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READER RIDE SUBMITTED BY JOSEPH E. TREY

Out West with Dad

Text and Photography: Joseph E. Trey



Each year I look to plan a ride that will take my dad, who lives in Connecticut, to new and exciting places. It started innocently enough with simple ATV rides in Colorado, which over time grew into more epic rides through the southern Colorado areas of Silverton, Telluride and Ouray. Eventually, being bound to a trailer was too limiting. It was time to get him out on the road—and they didn't all have to be paved either!

So last year, with me on a 2007 BMW 1200GS Adventure and my dad on my

2007 Kawasaki KLR 650, we took off on a 1200-mile northwestern Colorado, eastern Utah trip through picturesque scenery and off-road terrain. We headed out from Denver, in perfect weather, toward our day-one destination, the Dinosaur National Monument (DNM). After a nice lunch and some great onion rings in Steamboat Springs, we arrived in the town of Dinosaur minutes before the visitors' center closed. Dinosaur used to be called Artesia, but officially changed its name in 1966 to capitalize on its close proximity to DNM. Since the main entrance

to the park is on the Utah side, we decided to keep on riding to Vernal, UT.

We got an early morning start over to DNM, and after the obligatory shots of riding on a brontosaurus we were in. Knowing that the Quarry Visitor Center hasn't been open since 2006, we pressed on and met up with a ranger who informed us about the rich history of the park. We took a brief hike, discovered some smaller fossils, and talked about returning some day to see the bigger ones when the quarry reopens.

Heading up towards Flaming Gorge, we stopped for lunch at the Flaming Gorge Resort, where we had a couple of great hamburgers to keep us fueled for the day. The Flaming Gorge area is simply breathtaking. About halfway through the park on the east side, on Route 191, you cross over a scenic bridge and arrive at the Flaming Gorge Dam, which rises 502 feet above the bedrock and impounds the water of the Green River for approximately 91 miles to the north. You can take a tour of the dam and go inside it to get a real appreciation for this technical marvel.

Further north on 191 we reached the Wyoming border. We decided to backtrack and head up Route 44 to see the west side of the gorge. On this side there are several overlooks above the river. In addition to world-class fishing and miles of water to float in, there is a large expanse of off-road terrain to explore.

We then headed southwest to Roosevelt, Utah. A simple meal and a good night's rest would prepare us for

At this point we are grateful our bikes get 300-400 miles per tank!



Arches National Park: Plenty of stone arches but His arc in the sky was one of our favorites.



Dad (Chris Trey) takes to the trail like a pro!

a big stretch of off-road terrain in the morning. After a good breakfast, we headed to 9-mile Canyon, which isn't really 9 miles long. Depending on how you travel through, the ride can be up to 78 miles long and is a great alternative to 191 south. There are no services, but you can easily get through on a single tank of gas. Skipping a few of the detours that can make it a 6-hour trip, we got through in about 4 hours.

The area has many old homesteads; and though these areas are private property, there are plenty of places

along the road to take pictures. In addition, there are petroglyphs by the road that are still amazingly vivid after all these years!

Upon departing the canyon, we rode southeast with Moab and Arches National Park in mind. Greeted by some hardcore riders trailering smaller 450s down to Moab, we were encouraged to follow them through a stretch of unmarked desert to Moab. The invitation sounded appealing but impending rain made our choice for us, and we headed for faster roadways. The storm hit us pretty

Reader Rides

hard in the park, but it was brief and made for some stunning picture taking. Soon, with darkness falling, it was time to call it a night in Moab.

After waiting three hours for the skies to clear in the morning, we decided to return to Arches, heading towards Fruita, Colorado, on 128. This road turned out to be more than we could have wished for, with us galloping so to speak through the Old West canyons along the Colorado River.

Arriving in Fruita, we continued to avoid bad weather until our luck ran out at Colorado National Monument. This detour while beautiful ensured that we would be riding through storms for the next several hours. CNM is not a destination per se, but an amazing 32-square-mile park that connects Fruita to Grand Junction through a series of beautiful switchbacks, canyons, soaring cliffs and tunnels punched through rock faces.

The adventure begins where the pavement ends ...



At rest in the West, enjoying the view.

The rest of our ride was spent on Colorado's I-70 East. While highways are not always the most exciting time on two

wheels, the technical marvel of Glenwood Canyon is always a treat. And even after everything we had experienced, it was still welcome asphalt. Considered one of the nation's greatest engineering achievements, this Interstate is also one of the last to be completed in the United States. Adding to the magic was a gigantic rainbow stretching directly over the highway from one peak to the other.

We made our last official stop at the top of Vail Pass. I want to ride all 50 passes in Colorado and have the photos to prove it, so my dad was kind enough to stop in another driving rain to help me out. Shivering by the side of the road while enduring splash-back from the big trucks passing, he snapped one last picture.

In all, our 2008 trip was another amazing journey together – 1,200 miles and four days of surprises – and I'm already planning for us to enjoy something just as fine in '09.



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