

January 2010

Apex

Looking Through The Curve

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



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Settled in, basking in the warmth

Basic pleasures — food, shelter, **WARMTH** — go a long way in January.

Last January I disassembled the 1979 R100RT in a garage featuring electric heat in a four-foot space, a towel shielding my aching body from the concrete floor that had become a giant ice cube.

But I was much younger last year and full of optimism as I wheeled the stripped RT out of the cold garage to the driveway to gunk and hose down the chassis and naked engine. Ice quickly formed beneath the bike making the push back into the garage tricky.

Then, the ice storm hit at the end of January, shutting down our all-electric home for five days.

I vividly recall that day in the spring when I finally was able to open the garage door and work with sunlight entering the garage, exposing the work I had done with the overhead door closed during the cold months. Much of the work was too rough for prime time, so I disassembled and refinished many parts of the bike with the benefit of sunlight flooding through the open overhead door.

Last month during the first wave of cold weather I fired up my new propane-powered garage heater. Air temperature in the garage changed from 34 degrees to 67 degrees in a matter of minutes. I could comfortably work anywhere in the garage without seeing my breath.

The work was simple, a retorquing of the heads, valve adjustment. I marveled at how easy the routine tasks were in my warm garage.

I pulled the exhaust so I could

remove the center stand to have the worn stops welded up to prevent the stand from parking at the extreme angle that had made pushing the bike off the stand not a ride-off affair, but a muscle-pulling struggle. With stand welded, repainted and assembled with fresh hardware and thread locker, the bike now pushes off the stand with half the effort formerly needed.

Again, the warm garage made all work so easy. I now wonder if a warm garage last winter would have enabled me to do better work on the RT in half the time.

The RT now rests settled in alongside the F800S, ready to run when the notion strikes me. It starts easily on cold days, allowing me to shut off the choke by the time the bike is in second gear leaving the house.

I think the old RT, which sat out in the weather for years, appreciates the relative warmth of the garage even when it is not heated. Although it seems happy on a winter day's run, I'm not sure I would want to leave it outdoors overnight to attempt a start in freezing air.

I recall my five-year-old 1983 R80RT with fresh battery struggling to fire one frigid morning outside our room at Pisgah Inn on the snow-covered Blueridge Parkway. Halted grunts of the starter managed to fire the cold engine, but that bike was a teenager next to the adult '79RT.

So, the RT and I are savoring shelter and warmth, anxiously awaiting the deep winter ahead, the anniversary of last year's ice storm that prompted me to plumb the fireplace and garage for the warmth of propane-fed appliances this winter.

As so often is the case in life,



I now have the warm garage in which to work, but no space in which to work.

With two bikes, two cars and a lawn tractor sharing space with years of accumulated bike parts and a bench that should have been straightened up this summer, my heated space cannot handle another garage project this winter, although I am eager to acquire another Airhead, the one I had in mind from the start of retirement five

years ago, an '85-up Airhead with monoshock, tubeless wheels and Brembo brakes, to become a see-through naked sporty thing for warm weather runs.

If only I had a second garage, heated, of course, reserved solely for motorcycles. And the cash to fund a project. And the physical capabilities of a 25-year-old.

—Paul Elwyn

**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, 7-9:30 a.m.**

Rowlett wins MOA Helping Hand Award



BMW MOTORCYCLE OWNERS OF AMERICA

P.O. Box 3982, Ballwin, MO 63022 • (636) 394-7277



Roy Rowlett

November 23, 2009

Roy Rowlett
3413 Holwyn Rd
Lexington, KY 40503

Dear Roy,

The BMW Motorcycle Owners of America have been informed that you have come to the aid of numerous fellow members of the BMW MOA.

Rendering assistance to a fellow rider is at the core of the BMW MOA. Your acts of kindness towards many of your local club members is recognized and appreciated by the 38,000 members of the BMW MOA. Your actions, in assisting them proclaim that you understand and appreciate how the machines, no matter how desirable, are only a small part of the riding experience. We are proud to call you "family."

Accordingly, on behalf of the members and Board of Directors of the BMW Motorcycle Owners of America, please accept the enclosed "Helping Hand" pin in appreciation for your unselfish support to the spirit of motorcycling.

Sincerely,

Greg Feeler
President, BMW Motorcycle Owners of America

CC: Heather Auman
733 West Main Street
Lexington, KY 40508



Nomination letter to BMWMOA:

Hello Larry,
I was recently on the BMW MOA website and saw there was an award for "Helping Hand" and immediately thought of Roy Rowlett. How perfect if this award would be in conjunction with our honoring of him (and we're doing a roast) at our 21st of February 2009 banquet.

We've been gathering stories of thanks and praise to him with many years of mechanical help at very fair prices.

Several times he's rescued me at a moment's notice to help me diagnose the problem and fix it.

He really is a true hero of motorcycling.

Heather Auman

Ground Disconnect version 2

By Ron Blackburn

Concerning the quick disconnect ground of an airhead battery described in the Dec. '09 Apex, I could not leave well-enough alone and decided to make an "improvement," shown in the photo, when disconnected.

I added the other end of a buss fuse holder to the common bracket. Then added a bolt with three more nuts inserted into the cable end.

First, I ground off the corners of the bolt head and three nuts to make them more cylindrical in shape. Then I added one nut up to the bolt head, inserted it in the cable end, then added two more nuts.

The result is a shape that resembles an actual buss fuse that inserts directly into the double-ended fuse holder, with much better surface contact (probably less electrical resistance) and a positive lock-in.

I am just waiting now to see how long the bolt and nuts take to rust, since they are not cop-



per and most of the plating, if any, has been ground off.

Note: The other wire directly connected to the bracket base

just goes to an accessory connector (not for charger, which is directly connected to the battery posts)

Ron Blackburn
859-234-0096
rblackburn@kih.net

Jingle Bells at Frisch's



December 19th, 2009

We had about 20 in attendance; no bikes. Debbie brought the group a jam cake, cookies, and several types of homemade fudge for Christmas. We all signed a Christmas card for her and loaded it up with cash. Bob played songs on his harmonica. Here's a picture of Bob playing Jingle Bells!!!

—Ray Brooks

A snowy Saturday at Frisch's

Snow on December 5th settled on bikes during breakfast to offer a more interesting ride home for these hardcore Bluegrass Beemerphiles (top left to bottom right): Stan Horsley, David Griffiths, Geoph Jones, and Lee Thompson.



Technical Discussion 🤖

From: Wolfdata@aol.com
Date: Sat, 12 Dec 2009
10:45:30 -0500
Subject: Speedo issues
To: damccord3@hotmail.com

Dave.

Greetings and salutations!
Geoph Jones here. I am writing you as a fellow member of the Big Boy Motorcycle Gang and as a fellow Harley-Davidson rider. I am having a problem with my new Sporty and feel awkward bringing it up at

breakfast since I have never owned a BMW and thus may be looked upon as a Neanderthal. (5 years ago I rode a 01' BMW F650 GS for 30 days. It belonged to a friend of my sons who had to stay as a guest of county for that long). So I thought I'd ask you. I am having a problem with my speedometer. Whenever it is in the full clockwise position it causes problems with the bike. At first I thought it might just be me. When my right foot kept com-

ing off the peg I thought it was because I was not used to the forward mount controls. But there are other things. The mirrors don't seem to work when the speedo is all the way to the right. And the windshield seems to not be as effective. The worst part is the front end feels "funny" in turns with the needle on that side. I hope I don't need a new speedometer. Let me know what you think. I've heard that BMW speedometers don't do this.

Take Care
Love Life
Geoph



Geoph,

It's definitely the speedo as my bike does the same thing except I've never had mine in the "full" clockwise position. I think on our particular models, the speedo issues aren't quite as bad due to the rubber mounted engine which has a tendency to offset the detrimental effects of the defective speedo. I, like you, never wanted to bring up this problem with our fellow BGB members as I believe the speedometers on their bikes are a little more civilized than ours. Quite amazing actually. I believe the speedos on our bikes

must have a gyroscopic effect on the pegs, mirrors, and definitely causes the front end to push a little bit. This effect seems to be magnified in turns, thus causing the foot pegs to drop lower than usual and dig into the tarmac. It's generally thought that newer BMW speedos have a counterbalancing shaft to combat this gyroscopic effects, but on my older R100S, I have noticed that when the speedo is in the clockwise position, the middle of the frame tends to wallow a bit. The mirrors aren't effected to the extent as the H-D, but again, it's older and some of the

pronounced effects may have faded with time. But that's only my theory.

Hopefully this has answered your concerns and that you, in no way, are the cause of any of the ill-handling issues. Rest assured it is the defective speedo, and the speedo alone is the cause of all your bike's problems. Unfortunately, Harley is just now starting to address these issues and is now trying to develop a new speedo to alleviate these problems. They were making huge strides into these issues with their Buell division, but since it's demise, I'm afraid they're back

to square one. In the meantime, try to maintain the speedo in the 3/4 position instead of full tilt and I think you'll definitely see a marked improvement.

Dave



On Dec 12, 2009, at 6:18 PM,
David McCord
<damccord3@hotmail.com>
wrote:

John,

I've attempted to answer Geoph's concerns regarding his new Sportster. What's your take on this sensitive issues ?

From: John Rice
<riceky@aol.com>
Date: December 13, 2009
5:12:08 PM EST
To: David McCord
<damccord3@hotmail.com>
Cc: Geoph Jones
<wolfdata@aol.com>
Subject: Re: Speedo issues

Beemer speedos unfortunately have their own problems. Teutonic pretensions aside, they are not perfect. Although they do work remarkably well, even when placed in the right- of-center portion of

the dial, it's the odometer that gives the trouble. Every one of the Beemers I've had does the same thing. You bring the bike home with relatively few numbers on the odometer and then the next time you look at it, there's a bunch more showing. If you're not careful, after what seems like a very short time, the darn thing rolls over and starts again.

John

www.johnricelaw.com



Happy New Year, Lowell!



Lowell Roark took delivery of his new 2009 R1200RT at BMW Motorcycles of Louisville on December 17th. Having ridden his 1996 R1100RT about 137,000 miles over the past 13 years, Lowell says the R1100 still runs great, but it was time for a new RT. The new RT features Electronic Suspension Adjustment, trip computer, ABS, heated grips, electric windshield. BMW Motorcycles of Louisville owner Jeff Cooke stands with Lowell.

—Photography by Ray Brooks





Anke-Eve Goldman:

co-founder of Women's International Motorcycling Association, journalist, competitor, tourist, and consultant to Harro in the design of women's riding gear

<http://thevintagent.blogspot.com/2009/02/anka-eve-goldman>

Bob Beard invites us to check out an interesting website hosted by Paul d'Orléans.

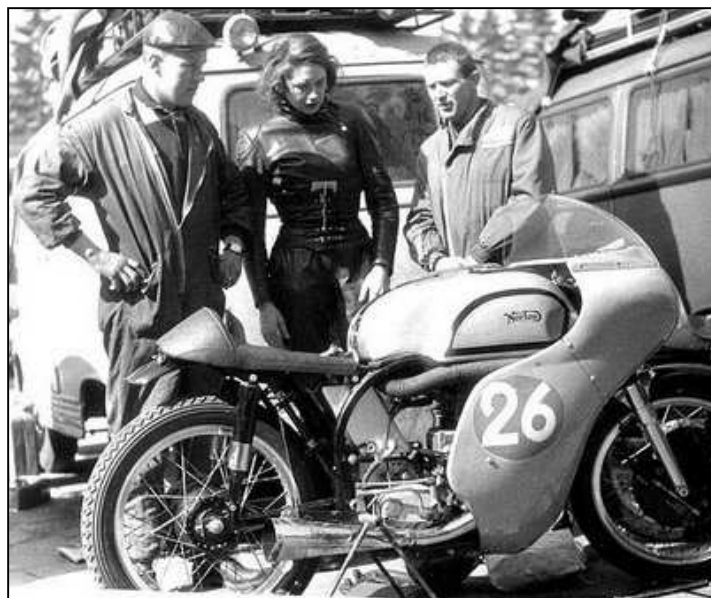
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By Paul d'Orléans

It seems we have found our Madame X, and her name is Anke-Eve. Six feet tall, slim, and striking, she felt comfortable with cameras and eyes focussed on her, as she proved her abilities on two wheels.

Our first image of her is astride BMW R67/3 in 1954. This model can be distinguished by the plunger rear suspension, tiny taillamp, and fishtail exhaust pipes. The 'Schorsch Meier' dualseat is an unusual item for a plunger-frame BMW - original equipment was a rubber Denfield saddle. It appears she competed in Endurance and Speed competition, but was barred, as a woman, from competing at a higher level of Club or GP racing.

This did not dissuade her from seeking fast motorcycles and race tracks; in many photo-



Anke-Eve examining a Norton Manx at Nurburgring

graphs she is hurtling down the tarmac, and mixing with other motorcyclists at Hockenheim and Nurburgring - such as here examining a Norton Manx at Nurburgring.

Her 'pass' at the tracks, be-

yond her riding ability, was a facility with writing a good story for the press, and she regularly sent racing and riding reports to *Moto Revue* in France, as well as publications in Spain, Sweden, Germany, the US, and Japan. Here at Hockenheim, she waits for track time with a pair of Jawa two-strokes and a Zundapp outfit - her suitcase strapped to the parcel rack of her R69.

She worked at a U.S. Air Force base, teaching German to the children of soldiers stationed there. She also spoke other languages, and her command of English was good enough to write two articles for *Cycle World* magazine in 1962. 'An Invitation to a Lap Around the Nurburgring' was published in the June issue of 1962, and a



Anke-Eve Goldman astride her BMW R67/3 in 1954



Anke-Eve Goldmann By Paul d'Orléans

report on women racers in the Soviet Union (!) was printed in October of that year [and yes, I will definitely post it].



By 1956, she had a new BMW R69, which was the fastest Bavarian flat-twin roadster, topping 100mph with aplomb. And she repaid the bike's excellent qualities with loyalty and by becoming an extremely visible spokesperson for the marque, always wearing her pudding basin helmet with a large 'BMW' sticker at the front.

In 1958, in concert with nine other women riders, including Ellen Pfeiffer, she helped found W.I.M.A. (Women's International Motorcycling Association) in Europe. W.I.M.A. U.S.A. was founded in 1950 by Louise Scherbyn, and the idea spread quickly to Britain and Europe. Ellen Pfeiffer is now considered the 'Urmütter' of the



Don't you wish your Elementary School teacher rode a motorcycle like Anke-Eve! She cut quite a figure in those drab days of the late 1950s, and had a bit of an exhibitionist streak.



In this photo, noted motorcycle author Erwin Tragatsch, author of the definitive *Illustrated History of Motorcycles*, stands with a group visiting Anke-Eve with her late-model R69S, now with a British 'Peel' fairing (distinguishable by the clear panel in the nose - the headlamp is not mounted to the actual fairing, but is retained in the standard position. The clear section is elongated for a full sweep of light).



organization in Europe.

I don't think Ms. Goldmann was ever sponsored or employed by the BMW factory, but she was clearly given priority when purchasing one of the first half-dozen BMW R69S models in 1960; her new machine has the ultra-rare rear-view mirror mounted above the cylinder head. The R69S had 42hp, was capable of 110mph, and made a superb and reliable sports-touring machine.

And tour she did; attending the Elephant Rally mid-winter for many years on her BMW, and riding throughout the year, regardless of the season or road conditions. These photos of Anke-Eve riding in ice and snow give an idea of her determination, and the care with which she designed her own riding gear.

It seems she worked with German leather riding gear manufacturer 'Harro' in creating

Anke-Eve Goldmann By Paul d'Orléans



her own personalized attire. In winter months, she can be seen wearing a large buckled body belt, too large to be merely a 'kidney belt', which must have been an aid to keeping warm in very cold weather.

Her riding suit for winter is significantly bulkier and larger than the svelte summer catsuit, and can clearly accommodate woollens underneath - leggings, sweaters, the lot - the suit approaches Bibendum proportions on her coldest rides.

Her summer one-piece riding suit had the distinctive feature of a diagonal zipper from the neck, crossing over to the side of the body, which may have aided the 'fit' of the leathers,

especially on a woman's torso. Her leathers certainly fit well. Harro went on to manufacture her design for public consumption.

And then, she gave up her beloved BMWs. Perhaps she was bored by the R75/5 model which supplanted the R69S in 1969, or felt that its performance lagged behind what 'the competition' was offering, especially as Japanese and Italian machines had much faster and better-handling machines at the time. Whatever the reason, Ms. Goldmann moved right on up to M.V. Agusta's 750cc DOHC 4-cylinder hotrods, perhaps the first and only woman to do so. She was a sensation!

While M.V. had been producing 4-cylinder racers since the 1950s, the 750S, introduced in 1969, was their first sporting 4, and what the public had been clamoring for. But, the public

couldn't afford the M.V.! It was always an expensive and exclusive motorcycle, revered by collectors today, and out of reach for all but the lucky few in 1969.

Anke-Eve seems totally at home with her Italian rocket, and she kept this bike for several years, upgrading over time with items such as cast magnesium Campagnolo wheels, triple disc Brembo brakes, and a set of aftermarket 'Arturo Magni' 4-in-1 exhaust pipes - all items which were added to the newest M.V. models.

This machine was the total antithesis of her old BMWs! Loud, fast, and a bit fragile, it certainly wasn't the best Touring machine, especially with the clip-on handlebars and rearsets she favored. Her riding position really tells the tale; Anke-Eve had evolved into a full-blown Cafe Racer, and



Ms. Goldmann moved right on up to M.V. Agusta's 750cc DOHC 4-cylinder hotrods, perhaps the first and only woman to do so. She was a sensation!

Anke-Eve Goldmann By Paul d'Orléans



given the noise (however glorious) emanating from those Magni pipes, a bit of a hooligan!

After the death of her closest friend in a riding accident, Anke-Eve Goldmann seems to have given up motorcycles altogether, and began to travel with a backpack to remote Asian locations. Traveling alone, she trekked through Burma, the Sunda Islands, Vietnam, and Cambodia, not many years after the conflicts there had ended.

Through some diligent searching, I managed to find the name of Anke-Eve, among several candidates for this anonymous woman floating around on the web.

Further searching between myself and my friend Yves Hayat in Paris (who first alerted me to a photo, which led to another, then a flood) revealed more information, and we agreed this would be the subject of a book project together (Yves has a corporate branding business, NewYorkParis, and is no stranger to book production, having been publisher of *Galleries* for 10 years in the mid-80s).

Our primary concern wasn't content, but ownership of the copyright, and we began to search for the photographer, whom we found, and who is a full participant in our project, at 86 years old!

He says he believes Anke-Eve may still be alive... and is working to find her.

When we find her, we'll bring cameras galore; still, video, the works.

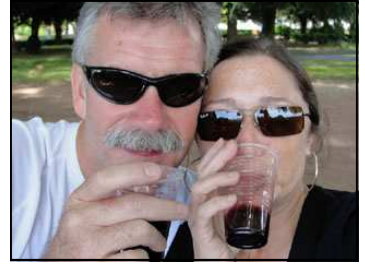
This will be a great story.

—Paul d'Orléans

The Streets in France

Part 3

By James Street
with photography by James and Stacey Street



Our next planned destination was Chinon, and our route there took us through the Loire Valley wine country.

Passing the requisite winerys, we motored through the agricultural heart of France where not only grapes are grown but

also sunflowers, acres and acres of brown dotted yellow waves that undulated and pulsed with life given them by a gentle breeze.

Dispersed among the sunflower fields were grain fields that also were in the constant motion of an inland sea.

I was surprised by extent of

the rural agriculture, as I suppose most of my exposure to France is through film and other media that's focused on Paris.

Likewise, my guess is that the rest of the world sees a much distorted picture of the USA that's neither flattering nor real as created by Hollywood and

The Streets in France Part 3



the news outlets.

The sun was out and Stacey struggled from the pillion to get a good photo of the sunflower fields while we were whizzing along; I now regret not stopping to take a good shot.

We stopped in Amboise where we had run out of gas three days earlier, and found it to be an architecturally and historically significant city that happened to be the city in which Leonardo da Vinci had spent the last years of his life and where he died.

We walked among the tourists and in and out of shops and cafes, stopped and had coffee at an outdoor patio café, and made our way to the top of the hill on which the house da Vinci lived in was located.

After posing for shots at the

entrance to the house and compound, we wandered in and followed a tour group for a few minutes and decided that the 10 or so Euros (about \$15) each for a guided tour wasn't worth it, so we walked back down into the heart of Amboise.

Along the street on the way back there were houses carved out of the cliffs where the actual front of the home was the wall of the hill in which the doors and windows were mounted directly to the stone.

These seemed to remain occupied and provided a bridge from distant past to present that reminded me that the essence of our existence hasn't really changed that much through the millennia; change is marked more by the ephemera of life.

Even though I was told by both British and French motorcycle enthusiasts in a somewhat snobby manner that most Americans ride cruisers, there were many cruisers in France. A nice custom was parked outside a café in the heart of Amboise, so I captured its image and paid homage to the craftsmanship employed in its assembly.

After an ice cream, home-made and very tasty, we wandered back to the BMW, donned our gear and made our way further toward Chinon.

Chinon is another river city

situated along the banks of the "rivierre Vienne," a tributary to the Loire River, in the heart of red wine country, and on our way there we managed to get lost only once, something of a record, but we recovered quickly and made our way west toward our destination.

Another word about navigation in foreign countries: Our goal had been to avoid motorways and ride secondary roads the entire time, and before departure from America I'd bought a European map set for my hand held GPS.

After learning that the GPS unit wouldn't hold nearly enough information to be of any benefit, I foolishly thought we could use good old hard copy cartographic information for route finding. Wrong!

First, maps that are portable enough to fit in a motorcycle tank bag don't have all of the secondary scenic roads on them, nor is the information in a format that makes interpretation instant for the pilot who is trying to absorb other ambient external data in a language in which he is not fluent ("not fluent" being a gross understatement).

What we ended up doing was having Stacey stuff a map book into her motorcycle jacket, and she'd pull it out as we neared critical intersections and then gesticulate and shout directions for me to try to follow. This comedy of communication actually ended up working very well, and I developed a tremendous appreciation for my wife's navigation skills. By the way, we now have a better motorcycle specific GPS for our next foray, and I recommend springing for one unless you are of the philosophy that you are never lost as long as you don't care where you are.

After making our way across the monumental arched bridge from the south side of the Vienne into the main street of



The Streets in France Part 3

Chinon which is situated on the north bank of the river, we started traversing the narrow streets with Stacey yelling into my helmet and directing us into even narrower one way streets to the walled compound of the Hotel Diderot.

At the hotel we had the pleasure of making the acquaintance of the second Monsieur Laurent, the innkeeper (the first being Monsier Laurent of La Rosarie at Chenonceaux), who directed us to park the motorcy-

through Chinon.

We started with a visit to a wine shop in town for a tasting and went through several glasses before settling in on the purchase of a bottle of a local red, and then we further trekked into the center of town and found the main square replete with a smattering of sidewalk cafes, restaurants, antique shops, a grocery, bakeries, an apothecary, and a couple of bars laid out in the quintessential French way so that all of

straggled back to the Hotel Diderot thankful that Chinon is a safe city after dark and also thankful that the French don't over preserve their locally sold wines with heavy sulfites so they don't produce the sorts of headaches that similar consumptive practices elsewhere inevitably cause.

Hotel Diderot's known for serving sixty some odd types of homemade jams at breakfast, so we again chose the option of dining at the hotel and once again were rewarded with not only the usual croissants and coffee but also the jams which were truly exceptional.

Apparently Monsieur Laurent's sisters make the jams from fruit grown both in the compound and on their property, and they do a great job with it.

We dined outdoors and the temperatures and atmosphere were perfect.

Imagine sitting in a flower garden with an early morning sun gently warming just a bit of chill out of the air with the hotel cat (chat), Monsieur Dodo, hovering nearby, with fresh coffee, fresh bread with local butter and fresh jam and you have the picture.

We took a walk to the laundromat after breakfast and found a confusing array of washers, dryers, and soap dispensers all operated by a central coin fed control apparatus with no instructions in English (Chinon's not really a tourist center).

We piddled around trying to figure out the routine and some kindly older gentleman (remember what I said about everything you've heard about the French being jerks is wrong) took pity upon us and walked us through the routine and we were able to begin washing a week's worth of underwear, shirts and jeans.

I didn't feel too bad about not being able to figure out how to use the machines because not



cle under the grape arbor in the end of the parking area and within a few steps of the hotel's main entrance.

We were shown our room on the second floor which overlooked the verdant floral gardens that covered the walls of the hotel, and our window overlooked a flower box, a duplicate of several that adorned every window, that gushed with a waterfall of color. Quaint and beautiful is a bit of an understatement. We situated our accouterments in our room and then headed out for a walk

one's shopping needs could be satisfied in a few steps.

Later, after a shower and change of clothes, we went back to the square and enjoyed an outdoor dinner and watched the ebb and flow of the evening: young people beginning relationships, old couples quietly eating in the silence borne of a decades long truce to which the passion of youth had devolved, and every emotion in between.

More wine was consumed — make that copious amounts of wine were consumed — and we

The Streets in France Part 3



too long after we got our loads underway a local fellow came in and was similarly dismayed by the process of feeding coins into the central controller and then coding what was needed.

We pitched in to help him and felt like we'd achieved a new level of international cooperation: France and the US can't get war plans to jive, but we can at least do the damned laundry together!

We'd stopped at a store on the way into Chinon and picked up a quarter-round of soft cheese, and somewhere in our forays through the city we'd stopped in a bakery and picked up a baguette, so we went back to the hotel after getting our laundry done and retrieved the cheese, bread, and our bottle of wine from the previous day and strolled over to a beautiful tree-lined park by the river and had

a picnic.

In the parking lot near where we picnicked there was a nicely restored Morgan three wheeler, and nearby there was a group of older gentlemen playing bocce.

The combination of the river, trees, automotive history and good natured banter from the bocce players made for a relaxing and exotic atmosphere for our picnic.

Later on we strolled to the other end of the city to view the Chateaux at Chinon which was a medieval structure situated on the hill overlooking the city but which had fallen into ruins. It was complete with all of the reminders of human cruelty, however, and had a dungeon, moats, battlements, a keep, and other components seemingly necessary for survival in a period of time when savage take-overs were a common occurrence.

After hiking back to the hotel we decided to try a restaurant that the hotel recommended as having great food, La Oceanic, and we again donned our "dinner clothing" and ventured to it.

We were seated outside next to some academics from Australia who took the caricature of the "Ugly American" and the definition of boorish to a new dimension. Anyway, the table was set with a collection of silver and plates that was quite a challenge, and our waiter is probably still laughing about my feeble attempt to maintain decorum.

Even though I followed what little training bestowed upon me at an early age and worked from the outside in while selecting the silverware, I'm quite sure that several faux pas were committed. Anyway, I had tuna that melted in my mouth, and Stacey had locally-caught mussels that were the surprise of the evening. Surprise in that she didn't order mussels-not sure whether there was a misunderstanding when she or-

The Streets in France Part 3

dered or if they wanted to clear the kitchen of the last of the evening's specialty, and surprise in how wonderful they were.

The evening was capped off by a selection from the cheese galley that the waiter rolled to our table. Afterward, we wandered back to the square and went into a bar where a local celebrity was playing guitar and singing while his ten or eleven year old daughter sat at the edge of the stage and spent a good bit of the evening staring adoringly at her dad while he played. His performance was in a style that I always associate with France, sort of a variation on the oom pah beat, and it was entertaining for a couple of songs, tolerated for a couple, and then it was time to go.

Back to the hotel, and the next day was to be our departure; however, we liked Chinon so much that we asked if we could extend for another night. Monsieur Laurent had our room booked for someone else but the gardener's cottage, across the compound, was available.

"Would that be acceptable, monsieur?"

"Wee, mercie."

So the next day after breakfast we moved to the gardener's cottage and found it to be quaint and very comfortable.

We went on a run out of town and went to the end of the public property on the east end of town and then ran along the river to the west until we ran out of a suitable running path near another winery, and then we turned and went back to town.

Later in the day we took the bike to the Chateaux de

Langeais, some twenty miles distant, and did another half day touring what my Dutch friend calls "a bunch of bloody stones."

Langeais was built at the end of the warring period of medieval times and was less defensively designed and displayed the beginnings of architecture that would evolve into some of the best stone work in the Old World. Tapestries from the 1300's adorned the dining hall, and several pieces of furniture that were displayed were from the original complement.

Langeais had served as the epicenter of influence during period of French history, and if this was a historical article I'd go back and fill you in on the details. It's not, so you're spared, but here's always Wikipedia if you're interested in the abbreviated version of the importance of Langeais.

We rode back and once again the fickle French weather sprinkled on us, but we decided to ride through without stopping to break out the rain gear.

The K100LT's fairing nicely

diverted the moisture, and I stayed dry until we arrived back at the hotel. Fortunately the weather cleared and we were able to walk back into town for dinner at a pizzeria off of the square where we had another encounter with another French canine, again a pug (Remember the photo of the pug that climbed into my lap to be petted only to try to bite me when I paid the tab at the café in Neufchatel?).

Monsieur Pug sashays out of the bar next door to our restaurant where we are seated at an outdoor table, and he goes from patron to patron for the occasional scratch. He then comes to our table, gets his head scratched, and then turns around and deposits the contents of his colon about two feet from our table.

It certainly added an unusual ambiance to our pre-dinner drinks, and made for a somewhat comedic exchange when the owner of the restaurant where we were dining confronted Monsieur Pug's owner. Fortunately, Monsieur



The Streets in France Part 3

Pug's owner was a responsible sort of guy and came over and removed the poop from our presence.

We stopped at another outdoor establishment after dinner and had a Grand Marnier, and then waddled back to the hotel.

I cannot overstate how much I enjoyed the outdoor dining offered in that city, and I hope we're able to go back.

The next morning we asked if the hotelier could bring our breakfast to the table situated just outside our cottage, which was a bit of an inconvenience for them as the cottage was quite a distance from their kitchen. They complied and we enjoyed the view from the cottage across the compound which gave us a full vista of the flower boxes, vines and shrubs planted against the main building.

We bussed our own table and carried the plates and glasses into the kitchen, and you'd have thought we'd made a gift of the Hope Diamond to them. I suppose they don't have clients pitch in very often, so they thanked us profusely, and later on when we were leaving they asked us to stay until they were through checking out some of their countrymen and then surreptitiously gave us a jar of the homemade jam. They were excellent hosts and I can recommend Hotel Diderot without hesitation.

We had the bike loaded up and headed in a generally northern direction with the intent of arriving in the Netherlands sometime the next day. We only messed up in a couple of roundabouts and for the most part were able to stay on course and avoid the stress of being lost.

We passed a huge nuclear power plant with five reactors not too far outside of Chinon and then rode for more or less ten hours through rural France.

One vista that remains in my memory is riding out of a heavy wood, cresting a hill, and then seeing an ancient castle, or correctly "chateau," that occupied an entire hillside overlooking a village.

Our route took us through the Somme Valley where one of the bloodiest battles of history took place, the Somme Offensive. Fought from July to November in 1916, there were over a million casualties with some 300,000 killed on both sides with the British suffering a record loss of some 57,000 men in a single day.

Riding through the valley took us past several cemeteries where thousands of young men were buried, some in marked graves and some in mass burials punctuated by a simple mound of earth, and it was a sad and sobering accounting of the aftermath of the "War to

End All Wars."

We ended up in Albert, just south of the Belgian border, and found a chain hotel with a connected restaurant and pulled in for the evening. We checked in and went to the room to dump our stuff and then immediately returned to the restaurant because we were starving from having missed lunch.

I ordered a pasta dish that others were having, and I ordered a French beer, "1664" brand, that I had grown fond of during our trip. I noticed that there were a few locals in the restaurant that had the long term beer consumption look about them that were drinking a Belgian beer that looked good, so I asked our waitress for one of them and the guy sitting near us told me that I had made a good decision, and it was delicious.

The irony of the situation is that I failed to write down what it was, so another lesson I learned is that my memory is fallible and failing and that I need to make notes of things.

After an evening in our room that had an interesting prefabricated pod for a bathroom, we got up early in the morning and had breakfast and went out to load up the bike.

As Stacey assisted me by pulling the bike rearward to roll it up on the center stand, we got a bit off kilter and almost toppled the bike over onto the Volkswagen station wagon, or "shooting brake" as it is called in some cultures, sitting next door. I mean literally almost toppled, as every vein in my body bulged as I struggled to pull the bike back upright.

We had a little exchange of less than benevolent admonishments and then proceeded to finish loading.

The family in the station wagon came out at the end of our inter-marital exchange and provided a welcome buffer. At that point the woman in the





The Streets in France Part 3

family started telling me some long-winded story during which I just smiled and nodded but didn't understand a single word until she said "au revoir" and I responded accordingly.

She returned the smile and as far as I know was oblivious to my ignorance. Oh, well.

From Albert we got on the motorway and rode across Belgium, through Gent and Antwerp and into the Netherlands where we were detoured off our route, and guess what? We were lost again.

Pulled into a service station and I got off, sauntered in, waited my turn for the cashier, and asked, "My apologies, but do you speak English?"

And he replied, "Of course; how can I help you?"

I was speechless for a few milliseconds while I contemplated how many service stations in my part of the United States have bilingual attendants (I suppose there are quite a few as long as the second language is Spanish or Hindi.) He then gave me directions through the detour and we found our way to Oisterwijk which is very near where my friend Chris Roos lives.

Next time: bikes in the living room, the Chunnel, and back to Easington.

Winter Riding in the Valley of the Sun Arizona

Text and Photos by Bill Voss

During the winter months in the Phoenix area of Arizona, the temperatures usually range from a low of 40 degrees to day time highs in the 60s.

Humidity is usually around 30% and there are occasional cloudy days. If you live here year round winter is still seems cold, but there is no snow or ice in the valley.

Occasionally, a group of us get together at DJ Bagels for breakfast near our home in Fountain Hills, just east of Scottsdale.

The photo shows everyone who road their sport bikes early that morning. We are cold by local standards, but we are sitting outside DJ's waiting to be served breakfast.



This little guy had to wear his slippers and his new BMW helmet (well it kind of looks like one).



This is December in the Valley of the Sun and we do experience cold weather. During this time of year, we have a day or two where it does rain.

As you can see in the photo, we are trying to stuff our motorcycles into my friend Andy's Ferrari shop to get them out of the rain.

Andy's shop is less than a mile from our home and when it gets really cold he closes the garage doors.

Continued on Page 21

Winter Riding in the Valley of the Sun Arizona

Text and Photos by Bill Voss



Andy's shop has the inevitable project bike- a Yamaha 600 dirt bike. He replaced the gas tank with a larger European Tenere tank which transformed it into a usable desert bike and a Paris/Dakar replica. Another of

Andy's bikes is a Bimota YB8 which has a Yamaha FZR1000 EXUP engine and is in perfect condition.

One morning at Andy's shop while enjoying an Italian espresso an old friend of his



Winter Riding in the Valley of the Sun Arizona

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came in while we were discussing Fiat 600s. His friend and I shared the fact that when we were kids our mothers each had a Fiat 600. His friend, Arie, said he had borrowed his mother's Fiat 600 and removed the seats so he could use it to pick up a Formula 2 engine. After picking up the engine, which barely fit into the car, he was racing along when he got airborne over a rise.

When he and the Fiat landed, the weight of the engine caused the frame of the car to crack.

Arie is better known as Arie Luyendyk, a Dutch auto racing driver who is known for winning the Indy 500 in 1990 and again in 1997. He also won the 24 hours of Daytona and 12 hours of Sebring.

We compared notes on how many cars and trucks we've bought our kids, and how short a time they lasted. He's a great guy.

A traditional place for anyone with two wheels to go on New Year's Day is Tortilla Flat, Arizona. It is the only authentic stagecoach stop to survive the 1900's along the Apache Trail.

With a population of six, they are still serving travelers of the mysterious Superstition Mountain area and is located 18 miles N.E. of Apache Junction, Arizona on State Route 88.

It was a great celebration of the New Year with bikes, riders enjoying the food, live music, and temperatures in the low 70s.

This area is just 30 miles from our home and the twisty Highway 88 is great to ride.

The number of vintage bikes that were in extremely clean

running condition was impressive and difficult to catch on camera since their owners were riding rather than parking.

I did get a shot of two Nortons. Plus, there was a large group of BMW Airheads and early K model BMWs flying around the very curvaceous highway 88 that goes by Canyon Lake on the way to Tortilla Flats.

Winter Riding in the Valley of the Sun Arizona



So.....yes, the weather during the winter is a lot cooler than the 115 degree heat of summer, and it does feel cold after you've lived here for a time.

Jenny and I did drive 70 miles north and up almost 5,000 ft to see the snow. We quickly turned around and drove back so I could ride my old bike around the twists on the reservation near our home.

If you come to Arizona this time of year, you can have any climate you want depending on where you go, but I'll be staying close to home and turning the temperature up on the outdoor Jacuzzi.

Happy New Year!



HAPPY NEW GEAR!

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— John Rice