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WHAT'S WRONG WITH...
MICHAEL YANG



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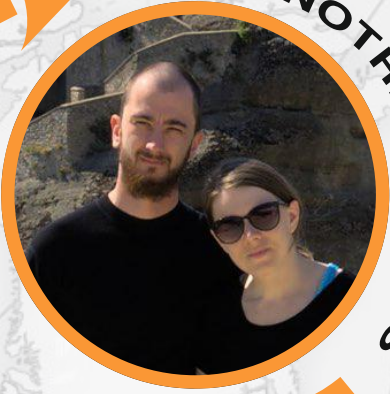


THEY WRITE FOR YOU

GARY WOOD



YET ANOTHER BIKERS



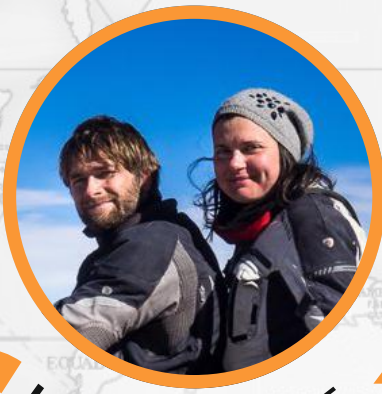
AD HOPPERS



POZNAŃSKI SZWENIACZ



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FROM THE EDITOR

Howdy!

Spring is approaching, and everyone is looking impatiently at the weather forecasts to get on their beloved two wheels again and set off ahead. We know very well that cool feeling when we start planning our next trips again, when we can already say that we are leaving in a month or two. We know the excitement before, developing routes, reviewing guidebooks, because planning is really part of the whole trip. Probably some of you have already chosen directions, and we hope you will share your adventures with us in the pages of RoA. Meanwhile, for those who are still looking we come, as always, with a whole lot of new inspiration and wonderful stories written by motorcycle travelers.

Drive safe!

Karolina Kowalska

BUY US A COFFEE



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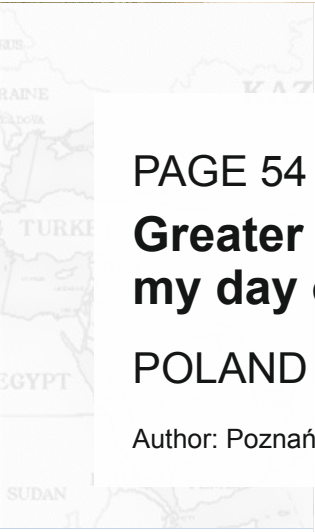


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WHAT'S WRONG WITH MICHAEL YANG

FROM THE PACIFIC TO THE ATLANTIC - LISA DILLMAN, A FORMER REPORTER WITH LOS ANGELES TIMES, INTERVIEWED MICHAEL YANG DURING AND AFTER HIS TRIP ACROSS NORTH AMERICA FROM LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA, USA TO ST JOHN'S, NEWFOUNDLAND, CANADA, AND BACK

Photos: Michael Yang, Karl Park

Author: Lisa Dillman





In June of 2022, Michael Yang undertook a 40-day, 12,258-mile motorcycle trek that wound through the United States, Canada, and Mexico. Midway through the journey when he was at Canada's Easternmost point - the island province of Newfoundland, Yang took a plunge into the freezing cold waters of the Atlantic Ocean to mark the end of the first half of his journey. Accordingly, after Yang wound his way back to California, there was only one way to mark the end of a memorable trip. With a similar plunge, into the Pacific.

The La Canada, Calif., resident and Silicon Valley internet startup veteran changed into swimming shorts and dove into the water by the Santa Monica Pier.

"Route 66, the End of the Trail was my final destination" explained Yang, whose family was there to welcome him upon his return. *"My mom said the 40 days felt like a year. She was so relieved I came home safely."*

This, by far, was Yang's longest and most-arduous journey since he rekindled his love of motorcycle riding about eight years ago when he and his family moved to Southern California from the San Francisco Bay Area to be closer to his aging parents. Yang made his mark in Silicon Valley by starting mySimon.com, the internet comparison shopping site which was sold to CNET in 2000, and later invested in tech stocks and Bitcoin which turned out well.

Nevertheless, Yang felt there was another side to the entrepreneurial spirit, an eyes-wide-open sense of adventure that he wanted to pass

along to his three sons and daughter, who range in age from 10 to 19. He wanted to embrace the wonder of the open road and that sentiment had been getting harder and harder to push aside.

"It was a great experience as an entrepreneur, coming up with an idea for a website to compare prices for online shopping, building it up, raising venture capital, and selling it at a high valuation," said Yang, who turned 61 in August. *"That was a great experience and accomplishment, but I think what I'm doing now is different."*

"Instead of a business venture or industry – exploring the world on a motorcycle - this is more like a hobby or sports or passion. I want my kids to know that life is more than just work and family and other things. We need to have things we enjoy doing and pursue that to the fullest."

Still, this didn't stop Yang from questioning himself during the 40-day trip when we spoke several times throughout his journey. An exhausted Yang dug deep at the end of Day 16 of non-stop riding, more than 5,000 miles into the trip, at an RV park in Labrador, and wondered:

"What am I doing here?"

"I found out that there's a book with that title written by another motorcycle traveler," he later said, laughing.

"My answer is that when I started out - it was fun to me, an adventure, a challenge. Riding over

12,000 miles on a trip is a test of one's endurance and mental willpower. Getting to see new places that you haven't seen before is fun."

"I get a lot of joy from seeing the grand landscape of the places because I feel like there's got to be a creator that's created all of this."

Yang had a riding friend Karl Park who started from Seattle for part of the trip. At first, he was a bit apprehensive during the times he was riding solo.

based in Minnesota, who was tracking Yang's movements noticed he was approaching the Twin Cities and invited him for a lake boat ride, a swim, and lunch afterward in White Bear Lake. A couple of weeks later, Yang's motorcycle tipped over on the side of the road when he stopped to take a picture to capture his entry into New Brunswick.

"I was able to continue riding to the next stop riding with a broken windshield and an airbag vest that was deflated," Yang said. "It wasn't dangerous but those things happen."



"Last year, I rode by myself for four days and I gained some confidence" Yang said. "There's a special feeling you get when you're riding alone and I'm getting more used to it. It's not always easy to find somebody to go long-distance riding together with because of work, family, and other priorities."

But in another sense, he was not alone.

Yang had a legion of other adventure motorcycle aficionados following along, seemingly mile by mile, via his personal Facebook page and one with a much larger footprint (BMW R1200GS), a group with a worldwide reach and 67,000-plus members.

The pages helped provide newly formed friendships and prompted one Good Samaritan to come to his rescue in July. Another member,

Fortunately, a rider – located about an hour and a half away in Moncton, New Brunswick – saw Yang's Facebook post and pictures and got in touch, volunteering that he had a replacement windshield for Yang.

"I reached out to him and he texted me his address and he was waiting for me in his driveway with his wife," Yang said. "He sold a windshield to me at cost, less than half the cost of a new windshield. He was an auto mechanic and replaced it for me for free."

"It's just amazing that we motorcycle riders have this community. I was able to stay in touch with travelers. They love following me on the trip, but they gave me hints to check out and what route to take and where to get help if I need it."

"Even three, four thousand miles away from





home I felt like I had support locally.”

There were moments of humor on the immersion tour, too.

Yang got ‘screeched in,’ becoming an honorary Newfoundlander, kissing a frozen cod. That captured and held the attention of his children when they spoke on their next Facetime call.

“They were like, ‘Uh, you kissed a cod, a dead fish,’” Yang said, chuckling. *“Anthony Bourdain went to the same bar and got screeched in. It’s a fun thing – a lesson in culture for my kids. They had never heard of Newfoundland before*

and some of the local traditions.”

That first dip into the Atlantic Ocean on a sunny summer day captured what Yang called “the whole-body experience.”

“It wasn’t as cold as I feared or expected – it was refreshing and a bit chilly,” Yang said. *“I’m glad I did it.”*

Yang was born and raised in South Korea and emigrated to the United States when he was 14, settling in the San Francisco Bay Area. A year later, he was working part-time at a 7-Eleven store in San Jose and spotted teenagers riding









mini-bikes and small motorcycles around the neighborhood.

The seed was planted. He bought a used 100cc Yamaha enduro motorcycle from a teenager in the neighborhood for \$200. That motorcycle soon became his preferred mode of transportation. He loved riding rented bicycles as a child in South Korea but this was captivating.

"Sometimes, I feel like I'm flying five feet above the ground," he said.

For Yang, there's no question more adventures beckon. It's only a matter of when not if.

"I'm planning to ride around the world - I don't know exactly when," he said. *"God willing, I hope to ride from London across to Siberia and ride to Seoul in the next one or two years."*

"That would be totally different. Russia is a big factor right now because of the war in Ukraine. I

heard that I could get in and ride across Siberia. I'll have to do more research on that."

"Someone who has been following me said, 'You have traveled halfway across the earth.'"

The other half of the earth is waiting for Yang and his motorcycle.

Michael's dream is to ride his motorcycle all around the world, one continent at a time. He is lucky to have a wife Sunny and family who supports him in the pursuit of his dream though it is not easy sometimes. His next destination most likely is Prudhoe Bay, Alaska, and Ushuaia, Argentina before heading over to Eurasia and other places around the world.





AUSTRALIA
CAFE YORK



THE JOURNEY HOME

Text and photos GARY WOOD



ONE OF THE GREAT ADVENTURE MOTORCYCLE TRIPS IN AUSTRALIA IS THE RIDE TO CAPE YORK IN QUEENSLAND. CAPE YORK IS THE MOST NORTHERN POINT ON THE AUSTRALIAN CONTINENT. TO GET THERE YOU HAVE TO RIDE UP THE PENINSULAR DEVELOPMENT ROAD (PDR). THIS ROAD IS MOSTLY DIRT WITH BONE JARRING CORRUGATIONS, CHOKING BULL DUST AND AN ASSORTMENT OF WILD LIFE INCLUDING CROCODILES, KANGAROOS, AND POISONOUS SNAKES. IT IS ONE OF THE MOST ISOLATED AND WILD AREAS IN AUSTRALIA.



AUSTRALIA

CAPE YORK

If you read my previous story "Cape York Adventure" you will have followed my fellow bikers and I on our ride to the Cape. But that was only half the journey. We now had to get home.

It starts as we contemplate going back to camp. I'm standing on a rocky outcrop, in front of me is the Cape York sign. As much as I want to stay and breathe in the sea air and look into the beautiful azure waters of the Endeavour Passage, I have to turn my back on it and prepare myself for the journey home.

On the way back we stop briefly in the carpark and marvel at the stunning azure sea, coconut trees and in the distance the masts of two cruising catamarans.

Before returning to our camp at the Punsand Bay Camping ground for a much deserved party at the Corrugations Bar, we have to stop and get some t-shirts from a small shed known as the "Crocodile Tent". After all, "been there, done that and got the t-shirt" is a well used Aussie expression.



After our stop, I happen to look down and see Emu's radiator guard was wet, we had gone through a few puddles but the water was only on one side. There was that distinctive smell of leaking radiator coolant, and a closer inspection revealed a fine mist of hot coolant spraying out of the very top of my radiator.

I reached down and undid the radiator cap and true to expectations a large amount

of water had gone. The only thing I could do was ride to Bamaga and try and find a solution. We filled my radiator with our drinking water, and I headed out to ride the 25 kilometres to Bamaga.

The dirt track to Bamaga is a wide corrugated road with sweeping corners. Had it not been for my concern over the leaking radiator, it would have been a fun dirt road to ride. Instead it was a tense







AUSTRALIA
CAPE YORK





uncertain journey. I kept a constant eye on my temperature gauge, hoping it would stay cool.

Pulling into the small yard with a mechanics sign out front, I'm instantly accosted by three very large dogs, they look like pigging dogs, bred to run down feral boers.

The owner a middle aged Aboriginal man sends me up the road to a shop that sells the radiator stop leak, suggesting if it doesn't work to come back and he will weld it.

I thank him and ride out of his yard. I can see the dog's faces turn as I ride out, salivating as they watch me leave.

I'm looking for an automotive shop, but all I find is a random selection of shipping containers.

Having ridden past the containers a number of times, I start to think the automotive shop is somewhere behind them. I find the front door at the back and an older gentleman in his mid to late 60's is sitting behind a small

desk under the air conditioner.

After diagnosing my problem with the efficiency of a doctor, he makes two recommendations. I take both and go back out to Emu.

I fire up the engine, remove the cap and pour one third of the stop leak product into the radiator as per the instructions and I fill the remaining space with water and wait until all the bubbles have stopped appearing before putting the cap back on.





AUSTRALIA
CAPE YORK





Once back on the road, I feel more confident and relieved. I'm starting to enjoy the dirt and corrugated road back to the camping ground. About half way back to camp I stop on the side of the road to check the radiator, there's no leak.

Back at camp I check the water levels again, the simple solution seems to have worked for now. Good enough for me not to worry about our return journey and I went and joined the others at the Corrugations Bar.

Our plan for tomorrow was to reach Bramwell Junction Roadhouse, before a marathon ride of 600 kilometres to a pub called the Lion's Den Hotel.

Waking earlier than all the others I pack all my gear and quietly put water in my jet boil to brew my coffee. It's not long before Quentin who had also packed up, joins me for a cup. We sit in silence listening to

our fellow bikers stirring in their tents as the first birds make their morning calls.

Within 40 minutes we're all packed and ready to go, some campers are still blissfully asleep, but as I have a Yoshimira exhaust and Nick, Shayla, Flemming and Quentin also have modified pipes, the peace doesn't last long. We motor out of the camp ground and make our way across the small creek then down the corrugated dirt road to Bamaga.

After refuelling we leave and I'm following both Quentin and Flemming as we weave around corners and accelerate fast over the corrugations. It's deep jungle and rainforest which makes for a pleasant and enjoyable journey. At the turn off to the Bamaga Road I pull up and wait, Shayla is next to arrive and I tell her to carry on. I'm acting as sweep and ensuring everybody knows which way to go.

As Shayla rides off I hear Nick over the my intercom, F&%K I just hit a roo, then nothing. We're listening but there's no further comments. "Dad are you alright," it's Shayla with panic in her voice. It's only been four days since a young rider was killed up here after hitting a roo, and that plays heavily on our minds. "It's alright, I'm still going," he replied.

A couple of minutes later Nick's DRZ400 E comes into view, "I hit it square on, doesn't look like any damage." I wait until he's made the turn and follow him.

We regroup at the Bamaga Road and check out Nick's bike for any obvious damage. I check my radiator water, everything is okay. We start back down the horrendously corrugated dirt road to the Jardine Ferry.

At the Jardine I check the radiator again, a little bit of water has leaked out, so I top



AUSTRALIA

CAPE YORK



it up and take a deep breath, we're only half way down the Bamaga Road.

We finally arrive back to the Fruit Bat Falls track and the northern section of the Old Telegraph Track (OTT). This signifies the worst part of the road is now behind us. The Elliot Twin Falls is another spectacular waterfall just 14 kilometres on from Fruit Bat Falls. To get there we would ride 14 kilometres of deep red sand and bull dust and undertake a steep creek crossing.

I stood on the pegs and leaned back, keeping my revs fairly high as I dropped into the sand. I prefer to ride sand relatively fast but not at break neck speed as recommended by some people. I prefer to have some torque left over to pull out of any tricky situation.

Just as I was thinking of going up a gear, Rob came flying past me on his Africa Twin. I decided to pull in behind him, follow his line and speed up. But as I moved my weight forward to lift the gear lever up, the front wheel buried into the sand and I jerked forward. Instead of clicking up a gear, I went down.

For what seemed like an eternity, but was probably only five seconds, I wrestled the handle bar as the front of the bike twisted and bucked from side to side. All bike riders

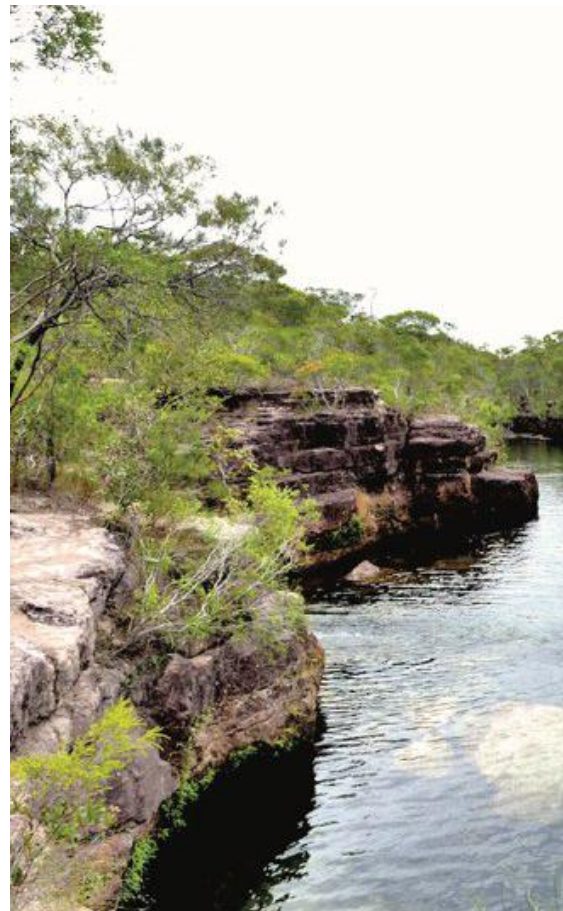
with experience in sand know, the only way to save this situation is to accelerate.

I pulled back on the bucking and twisting handle bar, stood up and twisted the throttle. The front wheel rose and the back dug in, Emu was screaming at about 7000 rpm, but I kept it constant until I was out of the deeper trenches then quickly changed up a gear and got the front wheel onto the top of the sand once again.

The rest of the ride was a little harrowing, there's no doubt mistake had shook me up and dampened my confidence. I managed to hold it together to get through the small but steep creek crossing and to the parking area at Elliot Twin Falls.

The falls themselves are spectacular and very different from Fruit Bat Falls. The river opens up into a big feeder pan before it cascades over a sharp narrow drop off. The water is funnelled into one small gorge. However, because the feeder is flat some water flows around the side forming a second series of water falls, hence the name "Elliot Twin Falls"

The water was a refreshing translucent green, with a strong current trying to drag us down stream. We could have stayed in the cool refreshing water all day, but it



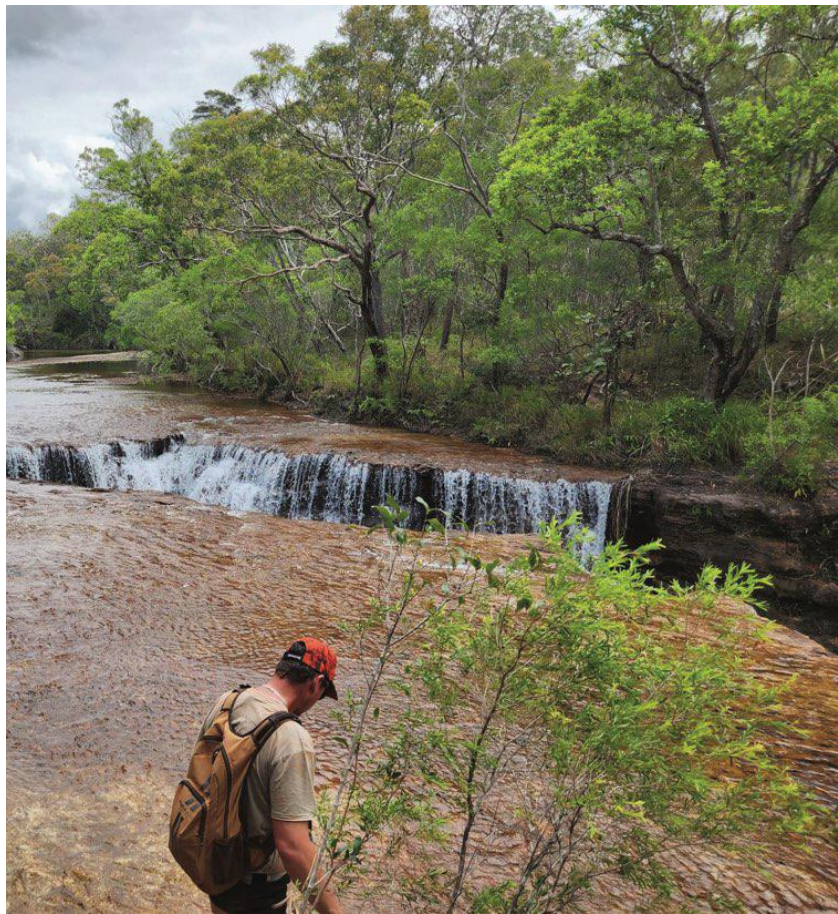
was getting late and we still had 109 kilometres of bull dust and dirt to ride before we could set up camp for the night.

Our destination was Bramwell Junction Roadhouse. I had to stop a number of times as the temperature gauge started to climb. At the second stop I filled the tank with the last dregs of my stop leak fluid.

Riding in this heat is fine providing you get air flow through your jacket, but when you stop you realise just how hot and still the air is. If I stayed here for any time, I was going to get heat exhaustion. A four wheel drive pulls up and the guys ask if I'm "OK". I give the thumbs up and they drive off. It's not far to Bramwell Junction. I continue on.

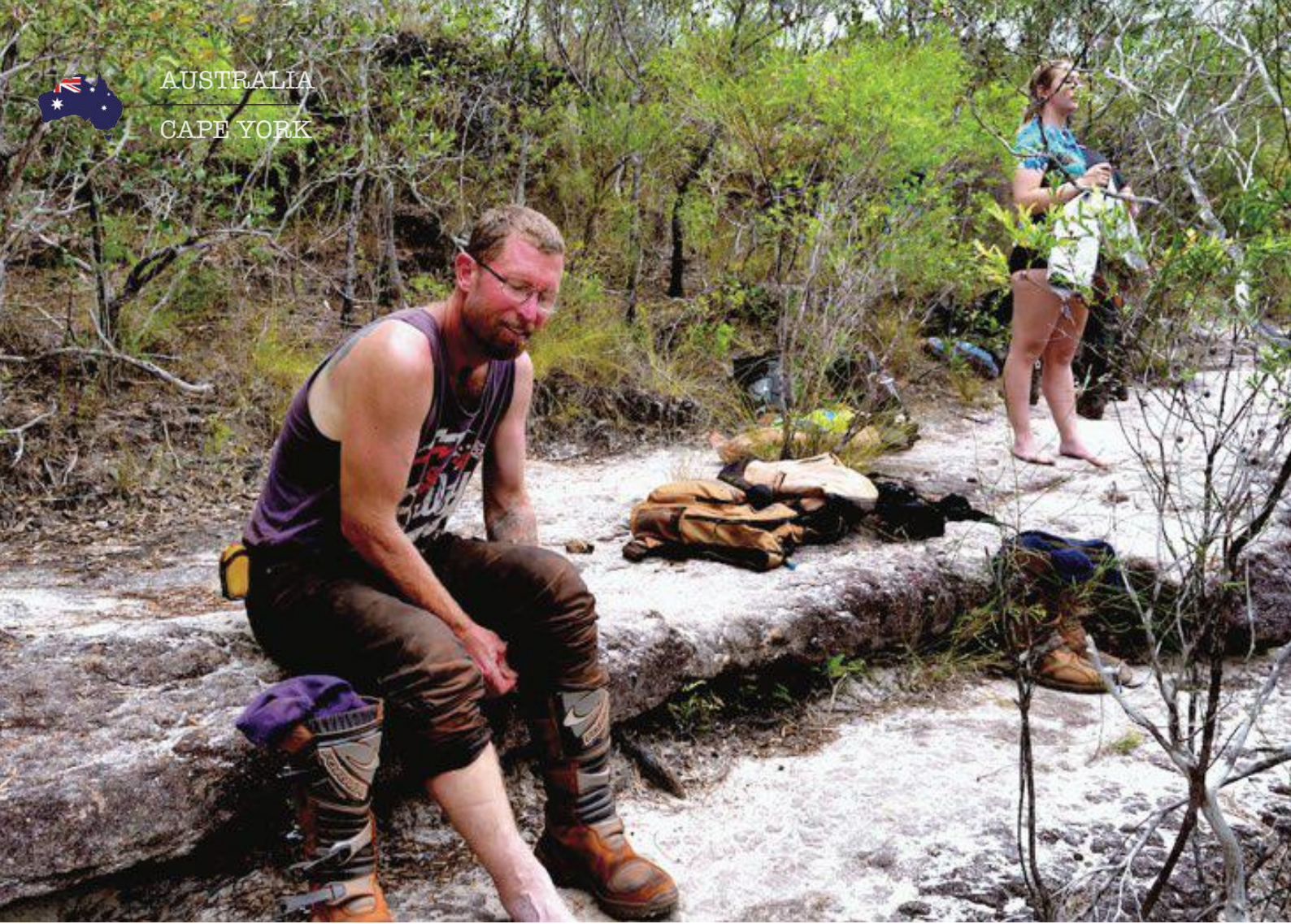
I'm the last to arrive at the bowser as Nick and Shayla have just topped up their long range tanks with fuel. When I pull up to the roadhouse, Quentin arrives. "Grab yourself a beer, I'm going to pull your radiator out," he says. I'm hot and sweaty so I







AUSTRALIA
CAPE YORK



just say "Yeah okay."

I have my first beer and the owner comes out with a bottle of "Seal It" "This will fix your problem mate," he says "I've had plenty of radiator problems here and I've had guys ring me saying they arrived home no problems with this stuff."

I pay my \$20 and go to where Quentin is cutting some fins out of the top of the radiator. One of the guys who passed me on the road has some radiator putty, so Quentin pushes it into the small hole he's made in the fins. We clamp the top of the tube to restrict water into that section, careful not to put stress on other parts of the radiator.

We put the radiator back together and pour the "Seal It" into the tank. To make it set I have to run the bike for 20 minutes, so I gear up and run up and down the road, as the sun's setting and the termite mounds start to glow bright red. I'm conscious the bar will be closed soon, so I go back and set up my camp and buy a round of drinks.

That night as we sit around cooking the last of our food, I'm talking with Nick about how Emu is handling. He gets

his tools "I think I know how to fix that," he says. He locks down my pre load by three clicks then adjusts the shocks rebound. We talk about balancing the bike, something I'm conscious of but I notice that when I pack I tend to have my tools on the side of the muffler and my softer lighter gear on the opposite side.

In the morning we pack early, I determine to balance my bike better by putting my tools and tent on the opposite side to the muffler and dropping as much heavy gear as low as possible in my panniers rather than my top bag.

Our journey today is a long one, we have to cover 600 kilometres or which 450 is on dirt. It will be a long tiresome ride, if we are to get to the famous Lion's Den hotel before nightfall. This is a bucket list item for Shayla so we all agree it's worth the effort.

As soon as I'm back on the dirt I can feel the difference in my bike's dynamics. The back end is set and stable, which helps keep the front wheel tracking straight. This is allowing me, for the first time on this trip, to look up and select the best line. I

accelerate to 100 kilometres per hour on the straights. Rob has taken the lead and I'm now sitting comfortably just out of his dust, matching his speed. The bike is handling beautifully and I'm feeling contented in the saddle.

Rob and I are the first to arrive at Coen to refuel. As we're moving our bikes off the pumps, three middle aged ladies in summer cloths, gold and pearls dripping off them, come over and ask if they can have photos with us next to our bikes. Rob and I dutifully agree to be action hero models as we put our arms around the ladies, puff out our chests and smile for the camera.

We are both riding with motor cross pants, t-shirts and body armour to keep as cool as possible, it's not the best look covered in red dust.

But it occurs to us later that night at the hotel, that we must have epitomised the essence of Cape York adventurers. For people sitting in an air conditioned four wheel drive bus, this must be one of the highlights of their trip (he says with a modest grin on his face).





We arrive at the Lion's Den Hotel at about 5pm. The Lion's Den is a right of passage for all adventure riders in Queensland. We are lucky to get a camping spot as it is a long weekend and we didn't book.

It was an awesome night at the hotel, even though there were a lot of people around, the atmosphere was great, the pizza's were tasty and the live country blues band fitted in perfectly with the mood of the revellers.

In the morning we head home via the world heritage Daintree Rainforest.

It's believed to be over 140 million years old, making it the oldest rainforest in the world.

We ride through the Daintree via the Bloomfield track, then cross the crocodile infested Daintree River on the ferry, before we ride onto Mossman.

I'm riding with Nick and Shayla, sitting just slightly back when they pull into Mossman Service station to

refuel. This is the end of our journey together, they will ride back up to Mount Molloy and Atherton and I will head south through Cairns and pull up somewhere near Innisfail for the night.

It's time to say goodbye. I give my new friends a hug, shake their hands and wish them safe riding as I watch them pull out into the highway. I wheel Emu over to the air compressor and pump his tyres to highway pressure.

As I pull out of the petrol station I can hear them talking over the intercom and see them turning at the Mount Molloy turn off. I say goodbye again over the intercom and get a chorus of "Ride safe, see ya next time and keep in contact," back.

This is probably one of the greatest adventure rides in Australia. It goes through rainforests, crocodile infested creeks and ends with the achievement of a much prized bucket list item and a few beers at an historic pub. We've seriously considered doing it again, but this time

stripping the touring gear off the bikes and having a couple of support vehicles.

GARY WOOD

Gary is an educator, adventurer and travel writer. He is the creator and author of the popular adventure travel blog Digital Swaggy.

He lives in North Queensland, Australia and regularly travels the remote corners of Australia on his Kawasaki KLR 650, "Emu."





EUROPE

GREECE





GREECE, A TRUE MOTORCYCLIST'S PARADISE

GREECE DELIGHTED US WITH ITS NATURE, SOUVENIRS AND HOSPITALITY. HERE WE FOUND PEACE FROM THE TOURIST HUSTLE AND BUSTLE. THIS COUNTRY IS A MUST-SEE ITEM FOR EVERY MOTORCYCLIST.

Text and photos: YET ANOTHER BIKERS



EUROPE

GREECE

It's the middle of September. The weather has just come breaking, it has snowed in the Alps and we are about to hit the road. We know it's supposed to rain and it's going to be chilly, but the prospect of going to southern Europe warms us up a bit. Literally and figuratively. After driving about 2,000 kilometers, we arrive in the country of tzatziki and good wine.

This is our first time in Greece. In the evening we cross the border. It's a bit chilly, but we still catch the evening sunshine. We drive on a practically empty highway to the town of Kastoria. Here we stay overnight.

The next day we have an ambitious plan. A tour of the monasteries of Meteors, which are UNESCO-listed, awaits us. We won't be doing much riding on the motorcycle. In less than two hours we are in the town of Kastraki. From here we will start our sightseeing.

Meteors are Byzantine monasteries that date back to the 14th century. An interesting fact is that the monasteries are built on top of



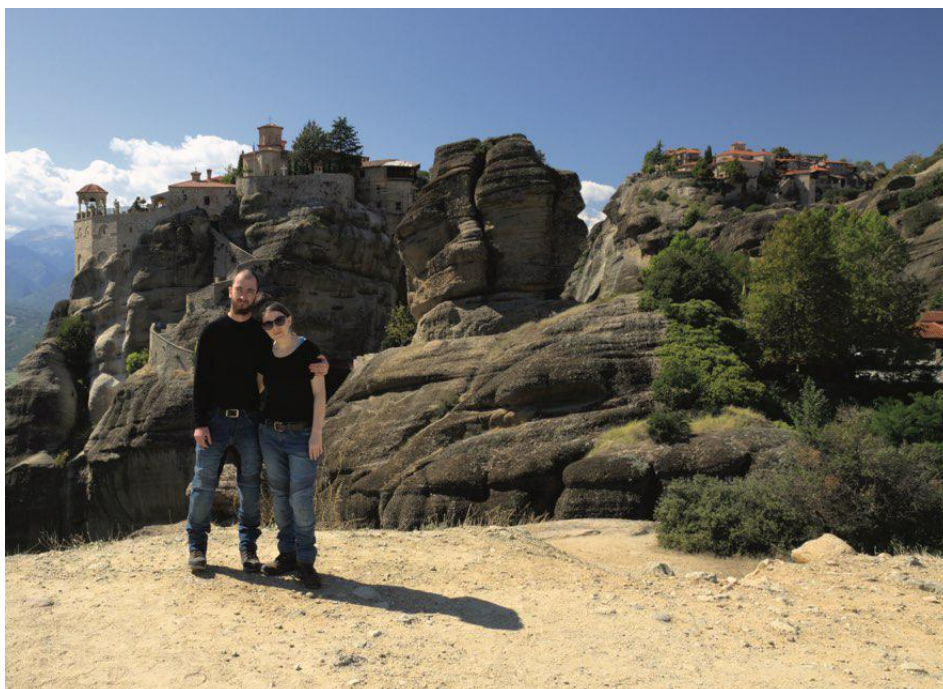
sandstone rocks. Of the 24 monasteries, only six have survived to this day (two female and four male). The monks carried the tools and stones for monastery construction on their own backs. It must have been quite a grind. Meteors is a very famous and touristic place and is worth a visit.

We are lucky to visit the Meteors at the end of the tourist season. There are fewer visitors, we don't wait in traffic, and most importantly there is somewhere to park the motorcycle.

We devote half a day to visiting the monasteries. But we still don't have time to see everything. We start the tour with the smallest monastery of St. Nicholas of Rest. This is the first monastery you will meet on the road from Kastraki. We are very lucky that we still have time to see the Great Meteors Monastery before it closes. We admire the other monasteries from a distance. Along the main road there are many places to stop and take photos. It's a good idea to check the opening hours before visiting, as not all monasteries are open daily. Admission to the monasteries costs just €3. It's good to have comfortable shoes on your feet, as you have to climb a lot of stairs here.

We are quite tired after an eventful day. Fortunately, we don't have to go anywhere far. We spend the night in Kastraki overlooking the Meteors.

The next day we set off for Baros Pass (Mparos), which is located at an altitude of 1898 m. The road that leads to the pass is one of the highest in Greece, it is 24 kilometers long and leads from Anthousa to Matsouki. The route that leads to the pass is marked on Google Maps with white, thin threads. We know that there is supposed to be some asphalt there, but we are not counting on miracles.









We drive on a narrower paved highway towards Mourgkani, then through Amaranto and then on into the mountains. Sometimes on the roadway some surprise awaits us in the form of a larger hole, mud or stones. Crazy driving here is out of the question. It's a beautiful, sunny day and we see the first signs of autumn on the trees. Along the way we encounter maybe a few cars. There is an incredible calmness here.

On the way to the pass we stop at the abandoned monastery of St. Theotokos. After a short pause, we continue driving to climb up the zigzagging highway in a short while. The serpentine are divine, a veritable marvel. The best part is that we meet one motorcyclist along the way. We have the pass all to ourselves!

At the pass we want to spend some time, but the cold wind gives us a hard time. We set off on the way back. We turn left, in the direction of Matsouki.

The road from the pass all the way to the village is in poor condition. We drive cautiously, constantly having to pay attention to the stones and mud that pile up on the roadway. In some places the

road is washed out. In general, it is difficult to stop safely here. In Matsouki itself, the streets are very steep. One piece Ondra has to descend alone. Phew..., fortunately he managed without scoring soil. We stop at the iron bridge to catch our breath.

The rest of the day we wander around the area. We pass smaller but charming towns. We drive through Ktistades, then Platanoussa, and finally reach Arta. The road is not only quiet, but also offers beautiful views of the Tzoumerka National Park.

From Arta, we're flashing along the busier Road 21 south. Since we are already in Greece, it would be a shame not to visit an island. In our case, the winner is Lefkada, which has a road connection to the mainland. We don't have to worry about trajectory. We will spend two nights on the island.

On Lefkada we don't get around. We will set off on a drive around the island. From Kariotes we drive south to the summer resort of Vasiliki. Despite the fact that there is a harbor here, the water is very clear.

Then we head in the direction of Porto Katsiki. There is a famous beach there and the sea is turquoise in color. We want to see it with our own eyes. We tangle on narrow roads that lead through Mediterranean pine trees. The view of the blue sea rewards all the hardships. We feel like we are in the Caribbean!

From Porto Katsiki we return north to the island's main town of Lefkada. The Old Town, however, will not impress us too much.

It's time to think about the way back home. We want to go back through Montenegro and Bosnia, since we missed several places there on our way to Greece. The forecast for Windy does not look optimistic. It's supposed to rain for the next few days, thunderstorms are supposed to rage and it's generally supposed to be miserable. We don't want to get wet for nothing, so we're escaping on almost empty highways to the east of Greece to the summer resort of Leptokarya.

On the way we'll have to drive past the famous Olympus massif. Before Kozani we turn onto the E65 highway, on which there is practically no traffic. The ride gives us great joy. Before long, in the



EUROPE

GREECE





distance we see the mysterious Olympus hidden in clouds and fog. It looks just as they describe it in the history book.

The most interesting section begins in the town of Kallithea. It is 53 kilometers long and leads all the way to Leptokaria.

We pass through small villages, then start climbing up the mountain. Unfortunately, Mytikas, the highest peak of Olympus is hidden in the clouds. But we have nothing to regret anyway, because the best is yet to come.

In order to get to Leptokaria at all, we have to go down the razor-sharp serpentines. There are so many turns here, so we quickly lose count. It is a real roller coaster, only that on a motorcycle. The brakes

are not happy, but they manage. We happily make it to Paralia for the night.

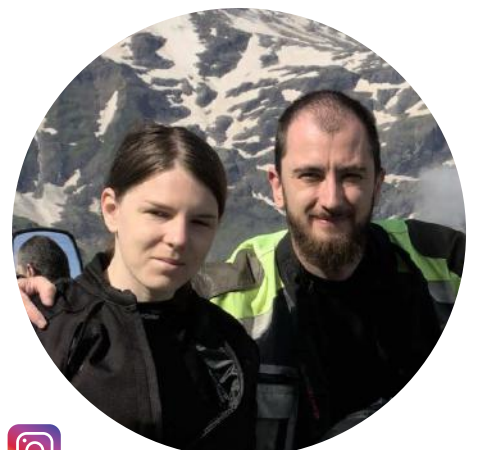
We would like to stay in Greece a little longer. Unfortunately, we have to slowly return to Prague.

We are still escaping the rain, so we decide to drive through Bulgaria.

From Paralia we take highway 1 north. There is more traffic on the road, which thickens when we are near Thessaloniki. Then we take a break from the hustle and bustle. We drive towards Promachonas, where we will cross the border. We have a long road ahead of us through Bulgaria, Serbia and Hungary to Prague. In the rain and cold we will reach home. We have traveled 4,924 kilometers.

YET ANOTHER BIKERS

Ondrej (Ondra) and Marta are a Czech-Polish couple from Prague. He steers and photographs, she invents and plans 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.





AFRICA

SENEGAL AND GAMBIA

THE SMILING COAST OF AFRICA

FOR MANY, SENEGAL IS KNOWN MAINLY FOR ITS CAPITAL, DAKAR, THAT WAS THE FINISHING LINE OF THE FAMOUS PARIS-DAKAR RALLY. AND THAT THE RALLY'S ORIGINAL ROUTE WAS CANCELLED DUE TO SAFETY AND SECURITY REASONS. THE TRUTH IS, THAT NOWADAYS THE CROSSING FROM MOROCCO IN THE SOUTHERN DIRECTION IS SAFE AND HAS WAY MORE TO OFFER TO TOURISTS IN TERMS OF COMFORT AND ATTRACTIONS. SOMETIMES EVEN TOO MUCH, AND WHERE YOU COULD EXPECT REMOTENESS AND WILDERNESS, THERE ARE MANY RESORTS, HOTELS AND MANY OTHER TOURISTS.

Text and photos: ADV HOPPERS







AFRICA
SENEGAL AND GAMBIA





SENEGAL CHILLOUT

There are two main border crossings to choose from, when coming from Mauritania. We advise on taking the Diama border. Unless you want to pay a lot at the Rosso border and feed the bribing machine (well, we can't confirm that ourselves, but we heard many complaints from people who took this option). The track on the Mauritanian side that leads to the border can be difficult after the rain. Otherwise the washouts and corrugations are manageable and the route is fixed from time to time, so should be passable for less experienced riders and/or on more on-road oriented bikes. And it is a beautiful stretch through a National Park, where you can see a lot of wildlife – mainly birds. But remember to keep your eyes on the road, as it is frequently crossed by warhogs. They run surprisingly fast and like to jump out of the bushes right in front of your wheels.

Senegal is made for chilling by the Ocean. This is why instead of rushing to Dakar, to have our paperwork sorted out, we decided to stay for a couple of nights at Zebrabar. It is a famous spot for overlanders, conveniently located relatively close to the Mauritanian

border, a bit south of St. Louis. We really enjoyed the calming sound of the waves on the ocean, whispering palm trees leaves and the company of colourful birds. This was a nice change of the landscape, given that Mauritania offers mainly sand and desert.

THE MYTH OF DAKAR

We left Zebrabar and drove to Dakar, to stamp our Carnet de Passage. A 200 km route took us 6 hours, due to heavy traffic in Dakar area. Old stinky diesel lorries, extremely high speed bumps and African driving style combined with 40+ degrees heat made it a rather unpleasant ride. However, the whole procedure at the Customs Office went smoothly and Joris was even offered lunch. We also managed to get the insurance at one of AXA offices and exited Dakar, this time by highway. It was still quite busy and we need to pay a small fee, but we did not feel like spending another 50 km in a traffic jam.

We don't really understand the phenomenon of Dakar. In our opinion it is an ugly, polluted city, with extreme traffic. There is not even a board or anything where you can take a photo and say "I reached Dakar". For us, it's a place to

avoid, unless you need to be there for a particular reason (paperwork, technical issues). There are far more beautiful places that Senegal has to offer.

After leaving Dakar, we headed to the Pink Lake. Roadworks with no marked deviations made the route "fun" again. We needed to cross some villages and their narrow streets with deep sand. Unfortunately due to the high water level the lake is was not pink at all. We stayed at one of the few campgrounds that were open (the rest was either flooded or permanently closed due to lack of interest from tourists) and again chilled for a couple of days, before moving forward.

As we moved away from the Dakar region, the traffic got lighter, the landscapes prettier and the people even more friendly. Well, they were friendly in the first place anyway. Every day we had multiple courtesy exchange conversations: "Bonjour, ça va?" "Ça va bien, et vous?" "Ça va bien, merci." And speaking about people, they were more laid back and less intrusive than in Morocco or Mauritania. When we said "no", they respected it and did not push further.



AFRICA

SENEGAL AND GAMBIA



We spent some great time close to the Saloum Delta National Park. We stayed in Joal-Fadiouth, famous for the picturesque Shell Island and unique cemetery with both Muslims and Christians tombs. We visited Palmarin and its distinct salt pits. From the ground they sadly looked like ditches with garbage, but from the air looked pretty impressive – numerous colourful lakes. Again, due to high level of water being less colourful than on some photos found over the internet, but still spectacular.

On our way we not only saw beautiful places there were many quite heart-breaking images of places that were totally ruined in a scenery that could be a paradise. There was a huge number of buildings, campgrounds, hotels that were abandoned, collapsed and full of garbage. Unfortunately, the travel restrictions experienced in the last years did not make any good to regions like this.

THE GAMBIA

Gambia is often referred to as the smiling coast of Africa – not only because of its shape resembling a smiling mouth, but also due to friendly people







AFRICA

SENEGAL AND GAMBIA





with happy faces. Here again, we had to do a lot of small talk, responding to all the “Hi, how are you?”.

We entered Gambia from the south, through a small, sleepy border crossing in Sabi. It went smoothly, even though we needed to completely unpack all our luggage. The border officers wanted to inspect what we were carrying – more out of curiosity than for any other reason.

Friendliness of the locals can really impact the travel plans – the road controls are frequent and because everyone is so friendly and wants to know your story and how you like The Gambia, it takes forever. Once it took us almost half a day to cover a distance of 70 kilometres because of that. And at some point – it could get tiring.

There are many places worth visiting in The Gambia, especially along its main river. We randomly chose Georgetown and it was the best choice we could make, as we really enjoyed the time spent there. We had a nice walk through the town, saw





AFRICA
SENEGAL AND GAMBIA



the huge baobab, under which a ritual circumcisions are held every 5 years (now not performed on girls anymore) and listened to a thought-provoking history under the Freedom Tree. We also visited a local museum where we learned a fascinating yet scary lesson on masquerades. They are associated with rituals like

circumcision, enforcing village rules, scaring away evil from the village as well as general entertainment. A cherry on the top was a boat trip on The Gambia River. We were lucky to meet a family of 7 hippos. At some point we were really close in our boat and they got annoyed with our presence, so we needed to leave. And it

was a speedy retreat, as hippos move faster under water than the boat goes.

For our time spent in The Gambia was supposed to be a rest and holiday, before we continued towards other countries in West Africa. However, we needed to







AFRICA

SENEGAL AND GAMBIA





change the plans. And as it was not an easy decision, we headed back north. We crossed back to Senegal in Farafenni and this was the one and only time we needed to pay something to corrupt officials. Gambian Immigration officer put our passports in the drawer and would not release them until he cashed in the money from us.

The ride north through Senegal was however one of the best we had on this trip in Africa. We ended up on some lovely dirt tracks with fantastic views. And even the fact that one of the roads we took to avoid a supposedly "corrupt checkpoint" resulted being a dead end (after riding 25 km of it and having 2 more to go) was fine, as we enjoyed the ride so much. We headed to Zebrabar again, where we closed the circle and rested before crossing to Mauritania.

HINTS AND TIPS

Choose smaller, sleepy border points for smooth crossing. If there are some locals queuing, use the same line and don't jump the queue –





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SENEGAL AND GAMBIA



priority service can cost some extra money that you won't get any receipt for.

If you need to go to Dakar for the paperwork e.g. stamping your Carnet de Passage (CPD) consider 2 options: stay outside of the city and take a taxi or use the highway - yes, it is a paid one, but saves time and nerves.

If you travel using a Carnet de Passage, make sure you know how to have it correctly stamped. The border customs officials may not always know it and for example stamp you in instead of stamping you out, and as a result you "lose" a page (yep, happened to us). In general – just make sure all the dates, signatures and stamps are where they should be, to avoid any problems with your deposit upon CPD return.

If you plan to visit more countries in the region, consider buying the Brown Card insurance. Note, that the







AFRICA

SENEGAL AND GAMBIA

prices are dependent on the engine capacity and may differ greatly depending on the issuing office. We paid in Dakar same amount for 2 big bikes as our friend in St. Louis for one small bike for the insurance for the same period.

Obey the rules and be kind to the officials. If you don't give them a reason it will be harder for them to squeeze the money/bribes out of you. Do not braaap through the dusty villages - respect the locals and other travellers. Once we had more sand in our sandwiches while elating at the side of the road, because some "bling bling" enduro and quad riders felt the urge to show off...

Know how much things cost and don't spoil the locals with overpaying, even if things seem cheap to you. There are official fixed prices for petrol, water, bread and other basic items.

Don't expect too much from the more expensive hotels - when paying 60 EUR per night you may still have nothing working in the room and cold water (or none at all).

Use resources from internet forums, groups and apps like iOverlander. In doing so, apply common sense and don't believe everything written there, use it more as a guide and enjoy travelling your own way.



ADV HOPPERS



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.







EUROPE

POLAND

GREATER POLAND ROAM - MY DAY OFF

MARCH IS THE PERFECT TIME FOR LATE WINTER EXCURSIONS. SPRING IS JUST AROUND THE CORNER. THE DAYS ARE GETTING LONGER AND WARMER. AND IN GREATER POLAND, SNOW HAS BECOME A DREAM FOR A NICE FEW YEARS NOW. SO YOU CAN DISPENSE WITH WINTER TOURING PANTS AND IN MOTO-JEANS (YOU KNOW WITH PROFESSIONAL "UNDERPANTS") SET OFF AHEAD. A RESPECTABLE LIGHTWEIGHT HELMET FROM PREMIER, WARM GLOVES, MY FAVORITE JACKET. AND AN OUTFIT FULL. IN THE TRUNK A CAMERA AND A DRONE, IN MY HAND NAVIGATION IN THE FORM OF A GOOGLE MAP. I INVITE YOU TO, MAYBE NOT TOO LONG, BUT CERTAINLY INTERESTING, A ROUND OF THE WIELKOPOLSKA TRAILS. IT'S WORTH PLANNING A WHOLE DAY FOR YOURSELF.

Text and photos: Poznański Szwendacz





EUROPE
POLAND





I started my journey from the palace in Biedrusk. From Poznań, it is worth choosing the route through Radojewo. Beautiful, smooth, like in Saudi Arabia, asphalt with numerous fast vinyls. A piece of luck. However, the road is fast, so in a short time I found myself at the first point. The residence was built between 1877 and 1880 for Albrecht Otto von Treskow to a design by Ludwig Huhn. The result was the construction of an

impressive Neo-Renaissance palace. The impression is enhanced by its location on an escarpment. Erected on a rectangular plan, the residence has a characteristic high tower. The main entrance is placed unusually in the side façade and is accented by a columned porch, on which the balcony rests. Inside, surprisingly, quite a lot has been preserved - woodwork, floors, stoves or polychrome in places. After World War I, the

training ground with the palace served the Polish Army. After subsequent regime changes as a result of World War II, the whole thing continued to serve military functions, only the troops changed... The mansion even housed a military casino. Oh, things must have been going on here... Today it houses a restaurant with a hotel. Some military equipment has been gathered around, and an exhibition on the Greater





EUROPE

POLAND



Poland Uprising has been set up at the entrance. The farther into the forest the worse it looks, unfortunately. A lot of trash, cardboard, foil, strange materials.... And it's a pity, because the place is nice and pleasant. Well, one should hope that this is a temporary condition.

The further route led through the Zielonka Forest. Here on the capital gravel roads you can speed while inhaling the clean and a little frosty air. The polycarbonate Premier helmet from the Devil series sat perfectly on the skull. On the route empty, only some goats crossed the road. Terrain ideal not only for mechanical wheels. Definitely such an aura allows you to clear your mind and relax. I ended up in the village of Stawiany with a beautiful abandoned manor house of Ferdinand Kalkstein.

The manor house in Stawiany was built in 1853-1854, when the owner of the village was







EUROPE
POLAND



Ferdynand Kalkstein of the Kos coat of arms, an officer in the Polish Army and a knight of the Virtuti Militari order. The building was built to a design by Karol Würtemberg. It is distinguished by a portico and a tower added on one side. It is surrounded by a park of over five hectares. After World War II the palace came under the administration of the State Agricultural Farm in Jablkow, and later of the State Agricultural Farm in Rybno Wielkie. After the collapse of the State Agricultural Farm in the 1990s, the land was taken over by the Treasury. Since then the mansion has been abandoned and falling into increasing disrepair. A reverie and a little anger that there are zero funds in the wallet to save such beautiful buildings. Well....

I took the direction of the west. It seems to be warmer there. At a distance of about 22 km northeast of Oborniki, on the edge of the Gniezno Lake District is the village of





Studzieniec. The village, is mentioned in records from 1365, but the manor house I intended to visit was probably built at the end of the 18th century.

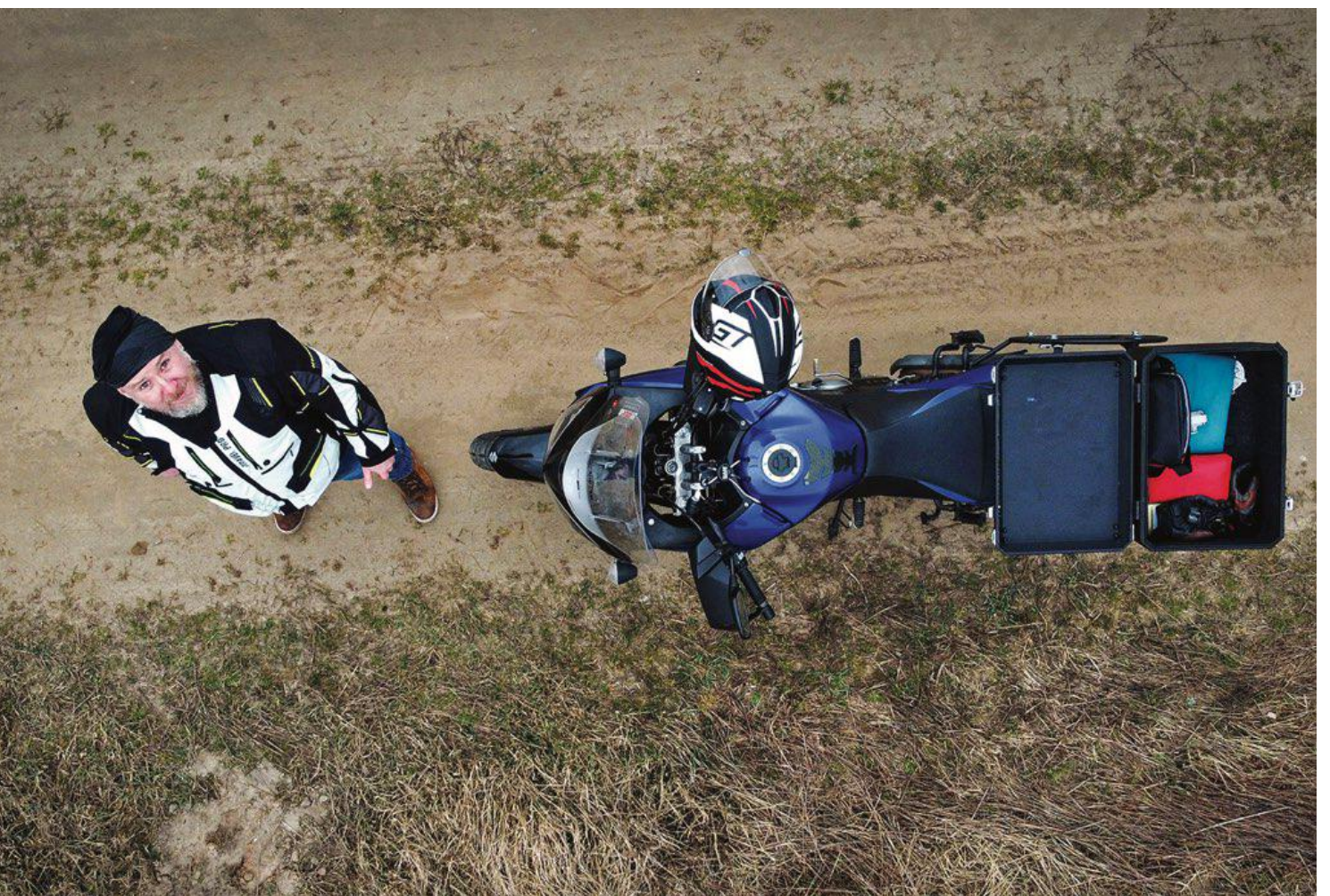
Built on a rectangular plan, it has two alcoves significantly protruding in front of the face of the building on the western side, a high, broken roof, covered with shingles. The east and west elevations have shallow, triaxial risalits. The building is one-story, with a partial basement, and storied exhibitions above the risalits of the front and garden elevations. Exterior and partition walls of half-timbered construction are filled with brick and plastered. The main entrance is located on the axis of the facade, with a door closed with an arch and framed in an architectural frame. A staircase to the south alcove was added in the 19th century. Interestingly, a copy

of the manor house in Studzieniec was erected in 1984 by the Wielkopolska Ethnographic Park in Dziekanowice. And in Studzieniec? At most the wind is blowing through the empty rooms... All that's left is to wave to the local residents watching me as if I were an alien and skip ahead.

There are quite a few monuments in Greater Poland that are "doing well" and will probably quietly survive the next centuries. However, there are also those whose time is numbered. Among them is undoubtedly the Łakomicki Palace in Dąbrówka Ludomska. That is why I was so anxious to see it while it is still standing. The mansion was built in the first half of the 19th century for Count Wiktor Łakomicki. The building must have once been beautiful. Seemingly one-story, but with a high basement and a two-

story, three-axis risalit in the center of the façade, covered with a high gabled roof, it looked very impressive. In the facade, attention is drawn to the arcaded triad of portico openings on the first floor and a similar triad of windows in the second story. The park adjacent to the manor is very neglected. Numerous broken trees, an overgrown pond. It's a shame to look at it, although the drone photos contradict this. However, perspective is important.

In front of me remained the last point of the outing, the railroad bridge Brączewo - Stobnica. On the Warta River in Stobnica runs the border between the oborniki and szamotulski districts. The two banks of the picturesque meandering river were connected in 1909 by a beautiful truss railroad bridge, 244.8 meters long. The bridge has an interesting cantilever





EUROPE'S
POLAND





railroad bridge listed as a monument in 2020.

Despite the fact that spring is just around the corner and the temperature is rising, in the late afternoon it is already getting chilly and not very pleasant, so we had to get on our "steed" and head home.

It was another successful day in the saddle. I encourage all readers to visit local gems, because these can be just as interesting, and sometimes much more interesting than those hundreds of kilometers away.

POZNAŃSKI SZWENDACZ

Under this nickname hides Mikolaj Szarafinski. He hangs out here and there alone or with a team. By moto, on foot, 4x4 or anything else. On his fanpage he shares accounts of his small and big trips around Poland and the world.



structure of the Heinrich Gerber system, forming an articulated bridge. The truss strand span is slightly longer than the clearance between the pillars. It is connected directly to the sheet metal spans routed over the floodplain, and there are no pillars at the connection point (but this does not make the structure unstable). Until August 31, 1991, the bridge, as well as the entire railroad, served passengers. Later,

only freight trains passed over it. Year after year, the condition of the track got worse and worse, until finally, on December 22, 2000, the line was completely closed. The tracks were partly stolen, partly demolished. The Stobnica bridge almost went to scrap. It was saved from this by Greter Poland Historic Preservationist Aleksander Starzynski, who made an effort to have the Stobnica





SOUTH AMERICA

BOLIVIA

THE SURREAL LAGUNA ROAD IN BOLIVIA

WE CAN SEE THAT WE ARE ENTERING A COMPLETELY DIFFERENT, WILDER WORLD RIGHT AT THE BORDER ITSELF. FROM THE ELEGANT BUILDING WITH SHINY FLOORS IN SAN PEDRO DE ATACAMA, WHERE CHILEAN CUSTOMS OFFICIALS STICK US WITH A FAREWELL STAMP FOR THE SIXTH AND PROBABLY LAST TIME ON THIS TRIP, WE ARRIVE AT A SMALL, MODEST BOOTH WITH A METAL ROOF, CROUCHED AT THE FOOT OF THE ANDEAN MOUNTAINS. THIS IS WHAT THE BORDER IN BOLIVIA LOOKS LIKE. A FOX CIRCLES THE RUSTY BUCKETS. AFTER A WHILE, FRIGHTENED BY OUR SPACEY APPEARANCE, IT DISAPPEARS ON THE HORIZON OF THE MOUNTAINOUS COUNTRYSIDE, WHICH ALREADY FROM AFAR ANNOUNCES A GREAT NEW ADVENTURE.





SOUTH AMERICA

BOLIVIA



Salvador Dali's Desert 150 BOB (approx. €17) per person to enter Eduardo Avaroa's Andean Fauna National Reserva Park and glide along a sand road between colorful lagoons and dormant volcanoes. The landscape gets more and more surreal with each passing moment. Yes, here we are arriving at Salvador Dali's Desert! We feel as if we have actually entered a painting, where in a moment a huge clock melted on a tree or elephants on stilted legs walking between chaotically scattered volcanic rocks will emerge. The picture is completed by the pale face of the moon drawing clearly over the Andean ridges, peering over the stretches of golden and white sand of the Salar de Chalviri, which at one point disappears beneath the azure surface of the water. This is because the lagoons reflect the sky, which on this day is stunningly blue.

In the village by the Mina Apacheta (borax mine) we arrive at the customs office, reportedly the highest in the





SOUTH AMERICA

BOLIVIA



world (over 5,000 meters above sea level!) Hot springs Termas de Polques A hotel by the Termas de Polques hot springs at 4,400 meters above sea level offers us a room with dinner and breakfast for only €5 per person. Yikes, we can afford it! This time we don't have to curl up like maggots in all betas to survive the frigid night (as low as -16 degrees) in a tent, as we did just a few days ago in the mountain passes of northern Argentina. During the day the temperature rises to as much as +15 degrees.

On the spot we meet a traveler Jean from Belgium, who has been traveling through South America by bicycle for six months and intends to reach the United States this way. So he has taken a similar route to us, only in the other direction, well, and it seems to be more athletic, since most of the way by muscle power, by bicycle. I wonder in how many months he will reach California.

The evening frost is already pinching our noses hard, but we can't resist leaving the

room to say goodbye to the day under the roof of the sky. It fades slowly, hiding the sun's pupil behind the spine of the And, leaving behind pink braids on which dark spots glide from time to time. These are migratory birds, *Calidris bairdii*, flocking for an evening swim in the lagoon.

Laguna Colorada This is one of those places that for years has invariably left visitors in a state of awe and mild disbelief. Yes, here in Bolivia the water ponds set at the foot of the majestic Andes flash an







SOUTH AMERICA

BOLIVIA







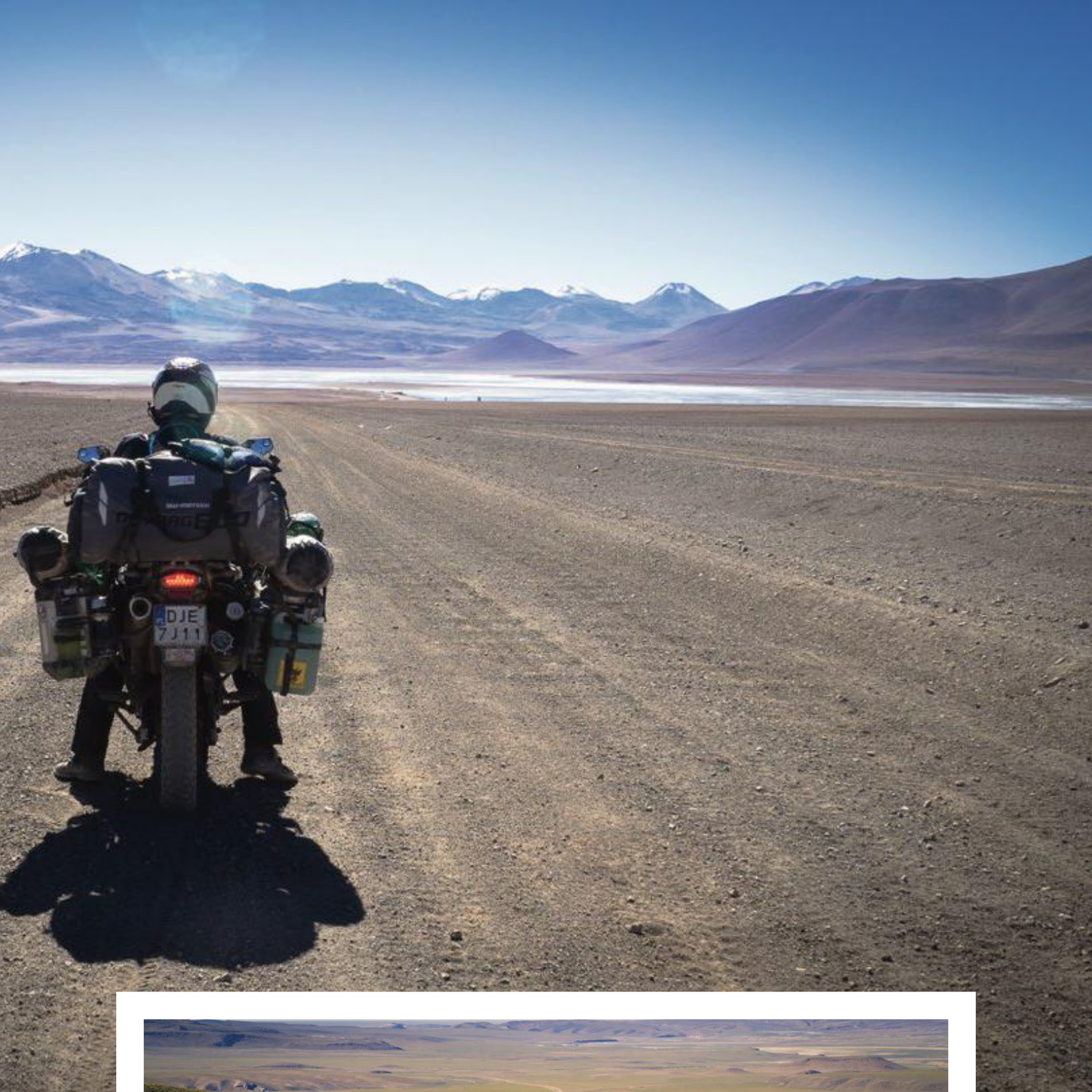
SOUTH AMERICA

BOLIVIA

array of colors: from the traditional blue, to white, green, purple, red and even black. We didn't get to all of them, only occasionally chuckling at another route suggestion from local guides operating the very popular organized tours here. The Toyota Land Cruiser unanimately dominates as a means of transportation here, and, picking up tourists well before sunrise, whisks groups of several people around the surrounding lagoons and rocky attractions.

However, Laguna Colorada beats all the others. Also known as the Red Lagoon, set at an altitude of 4,278 meters above sea level, it is like the queen of this part of the And, before which pink flamingos bend their skinny but extremely strong knees. Naturally, these birds are white, but astaxanthin, a red dye produced by several types of algae and plankton in the water does all the magic. This dye is eaten by crustaceans, which in turn provide food for







SOUTH AMERICA

BOLIVIA





the map with a kinship of names 😊 In fact, it exceeded her wildest expectations, painting itself with a full variety of landscapes, sounds and colors.

Route length	460 km
Start / End	San Pedro de Ataca w Chile / Uyuni w Boliwii
Surface	Gravel, sand, rocks, sections with deep sand, and holes in asphalt
Accessibility	Open all year round, but most passable during the dry season, which is from April to October
Threats	Lack of fuel along the way, soggy, muddy roads during the rainy season, very high altitude (up to 5033 m. above sea level) and low temperatures at night (down to -20 June/July)
Traffic on the road	Small
Attractions on the way	Laguna Verde, Laguna Blanca, Laguna Colorada, Laguna Capina, hot springs, geysers, volcanoes, Salvador Dali Desert, interesting rock formations, flamingos, vicuñas, llamas
Maximum altitude	5,033 meters above sea level



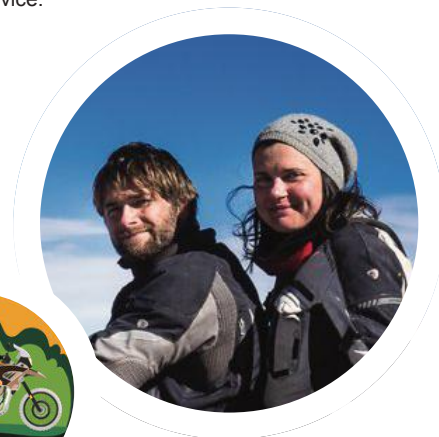
the flamingos and thus dye them pink. Ah, nature. It is also said that flamingos, despite their seemingly delicate, almost romantic physiognomy, are some of the toughest fighters among birds. After all, not many species can so bravely endure the harsh conditions of high mountains. It happens that at night, when the water freezes, they linger in it patiently waiting for the rising sun to melt the silver fetters and free

their long legs. Then they can spread their wings and soar, and their spectacular flight is recorded with undisguised passion by operators of all kinds of lenses.

Today we remember this journey with an inextinguishable smile and sentiment. A journey towards dreams fulfilled, because.... Livia dreamed of Bolivia - a country that already in childhood beckoned her on

LIFE WE LOVE

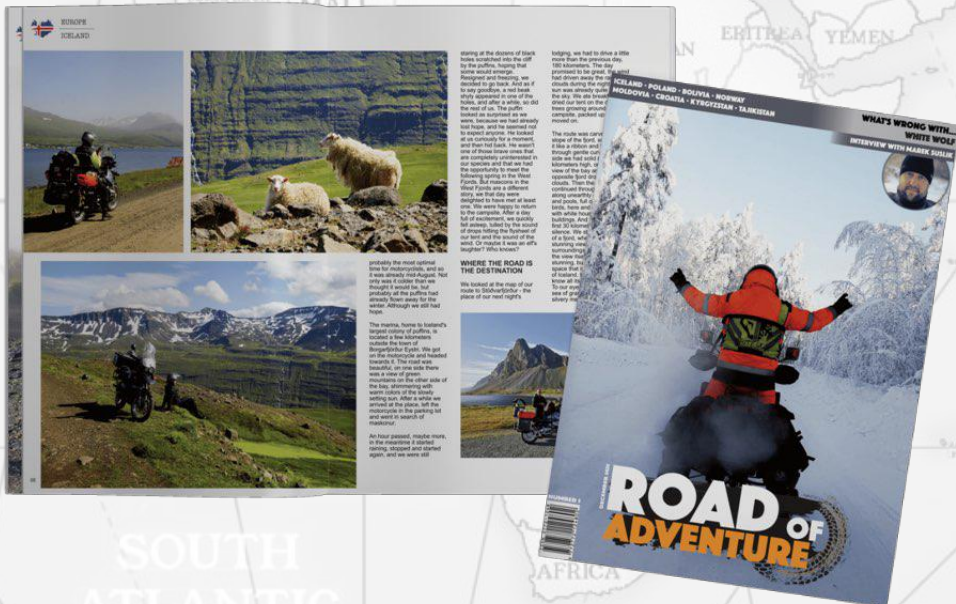
Livia and Joki - lovers of life on the adventure trail. Digital nomads. A programmer who likes modern technologies and an illustrator inspired by natural phenomena. On their blog [LifeWeLove.com] they publish reports from their motorcycle expeditions and practical advice.



ROAD of ADVENTURE



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