

View from the cockpit

"Training the Instinct"

Barbarian versus Civilized Bikers

Omer Koker article at the beginning of last month bulletin generated a large amount of e-mail mostly accusing the Bulletin Editor to promote "instinctive riding" placing training in secondary stage. Omer stone on the training pond gave to most of the reacting readers the impression that instinct and training were by him considered as alternatives.

Omer may be responsible for this impression when, at the opening of his note, says: "I had a serious disagreement when my teacher objected to my suggestion that decision making and resulting muscle/motor moves on a bike had to be reflexes. He insisted that I must think of everything that I am doing first. I just thought an active un-automated thinking mechanism would be too slow to scan predict and then actually decide and act, thinking of what I am doing in every step of the way. I thought it had to be fluid and automatic." And so, Omer deserves the almost irate reaction of several riders: among them **Fuat Domanic** (OMM riders and IAM member) opens his answer with a catchy statement: **Instinct Is Not the Real "System"!**

If Omer's proposition "instinct got ourselves out of caves" was true - continues Fuat - we would still be living in caves or, most probably we would be long ago extinct.

It is not our instinct but our intelligence that got ourselves out of caves and also made us riders of two wheeled lunatic devices. Instinct pushes us to eat, to breed, to survive, but certainly not to build sky scrapers and to ride 100 or more HP bikes two which are, in most case, way beyond our capacity to handle. Actually riding may even be considered as one of the most anti-instinctive activities.

Hans Heinz Dilthey in one of his seminars told us that human (and animal) instinct perceives any leaning beyond 20 degrees as a dangerous, falling situation: nevertheless any decent bike can be safely leaned at 30 degrees or more while, in circuit, racers can control leaning of 55 degrees.

So there must be something more than instinct on our way to become a better rider or, should I say, a less bad rider. As far as I know, "The System" (as presented in "Motorcycle Roadcraft: the Police Rider's handbook" (ISBN 0 11 341143X) and used by OMM ARA workshop's trainers) is a fundamental and helpful base for riders of any level except "real" beginners still busy to grasp the basic controls of a bike. While I agree with Omer that "conscious" saddle time is necessary for training instinct and acquiring trained reflexes, I strongly disagree when he says the system is not enough for advanced riders.

Who, among us, is a rider so competent to apply the whole System in at all times?

Do we "really" apply the System every time we ride? I am sure we don't... because we can't! We can't because we let our confused instincts (machismos, laziness, distractions) to take over our intelligence and confuse our ride. We had the opportunity to meet a very few riders who can fully apply the system and they would "calmly" make circles around any of us. Omer assumes that system dictates a kind of "contemplative" ride: a new type of mantra for a cheesy Californian sect. Something like: Scan the road attentively and think about it... then interpret the results of your scan-



ning and come up with a nice plan... then carefully execute it... ad infinitum and ad nauseam... If we try to apply the system this way we will certainly end up in deeper hospital contemplations.

For me the System is like a series of essential piano exercises. In order to become a decent pianist one must be trained with repeating different exercises. Each of the exercises is designed to increase one specific skill, if you repeat all of them long enough you become a better pianist or vice versa. Off course there are infinite techniques of riding for infinite number of occasions and individuals. Especially for us (riding most of the time on open roads) the System is the essential base to efficiently and safely use any additional technique. Being able to understand what the system is, doesn't mean that you can immediately apply it. It takes an infinite amount of conscious saddle time to own and use it.

As one of the greatest racers Eddie Lawson said: "The more I practice, the luckier I get!"

As rider, stoic philosopher and product of Roman civilization I totally agree with Fuat: still I do not disagree with Omer and in this conundrum is the solution of Instinct versus Theory... Practice versus Training.

The *Motorcycle Roadcraft Book* opens with a great note and Omer should have taken it into major consideration: "Just reading *Motorcycle Roadcraft* will not make you a better rider. Practice is an essential part of learning skill. What matter is not how well you can recall the content of this book, but how well you can apply what you have learnt to your riding? Many of the techniques explained in *Motorcycle Roadcraft* are fairly simple in themselves. Finesse in riding skill comes from applying them consistently. All the techniques depend on judgment and this only comes with practice"

Biking is not a natural, primordial activity: when you move on two wheels, at high speed, on paved roads, between moving vehicles the "cave instinct" will only shout to slow down. In this "unnatural" situation is easy to react defensively with wrong actions and "once we have learnt to do something routinely we are very reluctant to alter that routine, whatever the evidence that it does not work."

The transmitted knowledge of expert riders and the rationally acquired skill must become a second instinct: learn the System and practice it ... till you do not have to think about it. OMM

The Roadcraft System considers four phases in a permanent acquisition and evaluation of Information. Each phase is dependent on the one before and all phases should be considered in sequence at the approach to any hazard.

1. **POSITION** Choose the correct line of approach.
2. **SPEED** Adjust speed to negotiate safely the hazard.
3. **GEAR** Select the appropriate gear for the chosen speed.
4. **ACCELERATION** Regain fluent speed while leaving the hazard safely.

OMM Bulletin: a tool for change

Consideration on a poor media.

The OMM Information Bulletin was first published in December 1999 and since then has been distributed to active bikers every month. At the 47th issue of June 2003 this media will reach almost 1.300 friends around the world: it will definitely reach (if your server allows it) but we do not know whether it will be well received and used.

Comments from readers are not so frequent and normally they are reser-



ved to a group of loyal commentators: still, in the last three months, I got more comments than usual all (or almost all) positively commenting the changes in content and format.

For the format, we have solely to thank our good friend and OMM rider **Hi-dayet Gurdal** hg@rafineri.net, a genius of art direction.

For the content, I am glad to see from comments that at least a small portion of you noticed a new direction in this simple media.

We started we three simple objectives: to provide useful information for better enjoying our sport, to give points of reference for advanced training in motorcycling and to provide occasions for visiting and discovering Turkey.

All this with additional news on the activities of One More Mile Riders Association. We have now concluded the revision of the material that will form the future of this bulletin and we would like to get your impressions, comments and suggestions. After all, this "poor media" is the vehicle of a community of bikers and, as such, must reflect the desires of the noble among you.

Here is how we plan to organize the future issues:

1. "View from the cockpit" will remain the editorial piece open to facts, events, ideas, conversations we had during the month. This article tries to offer material for the construction of a "new biker" crazy but considerate, violent but gentle, risky but competent, individualist but social, disturbing but funny.

2. "Ride to Learn, Learn to Ride" will include articles written for OMM or taken with (and without) authorization from different sources: the common

denominator is the spirit of the "System" as promoted by OMM - ARA workshop. A competent, fluent and systematic way to move the bike around.

3. "Right to Ride" will take care of subject improving or limiting our right to ride responsibly in freedom. As FEMA Observer, OMM is committed to promote the rights of bikers and to work for a better road/traffic/legislation environment.

4. "One More Mile on the Road" are the usual reports of Rides (short of long) done by OMM riders in Turkey or abroad. We will improve this section with more space dedicated to opportunities for biking in our Country.

5. "On Your Bike: Excuses for Ride" is a new section where we list in a simple form appointments for serious bikers: good opportunities for leaving the daily routine and take the road.

6. "Ride in Gear" will continue to collect news of bikes, accessories, parts that can improve (at a cost) the pleasure of riding. Once a year OMM issues a special bulletin solely dedicated to this subject.

7. "Ride and Think" is the conclusion of the bulletin with ideas and considerations related to the philosophy of travel and motorcycle.

On top of these seven sections we will continue to have three "Group Related" parts of the Bulletin:

1. "OMM Ring of Friend" reporting on rides or events involving our friends in Turkey or abroad.

2. "The OMM Activities in the Month" reporting what has been done by Group's members.

3. "The OMM activities ahead" listing the calendar for the following months.

Most of the articles of the seven sections will be inserted in the OMM website that, in time, will form a substantial archive for training, traveling and gearing up. A simple plan, already in action, for a simple media. **We hope to continue in having your attention and approval: we wait for your contributions as usual at paolo.volpara@ommriders.org OMM**

one more mile
www.ommriders.org

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Right to Ride

European Road Safety Action Program:

Halving the number of road accident victims in the European Union by 2010.

The European Transport Commission published the 3rd Road Safety Action Plan. To ensure a sharing of responsibilities, and in accordance with the competences of each party involved (EU, Member States, regional and local authorities, industry, transport companies and private users), this program aims to encourage road users to improve their behavior, to make vehicle safer, and to improve road infrastructure. It provides for the setting up of a European Road Safety Observatory within the Commission. Lastly, it proposes that all the parties concerned, whether public or private, should subscribe to a European Road Safety Charter. **omm**

http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/transport/road/roadsafety/rsap/index_en.htm

OMM activities ahead



28 and 29 of June the monthly appointment with OMM-ARAFlex: one day workshop representing OMM contribution to the training of bikers at the beginning of the career. The session is a mix of theory, slow speed maneuvering in controlled areas and brief observed rides. You can join in Ankara (28) and/or Istanbul (29) by contacting **Omer Koker** for Istanbul and **Selim Demirel** for Ankara.



Rally in Kutahya Phrygian Valley from 3 to 6 July 2003. Organized by EMOK and supported by most of the Turkish biker's clubs and organizations this rally is the classical summer appointment bringing together the largest group of passionate riders. If you are visiting Turkey on bike this is a unique opportunity to meet the community in a splendid and friendly environment. Bring your tent or stay in one of

the hotels in the area. 300 K south of Istanbul and 300 K west of Ankara, Kutahya is well geographically placed, in easy reach from most of Turkish points. Even more important is that, although Kutahya has a reach tradition and a remarkable history: from the famous ceramics to the astonishing Temple of Aizanoi, Hittites, Phrygians, Greeks, Romans, Byzantines, Germiyanogullari and Ottomans have left their traces in this area. The camp is easy reachable from the main route 650, the holiday road connecting Istanbul with Antalya. The Rally point and Camp is placed in the high plateau of the Phrygian Valley a magic place of natural unspoiled beauty. The experience of the last two years proves that this Rally can satisfy the different tastes of bikers: from parties to good food, from competent company to training, from sporting activities to simple fun riding. The mayor producers will be presents with models to test and OMM-ARA will conduct seminars on advanced riding. For detailed information click on www.emok.org

For the ones of you rejecting the idea of camping, here a list of Hotels nearby.

TUTAV TERMAL Hotel Yoncali: **** Nazmi BOZKIR
Tavsanlı Yolu 16 km. Yoncali - 0-274/249 42 12

Hotel ERBAYLAR *** Cahit ERBAY
Afyon Cd. No:16 Kutahya - 0-274/223 69 60

HOTAS Hotel *** Hasan ONCEL
Menderes Bulvarı No:5 Kutahya - 0-274/224 89 30

And finally, if you still have doubts because you do not know how to reach the place a useful address where an animated map will lead you "by hand" to the Rally forest.

<http://212.174.221.141/ext/frig/frig.htm?PHPSESSID=e00a6cd4f0c45-6a804d7b1c783c7c962>



West East Crossing of Turkey LDR from July 11 to 12 OMM Riders are organizing a Long Distance Ride crossing Turkey from West (Cesme) to East (Dogubeyazit) in one go. Two Riders (Selim Demirel and Paolo Volpara) will leave Cesme on July 11 at 18:00 hoping to complete a ride valid for IBA (Iron Butt Association) qualification.



Welcome to OMM-ARA 14 "What is biking about? Fun! ... But there is no Fun without Safety. Safety enables the Riders to get a more enjoyable ride, so, if you increase safety you increase Fun. To ride safe you need time to react. Gaining time to react is the main goal of bike training. The few seconds you can gain by applying the right technique, by exercising additional concentration are essential in saving your skin... and having good fun"

These are Classes 26 and 27 and OMM has come a long way since we began training workshops in May 1999. With Theory sessions and Observed Rides we involved more than 400 riders in our Passion for competent riding.



ARA 14 will open at the Meeting Room of BMW MC Dealership in Istinye (Borusan Oto Istinye, Istinye Mah. Neslihan Cad. 1/1. 80900 Sariyer / Istanbul Phone 0212-3593030) at 11:00 of Friday, July 25. Directed by J. Taylor and P. Volpara, the workshop will start with a theory lesson especially dedicated to Braking and Cornering within the full Roadcraft System. In the same day (and in the same area) we will conduct practical exercises on Slow Speed Maneuvering, Braking and Steering: the theory lesson (11 to 15 hours) is open, as usual, to all riders and co-pilots.

Saturday, July 26 at 07:00 two Groups will take the road from Istanbul to Bolu following the traditional OMM Itinerary.

Sunday, July 27, the Groups will cover a distance of 300 K along some of the most demanding and spectacular roads of south west of Bolu.

Reservations for this event are limited to 16 riders: the applicants must have OMM - ARA qualification from Basic up or they must pass an observation ride conducted by a qualified OMM Rider prior the workshop.

If you are an OMM - ARA qualified rider, book your place immediately or call Omer Koker,
(Bus: 0212 2874101 Mobile: +90 (0532) 2637171) to fix your Observed ride. **omm**

riding is a way of thinking @ www.ommriders.org

The OMM Activities in June

Hakan Erman (OMM rider and member of EMOK group) went with several riders to the splendid Island of **Bozcaada** during the week-end of June 20/22. Full report on the next Bulletin.

Again, **Hakan Erman** gave an OMM - ARA presentation on May 29 to 12 EMOK members, at Borusan BMW Center in Istinye. On the week of June 2nd he repeated the same presentation for IKITEKER Group. He writes on his experience: "All the participants expressed appreciation, but I felt, once again, that knowing the subject is one thing and moderating a group is something else. Unfortunately, only talking about a subject, delivers a small part of the message. We have to make our audience discuss the subject as well. To give you an example, yesterday, after spending considerable amount of time explaining mental preparation, we moved to the subject of vision. Then we started discussing it. One participant admitted that it was not possible to be so alert to scan the road, because he would have business matters in his mind during week-day rides. So we went back to mental preparation and the group helped me make this point clear and acceptable for him."

From the 4th to the 8th of June CNN Turk program "6.Vites" broadcasted scenes from ARA13. **omm**

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Right to Learn, Learn to Ride

The Pace:

A conversation between Nick Ienatsch and Lance Holst.

By H. Marc Lewis 12-Sept-1994 www.micapeak.com/info

At the 1994 USGP at Laguna Seca I attended a High-Performance Street Riding seminar given by Sport Rider and Motorcyclist magazines. Nick Ienatsch and Lance Holst did the presentation: Lance knows a hell of a lot about motorcycles and how to ride them quickly and safely and Nick seems to know even more than Lance. To prepare for the seminar they gave sport riding some considerable thought and tried to reduce the key points to a small enough number that we could remember 'em and therefore work on improving those areas. Nick and Lance presented two lists of five items, and then elaborated upon them (the elaboration given below is mine, from memory).

The first list presents 'Things to Do':

1) Look where you want to go.

a) Remember 'target fixation', the tendency to go where you look. So don't look at the pothole, look at the good pavement just beside it. Don't look at the road right in front of the front wheel, because it's too late to do anything about it. Look further down the road or through the corner. The faster you go, the further ahead you have to look. This is particularly important if you enter a corner 'hot' (too fast) - look at the road where you want to go and push on the inside handlebar, do not look for places to run off the road and crash.

2) Set entrance speed early.

a) Get your braking (or just backing off the throttle) done before you enter the corner. The purpose for this is so you can then open the throttle as soon as possible. This assumes you are riding what is called the 'late apex' line through the corner, meaning that you don't initiate your turn until you can see the exit of the corner, and if you can't see the exit then ride in as deep as possible (staying in your lane, of course) before beginning your turn. Setting your entrance speed early and correctly means you won't have to panic in mid-corner because you're in too hot.

3) Turn the bike quickly.

a) Using a short but strong countersteering effort (akin to the effort in rowing a boat) causes the bike to turn more quickly, and allows the bike to remain upright longer to accomplish step 2 above. The more you lean, the less brakes and throttle you can use - so get the turning part over with as soon as possible.

4) Open the throttle early.

a) Opening the throttle causes the bike to stabilize. The weight transfer from braking and decelerating (Step 2) left the front end compressed and steepened the angle of the forks. This leaves the front end feeling very harsh and being very sensitive to bumps and irregularities in the road. Opening the throttle, even just barely, causes the weight to shift back to the rear resulting in the relaxation of the fork angle. This restores the full suspension travel, softens the ride, and makes the front end less sensitive to bumps.

5) Use precise, smooth control inputs.

a) Smooth application and release of the brakes, clutch and shift lever allow the bike to respond without unnecessary loads being put on any of its components. The ride is more comfortable, the bike responds better, and it's just plain more fun.

The second list presents 'Things Riders Do Wrong':

1) Lack of concentration.

a) This is simply a case of not paying enough attention. When you're riding a motorcycle you need to be 100% focused on riding. Don't be thinking about work, or your love life, or any other distraction. The Hurt Report founds that in the majority of motorcycle accidents, the rider didn't do anything to avoid the accident.

2) Poor visual habits (not looking far enough ahead).

a) Nick stressed the need to remember the formula: D = mph. By this he meant that as a rider increases speed, he/she needs to increase the distance ahead where they look. You should be constantly scanning the road ahead, looking for potential dangers (the 'Scan' part of the S.I.P.D.E.). You should include checking your rear view mirrors too.

3) Early turn-in points.

a) Initiating your turn too soon means you'll be leaned over longer and therefore be spending more time in a state in which you don't have as much control - particularly over the brakes. You may also have to adjust your speed up or down since you probably can't see the exit and don't know if the corner has a decreasing radius or not. If you're rolling on the throttle (as you should) you may end up speeding up too much and exit the corner wide - potentially moving into the oncoming lane or onto the shoulder.

4) Gorilla riding (i.e. non-smooth).

a) This results from jerky control inputs: brakes, shifting, and turning. It can induce unnecessary reactions from the motorcycle, result in temporary loss of traction, or break your concentration.

5) Panic attacks.

a) These are most often caused by entering a corner too 'hot' and thinking you can't make it. In fact, a modern sport-bike with good tires can almost always make it - it's the rider that can't. So if you get into this situation, first tell yourself you can make it. Really believe it. Then look through the corner where you want to go. Push on the inside handlebar to increase your lean angle. Do not use the brakes. If you can summon the courage, open the throttle, even just a little. It really will help. **omm**

sely affects handling.

Body positioning starts in the lower body. Don't be afraid to move around on the motorcycle. Put the balls of your feet on the end of the foot pegs, being careful not to let your toes hang too far over the edge, and use your legs to help transfer your weight from one side to the other. Rather than support your weight in a corner with your arms, use your outside leg to "hug" the gas tank. This will help keep your arms relaxed, and will result in much more fluid and controlled steering inputs.

Remember: You will never develop the ability to feel the front end grip level if you have a very tight grip on the bar with your hands. **omm**

Right to Learn, Learn to Ride

Proper Body Positioning from the Three-time Grand Prix World Champion Freddie Spencer (High Performance Riding School)

www.fastfreddie.com

Ever felt like you have a tense, death-grip on the clip-ons, but weren't sure how to cure it? The answer: proper body positioning. When a rider places all his weight on the hands and wrists, it becomes very difficult to remain neutral on the motorcycle, and often results in a straight-arm stance that feeds the rider's movements directly into the chassis, which adver-

One More Mile on the Road

OMM Riders on the first Circumnavigation of the Black Sea Action Program:

A Tale of 10 Kerabans by Ian Johnson

Organized by Motoreast www.motoreast.com and supported by Aprilia, BMW and Honda, the first complete tour of the Black Sea coast by bike was completed on the 11 of May after 10 day of fun, pain and adventures. Ian, one of the OMM riders taking part in this event, is the first one to report and we published the first portion of the ride from Istanbul to Yalta on May Bulletin . Here the conclusion: from Yalta to Istanbul.

Day Six

The next day's itinerary envisaged **leaving Yalta**, traveling north-east along the coast road to Kerch where we would cross the Cimmerian Bosphorus at the mouth of the Sea of Azov, before entering Russia and riding down to the Russian port and resort of Sochi. Our Russian motorcycling friends insisted that the coastal road from Alustia to Theodosia was all but impassible. Dangerous and with no petrol stations along its length they insisted that we took the main road back to Simferopol before then turning east to Kerch. Always bowing to local knowledge (!) we decided that we had planned to ride the coastal road and come what may, that was the route we were going to stick to ...and what a delight it turned out to be.

Our Russian friends were right (but also oh so wrong) about the road. Yes, there were no petrol stations but that was because the road was utterly unspoilt. Almost unchanged from when the Genoese set up their trading colonies along this coast and Theodosia was the capital of the Black Sea slave trade, the views were almost perfect and the road tight but demanding. Absolute heaven. The bubble was burst, however, on rejoining the main road and on attempting to pass through the city of Kerch. Resembling all the worst preconceptions about decaying Soviet-style cities, as we were leaving the city we were apprehended at gunpoint by the police. Accused as a group of reckless driving, of having generated a road traffic accident on the entrance of the city and having already ridden through the police cordon established to detain us we were threatened with confiscation of both motorcycles and licenses pending a hearing in front of the local magistrates.

Fortunately as the group remonstrated with the police a local rider riding an immaculate Honda Valkeriye (probably with a net worth equal to the entire city) came to our help. Despite negotiations, the police would not budge from their demand for \$300 as an alternative remedy. Knowing that we were heading for the ferry to Russia we were effectively trapped and reluctantly paid up feeling well ripped off. The news at the ferry terminal that 2 hours later one of our Russian friends riding alone on his Honda X11 was charged with exactly the same crime and had to pay \$20 did not ease the sense of injustice...if only we had known what was in store.

Border controls and customs formalities prior to the border crossing were worse than could be expected and at one stage it looked like we would actually miss the ferry (for some bizarre reason Passport Control and Customs clearance would only start to process our documents once the ferry had actually docked). Despite paying \$20 to the ferry operators to both ensure the ferry waited for us and to ensure that we were first on- first off the RoRo ferry, we were dismayed to find that at Russian passport control we were effectively sidelined until the remainder of the "normal" passengers and traffic were processed.

The border entry to Russia was an absolute nightmare; searches of all our luggage were made and then we faced the "one fingered" customs typist who had to create a personal import record of each motorcycle complete with copies of licenses, passports and such meaningful details as "Home address" and "How many kilometers your vehicles odometer has". With still another 300km to go before Sochi our timetable was under seri-

ous strain so as soon as the first 5 were through we split up and set off. The customs officials opened the gate, we traveled 10 meters and were immediately stopped by the police! We were lucky, our Russian colleague, nicknamed Vlad "the Russian" to differentiate him from Vlad "the Stranger", talked us past but the group following 1 hour later was subjected to another detailed search for drugs etc! Welcome to Russia.

By now the light had gone but the road was good and we estimated a 0300hrs arrival at the Radisson Hotel in Sochi. That estimate, however, failed to take into consideration the bureaucratic delays that we were to suffer as a consequence of constant harassment from the police. As we rode we were stopped at every single checkpoint. A pattern quickly established itself. Ride for 20 minutes; spend 45 minutes at checkpoint (and repeat) By 0145hrs we were had only covered at most 150 kilometers when for the fifth time that night we were stopped yet again south of the port of Novorossiysk. For the first time ever in my experience, we were asked for our International Driving Permits (IDP) and or licenses in Russian. In the past I have always thought these a waste of time as inevitably police ask to see your "real" license rather than IDP. In Russia, however, we found that they were absolutely indispensable. No IDP; leave Russia or pay the inevitable non-receipted penalty payment. I could be generous and attribute the Russia police tactics to their concern about night-time traffic in areas adjacent to Chechnya, or belated revenge for the British contribution to the final evacuation of the White Russian forces out of Novorossiysk in 1920, but the real motivation was money. Stern faced police would immediately become jovial after payment of the demanded amount and ask us to ride fast or pull wheelies on our exit from the checkpoints.

We had had enough. It was clear that we would not reach Sochi in good time and so we decided to call it a day. The police advised us to the location of a great 5 star hotel where we checked-in in relief. Our concern having been further raised by the presence of hundreds of troops roaming the streets! Or colleagues had a similar experience and had quit some 100 km further north. Their luck was not so great however. They had to settle for a Soviet style hotel where it was all but impossible to get a beer but the local pimp was more than pleased at the influx of potential new customers and paraded his wares to the guys as they tried to check-in (Soviet-style!).

Day Seven

Having blown our rest day in Sochi we took full advantage of our 5 star hotel's breakfast facilities before setting off yet again on the road to Sochi. Having refused to comply with the Russian police order to have our licenses translated by a public notary into Russian it was with some trepidation that we approached the checkpoint that the previous night had undermined our will to continue. Nothing! No request to stop at all ! The pattern repeated itself all the way to Sochi. The message was clear: under no circumstances try to travel by night through Russia - the pain is just too great and simply not worth it.

In the daylight the road showed itself to be excellent. Properties were well maintained and the views of the Caucasus to our left were simply stunning. As the road approached Sochi it became more and more demanding. The last 100 km being switchback after switchback. In fact the type of road that in the UK you would die to ride.

We regrouped on the outskirts of Mamajka just to the north of Sochi. The locals clearly as bemused at such a gathering as we were at the sight of veterans of the Great Patriotic War (WWII) waiting for the bus wearing all of their wartime medals. The plan was then to blast down to the harbor, put the bikes on our privately chartered ship and by-pass the war stricken province of North Abkhazia by sailing to the Georgian port of Poti.

We should have known better. On seeing the hydrofoil that we were to use our first reaction was "Not a snowballs chance in hell". Styled like a refugee from a Flash Gordon movie the Soviet designed and built Kometa 5 was no more than a foot passenger ferry. Not only were there no vehicle entry and exit points, in addition once on board the bikes would have to be tied between the rows of passenger seats. Oh, and just to make things even more entertaining there was half metre drop from the quayside to the ship. The thought of getting a 300kg K12 and the Blackbird down that drop and through the entrance was simply incredible.

The crew appeared to be undaunted so having little real alternative we thought we would give it a try. The first bike to try was the lightweight F650GS. Having perfected the technique (!) we then loaded the other "small" (read narrow) bikes: the Transalp, an Aprilia Caponord, the K1200RS and finally the Superblackbird. That left the 5 1150GS's which were clearly too wide to pass through the doors. After much debate 2 were hosted onto the top of the Kometa, one was hung out of the rear (emergency) exit and the final 2 were left dangling down each passenger

entry/exit point. UK HSE officers would have condemned the arrangements immediately. Not only were vehicles sharing accommodation with people but all the emergency exits were effectively blocked. Having worked like stevedores to load the vehicles the crew then announced that high winds off the coast of Georgia meant we could not sail after all that night but would leave at 0830 prompt the next morning. As the Black Sea at Sochi was like a millpond we were skeptical to say the least but again had little option than spend the night in Sochi.

Yet another night in a Soviet style hotel. This was the hotel Moskova and was a time warp from the Brezhnev era. Built in 1974 and seemingly never redecorated since then it offered a living history look at the former Soviet Union in its heyday. Brown paint, brown linoleum, brown threadbare carpets and the world's most claustrophobic bathroom/shower facilities simply underlined some of the more negative aspects of traveling through this fascinating country.

Day Eight

We were right to be skeptical the night before. Even with a help of a customs agent it took us until 1300hrs the next day to clear the emigration process. Stranger still, our "private charter" appeared to have been populated with routine, fee paying foot passengers who gave scant notice to the fact that they had to squeeze past BMW GS motorcycles to get on board and then hunker down amongst even more motorcycles in the body of the ship.

The team took the opportunity of the 4 hour crossing to catch up on much needed sleep but even though disembarkation in the Georgian port of Poti was remarkably painless in comparison to the bureaucratic porridge of Russia it was obvious that there was no way we could make the Capital Tblisi. Again we switched to plan B and simply staid in Poti, being regally entertained by the manager of the port complex. Given the truly appalling state of even Georgia's main roads and it's reputation for lawlessness, this was the only sensible choice.

For those not familiar with Georgia roads the reality can be truly mind (if not tire) blowing. Two years earlier it had taken us 2 days to travel 150km across the mountains, the main road from Poti to Batumi and thence to the Turkish border was only marginally better. Georgia is truly a country where a GS is needed. The Blackbird and the K12 bucked their way from pothole to pothole and eventually we had to remove the K12's front mudguard to prevent it continually hitting the fairing. The countryside is absolutely beautiful but take your eyes off the road for a second and you find yourself hitting the mother of all potholes. Surprisingly the rims on the K12 survived the onslaught but on returning to Istanbul it was clear that the Blackbird had picked up a material dent on the front wheel rim. As one of our colleagues cruelly said "I am not sure which is uglier: the women or the roads".

Day Nine

The exit from Georgia was relatively painless. The entry to Turkey should have been easier but was not. In particular the Turkish agencies have overreacted to the SARs threat and require all immigrants to complete a medical questionnaire and health check. You can imagine the response to the answer on the form "List all [other]countries visited in the last 10 days". But at last we were through the final border crossing of the trip and back into a country where you can pay for your petrol with plastic ! Free also to enjoy the coastal road to Rize and then onto Trabzon (former capital of the Byzantine Empire when after the 4th Crusade in 1204 the crusaders decided it would be more profitable to sack Constantinople than make the tiresome trip all the way to the Middle East just to fight the Moslems). The opportunity was also taken to visit the superbly newly restored orthodox monastery at Sumela; one of the "not to be missed" sights of Turkey.

Day Ten

We were now only 2 days from our final destination (Istanbul). After Georgia the roads were bliss but in parts heavy with traffic and on many stretches resembled nothing more than a construction site as the Turkish authorities grapple with completing the Black-Sea trunk road that effectively severs the communities from direct access to the Black Sea itself.

Our final night together was spent at Sinop. Sinop being the northernmost point in Turkey and hence the point chosen by the US to place its early warning and listening station; ironically only 4 nights before we had been in the Crimea peninsula, the position of the former USSR's listening station!. As the sun sank behind the horizon we drank warm champagne out of plastic cups to celebrate our success !

Final days can always be something of an anti-climax but in choosing to use the coastal road from Sinop to Amasra, Paolo and Kazim were ensu-



ring that no-one could relax too soon. A vicious, narrow road with the most stunning views (and it has to be said the most nerve wracking sheer drops down to the sea) this road is an absolute belter. By this stage people were freely exchanging bikes so I was on the K12 rather than the Blackbird, its undercarriage grinding away nicely on the uneven surface. It is difficult to do this road justice. Certainly not for the novice, nor for the person unnerved by loose gravel or even a total lack of asphalt at times this road demands utter concentration but returns it in spades. The loose surfaces did, however, mean that we have more than one accident on this stretch; but nothing so serious that bikes could not be ridden away from the scene. By the time we reached Amasra, however, it was obvious that is we were to meet our target of Istanbul by 2000hrs for a pre-arranged celebratory dinner we would have to forgo the delights of the coastal road, strike inland and cover the final 200-300km on the Trans European Motorway.

We had done it. The first recorded circumnavigation of the Black Sea by motorcycle.

As we made our way down to the Asian shores of the Bosphorus for dinner I would wager that we all thought a little of Keraban the Inflexible. After all we too had managed to travel from the European side of the Bosphorus to the Asian without paying the equivalent of Keraban's tax.... the one-way toll on the first and second motorway bridges across the straits. We had ridden in excess of 5,000km in 11 days, passed through 7 countries and had the time of our lives. What a journey !

Top 10 learning points from the trip:

1. When traveling through Eastern Europe (and particularly Russia) you do really need an IDP.
2. Do not attempt to travel by night.
3. Have plenty of small denomination USD notes for those unexpected "non receipted penalty payments".
4. Bureau de Change will only accept clean, unmarked notes.
5. Carry sufficient cash. Whilst most petrol stations indicate that they accept payment by credit card, the reality is very different.
6. Ensure that your vaccination record is up to date and carry it with you.
7. Whilst difficult to obtain try to obtain your Moldovan visa before you travel.
8. Learn to recognize Russian Cyrillic script and place names. Unlike Greece, road signs in Eastern Europe are only found in Cyrillic.
9. Whilst a Carnet de Passage may not be compulsory it makes border crossings in Eastern Europe much easier.
10. Exercise patience. **OMM**

OMM Ring of Friend

Kevin and Julia Sanders:

Trans Americas Guinness World Record Ride Kemal Altay injured in Pakistan.

Kevin and Julia Sanders, current record holders for the fastest circumnavigation of the globe by bike are well known to OMM Riders. Kevin was with us during the Istanbul Motorcycle Fair and he is now announcing a new Record attempt: **Trans Americas Guinness World Record Ride**. "For those of you we haven't spoken to in a while, we are taking the liberty of letting you know that we are off once again in August this year to try for another Motorbike World Record. (sorry if you've heard us shouting about it for months now!) This time... The Trans Americas Guinness World Record Ride! It goes from Prudhoe Bay Alaska to Ushuaia, Argentina. The bike record is currently at 47 days and we will try and take at least 10 days off this. It will be a tough endurance ride, riding 18 hours + a day. Additionally we still ride for the SOS Children's Villages charity - we raised over £10,000 on the ride last year for them and we continue to ride for this charity for the Trans-Americas record too. Anyway, we will start the record on 17 August and provided everything goes to plan we should finish around third week in September.

Just to get a feel for what we are doing, the ride was launched at the British Motorcycle Federation Show in the UK. BMW GB is backing us and they carried the news of our ride on www.worldofbmw.co.uk (see the News section). If you want to follow the ride, the website has had a makeover. Take a look! "

On Your Bike: Excuses for Ride

The 3rd International BMW Motorrad Biker Meeting is taking place in Garmish-Partenkirchen from 4th to 6th July, 2003. This meeting is all about getting together with other BMW motorcycle enthusiasts. The event includes motorcycle tours through the Alps, spectacular shows, training circuits, test rides on all BMW motorcycles, vintage & modern bike displays, info on BMW motorcycle clubs, special sales of rider equipment & a special exhibition on '80 years of BMW Motorrad. Up to date information is available at www.bmw-motorrad.com/bikermeeting Accommodation can be booked by telephoning the hotline on 0049 8821 180 726 or can be reserved by on-line booking via a form found on the web page. There is a limited size camping area available directly next to the event location. However no advance booking is available for this area.

From Istanbul to Garmish-Partenkirche the fastest road covers 1.900 kilometers going through Sofia, Belgrade, Zagreb, Ljubljana, Salzburg.

Ducati Speed Week will be held at the A1 Ring in Zeltweg, Austria, from July 30th to August 3rd, 2003. **Situated in the rolling hills of the Austrian countryside, the event's location is at 1.600 K from Istanbul following the same route till Zagreb and then pointing north via Maribor.** Rental bikes will also be available in situ. The historic event will maintain its traditional racing atmosphere, while at the same time expanding to offer many Ducati oriented activities. Organized by Motoclub Aquile Desmo in collaboration with the Italian motorcycle magazine Mondo Ducati, Speed Week is sponsored by the factory-based, Desmo Owners Club. Participants will have the opportunity to test the new 999, learn to ride on a Monster 620, check out the latest Ducati models including the Multistrada, and tour the area's amazing roads. Races, opportunity to meet current and former Ducati riders, shows by Christian Pfeiffer's Stunt, and endless occasion of friendship with Ducatisti from around the globe. Pre-book at www.ducati.com

July on the fast lane: to **Ankara for the Moto Dragster** championship with a Drag Party organized on the 21st.

Kenan Vural, good friend of OMM, gives you a new excuse for visiting the area of Assos (Troy a few kilometers). He writes "We are opening a place, called **DENİZE DOĞRU**, in Küçükükyu. It is a small town at the Aegean coast, 24 km south of Assos. Yeşilyurt village is 2 km away

Kemal Altay, friend of OMM and great "solo" rider, runs the Horizons Unlimited Community in Ankara. In his recent ride to East Kemal had a serious accident: the last issue of HU bulletin reports his mail to Susan and Grant Johnson founders and owners of the site.

"Hi Grant, Hi Susan. Just wanted to thank you for the great site. After I had fractured my leg in Pakistan, I have received both publicly and personally large amounts of messages from the people of HU, all with best wishes and intentions to help anyway possible. Reading them in such a state (in Quetta with crutches and couple of thousands away from the nearest reasonable medical center) has really helped me. Not only that, but met with great people on the road, again thanks to HUBB."

OMM Riders wish a fast recovery and a safe return home: Kemal may share with us in person his experience: you can also follow it by subscribing to Horizons Unlimited e-zine at www.horizonsunlimited.com Read one issue and you will understand why this site has become the "classic" for riders traveling around the world.

Ahmet Orhun OMM friend writes from Tajikistan: "Motorcycling in "Stans Countries" is at a very low stage. Very few motorcycles are on the street... and most of the bikes are old Russian makes. The way of driving is much worse than Turkey and bikers are real brave hearts who do not use any protective gear and even a helmet.

Intercity road systems are generally poor and needs a lot of development. I can understand it because under soviet regime, intercity traveling was restricted and frequent check points (some which are still in place and active) were discouraging (and still do) travel by private vehicle. It was easier to control trains and planes!

Finding gasoline in the cities is not be a problem (but finding 98 octane gasoline may in some locations) but gasoline stations on intercity roads are scarce requiring good road planning plus the carrying of some spare fuel." **OMM**

and Adatepe (Zeus Altar) is only 6 km from where we are located. We are managing a restaurant and cafe down by the sea with the Restaurant on the second floor with splendid view. Across us we can see Ayvalık and Midilli Island. We have 9 tables and we will serve home made stuff. There will be breakfast, lunch and dinner and after dinner the place will turn to a bar. Behind us there is a huge garden full of olive and mandarins garden and in this wonderful garden there are bungalows that we rent where. The address is Altinkum Mahallesi, Sakallı Süleyman Caddesi, 214 Küçükükyu Ayvacık Canakkale Tel. 0286 752 5696 Mobile: 0532 363 3364 e-mail: dendo2@my.net

From Bandırma, where the ferry from Istanbul can move you in three hours, the place is at less than 200K. By road via Canakkale it is a nice ride of 390K. **OMM**



one more mile

www.ommriders.org

Ride in Gear

Schuberth Helmets

We received several requests from pilots trying to find the new models of Schuberth Helmets imported by MOTOMAX (distributor of Aprilia and Moto Guzzi www.motomax.com.tr) Here the list of dealers at June 2003:

Istanbul European side	Daytona	Kurucesme 0212 2871787
Istanbul Asian side	Ruto Moto	Kiziltoprak 0216 3498454
Istanbul Asian side	Motogar	Goztepe 0216 3630739
Izmir	Ergur Motor	Kahramanlar 0232 4461497
Izmir	Motosport	Karsiyaka 0232 3655577
Antalya	Dragon Motor	Yilmaz Sit. 0242 3112450

Alp Berker, OMM rider and Aprilia pilot is ready with new accessory for the Caponord. He writes: *"The production of the Caponord prototypes accessories is ready. The first of the two are "Carbon coolant expansion cover" and "Carbon Kevlar + Kevlar laminate sump guard with oil radiator guard". The sump guard is extremely durable and protects the oil sump, engine and the oil radiator. The sump guard is so strong that if appropriate mounting points are attached to the bike (because the original points just hold the cosmetic sump guard look alike) the sump guard will withstand a Paris-Dakar rally. For both parts (at the moment) the original mounting points are retained. My future plans are Carbon Kevlar sump guards for GS 1100 and 1150, F650, KTM series and Husaberg."*

Some Information on BMW GS Tires provided by Rahmi Barutcu OMM Riders The following tire information represents the overall wisdom of R11GS riders on the BMW-GS list. However, tires are very subjective and individual owners may disagree with some of the following. Tire life too is very dependent on the rider so only general comparisons are made.

Maker	Front 110/80 R19	Rear 150/70 R17
Metzeler (OE)	Enduro 4/Tourance	Enduro 4/Tourance
Michelin (OE)	T 66	T 66 X
Avon	AV-33	AV-34
Bridgestone	TW 101	TW 152
Continental	TKC80	TKC80
Dunlop	Trailmax D 604 F	Trailmax D 604
Metzeler	Karoo Front*	Karoo*

***uses non-standard sizes. Front: MCE KAROO FRONT 100/90 - 19 M/C 57R M&S Rear: MCE KAROO 140/80 - 17 M/C 69R M&S**

Metzeler Enduro 4/Tourance, Road-oriented OE fitment

Advantages: excellent road grip, good in the wet, good rear tire life
Disadvantages: problems with front cupping, not great off road, more expensive than Michelin
The Metzeler Enduro 4/Tourance is not the cheapest but probably the best all-round tire. The rears give good tire life without problems. However, the fronts cup badly (i.e. suffer from deep grooves all the way round the tire). This shortens tire life. When cupped, cornering in the wet is very disconcerting and, in the opinion of some, almost dangerous. (Cornering in the dry is hardly affected). Metzeler have claimed since 1994 that they know about the problem and their latest batch of tires overcomes it. However, while improvements may have been made, front tire cupping remains a problem.

Ride and Think

From Paul Gordon, Los Angeles-based freelance writer. He currently is saving for his 12,000-mile tune-up.

"...I never worried about the razor's edge of riding. I was off on Planet Bike, protected by the gods who seem to enfold the testosterone clod in a temporary state of grace. I crashed and walked away in Italy and Japan, and felt a black 1000 Ninja lift up and begin to float beneath me on El Mirage Dry Lake at 160 mph. I also developed an almost daily association with the verities of real, outer-limit speed. Lesson One: If the bike's in shape, it doesn't matter what the brakes and tires are doing. Lesson Two: If the bike's out of shape, it doesn't matter what the brakes and tires are doing. There is no Lesson Three..." **OMM**

Michelin T66 Road-oriented OE fitment

Advantages: excellent road grip, cheaper than Metzeler, good tire life
Disadvantages: poor in the wet or slick surfaces, not great off-road

Avon AV The most common non-OE tire fitment

Advantages: good tire life, cheap
Disadvantages: "flops" into corners, can be difficult to get hold of, noisy on road

Bridgestone Trailwing

Advantages: good on road grip, cheap
Disadvantages: not a common R11GS tire, noisy on road

Continental TKC80 Off road-oriented - used by BMW at Hechlingen Park

Advantages: excellent off road grip, cheaper than OE tires
Disadvantages: poor tire life when used on road, poor on road wet grip

Dunlop Trailmax

One of the rarer tire fitments for R11GS owners on the BMW-GS list
Advantages Disadvantages poor on road wet grip poor tire life

Metzeler Karoo. Off-road tire with limited on-road performance.

Advantages: excellent off road grip, particularly good in mud and sand
Disadvantages: poor tire life when used on road, top speed on road limited to 105mph (170kph).

Helmet's choice make simple? Think again! Road, off road, full face, flip face, open face... too simple! **Arai introduces in Europe the SUH (Sport Utility Helmet) Tour-X.** A helmet, according to the producers, opening a new category. A helmet good for road, off-road and city. Take a look at www.arai.com

Shoei answers with the new XR 1000 with a range of new features (visor fixed in partially open position, integral back spoiler, 1330 gr.) Top of the range with the Shoei X-Spirit, this new helmet is now for sale in Europe at 500 Euro.

The sector Big-Trellies collects the bikes more suitable for traveling in Turkey (or for traveling in general) The two kings at the top (BMW R1150GS and APRILIA) Caponord are now joined by the new **DUCATI Multistrada**: DesmoDue (two valves per cylinder) of 992cc it develops 84 HP equal to the GS Adventure (85 HP) but still far away from the power of Caponord (98 HP). The new Ducati looks really gorgeous and all testers in Europe praised the handling and the suspensions.

On the same subject, several articles in Europe suggest to stay away from "marketing gimmicks" like the **GS Adventure and the Caponord Rally**. The basic models seems to offer more comfort, maneuverability and better power delivery. A recent comparative test of the two models (by the Italian magazine "In Moto") gave a marginal advantage (they are Italian... I know) to Caponord Rally, superior in power, acceleration, speed and suspension.

Beside the Ducati Multistrada **"The-I-would-like-to-try-list"** has in top positions

- The new Suzuki's SV650S and 1000S. They both look as an interesting alternative to the ultra-sport bikes, powerful competitors of the Fazer type motorcycle.
- The Moto Guzzi Brevia so simple, elegant and easy to enjoy
- The Aprilia Tuono pulverizing competitors in all comparative tests in Europe and USA. Defined by one journalist " the biggest fun you can have with your racing leathers on" **omm**

OMM BULLETIN ISSUE 47

This Bulletin is edited by **Paolo Volpara** volpara@homemail.com with contributions from bikers around the world. From November 2002 we also distribute a version of the bulletin in Turkish. You may have friends who ride with you and who would like to get included in the Bulletin distribution list: go to OMM web site and register online.

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