

Official newsletter of Bluegrass Beemers, Inc. Lexington, Kentucky MOA #146 RA #4-49 http://www.bluegrassbeemers.org



Brian Dean Sawyer 1953 — 2012

Brian Sawyer: Motorcycle Racer

By Jim Haley

B rian Sawyer gave me a lot of very good advice when I decided to start racing vintage motorcycles.

He was, by then, a seasoned racer, and he suggested that I sign up with Ed Bargy for race training. It was an October weekend in A labama at Barber Motorsports Park that I completed a weekend of racing training and earned my license to compete.

I rented a Kawasaki 250 for the weekend and decided to enter a couple of WERA races to try out my new found "skills".

By chance, Brian was running in the same race as I was, in the first flight of faster bikes at the start line, while I was in the second, slower flight. My only goal was to see if I could keep up with Brian and learn how he got around the track.

Well, after the very first turn, he'd already disappeared ahead of me. Not discouraged, I continued to ride as fast as I could in hopes of catching him.

On the last lap, I was amazed when I came around the last turn and saw Brian ahead of me. I closed in on his vintage BMW, my heart pounding as I dove under him in the first turn. I let out an adrenaline howl as I slid past the master.

Not wanting to relinquish my lead, I raced as fast as possible, not daring to look back. When I got back to the pits, I expected Brian might come over and offer some acknowledgement of my achievement. I looked around and noticed his red Titan truck (which I scratched with a highway peg the first day he took delivery, another story) pulling the Airstream, bikes in the back.

I thought to myself "that's not victory parade lap when I like Brian". Later, I went passed him!





Jim Haley (#625) with Tom Herlihy at Mid-Ohio.

down to the bike tech area where the race results were posted. To my embarrassment, Brain Sawyer had taken the checkered flag and was on his victory parade lap when I passed him! I never had the chance to tell Brian this story or to properly thank him for all the support and advice he gave me.

Thanks to Brian, I did have a relatively successful and, more

important, fun vintage motorcycle racing season.

—JH

Brian Dean Sawyer 1953-2012

SAWYER Brian Dean 58, husband of Dee Deakins Sawyer, passed away on Mon, Nov 5, 2012 at UK Hospital.

A lifelong resident of Lexington, KY, he was born on Nov 15, 1953. He was preceded in death by his parents, Arthur Howard (Tom) Sawyer Jr and Barbara Brewer Sawyer and grandparents Col. Boltos E. and American Institute for Archi-Frances Shely Brewer.

Brian graduated from Henry Clay High School in 1971 and from the University of KY College of Architecture in 1979.

Brian was a talented and award winning architect, with a keen sense of humor making those around him laugh often. He had a curiosity about whatever he undertook.

He leaves behind a diverse legacy of projects for the peo-

ple of KY which include the Lodge at Dale Hollow State Park, the historic restoration of the post office in Winchester KY, the Primate Rescue Center chimp enclosure in Nicholasville KY, and the RJ Corman airplane hangars, custom house boat, and railroad dinner train.

He was a member of the tects, the KYAIA, and past president of the Bluegrass Trust.

His passions included motorcycle racing from which he won a national title in 2010; riding scooters with his wife and growing the 'edible' garden each year.

Brian was a gifted woodworker and cook. He will be greatly missed by all that knew him.

He is also survived by a son Shane Briason Sawyer of Lexington, KY and daughter, Frances Katherine Shely Sawyer of Bowling Green, KY; two brothers, Bruce Sawyer of Saratoga, CA and David Sawyer of The Villages, FL. Nephews, Mark Sawyer of Lake Mary, FL, Brent Sawyer of Lexington; Harrison Gardner and niece Alexandra Gardner of Southern Shores, NC, and great niece, Kaleigh Sawyer of Lexington. Memorial donations may be made to the American Cancer Society or the Markey Cancer Center.

www.milwardfuneral.com Published in Lexington Herald-Leader on November 8, 2012





Apex is the official newsletter of Bluegrass Beemers, Inc. Lexington, Kentucky MOA #146 RA #4-49

Paul Elwyn, Editor paul.elwyn@gmail.com Deadline for submissions is the last day of the month. Back issues of Apex can be accessed at http://www.bluegrassbeemers.org

Join us at Frisch's on Harrodsburg Rd. on any Saturday, 7-9:00 a.m.

Saturday @ Frisch's 7-9 am





Mitch Butler (above) explains that the metal showing through in the center of his rear tire is not a safety issue, because he will not need the center of his tire on the ride back to Richmond. Our Safety Guru, Joe Bark, notes, "Practice safe motorcycling. Don't get a hole in your rubber."

-Photos by Joe Bark

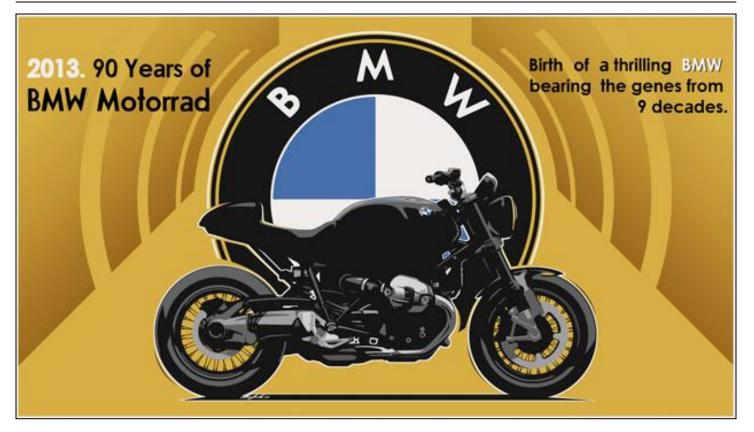


Roy Rowlett's grandson, Nicholas, ensures the tire change for Tom Weber is done properly.

-Photo by Tom Weber

RIGHT: Ian Rice on the trai Photo by John ricel





Multifaceted Concept to Commemorate 90th Anniversary of BMW Motorrad

Woodcliff Lake, NJ - November 13, 2012...In his speech at the international motorcycle show EICMA in Milan, BMW Motorrad President Stephan Schaller announced that BMW Motorrad will be presenting a new model with air-cooled 'boxer' engine in 2013 as a special way of marking the "90

years of BMW Motorrad" anniversary.

As long ago as 1923, the very first BMW motorcycle - the BMW R 32 – provided what was to become the genetic basis for the BMW Motorrad boxer series over nine decades: an aircooled, 2-cylinder 4-stroke 'boxer' engine with longitudinally mounted crankshaft and shaft drive to the rear wheel. Always combined with innovative technology and thrilling design - and with one priority above all else: sheer riding pleasure.

The new, distinctive motorcycle to be produced next year will express the genes of 90

years of BMW Motorrad combined with emotional styling and innovative technology to create a new, multifaceted vehicle concept.

The model designation and date of the market launch will be announced at a later date.

Editorial Response "air-cooled" boxer in 2013?

Tirst of all, I like the idea of a minimalist Boxer with conventional suspension.

But the image provided by BMW to accompany this tease appears to be the outgoing engine that is being replaced otherwise by the liquid-cooled Boxer. That's fine with me, also.

But this engine now is being called "air-cooled," and I'm not carried the banner through

sure I am fine with that. I suspect BMW Motorrad will not lose sleep over what I think.

I guess the issue for me is that of honoring the Type 247 and its fore-bearers, the two-valve, pushrod engines that first attracted many of us to BMW. I hate to see history revised by marketing.

After all, "airhead" engines

years with no significant development expended by BMW. These were great engines installed in light motorcycles. A fully-loaded R100RT, after all, weighs about 150 pounds less than the subsequent R1100 RT.

I think BMW could have further developed the old pushrod twin, as Moto Guzzi has done with their twins, but I guess I need to let go of that wish and

welcome anything that my favorite motorcycle manufacturer decides to offer.

So, whether air or oil cooled, the image above does look good, and most of us are suckers for another model that in any way interprets BMW history.



2012 Grand Riders Tour By Lowell Roark

ike all international trips, I suppose, the flight was long, 13 ½ hours from Los Angeles to Taipei,

We were treated well and fed well, the accommodations were 4-5 star hotels except in Hualien and that was more like I could afford.

Tai wan.

We were furnished brand new SYM RV 250 EFI scooters to ride while we were in Taiwan. After 8 days and 915 kilometers (572 miles) on some torn up roads they didn't look new anymore, but there were no complaints, they did just fine. Some roads were closed by mountain slides caused by the typhoon two weeks earlier but they were opened just for us on the Grand Riders Tour. Our tour was escorted by the Cruiser Riders of Taipei on Harley-Davidsons. They were a cool bunch of guys and gals. I didn't get a count but there were about 15 of them.

Our riding started in Taichung where there was a Kick-off meeting and ceremony at the city hall the next morning. The press was everywhere, It was a big deal, I got to pin the starting point flag on the map with the mayor of Taichung. We finally got rolling only to get stopped by the press for more welcoming and pictures where we were joined by the Grand Riders of Taiwan. Then we were off to Chaiyi and to our hotel for a rest and cleanup. I never knew how but the van carrying the luggage always got there before us. Then we were bused to another hotel where we were guest of honor at a fancy welcome banquet that lasted for 3 hours. After all the welcoming and ceremony the next morning we

were off to another city. At a break in a small town I was chosen to do some staged riding for the film crew. That was too much fun, it made the video of our trip.

We arrived in Alishan Mountain Resort in the middle of the afternoon for another ceremony, pictures and a tee-shirt signing session. I don't know how many tee-shirts I signed but the locals or tourists were standing in line with their shirts.

What a place, it was really nice. The next morning some of us got up at 4 am to get the train to the top of Alishan Mountain to watch the sun rise over Jade Mountain, what a beautiful sight. Back down the mountain for breakfast and prepare to ride

This day took us up and over the mountains, 10'500 ft.

above sea level and it reminded me a lot of the Smokey Mountains. Some fantastic views and pictures on top while taking a break. Down the other side and thru the Taroke Gorge, I think I went thru that with my mouth hanging open. I have never seen anything like that in all my riding. Huge nearly 1/2 mile high rocks on each side with an occasional white water stream to cross. Sorry there were no pictures because there was just nowhere to stop for such a crowd. We stopped at Taroka for the night and there was the





usual ceremony to kick-off the next day.

The next day took us to Sun Moon Lake, the most beautiful stop on the whole trip. There was a ceremony that afternoon, then some relaxing time which was spent by some of us on the deck of the hotel over looking the lake with a couple bottles of wine. Great time.



It was Friday when we left out of Sun Moon Lake for a long day over some more mountains to the town of Hualien for the next 2 nights. We were met upon arrival by more than 60 riders as we rode into town, all cheering and waving. They were to join us for the Grand Finale of the whole trip on Saturday night. That night there was a big dinner party in town with food and drink for all. The party was loud and boisterous and all the Americans got roasted by the Cruiser Riders of Taipei funny guy Joseph. It was fun, let your hair down fun.

Saturday all of the Grand Riders went to a nursing home to take part in a program for them. They all enjoyed us being there and it was very fitting that we went to share with the old folks there. After we were thru there we did some sightseeing and lunch. Back to the Holland Village Resort where we were staying to relax and get ready for the Grand Finale Gala that night. They had all the Grand Riders on stage for presentation of the trophies to the people that made it all possible. The three oldest Americans presented the trophies, I had the one for the head of SYM scooter company in appreciation for the scooters we had to ride. It was a big deal with food, drink and entertainment. That party ended with firecrackers that surrounded the tent and rained down sparkles for 10-15 minutes.

2012 Grand Riders Tour

By Lowell Roark



Monday it was the ride back to Taipei to turn in the scooters. It was a wild ride, you haven't lived until you have ridden on the streets of Taipei. Then it was time to go to dinner and the premier of the movie "Go Grand Riders". A very emotional movie and some very emotional goodbyes to some very warm and friendly people whom you get to like a lot after spending a week with them. The whole trip was to benefit, promote and to publicize the Hondao Foundation which helps elderly people realize and accomplish their dreams. It was the dream of the original 17 Grand Riders (average age 81) to ride around the island of Taiwan, 1178 kilo meters, in 2011. This got celebrated this year

with the ride that included 10 Americans.

I am very honored and privileged to have gotten to be one of the 10 A mericans that had the opportunity to go and take part in it. I never expected to be able to do anything like that on such a grand scale. The news media did a fantastic job, we were in the newspapers and on the internet. Almost celebrities, people would recognize us on the street, greet us and want pictures. It was a great and rewarding experience.

PS:

"Xie Xie," the two words that I learned in Chinese, says "Thank you."

-Lowell

Sunday was a ride from Hualien to Yalin with stops along the way. Lunch was along the coast on the eastern shore of Taiwan. Some of the people from Hondao Foundation had to say goodbye and it was kind of hard to do. On to Yalin and to the hotel, there was not a dinner planned so they gave us some money and we were on our own for the evening. Some of us went out and found a public market where we got a table and enjoyed some food and drink from the vendors. There was live music for entertainment. After a while I retired for the evening, after all there is just so much fun this old man can stand.



Joe Bark images from travels last summer



Happy Birthday!

December

Ron Blackburn Hubert Burton Paul Elwyn Alan Myers Paul Rice

November

Mitch Butler John Zibell Dave Mccord Robert McClelland

Send your birth date to Roy Rowlett:

kr4mo@yahoo.com







Just off the Blue Ridge near Grandfather Mountain

SPOILER ALERT: This will be a thoroughly biased ode to the marvelous qualities of the Yamaha XT 250 and its nomination for "most fun bike of the century"

Jay Smythe and I trekked to Blowing Rock NC with our wives and in the back of the truck, our 250s. Our intention was to explore the dirt side roads and trails off the Blue Ridge Parkway.

After getting ourselves ensconced at the Ridgeway Inn, just off Main Street in Blowing Rock, we walked about in the town where there are shops and restaurants enough to keep one's interest for quite a while. These would be fair game for Brenda and Marimac while Jav and I wandered the woods for the next two days.

On Saturday morning, he and I headed out in the cold morning air up the hill to the BRP and turned south. Within a mile or two we had determined that the little Yamahas were perfect for the Parkway where **n late October of this year**, the curves are frequent and the speed limit (enforced more strictly these days) is a maximum of 45. The quarter liter bikes are right in their power band in fourth gear to hold that speed.

We aren't here to do pavement though, so as soon as we came to a first turnoff that lead us to a gravel road we charged immediately up into the hills. Our map was a bit confusing. so for a while we knew we were in a fine set of mountains. but didn't exactly know where. This first road took us to a mountaintop, dead ending at a radio tower. Going back down, we tried the next turnoff and

ended up at another dead end in someone's yard, with a bemused beagle and a young boy of about 11 or 12 who told us which turnoff to take to get back into the hills.

Many of the dirt roads we explored were graveled for much of their length, but one, though it had a road sign, turned out to be more of a trail with rocks and roots for a surface and only a suggestion of definition as to its sides.

It connected from the Grandmother Mountain area to the Edgemont Road, just down from Grandfather Mountain, though we didn't know that at the time. Several branches went off the trail, but we kept choosing the ones that went up, finally arriving at a graveled crossroad where we met an older couple in an SUV. They told us that the left branch went back to Highway 221, and the right went down to the old village of Mortimer, which had been wiped out in a flood back in the thirties. By now it was after 2 and our old bodies were in need of sustenance, so we took the high road back into Blowing Rock for lunch.

On this last leaf-peeper's weekend of the year, the little town was chock-a-block with tourists, so many that every restaurant was overflowing and



Jay making his way up the gravel road somewhere near the Parkway.



This, believe it or not, is a "road" that leads us back to Rt. 221. It has a sign, and we met a truck coming down the other way.



Always take the branch going up the hill.

the sidewalks were past capacity. We found a seat at the Speckled Trout, where Brenda & Marrimac joined us since they couldn't get in anywhere else.

Back on the road by 3, we decided to put off the Mortimer excursion for the next day and just returned to exploring dirt roads. One circuit that lead us past a scenic waterfall, terminated, much to our surprise, right back on Main Street in Blowing Rock.

Sunday morning we were out in the chilly air by 9 and down to the end of Main to retrace the Globe Road back to the innards of the valley in an effort to find the remains of Mortimer.



On the trail this early morning, the rising sun is filtering down through the multicolored leaves that form a complete canopy across the path. We stop to drink in the scene, but I know that a camera in my hands cannot capture this soft autumn hued light.

Across the valley to our left, a hawk soars low above the treetops, scanning for something smaller than us to eat. With our engines off, there is no sound but the rustling of the leaves in the wind. I do love being out in the woods in the fall. I know that hiking would be a better, less intrusive way of experiencing this wonder, but I'm getting to the point where I cannot do that much anymore. With these small motorcycles, quiet and light as they are, we can see a lot of country in a relatively short period, more than we could on foot, and I hope that we're responsible enough to leave little trace of our passage.

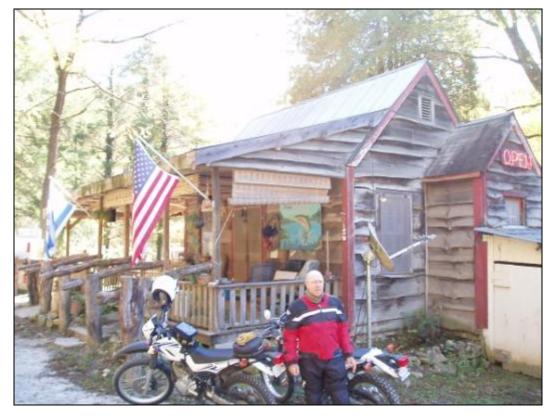
We find a fire road that is, oddly enough, actually on the map. It leads us up again from the valley floor, into the woods following a old creekbed. The smell of skunk is in the air, but the odoriferous little creatures don't make an appearance. A large tom turkey flies up from the edge of the path and disappears down into a ravine.

Eventually we find ourselves on a dirt road following the banks of Wilson Creek, which would be a river if only it could manage the length requirements. It's flow is impressive now and must have been even more so when it took away the town of Mortimer all those years ago There are only a few bits of the town remaining; one is the country store that back then was just out of town on the higher part of the bank. It is still in business, now catering to the fishing and camping trade that throngs these woods in decent weather. The two young ladies behind the counter don't know much about the town's history, but if we're there when their boss is back, he knows it all. Unfortunately, daylight is in short supply this time of year and since we don't have any really good idea of where we're going and how

long it will take us to get back to Blowing Rock, we press on.

Farther down, the piers of the old town bridge still stand in the water and just below them are the husks of the cotton mills that once defined this town. before the river emptied their contents across the downstream fields. Standing in this lot, it's easy to imagine the days when this was a busy commercial place, with farmers bringing in raw material, workers going to and fro in the business of changing that blank slate into something more valuable and boats on the water, just over there, waiting for the processed cotton to take down to market. I can imagine the scene when the river that made this place work took it all away in a day's chaos. Now it's a little memorial park where locals come to fish, picnic and whatever young people do when the grownups have gone home to bed.

We're not here to do any of those things, however, and so we head down the dirt and gravel road following the creek



The country store at Mortimer, NC

toward Brown Mountain Off Road Area, a group of public



Near here was a sign warning us that trespassers would be shot (and survivors shot again).

riding trails we've spotted on the map.

The gravel dead ends at pavement on Route 2 and it's only a short ride to the entrance. We need day passes to ride here, which are available at the country store across the road. In this spot we find not only a pleasant place to buy snacks, but also a rack with the essentials for any day of serious dirt bashing. There are replacement brake and clutch levers, gear levers, tire repair kits and first aid supplies next to the boiled peanuts and Little Debbie cakes. Obviously, folks crash out here on the trails and this merchant has accurately assessed his market.

We fuel up our bodies on the requisite high-calorie snacks and with our pass-bands tied around the handlebars, head up into the woods. There's a parking area at the end of a long gravel road, where we suddenly find ourselves among a large group of young men and a few women, all seriously attired in the latest moto-fashion with brightly colored padded pants and jerseys, off-road helmets (many adorned with video cameras) and perched way up high on bikes that should require a stepladder to reach the seat. They are brapping their way in groups up into the trails which all start on a feeder with branches going off to both sides. We learn from the trail map we were given that many of the trails are one-way loops and that they are all graded for difficulty. It gives us pause when we notice that nearly all are graded "more difficult" and that the only access to the "easier" routes are by taking



On the banks of Wilson Creek

first the "more difficult" paths. Only slightly daunted, we head up into the fray.

The first trails are wide, mostly sandy surfaced, and rise steadily into the mountains. There are lots of other riders on this part, proving the wisdom of the one-way scheme. I'd hate to run head on into one of the aspiring motocross stars coming full-tilt around the next corner. As more trails branch off to the sides, the crowd thins out. We're on one of the "difficult" routes, shooting for the "easier" trail #10 which should be somewhere up here near the top of the mountain. In hindsight, we should have taken notice that no one else was going this way.

Our trail started off to the east, along a ridge top, now down to a narrow single track weaving through the trees. For a bit, we were cruising along merrily, then it started downhill, both physically and metaphorically, fast. I came to a sharp drop-off, with a narrow turn flanked tightly on both sides by rocks and only through a combination of muscle memory and sheer luck managed to make it through unscathed.

Jay, right behind me, wasn't so fortunate. His muffler caught on the right side rock, pushing the bike to the left just when the turn was going right. The front wheel, unable to go two directions at the same time, turned the bike over to gravity's command and down she went on her side, with Jay following close behind.

No serious harm done to bike or rider, and another indication

of the toughness of the little XT. It can take a hit. Jay was going to be sore in the morning, but for now that's a long way off and we're still a long way out in the woods.

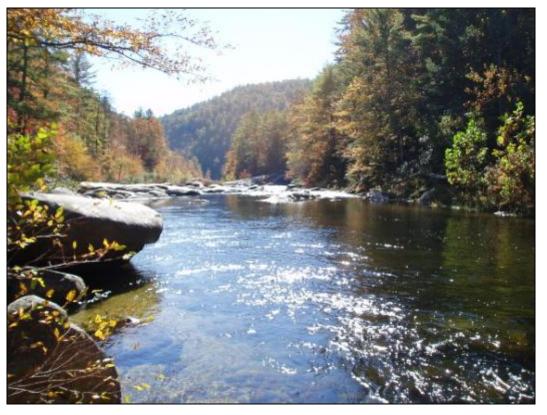
The trail continued along the ridgetop, winding between trees until finally the "easier" trail 10 forked off to the right. Immediately it started down a wall of rock, dropping at an alarming rate in deep grooves in the stony surface. I went on down a bit further and it only looked worse as it disappeared into the trees below me. Not sure if "easier" was named on Opposite Day or just someone's idea of a practical joke. We made our way back up the obstacles and returned to the trail we'd been on. Surely it would be better than this or perhaps not. I did stop to take a photo at one of the easy climbs, but the rest of the ride took far too much attention and energy to stop for pictures. What the map described as four and a half miles of trail took us almost four hours to traverse. Many of the uphill climbs were steep monolithic walls of rock, weathered and cracked into a jumble of chaotic grooves and obstacles that would have made good mid-level old style trials



When the trail started looking like this, I stopped taking pictures and concentrated on getting out of the woods in one piece. That's rock, not dirt.

sections. And of course, what goes up then has to come down, with just as much difficulty. On occasion we resorted to "bulldogging" the bikes down the jumbled slopes with engine off, using the clutch as a rear brake.

Often we would turn a corner and be confronted with what seemed to be the dead end of a canyon requiring a full-throttle ascent from a dead stop. Our arms and legs had gone well past tired and fully into cookednoodle mode. The last water crossing of the day had its exit up a steep hill that almost was a reach too far for two weary old men. Only the thought of camping here until spring kept us going and then, almost like magic, we were back on the feeder trail only a short hop to the parking area.





Jay, pointing to where he would ride if only he were 40 years younger.

Throughout it all, the XT's never hesitated, never bobbled. Each time I'd think that this little street-trail hybrid is never going to make it up THAT, the 250cc engine just motored on up like the Little Engine That Could, finding depths of torque and capability that seemed to go on forever. The suspension, which really shouldn't be able to cope with my size (I figure I'm at least 50 pounds heavier than this bike was designed to handle) kept the wheels on the dirt and the both of us upright.

We wobbled back down to the country store and rested in the rockers on the front porch, absorbing liquid and snacks to get the energy to head back to our motel.

Rt. 2 takes us back to Rt 181 which leads to the Blue Ridge Parkway. On the two lane roads, curving back and forth through the Pisgah National Forest, the little Yamahas are



On the porch of the country store across from the Brown Mountain riding area.

nearly as much at home as they were clawing their way up the rocks and dirt on the trail. Although we're limited to about 55 or 60 mph for the most part, the nimble machines don't have to slow down much for the curves and we manage to keep up a decent pace, even passing the occasional car.

I'm again reminded of the fun involved in planning for speed instead of just having it instantly available in excess at the twist of a wrist. Making the

most of a small engine is demanding of ones mind and isn't that a major part of the enjoyment of motorcycling ?

By the time we reached the Ridgeway Inn, the sun was just over the treetops and the temperature had dropped down into the low 40's. We parked the bikes and went into the motel's lounge where our better halves had already begun sampling the wine and cheese on offer there. A couple of glasses later, we had relaxed enough to realize where all the various body parts were hurting, but it didn't seem to matter that much. It had been a grand day of motorcycling in a beautiful part of the country and I think we'll have to do it again soon.



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