



THE CRAB POT
THE SILKY PUBLICATION OF THE
MID-ATLANTIC'S MOST WOOLY
MOTO CLUB
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CHRISTMAPALOOZA

It was nice to see some CRABS ride to the annual Christmapalooza on Sunday 16 December. Saturday's rain gave way to a dry day, albeit with 30 mph winds, but there was a nice selection of two- and three-wheeled conveyances in the driveway. Red Sciarra was showing off his Hannigan hack that was recently bolted to a K1200RS. That's a significant upgrade from the old K75.

John Marum had his Harley hack rig in vintage olive and red. Motorcycle Marty Kitner

appeared on his faithful Honda CBX1000 (Mary currently does not have a 4-wheeled vehicle on the road, so he's doing the hardcore commuting thing).

Danny and Audra Bishop came two-up on one of Danny's many rides, but I'm not sure which. Neighbor Tim Pugh drove his 1200GS down the drive so we could admire his new PIAA lighting.

Newlyweds Phil and Karen Ager came down from Ft. Washington on Phil's K1200LT, only to see their Baltimore Ravens beaten by the lowly Miami Dolphins... Lots of others came by 4-wheeled conveyance, including the Whetstones, Seidels, Frank Dawson, Thom Esposito, and new resident Alex Hoffman (from Georgia).

The long-distance award goes to Larry and Sue Segeleon from Virginia Beach, who also collected the cheekiness award for giving our dog Angus a Harley-Davidson collar. It does prove one thing I was told by another Harley rider: Harley Davidson sells bikes to advertise their sticker and apparel business. The "lifestyle" wear started to get to Angus, as he started barking LOUDLY, hanging out with Rottweilers, and drinking beer. We drove

him around in the Toyota until he got over it, though.

Thanks to everyone who came to partake of our feasting and fellowship. Our next palooza will probably be a Chili Feed sometime in March, so stay tuned to this channel for more information. 🏍️

DC MOTORCYCLE SHOW

As usual, we'll try to attend one of the days of the DC Motorcycle Show at the Washington Convention Center. The show is from 11 to 13 January. Friday is a CWS day at the base, so I may try to attend Friday instead of Saturday to avoid the crowds and to avoid interfering with a commitment I have for Saturday.

If you go, the Metro is a great way to do it since there's a stop right in the convention center and the parking at the Metro lots is free on weekends. The IMS usually has a good selection of new stuff and not as many of the "custom" jobs. The vendors are a little more varied too and it doesn't look like a leather fashion show.

In particular, I recommend the vendors who sell custom-fit earplugs (with or without audio systems). I use the simple plugs at work and around the house when running leaf blowers and

lawn mowers as well as when I'm riding. If you want, most of the earplug vendors can put speakers in theirs that are compatible with most intercom systems. My favorite is Marilyn Navia of "Now Hear This" but if you can make her smile, you're good. So far, only Motorcycle Marty has succeeded.

PURCHASE YOUR TICKETS ONLINE! The weekend usually brings a long line at the ticket booth, so get yours online and don't wait to get in. 🏍️

BRIAN AND SHIRA OF BACKROADS PARTIED AT THE END OF THE WORLD... AND IT WAS COLD, REALLY COLD...



The "Road" to Ushuaia
Photo by Shira Kamil

TRIUMPH R3T: RISE OF THE MACHINE

By the Crabdicator

San Antonio, TX; 1 November '07:
The machine arrived in the corner of a parking garage in a Texas hotel just after first light. It was unleashed on a small group of men who were immediately conquered and enslaved by it. Its massive metallic presence was only overshadowed by one other feature: inside the vast belly was a monstrous presence waiting to be unleashed. When the machine came to life and its single eye lit up, a mere twitch of the right hand summoned it. Dear mortal, say hello to the torque monster.

When Triumph motorcycles built their massive tour-de-torque Rocket III with its 240 section rear tire and 2.3-liter inline three, people thought it was for mad dogs and Englishmen. Then the first press reports came out like a revelation: the damn thing actually HANDLED. Before the big Rocket ever hit the street, however, the madmen at Hinkley went even madder. The design brief was bent and the big naked cyborg was asked to go touring.

Triumph didn't just bolt some cheap, cheesy, hastily-acquired, outsourced bags and plexiglass to their standard machine and call it a "touring cruiser." They designed the Rocket III Touring from the ground up to be the version of the massive Rocket III that would

allow you to actually ride somewhere distant without needing a chiropractor at the end of the trip.

They built it around the monolithic Rocket III motor, a 2,300 cc inline three that makes 154 ft-lb of torque at just 2,000 RPM, but it's tuned differently for the touring bike than it was for the naked one. Other than the taillight and a couple other details, however, the big mill is the only commonality.

They had to slim down the huge rear tire to allow the thing to hold saddlebags, but all of a sudden not only do you have room for bags, you have a bike that turns even better than the original. That's not a joke: yes, a cruiser that weighs in around 800 lb actually knows its way around a corner. Who knew? (Apparently, the boys from Blighty did.)

Not only do you have some decent ground clearance, but if the footboards do deck out (and it takes some angle to do so) they're hinged to fold up and they have a replaceable scuff strip that serves as a toeslider for the bike. No muss, no fuss, no levering the rear off the ground. Leverage is just what the big bars give you because the machine lays over with a light touch.

Did I say "footboards?" Yeah, I'm a footpeg guy, but these were not only hinged, they were set back far enough that they actually placed my legs in a pretty comfy, all-day position. I hate those

"forward controls" they put on some cruisers (or at least my lower back does) but the boards were sweet. The saddle didn't suck either and the all-day Triumph test ride gave me plenty of opportunity to complain, but I had none.

Anything that goes like stink should stop like crazy and the R3T does just that. Not five minutes into the launch ride, when a fellow scribe hit the binders at a yellow light I thought our group was running, I got a chance to find out just how well the brakes worked. For both our sakes, it turns out damn well.

I'm not a cruiser guy, but this thing won me over. The torque monster between my feet made the transmission all but unnecessary. The comfy seat below my ass, coupled with the good ergos and upright riding position made me think twice about a sport-touring mount that sometimes leaves my shoulders sore. But the biggest thing that schwacked me between the eyes was the handling: they actually made a cruising monster that doesn't require Arnold Schwarzenegger arms to maneuver. There's a couple nits in the saddlebag latches that protrude into their space and a little abruptness in throttle rolloff in tall gears, but they're niggles.

The looks kick butt too – not too swoopy like an Indian and not overly-techno like the repugnant K1200R. Triumph didn't let the

stylist get in the way of the rider. The price is in the ball park, at around \$17K for the jet black beauty and about another half a K for some two-tones. They took a page out of Milwaukee's book and designed 65 new accessories just for this bike, so if you're a chrome gnome, knock yourself out.

If you want to know more, then there's a pretty good chance you can check out the January issue of Backroads. 🏍️



THE HOUSE OF TORQUE

PHOTO BY BYERS

KEEP YER THONG ON!!

Sweatshirts, stickers, and stuff with CRABS logo, all available at...

www.cafepress.com/chesriders.



ME TOEING THE LINE IN THE TEXAS HILL COUNTRY.

PHOTO BY RILES & NELSON

BEING A MOTOJOURNO BY THE CRABDICATOR

So, you want to be a motojourno? Fly off to exotic locales to ride new bikes, take pictures, and all you have to do is scribble a few words. Glamorous, right?

I got a glimpse into this world during the Triumph press launch and it isn't quite what it seems. The Triumph guys took great care of us, but they're top-shelf that way. Not every manufacturer does it in a nice locale. Not many have all-day test rides. Some make it techno death-by-powerpoint and a few track laps, then goodbye.

I got to ride from the airport to the hotel with a true freelancer and his picture wasn't rosy. First, saying you're a freelance is a nice way of saying you're unemployed. If you don't sell, you don't eat. There's no health insurance. Forget a family life (he is divorced and squeezes in visits with his kid when he can).

Travel? He was leaving in the wee hours the day after the demo to fly coach to Europe where he'd ride a GP bike. Great, right? Once, he rode a popular rider's bike and right before hitting the track, the mechanic screamed through his helmet "You break it and we'll

f-ing KILL you!" No pressure, just ride several hundred grand worth of someone else's machine with a GP shift pattern and a strange setup around a racecourse without being an old lady but without wrecking it. Then pray someone will buy what you write if you can sell it to them before the other dozen or so guys doing the same thing can. Fly overnight from Europe to Cali to ride jetlagged at the next gig and write your stuff somewhere in between.

If you happen to be lucky enough to work for a major rag, don't plan on getting rich and be prepared to be mobile, because your half-life isn't that long. "Retirement" is usually a pink slip, so keep your 401K as up to date as your resume. For a true freelancer, you're either going to work your ass off or have another job (or a rich girlfriend). Or starve.

How about being a photog? Sure. Go hang out of the back of a PT Cruiser while a couple dozen journos ride 800 lb of metal at you a foot away, shooting up at a bike with a wide-angle lens six inches off the road, balancing a few pounds of camera. Wait beside a hot highway or track while dozens of same dudes ride by dozens of times. Then go back to the hotel, sort out the images

so the schmucks who were riding get glam shots of themselves, and make the CD's so they can have them when they get back from dinner. Repeat for a week, then go on to the next job.

Don't get me wrong: I would have smeared myself in honey and hugged an anthill for this opportunity and I'd do it again in a heartbeat, but I'm not sure I would last if it was my only vocation. It's hard enough sometimes to sit down with an empty screen and fill it with things remotely interesting and entertaining, much less things someone wants to routinely pay you decent amounts of money for. I completely empathize with the writers on strike in Hollywood right now.

Remember this stuff when you're checking out people's work in any of the mags. Look closely at the reflection in the chrome for Tom Riles' head hanging just above a bumpy Texas road while he struggles to stay inside the PT by jamming his feet under the seat for leverage. Read the article keeping in mind the writer is trying to avoid parroting the press kit while making it different than the other two dozen guys' stories. Like anything, there's a lot to it and it isn't always glamorous. 🍷