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Apex

Looking Through The Curve

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**John Rice and his XT 250 Yamaha
take a break in the shade near
Burkesville on the Lap of Kentucky.**

Ugly in Pink: Red primer and Alpine White paint. How *not* to paint a motorcycle

With apology (not really) to Molly Ringwald's "classic" coming-of-age film, *Pretty in Pink*, I title this column "Ugly in Pink" partly out of a need for constructive therapy to overcome my experience trying to paint the RT.

First, let me say that years ago I was able to knock out excellent paintwork, if I do say so myself, in remarkably short time.

Out of respect for the passing of time—it has been many years since I have used my gun to paint anything—I chose a simple Alpine White, a classic, traditional BMW color, for the RT. I used rattle cans to paint the '68 Triumph, a paint job that frankly looked really good, even to my critical eye.

An additional consideration in choosing white was that the color is least likely to show bodywork flaws.

Bodywork for this project has been extensive in that I have repaired many cracks in the fairing, piecing together broken mounts, cracked sidewalls, patching a hole in the fairing nose and filling holes in the lowers where the engine guards poked through. Lots of work, which again takes me back several years when I would rebuild a sports car in three months every summer.

(I love the smell of bondo and fiberglass resin in the morning!)

So, as I move along in the work, I shoot primer, of course. On this project, however, for some reason I chose RED PRIMER. Always, over the past 30+ years of painting, I have used gray primer and



sealer.

After countless hours of prep—at least 80 hours in the fuel tank, alone—I shoot the red primer, sand, and stand back to admire the work.

The photo above shows the fairing in red primer, mounted to ensure all mounting points in the fairing are solid and that the mounting bracket itself is true, which it was not, of course.

I removed the fairing, corrected two arms of the mounting bracket, remounted the fairing, loosened the mounting bracket to adjust it slightly to the right, tightened everything back up and took a picture.

Then I stood back and smiled in anticipation of the award-winning paintwork that the careful prep would ensure. I was so excited to finally be ready to paint!

I loaded Alpine white and applied a dry coat as usual, then followed with a less dry coat, then a slightly wetter coat. All looked good.

Then, I applied a fairly wet coat of clear to provide safe wet sanding that would not remove color prior to pin stripping.

Following a couple of hours of drying time, I pinstriped the parts in United Airline Blue, a perfect match to the BMW Roundel blue. Six hours of pin stripping later, I then hosed down the garage and stored the painted parts to dry.

On the second day I looked at the parts, resting on the floor next to the red Porsche, and I noticed a pinkish glow.

It's the Porsche, I said, casting its radiance upon the Alpine White, simply that and nothing more.

Then I carried a lower fairing piece into the sunlight.

The pinkish glow not only remained out in the sunlight, but swirled around in splotches and turns, sort of a pink camouflage, if you can imagine.

Pink camouflage. On my classic RT.

I broke out into a sweat and looked around to ensure no one could see what I was holding in my sweaty hands.

Two hours later I finished wet sanding the parts, removing the pinstripes and sanding the parts in preparation for a second paint job.

To ensure the bleed through would not happen, again, I shot gray primer and then gray primer SEALER designed to prevent bleed through.

I then found on the bench a full can of Dover White, probably from the 1980's, a very close color to the Alpine White. Acrylic lacquer is impossible to buy locally, because most painters don't want to mess with lacquer any more. It's final finish requires extensive wet sanding and polishing to achieve the desired finish. I continue to use lacquer because I cannot use anything with isocyanates, a deadly chemical.

I applied the second round of white.

Pink, again!

I sanded, then shot a dry coat of white, and set everything aside to dry.

As I write these words, the parts rest in the garage. I haven't had the courage to look at them.

—Paul Elwyn

Surfing the Lap of Kentucky



**Photos and story
by Marrea Matthews**

Between Owensboro and Henderson, I saw a beautiful yellow bi-winged plane resting alongside Laketown Rd. I stopped briefly and learned the young pilot used it in spraying and dusting the crops in the area.

At 9 a.m. Thurs. June 18, the Lap of Kentucky began.

Jeff Cooke, co-owner of BMW Motorcycles of Louisville, gave the pre-ride speech. In conclusion he asked that the 60+ riders in attendance split up into smaller groups since we "weren't riding in a parade." A three-wheeled Piaggio MP3 scooter, two wheels up front, led us out to the start of the course.

Heading west with an unobstructed view of the sky, I wondered if *Thunder Over Louisville* had been rescheduled to coincide w/ our start.

The sky blackened, the winds gusted, rain stung through my gloves, and the thunder left me

rattled. I sought shelter and fuel at a gas station on Dixie Hwy. I was confused by difficulty in getting gas; then learned that the lightning strikes caused the pumps to reboot.

The new suit of Froggtoggs kept me dry except where the elastic contracted at the ankles and funneled rain to over fill my boots. Thirty minutes down the road, I think it was near Brandenburg, the weather lashed out again. This time I found cover in the door way of a Catholic church. I watched in awe as lightning flared across the sky and hail pelted. The church marquee said "Praise God in all situations!" It was a

beautiful storm, and I was ok, so I offered praise.

The group had separated quickly with stopping for the storms, breakfast, etc. I found myself alone but always expecting to have the faster riders pass at any time.

The road was narrow and wooded on both sides. A turkey flushed and slowly climbed above my head. I'm sure if I had raised my hand I could have tickled its toes!

Between Owensboro and Henderson, I saw a beautiful yellow bi-winged plane resting alongside Laketown Rd. I stopped briefly and learned the young pilot used it in spraying and dusting the crops in the area. Corn, soybean and wheat

Friday night I camped 30 miles down the road on route from where the others stayed in Paducah. My campsite was sweet. I overlooked the Mississippi, had a swing, bench and flower planters. A combination of chocolate and strawberry ice creams from the concession stand finished my day with cool sweet satisfaction.



seemed to be the main crops. The fields were flat and huge when compared to those in central Kentucky.

The storms had long since passed; the sun had me shed layers and had dried my leather gloves. I met up with John Rice cooling off at a gas stop. We rode together for a couple of hours.

John was riding a little off road 250cc. He showed off its nimbleness in circling back to rescue box turtles from harm's way. While on the flat straight road, I could leave John way, way back, but he had no problem in catching up in the tight twisting roads with which Jeff had packed the route.

Twice I was shaken when I came over a rise and found John appearing to have fallen over on his side. In reality, he hadn't dropped the bike; he leaned so much more than I was accustomed. "Does John

have patellas of steel?" I wondered.

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Columbus-Belmont S. P. commemorates the location of a Confederate camp where a mile long chain was strung across the river to slow the Union gunboats. Once hung up on the chain, the boats were fired upon by CSA cannons. On display are the 16 foot long anchor and a section of chain that was unearthed by a landslide. Each link weighs about 20 pounds.

Friday morning I began riding at 7a.m. and once again expected the other faster riders to

catch and pass me. The roads were outstanding, small with very light traffic.

Near Moscow, I stopped and spoke with a farmer, Charles Parker. He was preparing the combine to finish his wheat harvest. The size of this machine was staggering compared to the tractors we have in the Bluegrass. The header was 40 foot wide. (That's the cutting blade thing that spins on the front.) Its tank could hold 300 bushels before off loading to a semi trailer. Charles humored me and let me climb up into the cab for a photo op. He seemed delighted with visit. I was honored that he'd given up his time to share with me some things he just takes for granted.

At Hickman, I left the route to seek out the ferry to Dorena, Missouri thinking I would just catch a ride over and back. I found the loading pad, but after 20 minutes, I had not yet seen



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the ferry. It must have left before I arrived. Judging by the width of the Mississippi I realized that a ride would take up quite a bit of time.

The day was heating up again and I was certain that the other "Lappers" would be sprinting by. Wanting to minimize the time riding during the heat of the day and not wanting to be off route and behind the other riders, I decided to save the ferry ride for another time.

I rolled across the Tennessee and Kentucky Rivers and through Adairsville. East of Adairsville, I was certain that I was off route. I stopped to pull out the Gazetteer thinking I'd find a way to get back on course. Surprised to find that I

was where I should have been, I rode on with the confidence.

At the end of day two, I camped at Dale Hollow State Park. It wasn't as interesting and nice as Columbus-Belmont, but it cooled down enough for a great night's sleep.

All day I had not seen one person who looked like they were riding the lap.

(The mc riders I did see were on cruisers and wore completely different attire. The women were exposed in what seems to be a prerequisite spaghetti strap top. The men revved their engines for others' listening pleasure. Most rode with more protection on their feet than on their heads.)

Saturday morning I was riding once again at 7 a.m. This

Surfing the Lap of Kentucky



day's route would take us through Pineville, Jenkins and across the top of Pine Mtn and deep into the mountains of eastern Kentucky. The day would end at Prestonsburg.

Climbing up through the switch backs to the top of Pine Mtn was one of the high lights of the trip for me. It's a new road that's been cut in with the safety features required by today's standards. Pull offs and railing allowed me to enjoy the climb and descent. I stopped to take in the western slope and grabbed a photo of one of the switchbacks and Whitesburg nestled at the base of the ridge. I felt great.

Upon dropping down into Whitesburg I spotted John Rice and three others from the Cincinnati area. From talking with them it seemed that I'd been staying in front of most of the riders. Perhaps they were busy checking out sights as well. I felt fine doing the ride alone, but it was reassuring knowing that others were out there who would help out if needed.

Riding alone I seemed to find a rhythm on taking the curves, much like surfing a wave. When I carved just right, it was very satisfying. Carving a se-

ries of curves was even more pleasing. As the terrain changed so did my thoughts. I seemed to just float on the moment, surfing mentally and physically. It was way cool!

While the roads up to now were great, the best were in eastern Kentucky. Tight, twisty, lightly traveled, beautiful tiny homesteads, cool and shaded.

As I passed through Elkhorn City, I recalled the fall trips I once made to run the mighty Russell Fork River and how I once surfed its waves. Saturday night I camped in Jenny Wiley S.P. just outside of Prestonsburg.

The people were friendly. By this point in the trip, I had learned the best way to answer the commonly asked questions, "Where you heading? ... Where did you ride from..." was to pull out my map of the state and show the blue high-lighted back roads near the perimeter of the state.

The puzzled looked usually changed to one of *Wow, How cool!* The campground host smiled through the retelling of a similar trip he took 30 some years ago and raised \$23,000 for cancer research by soliciting

pledges of 10 cents per mile from family and friends.

Before going to bed my phone beeped that I had a message. It was from Lynn Keppy-Montgomery, owner of The Kickstand. Ray, her husband, asked that she look up my number and call to see that all was well since I was riding alone. I last saw Ray Thursday morning after the thunderstorms. She left his number, so I called and assured him all was well and thanked him for being so thoughtful. While it appeared that I was riding alone, I felt comforted in knowing 60+ "brothers" were nearby.

Sunday morning I pushed for an earlier start knowing that after reaching Louisville I'd have the ride back to Lexington. Riding the scenic Route 3 through Inez to Louisa was exceptional.

The morning fog first rose off the ground then cleared as the sun warmed the picturesque landscape. At Catlettsburg came the industrial uses of the Ohio River- oil refineries, coal and gravel shipping, and power generation plants. These were interspersed with stretches of natural scenery, but, for me, none compared to riding through the folds of eastern Kentucky.

At South Portsmouth, I paused to ride the attractively designed suspension bridge across the Ohio and back. The route continued along the river on Hwy 8 rolling through Maysville, Augusta, Moscow, etc.

In Mentor I cut west to Union hoping to miss some of the northern Kentucky's congestion. Proceeding along the river through Carrollton and Milton, then in Bedford two Beemers rode by. One had what looked like a pony keg on the back. I was told it was an auxiliary gas tank. Shortly they stopped in Sligo. I figured they had more fuel in their tanks

Riding alone I seemed to find a rhythm on taking the curves, much like surfing a wave. When I carved just right, it was very satisfying. Carving a series of curves was even more pleasing. As the terrain changed so did my thoughts. I seemed to just float on the moment, surfing mentally and physically. It was way cool!

than their bodies could ride. Hwy 42 was packed with heat cracks heaved upward. Riding them felt like a very bad case of hiccups.

Around four o'clock, I pulled into the Beemer store on Breckinridge Street and found Lowell Roark in the lot; he was ready to head home. I laughed remembering before the ride began I had teased him that if he didn't slow down, he would ride the whole thing in one day.

It's supposed to take four I had explained. So either he slowed down or he rode the 1300+ mile lap numerous times. He wouldn't admit to either.

Jeff asked that Lowell and I talk with the Courier Journal reporter. Soon, John Rice arrived. From his grin it seemed that he'd had a good ride as well.

The ride home along I64 was too noisy for mental surfing, but the satisfaction will linger

for days for having completed the trip, for having ridden four consecutive days of nine and ten hours each day, for not having even one "close call" during that time, for having seen new parts of our beautiful state, for having seen my first bob cat in the wild, for having found a group of motorcyclists who like to ride safely and can put together absolutely awesome rides.



Bluegrass Beemers Lap of Kentucky riders among the 60 participants are Marrea Matthews, Roger Trent, John Rice, Raymond Montgomery, Ralph Anderson, and Lowell Roark.

Café Run draws riders for tire kicking and riding



John Rice

The annual **Café Run** hosted by John Rice drew an impressive field of motorcycles, including a group from Ashland, on the second Saturday in June to the parking lot behind Bailey's Café in downtown Winchester.

Bailey's provided breakfast and a warm welcome as usual.

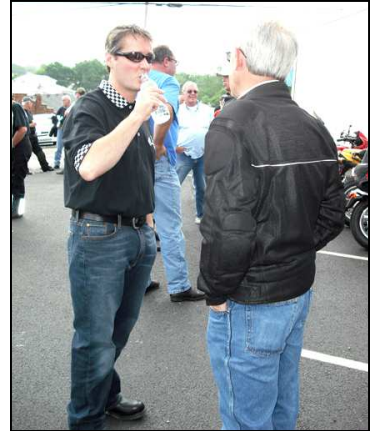
The Run is as much about kicking tires as riding. An award-winning Triumph 650 TT made an appearance along with an eclectic gathering of European and American bikes providing participants plenty to look at prior to taking off for The Kickstand in Burgin.

If you missed this year's event, be sure to put this one on your calendar for next year, the second Saturday in June.

Bring your camera!

Café Run draws eclectic gathering of motorcycles

















Bluegrass Beemers President Steve Little will compete at AMA Vintage Days at Mid-Ohio, July 24-26.



Lap of Kentucky Musings

By John Rice

The idea of the Lap of Kentucky, approximately 1,400 miles on small roads around the perimeter of the state, is the brainchild of Jeff Cook the BMW dealer from Louisville. Jeff mapped it out several years ago and has now run the lap event three times.

my lovely wife, I had acquired, as a 60th birthday present, a Yamaha 250 CC dual sport bike intended for off road riding but street legal enough to go from trail to trail.

What if, I thought, a person could make the lap of Kentucky on a 250? For no particular reason it seemed like a good idea at the time.

As I refined the (rather absurd) notion, it also occurred to me that such a bike would demand a minimalist approach. I had acquired a very small tank bag to go on top of the little bikes even littler gas tank and a

wash out in a sink and supposedly will have dry by morning), two pair of socks, one t-shirt and a pair of sandals to wear in the room after having had the boots on all day. A tire repair kit, consisting of a set of patches and two CO2 cartridges went in the pouch also.

I whittled my Dopp kit down to just a razor, a shaving brush and a small container of soap, a toothbrush and small box for pills (I am getting old !).

The lap was to start from the dealership in Louisville on June 18th and finish up back at the same place four days later on the 22nd. I decided that, at the 250's pace, the ride to Louisville to get there by 9:00 am would be too long in the morning so I went up on Wednesday evening to get a room.

The ride from Winchester to Louisville was uneventful though hot. I went all the way through Louisville on Route 60 trying to find a "small mom and pop" hotel but such things are apparently extinct. I ended up circling back to Hurstbourne lane and taking a non-descript room at a Red Roof Inn.

I thought of Peter Egan's comment that he had never forgotten a campsite or fully remembered a motel room. This one wasn't going to be the exception.

At about 9:00 a.m. on June 18th we met at the BMW dealership on Breckinridge Street and after a short "riders meeting" to go over the route sheet changes due to road construction, we started out in the rain. It wasn't a mass start but just groups of people trickling out of the parking lot heading towards the first intersections.

For about 20 or so miles we were on a 4 lane just to get



Maybe I'll get points for "most Spartan." If it didn't fit in the two small bags, it didn't go.

I did it several years ago, when he ran it in a clockwise direction, on my BMW 1000. It was a fun ride including many out of the way places that one ordinarily would not visit without such a contrived reason as this.

This year when Jeff announced that he was resurrecting the lap ride, it occurred to me that something should be added to the mix to provide a bit more challenge. Thanks to

small tail bag just for odds and ends. Each one had about the capacity of the inside of a man's hat. I decided that if something wouldn't go in one of those two bags then it just wouldn't go on the trip.

That meant that I had to think carefully about everything I took and pare it down to the essentials. By the time the lap date had rolled around, I had it down to two sets of travel underwear (the kind that one can



"Here's the smallest entrant, by 25cc, in the lap. This 225cc single was the rider's backup when his 650 wouldn't start the day before. Check out the luggage for a four-day ride."

Lap of Kentucky Musings *continued*



It seems odd to me after having traveled in other places that Kentucky doesn't make more of its river front than it does. There are miles and miles of beautiful river views with no one but cows and crops to enjoy them.

around the huge congestion that is Louisville. Fortunately though by the time we got down to Doe Valley we ended up on 2 lane roads.

The rain had picked up and was coming down hard. I ended up in a small group of two gold wings and a Harley and myself. After we got on the two lane they fell behind a bit. I stopped on Route 228 to rescue another turtle from the middle of the road, bringing the day's tally to two.

The rain began to come down in buckets and the wind was blowing hard enough to leave the road covered in debris of branches and leaves and the various things that blow out of people's yards. The clouds were roiling and if one looked at them long enough with sufficient paranoia, it seemed that they were trying to swirl into a

funnel. I kept going, telling myself that I had been through worse. And it occurred to me that I always tell myself that in situations like this and at some point, perhaps not today, there will have to be a time when it is the worst. I was really hoping this wasn't going to turn out to be it.

The rain and high wind added a touch of adventure to the journey and to some extent kept me from noticing what pretty scenery we were going through. Occasionally there would be glimpse of the river off to my right guaranteeing that I was in fact on the perimeter of the state. Finally near Stevensport on Route 144 the clouds began to break and the rain stopped. That's when I noticed I was nearly out of gas.

There is no gas station in Stevensport and when I ran on

reserve a few miles later I knew I only had about 15 or 20 miles to find a station or I would be participating in my least favorite form of exercise, pushing a dead motorcycle.

As always seems to happen just when you need it a gas station appeared at Clover Port. While I was standing in the parking lot drinking a bottle of water, what seemed like nearly all of the riders from the dealership lot went by on Route 60.

By about 6:00 on Thursday evening I stopped in Paducah at yet another chain motel. The temperature had been probably 95 or more degrees and I was extremely hot and tired. The route had meandered through some very tiny villages and roads that at times were a little more than a single track.

The land is flat down here all river flood plain. It seems odd to me after having traveled in other places that Kentucky doesn't make more of its river front than it does. There are miles and miles of beautiful river views with no one but cows and crops to enjoy them.

I could envision little cafes, walking and bicycle paths and the occasional small table and benches for just sitting and watching the river roll by.

I had encountered very little traffic on these roads. One good thing about traveling as slowly as the little 250 does is that I am not constantly coming up behind other traffic, giving me the impression that I have the road mostly to myself. I had hoped to make it on down to Wickliffe today beyond Paducah and in my younger days I would have kept on going. But these do not appear to be my younger days and I learned the hard way several years ago what happens when I press on after I already know that I am too hot and tired to do so.

Lap of Kentucky Musings *continued*

Starting out near first light, I soon found myself in Ballard County between Barlow and Wickliffe on a long relatively straight flat piece of highway through what would look like Louisiana Bayou Country if I were only a few miles further southwest. It is a river bottom here flattened out by millions of years of the water's wanderings. The trees here are different than in Central Kentucky looking very much more like Louisiana or Mississippi. Not too surprising I guess since the Mississippi River is only a short distance to my right.

It was a beautiful morning. The sky was perfectly clear and I watched the sun over my left shoulder slowly illuminating this flat fertile landscape as I rode along. It was climbing higher in the sky and I knew that soon it would be uncomfortably hot. But for now the temperature was perfect and the cool air was going up my sleeves and circulating around my jacket's interior. I decided that I would stop soon for breakfast, somewhere about an hour down the road and hoped I could locate a non-smoking restaurant in this area.

A few miles back I passed a huge field of freshly cut stubble shining golden in the morning sun. It looked exactly the same color as pictures I have seen of the golden sands of the Sahara Desert stretching off to the horizon. For a brief moment I thought perhaps I would see a camel coming across the far reaches of the field but then I realized I probably just needed to stop for coffee.

I stopped in Wickcliffe to stand on the banks of the Mississippi looking at a barge getting ready to head out in to the wide river.

It's incredible at this point how much water there is be-

tween here and the other shore. It's an industrial looking water front with rusty barges and old tires as bumpers for the boats that tie up here for their commercial needs. There was no mom & pop restaurant in that town open at that hour, so I moved on.

My next stop was at Columbus Belmont State Park right on the river at the point at which a chain was stretched across the river during the civil war to prevent the passage of supplies up and down the river. Right now that passage is obviously wide open because there were tethered barges as far as I could see north and south on the river. They were white & black, and rusty red loaded with who knows what, but obviously a lot of it.

The river is still a major transport artery just as it was back then but the size of the vessels and the barges would have been unimaginable to the people who once blockaded this river.

A monument here in the park indicates that confederate General Leonidas Polk stretched the mile long anchor chain across the Mississippi River from Fort DeRussy to capstans on the Belmont Missouri shore. The chain was to stop union ships coming down the river long enough for cannon fire to sink them. Most of the chain was removed after the union occupation of Columbus in March of 1862. Despite an awful lot of trouble to stretch this enormous chain across the wide river, the effort obviously failed. According to this monument a land slide in December of 1925 exposed a section of the chain that had been left behind, part of which is now on display here. Each link weighs 25 pounds 5 ounces. The anchor is 15 feet 9 1/2 inches long with the



flukes 9 feet from tip to tip and estimated to weigh anywhere from 2 -6 tons which shows you just how much of an effort they were willing to put in to accomplishing the purpose which ultimately came to nought.

Finally, when I had nearly decided that starvation would end my trip prematurely, I found a wonderful breakfast at Pappy's Café in South Fulton Tennessee, just below Fulton, Kentucky. It's all non-smoking in this state as the girls behind the counter proudly informed me. One turned to the other and noted that "in Kentucky they're trying to do it county by county" with the same tone that one would use to describe the sad sack who was still plowing with a horse while the tractor sat in the barn. The gas station

Lap of Kentucky Musings *continued*



I recommended to her the Lois Pryce book in which Lois rode a bike similar to mine from Alaska to the tip of South

pundits who had recommended this place obviously knew what they were talking about.

When I left I was over full and had enough calories and cholesterol on board to last me and several other people for the rest of the week.

Later that afternoon, morning calories forgotten, I stopped at the Adairsville Cardinal Café home of the Adairsville Cardinals for a piece of what they call fudge i.e. As I was leaving

the cafe, I watched four of the other riders from the group making the wrong turn at the central intersection in town.

This part of Kentucky seems to one just passing through to have been forgotten. It is off the beaten path with the main traffic on interstates 24 and 64, and 65 draining all the life out of this area. These small towns have the reminiscence of their former glory in large buildings now boarded up, facing the court squares and the bandstand in the central park. The land is still flat here and I'm sure quite fertile from having been river bottom in the past. I mainly saw corn and wheat crops, not tobacco. The grain elevator here in Adairsville seems to have had little use in quite sometime. The streets are emptied and the few people in the café appear to be grandparents with grandchildren on an afternoons ice cream break. When I stopped to turn around to come back to this café a family coming out of the side street walked past me. The little girl, about 4 years old, ran up the bike threw her arms around my leg and told me she loved my motorcycle.(I told her I was kind of fond of it myself). I asked her mother if the café behind me had good pie and she laughed and said she had no idea.

I got into Burkesville about 5:30 and had a fine meal there of the buffet, the salad bar, and butterscotch pie at Jones' restaurant. I got what is apparently the last non- smoking room at the Alpine Inn on the hill over looking the valley. The Alpine is a rustic old style motel which in its heyday it was quite a "resort" but now has run down to the point where it isn't even staffed. One checks in at the Riverfront Motel down in town and they give you a key there to

come up here and take your room.

As I was getting ready to leave the next morning at 6:15, I met in the parking lot a woman who was on one of the Gold Wings that I had seen at the beginning of the ride in Louisville. She said they had seen my bike in the parking lot and were talking about it. Apparently the little Yamaha had impressed them when it passed them on a curvy road in the rain storm. She said she had a large cruiser bike and a bike similar to mine set up as a dirt bike. She had been telling her husband that the cruiser was too large and too heavy for her to enjoy and she would really like to have something lighter for the road but they had always assumed that one couldn't ride something small like this as a road bike. Seeing mine on the road on this trip had inspired her to do something like that herself. I recommended to her the Lois Pryce book in which Lois rode a bike similar to mine from Alaska to the tip of South America ,solo.

I arrived at the Heritage House Motel in Prestonsburg at 3:16 pm on Saturday. This was intended to be the end of day 3 but it was too early in the day for me to stop so I proceeded on up route 3 to Inez and then to Ashland where I found a room for the night.

I've now ridden motorcycles in most of the united states and in 14 foreign countries. One thing I have noticed is that in all of those foreign countries, seldom if ever in the US, drivers who are ahead of you on a two lane road, going slower than you are, will almost always pull over as soon as they see you in the rear view mirror. They don't pull over and stop but they move to the side of their

Lap of Kentucky Musings *continued*

lane and give you enough clearance to go around. Drivers coming the other way will also move over to provide enough room for the pass. It seems to just be something that's expected of them and they all do it. Not here.

We seems to raise drivers in this country to believe that they do in fact own the road and no one else has any right to it but them. Our drivers speed up on the straights so that no one can safely pass, then slow again at the curves to keep everyone behind them.

I stopped in the little town of Vanceburg, Kentucky about 7:15 am on Sunday, June 21st. I came here from Ashland down the river road, US 23, a run I used to make quite frequently back in the 60's and early 70's. From Ashland to South Portsmouth, 23 is now a four lane divided highway. Back in the day it was a winding 2 lane that at one point made a rapid jog around a house size rock that, legend has it, fell off the mountain during the New Madrid earthquake of 1812.

I wanted to follow old 23 for a bit but it is broken up too much now. From South Portsmouth where the new bridge spans the river with its cables looking like an enormous harp, the road becomes route 8 and follows the river closely down here to Vanceburg. This part of the road, and the little communities that it connects, seem to have changed very little if at all since those days that I used to come here.

A long white cloud of mist hangs over the Ohio river and the rising sun behind me illuminates the weathered paint and a faded signs of places I remember from back then, looking older but little different.

Just a little further down the

road I picked up my 5th turtle of this trip. The poor reptiles crawl out there in the traveled lane to enjoy the warm asphalt and the rising sun. They sit there with their heads up, the bottom of their shell against the heat of the asphalt until there is a sudden shadow of an approaching car and then the lights go out. I've made it sort of a feature of my bike trips that I stop and pick them off the road and move them off to the side. How many of them turn right around and go back to where I picked them up I don't know and I don't want to know.

There was a long section of fog which had me down to 10-15 mph. I remember these river fogs from my youth and frankly it's not something I had hoped to relive. Although there is the look of clean green agriculture here along the river bank, a thick smell of diesel fuel and exhaust hangs in the air from the tug boats on the river and the trucks on the highway just to the south of me.

I stopped in Maysville for breakfast at a wonderful little café just off the main street where I overate (again) on perfect pancakes and scrambled eggs.

As I hung my red Darien jacket over the back of the chair, the waitress looked at me strangely (something I'm quite accustomed to having done) then asked me what fire department I was with.

Thus refueled, I headed off for the final leg. It was uneventful (except for the white mule with whom I had to negotiate the right of way on one small road. The mediation resulted in a mutual withdrawal to neutral territory).

I arrived in Prospect, just outside of Louisville, about 3



pm and stopped for an iced coffee (I needed cold liquid and caffeine at that time) and just chilled (literally) at the café until 3:45 since Jeff had told us there would be no one at the dealership to receive returning riders until 4.

When the hour approached, I made my way down the River Road into the confusion of the big city, after so many days on the road in small towns, and pulled in to Jeff's lot.

Lowell Roark was already there, having been the first one to complete the Lap, along with a few others.

A reporter from the Courier Journal was there interviewing the returnees. He was uninterested in my little tiddler of a bike, being distracted by the

Lap of Kentucky Musings *continued*



larger machines bristling with gadgetry and gear. I doubt that I'll make it to the story he writes. (I just hope he can write a story about motorcycles without using the word "roar".)

I left for home, soon thereafter, arriving at my garage around 7pm. I'd been on the road since 6 am with that day's total mileage at 442. The total for the whole shebang was 1,716 miles, start to finish, with a few backtracks and detours thrown in.

The little 250 proved itself

a competent touring mount within its own limitations (a description that also fits its rider, though with more emphasis on the limitations) of speed and carrying capacity.

On the long flat straight sections in the western half of the state, one could have enjoyed one more gear to bump the cruising speed up from 55mph. In the mountains, it was a blast, its knobbly tires and dirt-oriented suspension making the curves seem much more exciting at far lower speeds than the larger bikes would have done.

Lap of Kentucky benefits the Warrior Transition Unit at Fort Knox

Oilhead powers airplane to be delivered to customers this year

The June issue of *EAA Sport Aviation* reports that AeroJames of Mezzavia, Corsica, France (www.AeroJames.com) will deliver to customers

in the U.S. this year their BMW Oilhead-

powered airplane. The ISATIS features the 100-hp air/oil-cooled motorcycle engine with "full authority digital engine control" to drive a three-bladed propeller through a carbon-fiber shaft and unique balanced inertial clutch.

The airplane provides the visibility of a helicopter at the price of a conventional LSA.



Philippe Bafray (right), founder and president of AeroJames, with colleague Daniel Montagnon in their mid-engined, BMW-powered ISATIS, designed for maximum visibility. Under development for the past four years, the first examples will be delivered to customers in the United States this year. (My apologies for the folded photo stuffed in tankbag.)

Paul Rice, Cindy Ferguson marry June 14th, John Rice officiates

By Paul Rice

St all began simple enough. Cindy and I would marry in the spring and finally a date was set , June 13.

Turns out that was to be the date of the annual Café Run, so we quickly decided that Sunday, June 14th would be a better date for the ceremony. One must have priorities.

Our daughters, Madison and Addison were by our sides as the Honorable John Rice performed a fantastic ceremony. A poolside reception followed, and I believe a good time was had by all.

The following Friday, Cindy and I departed for a short wedding trip on the vehicle of (my) choice, the R1200GS. Although she has done several very long days on a bike, this was her first time traveling by bike, packing for overnights, etc. I'll give credit where due, she probably did better than me at condensing her essentials.

We set out that morning in



Cindy Ferguson and Paul Rice were married June 14th with John Rice presiding and Cindy's daughter, Addison (left) and Paul's daughter, Madison (right), included in the ceremony.



Cindy poses with the R1200GS at Breaks Interstate Park.

the general direction of South, picking up Rte 52 in West Virginia and following it to Williamson, our first fuel stop. I had been reading of the Hatfield and McCoy trails in that area and seen articles stating they welcomed trail riders with open arms... they do! At our stop, about ten dirt bikes, (knobbies, no lights, full MX gear) rode thru the middle of town to fuel at the pump beside us.

We continued south to Grundy , VA then after passing a road sign for the Breaks Interstate Park, decided that a brief

detour back to KY would be interesting. With a couple more states to get through before dark we didn't linger long, but it was long enough to convince us we needed to come back.

Leaving the park we found Rte 80 east headed in the general direction of Tennessee, and at least on the map appeared to be entertaining. It is, and for the most part , requires full attention, especially south of VA19, where we noticed signs prohibiting vehicles over 30ft long .

After a couple of mountains

Paul Rice, Cindy Ferguson marry, honeymoon on R1200GS



and endless miles of first gear switchbacks, I would say they should ban vehicles over 96 inches long. With a couple more detours we found ourselves in the town of Damascus, home of the Virginia Creeper Trail, and countless bicycle shops, yet another place to put on the "must see" list.

By now the sun was telling us to make some miles and the Blue Ridge was calling so we charted a course for Boone, NC.

The Parkway is a different world. I had never seen it before and am sad to know it has been there all this time quietly waiting for me.

We pulled into several overlooks, each with spectacular scenery, and soon found our home for the next two nights at the Little Switzerland Inn.

The next morning with our sights set on the Biltmore estate, we headed back on to the parkway. It's only about 60 miles away, but on this morning it was not going to be a quick trip over past Mt Mitchell. The nearer we got the more threatening the weather became, until we slowed and eventually stopped ... in a cloud. Twenty miles ago it was beautiful, now it's 45 degrees, 50 mph wind and zero visibility. It was absolutely awe inspiring. Now if only we had hot lava running down the road I could say I have seen it all.

Twenty more miles and all is beautiful again, and at this point I should mention so is my new wife. She was a real trooper through it all, and also

did I mention she was not the one who decided this was to be a motorcycle trip?

The Biltmore was beautiful. We also visited the winery there, and left with a couple of their bottles for future sampling.

The following day, we headed back north on the BRP, stopped for lunch in Boone, NC and then more or less, retraced our route through TN, and VA until we arrived back at the Breaks. It was early in the evening and with it being a Sunday, they had many vacancies. The trails and scenery made it a wonderful place to spend the night. On Monday morning we left late, had a relaxing ride and got home still early.

It was an ideal getaway, and one we want to repeat, maybe with a bit more time, next time.

