



## JUNE 2017

### CIRCUIT of the AMERICAS MOTO GP

By Doug Wilson, Henderson, Nevada

With the number of Moto GP events in the USA dwindling from 3 to 2 to 1, the event at Circuit of the Americas in Austin, Texas, has become an anchor point in my annual calendar. With my relocation to the Las Vegas area earlier this year, I opted to ride rather than towing or flying from Minneapolis as I have done in the past. The plan was to take a scenic route to Austin and then more of an express route back home.

I used ReveR to build rough routes since the pay version has a Butler Maps overlay and will produce GPX files for import into Base Camp. I also used ReveR to track to the actual rides.

I left Henderson early on April 19<sup>th</sup>, and took the standard route to Phoenix. Then I took a side trip up through South Mountain Park. A fun ride up to the lookout point given the light weekday traffic.



I continued on to Tucson where I headed to ride up Mt. Lemmon. Definitely worth the time with great views, pine forest scent and curvy roadway.

Arizona seems to have perfected road sealing – there were many tar snakes and I started somewhat cautiously, but experienced zero slippage or wiggle and soon ignored them completely. After descending I headed to the west side for a loop through Gates Pass and Saguaro NP. Gates Pass itself was disappointing due to rough road surface and traffic, but the views were good and I found a nice loop with no traffic to have a little fun with. Had great visit with friends in Tucson from years past in the Minnesota BMW club. 520 miles on the day.

On April 20<sup>th</sup>, headed east on the slab to Lordsburg, New Mexico, where I took route 90 north towards Silver City. Outside Silver City I encountered a bicycle race along the same route I was on. Not sure what race it was, but it was serious enough for expensive support vehicles with product logs and teams of 4 with matching gear. Once past Silver City, I continued north on route 15 and the road became narrower and more twisty, as expected. Some great riding and a few nice views, but not many turnouts for photos.



After reaching the Cliff Dwellings area at the end of route 15, I doubled back and headed southeast on route. 35, then east on route 152 towards Truth or Consequences. The western section of route 152 was most enjoyable; I would repeat it if in the area again.

At I-25 I went south towards Las Cruces through an area of what looked to be nut farms. I-10 between Las Cruces and El Paso seemed to be one large feed lot; not the best olfactory experience. After getting

through El Paso at rush hour I continued on to Van Horn TX. 594 miles on the day.

On 4/21, continued east on I-10 towards Balmorhea, Texas, where I picked up route 17 to Fort Davis. On the advice of some Texas friends, I opted to run rte. 118 SE to NW since it gets progressively more advanced when run that direction. Thoroughly enjoyed the return loop to Fort Davis via route 166 – especially with zero traffic. I picked up route 118 again and headed south through Alpine to Terlingua. After a fuel & hydration stop I headed west on FM (Farm to Market) 170 which runs along the Rio Grande. I ran out of scenery in Presidio and headed back to Terlingua. Given triple digit temps and multiple short hikes in full gear I opted for an hour of A/C in the hotel, then headed out to Big Bend NP in minimized gear for picture-taking. I was able to do all the park except the exit route planned for the following day.

After visiting the Santa Elena Canyon area, Garmin seemed to think that Old Maverick road was the best way back to Terlingua. But, since it was 13 miles of gravel and the sign said 4WD REQUIRED, I opted for a more spirited return via Ross Maxwell Scenic Dr. 477 miles on the day.

On April 22nd, back through the park to get a few photos in the morning light, then north on US 385 to Marathon, Texas, where I headed east on US 90. Zipping along nicely, until I wasn't. Up ahead all traffic was stopped on US 90 in both directions. I had encountered the time trials portion of the Big Bend Open Road Race. The race staff were nice enough to supply bottled water during the delay and I was back on my way after about 30 minutes. Continued uneventfully on US 90 toward Del Rio, Texas, with a brief photo stop at the Pecos River.

While riding the north edge of Del Rio I was surprised to find myself abruptly in shadow and then startled by a loud whoosh as a fighter jet passed close overhead while landing at nearby Laughlin AFB. I continued on US 90 to Brackettville where I picked up RR 674 to Rock Springs. RR 674 follows a creek bed for much of its length and is definitely a good ride within Texas Hill Country.

From there, began a series of south/north runs to include the popular Twisted Sisters of THC – RR 335, 336 & 337. Once back on the south side, I continued to Kerrville via SR16. There was a major Slingshot event in town – the motel lots were full of them and that explained the relatively high number I had seen on the road. 552 miles on the day.

Not much to tell for the next few days – rode over to the track on Friday, stayed in Austin and visited hallowed BBQ joints both nights (Stiles Switch & Salt Lick). Unseasonably cool and windy on Saturday; never removed my riding jacket.



Yamaha newcomer Maverick Vinales was fast all weekend but crashed early and Honda's Marc Marquez continued his ownership of the Austin MotoGP race (he has yet to lose there).



Once the race was over I moved swiftly (for me, anyway) towards the bike and was quickly headed out of the track. After getting out of the Austin

area I pulled in for fuel and changed footwear and gloves. Stayed on I-35 down to San Antonio, then picked up I-10 to Ozona TX.

Up and rolling early on April 24. Continued west on I-10, back through El Paso and then through Deming, New Mexico, into eastern Arizona. Managed to dip into reserve on 3 consecutive tanks due to a combination of substantial headwind higher speeds but the Find Gas feature on the GPS prevented me from embarrassment. Outside Bowie AZ, I headed north on US 191 towards the Mt. Graham area. South of Safford I took AZ 366 up into Mt Graham. Some spectacular views climbing the mountain and from the summit ridge that runs along the south side but sadly few places to safely pull off and take a photo. The road surface on most of the ascent was poor at best and took much of the pleasure out of the climb. After making my way gingerly back down, I picked up US 70 in Safford and headed towards Globe AZ. 728 miles on the day.

Morning inspection on April 25th revealed that my front tire was getting rather thin, so I revised my route to stick to more populated areas in the event of any problem. Thoroughly enjoyed the pass between Globe and Superior AZ and look forward to running the other direction some time. My earlier decision meant that I would be going through Phoenix at morning rush hour, but fortunately US 60 has an HOV lane for most of its length and I made it to the northwest corner of Phoenix with minimal delay. From there, just a reverse run of US 60 to US 93 to home. 426 miles on the day; 3755 miles total. Contributed by Doug Wilson, recently relocated into our southwest from Shoreview, Minnesota. Please submit articles and photos to [leonardlloyd@me.com](mailto:leonardlloyd@me.com)

## **ELDON RIX DUAL SPORT RIDE**

### **Silverton, Colorado, week of July 23, 2017**

Mountain riding and camping at its best! Trails start at 9300' and rise from there. Single track, Jeep roads and mountain vistas. Most of group dry camps just outside of town. Hotels and RV parks available in Silverton. Some riders arrive early.

For more information on all rides, Contact:

Eldon Rix, 918-864-0960,

Janet Chuculate 918-864-9026 (no texts)

Max Hendrix, 817-312-2208 (texts preferred)

## **RideMSTA.com**

For all the latest information on MSTA and the MSTA Forum.

## **TWO-UP TO THE CENTRAL COAST**

When Jeff Smith agreed to ride with us again for our annual ride to the Central Coast, he also endorsed our idea of leaving a day earlier than usual to stay over in Paso Robles Thursday night. Jeff also confirmed our preference to ride after the most congested hours Thursday morning and he suggested an early lunch meeting for our traditional gathering at Sandy's Restaurant on Monterey Road in south Gilroy.

We headed south toward Hollister on CA 25, turning east on Shore Road to bypass the middle of town. With orchards and vineyards on either side most of the way to rejoining state 25 south, the good feelings of a day of riding were well established.

As we approached the more interesting road, Airline Highway, we followed Jeff from an increasing distance. We encountered little traffic in either direction, free to set our own pace. We were surprised that the hills were less green already, compared to ours in the Bay Area. Wildflowers were in modest display, with blue more evident than the gold of the California poppy.



Shooting Stars in bloom.

As we approached the old Coalinga Road, Jeff was waiting and snapped a few photos of us as we approached.



Leonard and Iris, FJR riding down CA 25 southbound by Coalinga Rd. Photo by Jeff Smith



Further south on CA 25. Photo by Jeff Smith  
We rode separately into San Miguel to merge onto US 101 southbound via the left lane, an opportunity to give the old FJR enough fuel to be moving enough faster than traffic flow to be able to move over toward the Spring Street exit in short order. At mid-afternoon, the highway is crowded with cars and trucks, creating a moving obstacle course.



Melody Inn Motel: Two Yamaha's after a full day of riding.

We arrive at the traditional Melody Ranch Inn ahead of Jeff as he explored the richness of back roads of rural Paso Robles. He did arrive in time to make plans for dinner. Local members of MSTA had left earlier that day to partake in the wine tasting tour Friday that would start in Nipomo.



Yamaha Tenere in Indian Valley. Photo by Jeff Smith

After breakfast at Paso Robles Inn, Iris and I rode west on CA 46 to Highway One, enjoying grand vistas high on the ridge. Both cliffs and long sandy beaches separated us from the Pacific Ocean. We rejoined US 101 to Santa Maria south of San Luis Obispo. I managed to find the long way to our hotel, but we never did get to visit the two motorcycle dealers we passed. We walked a few blocks for pre-dinner refreshment before Les called to announce plans for dinner. We made it, two old fogies on a 15 year old motorcycle.

### Another Rider downsizes:

In search of a lighter machine that might increase the range of roads I can ride with appropriate confidence, I traded my faithful 2007 Suzuki Bandit 1250S for a 2016 Yamaha FJ-09.



Send your stories and photos to [leonardlloyd@me.com](mailto:leonardlloyd@me.com)