

SERBIA • ARMENIA • AUSTRALIA • SLOVENIA • HUNGARY
AUSTRIA • ITALY • TRAVELER'S WORKSHOP

WHAT'S WRONG WITH...
SCREW IT, LETS RIDE!



DECEMBER 2022

ROAD of ADVENTURE

NUMBER 6



THEY WRITE FOR YOU

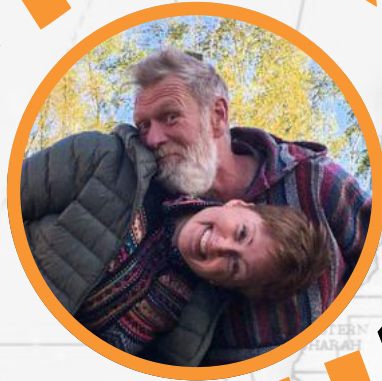
FREEBIRD RIDER



MAŁA I DUŻY W PODRÓŻY



GARY WOOD



ADV HOPPERS



YET ANOTHER BIKERS

WOULD YOU LIKE TO JOIN THE AUTHORS OF THIS MAGAZINE? NOTHING EASIER! WRITE US A PRIVATE MESSAGE ON OUR FANPAGE ON FB OR SEND AN EMAIL TO ROA@ROADOFADV.COM.



FROM THE EDITOR

Howdy!

While putting together the latest December issue of our magazine, we realized that it's actually about to be a year since we came up with the idea for it, and the issue you're reading right now is an anniversary issue. During this time we have published 6 magazines, almost regularly, every two months. The readership has also gathered not small, as almost 30,000 people around the world read the last issue. We can already safely call Road of Adventure an international travel magazine, which makes us very happy and proud. We would like to thank you - dear readers - for being with us during this time and we hope you will still stay with us. Thanks are also due to all the Authors - because without them we wouldn't be able to do it ourselves. Thank you!

This issue is also a holiday issue, so we would like to take this opportunity to wish all of you a Merry Christmas in a warm, family atmosphere, lots of motorcycle-travel gifts under the Christmas tree, as well as fulfilling your dreams in the coming 2023!

Drive safe!

Karolina Kowalska

BUY US A COFFEE



EDITORS:

Chief Editor - Karolina Kowalska

Layout and graphic design - Szymon Zobniów

PUBLISHER: Road of Adventure, Smáratún 28, 230 Keflavík, Iceland, PHONE: +354 6639467, EMAIL: roa@roadofadv.com, WWW: <https://www.roadofadv.com>

All articles, photos and other materials published in "Road of Adventure" magazine are protected by copyright. Reproduction, copying, reprinting or other use of all or part of the material published here requires prior permission from the copyright owners. Would you like to obtain it? Contact us by writing to roa@roadofadv.com.

Cover photo: Screw it, lets ride!

PAGE 6

What's wrong with... SCREW IT, LETS RIDE

INTERVIEW

Author: Szymon Zobniów



PAGE 16

This time not just passing through

SERBIA

Author: Freebird Rider

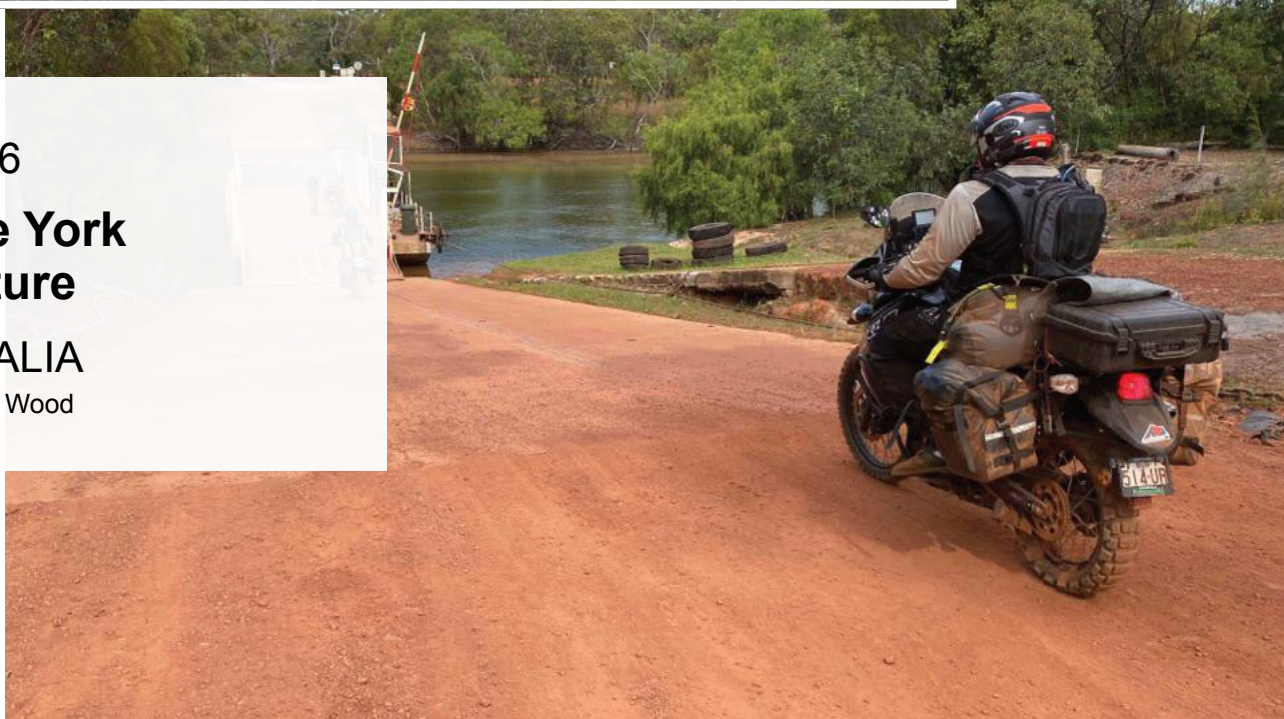


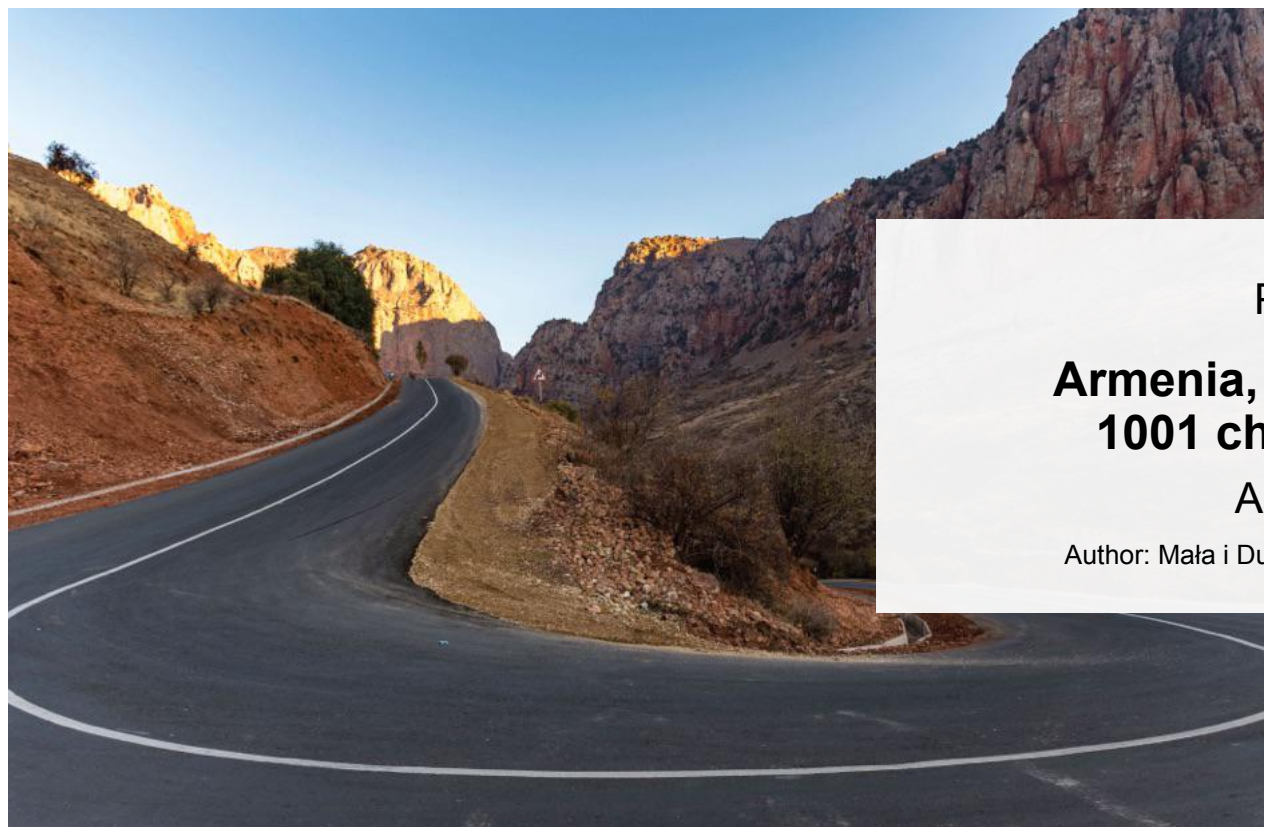
PAGE 26

A Cape York adventure

AUSTRALIA

Author: Gary Wood



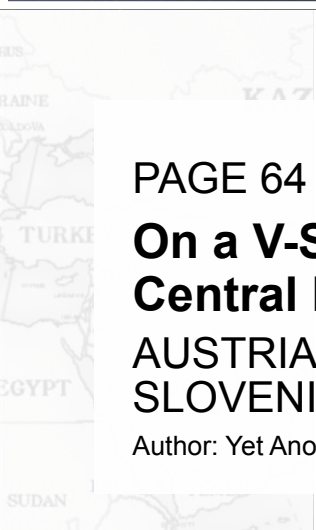


PAGE 48

Armenia, land of 1001 churches

ARMENIA

Author: Mała i Duży w Podróży



PAGE 64

On a V-Strom through Central Europe

AUSTRIA, ITALY, SLOVENIA, HUNGARY

Author: Yet Another Bikers



PAGE 74

Tools - which you should take on a trip

TRAVELER'S WORKSHOP

Author: Joris de Poortere / ADV Hoppers

SCREW IT, LETS RIDE!

GREGORY AND ELA, FAITHFUL TO THE HARLEY-DAVIDSON BRAND FOR YEARS, HAVE TRAVELED ALL OVER THE WORLD SHARING DESCRIPTIONS OF THEIR TRIPS WITH READERS ON THE BLOG, YOUTUBE AND SOCIAL MEDIA. RIGHT NOW THEY ARE TOURING SOUTH AMERICA TOGETHER. READ WHAT'S WRONG WITH THEM....

Photos: SCREW IT, LETS RIDE
The interview by SZYMON ZOBNIÓW





How did it start with you? Who recruited whom to travel by motorcycle? What was your first motorcycle?

It started before we even met. Grzesiek's first motorcycle was a '98 Softail Custom '98 Harley-Davidson he bought in 2007, of course, and it has remained that way to this day. It was on it that he began his first trips around the British Isles, where he was living and working at the time. Later, after returning to Poland, trips around Europe began, a solo trip to Turkey, there was also supposed to be Georgia, but unfortunately the trip ended with a credit card lost somewhere at a gas station... Ela, on the other hand, had no previous inclination to drive a motorcycle, but from an early age she enjoyed riding with friends as a passenger. We met in 2013 and our first trip together was a trip to Austria for European Bike Week, on a Softail at the time. It was such a test ride for us (Ela jokes) and we knew immediately after that trip that riding together on one motorcycle, tent climates, was something for us. So in 2014 we planned a longer tour, a month-long one, to the Iberian Peninsula - this was our first trip together on a 2014 Electra Ultra Limited. We later toured southeastern Europe and somehow things continued. In 2017 we went overseas together for the first time, toured the United States on a 1997 Harley Electra Glide we bought there, the motorcycle stayed there after this trip, and we returned to the US after some time to sail with it to Cuba and ride on the island we had long dreamed of. After that trip, the Electra became like a family member to us, so we wooed her to travel to Poland to refurbish her generally here on the spot and adapt her for more "adventure" riding, if that can be done at all. In 2019 we

returned to the States with her, this time to do a trip across Central America. The plan was that after this trip we would return to Poland for six months and then continue our trip further - through South America, but unfortunately, covid times came and we were stuck in our country. Since our Elektra stayed in Panama, courtesy of Liberator H-D Warsaw, a newcomer from the HD stable, the Pan America, was made available to us in 2021, and on this motorcycle we completed a 5-week expedition through Scandinavia. This motorcycle performed very well, we became so fond of Pan America that we decided to continue our tour of South America on this HD model.

Well, that's right, you changed the motorcycle to Pan Americas. After, one could say, quite a long period of using it, what can you say about the differences in riding compared to your previous HD models? How does it perform? How is it with the availability of accessories?

Well, there is a dramatic difference. Aside from the logo, this motorcycle has little in common with the motorcycles the brand has accustomed us to over the years. The position behind the wheel is different, you sit completely upright, the handling is different, it sounds different, it's a completely different engine. We both have a great ride on it and are very happy with the motorcycle. For expedition touring, it gives a lot of new possibilities compared to the Electra and at the same time a lot of fun to ride. As for accessories, more and more of this is starting to appear on the market. More and more companies are starting to produce accessories for this model, such as Touratech and

SCREW IT, LETS RIDE

Wunderlich. We use more than a dozen accessories that undoubtedly increase the comfort of the trip and additionally protect the motorcycle from various types of damage.

Your regular readers know that you had an adventure with the fuel pump in South America, probably due to the poor quality and impurities in the fuel in that region. How about the availability of HD parts? Any other failures happened as well?

Here in South America (but also in the whole post-pandemic world) there are problems with the availability of parts not only for Harley but also for other brands in the automotive industry. We luckily arranged and thanks to the help of, you could say, 3 HD dealers, we managed to send this pump from the US in just a week, which for the conditions here is a seemingly impossible thing. Unfortunately, the quality of fuel here varies, and if you get it wrong, you're bound to run into problems, so it's best to equip yourself with extra fuel filters in advance, before the trip. When we left, there was no such product on the market yet, but in Santiago, Chile, where we will soon be, we hope they will reach us. For now, this fuel pump malfunction was the only malfunction that happened to us, and let's hope it stays that way. :)

What kind of travel mode do you have on a daily basis? Do you drive every day? Or do you arrange longer stops?

This has changed with us over the years. Our trip around the States was quite carefully planned, maybe not with accommodations, but due to limited time and the desire to see many places, we had to think it through well. We had our return tickets already purchased in advance, and we also needed to have a few days in case of unforeseen events or emergencies. Then we managed to pull everything together nicely and everything worked out, but we know now that there was a lot of luck involved, which you can't always count on. After Central America, which was a rip-roaring two months, the thought of such a long-term trip, unhurried sightseeing, savoring the driving and sightseeing, began to germinate in our heads. So now, the current trip through South America has a general time frame only (it's supposed to last about a year), so we can spend more time on each country we visit. We thought it would be a lot, yet now we know that we really only thought it. It is not possible to drive every day, that is, yes it is possible, for a while, but eventually a person simply gets tired and one needs to make a stop to recuperate. Now we drive 2-3 days at most, and sometimes even one day, and the same amount of time we rest in a place, explore the surroundings, catch up on uploading information and photos for people following us on social media. And we think this kind of traveling is the best - nothing by force, at ease.

Do you plan what you want to see in advance? Or do you go on the spur of the moment and figure out where you're going to go on the fly? Any pins on the map?

We have a whole bunch of pins and always have. We plan what we want to see, but still, it's mostly improvisation. When thinking about where we're going, we think about the regions or neighborhoods we want to see, rather than specific places. Sometimes this planning turns out to be worthless anyway, because we have to change our route and its timeframe on the fly, wanting to adapt to the circumstances. Like, for example, in Peru, in Lima, where we were supposed to stop for a quick motorcycle service, fluid changes, etc., and it turned out that a week after our scheduled visit a rally of HD motorcycle owners was to be held in Cusco. Well, after all,



we couldn't miss such an opportunity to meet other lovers of the brand, so we went with the Club Harley Davidson Peru team to Cusco to be able to participate in this event, and then we had to make up and improvise to see what we had planned at the time. Everything changed, but it was worth it, a great event, sensational people, great friendships made, and after all, this is important, even the most important thing in traveling. And so it is in most countries, we often stay somewhere precisely because of the people we met, with whom we would like to stay longer. So it's hard to somehow plan your





itinerary more carefully, because that often changes due to circumstances.

You meet a lot of people on your way. Do you maintain any closer relationships with them afterwards? How is it with getting along, how about Spanish, after all the main language in South America?

We learned Spanish before the trip, although there is no denying that we are far from perfect. In basic matters we get along, so that we also tell something about ourselves, where we are from and where we are going, but for conducting philosophical disputes we do not get down. :)

Most of the people with whom we establish longer relationships, however, are people from the motorcycle community that we meet on our way.... With these people we just necessarily spend more time and have a common thread of understanding, common topics. We don't know how closed-minded one would have to be to not catch contact with people on a daily basis in South America, if only on the street. They are very open and friendly that the conversation goes quite naturally, without problems. We had

the opportunity to meet some of our compatriots from Poland, living here in South America - in Colombia, Ecuador, or Bolivia. We always remember such meetings very fondly, because, after all, it is not an everyday occurrence to hear our mother tongue on the other side of the world.

You have already traveled quite a bit during your travels. If you had to name one country from which you have the worst memories and one country from which you have the best, which would you choose?

As for the worst, there are none. We can't unequivocally point to any country that we don't like. We can't even think of any situations that are somehow unpleasantly remembered by us. Any bad memories fade next to the good ones, and there are really a lot of them. For that, the country we remember best at the moment is Peru. It really is a paradise - mainly for motorcyclists. Every day in Peru was saturated with positive emotions to the point that sometimes we were tired of them. Day after day, positive stimuli from morning to evening. Once you get off one beautiful road and think "that was a great experience," then in a moment you





INTERVIEW

SCREW IT, LETS RIDE

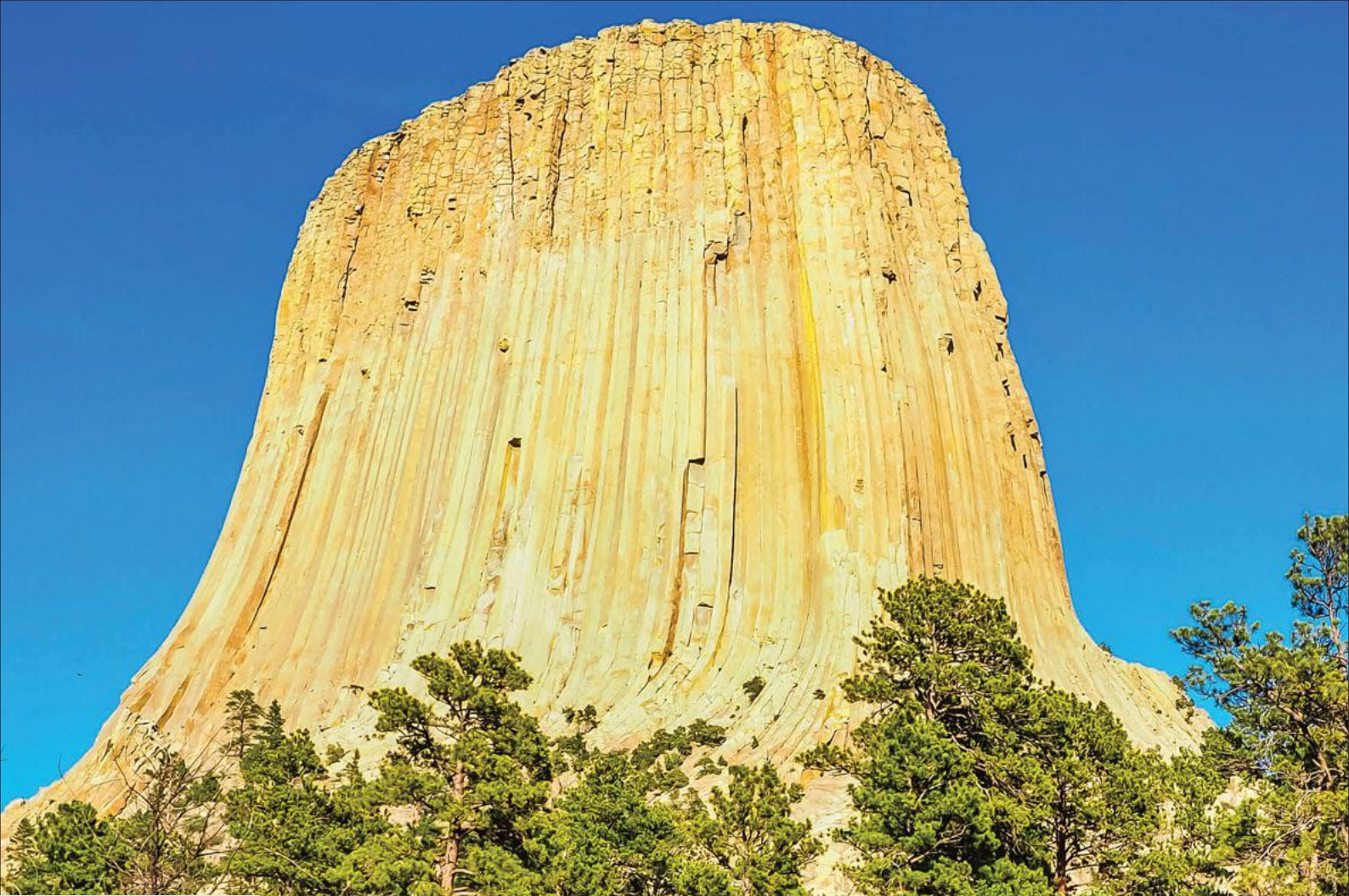
get on another one that seems even more beautiful, there's always something to surprise you. Also, the people and the food, because there's no denying it, an important part of traveling is also the flavors that you get to know, and that stay in your memory for a long time. Like Mexico, which we unfortunately traveled through on short notice, but which surprised and charmed us, in addition to the flavors of its cuisine, with its traditions and culture, evident at every turn. Someday we hope to return there for a longer period of time.

Well, now that we've come down on the subject of food, tell us something more about it. Do you cook for yourself when you travel, or do you try to explore local flavors? Any favorite dishes?

It's hard to answer unequivocally like that, it all depends on the country we are in. Certainly Mexico, which we mentioned, captivated us with its dishes, and there we tried to eat as much as possible in small street stalls. We always try to try local dishes, usually in local bars, less often in restaurants, because getting to know the local specialties is also the best way to get to know a country. Yes we also cook on our own if we

sleep somewhere wild, far from any village, but very often it is much cheaper to eat in a small local pub. Especially since, in principle, from Colombia to Bolivia you can very cheaply buy a so-called "lunch of the day", consisting of 3-4 dishes to choose from. On the other hand, maybe only in our opinion, but it seems that somewhere their potential escapes here. The dishes are very often homogeneous, which is strange with such a plethora of available local ingredients. Very lacking in South American vegetables, for example, we have the impression that they are treated only as a garnish and not part of the meal. We were surprised here, for example, by Colombia, where vegetables and fruits are plentiful everywhere, and you don't see that on dinner plates. Peru, on the other hand, pleasantly surprised us, with a rather rich cuisine in which we feel a strong influence of Asian flavors. One dish we really enjoyed was anticuchos. This dish can be made with any kind of meat, but we liked it best when made with grilled beef heart, a really good piece of meat. Or pachamanca, a dish we ate in the Peruvian mountains, prepared in pits in the ground surrounded by hot stones, a bit like Polish roasts. And then there are the juices, those freshly squeezed from fresh fruit,







which we can drink by the liters.

There's not much room on a motorcycle. How did you manage to pack for such a long trip and what did you take with you at all?

You may not always see it, but our motorcycle is really solidly loaded. Sometimes when we make trips on more technically difficult offroad trails, we leave some of the equipment at the place where we spend the night and to which we return for the evening, so in our photos and videos it would seem that we don't have much stuff with us, but this is not the case. Our luggage, in fact, is the third passenger on our motorcycle, as there are about 80 kg of it. Before setting off, we made a solid effort to prepare for what we might encounter, what we might need during the trip, and we think, for the moment, that we don't have unnecessary things with us that we don't use. Some of the things that we decided during the trip that we wouldn't need, we simply sent home to Poland from Peru in a package, but mostly they were souvenirs that we had collected up to that point. Of course, we have camping equipment with us, a tent, a stove, sleeping bags. We have a first aid kit, motorcycle tools and possible spare parts, we have a supply of motorcycle oil, personal belongings and clothes, motorcycle clothes probably don't need to be mentioned. Well, and more and more space in our luggage is taken up by electronics. If you look at it from the side, it makes our Harley such a gypsy wagon. :)

A question you probably hear very often. You didn't win the lottery, you didn't get an inheritance, so where do you get the money for your travels?

In life you have to prioritize somehow and you can't have it all - this is probably the maxim that best answers the question about funds. Working, we put aside every possible penny thinking about traveling, we don't buy unnecessary things, we don't spend on unnecessary entertainment, we don't go on vacations. Everything we do, we do with future trips in mind. Besides, it is necessary to distinguish between long-term travel and ordinary vacations. No one can compare them cost-wise. Many people think that a trip of several months will cost them a multiple of a 2-week vacation, which is not the case at all. The most expensive thing you know is always the logistics, transporting yourself and your motorcycle to and from your destination, the cost of buying gasoline and entry fees to the countries in question. During the ride itself, you can already save a lot, such as sleeping wild in a tent instead of a hotel, eating on your own or in cheap pubs instead of more expensive restaurants. Very often we also deny ourselves some attractions. Someone may say "but what's that \$5 or \$10 to enter a museum or local attraction?" - OK, but we have 500 if not more of these museums and attractions along the way. If we wanted to enter every one, we would quickly ruin our budget. We often have to choose what is important for us to see and what we can let go of. Anyone who has their priorities set for travel can do this, just instead of buying a new computer, TV or car - set aside that money for travel. When preparing for a trip, too, you can check on the Internet what and how much a

country costs. We are then able to roughly estimate the cost of the trip. Our daily budget we try to close, more or less, in the amount of \$30 and so far we succeed.

Finally, as if you were to encourage people to follow in your footsteps, what would you tell them? Is it worth it?

There are no impossible things. If you want something in life, you will always find a way to achieve it. And is it worth traveling? Of course, the world is beautiful, the people are wonderful, what you can experience in travel, you will not see in any photo, in any video material. Instead of encouraging, people need to be warned more, that once you start traveling, you won't want to stop!





EUROPE

SERBIA

THIS TIME NOT JUST PASSING THROUGH

A VISIT TO A COUNTRY THAT OFTEN LANDS ON THE MAPS OF MANY TRAVELERS, BUT IS VISITED VERY RARELY, BECAUSE IT IS USED ONLY AS A TRANSIT TO OTHER POPULAR DESTINATIONS. WE ARE TALKING ABOUT SERBIA, WHICH, WRONGLY IGNORED BY TOURISTS, MANAGES TO SURPRISE WITH MANY WONDERFUL ATTRACTIONS.

Text and photos: FREEBIRD RIDER







EUROPE

SERBIA





Until a year ago, I could count myself among those who had only been to Serbia in transit. I crossed it on my way to Montenegro and didn't even think about stopping there to visit anything. This year, however, I decided to take the country as my main destination for the trip, especially since it seemed the most affordable to me in this era of rampant inflation. I started turning my plans into action in mid-July, when I headed south after firing up the engine of my Zuzia (V-Strom 650). I landed in Serbia after just two days, and began my exploration of its lands with the capital, Belgrade.

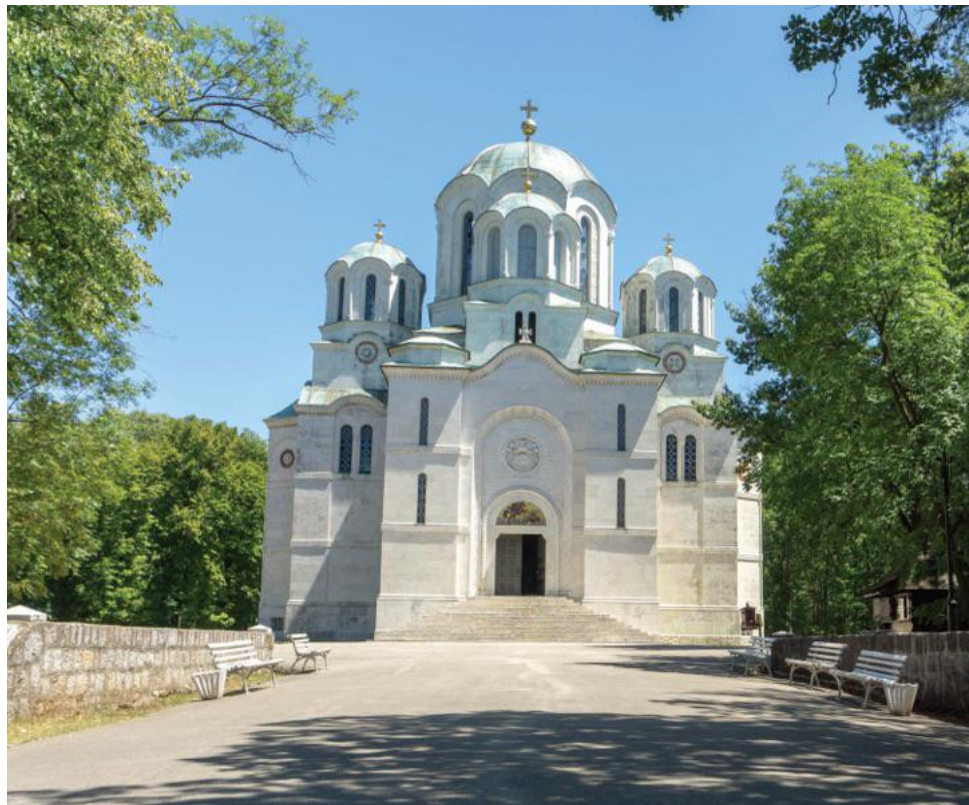
The city was full of contrasts.

Time and again it frightened me with large, post-communist apartment blocks (such as Novi Beograd), whose years of splendor passed away with the collapse of Yugoslavia, and at other times it piqued my interest with beautiful Orthodox churches (such as St. Sava) or the Kalemegdan fortress, from whose huge walls one can admire the Sava River cutting through the city. All attractions including parking spaces were free, and I only paid 16 PLN to visit the museum of Tesla, Serbia's most famous inventor. Also, food was cheap. Only 20 PLN was enough for a solid meal in a restaurant, and a private apartment cost me 120 PLN per night. A full day was

enough to see the main attractions of Belgrade.

After leaving the capital, I set off for the south of the country. The next few days of wandering made me realize how unpopular this country is for motorcyclists (and tourists in general) for three days and over a thousand kilometers of riding I didn't meet a single byker! An interesting departure from, say, Romania, where the left hand was raised every now and then to greet the next single-track driver. Not surprisingly, in every town the eyes of the locals were directed in my direction. Being the only motorcyclist, however, gave more fun in discovering the country and a





sense of uniqueness that one certainly won't experience by being one of the hundreds of rally riders on the roads of Romania, Croatia or Montenegro.

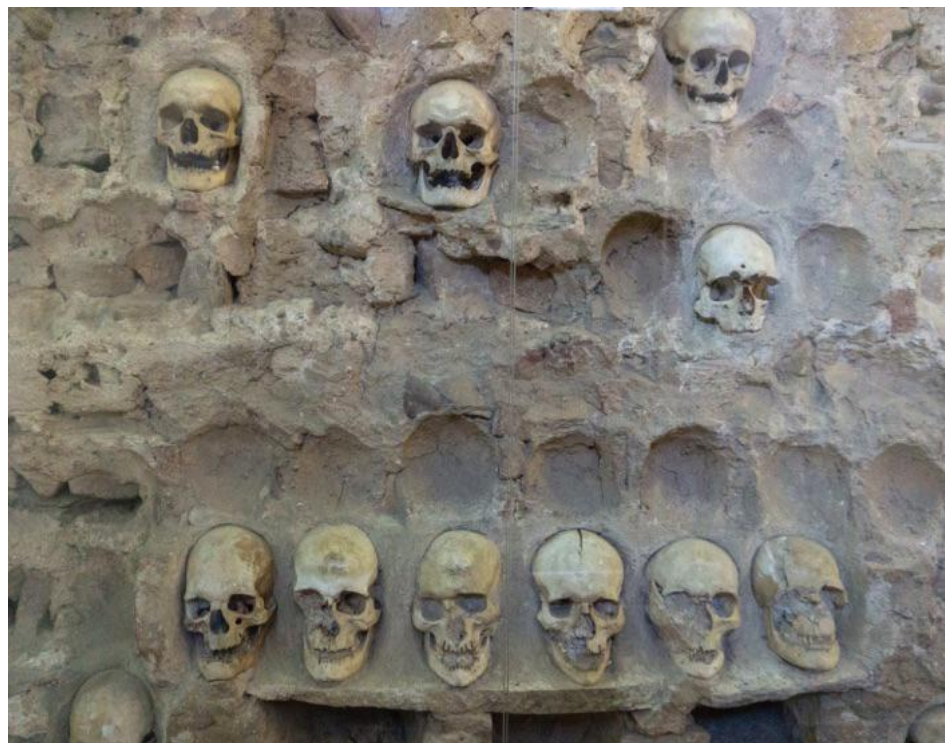
Serbia offered hundreds of kilometers of extremely winding roads. Finding even a kilometer of straight stretch of asphalt here bordered on the miraculous and could be experienced at most on a highway or expressway. These types of roads also offered a normal quality of pavement, as all routes outside of them are full of endless holes, ruts and potholes that will solidly test the suspension of any vehicle. Fortunately, the traffic on most of the roads is very calm and I reached each of the designated points on the map without any pressure.

In the south of Serbia, I visited the amazing St. George's Orthodox Church in Oplenac decorated entirely by colorful mosaics, the town of Niš with its fortress and the remains of a tower built of human skulls, a cruel symbol of the Serbian-Turkish war. I also dropped in at the Sicevo lookout point,

from where there was a magnificent view of the gorge of the same name, and after driving down many kilometers of serpentes near Lake Zavoj, I headed for a wild overnight stay under the Besna Kobilica mountain. Getting there was quite a challenge. 25 kilometers of steep and winding uphill, and

at the very end another 4 kilometers of climbing on a sandy and rocky road, which I consider one of my greater successes, because not having much experience in off-road riding, with a loaded motorcycle on road tires, the fact that I didn't even get a soil there, I can safely write down to the rank of miracles. My hardships were lavishly rewarded, because at the top of the mountain I scored one of the best wilderness accommodations I've ever had. Just me, the motorcycle, and the magnificent mountain scenery all around. Away from people and the hustle and bustle of cities.

On the next few days of the trek, I visited Serbia's most Muslim city, Novi Pazar, which seemed to bustle with life much more than the country's capital. Along the way I also dropped in on a well-known attraction in the form of the "City of the Devil," an unusual rock formation formed by some 200 conical pillars ranging from 2 to 15 meters high. This was the only place that turned out to be a small disappointment of the trip, as it did not impress me in person, in contrast to the Molitva viewpoint from where there was a view of the fabulously beautiful green







EUROPE

SERBIA



meanders of the Uvac canyon. There we encountered another challenging 6-kilometer climb on gravel terrain, but it was worth the effort for such an extraordinary wonder of nature.

An interesting peculiarity of Serbian attractions is that usually you have to drive several kilometers to them (often on a poor gravel road), and then return along the same route. The road

infrastructure to facilitate access to tourist locations is practically non-existent, so each time you have to backtrack to find a road with which to continue exploring the country. The big pluses include the fact that (with the exception of the "City of the Devil", entry to which cost 14 PLN) all natural attractions, viewpoints, etc. were completely free, sometimes even souvenir stalls were missing, so most places are

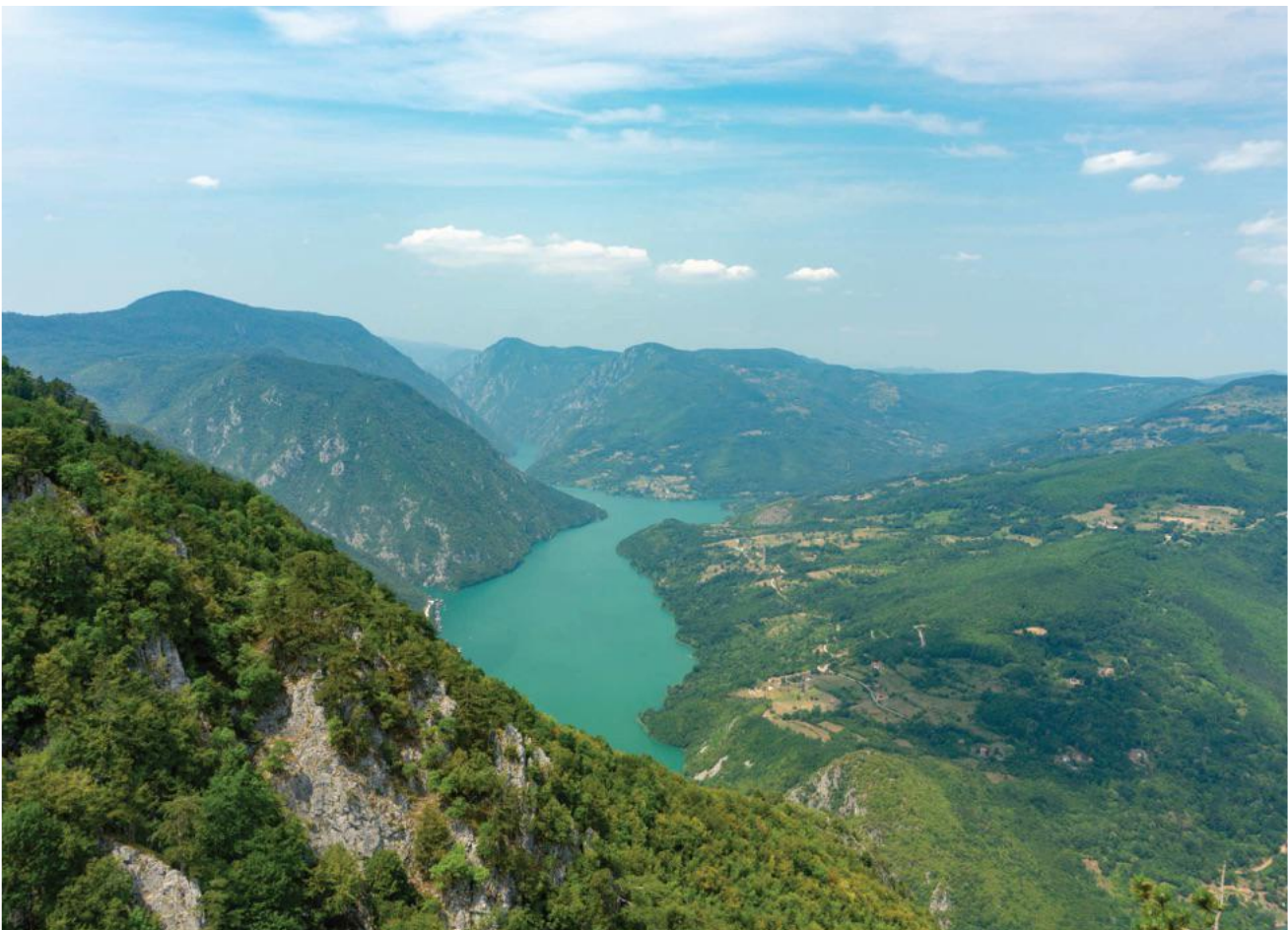
far from tourist commercialization. Interestingly, this was the first trip on which I never once had to pay for a parking space. In general, it was the first time I felt that no one here wanted to fleece me of every penny, just because I was a tourist.

For the next two days I wandered around the western part of the country, close to the border with Bosnia and Herzegovina. Here,



surrounded by the beautiful green landscape of the Zlatibor mountain range, I scored another great wilderness overnight stay, and later stopped in nearby Zlatibor, a town that seemed to be the only tourist-oriented location I came across in Serbia. Despite the somewhat commercial approach, even here it was cheap and I paid 115zl for a large room with breakfast included.

I spent my last days in Serbia roaming around the areas of the aforementioned Zlatibor and the Tara National Park. Passing hundreds of kilometers of winding and bumpy roads, I visited the Gate of Podrinje viewpoint and Banjska Stena, where I was given a magnificent view of the Tara Park and the Drina River. There is also one of the most famous attractions on this river, which is a small house built on a rock in the middle of the river's current. Although Serbia has many





EUROPE

SERBIA

more interesting locations, it was the view of this cottage that was the most crowded I saw in the country, probably only because it was located on a busy expressway. I also scored a loop around Lake Zaovine, full of great views, as a farewell to Serbia.

Serbia gave me a lot of enjoyment and respite from the typical tourist hustle and bustle I encountered on trips through other countries. This country, so unjustly neglected by motorcyclists, for me turned out to be a hit for this year's trip.

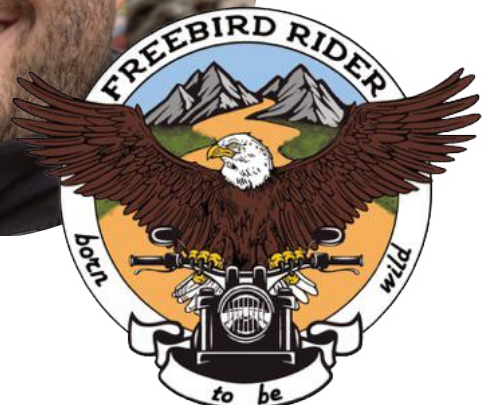
Low prices, magnificent wildlife, friendly people, free attractions with negligible tourists, hundreds of kilometers of almost empty winding roads that made every kilometer of riding an adventure, and even the disastrous asphalt could not spoil the positive impressions. It was worth giving Serbia a chance, because it more than repaid the favor.





FREEBIRD RIDER

Under this pseudonym in the Internet world hides Paweł Nowak, a 29-year-old passionate solo traveler. On his blog he willingly shares accounts of his travels in Poland and Europe.





AUSTRALIA

CAPE YORK

A CAPE YORK ADVENTURE

HEADING OUT ON AN EIGHT DAY MOTORCYCLE ADVENTURE TO ONE OF AUSTRALIA'S MOST REMOTE PLACES TAKES SOME PLANNING AND A FAIR BIT OF FAITH. SIX ECLECTIC INDIVIDUAL ADVENTURE RIDERS SET OFF TO CONQUER THE HEAT, HUMIDITY AND CORRUGATIONS OF THE PENINSULAR DEVELOPMENT ROAD (PDR).

Text and photos: GARY WOOD





AUSTRALIA

CAPE YORK

The call went out on Facebook. Does anybody want to ride to Cape York? "Hell yeah," I said. It was on my bucket list. Within a week, five more adventurous riders had signed up. Cape York is such a remote and intense journey that I couldn't help but felt anxious, the trip to the 'tip' is not for the faint of heart.

Cape York is the most northern point of the Australia continent. On the eastern side is the Coral Sea, just over 100 kilometres north is the country of Papua New Guinea and on the western side is the Arafura Sea and the Gulf of Carpentaria.

It is significant in Australia's history because just off the coast in the Endeavour Passage is a tiny island called Possession Island.

It was here Lieutenant James Cook of the Royal Navy, in 1770 declared Terra Australis (Southern Land) the property of His Majesty King George the Third of England and planted a flag.

It would take us three days to ride to the tip, through some of Australia's most remote and inhospitable land. We would do it in temperatures greater than 35 degrees Celsius with humidity of up to 85%.



Our group consisted of Nick, his daughter Shayla, Quentin, Rob, Flemming and myself.

We left Atherton and headed north along the Mulligan Highway. Our first official stop would be Lakeland, where we would refuel before starting our northward trek on the

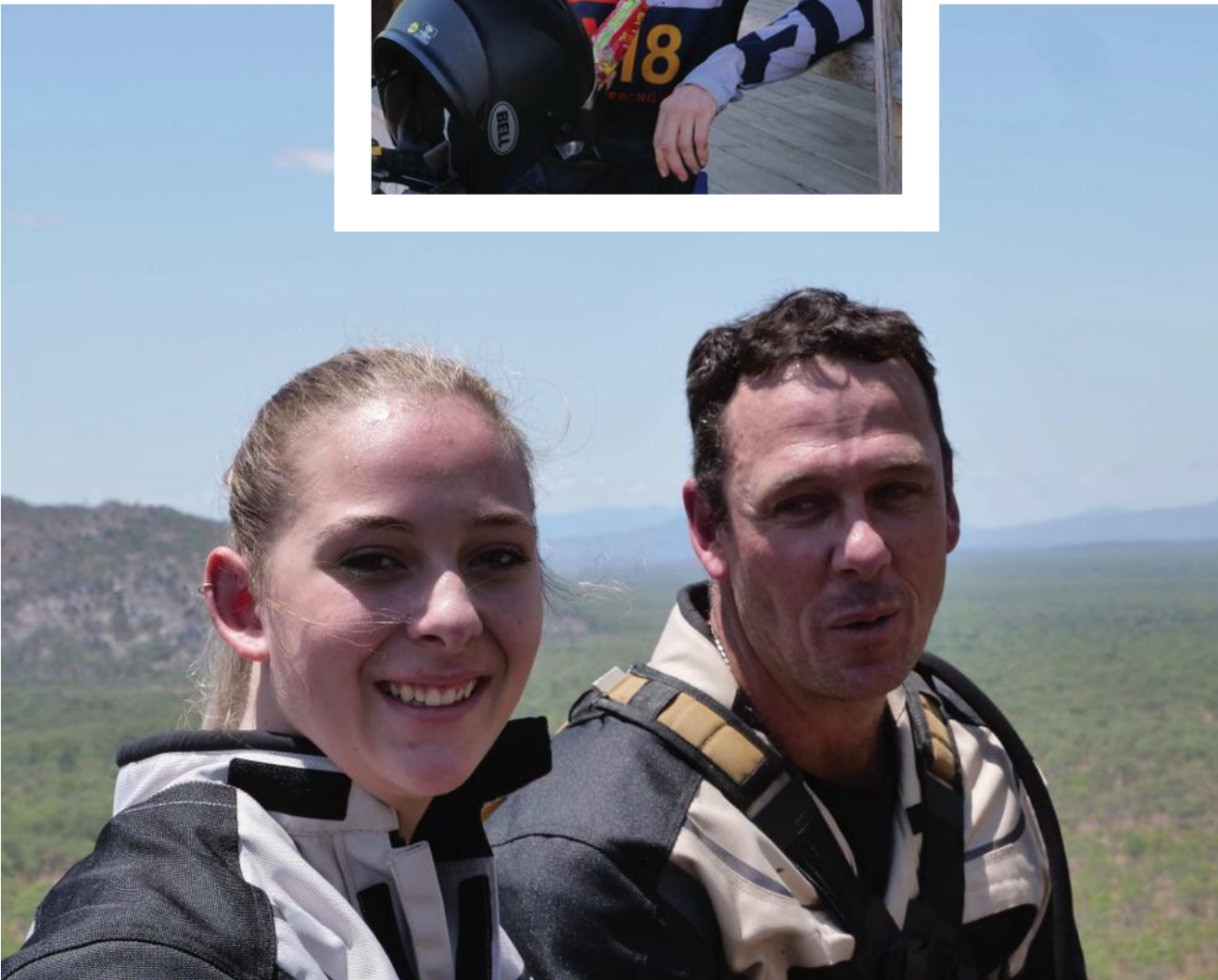
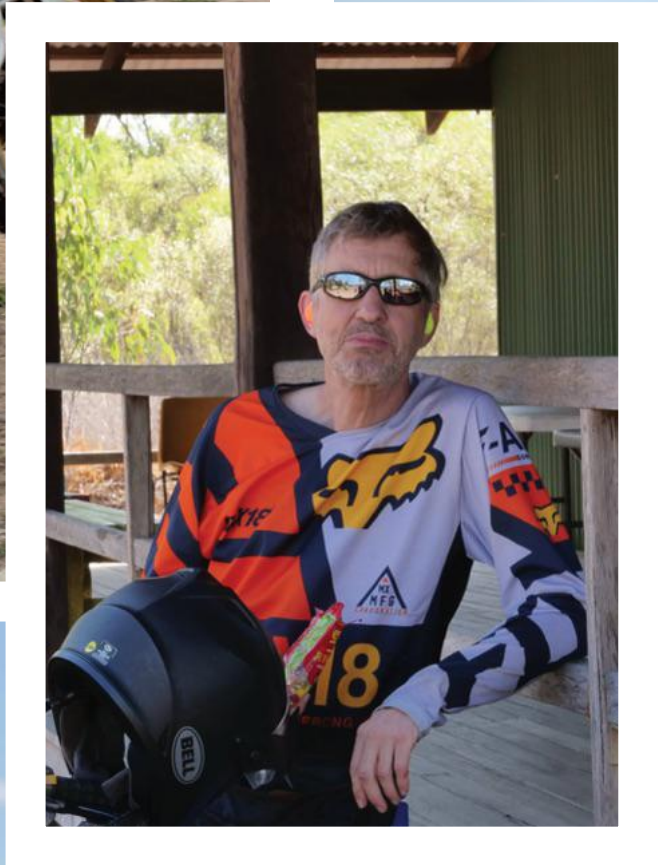
Peninsular Development Road (PDR).

Along the way we passed many small towns, in their day they were important service centres, but now just run down almost ghost towns.

Quentin's bike was spluttering and carrying on and as we reached a small park out side of Mount Malloy it died completely. But it was nothing the collective minds of Quentin, Nick and Flemming couldn't fix and within an hour it was running again



Nick and Shayla were riding DRZ400E's, Flemming and Quentin were riding DR650's. Rob had an Africa Twin and I was riding "Emu" my KLR650.





AUSTRALIA
CAIRNS





Back on the road we rode through flat grazing country, but within an hour we were climbing up the Great Dividing Range to “Bob’s Lookout”

The Great Dividing Range runs south to north for approximately 3000 kilometres. It is a continuous line of hills that are the spine of the east coast of Australia. It starts in Victoria and goes all the way to the tip of Cape York.

We arrived at Bob’s lookout which provides stunning views over the Mount Windsor National Park in the east and the dry flatland of the western side of Cape York.

We wound up and down the range, enjoying the sweeping corners and small hills, passing the Palmer River Roadhouse. This roadhouse is near the site of one of Australia’s most profitable gold rushes. Gold features heavily in the development of the Cape.

In 1872, two brothers from Victoria, William and Frank Hann were surveying the area and had named the river the Palmer River after the Queensland Governor who sponsored the exploration. During the expedition they discovered gold. Payable gold was subsequently discovered by another surveyor, James Mulligan, for whom the Mulligan Highway was named. It is estimated that over 100 tons of gold was pulled out of the river during the rush.





AUSTRALIA
CAPE YORK





The Mulligan Highway continues north east to Cooktown, but we were heading true north onto the Peninsular Development Road (PDR). In its early years the Cape was probably the most rugged and inhospitable place in Australia. It is still seen as such today. While travelling is much easier and there's less likelihood of getting speared by hostile aboriginal groups, it is still one of Australia's most isolated areas, full of Crocodiles, snakes, dangerous spiders and temperatures that can cause heat exhaustion and death.

We continued north, and after an hour of fast riding we had reached the town of Laura. We took a break to cool off, before making our way to the Hann River Roadhouse for the night.

Laura was a town specifically set up to support the gold rush. The area around the

town is culturally important to the local Aboriginal people, with many sacred sites and cave painting galleries in the region and through out the Lakeland National Park district generally.

Our first section of dirt road was 20 kilometres out of the Hunn River and consisted of deep bull dust and corrugations. A small taste of what was to come.

If you haven't ridden bull dust before, it can be quite challenging. It's like sand only much finer and it tends to settle in deep trenches you can't see. If you hit these trenches they can throw you off your bike. Bull dust makes choosing a line on the road difficult. It also fills the air with fine powder that lingers for some time providing choking dust with zero visibility.

I was focusing on the bull dust, trying at the same time to watch out for Kangaroos. A

native Australian marsupial that create carnage on the road by hopping out regardless of traffic. When suddenly one appeared in front of me traveling at speed. I only saw it when I was almost on top of it. "Shit," I exclaimed across the intercom, while at the same time hitting the back brake and feathering it fairly hard. I managed to keep the front straight just missing the Kangaroo by a metre. This is when I was glad not to have APS on my bike, ABS on dirt roads is problematic. Hitting a wallaby or kangaroo is a constant fear for bikers in Australia. A young rider was killed only two days before we left Atherton. He hit a Wallaby up at the tip and lost control of his bike before hitting a tree. RIP young adventurer.

After riding in a cloud of dust for 45 minutes, we arrived at our destination at the Hann River Roadhouse. We set up our tents and went to the bar



AUSTRALIA

CAPE YORK



for a few stabbies (beer) to quench our thirsts and to wash down the red dust.

The next day we woke early and prepared for a long 450 kilometre ride. The road from the Hann River to Bramwell Junction Roadhouse is a combination of dirt and tar. The further north you go, the less tar and the more dirt and corrugations.

The road to the tip of Australia was originally a track called the Cape York Telegraph Track, The PDR replaced the old road adding a number of bridges to improve access during the wet season.

The remnants of that track is known as the Old Telegraph Track (OTT). The OTT is the choice destination for touring motorcycle groups and four wheel drives.

We arrived in Coen to get a bite to eat and refuel, but unlike Laura, Coen was established as a defensive fort for white settlers, it later became a support town for mining operations. Along the way we stopped to marvel at the size of the magnetic termite mounds, which seem to thrive in this hot, humid environment.

During the early history of the Cape it was a violent place and there were many wars between Europeans and the Aboriginal peoples. This has all changed and during our stop in Coen we met a young aboriginal truck driver, he was very friendly, and told us some interesting fact of his tribal lands. He told us what to look out for on the road and welcomed us to his country.

We continued on the PDR until we hit the intersection, to the left, Weipa, to the right Bamaga. We went right and instantly the road deteriorated. It was mid afternoon, the sun was relentless and the temperature in the high 30's.

While we were riding the wind kept us cool, but once we stopped the heat became oppressive. After fighting the bull-dust and corrugations for a couple of hours we finally made it to Bramwell Junction Roadhouse, just in time to buy some "stabbies" (bottles of beer) before the shop shut. The camping grounds were well spaced and for \$10 dollars a night quite good value. Spotted around the sites were some of the biggest termite mounds I have seen in Australia. These were even bigger than the ones near Coen. We got pictures of all of



use next to one of the bigger ones.

The Bramwell Junction Roadhouse is the official start of the OTT but there are sections of the Bamaga Road that bypass it. These are known as the Southern and Northern bypass roads. The Old Telegraph Track is used today as a four wheel drive adventure trail with creek crossings and impossible creeks entries with names like "Gun Shot" and "Mistake Creek".

The track is not maintained and is more single trail than road. We arrived at the first creek crossing "Palm Creek". The entry to the creek was a sheer vertical drop of about three and a half metres, doable on a dirt bike but difficult on a fully loaded adventure machine.







AUSTRALIA
CAPE YORK





Rob had dropped the Africa Twin twice in the deep sand leading up to the first creek and with temperatures in the high 30's, raging humidity and no air flow to cool us off, we decided to take the Bamaga bypass road instead.

The Southern bypass ends at the entrance to the Jardine National Park at Fruit Bat Falls. From this point on the OTT continues north to the

Jardine River.

Fruit Bat Falls is situated on the Elliot River and is an iconic part of the Cape York experience. No adventure to the tip is complete without a swim at Fruit Bat Falls. The creek is fresh water and the many small waterfalls and shallow sections keep the crocodiles away making it perfectly safe for swimming.





AUSTRALIA

CAPE YORK



The water was cool and refreshing, and we took turns hiding under the falls and letting the current drag us downstream. We eventually had to get out and back on the road.

The Jardine River Ferry closes at 5pm and it was already 3.30, we still had 60 kilometres of bull dust and corrugated road to ride.

Not long out of Fruit Bat Falls I hit the most agonising deep

bull-dust and corrugated road I had ever seen. There was no safe line to follow, and deep bull-dust ensured I kept my focus on keeping the front wheel straight. The last 40 was the worst road I had ever ridden.









Eventually, with huge relief the Jardine Ferry came into view. The small shop at the top of the road had a non operational petrol bowser and little else. After paying my \$50 for a two way ticket I went back and fired up my bike. The others had arrived before me and having cooled down were anxious to get to Bamaga. Riding in the constant 35+ degree Celsius temperatures and the high humidity was starting to wear us out, the sooner we could get to our beach camp the better for everyone.

The old vehicle ferry had rusted sides and uneven wooden decking. We rode down a steep concrete slope, but when I looked at the river I got the feeling that if the ferry was just four metres longer on each end it wouldn't need to move. Just drop the barrier down and we could ride over like a floating bridge.

The ferry creaked and moaned as it slid across the Jardine River. The boards pitched and rubbed against each other. I was standing at the back of Emu when the unthinkable happened, he

topped over. It was luck that he hit a pole or he may have slipped into the crocodile infested water.

The relief at getting to the Jardine River Ferry was like a great weight had been lifted from my shoulders, but it was short lived. The road from Jardine to Bamaga was even worse than the previous 40 kilometres. There was not a single tall tree to provide shade, just sea-side scrub, sand, corrugations, and of course bull-dust for as far as I could see.

For the first time on this trip I felt disheartened as I looked at the never ending red bull-dust road and massive corrugations.

I stopped about half way and took a photo of the corrugations, they were at least 200 mm high and looked like speed bumps in a sea of a constantly rolling waves. But even this small rest didn't provide much respite, there seemed no end in sight, and the heat was oppressive.

I just had to keep going. This is when you have to dig deep. It was an adventure, and this is what adventure riding is all about.



AUSTRALIA

CAPE YORK

We finally got to Bamaga to refuel before riding to the camping ground at Punsand Bay. Punsand Bay is a spectacular tropical paradise, with one of the best beaches in Queensland. We walked around the sandy beach and bar area with no shoes, savouring the sea breeze and relaxing near the beach with a few "Stubbies" and a couple of red wines. The trauma of the past couple of days slowly vanishing just like the out going tide.







AUSTRALIA
CAPE YORK





The next day we stripped all our gear out of the panniers, I dressed in the only dry bit of clothing I could find, which just happened to be an old tee shirt I brought along as a rag to clean the chain.

Then we headed up to the northern tip of Australia.

The road to the tip was a deep red clay soil and we found ourselves weaving through a

tropical rainforest.

The riding was joyful, the lack of weight on the bikes meant we could throw them around easily. After two torturous days, we recaptured the fun of motorcycle riding.

It wasn't long before the small sandy carpark came into view. From this point we would have to walk up over a hill and then down to the a rock plateau

where a small sign awaited us.

Behind the sign, a deep turbulent channel was forming whirlpools as the tide ripped great amounts of water through a narrow passage. Beyond the whirlpools were two small islands and behind them was the "Endeavour Passage".





AUSTRALIA

CAPE YORK



On a small shard of rock was the sign that said “You are standing on the Northern most point of the Australian continent”. I had an overwhelming sense of accomplishment, the two torturous days making it even more meaningful. I/we had made it.

All there is to do now is get the tee shirt and make our way home, but that’s another story. If you want to read more of our journey you can find the five part blog series at <https://digitalswaggie.com.au> search for “Cape York”.

Safe Travels.

GARY WOOD

Gary is an educator, adventurer, and travel writer. He is the creator and author of the popular adventure travel blog **Digital Swaggie**. He lives in North Queensland, Australia and regularly tours out of the way parts of Australia on his Kawasaki KLR 650, “Emu”.







EUROPE
ARMENIA





ARMENIA, LAND OF 1001 CHURCHES

THE TRIP TO ARMENIA WAS PROBABLY OUR MOST SPONTANEOUS TRIP TO DATE. AND AS IT TURNED OUT, IT WAS ALSO A VERY GOOD IDEA.

Text and photos: MAŁA I DUŻY W PODRÓŻY



The LOT plane lands in Yerevan before 5 am. Too early for sightseeing, too late for sleeping. A pre-booked cab takes us to a reserved hotel and our host offers a room right away, at half price. We sleep off the night flight and set about exploring the city.

Armenia is a very small country, the size of our Greater Poland province. Out of a population of 3 million, 1.5 million live in the capital, with more than 100,000 in the second largest city of Gyumri. The rest are scattered around smaller or larger villages. An important thing to know about Armenia is that it is the oldest Christian country. As early as 301, through the cause of Gregory the Enlightener, the country was baptized. One thing that follows from this is that there are a lot of old churches in the country. And these we wanted to see.

We spend the first day in Yerevan—the capital. Perhaps the most famous attraction is the beautiful Cascade

Staircase, located in the very center of the city. 572 steps 50 m wide made of white stone, on 5 levels look extremely dignified. We are already out of season so the fountains are turned off. At the foot of the steps there are sculptures made of various materials. We liked the most the lion made of cut tires and horses made of old horseshoes.

We climbed the stairs to the hill, which offers a view of the city. On sunny days you can see Ararat—the most important mountain for Armenians—from there. It was on this mountain that the Ark of the New was to settle. For Christians, the mountain is a sign of the fulfillment of God's promise. For Armenians, it is a symbol of a great and independent Armenia. A mass murder of Armenians by the Turks took place under this mountain in 1915. Once Ararat was in the territory of Armenia. Today there is not even a land border between the neighbors.

At the top of the hill stands a monument to the 50th anniversary of the Armenian Soviet Republic. We go even higher to see a work of socialist urbanism - characteristic blocks of flats that expand upward.

We descend toward the center and enter Victory Park. At the end of the wide avenue stands the Monument to the Mother of Armenia holding a sword in her hands. Until 1962 Stalin himself stood on the pedestal, then the monument stood empty for 5 years until 1967, when the current statue was erected. In front of the monument an eternal fire burns in praise of the heroes and under the statue, in the building you can see an exhibition on World War II.

Some time ago we met Darek, a Pole who has lived in Yerevan for two years and is a tour guide in Armenia, Georgia and Egypt. We asked him to show us the city. We made an appointment for the next day to drive around the capital a





EUROPE

ARMENIA

bit and start our Armenian adventure.

When planning Armenia, we wanted to tour it in an iconic Lada Niwa car. We found a rental company that had such a car available. Since we couldn't take it right away, we drove a regular passenger car for one day.

We shot the first kilometers not far away, some 60 km from the city. In the village of Garni we saw one of the oldest temples. Built in Roman times, it retained an appearance deceptively reminiscent of the one intended for Athena on the Acropolis. Destroyed by an earthquake, it was painstakingly rebuilt. Such an interesting fact- during the filming of the movie "Mr. Kleks Academy" - the film with Piotr Fronczewski several scenes were recorded here.

Below the temple in the Goght

River canyon we can see huge 5- and 6-sided basalt columns shaped by volcanic processes. They rise almost 50 meters high and their shape resembles an organ hence their name "Basalt Organ".

The Geghard Monastery Complex, the third point of our tour, was built so that some of the buildings are built into the rocks and the rooms are almost a maze with secret, dark rooms. Lighting is provided by the few openings in the walls, through which the sun's rays seep. In one of the rooms a sacred spring flows out of the rock, from which the faithful drink water. It is said to have the magical power to add wisdom. We drank a few sips, we will see if something changes in us. This church is a very important place of worship for Armenians. This is where the Spear of Destiny, which was used to pierce the









side of Jesus on the cross, was originally placed. The name Geghard just means spear. Outside the church gate we stop for a moment. On the rock shelf, at a height of about 3 meters, there are small gouges. Tourists and believers try to throw a small pebble so that it stays in the basin. If it does not fall, the dream they thought will come true. We didn't succeed, we look for happiness further.

On the way, we stop at a small house with a large terrace and watch two ladies baking lavash-cakes made of flour and water, which here are eaten like our bread. The lavash is listed as an intangible heritage site by UNESCO.

We say goodbye to Darek, who is soon going on another trip, and look forward to a new day.

We pick up the Lada, white and clean, and head south.

I have already mentioned the adoption of Christianity and Gregory the Enlightener. This

scholar was thrown into a dungeon for 15 years by his king. The king became ill and thanks to the sage he recovered and in gratitude he was baptized in 301. In the Chor Wirap church, you can climb a narrow ladder into the dungeon, which was Gregory's prison. We didn't make it. A tour of young explorers had arrived before us, and each of the children absolutely wanted to descend into the dungeon. The name Chor Wirap in Armenian means "deep dungeon."

We continued on to Noravank. Our cargo resisted going up high hills and sharp curves perfect for motorcycle riding. Here we are not as lucky as before. The wedding has just finished and the wedding guests are waiting for the young couple to finish their photo shoot. I noticed an unusual for us decoration of the newlyweds' car. Attached to the hood by its four legs was a dead hare or fox. I didn't look too closely at this peculiar decoration so as not to appear too curious.





Jermuk, where we go the next day, is a kind of our Ciechocinek. The town once served thousands of visitors. After the collapse of the USSR it began to decline and the situation was made worse by the economic crisis. Today, hotels and sanatoriums haunt with broken windows and devastated interiors. Due to its location, in the winter the city provided skiers with sports experiences on the slopes during the day and entertainment in the thermal pools in the evening. Today it attracts with a beautiful waterfall flowing down from the mountain, on which the crumbling but still receiving guests Gladzor hotel was built.

Two routes lead from Jermuk to the main road. One is comfortable, paved. The second one the navigation did not let us go. We drove up to a guard who was guarding some facility and asked if we could drive through. He looked

at us, at the car, nodded and said "with this car you will give". After a few hundred meters we knew where the smile on his face was from. The next 30 km was a bumpy road full of stones, which could only be overcome by an off-road car. Terrible road, but what a view !!! We stood every now and then to take a photo and then, around the next bend another one. Somewhere in the middle of these potholes lies the Gndevank Church, built in 936 at the behest of a princess. Damaged in an earthquake, the church was rebuilt in the 1960s. The church looks cut off from the rest of the world, with only the sound of trees and the buzzing of bees around.

We continue on our way. At an altitude of 1770 meters above sea level, near the village of Sisian we see the Armenian Stonehenge - stone circles built more than 7,500 years ago here called Zorak Karer, or "vertical stones." The

circle, from which 2 arms diverge, consists of more than 200 stones. Holes were drilled in some of them. Most likely, they were important for astronomical observations hundreds of years ago. Through the holes the blowing wind makes strange singing sounds, which is why the place is called Carahunge which can be translated as "singing stones." However, current research has not yet given a definitive answer as to the actual meaning of this structure.

Armenia is a very mountainous country. Roads of good quality encourage motorcycle riding. We, however, saw only two or three at a time during our entire stay. Driving to the next place, we covered a route that the Transalpina could eat out of hand. First it was downhill, then uphill with more than a dozen hairpins and a steep







the village of Khyndzoresk, where there is a suspension bridge weighing 14 tons , 160 meters long. It connects the new and old parts of the village. The guide we met told the story of the bridge and the old village. Old Chyndzoresk is a settlement carved by people into soft tufa rocks. Until the mid-20th century, up to 15,000 people lived this way, there were 3 temples and 7 schools. In the rock caves they lived, raised animals , stored supplies for the winter. At the top of the mountain they cultivated their fields. In the 1950s they began to gather their homes and possessions to move to other, easier places to live. Our guide is one of the children who were born in just such a cave. He is also one of the seven men who built the bridge.

We continue on to Lake Sevan. It is the largest lake in the Caucasus. As a result of the destructive policy of the USSR in the 1930s , the waters of the lake lowered by more than 20 meters. Fortunately, 20 years later, the mistakes of the predecessors

began to be corrected, and now the water level is slowly but steadily rising. On the shore of the lake, once on an island, now on a promontory, the Sevanavank Church was built. The walls of the church were erected from black volcanic tuff, which is why it is sometimes called the Black Monastery. It is said that for some time the monastery was a place of exile for monks who behaved incorrectly and had to "rethink" their behavior. Of the entire complex, only two temples remain, but they too impress the visitor. Since we had an overnight stay almost at the church itself, we got up with the sun and without tourists we could admire the landscape Armenia has many UNESCO-listed sites. We drove to the village of Noratus. More than 800 khachkars, from various places in Armenia, were deposited in the small village. Khachkars are stone tablets made in the form of bas-reliefs. Such plaques are a form of tombstone finishing, and were placed at crossroads, springs or as thanksgiving for a church or bridge built. The

climb. The large trucks that traversed the route honked loudly before the turn so as not to meet anyone during the maneuver. You can see the entire route beautifully from the train called " wings of Tatev", which I rode.

Tatev-another church we drove to for a very long time-was a hard object to reach. In 2010, a cable car was built, which was entered in the Guinness Book of Records due to its dimensions. The length of the route is 5752 meters, at its highest point the cable car travels 320 meters above the ground and all this on a rope suspended on only one span. We drove to the church by car. Back Edward drove alone, I got on the train and after 12 minutes we met at the starting station. He sped like a madman around the curves.

We headed further south to





EUROPE
ARMENIA





cross carved on the plaque was a link between the material and spiritual worlds, so the land on which they were placed had to be consecrated. The collection has been on the heritage list since 2010.

Church after church. You can see how deeply Christianity is rooted in this country. Hochpat and Sanachin are two temples from the 20th century, standing very close to each other. And again we are almost the only people, We slowly finish the tour of the churches and leave at 2300 m. Amberd Fortress built in the 10th century was a fortified castle. Amberd means

"fortress in the clouds" Indeed-heavy, dark clouds obstruct the view of the remains of the castle every now and then. Nearby crouched the small church of Vahramashen , where we once again light a candle, for all those who are no longer among us. This is the tradition we have made for ourselves.

More and more snow begins to show around us, it gets quite cold. We want to go even higher to see the point of disruption of gravity. You know- the bottle instead of going down, it rolls up. We reach an altitude of 2749 meters above sea level and

know that further our cargo will not go. Fresh, wet snow verifies our plans. We don't want to get stuck here for the night and the main road is far away.

Our Armenian adventure with the Niva Lada comes to an end. We return to the rental place prepared to pay for its washing. It turns out that if we are satisfied and write a good comment about the car and service then ... we do not have to pay. Since really the service was ok and both cars did a good job, in good conscience we give the most positive review possible.

We have one day left, which





EUROPE
ARMENIA





we devote to exploring the rest of Yerevan. There is the only mosque in Armenia that we want to see. It turns out that the main entrance for men is closed due to renovations so only I go inside, covering my head of course and pulling off my shoes.

I have already mentioned the great massacre of Armenians in 1915. To honor all those who were murdered, a memorial consisting of 12 concrete blocks between which an eternal fire burns was built on Cernakaberd Hill in the 1960s. A 44-meter pylon stands next to it. The Armenian Genocide Memorial Complex includes the Monument, an interactive museum and a park where important figures court the trees. I saw a spruce tree planted by Angela Merkel or Pope Francis. Of the Polish names, I noticed Radoslaw Sikorski.

An important aspect of all trips, undoubtedly, is the food. Here it is excellent. We ate in an exquisite restaurant, in a roadside bar, in several places where we slept. Everything was always freshly prepared and nicely served. And we were always asked if we wanted lavash.

Armenia made a really favorable impression on us. We are charmed by it. And as Dariusz the guide said "You guys will come here again".

He is probably right. We sincerely thank Dariusz for the introduction to the Armenian atmosphere. If you would like to visit this country - we recommend Darek. Have a look at his website

<https://venividitravel.pl/>

And the rental company is Car&Van Rent a Car - we recommend it, because our cooperation was very successful.

MAŁA I DUŻY W PODRÓŻY



Mała I Duży w Podróży - for years they have enjoyed every day spent on motorcycles together. They constantly suffer from notriphobia - the fear of that moment when they won't have another trip planned. They work together - he comes up with the direction of the trip and plans the routes, she embraces the visas and accommodations. For them, the route is less important than the people to meet on it.





EUROPE

AUSTRIA, ITALY, SLOVENIA, HUNGARY

ON A V-STROM THROUGH CENTRAL EUROPE

SHORT AND NEARBY TRIPS HAVE SOMETHING TO THEM. AT THE BEGINNING OF THE SUMMER, WE SET OUT ON OUR V-STROM THROUGH AUSTRIA, ITALY, SLOVENIA AND HUNGARY. THE RESULT? SEVEN DAYS, FOUR COUNTRIES AND 2,500 KILOMETERS.

Text and photos: YET ANOTHER BIKERS





EUROPE

AUSTRIA, ITALY, SLOVENIA, HUNGARY

We set off from Prague to the Austrian town of Vöcklabruck. The road to České Budějovice is jammed as usual, and the price of fuel... better not to say. In the evening all these unpleasantness will reward us with a cold Weissbier with a decent foam.

The next day we drive towards the lakes. We pass Lake Attersee, then turn onto highway number 153 in the direction of Bad Ischl. We see a road sign that informs us that 13 kilometers full of curves lie ahead. In German, kurvenreich. We pass through the town of Hallstatt, which has been inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List. Unsurprisingly, we spend the whole afternoon here.

We explore the town and snap photos. That would have been enough to make us happy, if we hadn't gotten caught in the tourist trap. We bought an entrance ticket to the viewpoint, combined with a tour of the Hallstatu salt mine. We thought that with this we would save ourselves a trip to Hallein, but we were terribly disappointed. In Salzwelten Hallstatt, the oldest active salt mine in the world, there is actually nothing of interest to



see. Avoid this place from afar.

In the evening we reach Vorfusch for the night. Grossglockner is already at hand.

Our mood is spoiled by the not very optimistic weather forecast. It is supposed to rain on Grossglockner. We set off early in the morning, when the

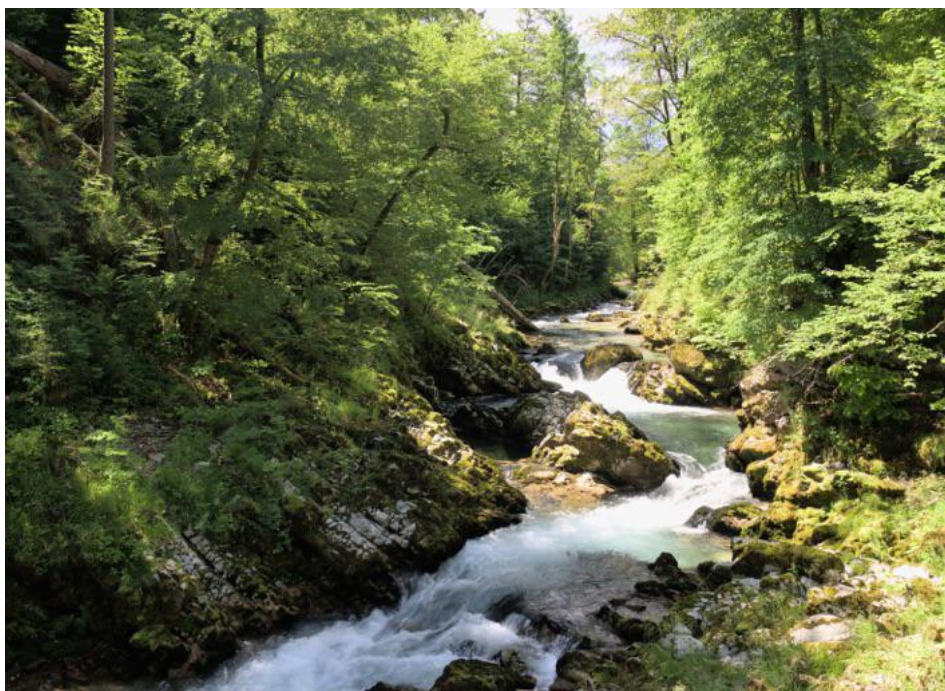
sun is still shining and small clouds are streaming in the sky. We pay 28 EUR for the ascent of Grossglockner Hochalpenstrasse. Ahead of us is 48 kilometers full of beautiful views and countless curves. There's nothing to complain about on the asphalt, we mow down once one turn, then another. A fairy tale!

We arrive at the Fuschertörl 1 parking lot, where we admire the alpine views. The weather favors us, but after a few moments the tops of the mountains begin to be shrouded in a thick fog. We escape the rain towards the sun.

We pass through Lienz. From here we have a short distance to Italy.

The country of pizza greets us with rain. True, we are wearing anti-rain suits, but we stop for lunch anyway. In a short while comes a violent storm with torrential rain.

The rain finally eases a bit, and we set off on our way through Cortina d'Ampezzo to Longarone. Too bad it's still







EUROPE

AUSTRIA, ITALY, SLOVENIA, HUNGARY





raining. The Dolomites are hidden somewhere in the fog and rain. We pass through small towns where the devil says goodnight. It seems that time has stopped here.

As we approach Longarone, the clouds are slowly receding. We pull on our anti-rain gear. In Longarone we can see the Vajont Dam in the distance. Just a few more serpentine up and we are at the dam. It was here that part of the Monte Toc mountain landslide in 1963. The

landslide created a 200-meter wave, which overflowed the dam and flooded the town of Longarone.

The quiet road SR251 leads us to the small town of Maniago, where we have an overnight stay. We pass quaint, sometimes abandoned villages with half-decayed houses. We admire the unique view of the Italian Dolomites.

In the morning we wake up with the feeling of having been run over by a steamroller. The

night was steamy, with locals partying in a nearby bar until three in the morning and letting everyone around us know it. Today we are going to Mangart. This thought makes us feel better.

We quickly escape from the city and flash towards Slovenia. Suddenly an emerald lake catches our attention. We like such surprises. We learn that it is the Lago di Cornino lake, which owes its color to calcium sulfate.





EUROPE

AUSTRIA, ITALY, SLOVENIA, HUNGARY





From the lake, like it or not, we have to take the more frequented SS13 highway. Then we turn onto the SP76 road, interesting for motorcyclists, a secluded road towards Sella Nevea. There are many curves here. Too bad it's impossible to stop here to photograph the stunning view of the valley disappearing behind us.

As soon as we pass Sella Nevea, the road, which we couldn't complain about so far, becomes more or less pothole-like in places. Anyway, we stop every 500 meters, because there is something to photograph. Willing or not, we say goodbye to Italy. Hello Slovenia!

We barely pass the border crossing and the main destination of our trip - Mangartsko Sedlo (2055 meters above sea level) - looms before us. It has already begun to get dark over the Julian Alps, so we move

on with all speed.

We pay 10 EUR for the ascent of Mangart. This highest road in Slovenia was built in 1938 thanks to the Italian army. The road is asphalt, in good condition, but it is quite narrow. It commands our respect. To be more precise, Ondra feels respect, and Marta is full in her pants. There are no guard rails here. The trick is to evade vehicles coming from the opposite direction.

At first we tangle in the forest on numerous serpentines, then the forest suddenly disappears and the next, more interesting part of the route begins, with views of the Julian Alps and Mangart. The road is 12 kilometers long, but for us the fun ends after 9 kilometers at a large parking lot. It is impossible to drive any further. The ban on entry and the barrier tell us everything. But still we have nothing to regret. The views

are stunning!

In addition to Mangartsky Saddle, we couldn't miss a ride on road 206 in the direction of Kranjske Gory. The icing on the cake has to be the Vršič Pass (1611 meters above sea level), to which there are probably 40 turns.

We have a great ride. Occasionally we meet some car or motorcycle. From the town of Trenta the traffic suddenly thickens. To the pass we drag along, like snails, in the tail of Czech cars. It is impossible to overtake here.

From the pass we head along the Russian road to Kranjska Gora. There are so many serpentines here that we quickly lost count. The road is quite broken up on this side. The curves form cobblestones. The breathtaking views of the Julian Alps are honey for our



EUROPE

AUSTRIA, ITALY, SLOVENIA, HUNGARY

sore asses. It can't be described in words, it has to be seen for yourself.

We arrive at Lake Bohinj, where we have booked to stay overnight, accompanied by a passing rain.

The next day we go to see the Vintgar Gorge, which we have been sharpening our teeth for a long time. Its website says that there are detours in the area. It didn't occur to us that there would be such chaos here.

We arrive at the P3 parking lot. At the site, we learn that the parking lot for motorcycles is right at the entrance to the gorge. The joke is that it is impossible to get there without breaking traffic regulations. Detours all around, ditched streets, no signs directing to Vintgar.

With a heavy heart, we break several entry bans and drive through the ditched streets. At

least the gorge is within our reach.

Vintgar is a 1.6-kilometer-long gorge, in the middle of which flows the Radovna River. It is a well-known as well as touristic place. We pay 10 EUR per person for the ticket. For parking we still have to pay an additional 2 EUR.

The road through the gorge is one-way. Back to the parking lot it is possible to return by one of two routes - green (longer and easier) or red (more difficult). We choose the latter.

Vintgar we can tick off on our list. In the evening we reach the small but charming town of Celje. We walk around, stray into a few streets, but most importantly stop for an ice cream. Without it we wouldn't go home again :)

The next day we leave for Budapest. We still want to stop at Lake Balaton. We turn

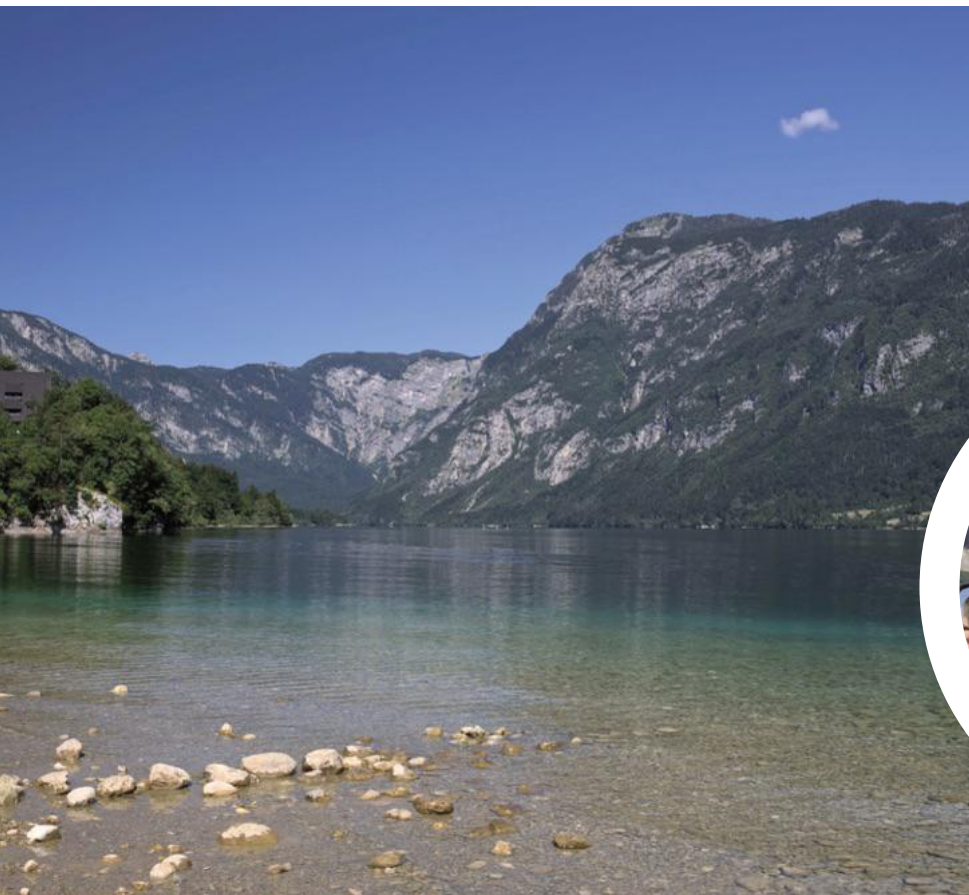
off the highway onto Road 7, which passes through the towns along the lake. From the road the lake is not very visible. We stop at Varosi Strand and Panorama Lookout, from where we can see Lake Balaton like on the palm of our hand.

In the evening we arrive in the capital of Hungary, where we spend two nights. We recommend checking out the Nagy Vásárcsarnok market hall and seeing the Buda Royal Castle. From here you have an interesting view of the Danube River and the Hungarian Parliament building. On the other side of the river - in the Pest section - it's worth hooking up with St. Stephen's Basilica and the Great Synagogue - the largest in Europe.

The trip is coming to an end. Only the way back to Prague awaits us.

YET ANOTHER BIKERS

Ondrej (Ondra) and Marta are a Czech-Polish couple from Prague. He is driving and photographing, she is inventing and planning future expeditions. Since 2018, they have been going on motorcycle tours together. They have completed trips to the Balkans and Morocco, among others. They both believe that the best investment is an investment in dreams.





ROAD
of
ADVENTURE

TRAVELER'S WORKSHOP
TOOLS



Text and photos: Joris de Poortere / ADV HOPPERS

TRAVELER'S WORKSHOP

TOOLS

WHICH YOU
SHOULD TAKE
ON A TRIP







First and most important, make sure your tools are always on the motorbike, independent from your other luggage, you will see, the moment you don't have them with you...you'll need them, Murphy will make sure of that. Try to make them as accessible as possible, doing a roadside repair and having to dismantle half of your setup next to the road could be impossible. Before you leave on your big trip, try to do all your repairs and maintenance at home with your travel tools, so you know upfront what you need to dismantle your motorbike, and you will not be missing that one key to get your wheel out, or for that matter, carry tools around the trip which you will never use. If you travel more than one, check what others carry, no use of having 5 sets of same keys.

Most vulnerable part of your bike are the tires, so in our opinion, the most important tools to carry, a repair set for a puncture and a pump. If you ride inner tubes, some patches and even a spare tube. If tubeless, a repair set with plugs will be sufficient. We carry both, as it could come in handy to help out a fellow biker, or patch up a mattress. For the pump part, we carry a very small

compressor, which can give enough pressure to 'pop' a tire back on its rim. Since we don't have a pressure indication on the compressor we have a mechanical gauge to check on

the air in our tires. Spoons to lift the tire from the rim, especially if you ride with inner tubes, a must have, and preferably 3. We also carry them, in case of helping a

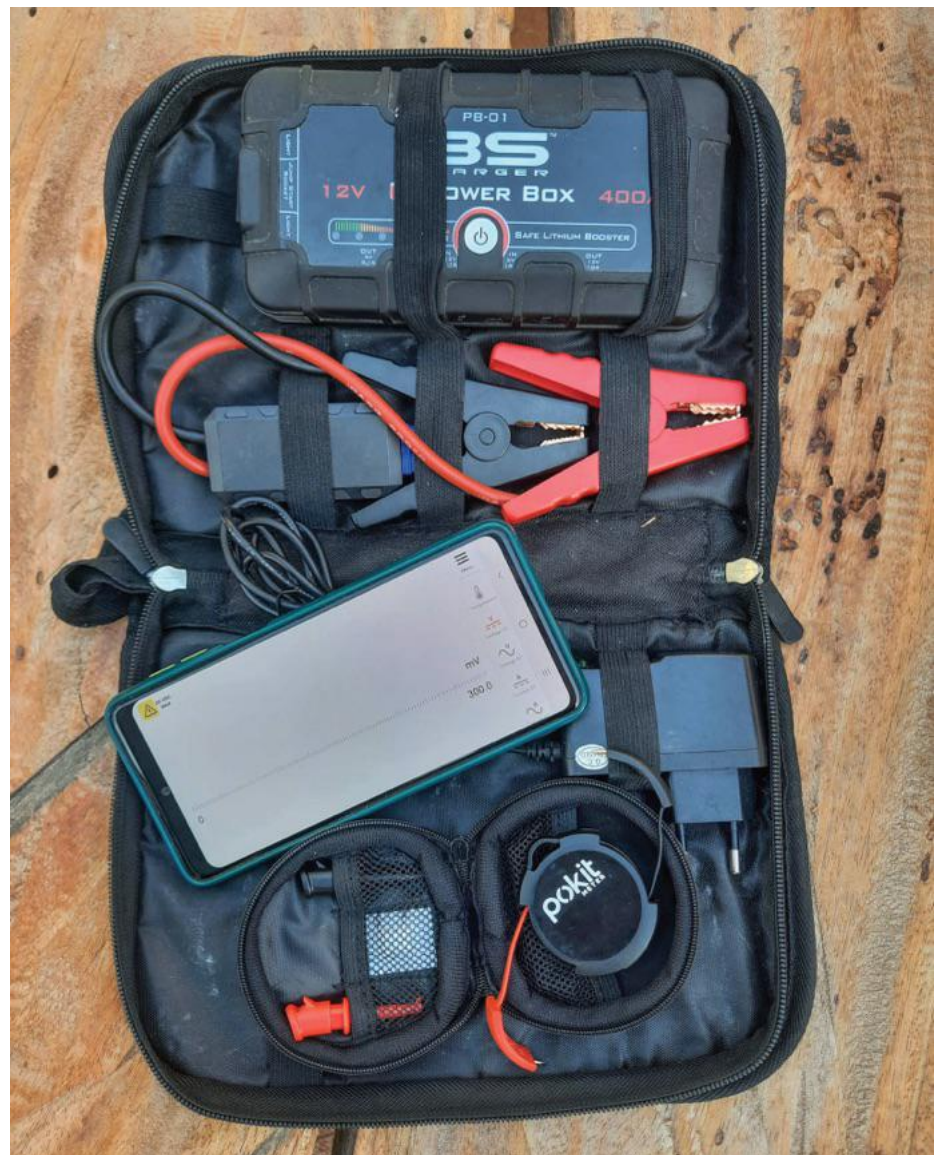


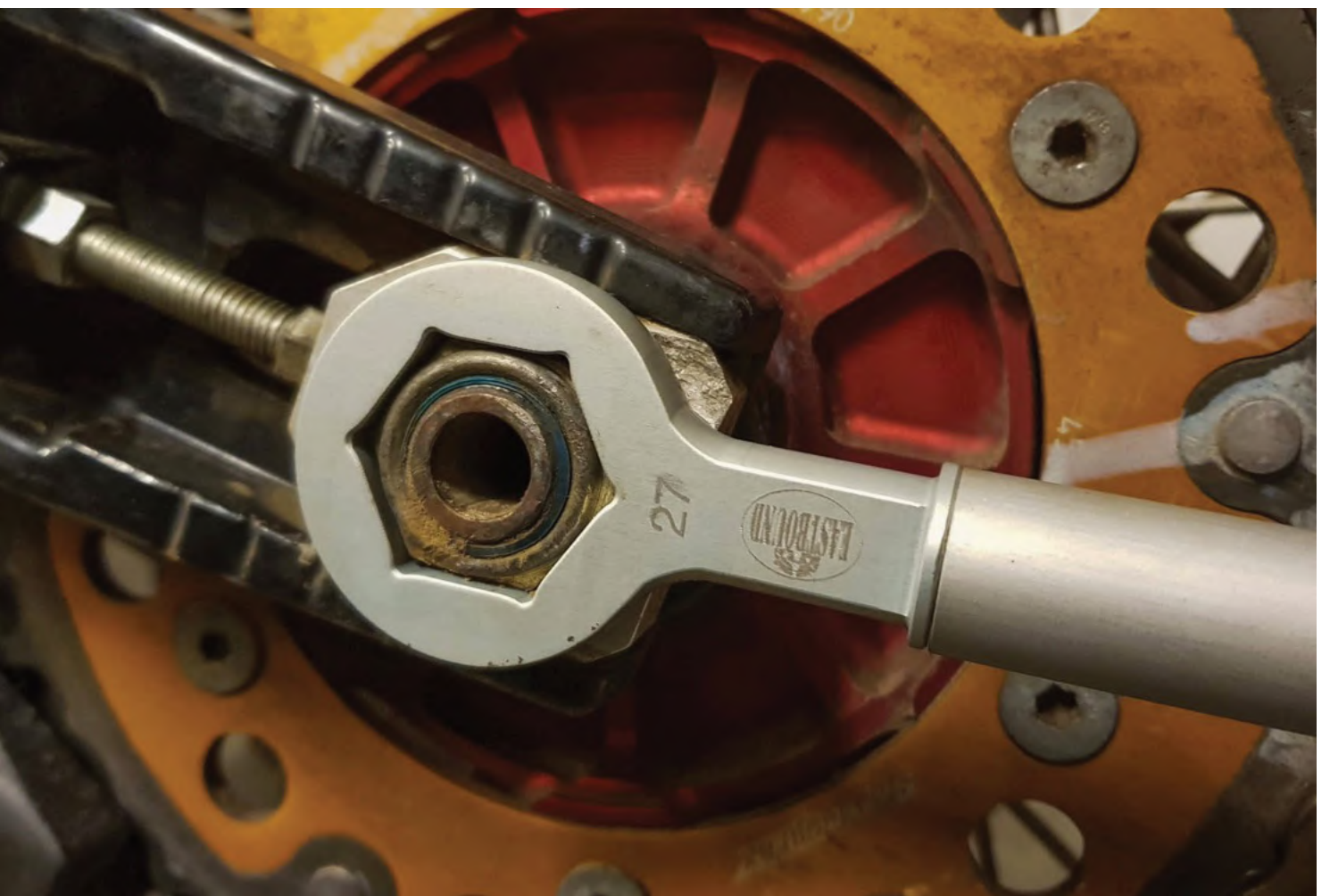
TOOLS

hand, or even when we have a bigger damage on the tires. We use light aluminum spoons which can be taken apart and made small. Since we have mid-stand, our bikes are stable and we can take out a wheel easily if needed and we don't need an extra support.

As of keys, we only carry the ones that are needed on our specific motorbikes. Most of the time it is a very limited number of keys you need, even to do bigger works on your bike. Also here, keep it light and small, as weight and space are important on a motorbike. Small extra remark on the sparkplug key, test it before you go, see if it is possible to get it out without dismantling half the motorbike. An adjustable spanner also comes in handy, as your repairs are maybe not only limited to your bike. A spanner plier should be in the tool-bag, if one of your bolts decides to go round and refuses to come out. A small and fine plier, if your fingers are too thick to reach for that small nut. A small hammer which we use daily, even if it is to put up the tent. In the same set we carry a simple screw driver with 2 ends, did the job till now. A simple ruler to measure distance could be useful in a lot of cases. Finally we also have a set of gauges to measure valve clearance, again, useful if you are traveling in more remote places or countries where good garages are limited.

Don't forget about the electrical part of the bike. We carry some random electrical wires, fuses, sparkplugs, wire connectors as spare parts or for some temporary fixing. Electrical isolation tape should also be taken, as it is useful for everything. One useful tool is our multimeter, a version that connects to an app on the phone, so very light and small. Another item is our jump starter, small and powerful, used a lot of times, even to help out an electrical car that ran out of power.









Fluids, an important substance present all over the motorbike. Make sure you take some spare engine oil, especially if you go to more remote parts of the world. Some extra brake fluid, you never know what you loose on the way. A tube of silicon grease, keeps parts moving in hard conditions. And of course, WD40, never leave home without it. As we do oil changes on the way, the foldable funnel we carry, came in handy more than once and is small and light. Maybe not fluid, but we mark it under this category is the liquid metal paste. If something should 'crack' it could get you to the next possibility to have a final repair.

Some other items we carry and are not really to be put under a category. Some spare cables for the throttle or clutch, with universal connectors so it can be used on any motorbike. Dental floss, strong as a horse and useful to keep parts together, to do some surgical maintenance or just to keep teeth clean. Some thin steel wire, used it to repair my glasses for example. Duct tape of course, for the bush

craft engineering, and together with the zip ties, you'll be able to do that extra distance to the next garage. Straps also come in handy, can be used to keep parts from falling off, or for towing another bike, even as a laundry line it can be useful.

In general this is what we carry to do road repairs or have maintenance on the motorbikes. Our tire repair set and compressor stay under the saddle, so always on the bike. The rest goes in the tail bag, easy accessible and nice to keep tidy. The smaller parts and keys are kept in some pencil cases, cheap and efficient. The 'daily tools' stay in a tool roll, good to keep an overview of what you took out and need to put back again.

It is still a personal choice of what you take, but up to now we didn't miss anything, used most of it and hope to keep it this way.



ADV Hoppers is an international couple of motorcyclists and adventure lovers: Agata Dudek and Joris De Poortere. Currently on a trip around the world, the progress of which can be followed on the blog and social media.

ADV HOPPERS **JORIS DE POORTERE**



ROAD OF ADVENTURE



THE PREVIOUS ISSUE CAN BE FOUND ON
[HTTPS://ROADOFADV.COM](https://roadofadv.com)



BUY US A COFFEE ON



Buy me a coffee