

Red River Run

Hello all. My son Joey and I rode from Fort Collins CO, to Red River NM for the annual Memorial Day motorcycle rally. I rode my 2005 MAX, and my son rode his 2003 Suzuki SV1000S. The first part of the ride from Fort Collins to Walsenburg was uneventful, considering we rode on the I-25 interstate. We were eventually passed by a couple more sporty Harley riders cruising between 85-90 Mph. We "played" with them for around 30 miles, and did our best to keep up :-)!



At Walsenburg, we turned into the mountains on Hwy 160, and rode to San Luis, CO., (elevation 7965 feet) and through the San Luis Valley into New Mexico. This is a beautiful stretch of mountain riding with scenic Rocky Mountain snow covered peaks! On the ride you can view Mount Lindsey towering at 14,125 feet and Mount Blanca standing at 14,345 feet. The traffic from riders heading to Red River increased on this stretch, and were again primarily Harleys. Again, we did our best to keep up. HeHeHe. The ride into New Mexico continued to be scenic, but was MIND NUMBINGLY painful due to a 55 MPH speed limit. Ok, ok, so perhaps we didn't *completely* observe the speed limit. As we arrived in Questa New Mexico, the weather started to turn ugly.

We stopped for gas, and had to wait in a line for several minutes due to the number of other motorcycles. Once we left the gas station for the remaining 14 mile ride to Red River, all hell broke loose! Lightening started striking around us on the surrounding mountains, with the resulting thunder clapping through the valley. You can tell the lightening is close when you are buffeted by the wind it creates. The ice cold rain slammed down on us, driven by high winds.

I guess we could had stopped and put on our rain gear, but hey, we only had 14 miles to go! My intent is not to bash Harleys, but I had to chuckle. When the rain hit, these bikes did scatter off the road like cockroaches after turning on a kitchen light :-). In all fairness, a lot of these bikes are show bikes, and they were not too interested in detailing them again for the rally. We were about the only motorcycles for the last 14 miles into Red River!

We arrived in Red River on Friday afternoon after about 340 mile ride from Fort Collins. After checking into our room and changing into dry clothes, we walked down to party central, also known as Bull O' The Woods Saloon. Bull O' The Woods Saloon had several bands and a more than festive atmosphere. This also seemed to be the establishment where the "less than festive" bikers hung out displaying their colors and wearing large matching hunting knives. I guess



noticed that the police presence in town was massive.

One particular biker was doing his best to find trouble. He selected my son Joey, (a 3rd degree black belt, and Colorado State champion in sparring), and blocked him from walking down the aisle to the stage where the "Jagermeister Girls" were throwing out free T-shirts and miscellaneous collectibles. As always the smartest and only course of action for encountering baboons in their natural habitat (bike rallies :-)), was to find another aisle. For those of you who do not know about Jagermeister, my working theory is that Jagermeister is actually syrup of lpecac dosed with a heavy flavor of dark licorish to disguise it.

The remainder of Friday night (as each evening) was, well interesting, and perhaps I can cover the evening's activities another time. On Saturday morning, we walked back into town and checked out the various booths selling mostly Harley accessories, motorcycle cleaning and polishing chemicals, leather, and of course, the discount tattoo and body piercing trailer! I was great fun to watch and listen to the several thousand motorcycles, trikes, and side cars roll into town. The police and town set up stop signs at EVERY intersection, making the ride through the 1 mile of downtown Red River a cluster f\$%! We saw 6-8 V-max's in town as well.

I also had to chuckle at the "posers" (pronounced posers). What are "posers" you ask? "Posers" are non-biker Harley riders and passengers who wake up Saturday morning, and put on their complete set of matching leather accessories, INCLUDING CHAPS, just to walk around town! It was even more humorous as the temperature warmed up during the day. "Pose" in the online thesaurus is "pretend, fake, feign, grandstand, impersonate, masquerade, and peacock. I have to agree.

Later in the day, we rode around the "Enchanted Circle". This a loop thru Red River, Eagle's Nest, Angle Fire, Taos, and Questa. This ride is around 85 miles circling Wheeler Peak (elevation 13,161 feet). Wheeler Peak is the highest point in New Mexico. It is probably the most beautiful 85 road miles in New Mexico. Red River's elevation is 8,750 feet. I estimate that the ride east out of Red River climbs to close to 10,000 feet in evaluation. The ride from Angel Fire to Taos becomes more narrow, with several miles of fun, and occasionally challenging twisties! Inexperienced motorcycle riders, especially on a nimble

they stopped at a K-Mart on the ride to Red River and hit a "blue light" special in the sporting goods department? I am speculating they negotiated a group discount for matching knives? This is were we first

VMAX, may find the ride difficult or stressful. There were State Patrol with radar every few miles!! Thanks for the "Buzz Killer" boys!

There is a Vietnam Memorial in Angle Fire. I encourage anyone traveling thru this area to stop and visit the memorial. The memorial is privately funded. There is a ceremony and parade on each Memorial Day at this site.

Saturday night we met up with several VMOA members from the San Luis Valley area. They were camped a few miles outside of town. They had a great spot to camp. It is always a great opportunity to meet and chat with fellow Vmaxers on such occasions! Sunday was supposed to be a Poker Run, but the New Mexico police stepped in to shut it down, since it was "technically illegal". Thanks again boys. Bummer. Sunday afternoon there was a tattoo contest at Bull O' The Woods. There were several categories in the contest, including best color, most technical, best back tattoo, and more. I especially enjoyed the self proclaimed "Rally Slut's" tattoos. Can't say why in this article :-).

On the return trip, we stopped and ate breakfast at a Cafe in San Luis. For those of you who haven't experienced New Mexico



Tex. Mex green chile, you haven't lived (yes San Luis is technically in Colorado)! Mmmm Mmmmm. Huevos Rancheros smothered with hot green chile. If that doesn't get you going in the morning, your already dead!

Finally, riding in heavy Denver traffic, Joey and I were caught in "the mother of all rain storms". Cheez, now I know what John Denver was talking about when he sang "I've seen fire, and I've seen rain". Lightening, rain, more rain, damn more rain, high gusty winds, and a river where the highway was supposed to be. There is a Russian proverb that goes something like, "No matter how bad it gets, don't think it can always get worse." Well, it got worse when the rain suddenly turned to hail. Luckily, it wasn't bad enough to damage the bikes, but I must confess, fingerless gloves are no match for hail!

I haven't heard any numbers, but I would estimate there were around 10,000-15,000 motorcycles through out the weekend.

I averaged around 43-44 miles per gallon on my Max. I was quite happy with the Venture rear end I installed prior to the trip. My bike ran well, even at the higher elevations. I did experience some loss in power and my gas mileage went down in the higher mountains. My son's bike has fuel injection, and obviously his power and gas mileage were less affected.

Guess its time to retreat my leather jacket for the next wet ride :-).

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P.S. Oh yeah, I've officially sworn off Jagermeister!!