

**Los Angeles Trip With Wonderful Wife**  
**2010 June 15**  
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**Toronto**

The following is adapted from a web BMW forum.

Having a grand time (with wife since Denver airport). Left Toronto, 2006 July 31, superslab to Denver, then scooted in Colorado, Utah, and Nevada, presently with daughter in LA. Likely to head north in a few days, then east.

Sure impressed by Rocky Mountain park, Bryce, Zion, Grand Staircase, Moab, and can't praise scenery enough. Left Toronto with a friend on another black R1100S 1999 who is a professional photographer (he has a blog with pix but not easy to access yet) and another true nomad with 80,000 km on her 2004 GS. We all attended an Elvis wedding in LV.

Used maybe .2 liters oil so far (none added yet in first 3300 miles, bike has 22000 miles on it). Pirelli Diablo Strata's holding up well and haven't even added air (36/41 with a ton of luggage in System cases, tank bag, and Shannon's old 45 liter Ventura bag too). Lost wife's sheepskin pad between LV and LA (please let me know if you find it). Often 50 mpg - hard to believe and 10 mpg better than at home - and that is riding two-up and with stretches of an indicated "BMW" 90 mph (no other way to go across desert to Moab except real fast, eh).

Only bike damage so far has been a hole in my latex TB crossover pipe repaired with self-vulcanizing rubber tape (one of my 300 favorite tools). OK, next time I'll look for Teflon tubing. Got a touch of thrumming when hole was present, I think. Carrying a Techlusion but not connected and O2 sensor cutout switch (with sensor stock-connected in the loop): running stock EFI and liking it.

My nylon fabric booties lasted two rainstorms.

Foiled by small tank only once so far: seconds after idiot light came on, exited Interstate at Cisco, Utah en route to Moab and then saw sign: no services for 52 miles. Had to get back on superslab. We did get to Moab but using dull Rte 191 (desert scenery and road dull but 110 mph most of the way added a measure of thrill), but area right around Moab very worthwhile.

My thanks for meeting with Moybin and thereby adding value to our passage across Iowa.

Below is picture of charming wife and loaded bike (with Shannon's old Ventura bag, very useful for carrying hydration tanks).

Ben

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Made it home Saturday night, Aug 19, after chasing the "monsoon" from Wyoming to Ontario and getting wet now and then. 20 days on the road, mostly moving fast, mostly with my wonderful wife, 100 lbs luggage (system cases, tank bag, and Shannon's old 45 liter Ventura) with just 4 nights spent in the same place as the night before, 6400 miles total.

Final oil tally total for 6400 miles (Mobil 1): it needed about 350 ml to return to original level. Added air to rear tire once. Pirelli Diablo Strata's were super with lots of rubber left (guess would be 2-3000 miles more).

I rode stock EFI. However, not knowing what to expect in the mountains, I had Techlusion wired but unplugged and also my O2 sensor switch in case I wanted to switch out the sensor. Myself and luggage at high and hot and fast speeds ran mostly 50 mpg and with wife added and more luggage, mostly over 45 mpg. Hard to believe.

With loose valve lash and de-constricted front crossover pipe (see my write-up), very nice to have the extra low-rev grunt when touring. No problem turning 6th gear heavily loaded at 3800 rpm. My S performance targets are different than the boy-racers.

I also get along well with stock suspension, so far. But I modified my front spring rate about 12% down which worked well on the trip although I think it is too soft for the stock front shock and then the shock becomes the too-stiff element.

Many would find the appearance appalling, but for touring, my homebrew windscreen is 26 inches plus a wee piece of Saeng edging on top (added when I went from stock to Corbin). Oddly enough, still standing tall after 16,000 miles and passing many large trucks at high speed.

Perhaps too much protection in desert (rather a lot of desert this trip). We had Camelback insulated water system attached to top handle of Ventura bag (very convenient to have lovely wife along to serve cold drinks when you ride, not to dwell on other connubial benefits). Wore crystal-filled snake-like wet neckerchiefs and underneath Frog Tog wet towels and various bits of wet microfiber cloth in helmets, etc. We did not try Scotch-on-the-Crotch, but doused ourselves with water liberally as needed.

Mostly rode with sheepskin (if NASA invented it, we'd call a space-age miracle). Buy it at Ikea for \$20 (and larger pieces available too) and cut to shape. Wife lost two pieces on road. Fortunately, I find the Corbin Dual Canyon (with my custom backrest for wife made from visco-elastic foam) just fine with no sheepskin.

Backrest and other little write-ups (such as filter/induct measurements and A/F tests) at:

<http://home.ica.net/~barkow/Bike%20Stuff/Bike%20write-ups%20and%20pictures/Bike%20writings/>

In addition to parks before LA, did Pacific Coast Highway to end (pretty sure we saw Paris Hilton at one of the service stops, the one with the \$5.50/gal gas), Yosemite, and regions just east of Yosemite. Then mostly superslab I80 home (although I80 is moderately scenic in Utah and Wyoming).

I feel no more need to cross Nebraska again, with all respect to members who live there. Nice to return to green east. Funny, in west, I looked around and everything was brown and I said to myself, "Great...no rain here."

Many thanks for route suggestions on this forum. And to the great hospitality of Jeff Williams.... he's born to ride. And Moybin, thanked in previous post, the guy is a genius with materials and very modest too.

Hard to say what of many spectacles was the best. Highway 12 in Utah is amazing, esp. the part called the Grand Staircase. Due to road washout of 140 east of Mariposa, CA,

took detour road to Coulterville. That piece was astonishing and not busy (and so is Coulterville).

At age 66 at the time, I was not inclined to bike-camping and my wife less so and never have been inclined when biking all day long or at any age. Nice around 3 PM to phone Quality Inns (Comfort Inn, Econo, etc) and ask for a place 100-150 miles down the road, with a hot tub, pool, first-floor access for schlepping bags, and walk-to food.

Don't tell my cultured friends, but on the road, McDonalds is super place to stop. Free ice for the Camelback, empty tables, good toilets, Oriental Salad with locally grown edamame beans (in Iowa, of course, where soy is the second biggest crop). Only in Winnemucca, NV (formerly known as "the whore town") did they want to charge me for a cup of ice!

The professional photographer I rode with, Michael Cooper, has pictures at a blog (that's me with green earplugs and dazzling Denver rainbow over my head) but semi-private; send me a PM for access. Photos sure can't capture the mountain and desert scenery well. My couple of pictures, mostly with lovely wife and bike are at:

<http://home.ica.net/~barkow/Bike%20Stuff/Trip%20August%202006/>

So the question naturally arises, do you need a GS for touring? Perhaps my wife would be a bit less favorable, but I found the sporty S just grand, comfortable, a good in the twisties even heavily loaded, stable at high speeds down to Moab across the desert and higher speeds into Salt Lake City, pretty good rain protection, and generally, a good behaving bike. Of course, I have more grunt, very high bars, and a tall windscreen. Perhaps for touring I would not have a trick muffler (my beautiful baritone Leo Vince) because the noise is fatiguing compared to stock.

Mark "Coulterville" on your maps.

Forgot all about the key touring accessory: a throttle counter-force spring.

With the spring (wound around the bar-end weight), throttle stays in place if you set the spring force that way, and when you move it, takes just tiny force. Makes you a better rider because you can manipulate the throttle more precisely and faster since it takes vastly less force to move it where you want it.

I set mine about a year ago and haven't touched it since.

<http://home.ica.net/~barkow/Bike%20Stuff/Bike%20write-ups%20and%20pictures/Bike%20pictures/throttle%20spring%20w-teflon%2059.jpg>

(In the picture you can see little white strip of teflon - helps the spring slide on the bar-end weight and hasn't fallen out for the last 8,000 miles. Bicycle handlebar tape is available in colors besides red (matched my old R80 paint))

Can you picture the benefit of taking your right hand off the grip?

Buy a Throttlemeister (a pricey friction gizmo that attaches to throttle grip) is daft because the last thing you want to add to your throttle is more friction.

Gave two-hand wave to thousands of Harleys heading for Sturgis and thousands heading back later.

I also wound an extra layer of bicycle handle bar tape (cork, elliptical cross-section) over stock grips and over the single layer I usually have, sometimes over film heaters. Pretty large (and unsightly) grips but sure nice to have those large diameter grips when you are grabbing them all day.

With really high bars, the mirrors work well to protect hands from wind and rain, esp. as in my case, with the clip-ons are turned tank-wards as far as the geometry of the tank permits when touching the stops. Bar-backs or Suburban Machinery thingys are nice but not essential for raising bars.

Like I'd say about sheepskin, don't leave home without deerskin gloves. Available for about \$20 from work wear places or for twice that at bike places. Good feel, don't stick to you in heat, wick sweat, yet are warmer than other hides in cool mornings. Dry fast and return to good form. And pretty yellow color too.

I bought a spare pair at Little America truck store in the middle of Wyoming. "Seconds" selling for \$13 but looked perfect enough.

Bicycling (seamless) underpants and various hi-tech (or silk) wicking undies helpful too, esp. hi-tech sox in your boots.

Strange part of my trip....

Entirely coincidentally, a few weeks after getting home, I took Mark Twain's "Roughing It" out of the library. One of his first books and relates his experiences in the west when he worked for the government of the Nevada territory and bummed around California before and after the Civil War.

The first quarter of the book describes his trip from St. Joseph, MO, on the overland stage. Turns out the route he was taking west was almost exactly the same route we took east hurrying home, today known as I-80, and both in August.

As I am reading the chapters, I am following the route in my atlas. You need an atlas to locate the towns and rivers he mentions as he crosses the great expanses of what are now Nebraska, Wyoming, and Utah (only place in the US with a monarch, he says). Much

discussion of area around Rte 385, Lake Tahoe, and mining in the Sacramento Valley and around Coulterville. Towns are still there, but mostly small today... as are the rivers.

The trip on the overland stagecoach is described in detail (with lots of very funny exaggeration, of course) and so is the Pony Express. The stagecoach, loaded with mail, ran non-stop, changing horses (or mules in the mountains) every 10 miles, doing 150 miles a day. The Pony Express riders did 250. The riders were small guys with very light clothing, skullcaps, and sometimes no shoes to save weight. Postage to California was \$5 for onion-skin-paper letters, so each piece was valuable. He also discusses the Wells Fargo stage service west from Carson City and Virginia City to San Francisco (about 175 miles, around north shore of Lake Tahoe).

Ridin' and readin'... a great "encore" to the trip.

Can't beat Mark Twain for humor and - at least for the times - a tolerant, very American-west take on human diversity.