANADA

From British Columbia Down the Coast of Oregon and California

By Barry Carraway

As an avid motorcycle rider, one of the most enjoyable times for me is planning our annual cross country ride. This past year we decided to spend 10 days riding through British Columbia and then down the coast of Oregon and California. But as most of you know, taking a 10-day, cross country ride on a motorcycle is nothing like spending a week laying on the beach in Maui. The beach lets your senses vegetate and become idle, riding is a way to awaken your mind, body and soul to the outdoors. The countryside was alive with the smells of the pine trees and redwoods in the forests, the cattle and the grass in the farm lands, the smell of the fish near the ocean, and the crisp air with the sea breezes. In my mind, there is not a better way to experience travel. Our philosophy on trips like this is to ride as many miles as we can, soak up as much as we can, and spend the next year recalling what we have seen and experienced. There are so many beautiful sites and memories developed over a trip like this that it is hard to even comprehend, much less try and recall to share with everyone.



We did our own version of the "Fly and Ride" and had the bike shipped to Downtown Harley-Davidson in Seattle. After a short four-mile ride in a cab from the airport to the dealership, we strapped on the bag and were on our way to Canada by 11:00 am, eh!

One of the enjoyable things about riding cross country for me is the interaction with people. I love pulling into a gas station or Country Store and talking to the locals. It seems as though everyone is intrigued by the thought of traveling on a motorcycle. But some of the questions they ask are kind of funny. They will walk up to the bike and look at the T-Bag strapped to the back and say: "Are you traveling?" Nope, just taking a few T-shirts out for a ride around the block. Or they will walk up and look at the tank that says Harley-Davidson and say: "Is that a Harley?" Nope, we just painted Harley-Davidson on there to see if anyone would notice. I lost track of how many times we answered those two questions. But the interaction is what makes it fun.

10 days of touring 3000 miles of riding



DAY ONE

Day 1: We crossed the Canadian border at around 3:00 pm and got acclimated to the change in road signs. Everything was in kilometers. I have to admit, when I saw that first speed sign that said 100, I got a little excited, until I realized that really means about 65 miles per hour. Between the currency difference and the distance and speed being quoted in kilometers, I was pretty tired of doing the math after about 500 miles in this country. We made our way to Whistler around 6:00 pm. Wow! What a beautiful place this is. The village of Whistler, nestled in between the Whistler/Blackcombe Mountains, is built to look like a mini Switzerland. They did a great job of master planning this area, and it has just about every outdoor activity you can think of. In fact, one of the outdoor activities particularly caught my eye. I showed the flyer to Mrs. C. and she said: "You are not going to do that are you?" I said yes, I think I am. So we hopped on the bike and headed eight miles South of Whistler and traveled two miles on a dirt road to the 160-foot bridge that was the home of Whistler Bungee.

It is kind of interesting how something can look good on paper, but when you actually are standing there, 160 feet above the rapids, contemplating stepping off of a perfectly good bridge, excitement turns to fear. That is pretty much what happens on your first bungee jump. And of course, I unknowingly did it the scariest way the first time, falling off backwards. I decided

to go again, this time experiencing it from the "Swan Dive" position. This way was filled with adrenaline as you could see the water getting closer to you by the millisecond. What a rush that was! Mrs. Cyclerides wasn't sure at first, but decided to join me as well.

Day 2: Once we got our little adrenaline charge from Whistler Bungee, we were on our way for our 270 mile ride through the Lillooet Mountain range in Southern British Columbia. This is an absolutely beautiful ride as you go through farm land and then right through and around massive mountains and cliffs while paralleling rivers most of the way. But if you are looking to get out of the heat in the summer, you will be surprised. It was 110 degrees in Lillooet when we were there, and they said that is normal. But, it was a dry heat, so we felt right at home. After getting a late start, we went through Hell's Canyon and the 7 tunnels between Lyton and Hope and got into Hope, B.C. at about 9:00 pm, and we finally made it back to West Vancouver at 11:30 pm that night.

Day 3: After two days of riding 596 miles and tackling more twisties than I could count, at 10:00 am on Day 3 we were boarding the ferry for the 12-mile, 90 minute cruise to Nanaimo on Vancouver Island. The good news was that motorcycles got preferential treatment. You didn't have to wait in the long line of cars to board the ship. We were the first on and the first off. Now that is what I call motorcycle friendly. We disembarked in Nanaimo and made the 60-mile ride to Victoria. Victoria is one of those cities that is filled with history and seems like you



DAY FOUR

have gone back 100 years in time. They have many of their old buildings including the Empress and the Parliament building that was built in the early 1900's. There is plenty to do here, but we decided to take a little ride, walk around town and just sit on the balcony of the hotel enjoying the view. If you wanted to spend an extra couple of days here, there would be plenty to do, but we came to ride. So the next day we were off again.

Day 4: On Monday morning, after a night of luxury in the Laurel Point Inn, we arose early to catch the ferry from Victoria to Port Angeles, Washington. I'm not a morning person at home, but it's funny that while on the road I was awake at 6:00am every morning ready to get up and go. The difference in attitude when choosing between going to work or taking a 350 mile ride through beautiful unknown territory is amazing. One tip about the ferry in Victoria is that you have to go through U.S. Customs and you need to be there at least two hours prior to departure to get in line. They only take eight bikes on this ferry. We were number five in line and made the 1-1/2 hour cruise to Port Angeles where we were on our way to Portland, OR.

I called Day 4 a travel day. That is a day spent getting to where we wanted



DAY SIX

to go. The ride down the 101 along the inner bay in Washington is not a bad one, it is just a little redundant after 93 miles of the same twisties and scenery. Our main goal was to get to Portland and then to the Old Columbia River Hwy. off of I-84. This is a beautiful ride where you experience seven different falls including the 600-foot Multnomah Falls. From there we continued on scenic I-84 that parallels the huge Columbia River and after 300 miles ended Day 4 at the Best Western in Hood River, OR, which I would recommend Because of the great view on the river.

Day 5: A highlight of the trip. We started the day with breakfast in Hood River and then made our way to the historic Columbia Gorge Hotel built in 1921. This is a beautiful hotel with incredible views of the river. It is worth the stop. We were then on our way South on Hwy. 35 toward Mt. Hood. I could have spent three days just riding around Oregon. There is a lot of fruit farming there, the rolling hills are beautiful, and it seems that the ominous Mt. Hood is present in almost every view. We continued on Hwy 26 to Portland where it was 95 degrees and then onto the coast of Oregon where we were met with a thick layer of fog and 58 degrees, all in a mere 60 miles. Day 5 ended at Tillamook, Oregon freezing our rears off after riding 308 miles.

Day 6: This was the beginning of 3 days of coastal riding down Hwy 101. We started the day with breakfast and an interesting tour of the Tillamook Cheese factory. We were then off to the fog and the Three Capes Scenic route to really get a feel for coastal living. A real treat of the historic aspects of the coast of Oregon is all of the Lighthouses that are still standing. Another stop that I would recommend are the Sea Lion Caves, just North of Florence. You take an elevator down 300 feet below Hwy 101 to view the sea lions.

As with anything you do for the first time, your recollection and fondness of the area is always going to be remembered by the weather that you encountered. With that being said, I am not going to remember the coast of Oregon with high regard. For three straight days we were riding through fog, mist, high winds and temperatures reaching a blistering 63 degrees. You can see by the gloom present in almost every picture. But on a nice, clear, warm sunny day, I would think that this would be a sensational ride. The entire coast of Oregon is mostly old cities that have been there since the early 1900's and are still there for a variety of reasons including fishing, logging and some tourism. But it is definitely a ride through the past when going through these many small towns on coastal Hwy 101 in Oregon. We ended day 6 in Gold Beach, OR after riding 288 miles of coastal twisties.

Day 7: At the beginning of Day 7 the odometer was reading 1621 miles traveled, slightly over half of our trip.



DAY EIGHT

The interesting thing about traveling without reservations for hotels or a particular destination is that you totally lose track of time and the days of the week. There were several times I had to figure out what day it was to know how much longer we had to ride. On a 10-day adventure like this, you don't even think about the days early on, because you know you have plenty of time to go. But when you start seeing Day 7 roll around, you are having so much fun on the road, that you don't want it to end and start trying to figure out a way to extend the trip. We said to each other a couple of times in the last few days of the trip, "This is really fun, I wish we could figure out a way to keep it going". That wasn't going to happen, reality had to eventually make its way back into our lives. But what we didn't know was that one of our best riding experiences was right ahead of us.

Day 7 started out with a quick breakfast bar experience at the Beachcomber Inn in Gold Beach, Oregon. For once, and for a brief time, we were greeted with some sunshine on the coast as we headed South 37 miles to the California border. But it wasn't long until the typical fog on the coast started to find its way onto shore. It was only another 39 miles and we were entering the Redwood National Park and about to embark upon our first real tourist experience, the drive-thru Redwood tree. Yep, this two second ride makes bungee jumping look like stepping off the curb. But you HAVE to do it, or you

"calming ourselves from the rush of riding"

wouldn't be a tourist. Just think, if we had a drive-thru cactus, people from California would be coming over here to do that. After finally calming ourselves from the rush of riding through the Redwood tree, we were on our way to the Eureka.

Eureka is one of the most interesting towns that we went through on this

part of the California coast. It is an old Victorian Seaport that began in the 1850's that thrived on both logging and commercial fishing. It is a town of 26,000 people, but best known for Old Town Eureka where they have preserved and rebuilt the

Victorian houses and buildings that were built in the late 1800's. It is definitely a good place to spend a little time, soak up some history and ride through the old town. You can also visit Redwood Harley-Davidson located right on the Hwy 101. They were very friendly and helpful with directions and questions about the area. Thanks to the lady at Redwood HD, we took what turned out to be one of the best routes on the trip.

I had this route penciled in on my agenda, but was falling into the old clock watching syndrome that we are used to at home and was ready to abandon it until she insisted that we take this ride, and boy are we glad we did. It is dubbed by the locals as "The Lost Coast," and when you go you will see why, there is no one out there. About 15 miles South of Eureka you take the exit for Ferndale. A beautiful little Victorian town in it's own right. This is also a good place to stop for lunch at Curley's Bar and Grill in the old Victorian Inn Hotel. Just a block off of main street you will see a sign that says Capetown-Petrolia. Turn here and you embark upon some of the most interesting and exciting 70 miles you will ever ride. This is a narrow road that will take you through the pines for a view of Ferndale and then up a couple thousand feet through twisties until you then make your way back down into the beautiful rolling California golden and grazing land. After about 18 miles you will see the clouds starting to roll in as you get near the ocean. Mattole Rd. will then take you for a seven mile ride right on the ocean. But watch out for cows as it is open range there and they

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DAY EIGHT

do take advantage of it. From here, your next 30 miles will criss-cross the Mattole River, more California golden, and go through the very small towns of Petrolia and Honeydew where you are likely to see deer along the way. You will then start winding your way up and over a 2700 feet pass for 20 miles before being dropped right into the giant redwoods of Humboldt State Redwood Park and back to the Avenue of the Giants for your next opportunity at a 5000 year old drive-thru tree. An awesome ending to an awesome ride. If you are doing this route near the end of the day, you will want to stay in the town of Garberville. It is the only town in the area that has a choice of motels, food and gas.

Day 8: This day would take us from Garberville to Leggett for our final drive-thru tree of the trip. This is the Chandelier Tree and is probably one of the more famous drive through trees as it is actually called a drive-thru park. The tree is 315 feet high and is 2400 years old. I wonder what these guys were drinking when they were setting around on the front porch looking at this tree and said: "Hey Bo! How bout we get out the chainsaw and cut a big hole in that 2000 year old tree out

there and then charge people to drive through it?" Now that was the thought of the day. But as a tourist you have to do it and take the picture. From that photo op we were on our way to Hwy 1 and heading to some pure California Coast riding. But not before 20 miles of massive twisties on the way to the ocean.

South of Fort Bragg you will go through a town called Mendocino that is billed as a New England get-away, California style. This is a neat little artsy town full of B&B's that dates back to the California Gold Rush and since the 50's it has been a thriving art community. There have been several movies shot here including "The Summer of 42," "Murder She Wrote," and more recently Jim Carrey in "The Majestic." It is worth the stop to cruise through and take a break. From here it is 161 miles of small country towns and California twisty coast riding to San Francisco. The scenery is beautiful and if you have a sunny day it will be a fantastic experience, although you will get your fill of twisties and may want to lay off of them for quite a while. We cut over at Bodega Bay for a stop in Oakland at the new Arlen Ness headquarters.

Day 9 & 10: These days were travel days to get back home as our travel days were running out and it was time

to start thinking about getting back to the real world after eight great days of touring. We decided to take Hwy 5 from Oakland to Los Angeles. After a night in L.A. and a stop at the Rock Store we were on our way back to Phoenix, Arizona to sit back and enjoy and recall a fabulous 10 days and 3000 miles of riding. See the All Ride Photos section of www.cyclerides.com for 1500 photos of 10 Day Canada Trip 2004. **RUMBLE**

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