

**August 5,6,7, 2016: Ride 'Em Don't Hide 'EM Getaway at Seven Springs Mountain Resort**

It was EPIC! The Motorcycle Classics Magazine's "Ride 'Em Don't Hide 'Em" getaway went way beyond expectations. For me, it was a huge effort, a chance for some great exposure for RetroTours, and a fantastic ride. Things began on the Tuesday before the big weekend. I spent hours cramming 5 motorcycles onto a big trailer and 3 into the pick-up truck. Then I left Wednesday at 4 AM to drive the rig and 2 tons of cargo 250 miles to Seven Springs Mountain Resort, not far from Pittsburg. I unloaded there and stashed the bikes in a garage bay generously loaned by the resort. These bikes would be used by 8 attendees who were flying in from points afar: 6 magazine personnel and associated industry contacts plus 2 paying customers who opted to fly in, ride the event on RetroTours bikes and fly out.

One of these bikes was for Brian Slark, director of the Barber Museum, and his wife. The BMW that they rode was the very machine that had fried its dual; coil electronic ignition system on the last tour, forcing us to stash the bike and return to home base to regroup. Talk about pressure! Fortunately, the repairs worked well and the machine ran flawlessly for the Slarks. After unloading I drove east on the turnpike and capped off my 16 hour day by falling into a deep sleep. It would take several days to recover fully.

By Thursday afternoon I was feeling almost normal as riders began to arrive. Seven of us planned to ride classic bikes west, decidedly NOT on the turnpike, to attend the festivities. First to arrive was Richard Anderson, an artist and an art teacher from Long Island. Richard is a RetroTours regular and he has learned that to beat the New York City traffic he must leave home way before sun-up. He arrived a bit before noon time which was fortunate for me since he was able to help collect 4 more riders coming in from out of town by airplane or bus. Towards 4 o'clock Richard headed for the Wilmington, Delaware bus station to pick up Jose Lopez who rides a CB550 chopper and is a repeat RetroTour-er from Connecticut, while I drove to the Philadelphia Airport to get Tim and Karen O'Mahony, CB160 racers who flew in from Seattle, Washington. I also picked up John Howker, a pilot who lives in Kentucky who jump seated in from Boston. Back at the house everyone settled into their rooms and rested a bit before we headed into Kennett Square for some authentic Mexican food; Kennett is 38% Hispanic as workers in our mushroom industry have relocated here over the decades.

Early Friday morning the last rider arrived in time for breakfast: Robb Harman, another repeat customer, lives nearby in Newark, Delaware and stashed his modern Yamaha in the garage. Everyone was advised to eat big in preparation for a big day; the convoluted back roads route looked like 300 miles or more. We loaded up the BMW/EML side car rig with everyone's baggage, allowing riders to ride unencumbered while providing useful ballast for the sidecar. Uncharacteristically, we were able to leave ahead of schedule at 8:15. The weather was warm but not oppressive with overcast skies overcoming the initial bright sun and helping to moderate the heat and humidity. Riders had chosen which bikes they wanted to start out on which included the Benelli 650 Tornado, the Suzuki T500, the Rickman Royal Enfield, the Moto Morini 500 Strada, the Laverda 750SF, and the Kawasaki KZ750 twin.

L to R: Richard Anderson, Tim O'Mahony, Karen O'Mahony, Robb Harman, Jose Lopez, John Howker



L to R: '70 Rickman Royal Enfield 750, '75 Suzuki T500, '79 Moto Morini Strada, '76 Kawasaki KZ750, '72 Laverda 750SF, '74 Benelli 650 Tornado



The first leg was about 50 miles to The Pinnacles: a 400 foot high overlook of the Susquehanna River. This section of the river's bottom features a deep gorge several hundred feet deep for a length of 1 mile. Then we crossed the river and worked through several quaint villages like Glen Rock, Seven Valleys and Jefferson. Working our way west we passed through Amish country and entered Apple country; huge orchards overrunning the landscape as we passed through Arendtsville, stopping for lunch at a characterful

restaurant in Biglerville. Dessert was as tasty as it was unique: fried apple pie. Riders were switching bikes at will as we continued with stops every 75 miles for gas and rest.



After filling up at each gas stop we parked the bikes out of the way and opened the sidecar trunk to partake of water, Gatorade and granola bars, along with some conversation. Riders also gave each other quick tutorials when switching bikes.

We found a nice rhythm after lunch and made our way over the Appalachian ridge on a very entertaining bumpy, twisty road passing through Upper Strasburg and Fannettsburg, then past Cowan Gap State Park which has a lovely swimmable lake, though the overcast skies and our tight schedule kept us moving forwards. We hit Route 30, the Lincoln Highway, shortly thereafter and tuned due west, crunching out the miles through Breezewood, Everett and Bedford, switching to Route 31 until Somerset where after 15 miles of back roads got us to the resort at 6:30. It had been a 10 hour day, things had gone smoothly and after check in we made it to the reception dinner just before the doors closed. The food was really, really good and the quantities were unlimited: just what the doctor ordered! I can't speak for the rest but after gorging myself I headed to my luxurious room and promptly collapsed on the bed. We were scheduled to ride with 85 like-minded individuals early on Saturday morning. Sleep came easily.

Saturday breakfast opened at 7 and was amazing. This resort really fed us well. I personally was a bit too hung over to partake but I managed to drag my sorry butt to the riders meeting before the scheduled 9:15 departure. Nearly 90 classic bikes were involved and groups of 10 or 15 were formed with

leaders appointed for each group given route sheets. I was asked to lead one of these small groups and was happy to do so though I was the only leader who had not pre-ridden the route the day before. The ride was plotted out for 120 miles, including a tour of Fallingwaters, Frank Lloyd Wright's architectural piece de resistance, a lunch stop at a great outdoors-y restaurant and a loop into West Virginia to check out Cooper's Rock



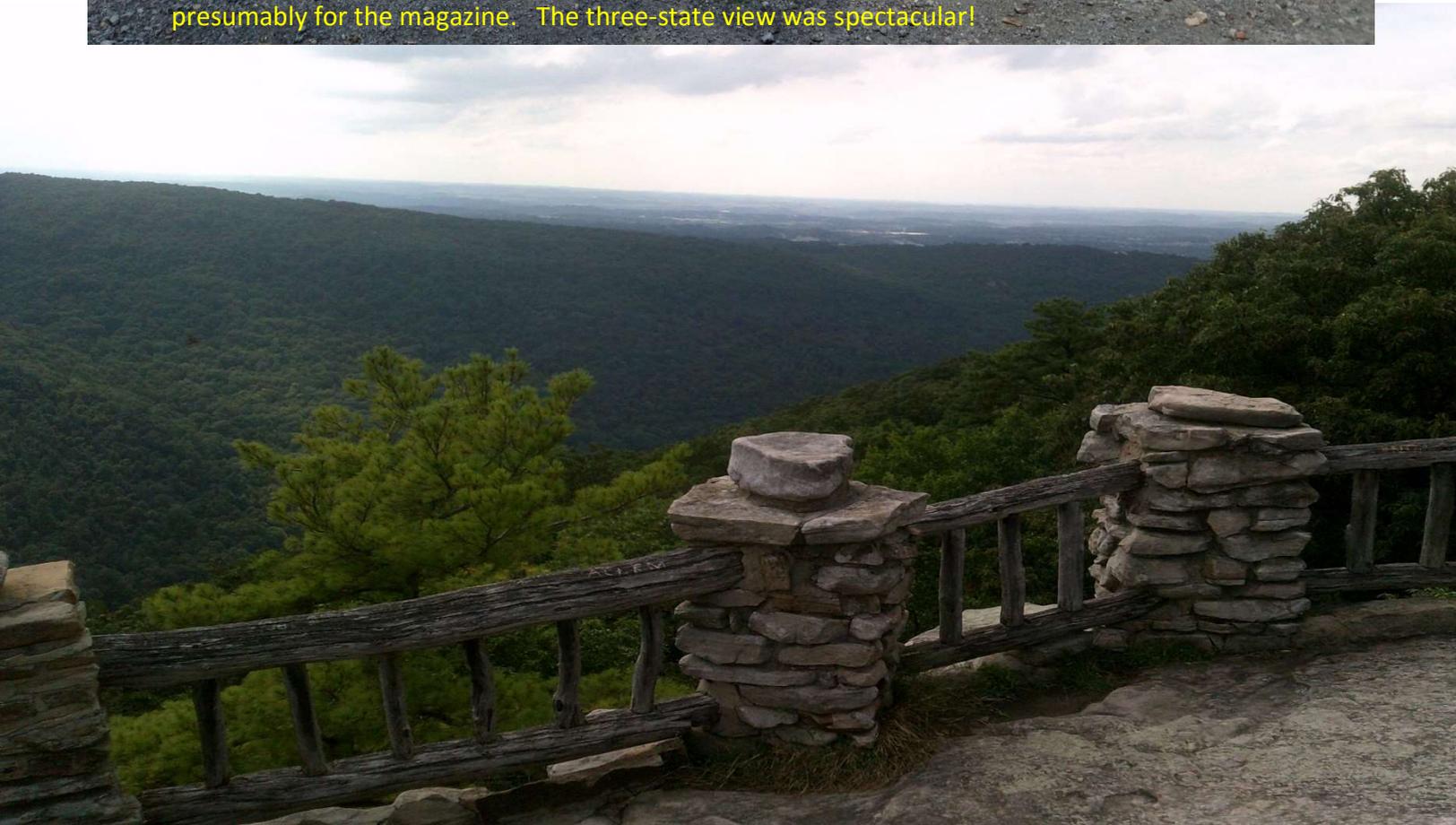
State Park, a massive scenic overlook. Things began looking grim when the skies opened up just as we were scheduled to leave: the wrong sort of "Falling Waters", especially since delaying the start was not an option as the tours were scheduled and paid for in advance. I think I was in the third group as we all donned our rain gear. A few riders who had trailered in gorgeous pristine old bikes opted out, and John Esposito, an old friend from Virginia decided he would rather ballast the sidecar than get his beloved immaculate Laverda 1000 dirty. Looking at the huge swaths of highly polished aluminum on the award winning bike, who could blame him?



Besides a three car garage (minimum) every home needs a waterfall running through it, don't you agree?



Things got off to a shaky start when I blew the first turn, forcing an awkward turnaround which put us right up against the next group. Before long it all got sorted though and the sun even came out as the quick heavy rain shower effectively cleared the excessive humidity from the air. We arrived after 30 miles to Fallingwaters which truly was amazing. It even had a really nice three car garage port, undoubtedly any home's most critical feature. The comprehensive tour lasted nearly an hour and was most interesting. Afterwards, John and I relaxed in the air conditioned café where 2 cups of black coffee had me feeling almost human again. The groups headed out somewhat at random and our group of 6 or 8 bikes followed the route sheet through the beautiful Laurel Highlands countryside, crossing into West Virginia for a lunch stop before making way to Cooper's Rock where a group photo was painstakingly staged, presumably for the magazine. The three-state view was spectacular!





During the final leg we enjoyed very fine weather with brilliant sunshine and low humidity. Back at Seven Springs we again took advantage of the much appreciated secure, indoor parking. With help from Richard and Jose the bikes were checked, oils topped up and chains lubed and adjusted in preparation for Sunday's long and intricate ride home. Dinner was in the form of a banquet, again the food was fantastic (and large) and after the main course keynote speaker Brian Slark entertained us with stories about the British motorcycle industry of the 1950's and 60's.



Another loop of just 40 miles was planned for Sunday morning but I had worked out a route home that promised to be very interesting so we decided to skip the group ride and head directly east instead. I was excited and worried. Excited about the prospect of exploring scads of new back roads, some so tiny they barely showed up on Google Earth. Worried that we might not be able to cover it all; it was ambitious, possibly 350 miles, and one navigational error or mechanical problem could put us behind schedule. To add to the drama, the charging system on the Morini had quit. The bike runs fine with a dead battery (CDI ignition) but by the end of the day I knew the headlight would be inoperative so we really needed to get home before nightfall. There would be no drinking for me on Saturday night; a good night's sleep was imperative and I got up extra early to stage the bikes. We met at breakfast just as it opened at 7 and were on our way by 8 AM. I wish I could take full credit for Sunday's ride. It was almost religious: one of the best rides ever. The bikes mostly behaved themselves and everyone road perfectly, maintaining a respectable pace but staying well within limits. The route was a good one and we kept a steady pace but the brightest aspect of the day had to be the weather. The humidity was gone and the sun was out, lighting up the morning landscape with a mystical glow. As we ascended into the highlands we met with a cloud that dropped down to enshroud us, giving me the shivers: it was simply heavenly. This, then, is what classic touring is all about.



**Sun rise at Seven Springs on Sunday morning. Not a cloud in the sky: perfect weather.**

A few of the bikes were quite low on gas. As we pulled into the tiny village of Rockwood, I noticed a one pump general store/gas station and pulled in. At 9 AM on a Sunday morning the store's front porch was occupied by a half dozen men sipping coffee and undoubtedly solving the world's problems; what an perfect slice of Americana! I introduced myself, made a bit of small talk and asked for and was granted permission to take a photograph.



**Rockwood, PA---good old boys' town meeting in progress**

The roads from Rockwood to Cumberland were fantastic. There was no traffic at all as we clawed our way up and down ridges through seemingly endless processions of curves marked 10 or 15 mph. At one point a wrong turn brought us to the top of a ridge where we stopped on a dirt road directly underneath one of 20 or so huge windmills to consult the road map. An hour later we stopped for a break at the top of another ridge and looking back we could see the same line of windmill/generators, as small as matchsticks in the distance.



Jose's smile says it all. You can just make out the windmill/generators atop the ridge in the distance. It was a magical moment.

In Cumberland we spiraled around a bit, cut through a supermarket parking lot and finally found an obscure very fun road which challenged us. At one point Robb commented, "I have never leaned a bike over that far in my life" and he was riding the Suzuki 500 at the time. It must be true: it's more fun to go fast on a slow bike than to go slow on a fast bike. This road terminated in Flintstone, and we crossed back from Maryland into PA and continued east, passing through Warfordsburg and stopping at a very "local flavor" diner for lunch in McConnellsburg. We mostly ate from the buffet to save time but we had a hard time getting out of there because the locals kept chatting us up. While we were having dessert an older couple dressed like hard core bikers came by the table. The cute little lady enthused: "Y'all are riding bikes like the ones I rode when I was a young girl" and her 74 year old husband gave us a detailed rundown of the bikes he had owned over the decades. He's riding a Spider nowadays. After he slipped on ice and broke his hip he kept riding but fell over at a stop and broke his foot. Three wheelers have their place, especially as we baby boomer riders 'age out'. He also told us about his 100,000 mile R90S that's in the barn and ran fine when he parked it 27 years ago. It's for sale by the way.

Next we passed through Waynesboro, summited Mount Alto and came into Gettysburg. The day was growing long so we limited ourselves to the '5 minute' drive-through tour of the great battlefield. It is always sobering to think about how many thousands soaked these fields with their very blood. As we bypassed the traffic quagmire that is Hanover we reached more familiar territory. We dipped one last time into Maryland after picking up route 851 into Delta, PA, rolled through Peach Bottom and re-crossed the Susquehanna River over the Connewingo Reservoir Dam. A short run through Rising Sun put us onto 841 which leads to Kennett Square.

Back at home Lynn had a fantastic hot meal waiting. We seven were joined by an equal number of extended family as we feasted on one of Lynn's signature dishes: short ribs, with fresh local sweet corn and ice cold Yuengling beer. Man, that sure hit the spot. Robb headed out while the rest of us headed for bed early; it had been an 11 hour, very intense, VERY BEAUTIFUL ride.

All I could say was....."IT DOESN'T GET ANY BETTER THAN THIS!"





Let's see....8 bikes averaging 400 pounds each equals 3,200 pounds, plus the trailer and my fat ass.

I covered 1,000 miles in this rig. The truck took it all in stride, except for the blown rear shocks which have since been replaced with heavy duty items. Personally, I preferred riding the other seven bikes there and back. Looking forward to doing it again in 2017. Hope you can join us!