

Gyro 2025 Ride Report

Saturday: It's HOT! Five of us make 325 miles to a house in Thomas, WV. All bikes are running well: GL1000, 850T3, GS1000, CB550K, R60. The House is called "Solar Haven". A Haven perhaps, but an Airbnb house is always somewhat of a gamble. This is a nice house in a quiet neighborhood just outside of Thomas. It has a hot tub in the garage which is clean and hot, but the bromine fumes are a bit much, as are the house rules: "Shower before using the hot tub", "no head dunking in the hot tub", "no shoes in the house", "don't touch my food", "take your leftovers with you" "wash your dishes", "conserve energy", "take your garbage with you" and on and on. Ok, I admit that I don't like a lot of rules. We provisioned on the way in at the Davis supermarket and have roaster chickens and hot dogs for dinner at the house. Everyone chooses a bed and usually I sleep on the floor or on a couch, but Eric insists that he will not share a bedroom—most feature double occupancy-- because he snores, so I share a bedroom. Next morning, Eric says he hardly slept a wink because the couches suck.

Sunday: We leave at 9, enjoy Route 219 and the fog in the valleys seen from scenic overlooks. We do breakfast on the road at a fast food muffin house, and ride 100 miles to Weston for the Trans-Allegheny Lunatic Asylum. We try the easy route which has some new super slab where old RT 33 used to be, getting a little lost even after asking locals for help. Finally, Joe S gets us to Weston with his GPS phone. We arrive at the Asylum right at 1:00 but they won't let us jump onto the 1 o'clock 45-minute tour for \$16. The next tour wasn't until 2 and the heat of the day is somewhat oppressive when not riding, so we look at the gift shop and leave, this time on the more adventurous route which includes some dirt and back roads as well as some open smooth curvy stuff.

Sunday night the group becomes indecisive regarding dinner. We were going to ride 4 miles to a Davis restaurant, but the mere threat of rain puts the kibosh to that. Next, we try to call for Uber but there is no service here in the boondocks. Then we try for a pizza delivery, but again, no such service here. Hey, We're getting hangry! Finally, Eric bribes the pizza lady to bring us pizzas, pasta, salad, and meatballs; lots of leftovers are thrown away the next morning. Eric considers renting a hotel room in town, but again, no Uber. I ask Greg to switch to my bed room which I had shared with Peter, leaving Eric with a private bedroom. I sleep on a couch—not too bad.

Monday: We leave at 8AM. The 850T3 has been pushing oil out of the trans breather so I make a catch bottle. The CB550 lost its headlight so I replace a fuse. Otherwise, the bikes are doing fine. I added 1 quart of oil--split between the 3 non-Jap bikes-- yesterday. Open roads mean good progress, especially Route 50. Nice sweepers, banked, smooth, constant radius...FUN! In Romney we need to eat breakfast. Stop at a smoked meat shack that isn't yet open. Joe takes the initiative and talks the smoke house guy into going out to buy some eggs and we feast on delicious smoked meat and scrambled eggs with cheese. Yummy! We give hm \$125; everyone is happy.

No real rain, just a tiny sprinkle as we make out way home by 6. The group is stressing about getting home and had told me early on that they would not stay for dinner. Lynn gives them care packages to eat on the way home. The ensuing text chatter indicated that we all liked most everything other than the house. We cover 850 miles all told. For me, another great adventure in the books. For the rest of the group, maybe not exactly what was expected, but a great adventure, nonetheless.

Not everyone enjoys dirt roads, especially on heavily laden, unfamiliar, antique motorcycles. But in the spirit of RetroTour-ing we do find ourselves on dirt here and there.

Remember, 50 years ago a lot of these back roads were unpaved; some still are. The best strategy is to just relax, don't squeeze the handgrips too tightly, and stay smooth. Your exact path of travel needs to be a compromise between where you want to go and what the terrain demands. Don't worry, as long as you don't need to slow down or turn, everything will be fine, LOL. In any case, everyone displayed courage, skill and good self-control; and we survived!





The GS1000L has some real muscle, with gobs of power available anytime the throttle is twisted.

The Gold Wing is like a magic carpet ride. Heavy yes, but a real delight to ride all the same.



The CB550K is such a Honda! It does everything well and what it may lack in character, it makes up for with its total competence.

The Guzzi 850 is gutsy. Tons of torque with a cushy ride that soaks up the bumps while holding its line with real tenacity. Riding it makes one feel like Italian royalty.



The R60/5 may have been the favorite of the 5 bikes. Smooth and oh so civilized with its comfortable seat, relaxed seating position, decent brakes, compliant suspension, and soothing exhaust note, it feels like it could go on forever. Yet, for all of its competence, it still retains a true classic feel that gratifies completely.





We arrive at our bucolic house in Thomas close to sundown and set about unpacking our gear and the food we had stashed into our tank bags in Davis, a few miles back. Dinner is on the back porch as the sun sets over the windmills visible on the ridge in the background. A fine way to end a great day of vintage motorcycling.



The vistas we were treated to in West Virginia could never fit into a camera: truly Almost Heaven!



When it was built, The Trans-Allegheny Insane Asylum was the second largest sandstone structure on the planet, surpassed in size only by the Kremlin.



Even though breakfast is not on the menu, the proprietor of this tiny smoked meat shack was kind enough to run out to buy some eggs to cook up an amazing breakfast for us 5 hungry motorcyclists; and it was fantastic!



Left to right: Greg, Peter, Eric, Joel, and Joe

Great company, good ice cream, fine bikes, entertaining roads, beautiful countryside.....

.....LIFE IS GOOD, NO?

