

One More Mile Riders

Information Bulletin	Issue 40	November 2002	Sunday, November 24,2002
----------------------	----------	---------------	--------------------------

OMM Information Bulletin reaches this month the 40th edition!

From the beginning, at the end of 1999, we planned to produce a simple newsletter passing useful tips and information to the biking community in Turkey while attracting friends and riders to this splendid Country. The distribution (by e-mail) grew by word of mouth and the thousand readers of today are not a "commercial list" but a group of friends who personally requested to be united by this poor media.

From November 2002 we also distribute a version of the bulletin in Turkish: for them we created a new mailing list and the feedback we are getting is very good.

You may have friends who ride with you and who would like to get included in the Bulletin distribution list: your recommendation is the only "advertising" we have. Present to them the OMM Bulletin (in English or Turkish) and send to Yakup Icgoren yicgoren@barwil.com.tr a note with the names and e-mail addresses of the fellow riders you would like to enroll. Please specify if we have to mail the Turkish or the English version (or both).

Your help in enlarging the ring of friends is really appreciated.

WARNING: Training may damage your health

Read and Ride article of November 2002 by Paolo Volpara



One month, four friends down... what a November. All long term riders, all trained, all knowledgeable. And all down almost in the same way: exiting a corner too wide and crashing into nature. Each one has an excuse, all presented attenuating circumstances and all are guilty.

What an end of the season! Then comes Jon Taylor, master of our training courses with excerpts from a mailing list he belongs to. The writers are drivers (meaning users of four wheels) but, as Jon cunningly notices, the points are well taken for bikers.

"High speed driving skills - says our first speaker - cannot be learned on the road. Once learned, higher speed driving skills cannot be unlearned, but they can be (and usually are) used in inappropriate circumstances such as on well known local back lanes or the like, usually at night..."

The eventual result is a minor error of judgment and an instantaneous off exactly as happens to us on circuits or anywhere else where our ability is suddenly and unexpectedly found to be lacking... It is true that, at normal speeds, highly trained drivers have a far lower chance of crashing than drivers who have no advanced or high speed skills.

The fact is that once we feel comfortable with high speeds, we do not drive at normal speeds, do we? I did not crash a car 'till I learned how to do it properly from "advanced driver/safety training" done exclusively on tracks. Sure I learned all about chassis balance, percentage braking, using the full width of available tarmac etc... I was then armed with new skills that were barely stretched even at semi-legal speeds on the roads we have to use every day. Consequently, I went about my driving exploiting these skills and in search of the limits - limits that were much higher than they used to be. Sure enough, I eventually found them."

What follows is a set of horrendous crashes that our writer endured with stoic patience. After a brief description of these tragedies he continues asking the lesson learned: "Well, for a start, I learned not to become complacent about my own abilities and also to back off just a tad to keep within my envelope at all times. It's worked so far, but if I had never done a track day, I would never have arrived at this point in the first.

And this is the moment of truth: "Without circuit training - says our writer - I would have avoided those accidents". Now it is proven: training can (and will) damage your health. On the chat room the answer comes (just by chance) from an OMM friend called Ben: here you have the experience of a rider (4 wheels) and a biker (enough wheels) combined.

Ben introduces the theory of risk-compensation: "In any aspect of life, we each have a level of risk with which we feel comfortable. If anything changes to make us feel safer, we'll push until we're back at the same level of perceived

risk. I would argue – he continues - that we are safer on the road if we've learnt on the track where the limits of the car are, so that we can stay well inside them. And if we do get it wrong on the road, we have more chance of recovery if we've experienced sliding round a track.

Now, yes, I drive faster on the road these days, and that is down to more experience of high-speed driving. But I'd say that high-speed driving in itself doesn't pose much of a risk. Absolute speed is only really relevant for something like a tire blow-out or something absolutely unpredictable.

If speed is adjusted to the hazards, and in particular the old Roadcraft maxim of 'What you can see, what you can't see and what can reasonably be anticipated', then it isn't going to be an issue."

Well said Ben but the stone thrown on the biker ponds created further ripples.

"If you take Chris's point of view a little bit further – says Fuat - we would be much safer if we were "incapable" of riding! Professional training should emphasize the fact that understanding what the instructor says doesn't mean that all this knowledge is instantly usable by the student. The student may discover many things in training but it takes a considerable amount of conscious time and mileage to make this knowledge a second nature. On my own account, more I learn and more experience I gain, slower I go on the road."

Beside the obvious lie (he was just joking when talking of going slower) Fuat has a point: knowledge does not mean confidence (you may know Latin but you may be not confident enough to sustain a public oratorical contest in this language)

On this direction, but with a savage touch, comes Omer.

"Progress and development depends on pushing the envelope. For team or individual information, training and preparation is paramount importance but integrating that with gut feeling and applying it is what counts. It's what distinguishes Schumi, Rossi from the others: the more 'civilized' mind pretends and tries to keep things logical but there is a natural tendency in quite a few to push the envelope". Omer continues with Olympic tones: "We like to push things faster, higher, deeper, and farther... it's a gene in us homo-sapiens and nothing more. If we could surgically take this gene away our human race would possibly be very populous to begin with but very boring and soon extinct."

Bringing the spirit of exploring the unknown to more prosaic motorcycling training Omer just manages to agitate the waters of our ponds.

The real storm comes from a magazine known for original thinking and good writing: CITY BIKE California's Motorcycling Newspaper came out in November with a pious suggestion: "First, we kill all the Boy scouts!" To the relief of Baden-Powell followers the invitees for the slaughter are not young souls but a special kind of bikers. The author of the article **Joe Glydon** (read the entire piece at <http://www.citybike.com>) has clear ideas on the suggested massacre: "Like any other broad-based avocation, motorcycling has its share of irritating assholes. One group that never fails to give me the pip is the brotherhood of self-righteous safety mongers I like to call the boy scouts. They're easy to spot. They favor big touring-oriented bikes, BMWs, ST 1100s, and Gold Wings in particular. They waddle off these bikes, so swaddled in compound layers of synthetic armor that their movements conjure images of tragic birth defects lurking beneath the foam and Cordura. Their helmets are top quality, headset-equipped and often featuring flip-up chin guards. Their gloves are engineered to imprint plywood; their boots to stall chainsaws."

Easy to spot the victims you would say... read on "As good foot soldiers of the establishment safety coalition, the boy scouts have had their impact on our sport. Advocating the more lucrative forms of dress and the more prudent modes of behavior, they have brought reformist motorcycling to the streets. Like pulpit-less fanatics of motorcycling's religious right, they bellow from the phantom altars that they occupy on curbs and in parking lots. They call for the burning of white T-shirted pagans with dirty jeans and Luckys rolled in their sleeves. They call for the redemption of misguided youth who ride in shorts and tank tops. They preach the gospel according to the AMA, Arai, and Aerostich... Boy scouts love attending, and discussing at length, riding classes conducted at racetracks. The racetrack aura seems to give them a sense of manly daring while the rigid rules and protocols provide a sense of security. The principals of these 'performance' riding schools tend to be, so far as I can tell, Eagle Scouts themselves. Conformity to 'the rules of responsible riding' is the order of the day. Boy scouts think that's fun."

Now you are the target: if you consider wearing protective clothes, if you do not ride under the influence of "recreational drug", if you consider to take part in a training class Father Glydon guillotine is waiting for your neck. More wind on the waves and more turbulent waters.

Yes Joe is right: "The most dismal characteristic of the boy scouts is that they've forgotten, if they ever knew, that motorcycling is supposed to be fun" but I cannot see a lot of fun in ignorance and stupidity.

Yes Ben is right: "We'll push until we're back at the same level of perceived risk" but the qualification "perceived" can be deceiving. What Fuat perceives as a risk is different from my perception.

Yes Fuat and Omer are right: "It takes a considerable amount of conscious time and mileage to make this knowledge a second nature... information, training and preparation is paramount importance but integrating that with gut feeling and applying it is what counts" but I still have four friends with crashed bikes, bruised skins and mending bones.

Riding a bike is simple, riding a bike at good speed in relative safety is risky and complicated: If you enter a left corner too early and you discover that you do have enough road at the exit my point becomes quite clear. At low speed you still have time and space to correct the mistake. Even under the influence of mind expanding substances, at low speed, you will hopefully find time a space for last-minute-adjustments.

When confidence (real or presumed) builds up, speed follows. Take speed out of biking and you will be left with an inadequate mean of transportation. At sustained speed the room for last-minute-adjustments reduces and we start "pushing the envelop" or calling on luck.

Training can therefore have a double edge: while improving your knowledge and confidence it can blur your self-evaluation.

Hans Heinz Dilthey from Cairo and **Jon Taylor** from suburban London will impatiently say that it took me two entire pages to come to the point.

The storm of the debate may calm down when we introduce the principle of correct self-evaluation. Training should be used to enrich the "bag of tools" but most importantly to conduct a correct evaluation of our skills.

When speed comes into play there is no room for presumption: there is no excuse for being in a group, there is no justification in the distance.

If gives you joy, leave at home your Cordura Jacket, wear flip-flop (no socks please), parade with a second-war-slightly-used-German-army-helmet and fill your camel-bag of Corona beer: just carry a good self evaluation in your mind and stay within the boundary she fixes.

When are you pushing too hard? When training (or no-training) can really damage your health? Like a good Boy Scout look for sign in your mental forests and in the valleys of your body.

Are you really applying what was preached in the training course or are you giving your personal interpretation?

Are you worried to keep the tail of your buddy, more experienced and faster than you?

Are you tired after few hundreds kilometers? (Wrong bike or, more likely, too much tension on your body)

Do you continuously modify at the last minute position, speed and gear? (You are loosing, if you ever had it, fluidity)

Head down, shoulders up and eyes low? Maybe you are just trying to avoid disasters instead of riding the pace.

How is your concentration? What are you thinking going into that bend? Maybe you should leave the group and take a rest.

Are you having fun? Not after the ride, when adrenalin pumps in and BS fills the conversation. Are you having fun while you are riding? A good controlled relationship between the three of you?

Machine Road and Pilot are the ingredient of the funny cocktail: correct self-evaluation is the mixer. Training or no-training.

OMM ITINERARIES: OMM 2002 Rally in Abant

It was the closing of 2002 season and for some of us the closing of biking time, good by to two wheels till the spring. In Abant, a tiny mountain lake on the valley high above Bolu OMM friends took a good and nostalgic look to the 2002 activities and dreamed about the next year program.

More than 70 participants made this "OMM Rally" the largest one since the beginning of our group: the absence of a set-program kept the atmosphere relaxed and inter-personal. Plenty of time to know each other and to relax. The weather could not have been better. Clear blue sky, sunny and balmy temperature.

In the afternoon of Saturday 16 we opened a round table on training that saw a good participation: Long Distance Riding, Gearing up for ride, Tire maintenance and ARA courses were the main subjects covered.

In the late afternoon we had the planned session on 2003 calendar and we discussed the possible activities for the next year. A first-six-months Calendar will be published next month.

Riders interested in an ARA Course only for the Competent and Expert qualifications with a ratio of four students to one instructor (June 18/25, 2003) are invited to send a note to Apo Hekinham (bukalemun@turk.net): we want to check the interest before we commit our resources.

After dinner we had presentations: Kazim Uzunoglu introduced the audience to his Company "Motorcycle Adventures" offering tours on bike in Turkey and Abroad. Selim Demirel and Yakup Icgoren gave a report on the OMM Grand Tour of East conducted in July. We also welcomed **Suleyman Memnun and Yenal Yumak** (Aprilia) kind enough to take time to share with OMM.

In the morning of Saturday four Groups (36 bikers) took the road for an Observed Ride. After a brief introduction to the System, **Baran Kaya, Kursat Teker, Taylan Kalkavan** and Paolo led the teams on the "circuit" Abant-Mudurnu-Bolu-Abant.

Good ride on spectacular mountain roads with some difficulties created by the slippery asphalt on the north side of the hills. This was a brief introduction to the ARA training course and the enthusiasm of the riders made the event quite unique.

Aykut Bayindir writes: "I really like to thank you and the rest of the OMM members for the cool organization in Abant. Everything was smooth, and in order... the off-the agenda "Observed ride" for the first timers was much more than just a ride, at least for me. It gave me the taste of what the real training could be like. Many thanks to our leader Kursat: he was so patient and teaching, and showed a mature behavior, worth of a good OMM trainer. On my way back home to Istanbul the phrase I constantly remembered and kept repeating at every occasion was: Position for Vision".

With some scratches on the plastic but, we hope, with good memories and plans all riders made safely home in the evening of Sunday.

TRAINING: Report on the Election Day Run from the OMM Ankara Group.

OMM Ankara under the leadership of **Selim Demirel** found an OMM way to celebrate "Election Day" of November 3. After placing the vote in the early hours of Sunday they left the capital at 08:00 for the EDR (Election Day Run).

If you are thinking about a short ride to a nice restaurant for an early return home, think again. Via Kastamonu the group reached Inebolu and then completed the OMM "mother of all roads", over 150 kilometers of high class corners to Amasra. From the shores of the Black Sea, via Bartın and Mengen they connected with the TEMotorway for a "quick" return home. In total more than 900 K for a good saturation training day, following the System and discussing the application.

"We departed after voting, in high spirits, with a clear sky. Temperature was 5 C in the morning, going up to 20 C at the Black Sea coast, sinking again to 6 C on the way back home. No rain, but a few clouds in the afternoon and strong wind on the Black Sea coast. The road surface was mostly OK with some construction works between Küre and Inebolu and slippery sections on the coastal road. Best portions: Tosya-Kastamonu section always a pleasure to ride; Kastamonu-Küre-Inebolu perfect in this season with forest colors changing from green to red and yellow; the breathtaking view of Black Sea from Küre Mountain. From Inebolu to Amasra we had a very disciplined and hard ride of 180 km's without a break and covered this distance in 2h45min."

On the road with Selim were **Kürşat Teker, Nuri Danişman and Baran Kaya**. This is a hell of a ride for an autumn day and only the high training's level of Ankara group can make sense of the distance.

OMM ITINERARIES: Biking in Georgia. By Kevin Cain kcain@caucasus.net

This article is the beginning of a correspondence with few selected friends of OMM who took commitment to write for our bulletin and web site on regular basis. Kevin has been crossing the European/Central Asiatic continent for many times and he actually resides in Georgia.

Biking in Georgia is certainly different and the country does not really have a biking culture. There was some biking activity in the old Soviet days, mainly speedway and some motocross, and the farmers and police have always used Ural bikes with sidecars as a cheap means of transport, but it was never seen really as a leisure activity until recently. The Georgian Traffic Law and Highway Code have no provisions for motorcycles; there is no training and no form of driving test. Any Georgian biker who has the appropriate stamp on his driving license must merely convince the issuing office that he is competent (and normally a small present helps). There is no requirement for insurance and indeed no means of insuring a motorcycle here. Of course helmets are not compulsory and I have even been stopped by the police to be told that it was not right to wear a helmet in Georgia! The police in Tbilisi have recently been equipped with some old Moto Guzzis, and though they do wear open face helmets, they do not fasten the straps!

The situation is slowly changing as far as the number and type of bikes is concerned. When I first arrived on my BMW R1100GS in 1997, it was one of the first foreign motorcycles in Georgia, and then a Gold Wing was imported followed by a Super Tenere. One or two other expats followed my example and imported KTMs from a dealership in Istanbul. A Bikers Club (Camelot) was formed and consisted mainly of old Soviet machines as well as beautifully restored BMWs from the Second World War (of which there are many just lying around in bits). Some of the more ingenious Georgians have constructed chopper type bikes from what was available. In the past year there has been an increase in the number of bikes imported, mainly second hand from Europe, including some very fast sports bikes. I myself was riding a Honda CBR1100XX Super Blackbird for a while, but it is entirely unsuited to the poor roads in Georgia and it was impossible to really enjoy the bike here. My R1100GS was far more suited to the local conditions, and I was also able to make a further return trip to Europe on this bike. It has now been replaced by a new R1150 GS Adventure which is perfect.

A further problem facing Georgian bikers is a complete lack of any dealership or workshop. All spare parts must be individually imported, but there are several good mechanics available to do regular maintenance. Because of the lack of formal training and the fact that most journeys are limited to a small radius around Tbilisi, there is considerable ignorance concerning the correct usage of modern motorcycles, and most Georgians will not believe me when I say that 80% of braking should normally be via the front brake. They ride with considerable abandon in traffic and most of the bikes are dropped regularly, fortunately with minimum damage to the riders. Motorists are also unused to seeing bikes on the road. The Bikers Club is trying to do some basic training and I have tried to help training by supplying videos, but there is much more that needs to be done.

Georgia is in fact an excellent country for biking though the roads are generally very poor. On the other hand the scenery is beautiful and the weather very suitable for biking. We are a bit off the normal route for travelers, though we do see the occasional long distance rider coming through. Two German tourists came through on BMW R1100 RTs not long ago and made the mistake of offloading their panniers and leaving the bikes in the street overnight. Of course by morning they had gone. Because bikes are still fairly rare here, Georgians seeing a parked bike feel that this is an open invitation to sit on the bike and see how it feels. I learnt to my cost that it is always best to leave my bikes on the centre stand and only to park where I can keep an eye on the bike. On one occasion my bike was pushed over causing considerable damage. In defense of the Georgian bikers, it must be said that with a few exceptions, very few have enough money to buy a good bike. Most Georgian Bikers are very young and new tires and spare parts are very expensive for them. Very few indeed have any form of proper protective clothing. Even though recently some have started to wear helmets, in most cases these are borrowed from friends and do not fit properly. There is a very small market for second hand bikes and though more and more people are becoming interested in biking as a leisure activity, the cost of a good second hand bike is more than most Georgians would pay

for a car. The Bikers Club makes every effort to raise public awareness of biking with frequent articles in the press and appearances on local television programs. Two Georgian bikers were recently invited to join the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan trip on their own bikes and received some sponsorship to cover their expenses. Georgian bikers are very enthusiastic about biking, and in view of the obstacles and difficulties they are facing, it requires considerable determination and commitment to enjoy their hobby.

Though biking is a different experience in Georgia, the Georgian bikers are very enthusiastic and deserve all the support that they can get. Biking in Georgia has been a very rewarding experience for me and has enabled me to make very many friends. The trend towards bike ownership is increasing year by year and this is a very positive factor towards the development of biking here. There is an urgent need for basic and advanced training but I can just see the face of my old instructors in London if faced with a group of Georgian bikers with no helmets or proper protective clothing! I also have a small (185cc) Honda which I have been using to teach some friends, but in most cases new Georgian riders are learning on much more powerful machines and in the absence of a legal limitation on the machines which can be ridden by new riders such as we have in Europe, then this state of affairs is likely to continue. We look with envy on the sort of training and rides which you are able to organize in Turkey, and even though we are the neighboring country, it takes two days hard riding to reach Istanbul. **If ever an event were to be organized towards the East of Turkey then I am sure that we could find some Georgian bikers to participate.**

From a personal point of view, I have now crossed Turkey 4 times by bike – twice along the Black Sea route and twice through Erzerum/Kars which is the most spectacular and beautiful ride with very little traffic. Unfortunately I have twice fallen foul of the Turkish road repair gangs who spray the complete surface of the road with hot tar and then wait before adding chips. This has the effect of covering the whole bike and rider with a coating of black tar. If this should happen to you I recommend the car wash facility at the Ankara Hilton who have twice done a spectacular job of cleaning up my bikes. As for my boots, I can also recommend the shoe shine guy in Seville, Southern Spain, who spent many dirty minutes cleaning up my boots as I sipped a cold beer at a café.

RIDING TIPS: Eyes Up

This is one of the several tips you can read when visiting the web site of from Freddie Spencer High Performance Riding School at <http://www.fastfreddie.com>

One of the most important techniques to remember when riding a motorcycle is to keep your eyes up and continually scanning up the road or racetrack. By doing so, the rider slows the perception of speed, and is able to anticipate changes in direction and any unexpected obstacles in the road.

Here's an easy example to illustrate this point: Next time you're driving near a fence alongside the road, look directly to your left (or right) while traveling at a relatively slow speed (perhaps 55 mph), and try to focus on the individual fence posts as they flash by – it's nearly impossible. Now, look well ahead; you can just about keep a count of the fence posts. Looking ahead slows everything down, and allows the rider to more easily manage the information being presented to him.

Remember: Even the best techniques a rider has are useless if you do not have time to react and implement those techniques. Be prepared, and keep your eyes up and scanning at all times.

RIDING TIPS: Where Did It Go Wrong!

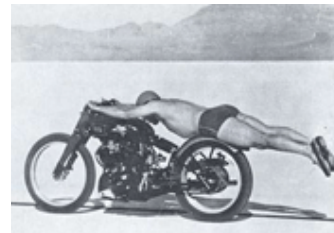
Stay Upright is an Australian Biking School directed by Warwick Schuberg. The school web site at <http://www.stayupright.com.au> has some of the best riding tip for beginners and experts.

Some riders have experienced the split second just before the crash or the near fall, in some cases knowing that they are in trouble and desperately trying to find a way out. In some cases they don't, some get away with it and stop on the side of the road with a very high heart rate... We have all heard a motorcyclist say the seven words "THERE WAS NOTHING I COULD HAVE DONE". Well, maybe there was. We believe it is a rare case. In most crashes the rider has usually run out of TIME and SPACE.

To enable us to stop safely in a given situation, we should be always trying to travel in the correct Position, correct Speed and correct Gear at all times. This is a basic safe riding principal and just so happens is true for the track as well. Remember a motorcycle traveling at 60 km/h on a flat, dry bitumen surface with a competent rider in control should be capable of being stopped (braking distance) in about 12 meters (less for more experienced riders). It is important to consider the time before the brakes are applied, i.e. the Reaction time from the moment the rider sees the need for braking action and the time taken to start braking. This time is anything from half a second to a more realistic time on the Public Streets of about 1 to 1 1/2 seconds. Consider a situation where a rider is traveling at 60 km/h and is suddenly confronted with a real hazard. If the rider reacts in say 1 second he will travel about 17 meters before the brakes are applied. If the rider's reaction time is say two seconds it would be about 34 meters before applying the brakes. Add to that the distance to pull the motorcycle up to a stop, say 12 meters - total distance of about 29 meters or 63 meters would be required

WATCH THAT CORNER: The importance of protective gear

On a cool Monday morning on Sept. 13, 1948, Rollie Free lifted from Harley Davidson the US national motorcycle speed record by riding the first Vincent HRD Black Lightning racing motorcycle to a speed of 150.313 m.p.h. When Rollie's leathers tore from early runs at 147 mph, he discarded them and made a final, heroic attempt without jacket, pants, gloves, boots or helmet. Aboard the motorcycle owned by the California sportsman, John Edgar, this



final run resulted in the most famous photograph in motorcycling, the "bathing suit bike" shot taken from a speeding car on the Bonneville Salt Flats in Utah. Rollie lay flat out on the motorcycle wearing only a speedo bathing suit, shower cap and a pair of borrowed sneakers

**WATCH THAT CORNER: Take example from the Swiss
21st November 2002**

"The Swiss authorities have reassured FEMA that the proposed strict maximum speed limit of 80km/h for motorcycles will not be implemented. This is the positive outcome of a meeting held last week between FEMA and a government's official in Geneva." Read more at <http://www.fema.ridersrights.org/>

TRAINING: Go Off-Road, Young man, go off road

From OMM Rider **Hamit Abassoglu** we received a short note commenting on his performance in the Turkish Motocross Championship. "Last year today I have started to ride on "off road" for the first time in my life. Afterwards, I began racing in the Turkish Enduro and Motocross Championship with the great support of **Suleyman Memnun**. Last weekend, in the last race of the year held in Izmir. I competed in the 125cc category in a two stages race. I have completed the first race in 5th place and second race in 2nd place and I reached the podium as 3rd overall. I was the best starter for both races and I have been named as "King of the Start". After passing our compliments to Hamit we would like to take this event as an introduction to an important aspect of motorcycle training. Ever wondered what great bike champions do in winter at the end of the racing season? You stop wandering... they go off-road as the most effective training and fitness tool. But you do not need to be a champion, or a young boy to take to the mud. Learning how to control a bike in the dirt involves skills that can be brought back to road riding. It gives also the confidence to master slides and "irregular moves" without panicking. Off-road riding teaches the importance of lines, long distance vision, and throttle control: on top of all these benefits it is safer than zooming around cars and trucks. OMM is now considering the opportunity to open an off-road course under the tuition of Suleyman.

Frank Campbell (Indian Rocks Beach, FL), a very good friend of OMM and insatiable rider around the world, is so convinced of the value of off-roading that, this summer he took a Course in Italy on the isle of Elba. He wrote for us this report and, despite the unfortunate ending of his experience, it can serve as motivator for more riders to contact Suleyman (s.memnun@superonline.com) and get a small cross bike for the winter. After all this is the season for soft mud!

"My last trip to BMW's Enduro Park Hechlingen in the early summer was the usual treat. But I needed a change. After running that gauntlet for the fourth time, I knew every rock and bush in the former Bavarian quarry (some of them quite close). KTM's training program was just the challenge I was after. What better place to hone my off-road skills than the Isola d'Elba, just within sight of the Tuscany coast! There were many other venues to choose from, but Napoleon's former place of exile beckoned. When I asked Paolo Volpara (whose love for his native country I share deeply) about what the island was like, Paolo laconic reply alluded to the terrain being "hard". Just how "hard" I would find out in due course.

If you are going to be banished from your dwelling there are far worse places than Elba. And if your roots are in Corsica, as were the Emperor's, home is just within sight on a clear day. Had motorcycles existed during Bonaparte's time, he might have not been in such a rush to leave for another try at running the Empire. I planned my own stay in Elba short of a week, which would be long enough to do the 3-day off-road course plus a little sightseeing on my own.

It took less than an hour to make the crossing from the mainland across the Tyrrhenian Sea. Aside for a few late vacationers the ferryboat was less than half full. Autumn weather in Tuscany is usually perfect and this day was no exception. A cold front was working its way down from Northern Europe towards the Italian peninsula, but the forecast was favorable for the next few days. The Airone Hotel Resort just a few km out of Piombino offered a setting of understated luxury, but the bunch of orange KTM's parked out front were a reminder I was here primarily "on business". Before supper, I strolled around fingering the bikes. All but two were 400 cc four stroke models, and aside for a few scratches, the bikes looked remarkable unscathed. The license plates made them marginally street legal as required by local law, but all the frills such as rear view mirrors were gone. At dinner I shared a table that bore a "Prenotato Gruppo Fasola" sign with other course attendees. Mercifully, their English was far better than my German, and we had a great time getting to know each other while enjoying the fine cuisine.

Business, that is riding, began at 9 AM the next day. Fabio Fasola, an accomplished Italian rider, teacher and organizer of the event was out of commission for a while following a serious crash during a competitive event in Africa. Thus, the lead role went to Stefan, a young Swiss instructor whose enthusiasm probably far exceeded his teaching experience. He showed us how to start the bikes (remarkably easy with an electric starter), and loosely separated us in groups according to our self-perceived level of skills. In the meantime the weather front had fooled the most pessimistic of forecasters, and a drizzle had began to fall, which quickly turned to steady rain.

Undaunted, we set off into the Elban hills trying to keep Stefan in sight. The isle is of volcanic origin, hence mostly rocky. Following an unusually wet summer the vegetation was lush, and the scenery reminded me at times of a Caribbean rather than a Tyrrhenian island. The trails were strewn with rocks of varying sizes and steep. By now the rain had turned into a monsoon, and the patches of dirt around the rocks were slick. I had noticed the full-knobby tires were a bit chewed up when we started, and during a break I asked Stefan how long they lasted on these trails. His reply: "about five days". No doubt mine were about four days old.



The KTM 400 is a delightful motorcycle. Light, nimble, and agile it handles like a dream compared to my clunky F650. Although rather tall in the saddle, seat height posed no major problem and I was glad to have plenty of ground clearance considering the terrain. Power delivery is almost linear, and third and second gear sufficed for most trails. A few large boulders had to be negotiated on first gear, but the bike obligingly lifted the front wheel with a touch of throttle at the critical moments. The steering is a tad heavy though, and wrestling the bike on those trails felt after a while like doing more bench presses than I cared to. During a welcome cappuccino break in the afternoon, I spoke with Stefan about letting me try the 250 cc model for a while. This was to be our last ride for the day, and I was tired and soaked, both from the rain outside and heavy perspiration inside. Stefan was riding the 250, and he readily agreed, cautioning me to keep the engine revved up, as the bike although lighter, did not have as much power as the 400. The bike switch would prove to be a costly error for me later. Upon mounting the bike, I took notice that instead of beefy hand-guards connected to the bar-ends, the 250 had mere plastic deflectors. I don't know why that seemingly trivial fact stuck to my mind at that moment, but as I would find out in a few minutes it might have been a premonition of things to come.

After savoring the last drops of cappuccino, we mounted our bikes and set off on the trails once again. I immediately noticed the marked difference in power. The 250 seemed positively anemic compared to its larger 400 stable mate. Trying to lob the front wheel a few inches took real effort, and first gear had to be visited far more often. To be fair, the bike was lighter, and could be tossed around with greater impunity on curves without fear of pushing the front end. But the trails grew not just tighter but steeper. First gear and fanning the clutch was needed to keep the wheezer alive. And at the least convenient on a rock-strewn steep incline it happened. When I could not have possibly reached the ground with my foot the engine stalled.

Those of you who are old enough to have watched reruns of the "Laugh-in" TV show may recall the character that falls off his tricycle on every episode. That is exactly what I must have looked to those who saw me. Doing exactly 0 km/hr I toppled left rather stylishly. It would have all ended there had the left floppy hand guard not landed on my hand already poised on a very sharp, and yes Paolo, "hard" rock. A meat cleaver could have not done a better job on my ring finger. My riding suit protected the rest of my body rather well, but my hand was clad in a mere nylon glove that was no match for the situation. I suppose that the old adage "being caught between a rock and a hard place" described my predicament with uncanny accuracy.

We were about 20 km from PortoFerraio. A quick glance at my left hand told me I wasn't riding any more, at least for a while. Calling an ambulance would have been useless in that narrow trail, and the weather did not look promising for an air-evac helicopter, if indeed that was even a possibility. A decision was made quickly: I jumped on Stefan's back seat, and for the most exhilarating ride of the day we dashed over to the Ospedale in town. Following evaluation at the emergency department, the doctors decided I would need surgery the next day. While I lay in my room upstairs that evening, I wondered what on earth I was going to do with my F650, safely parked back at the hotel. I had a plane ticket home from Frankfurt, and the bike and I needed to find our way back to Germany somehow, but obviously not together. Stefan, who seemed a bit shaken, had gone back to the hotel to consult with his superiors about my case. He returned a bit later with excellent news: a group of German riders from Augsburg had enough room in their van and station wagon for my F650 and me.

The young "dottoressa" who repaired my hand had the skills of a daughter of Botticelli, and a bedside manner sweet enough to bring the dead back to life. The trip back to Germany was uneventful. The weather front had cleared, and we zoomed along the autostrada and autobahns at a merry clip. My friends in Munich were surprised to see me return ahead of schedule, but my heavily bandaged hand obviated the need for further explanation.



So all is well that ends well. Florida is a delightful place to be in the winter. The hot, muggy summer is over. From my living room window I can see palm trees swaying gently in the breeze, and sailboats cruising the calm waters of the Gulf of Mexico. My hand is still bundled up and I can't get my fingers around the clutch lever, although it has not been for lack of trying. The local surgeon has assured me everything will heal well, but I have not 'fussed up to him that it was a motorcycle accident. When asked what had happened I alluded vaguely to a bike accident, which everyone took to mean a mountain bike. Fine with me. At my age I hate people who try preaching at me.

The karma of life usually teaches you not what you want, but rather what you need to learn. I traveled to Elba planning to learn off-road riding. I learned instead that human kindness and consideration are alive and well in the world. Regardless of how some may wish to see themselves, underneath the skin we are exactly alike. We get bruised, cut and bleed. We need to be bandaged up and cared for. Usually by total strangers, people whose idioms, customs or beliefs we might have thought different from ours. Nothing could be farther from the truth. Also, motorcyclists make the best friends in the world. But I already knew that. Just need to be reminded every now and then.

Would I recommend the course? Most definitely yes, but be sure your skills are up to the challenge. This environment is not for beginners. If you just went to Elba for the food and wine alone the experience would be well worth your while. That is precisely what I did for the next two days following my mishap.

With **Rahmi Barutcu** and his BMW-GS well in control the "OMM – Year on the Saddle" award is still open to some changes in the month of December. **Timucin Kanatli** (on Triumph Tiger), **Sinan Ozgen** (on Aprilia and BMW) and **Fuat Domanic** (on Aprilia Mille) are just few thousands kilometers behind.

The final results and the list of prizes will be published in the January 2003 Bulletin. Stay tuned... and if you are in ... get out ... on your bike.

BIKING IN TURKEY – OMM Ring of Friends

"You must read history chapter of your guide book before going to Turkey. You will see that whatever happened in the history of mankind in the first 10,000 years had been placed whether in China or at the places which are one day away by bike to Istanbul." The writer is Bob Higdon, 61 years old from USA who had covered more than 520,000 km. and visited Turkey last year. (You can find entire article about his ride at : www.ommriders.org - Travels - St. Paul, Homer, and me) Western travelers are not new to Turkey. William Hamilton can still use today his notes from the trip he made in 1836-1837 in Turkey; Hamilton traveled on horses and, in the same spirit, some of today's travelers prefer motorbikes as modern replacements.

Turkish and foreigners bikers are now criss-crossing this Country: for some of them is the passing itinerary to Far East, for others is "Sun and Sea", for others again is mountains and old roads, for all is the untouched pleasure of discovery. A ride across Turkey is always a fascinating experience and an opportunity for freedom and adventure incomparable in Europe. Sometimes the adventure can show the hard face: outside big cities services for bikers are rarely available, spare parts difficult to find and bike support non-existent. The traditional Turkish hospitality and the rules of nomad culture provide in most cases easy solutions: still in emergency we all need a friend and for this reason OMM opened last year to individual riders and clubs the Ring of Friends. In every settlement of Turkey motorbike riders and volunteers may help to the biker in difficulties..

If you are interested in being a member of OMM Ring of Friends all you have to do is to complete this form and send to Emin Gursoy at emin@gursoytekstil.com. Your participation to the Ring of Friends can make biking in Turkey a safer experience and it can offer the opportunity to meet and share the experience of new friends

1. Name:	
2. Family Name:	
3. Address:	
4. Home Phone Number:	
5. Work Phone Number:	
6. Occupation:	
7. Mobile Phone Number:	
8.E-mail:	
9.Language(s) Spoken :	
10. Bike(s) owned or no-biker:	
11. Help offered:	Please type YES in the sections of help offered
Assistance by Phone	
A space to park the bike	
A workshop to repair the bike	
Hospitality in emergency (food)	
Hospitality in emergency (bed)	
Bike recovery (trailer or pick-up)	

NEWS NOVEMBER 2002. Friends for One More Mile

Our good friends and exceptional riders **Erin & Chris Ratay** celebrate this month 3 years and 6 months of their ride around the world. Erin and Chris have been, for the last year, riding in South America and they wrote to us:

"The end of the ride is on the horizon, and we will then have to settle down to find a place to live and work at the end of next summer. Well, here we are in Belem, just 100 miles/160 kilometers south of the equator and sweating our -----s off. We are on the edge of the great rainforest area known as the Amazon, and at the mouth of the mighty Amazon River. Monday, we board a "bird cage", the locals term for the little wooden ferry boats, for a 5-day journey up the Amazon River to Manaus. The bikes will ride down in the cargo hold, while we bask in relative luxury in a 2x1 meter cabin. We could go hammock-class, but that would mean sleeping in extremely close proximity to 100 other people with all the associated noises and annoyances that implies. There is also a security issue, along with exposing ourselves to the swarms of mosquitoes... If all goes well, and we don't throw ourselves to the piranhas (those nasty little flesh-eating fish) before we arrive, we should be in Manaus by next Saturday. The plan is then to make a quick dash to the Venezuelan border (crossing the equator along the way) where we hope to meet a Venezuelan guy who contacted us on the internet and invited us to stay at his summer house.... Our time in Venezuela is unfortunately limited, as we plan to be in Panama to celebrate Christmas. In the coming months we will work our way north through Central America and Mexico. We will probably cross back into the states in late-May of next year, and arrive back in NYC around August of 2003."

Read more about this unique ride at <http://www.ultimatejourney.com/>

Frank Schellenberg has been crossing Turkey at the beginning of November on his way to "Crossing Africa". He went to Fethiye hoping to paraglide on Oludeniz but he found all the operators closed for the season. Read on his planned ride at <http://www.crossing-africa.com>

From Horizon Unlimited November 2002 E-zine, **Iris Heiremans and Trui Hanouille** (Belgium, 2nd overland to India, through Pakistan, Iran and Turkey, on DR650SE's) story about the Trabzon, Turkey Community:
"More than a month before getting to Turkey, I thought it would be interesting to meet with Turkish bikers. Have a chat, maybe ride out with them, or just see a bit of Turkish biker's lives. Through our favorite biker's web site, <http://www.horizonsunlimited.com> which hosts 'communities' from all over the world (groups or individuals ready to help passing-by motorbike travelers), we contacted the Tarzan Community. Tarzan is a medium sized city on the Black Sea coast in north eastern Turkey. We wanted to visit this interesting city anyhow on our way back through Turkey. Almost instantly we received a very kind reply from a certain **Alton Kalama**, welcoming us to his town.

Though a recent 'convert' to biking, Alton is a biker to the core for sure. He told us they founded a biker's cafe last year (open after 19 h and serving tea), and there are about 25 'big bike' riders in the whole of Tarzan, all knowing one another. But halfway through Iran we realized our front tires wouldn't hold till home, and Iris's relined brake pads were not up to the job. So we contacted Alton again asking if he could help us with these matters. He did, and how! Spare brake pads were DHLed from home to his address, and he managed to order the exact tires we wanted. All was ready and waiting for us when we got to Trabzon.

One afternoon, when we were at the tire shop and there was a bit of a language problem over 'where can we have the tires fit', Alton was called at his job and showed up only minutes later. He helped us out with a smile, and went back to his work... On top of that we spent an evening together with Alton, his great wife and two almost-grown-up children, and an entire picnic day at Sumela monastery - the latter on Iris's birthday with the very best lamb chops we ever had and a real cake with a candle to finish off the day. A huge 'Thank You' to Alton!"

See pictures of the ride at http://www.990.to/iris_trui/ and subscribe to the best bike e-zine at <http://www.horizonsunlimited.com/form/subscribe.shtml>

LONG DISTANCE RIDING. News from Iron Butt Association

While working on the OMM plan of Long Distance Rides of 2003 (we have some surprise in store) we received the last Iron Butt Bulletin from Michael Kneebone.



"The 2003 Iron Butt Rally will start on Monday, August 11, 2003 from Missoula, Montana and return 11 days later on Friday, August 22. Registration forms will be distributed via this news list on October 14 and placed on www.ironbutt.com on November 1st. The drawing for positions will be held mid-November, 2002.

We have held the drawing almost one year later than tradition to try and minimize all the roster changes that are an administrative nightmare for us. If you are new to the drawing process and plan on entering the rally, you should first visit www.ironbutt.com/ibr/2001/index.html to get a feel for the selection process.

Please note that positions are extremely limited and not everyone that seeks to enter the rally will be able to find a spot. We wish we could accommodate each applicant, but unfortunately, we do have limited facilities to conduct the rally."

If you do not plan to enter the drawing for next year Rally a visit to www.ironbutt.com is still worth the trip: you will get the latest Iron Butt articles, news and tips for safe (and long) riding.

GEAR AND EQUIPMENT: Get the right Insurance for your bike

It all started when a friendly "Devil" whispered in my ears "Get a close look at your insurance policy!".

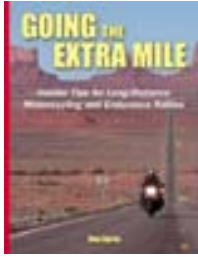
That I did and despite being insured with a well known Turkish and International company I discover that my coverage was quite inadequate. Just an example: my fully comprehensive policy covered the bike against theft only and when the bike was parked in my private garage!

ONE MORE MILE with 

Now is my turn to suggest that you take a good look at your insurance. Read the small prints and ask question to your broker. Not satisfied? Read on OMM web site the policy and the assistance services offered by Swiss Sigorta (under Gear and Equipment) and get in contact with them www.isvicre-sigorta.com.tr You will get not only a better coverage but also a cheaper one: they offer substantial discounts if you well protect your bike and if you have an OMM training Course certificate. Isvicre Sigorta sponsors the OMM Bulletin and Events.

OMM BOOKS: Going the Extra Mile.

When Ron Ayres first competed in the Iron Butt Rally in 1995, a hardy, but loosely organized group of endurance riders took the field to participate in a sport that barely existed at the time.



Seven years later Ron has written the first book that shares the proven advice of long-distance veterans with all riders who want to extend their range on a motorcycle. To ride long distances, first one must be comfortable riding in a wide range of conditions and situations, and long-distance riders typically choose and modify their gear with these goals in mind. Preparation is also key to success, and you'll learn how to make the most of your ride before you even mount up, utilizing the latest techniques for computer mapping and GPS navigation. See how the Big Dogs manage fuel consumption, speed, and rest breaks to maintain a high average mileage. And lastly, an extensive resource directory will put hundreds of valuable contacts at your fingertips.

Ayres has drawn on his years of experience to produce a book that can help riders get started down the long road of endurance riding, answering their most frequently asked questions. Order your copy at <http://www.whitehorsepress.com/onlinecatalog/sections/proddata/GEM.htm>

Also available at White Horse Press:

MOTORCYCLING STORIES: ADVENTURE TOURING FROM THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES, by Piet W. Boonstra, winner of the American Motorcyclist Association's Joe Christian Award for "outstanding freelance writing."

GHOST RIDER: TRAVELS ON THE HEALING ROAD, by Neil Peart, drummer for the rock band Rush. A triumphant travel memoir from a very gifted writer and musician, who took to the road as a man reduced to staying alive by staying on the move.

AWAY FROM MY DESK: A ROUND-THE-WORLD DETOUR FROM THE RAT RACE, by Rif K. Haffar. A whirlwind tour of 45 countries spanning six continents with enough fascinating, harrowing and often very funny encounters to fill a lifetime.

MANN OF HIS TIME, by Ed Youngblood. The engaging story of one of the greatest motorcycle racers in history and a book that can be enjoyed by anyone who loves the sport and is inspired by its heroes.

SHE'S A BAD MOTORCYCLE: WRITERS ON RIDING, by Gino Zanetti. A wonderful sampling of the best motorcycle writing from Hunter S. Thompson, Ted Simon, Ralph "Sonny" Barger, Robert Pirsig, Robert Fulton, Che Guevara, Peter Coyote, Dennis Hopper, and many others.

LINKS:

NOV. 02 CLUBS The Oil Route: the announcement from George Karabatos of the Ride around the Mediterranean covering approximately 15,000 km and visiting ten countries (Greece, Turkey, Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, Jordan, Egypt, Tunisia, Italy, and France) in the course of 35 days got a lot of attention from OMM riders. Now you can link to the web site at <http://www.oilroute.gr>

NOV 02 ACCESSORIES TURKEY Get tire repair kit, Smartire wireless tire pressure monitors and fill your tire with nitrogen after your visit at http://www.vatanticaret.com.tr/lastik_servisi.htm. Cem Uceler is ready to welcome bikers.

NOV 02 TRAINING "Tell me how you drive and I will tell you what kind of idiot you are" A Dys-educational road driving movie. The master of animation Bruno Bozzetto has a really funny story to tell you at <http://www.muesing-hv.de/rr/fahrschule/>. Do not miss it: while smiling, you will see a lot of real road-madness.

NOV 02 ACCESSORIES A special set of ear-plugs with variable level of attenuation is presented (and sold) at <http://www.bikehps.com/ProductFiles/motosafe.html> So far, untested by us these ear-plugs introduce a new concept of safety.

NOV 02 RIDING GEAR Woman Biker (<http://www.womanbiker.com>) offers leather gear specially designed and made to order. The web site has a good collection of articles on leather quality and maintenance. You cannot order on line but you can mail requests.

Ride and Think

"The study of the art of motorcycle maintenance is really a miniature study of the art of rationality itself. Working on a motorcycle, working well, caring, is to become part of a process, to achieve an inner peace of mind. The motorcycle is primarily a mental phenomenon."

Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance by Robert M. Pirsig

This Bulletin is edited by Paolo Volpara (volpara@homeemail.com) with contributions from bikers around the world. For more information about OMM visit our web site at www.ommriders.org or contact EMIN GURSOY (emin@gursoytekstil.com), YAKUP ICGOREN (yicgoren@barwil.com.tr) or OMER KOKER (omer@insan.net) . In Ankara contact SELIM DEMIREL (sdemirel@alterna.com.tr).

The following Companies generously support OMM site and activities.

