

# DESMO LEANINGS



The Official Magazine of the Ducati Owners Club of the United States

Volume 5 Issue 4

Winter 2007



***NCR Leggera • Hypermotard 1100S Test • DFS Recap  
Laguna Seca President's Dinner • Touring Norway***



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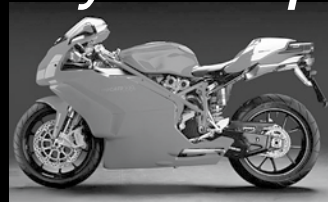
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# Contenuto

## Features

**7**

**NCR Leggera**

**11**

**2008 Hypermotard 1100S Test**

*by John Rossi*

**15**

**President's Dinner Laguna Seca**

*by George Betzhold*

**17**

**Ducks Fly South Recap**

*by Bubba Edwards*

**23**

**Touring Norway**

*by Jim & Kathy Wright*



Page 7



Page 11



Page 15

## The USual Suspects

**4**

**Piazza Del Mercato**

*Classifieds*

**28**

**Bench Racing**

*Tall tales of fact and "friction"*



Page 17



Page 25



## Greetings from il Capo

**T**he club is now five years old, and it is time to look back a little. First, we have signed up 1,079 members in that time with about 650 remaining active. We must be doing something right to have that many stay with us for such a long period of time. We are still predominantly a Ducati club, but we have many members that own other Italian bikes. Our membership form is designed to give us some insight into what other bikes club members own, but the form never included Harley Davidson bikes. Well, this was clearly an oversight, as many took the time to add this category to the form. I will try to change the form for 2008, with my apologies to our H-D brethren.

Another change you will see for 2008 is a new membership rate. Everything has gotten more expensive in the five years the club has existed. Postage is the largest increase we have had. It is not just the cost of the basic stamp, but the larger envelopes we use had a bigger increase than the standard letter size. Printing of the magazine has had a steady cost increase also, so after five years at the same rate we are increasing the dues \$5. I am sure you will understand.

In the last two issues I have written about how I always thought our club was special. Just to prove I was right, we had a rider from Philadelphia have his bike pick up a nail that went through the sidewall of the tire and could not be patched. Seeing as he was at the Ducks Fly South in North Georgia, he had a long walk home. Well, another member loaned him a rear wheel and tire to make the trip back. The wheel has since been mailed back to its owner, but it just typifies the type of club we have. It all makes me so happy this club exists.

We will continue with our event format from 2007 by hosting three weekend rallies, three Monday track days, and one track weekend. We had discussed adding some more events, but with my current limitations it just did not seem like a good idea. In 2009, when I am back to full strength, we will look to see what we can do. Suggestions of types of events or locations are always welcome. Just remember it takes a lot of preliminary work to set up a new event, and we will definitely need help for any new venture.

Come ride with us. I'll be back with you as soon as I can!



Jim



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**1999 Ducati ST2 Red**, 13,320 miles, hard bags, Sargent seat, 26 Dzus fasteners to aid in fairing removal, heated grips, I have the stock seat and a spare gas tank that has weeping leak at the spot weld for the hinge. Belts, battery and all fluids changed at 5,333 miles three years ago, clutch fluid changed recently. Front tire excellent rear is worn but replacement tire is included. Maintenance records available. **\$4,500 Call Jim at 704.843.0429 or email capo@carolina.rr.com**



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# LEGGERA – THE NEW NCR MOTORCYCLE



*Leggera*

**T**he quest at NCR is to always strive for the ultimate performance and ultimate lightness or “Leggera”. Today, NCR introduces its first street motorcycle using its racing expertise and ultimate technology, the NCR LEGGERA. The LEGGERA, NCR’s first street motorcycle, is a culmination of years of experience in racing and development using the very best in ultralight components and exotic materials to achieve an ultralight design. The LEGGERA is based on Ducati’s new Hypermotard and then modified extensively. NCR takes an already exhilarating motorcycle and then updates every aspect of the bike to include the very best in technology available today. In fact, in street trim, the NCR LEGGERA weighs only 157 kg (346 lbs). This makes the NCR Hyperleggera the ultimate bike for back road carving or slicing through city traffic. Here are some of the highlights of the hand made beauty, the NCR LEGGERA : Titanium frames, both the frame and

sub-frame are constructed in Grade 9 Titanium. The frame weighs an extremely light 4.8 kg (10.6 lbs) and the sub-frame weighs only 1.5 kg (3.3 lbs) The Ducati 1100 engine breathes with a NCR designed carbon fiber exhaust manufactured by Zard. Even in stock trim, the 90 Hp comes alive when it only has 157 kg (346 lbs) to move around. Close collaboration with Ohlins has enabled the NCR LEGGERA to use the latest competition forks, steering damper and monoshock. The suspension supports a wide range of adjustments to ensure the proper set-up to suit your environment and taste. The upper and lower triple clamps are carved out of billet avionic aluminum and are adjustable for offset. The fork bottoms are also carved out of billet to support the radial brakes. Brembo Racing radial brakes running on the latest wave 300mm rotors by Braking. The carbon fiber wheels are manufactured to NCR specifications by BST. Adjustable NCR rear sets in Al 7075 and titanium, passenger peg support in titanium, custom

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further driving down the weight to 137 kg (300 lbs) thanks to the NCR CORSE racing exhaust system in titanium and the NCR CORSE carbon fiber slipper clutch produced by AP Racing. This attention to detail results in a street legal motorcycle that is hyperLIGHT, hyperFUN and hyperCOMPETITIVE. How is that for Hyper-exclusivity, Hyper-passion and Hyper-Uniqueness... the NCR LEGGERA?

The NCR LEGGERA with the NCR CORSE engine kits and with the NCR CORSE pipes in titanium is for racing use only. Regardless of the appetite and goals, the NCR Store has all the parts you need to customize your own Ducati. Visit [www.ncrstore.com](http://www.ncrstore.com) or [www.ncrfactory.com](http://www.ncrfactory.com)

gas cap by NCR in Al7075, billet NCR CORSE fork bottoms and fully adjustable triple clamps in avionic aluminum. Adjustable ride height adjuster and rear single sided flange in aluminum. More power and even less weight? Well, how about even more power and even less weight?? For customers that want even more performance, NCR Corse offers two racing kits: NCR Corse kit to transform the Ducati 1100 engine to 1160cc (for racing use only): 125 Hp or a NCR complete racing engine NCR Corse 1200 with a billet crank, titanium rods and valves and many many other items to increase power by 42 Hp and reduce weight a further 11,5 kg (25 lbs)!!

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**NCR LEGGERA – Race in summary:**

Starting from: \$46,200 US (\$66,500 US as shown in Milan)

**Technical Specifications:**

WEIGHT: 307 Lbs (140 kg)

FRAME: Trellis frame made entirely of Grade 9 Titanium. Weight: 4,8 Kg (10.6 lbs)

MOTOR: NCR-Ducati CORSE 1200, 132 Hp (42 hp more than stock), torque 95 lbs-ft of torque at the crankshaft.

CLUTCH: Slipper clutch designed by NCR

EXHAUST: Complete competition exhaust in titanium and carbon fiber design by NCR and built by Zard (weight: 10 lbs – 4.5 Kg)

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# 2008 Hypermotard 1100S Test

On the "TEST" Ride with John M. Rossi, Northeastern U.S. Exclusive, Member #00262

I have experienced the future of high-performance, street-legal, motorcycles. Like many Ducati motorcycles, the Hypermotard will, and has already begun to, redefine an entirely new genus of motorcycles. No, not just a Motard — a 'Hyper' motard. The 1100S is purely original in its design and performance, incredibly fast and powerful, and served by a big-bore, air-cooled L-twin. And, as always, its pedigree is uniquely Italian.

**Worth the wait.** From the eye-candy articles of the world release in Sardinia, Italy, to the unveiling party at Ducati New York in June, my wait was rewarded with clouds and a rain-soaked track at New Hampshire International Speedway. Jason Routhier is Ducati's New England representative, and NHIS is where Jay and I instruct at the Penguin Road Racing School. We were expecting the arrival of two Hypermotards: one for me to test, and the other for Eric and Jeff Wood to race. Luck was on my side as my test Hyper showed up first, perhaps the only time I'll get ahead of these two National Champions.

BCM Motorsports prepped the bike with a Ducati Performance 2-into-1 Termignoni carbon-fiber-and-stainless race exhaust that saved several pounds over stock and added six more horsepower. The sculpted Ducati Performance race seat made moving around on the bike a little easier, and the stock Pirellis were replaced with stickier race-compound Dunlop tires.

## ***On the ride in the real***

***world.*** The odometer had one mile on it when Jay handed me the key: "It's all yours, John. Give it a real-world test and let us know what you think." So on it I did ride — from the Penguin School at NHIS, I wound around New Hampshire's roads to Sturbridge, Massachusetts, into Boston, and then did a 620-mile loop in 13 hours to the Adirondacks, across Vermont, and back to Boston. My test spanned more than a week, of course, and was as much my





assessment of the motorcycle as it was introducing the bike to the “real-world” riding paces here in the United States. The biggest challenge doing this test ride was staying off the Hypermotard long enough to write about it. Wow. This bike is fun, fast, and nimble.

**Is this legal?** Astride, or more like atop, the Hypermotard 1100S, my mind and body quickly recalled the simplicity and purity of riding dirt bikes thirty years ago. But this was a whole new era on an exquisite, street-legal Motard Ducati.



**Rider Benefits.** With the Motard style’s popularity today, the Hypermotard can empower riders across a broad spectrum of abilities, and the grins and giggles can be shared equally. This bike is fun, with a long list of rider benefits including:

- Upright seating position
- Natural athletic stance (of bike and rider)
- Generous leg room
- Comfortable foot-peg position
- Great visibility for the rider
- Comfort and visibility for the passenger
- Maneuverability in tight, urban situations
- Sport-bike performance through the mountain twisties
- Incredible torque and smooth power delivery
- Perfected power and reliability of a twin-spark, 1100 L-twin, desmo-duo powerplant
- Finest Ohlin rear and Marzocchi front suspension
- Brembo braking components equal to the Ducati 1098 Superbike
- Competitive qualities on the track
- Styling that will make you a new friend at every red light and gas stop

My test Ducati Hypermotard was a track-prepped, 2008 1100S model with 100 hp and a top track speed of 125+ mph and a suggested retail price of \$13,995. This is a high-performance motorcycle

by every measure. There is also a standard Hypermotard model offered at \$11,495.

**Right out of the crate.** To summarize the positive attributes of the Hypermotard right out of the crate, my top items are that Ducati has:

- Incorporated decades of race-winning advancements into a high-performance, powerful, bullet-proof, L-twin, air-cooled motor.
- Utilized the best components that have met the time-tested demands of other Ducati models, such as:
  - Single-sided swingarm from their 9-series superbikes
  - Trellis frame configuration from the Multistrada
  - Front wheel and Brembo brake combination from the 1098 Superbike



- Designed yet another precedent-setting motorcycle that has won top honors on the world stage for design and performance
- Has basically created a motorcycle that will rock your world regardless of terrain or trip route you choose.

**Geometry and handling.** The seating position is very different if you ride a typical performance street bike. The design brief Pierre was working with in 2004 was to “create a minimalist package



with the feel of a big-single motard bike.” Meet the Hypermotard, a bike that is very comfortable to slide way up on the tank reminiscent of earlier MX days. Once you get dialed in to this rider position, handling becomes incredibly precise to the point that the 50mm Marzocchi forks seem to be extensions of your forearms. In spirited cornering on this bike, you are so much over the front end that you are practically staring down the fork legs. This is a bit disconcerting, since there are few front-end reference points to use such as bodywork, windscreen, mirrors, or a bulbous tank. There is none of that. You will find the experience of mastering this minimalist bike, with precision, to be incredibly liberating.

In tight sequential twisties, you feel connected directly to the front wheel as you would, or once did, on a dirt bike planting the front wheel into a berm. On the road, you are predictably tracking the front wheel and not berm-bashing. Between the Hypermotard’s seating/tank position, sticky Dunlop tires, and stout suspension, you can feel every detail of the road surface. With the bike’s steering being so responsive, you can easily course-correct, and do so ever so slightly, at any place throughout the turn.

**Smooth power.** At 60 mph in sixth, you are lugging it at 3,100 rpm. Running at a sweet 78 mph, you are around the 4,100-rpm mark, and the real torque pull is from 4,000 to 7,500 rpm. That means Giddy up and GO !!!!! There is lots of running room at NHIS, and triple digit speeds are seen often and easily. Stock gearing is tall for around town and will lug a bit in stop-and-go traffic; the bike and I were happier running at a more spirited pace.

The single-exit, 2-into-1 Termignoni carbon exhaust sounds reminiscent of a single – blap, blap, blap – very different than a twin-exhaust Ducati I am used to. Bring it on; change is good. New bike. New riding style. New sound. Newer, bigger smiles on the Hypermotard. All are okay with me.

**Critique.** Now I ride, race, and have a brand affinity for Ducati, but not a blind loyalty. So my critique of the Hypermotard is honest guidance that my readers deserve and essential R&D feedback the design team at Ducati Motor SpA may value when upgrading or developing new models. A few possible refinement areas for the Hypermotard are:

**Seat Height:** The bike is tall with a seat height of 33.26". Riders of 5'9"+ with a decent inseam will have fewer issues. But for us shorter riders, stopping gets creative. But, then again, I test-ride bikes and never really get hung up on the stopping part. I use curbs, milk crates, or other riders, or just place a foot on a car next to me at stop lights. It is a great conversation starter... and they’ll never catch me.

**The Seat:** The Ducati Performance seat is a stylish, sculpted add-on designed for racing, but it is a plank. So aftermarket seat companies, let’s no doubt offer something a little cushy for America’s super-sized, ride-it-long,-hard,-and-far Ducatisti. Skinny and lean, wide and weighty, I expect many new distance riders will emerge from owning a Hypermotard, since this motorcycle is nearly impossible to park and walk away from, and mountain roads are simply a blast.

**Steering:** Around town at legal speeds, steering is perfect. Pick up the pace significantly, and the need for a steering damper will be evident. Seriously. Don’t roll out of the showroom without one



installed and tested. Shakes are to be read about, or experienced from too much espresso, but not something to be experienced on a motorcycle.

**Fuel capacity:** Plan on meeting a lot of new friends at each 92.75 mile stop for 2.69 gallons, and spend \$7.45 for 87-octane to start the process all over again. The Hypermotard’s micro 3.3 gallon tank, located under the seat, fed the need for fuel at a rate of 35.06 mpg (highly spirited riding, of course.) Reserve offers a paltry 0.61 gallons of fuel

remaining, for a conservative additional range of only 21 miles before you are completely empty. Pierre, couldn't you find one more gallon? Perhaps under those panels where fuel used to be stored on motorcycles?

**Refueling:** The filler cap is an independent, removable object, and a thing of the past. It is beautifully sculpted, easy to lock and unlock with



a key, grip with your fingers, and remove. So now where do you put it? On the seat, on the ground, on the gas pump? You just know it is going to fall and get scratched or may even be left behind and forgotten at a self-serve gas station.

**Gauges:** The information center is compact and fitting for the Hypermotard's design. However, user-interface design is highly advanced today from iPods, iPhones, and GPS. Ducati's digital MPH counter looks "oh, so early 90s Radio Shack." Much better at night with a white-lit background and black numbers, but, by day, it's an Etch-A-Sketch: grey on grey. The digital gauges: let's see, (5) + (4) – okay, that's fifty-four mph. But wait. The speed varies, numbers constantly flicker and change. The tachometer is worse, with its ascending read-out of little bars. Thankfully, the bright-red, flashing rev-limiter tells you you've wrung it out – please shift now! Do digital well or give me a big, bright-white, Veglia gauge with a sweeping orange arm.

**Those cool mirrors.** It has an integrated LED turn signal, with wind-deflecting action, and a retractable flip-out, bar-end mirror that closes in for stealth mode. High marks for design. Low marks for functionality. Adjusting mirrors on the fly is a nearly impossible acrobatic act. You can't

reach it, and, if you do, you are literally pushing on the bars to adjust it – not exactly the ideal steering input you want at any speed. Mirror placement is way outside of a rider's field of vision. Night riding is a connnnnsssstaaannnnnt blurrrrrr of headlights behind you – five lanes of Massachusetts drivers' headlights all coming up from behind at 80 mph. Very exciting. More aftermarket ventures anyone?

**Service time already?** NO. Ride more. With 50% less maintenance, I returned the bike to Al Arbor at Riverside Ducati with nearly 1,100 miles for its first 600-mile service. Well, isn't that how Ducati's new maintenance schedule is performed? Seriously, if we are trying to dispel any distant reliability rumors, that is one thing. But maintenance of all my machines is, and will remain, a 600, 1,500, 6,000, and every increment of 6,000 to 10,000 miles thereafter, exercise. Unless we are adapting to a hydrogen fuel cell here, someone at Ducati really has to teach me the new math on service. Besides, I like wrenching a close second to riding.

**Final word:** I would dial-in and modify a few things on this motorcycle as I would most. But, the Hypermotard right out of the box will rock your world. I'd love to live with one for a season or two and make it uniquely my own. Regardless of the nit-picky design critique and user-interface issues, I love, love, love this bike. If you ride one, you may never look at what's in your garage the same way.

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*On behalf of the Ducati Owners Club of North America, I wish to thank our respected colleague, Pierre Terblanche for shaping the Ducati motorcycles praised around the world for nearly two-decades and being a friend to US DESMO. Terblanche is one of the most influential motorcycle designers of our time and is credited with the SuperMono, MH900, 900SS, Multi-Strada, 999 Super Bike, Sport Classics, and his latest success, the Hypermotard. Terblanche stepped down as Director of Ducati Design on December 19, 2007 to pursue a world of new opportunity. We applaud your work — completed and much anticipated.*



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# President's Dinner Laguna Seca MotoGP 2007

by George Betzhold, Member #00658

**F**irst of all, I want to thank Jim and Vicki for inviting me to take part in this event. It was an honor to be able to participate.

The guest list was pretty impressive. Among the noted attendees were Casey Stoner, Loris Capirossi, Livio Suppo, Cook Nielsen, Sammy Tanner, Paul Ritter, Jeff Nash, Rich Lambrechts, Keith Hale, Steve Allen, Andy Smith, up-and-coming bike designer and builder Stewart Baker, and Hans Mellberg. It made a great melding of the Ducati's historic past and its vigorous future. How often do you get to see Motorcycle Hall of Famer Sammy Tanner and future World Champion Casey Stoner standing next to each other?

During and after an open autograph session by Casey and Loris, everyone had an opportunity to partake of the open bar and wonderful pasta bar.

During this time, I was able to renew a conversation I had at Mid-Ohio with Cook Nielsen. He spoke at length about Old Blue and his and Ducati's attempt to get its current owner, Fred Fitzgerald, to make it available for the New Blue introduction. Unfortunately for all Ducatisti, Mr. Fitzgerald made what turned out to be unacceptable demands. Cook said that Fred demanded a new motorcycle in exchange for his cooperation. I guess after he pulled Old Blue out of the 2005 Mid-Ohio Museum a day early, this was too much for everyone involved. He does maintain that it is for sale, though. Apparently, Mr. Fitzgerald has turned down an offer of \$600,000 for this piece of Ducati history. Cook related that he was told that \$600,000 was not enough and \$1,000,000 was too much. It looks like, barring a change in ownership, Old Blue will probably remain hidden from general view forever. So those of you who had an opportunity to see it in the flesh have had a rare experience.

I also spoke to Sammy Tanner ([www.motorcyclemuseum.org/halloffame/hofbiopage.asp?id=278](http://www.motorcyclemuseum.org/halloffame/hofbiopage.asp?id=278)) over a beer. If you weren't familiar with his towering racing accomplishments in the 50s, 60s, and early 70s, you might mistake him for just another hanger-on (like yours truly). Sammy has an Arai distributorship in SoCal these days. Not one to dwell in the past, his interests revolved around the relocating of his business to Fontana near the Penske Racing facility.

Another Ducati luminary in attendance was Paul Ritter. Among his Ducati-related achievements are 1978 and 1979 wins of the AMA Superbike race at Sears Point and missing the 1978 #1 plate by only seven points. Paul lost the use of his legs in 1998 in a vintage racing accident. This injury has not stopped Paul from getting the most out of life. He continues to participate in activities that many of us would find challenging. SCUBA diving, whitewater rafting, and camping are some. But probably the most amazing thing he has done "lately" is to drive his own sidecar FROM the sidecar. Any time spent with Paul is an exercise in inspiration.

Also there was Keith Hale. Most of you will know Keith from his well-documented (in print and television spots) ownership of probably the highest-mileage, real Greenframe [1974 Ducati 750SS] in the world. With over 100,000 miles without a case split, this bike can make all of us envious. Keith's bike (he is the original owner) is a regular in any West Coast Ducati show or museum. He is always the guy you have to beat if you want a trophy. This year was no different. The only wrinkle was the catastrophic puncture he had as he rode it into



Casey Stoner and Loris Capirossi



Cook Nielsen



Danny Carson and Hans Mellberg



George, Steve Allen, Danny & Hans



Livio and crew



Stephanie Carlson and Keith Hale



Rich Lambrechts





Casey Stoner, Sammy Tanner, Livio Suppo, and Miss Vicki

Monterey. Unfortunately, both he and the bike went down hard. The bike actually fared better than Keith. It made it to the show and still proved to be an eye-catcher. Keith toughed it out all weekend with a fractured collarbone, wrist, and rib. He earned an extra swallow of Kickapoo Joy Juice at the Hill House.

Stewart Baker (2005 winner of the Monster Challenge) owns Flight Motorcycles, Inc., in Reseda, California ([www.flightcycles.com](http://www.flightcycles.com)). Besides being one of the nicest guys you would want to meet, he is a motorcycle-design visionary. His wonderfully executed Ducati chopper



From left to right: Steve Allen (and friend), Paul Ritter, Paul Ritter (and friend), Sammy Tanner, Keith Hale.

has identified those parts Bevel owners have had problems finding, sourcing those parts, and selling them to us at prices that are extremely fair. The power and inspiration (along with Miss Vicki) behind the Ducati Island Museo of past years, Steve is a friend to us all. Because of this year's Ducati Island Museo change in format, Steve was able to spend more time documenting the weekend. If you haven't done so, you need to check out his website: [www.bevelheaven.com](http://www.bevelheaven.com).

Many of you know Hans Mellberg. He is the owner of many rare bikes (including a real Greenframe) and past winner of the Speed Wrench Challenge on Ducati Island. Hans's current project is building a Land Speed Challenger.

Andy Smith showed up a little late. Andy was running late after having to return to the track to retrieve his ticket package. He ended up finding out that the amount of fuel left in a 1098 after the "low fuel" light comes on was less than he would have liked. The normally cheery Andy was in an understandably peevish mood as he had to push it (along with the kidney stones he was carrying – that's another story) to a gas station while being passed by a number of Ducati riders. I am sure any of us would have been in the same state had it happened to us. Needless to say, if'n ya see a fellow rider pushin', ya oughta stop. Dem's da rules, guys.

The dinner was a fitting midpoint for a great weekend for Ducatisti. Casey's runaway victory on Sunday was the cap "Stoner" (pun intended).



Stuart Baker mugs for the camera.







# TWELFTH ANNUAL *Ducks Fly South 2007*

*by Nail 24 aka Bubba Edwards Member #00817; photos by Ann Calandro, Member #00006*

**I**l Capo has asked me to write this year's report on the Ducks flocking to Hiawassee this past October. I really consider it an honor to relate the fantastic weekend the worshipers of the desmodromic world of motorcycling had on three crisp, autumn days. Wow, can you believe it — NO rain! It took a 500-year drought to not have the wet stuff rolling off our Ducks' tanks, but we somehow managed to have three perfect days of riding and a final time to renew friendships brought on by a shared love of Italian motorcycle art. All in all, we wound up with 87 riders and their supporters (wives and friends) at the hospitable Ramada Inn on Lake Chatuge. Or, should I say, the remains of Lake Chatuge.

The only gray cloud for the gathering of Duck lovers was that our leader was not dressed in his normal garb of black leathers as we began our trek around the North Georgia country on War Woman Road, Highway 23, Richard B. Russell Road, and the rest of those A+ to B+ roads il Capo maps out for us each year. Some of us even struck out to boldly go to forbidden areas where the LEOs (law enforcement officers) wait in hopes of bagging a Duck that is operating outside the socially accepted parameters of legal two-wheeling.

Fortunately, this year there were none of the get-offs that have plagued us in past gatherings. Not even the complimentary double-yellow passing award, which was won at our Ducks Head West event. Our leader, resigned to the Duck pen by his continued bout with the big C, waited patiently like Gregory Peck in Twelve O'clock High, sleeping the morning away dreaming about each turn and twist

that his men and women were making as they made their way to the initial point (IP) on the outbound leg for a quick refueling stop for body and bike. Then it was the infiltration route back to the Duck pen for adult beverages and cigars as the road runners awaited the night's festivities.

The next best thing to Duck running is the Italian feast that follows. The tales of the day's run move through the group at the speed of heat. A serious critique of the roads, traffic, LEOs, and how the Harley parades got in the way always top the "hot wash" agenda.

Right on schedule the food arrives. I don't know how anyone could eat all that pasta and chicken whatever after being stuffed to overflowing on pizza Friday night. I was amazed that we had so much pizza left on Friday, but it completely disappeared by Saturday morning. Those "Greenie's" must generate a big hunger for marinara sauce. The evening progressed on Saturday with Captain Clyde calling out the door prize numbers so fast that you had to run to the prize table before those called after you got that prize you wanted. Thanks to Clyde for picking up the donated prizes for NPR Ducati in Watkinsville, Georgia, Touring Sports in Greenville, South Carolina, Ducati North America, Atlanta Triumph Ducati, Cogent Dynamics, The Duc Shop, Cycle Gear, and R C Cole. Everyone got a prize, if you count the proverbial lanyard.

But now it's time to get personal. This story is about the Ducati and those US DESMO members who love to ride them. I ran into Wally Anderson, who had ridden to the rally from State College, Pennsylvania. We walked to Shoney's down the hill





to grab a late lunch while waiting for other Ducks to arrive. As we walked back to the Ramada, it was evident that this was going to be a well-attended rally. Ducks were already vying for the carport for the best overnight protection against theft and dew. Bob Hancock was sporting his newest acquisition, the Paul Smart 1000LE complete with Termi exhaust sans baffles. A couple of 900SS/FEs, mine included, and the rest of the numbered Ducks: 748, 999, 1098, and ST4s, plus Monsters and Multistradas. The boss was in mama's mini Cooper

but I took the road less traveled with Dan Greene and Bob Hancock. If you asked me where I went, I have no earthly idea. But I will say that Dan and Bob can run a pace that will kick in the heavy breathing when they want. I don't think there is a road in North Georgia or North Carolina that these two haven't run both ways. I do remember coffee at Two Wheels Only, but the rest is a blur. Saturday was about putting our Ducks through the wickets, and I can only assume that was happening with all who converged on Hiawassee. It's amazing that so



S in red and white. A green stripe would make it pass for an Italian flag, Jim.

There were some non-Italians also: Doug on his yellow SV and then there was Marvin on a Stevo loaner (he broke it and took Stevo's other bike to ride home). Don't you just love friends that take your last beer and then ask for your bike too? Capo had the canned route, which most of the clan took,







many diverse folks can get together because of one common interest. This brings me to what I consider the highlight of the rally.

On Sunday morning as we were packing up to go back to our dependants and leave our common love for Ducati sport riding behind until DABR '08, Wally Anderson discovered that his 916 had taken a nail in his rear tire that also pierced the sidewall, rendering the tire trash. Anyone in Georgia knows that most bike shops are closed on Sunday and Monday, and Wally was in a pickle trying to figure out how he

getting ready to trailer Terry's 748, which couldn't get full power (3500 rpm tops), back to Easley, South Carolina. As I walked up, the ideas were flowing like beer at an Irish wake. I finally asked the question, "Will a 748 wheel fit on a 916?" Lights started coming on for all present. We determined that we could swap the wheels, let Wally ride home with Terry's wheel and tire, and fit the dud wheel on Terry's 748 for the trailer event to Easley. A simple swap via UPS would get all the parts from the donor bike and the receiver bike back in the correct locale.



was going to hang around waiting to get a new tire mounted and then begin the long trip home. Stevo and Jeff were considering the options, which were meager at best. Two days sitting in a motel waiting for the bike shops to open plus hoping that there would be a tire in stock was the last thing Wally wanted to do. A trashed tire was turning into a high-dollar operation. As fortune would have it, Jeff was



If you check the US DESMO website, you'll note that all's well that ends well. The greatest attribute about our group is the willingness to stop whatever we're doing to help a bud solve a problem. It's a great feeling to know that a little time spent serving another with no expectation of something in return is one of the basic pillars of US DESMO. Ciao, until we flock together again.







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# Evoking the Spell of the Troll to Avoid Crashing Again

(or Our Travels Through Norway on Summer Vacation)

by Jim and Kathy Wright, Member #00045

This is an unabashed advertisement for motorcycling in Norway – no apologies. It includes very little specifically for the sons of Desmo – no apologies. I figure that sharing motorcycle adventures, if done moderately well, can encourage others to try them too, so that's the point of this report.

Some of you faithful readers – you know who you are – remember the sad tale of 2005 – “Going to the hospital without seeing The Doctor!” – about our ride in Spain and France on the way to the Spanish MotoGP on the *Cycle World* tour. That's the one about breaking Kathy's leg when we fell off the ST4. For those of you with fading memories, il Capo published it in the Fall 2005 *Desmo Leanings*, and it appeared in the December 2005 *Cycle World*.

Last year, there was no adventure story because there wasn't anything funny or particularly sharable about my 2006 crash in the mountains, which kept us off the bike all summer. There are those of you who wonder if I've quit track days and really miss me on the Aprilia acting as the rolling

chicane. Others will not have noticed. In my own self-effacing way, I was the passing opportunity for many of you, and I promise to come back.

By 2007, we'd built up a big need for a bike adventure. Kathy is beginning to get her confidence

back from the second crash – she was there, but more or less walked away, after the ambulance ride to Hendersonville, with assorted bruises, aches, and pains. That was my turn for broken bones and a dash of surgery.

A few years ago, we attended a Reg Pridmore track school during which Reg mentioned that he ran occasional rides to Norway. Kathy's ancestors came from Norway. Being of average IQ, I decided a ride in Norway would appeal to Kathy's desires to see the homeland and my desires to go anywhere fun to ride. We checked with Reg in late 2006. “We're going to take a group, but it's full,” said Reg's leader of

administration, Gigi. “Please put us on the waiting list,” said I. January 2007 email: “We've got a vacancy. You have two days to decide.” Wise Kathy, remembering the influence of 20 single “F-16 pilots” (not really, but one was) on the MotoGP ride, asked







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for a demographic and marital breakdown of the potential riding companions. I'm surprised she didn't ask for a mental evaluation of everyone. Thank goodness she didn't want DNA samples! Lots of couples and their ages seem to be pretty mature. We were in, and off went the deposit. About this time, my company announced a merger, which added a bit of pre-vacation anxiety.

Reviewed all the check lists from all previous trips. Off to Touring Sport BMW Aprilia Ducati to sit on the R1200RS. That was the closest thing Touring Sport had to the R1100RS we were assigned. Seemed like a nice fit to me, but Kathy says, to paraphrase Wil Rogers, that I've never met a motorcycle I didn't like. Bought the cheapest air fare we can find to Kristiansand, Norway.

For those of you who haven't flown since President Peanut deregulated the airlines, cheap fares mean small planes, many segments, and riding in what once was the smoking section. Reminds me of the intercity bus I rode to my grandmother's as a child. Could even mean a box or two of baby chickens get carried onboard. Your luggage arriving when you do now has odds something like Powerball, particularly through Heathrow. Saints help anyone who needs a real meal.

We flew from Greenville-Spartanburg International Airport to Detroit, to Amsterdam, and to Kristiansand. I expected pot to be smoked all over the Amsterdam airport, but it was more like a United Nations meeting. Spotted a couple of fellow travelers with helmet bags in the Amsterdam airport. Picked up on Saturday morning at the Kristiansand airport by teenage Eivind, who looks like a cuter version of Nicky Haden. He told us if we couldn't pronounce Eivind to just call him Ed. Turns out he was a great tour guide and one of the nicest young men we've ever met.

Saturday afternoon and Sunday, slept and walked around Kristiansand attempting to recover from the jet lag. Ate pizza and discovered that Norwegians eat more pizza per capita than any other country in the world. Sunday night we met the entire tour group for dinner and orientation.

Eleven couples and two single guys for a total of 13 bikes plus Eivind, his father OT, and OT's father. Had the makings of a good group – most were from California, but there were a few from other states and four Canadians.

We rode for eleven days and covered 2,600 kilometers. There were several days in places that were designated rest days when riding was optional. The route was an oval beginning in Kristiansand and returning back there twelve days later. I won't give away the route as that's part of OT's business strategy. There was lots of flexibility on the routes you could take, with the only constraint being your



hotel destination for the night. You dropped your baggage at the chase truck each morning, and it was in your room at your arrival.

We were rained on only twice, though it had been the rainiest summer in 100 years. We were the only riders in leathers and, based on what we had seen about the weather, took our "winter" leathers only. Everyone else had some form of textile riding gear – some BMW, some Aerostich. There were a few times when an electric vest would have made things more comfortable. A couple of light layers under the leathers were nice most of the time.

The hotels were all good, and the food was good. We liked some hotels better and some food was better than other fare, but it was all good. Most breakfast and evening meals were as a group – the hotels probably wanted the bikers in the same corner in case they had to call the police. We never



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did like European beds, which are split down the middle like two twin beds pushed together. We learned by the second day to make a sandwich for lunch from the great breads, cheeses, and meats that are available at breakfast each morning. That type of lunch could be eaten quickly while on a ferry or at a gas stop. We had some great roadside picnics,



too. Avoiding the necessity of finding a restaurant and ordering saved time for riding or arriving at the day's destination a bit early for resting or walking around at the end of the day.

The roads in the parts of Norway where we were are exceptional. Kathy commented that she understood why Nobel invented dynamite in Norway, as there were lots of tunnels. That's the way roads that began as trails along fjords get constructed. We estimated we went through over one hundred tunnels of all lengths and constructions. Lots of the roads were nice two-laners, but they occasionally drop to about one lane where, if two big vehicles meet, one has to back up until it gets wide enough to pass. That generates quite a few skid marks.

Usually on the fjord side of such roads there's a low rock wall and a drop of varying heights to the fjord below! There was a ferry ride or two almost every day. The ferry rides were usually 15 to 30 minutes, not counting the time waiting for the ferry. Good time for coffee, lunch, bio break, etc. In an American-like maneuver, we found that normally courteous Norwegian drivers would really rush to get to the ferry. Ferry operators were kind to motorcyclists when they could be and let us load to the front. That paid big dividends as the big trucks

and campers on ferries could really slow you down on the offloading side.

As mentioned, we began the trip on an R1100RS. There was a K1200GT, two GSes, three Hondas, three Yamahas, and two Suzuki V-Stroms. I didn't ask, but figured the bikes belonged to individuals who rented them to the tour. I suspect this is one reason for the lack of Ducatis. All were well maintained, and except for our little issue, there were no mechanical problems. On the first day, we noticed a puddling of oil from an unknown source each time we stopped. The bike had the catalytic converter on it, so the oil ran down and across the converter but you couldn't see the source. When the engine stopped, soon thereafter the oil stopped, indicating it had to be pressurized to leak. My best guess was a rear seal on the transmission, but it was just a guess. At the end of the first day, the tour swapped it for a GS that performed well for the remainder of the trip.

So what did we learn from the trip? We've taken so few two-week vacations in our lives that we keep elaborate journals and continue to analyze the life out of them for long periods of time, always looking for ways to make them better – sometimes it works and sometimes it doesn't:

The riding was pretty technical – on par with our Spanish Pyrenees tour in 2005. We would not recommend this vacation to inexperienced riders.

The people are great. The country is beautiful. Even those among us who lean to the conservative side of some political issues would admire how well they seem to have dealt with many social issues.

For once, we didn't pack too much. We were





there in July and August and the high temperatures were in the 70s and the lows in the 50s. Jeans and sweaters were acceptable everywhere we went.

Speed is relative. The speed limit on main roads is 80 kph and the freeways are 85 kph. You soon grew to know that 80 was fast on some roads.



European drivers, including trucks, are, by and large, so much better than we are. So courteous and safe. Very aware of motorcycles.

Roundabouts are very efficient ways to manage intersections, and they don't waste gasoline. Except for the cities of Kristiansand and Bergen, I think we saw only two or three stoplights.

The Norwegians we met are still pretty irritated about Germany and World War II. Norway was the "most occupied country," and we forget that Hitler thought the Allied invasion would come through Norway. We saw some tank fortifications that the Germans had installed, and there were a couple of mines on display.

They are a proud people and very proud of their country. They take great pride in caring for children, and it shows.

There is no visible pollution, very few road billboards, and no roadside litter. We did not see Oslo, so can't speak to those matters there.

The police were reportedly very firm, especially about any more than 0.02% blood alcohol; however, we didn't see many on highways outside of town.

Gasoline was expensive. Twenty to twenty-five dollars to fill up a GS!

Recognizing that this is a US DESMO publication, this could be a good ride on a Ducati. I would recommend one of the ST3-ST4 rides (although my wife will not ride one again after Spain!) or a Multistrada. You just don't see many full-bore sport bikes there, and I suspect that

maneuverability and luggage capacity are the big issues. In the bigger picture, it's probably a minor deal, but the riding position of a "sit up and beg" bike facilitates seeing so much more of the scenery than a sport bike with clip-ons or low bars.

Two points for any ride that involves an airplane trip – domestic or foreign. Determine a way to get most of your critical riding gear into a carry-on bag. We carried on helmets and the Autocom. One couple's gear took about eight days to arrive. Our conclusion was you could buy underwear, cosmetics, and shaving gear almost anywhere, but not riding gear that works. Second tip – go a day or two early and stay a bit late. If you miss the start of the ride, it's a big deal; you'll need the relaxation time. Check your airline reservations early and often.

We've had good guides on the Edelweiss tours we've been on. These were better. They grew up in the places we were riding. The tour-guide book was excellent and described both alternate routes and things to see or do in addition to the ride. Understanding the country and culture are important parts of adventures to us, and we learned a lot. If you measure your motorcycling by "making miles," you could do it on this trip too, but you can do that a lot cheaper in the United States.



The farmers or herdsmen in Norway are permitted to "free range" their animals in the summer. That means that there are sometimes unexpected sheep or cattle on or near the highway. Cattle seem to be okay, but sheep will lie down and sleep or chew their cud in all kinds of places, including the center of highways and on bridges. They don't seem to move much as you go by, and the locals don't even slow much. We were told they would bring a bike down and would dart around if lambs were involved. They also were very



inconsiderate about where they took care of their business!

There is no shortage of water in Norway. It is everywhere, although it occasionally is in one frozen form or another. You've seen fjord pictures. There were more large waterfalls than tunnels, never boring but hard to distinguish after the first few days. We read there were 19,000 waterfalls and 200,000 lakes.

We've done tours in Canada and Spain that were groups. We've done "self planned" trips to Italy and the American West. There are great, memorable times and rides in them all. If you want more pictures of roads and learn more about the ride and tour, please see OT's website [nordicbike.no](http://nordicbike.no)



If you have not done a one- or two-week touring-type trip, you should. It's hard to articulate why it's so great. There are more risks than car or plane travel, and you have to plan everything more carefully. You're in the elements and have no choice but to continue on. You smell everything. People everywhere will talk to you, probably out of a sense of jealousy

– they wish they were willing to take those risks. If you wear black leather, sometimes they look at you like you just stepped off a space ship, but little children love you. Maybe they can tell that we're just children inside, too.

Ride safely and ride often.



*Continued from page 28*

right path, I soon was well on my way to getting lost on the wrong fork. My journey has progressed thus: Motorcycles > four-strokes > twins > English > old > Enfield single. This is now MY niche.

By choosing to ride a motorcycle, I've branded myself as crazy to most of the rest of the world. By choosing to ride an Enfield, I'm now crazy to even most motorcyclists, and a little uncomfortable with that. Is this what the committed Trekkies are made to feel like? My bike is too slow for most group rides, though it will outrun Corollas if they don't know I'm racing them. Nobody else wants to ride it 'cause it shifts backwards and on the wrong side. Even if I agree to flog it to keep up, my friends won't let me go on their rides because no one relishes going back for the truck to haul me and my bike back home.

So what's the appeal? What do I see in the Rorschach spots that denote an Enfield parking spot? I've thought about it at some length over the years to try and figure out why I would be nuts enough to have a slow, vibrating, hard-to-get-parts-for bike and love it more than any of the other 21 bikes I've owned. At first I ascribed it to just getting old and curmudgeonly, but I think I've finally figured it out.

You see, a bike like the Enfield needs constant fettling. It's reliable, only if one defines reliable as easily diagnosed and fixed. Every trip that I undertake is an adventure. (Will I make it?)

But there's pride in successfully completing each commute to work or each short trip. I've decided that my attraction to the Bullet is this: IT NEEDS ME! Without me to tinker and stay on top of things, it's nothing. I suppose I ascribe to it the same kinds of emotions as a dog rescued from the pound. Can a motorcycle exhibit gratitude and loyalty? If I sold it to almost anyone else, it would shortly be sitting in a garage corner waiting for some kind of attention. I welcome input from any psychologist readers out there, but in the meantime I'll choose to grin, and maybe drool all over my shirt in my own little corner of the loony bin.

It's my hope that each of you owner/riders reaches a level of satisfaction with a particular machine that gives you such pleasure. I've found that even from the vantage point of my cul-de-sac 'way out here in the boonies, I can love and appreciate the appeal and qualities of that rich palette of two-wheelers that others have chosen. Whether it's the full booming sound and torque of an Electra Glide, the fascinating intricacies of a desmo valvetrain, the elemental beauty of an old Bonnie, or the sheer straight-line competence of a Hayabusa, bikes have so many things that can appeal to the insanity in each of us. Find your niche, but revel in the richness and variety that exists in our hobby. And if you see anyone coming with a straitjacket, twist that right hand really hard!



# BENCH RACING

Tall tales of fact and "friction"

## A Note From The Fringe

by George Smith

**W**e're all a little nuts. But then craziness is in the eye of the beholder. Most of the world ascribes some level of mental instability to a preoccupation with things Italian, or Italian motorbikes in particular. It's just a fact of life for US DESMO members, but one with little downside, thank goodness. I don't recall being denied service at the lunch counter, or being overlooked for a job, because of it.

and handling, than Guzzis. The belt-drive Ducks are much less agricultural than old bevel-drives. We're getting into a pretty tight compartment now. See how I've managed to narrow it down? Every fork in the road that our preferences lead us to take dumps us onto another road that further defines what kind of riders we are, and where we fit in the grand scheme that we call motorcycling. My own forks in the road have taken me a long ways away from what

*By choosing to ride a motorcycle, I've branded myself as crazy to most of the rest of the world. By choosing to ride an Enfield, I'm now crazy to even most motorcyclists, and a little uncomfortable with that.*

Nevertheless, it's curious how craziness tends to fall into certain broad categories that, as time passes, get narrower and more compartmentalized. For example, the motorcyclist won't or can't understand why someone would choose a car for a trip to the Blue Ridge Parkway when it's so obviously bike weather today. The same rider can't see why one would ride a cruiser in the mountains, when sportbikes are so obviously right for that type of ride. European sportbikes, of course, are much more involving than Asian bikes, and much less appliance-like. Italian bikes are the most artistic and involving of all the European bikes. Ducatis are better-looking,

even most motorcyclists consider sane. To wit:

Back in the old days of WERA roadracing, the Yamaha RD350/400 was dominant in the C-production class. I switched to a Honda 400/4,



something different, and even managed, on rare occasions, to beat Bill Birchfield, Craig Hunley, or il Capo (though I doubt all three at once!). I was a four-stroke amid the Castrol haze. Then I noticed four-stroke twins had a special sound and appeal, so of course my next bike was a bevel-drive Ducati, followed in short order by an early seventies Triumph

Daytona and a Norton Commando. It's probably obvious to most of you that while I started on the

*Continues on page 27*



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