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ROAD of ADVENTURE

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THEY WRITE FOR YOU

MAŁŻEŃSTWO Z MOTOCYKLEM



ADV HOPPERS



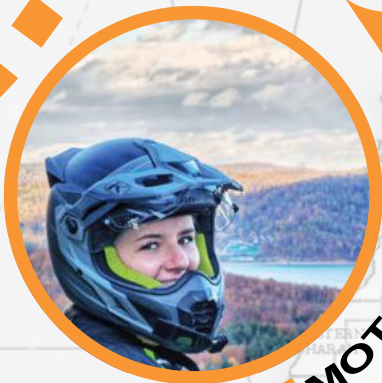
FREEBIRD RIDER



BIKERS ADVENTURE



MOTOHERO



MAŁA I DUŻY W PODRÓŻY



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!

Spring is slowly approaching and most of you are probably already looking out of the window, longing to get on your two wheels again and move ahead. In order to make this time of waiting more pleasant, we give you the next issue of our travel magazine - Road of Adventure. In it you will find articles from around the world that may inspire you to discover all its amazingness. Unfortunately not everything went according to our plan, as it often happens in life. The author of many travel books and a passionate motorcyclist - Witek Palak, who was supposed to be the special guest of the second issue, got stuck somewhere in the Sri Lankan wilderness and although we managed to interview him, he was no longer able to send us the photos for it. We also don't want to delay the release of this issue, so we are letting it go without the interview. We will make up for it in the next issue.

We would also like to thank you for all the messages we received from you after the release of the first issue. You don't even know how nice and motivating it is for us. You have the power! Thanks again, enjoy reading and see you in the next issue!

Regards,

*Karolina
Kowalska*



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>

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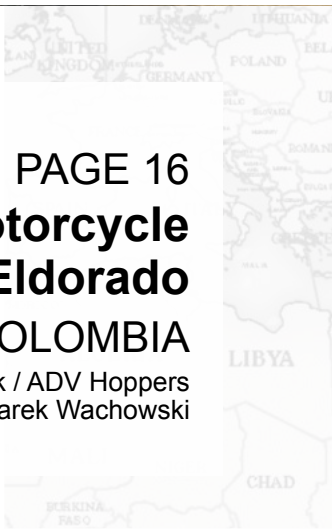
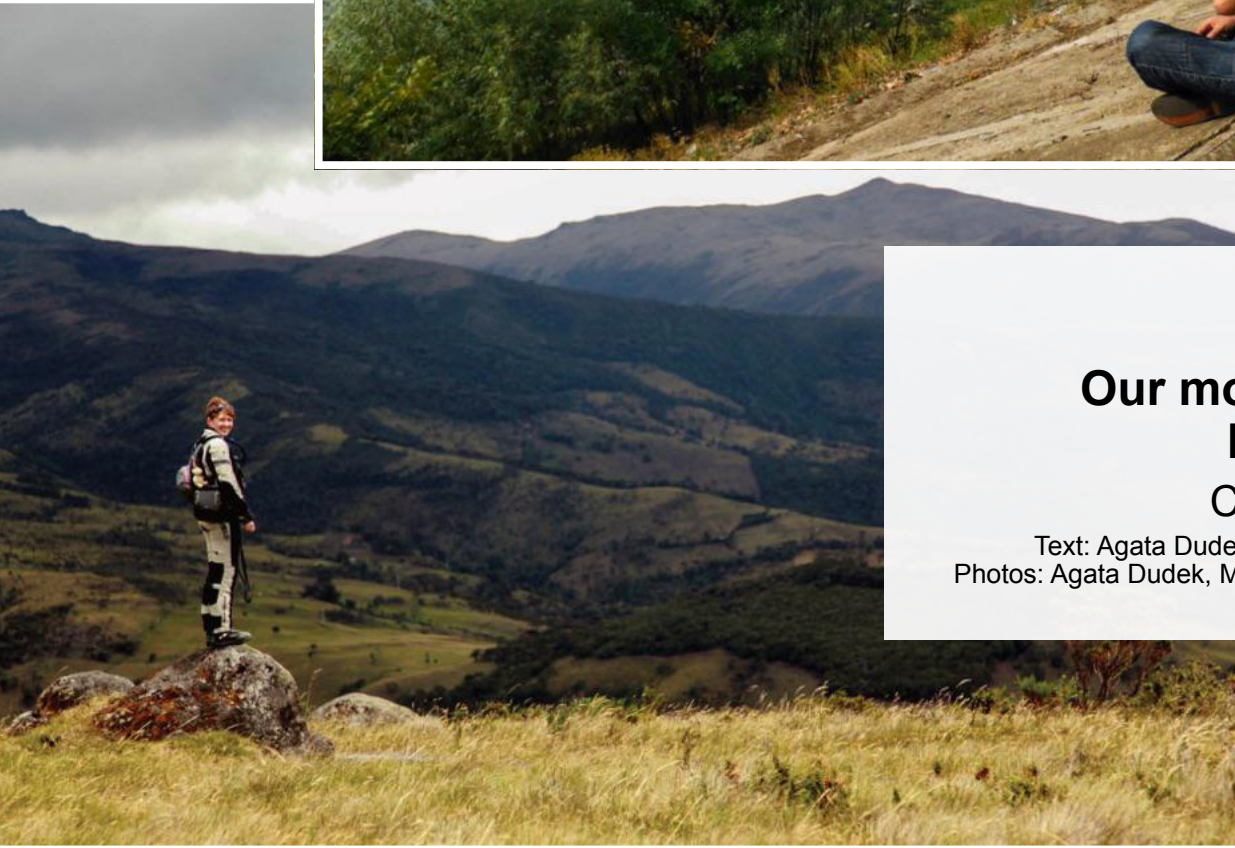
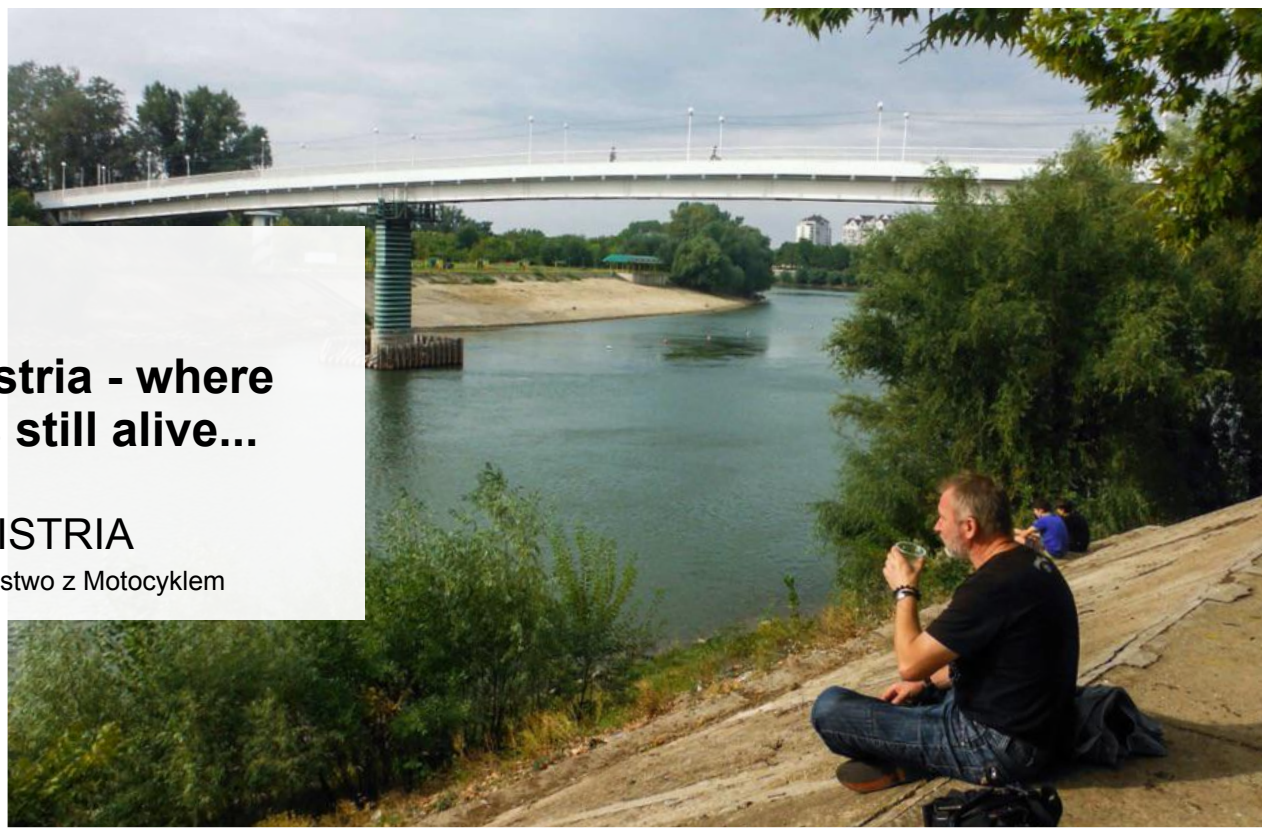
Cover photo: Wojtek Borkowski

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Author: Małżeństwo z Motocyklem



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Our motorcycle Eldorado

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Text: Agata Dudek / ADV Hoppers
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Author: Mała i Duży w Podróży

NEW ZEALAND



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TRANSNISTRIA





TRANSNISTRIA - WHERE LENIN IS STILL ALIVE...

WHY TRANSNISTRIA?

- BECAUSE ALMOST NO ONE RECOGNIZES IT,
- BECAUSE ALMOST NO ONE GOES THERE,
- BECAUSE THERE IS NOTHING INTERESTING THERE,
- BECAUSE IT IS ON THE WAY TO ODESSA,
- BECAUSE SO...

Text and photos: MAŁŻEŃSTWO Z MOTOCYKLEM



EUROPE
TRANSNISTRIA



The eye of the commander
reaches far and sees all...

This morning woke us up with beautiful sunshine. It's good, because we are going to an unfamiliar area (a place where hammer and sickle are still going quite well:)) and we have absolutely no idea how to cross the border and move on the roads there, not to mention contacts with the militia.

Transnistria is a self-proclaimed republic, which in 1990 split from Moldova and declared independence. No one recognized it as a state (sorry, it was recognized by the unrecognized Abkhazia and South Ossetia), but the facts are: Moldova has no control over this territory, which for more than a quarter of a century has been governed by its own laws. And laws, that is, rule by a strong hand and turning a blind eye to nepotism, corruption and organized crime. Today, Transnistria has all the attributes of a state. The country has elected its president, prime minister and



The border between Moldova and Transnistria - we can still turn back



We did it. We are in Transnistria

parliament. It has its own flag and currency - the Transnistrian ruble. The Transnistrian flag is the only one in the world that still uses the sickle and hammer symbol. The emblem also includes the sickle and hammer, a red star and flags, plus wreaths of ears and fruit. While in Transnistria, it is important to remember that we are in a breakaway republic under the control of an unrecognized government sponsored by Russia.

From what we read from the few tips on tourist trips to Transnistria, one thing was clear - do not take pictures, do not discuss, do not fool around. If a soldier calls you and tells you to delete your photo, do it without discussion. This country doesn't exist, it has a non-existent border, a non-existent government, a non-existent currency, but as real as possible army, militia and regulations. Apart from such



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things, Transnistria is basically no different from Moldova, and the few tourists are very nicely welcomed, as we found out several times.

We are approaching a non-existent border, a non-existent state - the border in Bender. And yet there are gates, barriers and men in uniforms. We stopped at the STOP sign and Doti wouldn't be herself if she didn't play the mysterious spy and take some photos of the border from behind my back. Fortunately, the Moldovan policeman did not notice and just waved his hand to go on. After about 100 meters there were Transnistrian tollbooths. We stopped at a window where we had to state the nature and duration of our stay in the Republic. The registration system in Transnistria is a little strange. Without informing the police about your stay you can stay here up to 10 hours, then you have to go to the police station with a card from the hotel or other place of accommodation and check in. With our tourist stay, we did not have to inform about the place of stay, because we were not going to stay there for more than 10 hours. Then the passport control, where I said that we go in transit to Odessa and then we got the "visa" cards, which are given back on departure. Of course, under no circumstances can they be lost. On the cards, in addition to our names (also written in Cyrillic), passport numbers were written the time of entry and the time until which we have to leave Transnistria. Another booth - the customs officer checks our passports and tells us to approach a uniformed man. He waved a friendly hand, opened the barrier and let us go. And what? Is that all? The whole procedure took 10 minutes. And where is the import duty that has to be paid for the vehicle you are driving in? We drove a few hundred meters, all the time being in shock. Maybe this is a no

man's lane, maybe there will be more toll booths soon? Nothing like that.

Welcome to Transnistria!

The first thing you notice after entering Bender is space. Wide streets, low-rise buildings, grayish concrete, trolleybuses, police and army stations. Social realism is still alive. Red and green flags, a typical Soviet town, which seems empty, as if deserted.

The second one is Sheriff. Sheriff is the largest corporation in Transnistria, controlled by "their" former president. Everyone speaks openly about mafia, Russian services and other shady connections. Anyway, this logo is used by gas stations, supermarkets, a cell phone network, a construction company, a TV channel, a publishing house, bakeries, a Mercedes showroom,



advertising agencies and, of course, the most famous football club Sheriff Tiraspol, which showed Legia Warsaw where it belongs :(, and even Real Madrid, which lost in LM at Santiago Bernabeu. The company even owns the distillery of the famous KVINT cognacs. In a word, Sheriff is Transnistria, and Transnistria is Sheriff. A private manor.

It took us a while to find the fortress in Bender, but we made it. We drove up to the

gate of some factory, at which we stood in front of a watchtower, next to which stood a uniformed young man. We had to go inside and buy tickets. The uniformed gentleman showed us how to drive up to the fortress and how to visit it. The fortress itself was very nice, bigger than the ones we visited in Kamieniec and Sorok, although there was nothing spectacular inside. Of course, we took photos of



Bender Fortress



Sheriff rules in Transnistria



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A stunning woman!



Five tenors



So here we go...

ourselves on Baron Münchhausen's ball, climbed the walls with turrets, where you can walk around, reach viewpoints and look at the Dniester River (called Tyrka here). Inside the courtyard with nice buildings, dykes, siege machines. Nearby is St. Alexander Nevsky Church, which we did not enter. Everything is very nicely restored, you can see that someone takes care of it. In the store, of course, magnets for our collection. The lady in the store (not very smiling) converted the hryvnias into rubles for us, "rounding up" a bit in her favor. But no matter, it was

worth it, because magnets from Transnistria are rare, and the real "gem" we found, which I gave the title "Five Tenors" presenting Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin and Putin does not happen often.

Since there is nothing to see in Bender except for the "krieposta", we moved in the direction of the capital, Tiraspol. Not wanting to offend the 'authorities', we drove below the speed limit, because there are legends about the Transnistrian police. Poles here have no consular protection, and the "green card" does not work.

Tourists love to use the term

"Soviet open-air museum" for the capital of Transnistria. Legends circulate about the lack of many facilities known to us from "our" world - such as internet, card payment or cell phones. Some scenes really take you back to the past. At first glance, it's hard not to agree with this statement. Every step we take, we see Transnistrian symbols directly referring to those known from the times of the USSR, and on the streets there are many cars from the previous era. Most of the buildings are gray, blocky and do not differ architecturally from the Soviet times, but I don't think there is any country in Eastern Europe that would not have this style of construction.

On the main street we stop and exchange the entire \$10 for Transnistrian rubles. The currency that does not exist is not exchangeable practically anywhere. Small, quite aesthetic banknotes, on most denominations there is a bust of Suvorov wrapped in medals. It is amazing that in a country so often referring to the traditions of the USSR there is a tsarist general on the money :). There is also Shevchenko on one of the papers. This strange money looks like colorful bills from "Monopoly", and the plastic coins resemble casino chips.

Our first must-see spot for today - the Green Market. With its colors (pant green and dark green :)), the market hall resembles the ugly buildings of the early 90's differing from the previous era only in that they are colorful and even more shapeless than those from the communist era. However, this ugly exterior is not important. It is inside that the magic begins!

We parked our Moto a few dozen meters before a store with flowers (artificial), mainly for cemetery monuments. The elegant store owner let us leave our helmets at her place and promised to look



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after our motorcycle. It was 2 p.m. and the store was closing at 3 p.m., so we had little time left to visit the market. Walking towards the market we asked a local if we were going well. He said yes and asked where we were from. We answered, as everywhere "Poland, Lewandowski...". And he seemed not to understand the second part and said: "Poland... Four tank soldiers and the dog (from editor: old Polish TV series). I know that movie!!!!". We laughed sincerely. As you can see Lewandowski does not open doors everywhere :).

Continuation of the article you will find in the next issue of "Road of Adventure".



Currency of Transnistria



The Green Market

MAŁŻEŃSTWO Z MOTOCYKLEM

The project began in the heads of Dorota (Doti) and Maciek (Macko) 37 years ago. After 20 years a motorcycle (Moto Guzzi - Guzzilla) joined them. Since then they have been travelling the roads together as a **Małżeństwo z motocyklem** (Married couple with a motorcycle).





SOUTH AMERICA

COLOMBIA

OUR MOTORCYCLE ELDORADO

SOUTH AMERICA WAS ALWAYS ON MY DREAM LIST. I USED TO THINK THAT IT WOULD BE A STANDARD BACKPACKING TRIP, IN ADDITION TO A COMPLETELY DIFFERENT COUNTRY ON THE CONTINENT. AND IT TURNED OUT TO BE A MOTORCYCLE TRIP TO COLOMBIA. WITHIN TWO WEEKS WE RODE ALMOST 2200 KM.

Text: Agata Dudek

Photos: Agata Dudek, Marek Wachowski





SOUTH AMERICA

COLOMBIA



From Monserrate Hill, which is accessible by cable car, you can admire Bogotá



Polish Fiat on the streets of Bogotá



Sunday on the streets of Bogotá



At the Bogota Police Museum, you can learn about the history of Pablo Escobar

After coming back from Western Africa and writing about all the adventures that happened there, I got a message from Marek. It read: "Unlike others, you are not afraid of going to Africa. I've been there multiple times alone, but maybe we can join forces and travel

together someday?" Interesting and tempting as it was, the idea was put aside for a few months but then it came back. "So, where are we going? Maybe Uganda and Rwanda? Or Togo, Benin and Ghana? Or maybe in another direction, like Oman? Or something completely different? Ecuador? Or maybe... Colombia?"

We found a bike rental company that had something that fit in our budget: two Bajaj Discover 150 ST bikes. We booked them and despite the fact that Zika virus was running riot in South America,

we set off to Colombia.

BOGOTA

We have different flight schedules so we meet only in Bogota. Our hostel is located in the historical part of the city. We check in, and before going out for a well-deserved beer and soaking in the local atmosphere, we try to repack our valuables. Where the heck do we carry the heap of bills of the local money? Where do we keep the dollars? And where do we hide the bank cards? Do we leave the passports in the hostel or try to squeeze them in the pockets?



Bolivar Square in Bogotá

In the morning we decide to what to do with the day – we go to Medellin with the overnight bus, so we have the time to see the capital. On Sundays, Bogotá's centre is closed off for traffic, so people use bicycles or just walk. Also, all museums are for free so encouraged by the local policemen, we visit... the Museum of Police. We learn about the history of the Colombian police, uniforms, equipment, see a collection of historical vehicles and weapons. We also learn about Pablo Escobar and the way that Colombian forces handled drug-trafficking and money



Color, dancing and singing are an integral part of the streets of Bogotá

laundry. We must admit that the items that once belonged to El Patrón and are now on exhibition are impressive: satellite phones, desks with hiding places for the money, guns, money counters (that he had more than the entire state).

Then we take a cable car to the Monserrate Hill. It takes us as high as 3150 metres above

the sea level. We are overwhelmed by the view over the city that spills beyond the horizon.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

The bus to Medellín drives fast, so we arrive ahead of schedule. Exchanging money for local currency in the station's exchange office - in



The food from the stalls is not only tasty and fresh but also very cheap

the company of armed soldiers - is quite an experience.

We pick up the bikes from Harry, an Austrian guy who runs a vet clinic here and has a bike rental side business. We deal with all the formalities and he cashes in 1 million Colombian Pesos plus 250 USD of deposit from each of us. Our little motorbikes feel extremely light and their turn radius is close to none. And the gears... neutral far down and all other gears up – it will take some time to adjust. Harry does not provide us with any spare parts – he claims the roads are good and the bikes are reliable. We hope he's right.

The traffic is heavy, but we quickly adapt to it. There is no



Cocora Valley. The wax palms can reach heights of up to 60 meters.



Road signs in Colombia are very precise. And they often suggest lots of turns.



Trekking through the jungle - you can feel like Indiana Jones.



SOUTH AMERICA
COLOMBIA



Nightlife at Yumbo.



Beautiful views are at every turn



hills. We travel very slow. The scenery is exceptionally picturesque and we stop way too often to take the photos. The only thing that pushes us to go faster is the weather – every afternoon the leaden rain clouds cover the sky.

Most of the small towns we ride through have a similar layout – a central square, where the food stalls emerge every late afternoon, a church on one of the sides and many hotels, bars and restaurants. We try to stay for the night in such places, just to enjoy the atmosphere in the evenings, while eating the local food, drinking beer and listening to the musing blaring from the omnipresent loudspeakers.

PALM TREES AND HUMMINGBIRDS

The town of Salento is an ideal starting point for the visit in Cocora Valley, famous for its distinctive wax palms, reaching up to 60m in height. These are Colombia's national trees. We decide to have a trek on one of the trails that leads through fields at first, then breaks into the jungle,

time to hesitate. Riding on the main roads, especially close to the big cities, means racing against the trucks. They drive pretty fast in order not to struggle on lower gears. They cut the turns as they go with the momentum. Overtaking them is quite a challenge – they just go with the same cruise-control imposed speed at all time and sometimes end up in the wrong lane. If the bus from Bogota was driving like that, I am happy I was asleep for the whole night...

Both weather and scenery improve with each kilometre. The flowers on the trees have fantastic colours. We notice palm trees with leaves shaped like Japanese fans and banana trees with bunches of fruit wrapped in blue plastic bags. We see green coffee plantation stretched out on the

Photographing hummingbirds is a difficult task - they move too fast.





SOUTH AMERICA

COLOMBIA

The luscious green mountains force frequent stops to take photos.



and then you can go even higher, on a vast paramo leading up to the Nevado del Tolima volcano. A visit to the "hummingbird house" is an amazing experience. However, taking photos of those restless tiny birds is a real challenge.

POLICE AND THE MILITARY

We feel that the wet season is coming close. One of the heavier rainstorms forces us to stop in Popayan – a charming and neat town. It is



Our little motorcycles coped bravely on the winding gravel roads of Colombia.



The police are a valuable source of information about towns - what to see, where to find accommodation and which neighbourhoods not to go into



SOUTH AMERICA

COLOMBIA

interesting that two men on one motorbike are not allowed in the city centre - it is related to frequent thefts and robberies, and the policemen enforce the ban effectively. The streets are basically a mixture of two colours - bright yellow and military green. There are plenty of police and soldiers marching on the streets in all directions. I wonder - just because they are there, does that mean it is safe or not? All in all, we don't feel any danger - we even visit a very local pub - a pool club where the locals spend their evenings.

EXCAVATIONS

There are quite a few archaeological parks in the area that are famous for pre-Columbian sculptures and handicrafts dug out of the ground, but we definitely won't be able to visit all of them, so we're focusing on one - San Agustin. The site I like most is the Forest of Statues, a path

in the woods where the sculptures stand on platforms, covered with cheap corrugated metal roofs.

A STORM IN THE DESERT

We haven't even reached the Tatacoa Desert yet, and it is already stunning. The closer we get to our destination the more impressive the landscape becomes. We decide to spend the night in tents. After setting them up we go for a short walk through the maze of gorges and rocks carved by water and changing their shape with every rainfall. The night is also full of events - fierce wind and a massive storm. Ironically, the biggest rain of the trip catches us in the desert.

You will find a continuation of this article in the next issue of "Road of Adventure"



It's beautiful? So the smile is



A machete is standard equipment when walking. Without it, there's no way to get through dense vegetation.



ADV HOPPERS

ADV Hoppers are an international couple of motorcyclists and adventure lovers: Agata Dudek and Joris De Poortere. Currently on a journey around the world, which you can follow on their blog and social media.





EUROPE

ROMANIA

ON THE WAY TO THE TRANSALPINA

TRAVEL BY MOTORCYCLE TO ONE OF ROMANIA'S MOST FAMOUS ROADS, INCLUDING SOME ATTRACTIONS ALONG THE WAY WHERE, AT LEAST IN MY OPINION, IT'S REALLY WORTH STOPPING.

Text and photos: FREEBIRD RIDER





Sucevița Monastery - frescoes covered almost the entire building, both inside and out.

Happy Cemetery - gravestones often depicted the sad fate that befell the deceased.



I have visited Romania for the first time in 2018. At that time, still as a motorcycle rookie, I went there to see the famous DN7C road called Transfogaraska. I liked the country so much that after three years I decided to go back there. Once again, in the seat of my faithful Honda Shadow I set off for Romania, this time with another legendary road as my destination: 67C - the Transalpina.

Each of my journeys has its own main point of destination, but I try to choose a route so that I can see as many interesting places as possible. This time was no different. I was planning to visit some places that I didn't see during my previous trip to Romania, so right after crossing the border I went to the Happy Cemetery. (entrance cost 5 RON)

This cemetery is located in the north of the country, near the border with Ukraine, and it is famous for the unique tombstones decorating the graves of the deceased. They are carved in wood and painted with many colors, and each of them depicts the deceased during his life, or



Happy Cemetery seems cheerful only on the surface

sometimes depicts the moment of his death. Thus, a shepherd's grave is beautified by an image of him with a flock of sheeps, a lumberjack at work in the woods, and a girl hit by a car...well, the scene of her death in just that way. The essence of the Happy Cemetery are the tombstone epitaphs, which describe in words the life of the deceased. Contrary to the name attached to the cemetery, they often show the sad, tragic fate of the people buried under them. Unfortunately, due to the fact

that they are in Romanian, many tourists miss the real meaning of this place. I myself discovered it only after my return, when I decided to discover word by word the meanings of the descriptions. Here are examples of some of them:

"I enjoyed traveling in foreign countries. I was making good money. I bought a car and found out I was dead. I would rather be alive than be a boy to rot. To have a beautiful bride rather than live in a dark grave. I lived 22 years."

"I was born in the countryside, where I found work. I was a driver in a milk factory. I was a handsome boy, but I was not lucky. I had a serious illness that finished me off. I came to this memorial and left life. I lived 58 years."

"Here I rest, Grigore Maiculi is my name. I worked at the airport and later was a state policeman and mayor. An inexorable illness cut short my life. I leave a grieving wife who will mourn me as long as the world exists."

"Here I rest, Pop Grigore is my name. I enjoyed riding the tractor. With the glass I quenched my longing because I was still upset that my father had left me when I was a child."



Bran Castle, although it looked interesting from afar, in reality it was an uninteresting trap lurking in the wallets of tourists.



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Maybe that was my fate. As a young man I gave up on life. Death took me at the age of 33."

"In the world, as long as I lived, Turda Amuta was my name. I am going to you, mother. I am even better here. I see that nothing disappears. I had two daughters. May God live with them and look after the grapes I left on my land."

Local artist Stan Ioan Patras is considered the creator of the "happy cemetery" and he was the first person who made a carved, colorful gravestone with a description here. This was in 1935 and throughout his life he made almost 700 tombstones. Interestingly, before his death, he also carved his own tombstone with an epitaph! His body also rests in this cemetery. Currently, the continuator of Stan Patras' work is Dumitru Pop Tincu.

The weather in Romania can be capricious and right after visiting the cemetery I fell into three days of rainy weather. Having learned from my previous visit to this country, this time I did not intend to dry my clothes, and quickly put on a waterproof suit. The rain did not stop me from visiting more places. One of them was Sucevița Monastery (entrance 10 RON). It was built in the 16th century and is famous for



Bran Castle - unfortunately I did not meet Dracula

its wall paintings, which cover most of the walls and are well preserved. It is one of the last such places in Europe. The number of different frescoes decorating the temple is impressive.

The next point of my route was Biczaz Gorge. It is an 8km long gorge with a road running along its bottom. High, vertical, stone walls surrounding the road give nice impression during the ride, but this section is no more than 300 meters long. The rest of the gorge is just ordinary mountain slopes covered by dense forest, so at least from the point of view of a motorcyclist, it doesn't give a

great view and doesn't differ much from other ordinary mountain roads in Romania.

Moving further south, I visited one of the most famous Romanian castles, which was Bran Castle (entrance 45 RON). It is advertised as the former home of the famous Dracula. The promotional slogans did not quite translate into reality. Starting with Dracula himself, it should be noted that the prototype of this book character, the famous Vlad the Impaler did not have his residence there at all, and historical records show that he could have spent only a few days at the castle. Advertising Bran Castle as "the seat of Dracula" is nothing else but a simple marketing trick. Unfortunately, it was probably necessary, as the castle does not have much to offer to tourists. Although from a distance it looked quite impressive, and the high walls rising from a soaring stone hill looked interesting, the walls were covered with modern plasterwork, which took away a lot of the old atmosphere from Bran. It was no different inside, where smooth, white walls killed the medieval potential of the building. Although these walls, dating back to 14th century, surely needed renovation, I've seen many castles, which despite modern





The Biczaz Gorge



The fabulously beautiful Peles Palace



Transalpine - everywhere you look, gorgeous green mountains.



Transalpina - at some moments the route was covered with clouds



A biker's paradise...



(entrance 40 RON). Beautiful walls enriched with countless ornaments of all kinds would make many architecture fanatics dizzy. Even greater magic began after entering the interior. There I was literally stunned! I have not seen such beautiful rooms even in the movies! I will not even try to name the styles of wall decorations or exhibits seen there, because it would take a whole encyclopedia of art. The only disadvantage were additional, quite large fees for taking pictures inside the palace (60 RON), and visiting the second level (40 RON). I took the cheapest option, which I actually regretted later.

Time to go to the destination of my expedition, which was the road 67C mentioned at the beginning, the Transalpine. It stretches for almost 150 km and crosses the Parâng mountain range in the Southern Carpathians, and the height it reaches at the Urdele Pass (2145 m) makes it the highest road in Romania.

renovation managed to keep their old look, and in Bran I had impression that it was done in the least possible way.

Bran Castle turned out to be a tourist trap, but the 19th century Peles Palace located 50 km away enchanted me with its fairy-tale appearance

The route leads through vast mountain landscapes, which saturated my eyes with their beauty and green color wherever I looked. In contrast to its Romanian sister, the Transfagaraska, the Transalpina seems calmer and easier to ride. There are no

sudden, steep hills to overcome with a large number of serpentines. The road seems to be more spread out, it does not suddenly jump over the mountains, but takes you slowly along them. On the one hand, it is less spectacular, the adrenaline is given here in small doses, but on the other hand, such an arrangement of the route allows you to enjoy the ride longer and take in the magnificence of the Carpathian Mountains. Transalpina as a Romanian bikers' paradise offering unforgettable experience. The ride along this route was definitely the most enjoyable experience during the trip to the Romanian land. However, it was not the last attraction during my visit to this country, because the day after, I visited Turda Salt Mine (entrance 60 RON).

The mine looked amazing and transported me to an unusual underground world. In the huge mine shafts, several dozen meters high, something like a theme park was created. There is, among others, a huge Ferris wheel, playground, billiard tables, mini-golf tracks, playground, and even an underground lake where you can take a boat ride (unfortunately, most of these attractions are extra paid). The magic of the whole mine gave numerous lanterns, which hanging from the ceiling,





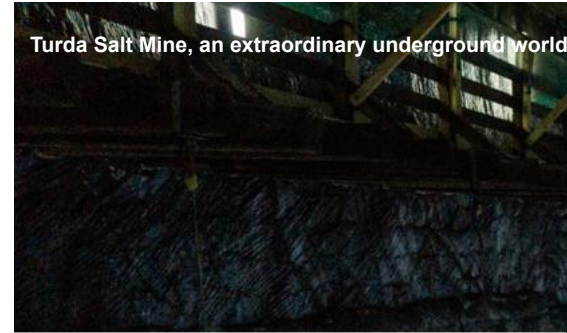
EUROPE

ROMANIA

illuminate the entire complex.

It was great to travel through Romania again, even despite the bad weather that made its presence felt during the first days of the trip. This country continues to amaze me with its familiar climate, especially in the countryside, where you are more likely to see horses than

tractors on the roads. People are kind and helpful, mountainous landscapes enchant with their beauty, and the multitude of all kinds of attractions, which I could choose according to my taste during the hike, made sure that I was not bored even for a moment.



Turda Salt Mine, an extraordinary underground world.

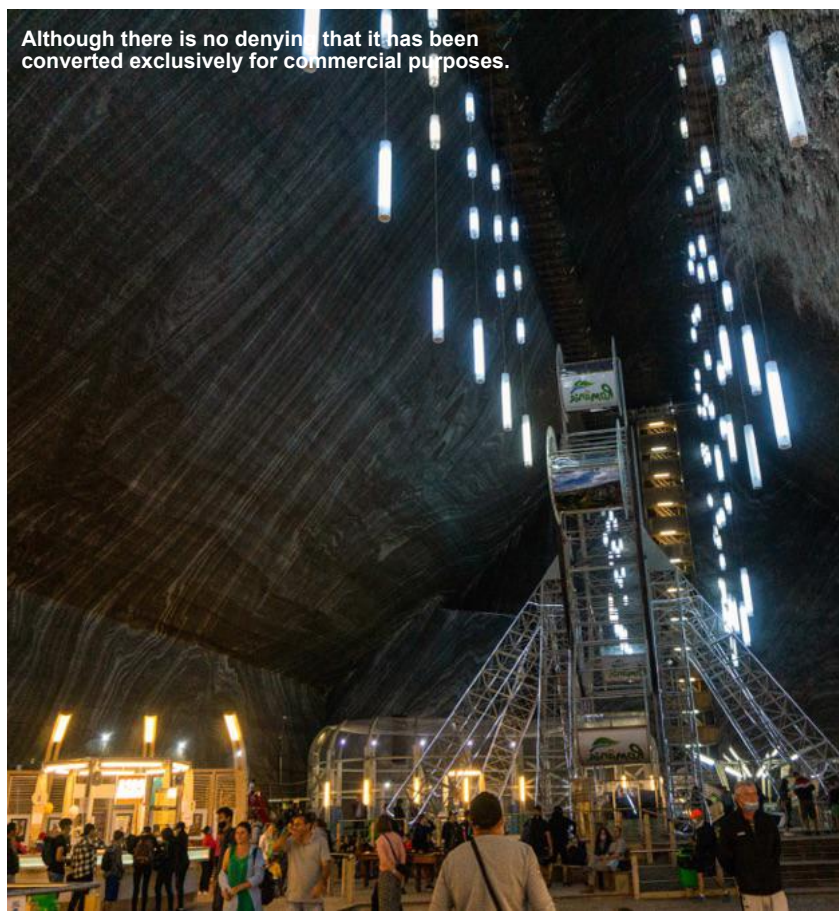


In Romania it is officially forbidden to spend the night in the wild, however, this regulation is considered defunct here, so you can pitch a tent without much concern. However, beware of wild dogs and bears.

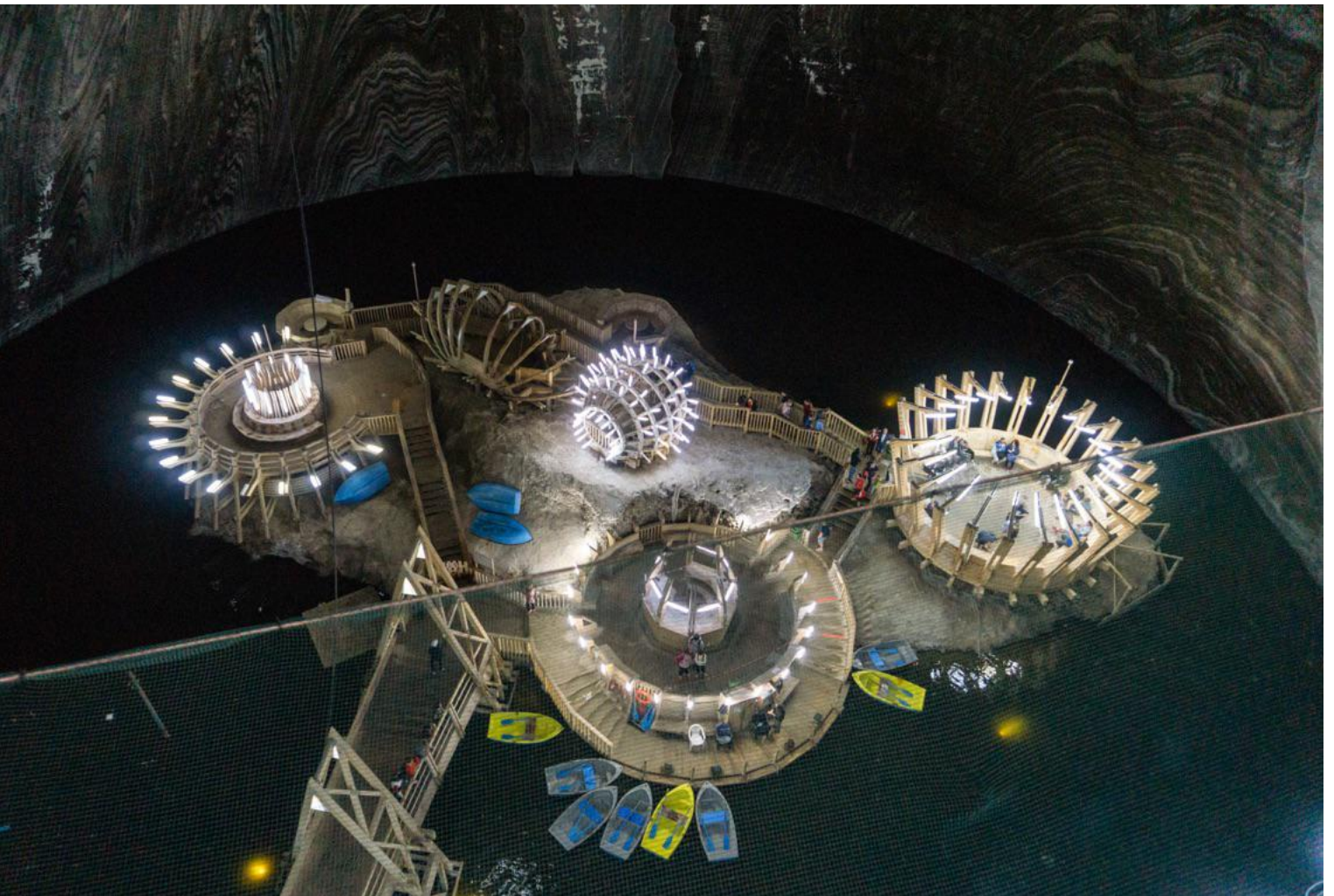
FREEBIRD RIDER

Under this pseudonym in the online world hides Paweł Nowak, a 29-year-old passionate about travelling alone. On his blog he willingly shares reports from his travels around Poland and Europe.





Although there is no denying that it has been converted exclusively for commercial purposes.





EUROPE

KOSOVO



BALKAN OFF-ROAD EXPEDITION

A TRIP THAT I HAD BEEN LOOKING FORWARD TO FOR A LONG TIME, AND WHICH WAS UNDER GREAT QUESTION MARKS, DUE TO THE WORLD AND PERSONAL SITUATION.

Text and photos: WOJCIECH BORKOWSKI





EUROPE

KOSOVO

A direction not often chosen by motorcyclists. A destination not often chosen by asphalt bikers, and in my opinion, practically undiscovered by off-road routes. I went on a three week trip with my Afrika Twin, of which Kosovo was an indispensable and practically main element.

I've been there by motorcycle several times before and had happened to call Kosovo my second home. This time Kosovo made it by far the most extreme motorcycle trip I have ever been on.

I started the journey alone, the rest of the team had less free time than me, and I wasn't going to waste my vacation not riding my motorcycle, so I visited Romania once again, but that's another story...

Before the trip I managed to reduce my luggage practically twice, which resulted in only 56.5L plus a small backpack with camelbak. For the sake of curiosity I'll add that my equipment included full camping gear with a tent, sleeping bag, mattress, gas stove, a set of tools and literally everything to handle a solo trip.



After a few days of wandering alone, I was supposed to meet the team in Serbia. Due to the expensive roaming, after crossing the border I turned off the data transfer, which in theory could make it harder for us to find each other. Fortunately, the rest of the pack had brought with them a satellite phone, so I knew their exact position.

BWe seamlessly met before sunset. After warm hugs, a mass of shared jokes and smiles, we took the direction west to reach the Kosovo border. There were ten of us in total, nine guys and the wife of one of the group, Ewelina. Due to the rather large team and the late hour, we decided to spend the night on the Serbian side of the border. In



What do you mean where to go? Up ahead!



Crossing such rivers was the daily routine



EUROPE
KOSOVO



Sometimes we wondered if we were driving across or along the riverbed.



There must be some losses! If not in people, then in equipment.



Some approaches were too steep even for the drivers themselves

order to find a place to stay, we strongly strayed from the main road into the woods, fields, dirt and gravel roads.

Ready to set up camp, suddenly on the road we met hunters or poachers, probably drunk and equipped with long guns - the place was out of question. Despite language barriers we managed to "joke" for a while, calmly drive a few kilometers away and set up camp literally in some bushes.

The adventure in fact began the next day... We got up in the morning, rolled up and drove towards the border. We crossed it without any problems, although it took us some time. Mostly because of the heavy traffic and the need

to buy additional third party insurance for Kosovo. It is obligatory for every vehicle, has to be bought on the border and costs about 10 EUR.

After taking care of the formalities, we refueled the motorcycles and smoothly went off-road, starting our route. The route was designed by the team, due to the uncertainty of my participation in the trip I unfortunately did not take part in its creation, but the rest of the team did a perfect job. The route was created based on satellites, OSM maps and probably a few other sources. In order to facilitate the movement of such a large group, we divided into several small groups,

where each navigated the same GPX track and we just met on the route or camps, or not at all ... :D

From that moment we started to drive off-road in Kosovo. At first the weather was not good, because it had been raining constantly for two days. Fortunately, the roads were very rocky, so the rain did not significantly affect traction. Due to the harsh conditions, we had to use asphalt for some of the stages. After a while, I started to have a problem with the side footpegs, which got badly bent. I tried to fix it at a local garage... which helped only for a while. During the visit I asked the locals if they had local alcohol rakija - they said no, but invited me into their Mercedes, offering to help and give me a lift to the local „source". As it turned out, it worked out even better - my driver gave us local alcohol as a gift. Unfortunately, the repair of the footpeg did not go well and from then on I had to jump on and off the bike on the run, which was a great opportunity to practice my balance.

Trying to ride mostly off road, we rounded the northern part of Kosovo, whose local nature is simply unearthly. During this trip I experienced probably the most exciting motorcycle day of my life. While riding up to the top of the mountain, we had to cross a deep and rushing creek. It went smoothly for everyone, but once we got to the top, we found that there was still a lot of snow at 1900 meters above sea level, blocking the passage. We had to turn back. On the way back, I flipped my motorcycle over in the creek, which had already challenged me once.

Luckily I didn't flood the bike, but I became all wet in seconds. The moment this happened, I didn't know that it would be just the boring beginning of the story... After embracing myself and the



EUROPE

KOSOVO



Camp everyday life

moto, we drove down further. It turned out that the road we had entered was an active landslide and no longer existed.... The snowmelt simply cut off our descent. We had no way out, we had to get through somehow, but we spent a lot of time there, in a way risking our health... Fortunately, the day ended successfully and was amazing.

Kosovo is just beautiful,

although it was quite challenging at times. Africa endured the journey bravely, although it was not without troubles. At the beginning my handlebar broke due to the weight of navigation, then I got a flat tire, and in the end it turned out that probably from the river fords I have dead bearings in both wheels. Fortunately, with the help of local peoples, who are simply great, such problems were quickly solved.

While climbing one of the passes I damaged one of the engine cover with a stone, which resulted in leaking oil. We cleverly sealed the cracked engine cover with poxiline, literally in the middle of nowhere. The procedure went well, although after calm consideration and due to the circumstances, I decided to leave the group. I decided that a small parking off-road could kill my engine and ground me somewhere in the



mountains... I finished the journey alone, tangled in asphalt for 6 more days on the roads of Albania, Kosovo and Macedonia, and what was funny, during one of the stops I burnt my forehead looking under the motorcycle to see if I am leaking oil. :D

This trip was an amazing adventure for me. Besides the beautiful views, all the situations made the trip more interesting and added to the spirit of the adventure, just convincing me that there is no situation you can't get out of. The people of Kosovo are very helpful, kind, accommodating and didn't want any money for help, mega supportive of travelers. I love this nation! Back home, I managed to dispel a myth - I confirm that you can enter Serbia from Kosovo when you entered Kosovo from a country other than Serbia.

In total, I spent 19 days on the road and covered 5200km! I spent 10 days alone, covering 3900km. The remaining 9 days I spent in the company of



A natural, almost private, bathroom at 1,500 meters above sea level.



EUROPE

KOSOVO

a great team, traversing the deepest parts of Kosovo and Albania, which can only be seen with enduro bikes! Big thanks to the whole team, great company and wonderful time spent! Sleeping in the wild, swimming in streams, washing in rivers. Definitely my best motorcycle trip so far! Challenging terrain and great views!



The fenders were all stuck with clay



Well, the fun is over!



WOJCIECH BORKOWSKI

Wojciech Borkowski, for everyone simply Borek. He has been riding a motorcycle since 2012. Motorcycle is his whole life. He rides and trains on heavy touring enduro, his beloved Africa Twin. Spontaneous solo trips, sleeping in the wild, swimming in rivers, cooking on fire and never-ending wandering. This is what he loves most about traveling by motorcycle. :)





EUROPE

UKRAINE

STILL UNDISCOVERED UKRAINE - CARPATHIANS AND ODESSA

THE EAST IS A DESTINATION THAT MANY FEAR, AND FOR ME IT HAS ALWAYS BEEN THE MOST EXCITING AND INTERESTING DESTINATION.

Text and photos: MONIKA CZERNIEJEWSKA



Kod



EUROPE

UKRAINE

The idea for a trip to Ukraine was born during my first visit there in 2019 when Ukraine was just part of the transit leading me to the Pamir. Even then I knew I had to come back there. I dreamed of the Carpathian Mountains. Still wild and full of local folklore and one day on the beach at the Black Sea :) In addition, there were two very important advantages of such a trip: it is relatively cheap there + most importantly (!) there is delicious food :)

As far as crossing the border with Ukraine is concerned, everything went very smoothly, without bigger queues, even this time despite covid (vaccination/test) and



Camping morning



Without queues, crossing the border is a real pleasure

the need for additional insurance I showed everything on the phone and the whole border crossing lasted maybe 10 minutes. I crossed the border in Krościenko. Immediately after the border on the right side behind a large tree stands a lady where you can exchange money at a very good rate (checked info from a friend). So I did :) Ukraine welcomed me with a beautiful sunset and a new asphalt road leading practically to Truskawiec where I slept.



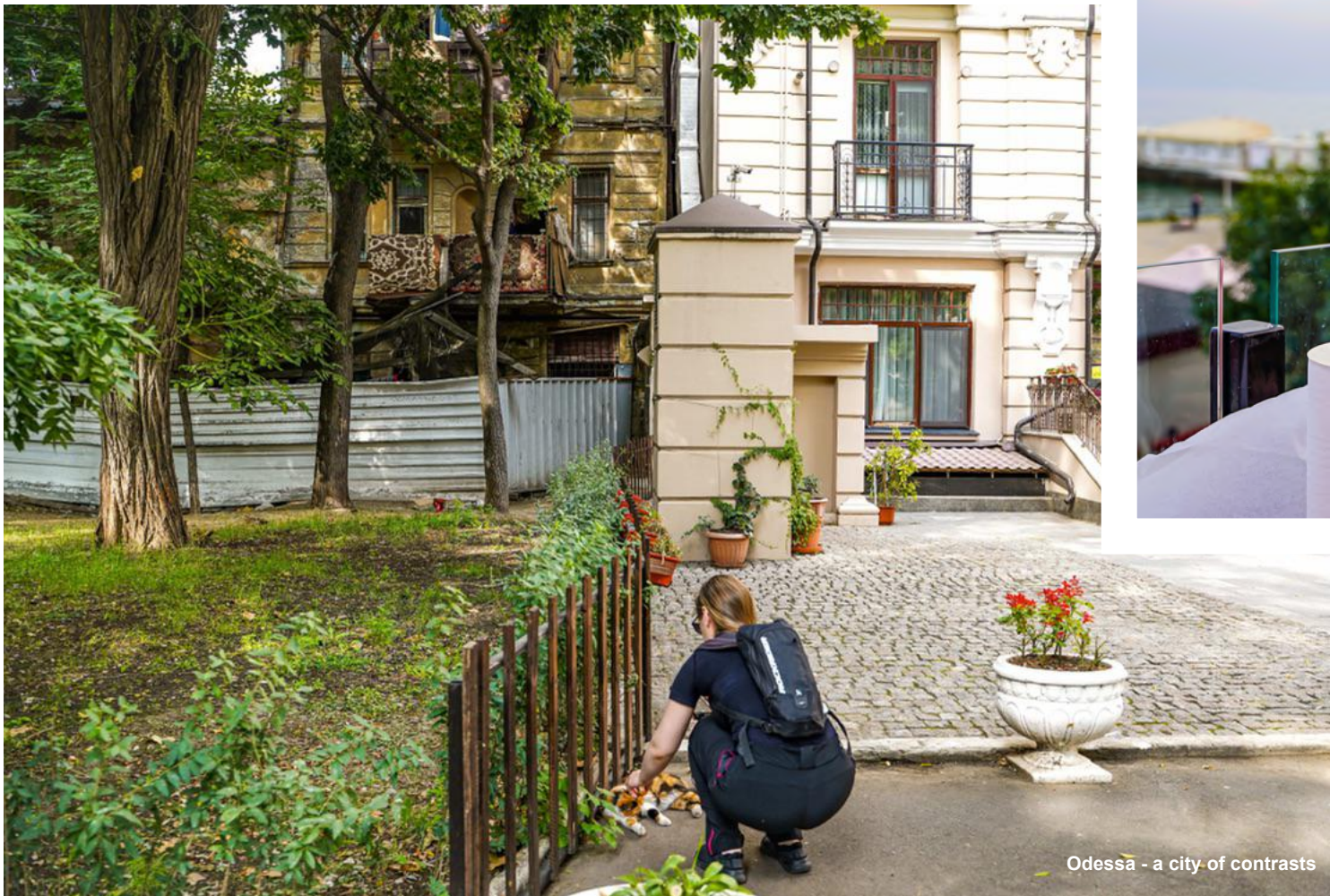
Annoyance and fatigue visible even in the photo ;)



Just lying there enjoying the view



Odessa - Arcadia Beach



Odessa - a city of contrasts

A GOOD OFFROAD IS NOT BAD

Going to the Carpathian Mountains I did not plan the route beforehand and decided that I will ride where it will be nice and will be nice views. I thought it will end on light gravel and delicate off road. How wrong I was :) The cool trails started with nice gravel where you could look sideways and admire the wild mountain scenery, but then the road ended and began to be very demanding sections for my heavy bike. You know how it is, you never want to go back the same way and you just keep going. We were riding two bikes so I could afford to be a bit crazy and possibly have some crashes. There were a lot of steep descents and climbs, deep ruts. On the plus side, it was dry. Occasionally we had to



Luxury for me is good food and a full bottle

cross some mini river, but that was fun in itself. The trails were mostly along rivers and only occasionally a few locals' houses or small towns would pop up. There were also quite a few abandoned small houses and wooden cabins. In one I found very old photos, it was great to see what it used to look like. The views were

beautiful, green, mountainous and wild. It was worth the sweat on those difficult sections to see all those valleys and abandoned places from above.

ODESSA - A CITY OF CONTRASTS

Generally I don't like to visit big cities, I definitely prefer nature and avoid big metropolises on motorcycle trips. However, somehow I was curious about Odessa and its coast. 2 days were completely sufficient. In addition, as it is the case with every trip, it was time to wash the pants to have it clean for the return trip and it was a good opportunity ;) The city is like a city, a lot of traffic, a lot of people. But you can feel that it is in the East. In the very center of the city, between office buildings, spilled at least a ton of watermelons on the sidewalk



EUROPE

UKRAINE

and the sale continues at best. A city of great extremes. On the one hand, in the very center of the city there are polished tenement houses near the Opera House, and right behind them there are tenement houses like from the slums. Lots of cheap kitsch and trash, and fancy bars right next to it. It was nice to see it live, plus eat good food cheaply and have a drink around every corner for 10 PLN. The center of Odessa itself is not very big. In addition, I also went to see the most famous stretch of beach in Odessa - this "party" part with an amusement park. There, unfortunately, was even more kitsch and trash, but it had its own charm. It is like with Krupówki in Poland - some people love it, others hate it :) After two days of drinking and eating Ukrainian delicacies we had to get back on the motorbike. I was sure that I would be able to have a little fun in Odessa, but the beach was hopeless, dirty and very crowded, so I went

towards Romania and there I found a nice place to chill :) There were lots of jellyfish and curious children, the water was not too warm, but still it was cool and different than usual at my beloved Adriatic Sea.

IS IT WORTH TO VISIT UKRAINE?

Probably a lot of you will think that there are many nicer places in the world than Ukraine. Definitely yes, you are right, but the uniqueness of the places we go to is not only their beauty, but the atmosphere and the people. Ukrainians are very friendly and empathetic. Of course they probably start a lot of conversations because of my gender and surprise that I ride a motorcycle. But still, they are much more open and empathetic towards strangers :) It's very cool! Additionally, time seems to flow more slowly there. You just want to be there and come back.

TIPS

How to pay? - If you go off the main routes then only local currency, but on the main routes you can easily pay everywhere by card.
Where to eat? - best in roadside bars. It is the tastiest and cheapest. Go where there are many local peoples or truckers :) I could eat

MONIKA CZERNIEJEWSKA

Monika z MotoHero - pozytywnie szajbnięta motocyklista, która od 10 lat przemierza świat na motocyklu. Uwielbia jeździć z asfaltu by odkrywać dzikie miejscówki. Kocha naturę i dzikie campingi nad wodą. Plan na najbliższe lata - jak najszybciej wyjechać w podróż dookoła świata! Więcej zdjęć i relacji znajdziecie w jej profilach na mediach społecznościowych.



Cheap and delicious...

Ukrainian borsch and pielmieni every day! For example, for 2 pieces of borsch with bread, pork fat and garlic, plus one portion of dumplings with meat and plenty of water, it cost 24 PLN. Where to sleep? - Tent, roadside accommodation, hotels/guest houses from bookings. Sample accommodation in a very good standard in the center of Truskavets - 64 PLN for a double room.
Internet? - It is best to buy a local sim card and use it as a hotspot for other devices. I bought a SIM card with unlimited internet for about 50 PLN.



Beach friends



How can you not relax in such an environment?





OCEANIA
NEW ZEALAND



IN TIME BEFORE THE WORLD CLOSES

FJORDS - THOUGH NOT IN NORWAY. GLACIERS, BUT NOT IN THE ARCTIC. GEYSERS, BUT NOT IN ICELAND. ONE OF THE MORE FAMOUS MOVIE SETS, OTHER THAN HOLLYWOOD. FINALLY, COUNTLESS CURVES WITH FABULOUS VIEWS IN THE "NON-EUROPEAN ALPS". ALL THIS IN A COUNTRY WITH AN AREA SMALLER THAN ITALY OCCUPIES.

Text and photos: MAŁA I DUŻY W PODRÓŻY





OCEANIA

NEW ZEALAND

New Zealand has been a dream of ours for a very long time. Since we belong to those who act rather than dream, in the summer of 2019 we decided to realize our plans about a trip to the antipodes. We started looking around for airline tickets or gathering information on motorcycle rentals, because that's how we wanted to visit the islands. We were researching what to see and where to go. The three weeks we were going to spend in New Zealand are definitely not enough to get to know this country. During this time it is possible to "lick" it at most.

In early February 2020, less than two weeks before our departure, covid fever began to rule the world. We watched with growing concern as the situation developed. A week before departure, it turned out that New Zealand does not



accept tourists who have even touched the China region with a small finger on the map. And on our tickets the connecting port was Hong Kong. The end, there is no way - airlines cancel flights, change routes.

We watched in horror as the result of our six months of work began to fly away, not necessarily with us on board... After a quick discussion we agreed - we buy new tickets and go. If we don't follow through, it may turn out that the next opportunity may not come again for a long time. Not only the airplane flights change, but also the directions in which we fly to get to our destination. Instead of Prague there is Zurich, Hong Kong is changed to Chicago and on the way back we will greet... Japan. We will circle the entire globe, but we are flying!

After about 45 hours of travel we arrive to New Zealand. The time difference between Poland and New Zealand is even 12 hours. It's daytime in Auckland and to overcome jetlag we almost force ourselves to go sightseeing.



The Sky Tower in Auckland really is very impressive.

There are four of us - the gentlemen get a BMW GS750 and I get a good old Honda Rebel 500. See on the right how a real motorcycle looks like



Milford Sound road closed due to landslide after rainstorm





OCEANIA
NEW ZEALAND

Cook Mountain, New Zealand's highest peak, 3724 meters above sea level.



Taranaki - an active volcano with an altitude of 2518 meters above sea level.

We start from Sky Tower - the highest tower in New Zealand, to admire the panorama of the city from a height of 300 meters. Then we take a double-decker bus around the most important tourist spots and we look forward to the next day. It is important for us because we are moving to the South Island to Christchurch - the city where we will take our motorcycles and it is there where our adventure will really begin.

NATIONAL PARKS

New Zealand has 14 national parks with a total area of 30,000 km², which is about 10% of the total area of the country. Five of them are listed by UNESCO. Most are located on the South Island - in our opinion greener, wilder. We planned each day to drive about 250-300 km, depending on the area. The left-hand traffic paralyzed us at first, but with every kilometer we drove the change of sides did not make an impression on us. One of the first parks was Arthur's Pass National Park, bisected by Route 73, known as the Great Alpine Way. Our heads turn again and again and the views are breathtaking. We headed toward the next park,



Banks Peninsula, formed by volcanic craters now flooded by ocean waters

Fiordland National Park. We wanted to see Milford Sound bay. A few days before our arrival, violent storms passed through the area, causing the only road to the bay to slide more than a meter and become impassable. We had to change our plans.

Cook Mountain National Park, the next on the itinerary, takes its name from the highest mountain in New Zealand. We arrived at a campsite located just off the road to the top and saw a flock of Kea parrots, endemic birds of the continent. The birds are the

bane of tourists - with their sharp beaks they break seals in cars and bend car antennas. We watched as a girl came out of one camper and chased the parrots away with a broomstick. She said that a moment's inattention or an open window causes the parrots to go inside and wreak havoc. We noticed that the top of the mountain was covered in a strange looking snow. In later conversations we learned that the brown coating on the snow was ashes brought from Australia, which had been consumed by fires a while earlier.

Kea parrot, one of the endemic examples of New Zealand fauna



During one of the coffee stops we spread the map and try to locate our position. At one point a motorcyclist comes up to us and starts a conversation. You know, a kind of "small talk" - where we are from, where we are going. He suggests a slight correction of the planned route and a descent to the Banks Peninsula, which is the remains of two volcanoes whose craters are flooded by ocean waters. The lay of the land allows us to go around a significant part of the peninsula, enjoying the views at every turn.

We slowly headed towards the



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Rotorua National Park - geothermal geysers



Whangamomona, a 1902 hotel on
Forgotten Road





Meeting of vintage American cars

the "Forgotten World Highway" was being repaired. Asphalt was being laid and shoulders were being repaired. A short conversation with the road engineers, a friendly smile and we have permission to drive. Some new asphalt, some gravel, some mud and lots of dust - that is how the road looked like. My old Honda was bouncing on bumps and stones like a ball, but we managed. The route ends in Whangamomona. The town has one street, a post office, a museum and a hotel from 1902. Interestingly, it has only 10 registered permanent residents, but is visited by about 25,000 tourists a year.

Another day, another kilometers. We drive to Rotorua, a city very important for the Maori - the indigenous people of New Zealand. We are interested in thermal geysers, which are considered the New Zealand capital of geothermal phenomena. In the park you can see the Puhutu geyser, which makes a show for us and ejects steam and water every few minutes for over 20 meters, and the

strong smell of sulfur does not allow to breathe normally. Maori have their faces and especially their beards tattooed in characteristic patterns. We watch them perform in the only Maori theater on the reserve and admire their national HAKA dance.

Anyone who has watched "The Hobbit" or "The Lord of the Rings" knows what kind of houses their characters live in - tiny ones. We go to Hobbiton, to see for ourselves where Frodo and Bilbo lived with their friends. We leave the motorcycles in a huge parking lot, buy tickets and by bus, with a guide, we go a few miles away. Historia Hobbitonu jest zagmatwana.

Performances by the islands' indigenous people, the Maori, in Rotorua National Park are something you can't miss.

town of Picton to take the ferry from the port to the North Island to Wellington. Egmont National Park with Taranaki Volcano, which we really wanted to see is the first point of our tour. The volcano is an active volcano, considered to be slumbering. Its summit is usually covered by fog. We were a bit lucky - the peak showed up in our mirrors, when we were already resigned to return to the main route.

Driving to the hotel we found ourselves at a local celebration - a rally of old American cars. A closed town festively decorated and hundreds of polished cars, whose appearance makes your head spin.

When sitting at home and planning routes, it is impossible to anticipate surprises. The road through another national park called





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NEW ZEALAND



Commemorative photo with a Japanese woman in a kimono

narrow, with 381 mm gauge. The railroad was built by one man who used to pick clay from the hillsides for local potters. He covered the sides of the mountain with whatever he had at hand - there are walls made of bottles, tires, ceramics. Tickets need to be booked in advance, but we manage and wait only an hour for our tour.

We drive to Waitomo where there are caves with glowing bugs. Hundreds of blue dots can be seen on the "ceilings" and walls - these are the larvae of fireflies, which by glowing attract food. We are a little disappointed, because our cameras are not able to take pictures, it remains to keep these images in memory.

The deadline for returning the rented motorcycles is inexorably approaching. We change two wheels for four and now use the car with air conditioning to explore the areas above Auckland, from where we have to fly out in two days.

After the movie was made, the entire set was dismantled and the area was restored to its original state. However, after the release of the movie, people began to flock to see the Shire, which was no longer there. After the filming of the next installment, the movie setting stayed and became a huge tourist attraction. It's terribly commercial, you can't miss that, but it was worth coming here.

While sitting in one of the hostels, we found a leaflet about the town of Coramandel and narrow-gauge railroad, which you can ride. It turns out that the tracks are really



New Zealand's roads are different, give yourself more time

Hobbiton - Big didn't fit into the cottage, he will have to settle for the role of Gandalf...



Caramandel, a 2 km long narrow-gauge railroad made by one man



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NEW ZEALAND



The meals were not very varied

FOOD

Going to New Zealand I dreamed of fancy dishes, exploring flavors I had never encountered. Nothing could be further from the truth. Breakfast or dinner we usually did ourselves, and for dinners



we stopped somewhere along the way. The most popular dish on the menu was usually...hamburger or fish and chips. Nothing else. From time to time there was a salad, once a Thai soup or seafood, such as fish or shells. In this topic I feel a slight disappointment. Only coffee saved the whole culinary background. In every smallest town there is a cafe with freshly ground, aromatic coffee. This one we could not deny ourselves.

ACCOMMODATION

We went to New Zealand during the peak season, so we booked our accommodation before leaving. Our stay was supposed to be rather budget, so we usually slept in hostels, backpackers' dormitories, or bungalows on campsites. The basic requirement was access to a bathroom and a bed.

We spent 19 days on our dream trip. It was far,



sometimes hard, but it was definitely worth it. We traveled about 4,000 km on motorcycles, 1,000 km by car, drank countless coffees, saw sights that not everyone gets to see, circled the globe. We assumed a budget of about 15000 PLN/person. As a result of necessary changes it came out about 17000 PLN from each of us.

MAŁA I DUŻY W PODROŻY

Mała i Duży w Podróż (Small and Big on the Journey) - for 5 years they have been enjoying every day spent on motorcycles together. They constantly suffer from notriphobia - the fear of the moment when they won't have another trip planned. They work together - he comes up with the directions and plans the routes, she takes care of the visas and accommodation. For them, the route is less important than the people they meet on it.



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