

DESMO LEANINGS



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

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Winter 2008



*Indy MotoGP Recap • Ducks Fly South Rally Recap
Sixty Nine Single Project • Track Day Experiences*


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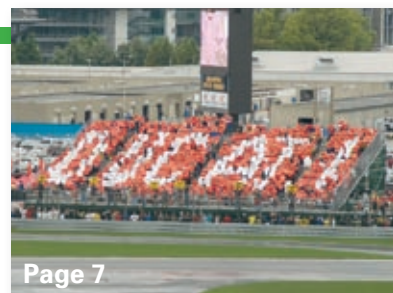
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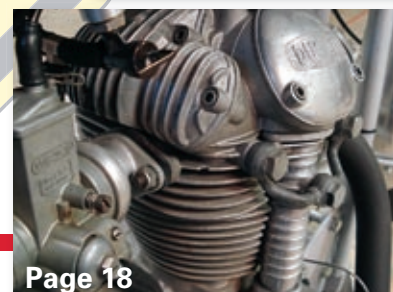
Tall tales of fact and "friction"



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Greetings from il Capo

It is hard to imagine a time when I was not involved with a Desmo Owners Club. Thirteen years ago there were no significant United States clubs and events, so I joined the Ducati Owners Club of Canada and acted as their Southeast Regional Representative. After seven years in that capacity, it became apparent the Southeast Region was almost as active as the parent club. Ducati was looking for someone to start a United States equivalent and asked Clyde and me to get it done—thus the name of our club, US DESMO. This caused some confusion because Ducati North America management changed shortly thereafter, and then we got questions as to why we considered ourselves a national club when DNA wanted regional efforts.

Six years later and we still go by the same name but are more of a Southeast United States club with a magazine that gets international circulation. One copy goes to Australia and several to Canada. A few do find their way to Italy for sure, but I do not think that would surprise anyone. It is amazing to see some of the states to which we ship magazines for our members. California, Montana, and Arizona, to mention a few where you would not normally expect a Southeast club to have members. I guess being the only publication with Ducati-specific information available helps.

I asked my son Tony to write another article for the club. His first two rallies on his new bike would give us a different perspective from the usual reports. Unfortunately, he bought his first house and has other priorities so the old stand in is at it again. John Bullard wrote a whimsical article on his track day at Carolina Motorsport Park that I just had to print. John does own a Ducati but used an SV650 for the track day. I have informed him he needs a 900 SS to replace that bike.

With the current tough economic times, it is not surprising to see attendance down for events. All three rallies this year were off by 25%, and our last track weekend was off by 35%. Our club is run not for profit, but we are being more successful than I had hoped. We are doing fine, and the club balance sheet will be close to zero at the end of the year—a normal occurrence, so it is not a problem.

The MotoGP at Indy was a big, soggy success. The camaraderie of being in a Ducati-only area was fantastic, and our club got noticed by a lot of people who did not know about us. We signed up about twenty new members, some from pretty far away places. Vicki Smith of Ducati dot net fame put together a wonderful package that included Mugello-style stands with the famous red-and-white poster boards spelling out important words like "Ducati." Too bad we could not have had her

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Cover photo by Jim Calandro. "Sometimes you have to ride over a 100 miles to see the fall colors. In this case it was only 300 yards from my driveway."

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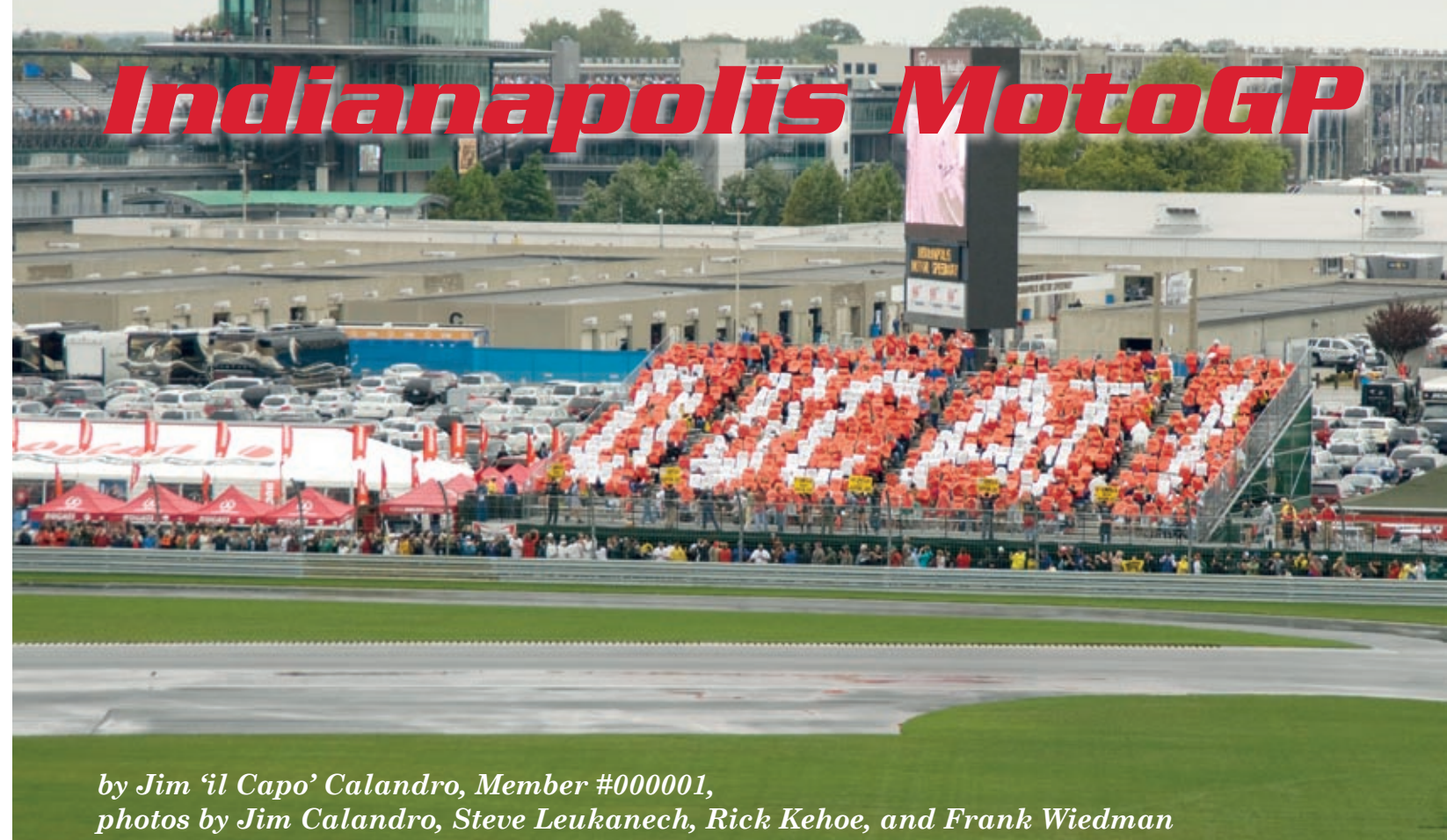
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Indianapolis MotoGP



by Jim 'il Capo' Calandro, Member #000001,
photos by Jim Calandro, Steve Leukanec, Rick Kehoe, and Frank Wiedman

I have always wanted to attend a MotoGP, but Laguna Seca is so far away and the weather is so hot there that it has never had much appeal to me. Besides, I am an East-Coast kind of guy. When it was announced that the event was coming to Indy, I knew I was destined to go; and when Vicki Smith announced the Project Mugello, the suspense was over. Fortunately, I was strong enough to consider even riding up, so it was with great anticipation I planned on going.

As the event became clearer in my mind, it was obvious I would have to trailer up. I needed to be there earlier than I had planned, and with the large club area Vicki planned, I needed to bring lots of stuff. I booked my room, found roommates and a travel partner, and I was all set. The great wisdom of my decision to trailer up

rather than ride came in the form of Ike. A late season hurricane that headed up the interior of our country rather than its usual coastal path left us traveling almost all day in the rain. Good planning!

David Grogan, who doubles as our magazine's proofreader [Saving Jim from mistakes such as his spelling proofreader as two words-DG], joined me for the trip. Nothing like ten hours in a car to get to know someone you already thought you knew. Most of the rain was in the dark; we departed at four, so it was very dark. Somehow it always managed to clear up when we needed to stop for gas, and the trip went smoothly. We arrived at the track early enough to unload all our club stuff at the track and head to the hotel. It was unfortunate that David had a separate hotel from mine, but it was within



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walking distance so was not a real problem.

Friday, we rode to the track in a light rain and got to park in the Ducati-only parking right in the Ducati area. There was a special tent to check your gear, which was good because most of the riders had lots of it in an attempt to stay dry. The booth area was covered, and one of the local clubs had provided tables and chairs. We shared our booth with the Ducati Owners Club of Canada and long-time friends Steven and Linda Warburton. They have been to many US DESMO events, so it was like old home week.



The whole day saw rain off and on, but it was not heavy, and we got to see a lot of the exhibitors and other clubs. The traffic through our booth was pretty heavy all day long, and we signed up a few new members, renewed a few more, and gave away a bunch of magazines. That was good, because I had brought up about four hundred and did not want to try to carry them back on my bike. The club was fortunate to have many members come and volunteer to help man or woman the booth. This allowed me to wander around some and see all the bikes, displays, and some of the practice sessions.

Friday night was the Hill House East dinner. For those of you unfamiliar, a group of Ducatisti has a

tradition of renting a house, on a hill of course, at Laguna Seca and then subletting floor space to pay for it. They also have a dinner on Friday night, and George Betzhold wanted to carry this tradition to the Indy MotoGP. Well, George outdid himself with wonderful Italian food and over 200 participants. Notables like Cook Neilson, Phil Shilling, and Paul Smart came to join the cognoscenti. That turned out to be fortunate for me, because I had carried up the tail section to my Ducati Paul Smart Sport Classic. Paul was very gracious to sign it for me and even posed for several pictures. This is the first time I have ever thought about having a signature on one of my bikes, and it is the right bike and person to be sure.

Beer and wine flowed freely all night, and it was a



very nice party. No one did anything they could not tell their mother about, and several exotic bikes were to be seen and heard. It was a last-minute idea that went off without an apparent hitch. I say that because I saw the look on George's face all night worrying about a problem. Good job, George. Now all you have to do is outdo yourself next year.

Saturday brought some sunshine and more people to the event. Part of my commitment to Vicki was to help man the hospitality tent. Well, I went over and the





staff that was on duty first would not let me in. They are instructed to require a registration, and I had only my Ducati key with me. Fortunately, I had my registration under my seat. I asked if I went over and started my bike up—it was about fifteen feet from their table—if that would be enough. The lady I was talking to looked at me very strangely but did not say anything. I went to walk to my bike when someone said, “He is OK; that is Jim Calandro!” The young lady was not impressed, but she let the other gentleman put on my arm band. Too bad Vicki has been forced to use these new rules. Apparently people have been passing around keys to get

people in who were not entitled to have access. No Ducati registration, no service! David Grogan did “lend” his two Ducati registrations to Gerhard Alf and his son, Kevin, two US DESMO members who are Ducati owners but had not brought their registrations—breaking the letter of the rules but not their spirit.

Later in the day when I was working that same table, I was looking for arm bands on those who were walking though and stopped one person who did not have one. The person who was with him said, “You have got to be kidding. Do you know who he is?” Well, not really, because I was looking at his wrist rather than his face. But looking up, I instantly recognized the distinctive look of Larry Pegram. I explained that he really needs an arm



The weather took its toll in the Ducati parking area. Photographer unknown



band, because his wrists looked just like anyone else’s. Larry, showing that he has a sense of humor, said, “You should be able to tell it was me by all the scars!” When he left the hospitality area later, he was quick to show me his scars. Larry is a good man and does not have an exaggerated sense of self. I like that.

Sunday was the long red snake ride to the track from Ducati of Indy. Not as many bikes showed up as Vicki had hoped for, but it was both early and looked like rain. We had around 100 bikes, so of course we left a little later than planned. We all had directions, so if we got separated we could still find the track. As we left and started to pick up speed on the main road, I saw something go flying by my helmet. I thought to myself that looks like a ticket to the race and some poor sap has just had it fly out of his pocket. Do I stop for it and lose the group?

Well, within 100 feet not only do I see the poor sap by the side of the road, but I realize it is my poor sap,

time for stopping in an area where we should not be, but instead he was concerned to see a biker running up the road in full gear and helmet and was wondering if there was an accident or injury. I reassured him it was only a logistical problem and we were OK and thanked him for his concern.

By then David had returned huffing and puffing but with ticket in hand. Of course the group was long gone, and we just followed the directions we had. What was a real concern was spotting the turn before we went past it. There are no early warning signs to tell you what road is coming up, and all the roads were at a less than 90 degree angle, so the signs were hard to read. All of a sudden we could see a large group of bikes up ahead, and we caught them just as they turned onto the highway that led to the track. The good news is the police had all the side streets blocked, and we just sailed into the track.



The rain even held off, so the day started well. Too bad it did not last.

After getting to see some exciting qualifying in the dry, it looked like a wet race. I am sure you have seen the race on television and know how it all went, but you cannot appreciate the weather if you were not there. Sure a lot of rain fell, but the wind was something to behold. It blew bikes over and knocked down a very large tent

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Gabriele Del Torchio, the CEO of Ducati peruses an issue of Leanings.

David Grogan! :-0 I pulled over and told him I saw it come out and where I thought it was. David hot-footed it up the road, and I stayed with both bikes. He was about half-way there when a local police car stopped by to check on us. I figured he was going to give us a hard



Gary Egan with his well-worn Multistrada photo by Rick Kehoe

Yamaha had set up. We saw a lot of ambulances going to that site. Valentino is impressive at everything he does and is a great showman. Nicky Hayden gave us hope for his future both as one of the few American riders but also as a future Ducati rider. Casey Stoner was injured, and we could see at his autograph sessions he was in pain. His wrist was bandaged, and he kept it off the table. Not a good sign.

Despite the torrential rain and winds, the crowd at the Ducati area remained large all day. There were a lot



of the unwashed who came by to see all the red bikes. Well, they are not all red—my Monster is silver—but you get the idea. We even had a visit by Gabriele Del Torchio, the CEO of Ducati, who came by to say a few words to us. Pictures were taken for sure. All our club hats, stickers,



patches, and watches were sold, and we had only about five magazines left at the end of the day!

We were fortunate our ride back to the hotel was uneventful. Lots of downed tree limbs and leaves, but it did not rain at all. We elected to take surface streets to avoid the traffic heading to the interstate, plus riding on the interstate with all the construction and the high side winds did not seem like a good plan.

Our trip home on Monday was very anticlimactic. No rain, no rush, and no gas! We were fine in all of the more

northern states, but once we reached North Carolina, we had no gas. We called a club member to see if he knew where we might get some, but he was not home. Maybe he ran out of gas? We took a back road hoping it was just an interstate problem, but that did not help. Heading back to the interstate, with the low-fuel light having



graced us with its cheery glow for about 20 miles, we not only found a gas station with gas, but dinner, too. The Pizza Hut next door had a woman stationed under an easy-up with pizza for sale. Anything you wanted as long as it was a large pepperoni. Henry Ford would have been proud of her. We ate and drove home very tired but glad to have some gas in our tank and an end to our adventure. Would we do it again? In a heartbeat!



Thirteenth Annual Ducks Fly South Rally

by Jim 'il Capo' Calandro, Member #000001, photos by Jim Calandro

This year's event had a significance that cannot be adequately described in words. Ducks Fly South has been around for 13 years, but last year I thought it might be my last. I am very happy to report that I not only attended but rode to and from the rally on a bike, rather than in my wife's Mini Cooper like last year. My son Tony, Bob Lattanzi, and Bob's girlfriend Marissa accompanied me. It was great to have good company not only to make the trip more interesting

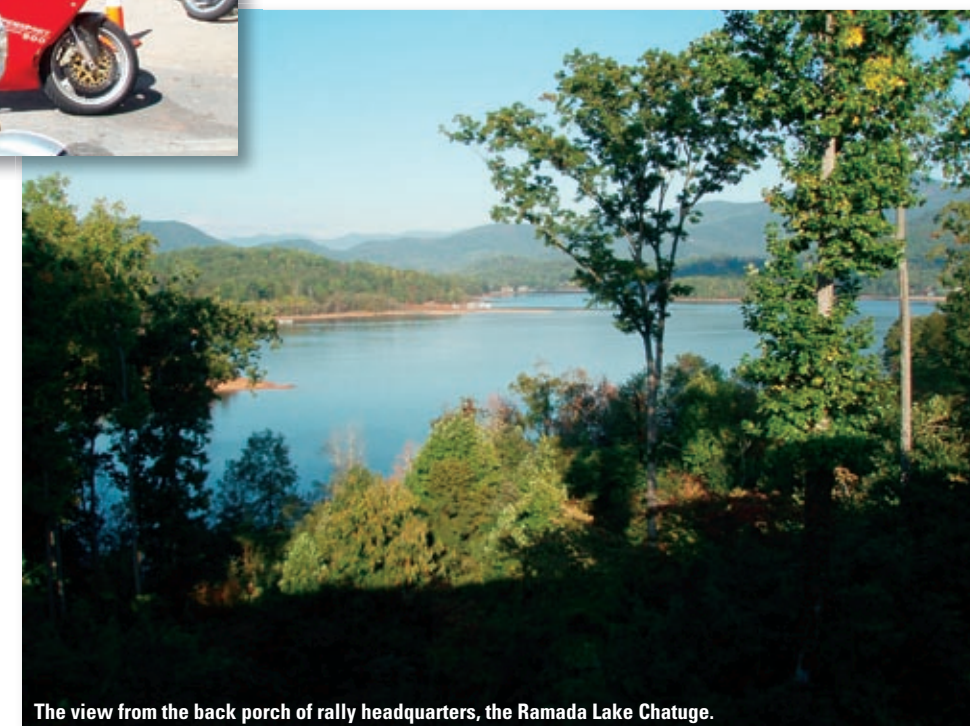


but as backup. This was my first long bike trip in over two years, so anything was possible. On top of that there was a gasoline shortage in the mountains courtesy of Hurricane Ike. My bike has a very small tank, so Bob's bike was my personal tanker.

We left about nine Friday morning so we could be behind the rush-hour traffic. David Grogan was supposed to meet Tony and me along the way, but a court case that could not be handled without his expertise kept him away. [I left Charlotte after four in the afternoon and had a miserable final leg of my ride through twisty, deer-infested roads after dark with a tinted faceshield and with the temperature in the 40s, followed by a terrific day on Saturday—DG] We met Bob and Marissa in South Carolina about an hour and a half after Tony and I started, and we all arrived about five minutes apart. Considering it involved four people departing from two different locations, we scored a home run.

The first part of the trip was mostly straight roads, and the Monster and I got along famously. I was a little concerned about the lack of a real fairing on the higher-speed roads, but it was never a problem. Big tractor trailers did make it move around some, but we all had that problem. The seat was OK, but if I get in the habit of using this bike for longer trips, I will need an aftermarket seat for sure. Once we left SC Highway 11, it was literally all uphill. My lack of riding on mountain roads for the last two years really started to show. Tony kept wondering why I was slowing down so much for corners. He and I ride a lot together locally on roads, so I know he has gotten used to a certain pace. Not that day! He thought I was sleeping. Oh well, such is the price for old age.

We stopped for one Kodak moment and still got to the hotel early so I could get the event set up and started. We have stayed at the Ramada Inn in Hiawassee for the last four years, and they continue to do a great job to assure our return. Attendance was down this year by



The view from the back porch of rally headquarters, the Ramada Lake Chatuge.

about 25%, which was consistent with other rallies we have run this year. There is no getting away from it: we are in a recession and even Ducatisti are not immune.

We were catered by Angelo's pizza this year, and it was much better than the chain pizza place we used last

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Thirteenth Annual Ducks Fly South Rally, Hiawassee, Georgia



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Ducks Fly South 2008

year. We ordered so many pizzas that the delivery lady had to make two trips to bring them all. That worked out pretty well, because it allowed those who came a little later or those who wanted seconds to eat hot pizza. Much of the food was eaten on the fly as everyone wanted to go outside and see what bikes were at the rally. There are always some unusual bikes there, and this year was no exception. Bob Hancock was there on his Paul Smart Limited Edition, just to show that old men can ride extreme sports bikes. He was one tired and sore puppy by the end of the weekend, but he did smile a lot.

Including Tony and me, we had three father and son teams present. Gerhard and Kevin Alf and Eric and Will Kinard were also in attendance. It is gratifying to see a family tradition passed down from father to son or daughter. Unfortunately, most of the sons have the same complaint about fathers: they are too slow! What is this world coming to?

After a good night's sleep, we left the hotel around 9 a.m. and headed for the mountain roads. We used the same route we have used the last four years. It has worked well and, with the new lunch destination, flows better. The weather was perfect for wearing leathers, the roads were clean, and the traffic was fairly light. We stopped for a few Kodak moments on our way to the Motor Company Grill for lunch. Lunch was speedy since I remembered to call them a week ahead of time, and they had enough wait staff to serve us without delay. Score one for planning.

Our afternoon ride started out fine, but as we headed for Wayah Road, we found the road blocked by a Harley rider, who proceeded to let out about 100 more Harleys in front of us. They then headed down the road at ten miles per hour under the speed limit! I was not too concerned, because our turn was about two miles up the road and we would be done with them. Not so fast, Kemo Sabe. They headed up Wayah road in front of us. This is a long, technical road, and there are few places to pass. So discretion being the better part of valor, I pulled off at the

power station and decided to wait about fifteen minutes for them to make their way without us. Soon, we had about thirty Ducatis waiting for the same thing.

Back at the hotel, we were very tired and glad to be back. The gasoline shortage had never reared its head. Not only did most stations have gas, but my bike averaged almost 60 mpg, so the small tank did not turn out to be much of a problem. Our traditional Italian feast was great as usual, and the company was even better. We continue to have dealers, shops, and individuals donate door prizes, so no one goes home empty handed.



NPR Ducati, Atlanta Triumph Ducati, The DucShop, Cycle Gear Atlanta, BellissiMoto, Jay Moser, Chris Anderson, and Bubba Edwards all rose to the occasion and donated items for our attendees. If you frequent any of these shops, be sure to say thank you for us. If you do not, then try to stop by.

After dinner, the parking lot was busy all night long for the obligatory bench racing and other lies to be told. It was good to see so many familiar faces and get to ride and tell lies together. I hated to go to bed, but I was tired and had a 250-mile ride home in the morning.

Sunday started out a little cool, but we shortly had to stop and remove layers to keep from overheating. It is amazing how much heat the body

will build up on tight mountain roads. The ride home was more direct than the trip up because we all needed to be home before dark. It is the time of year deer move around a lot, and dusk riding takes on a new threat. We stopped in Gastonia for a nice lunch and goodbye to all who had ridden with us. Tony and I headed home to end a special trip for us. It was great to visit with all my friends, but it was extra special because this was the first long trip Tony and I have made together. It felt good to see how comfortable he has become with his 900 SS/SP. Now all I have to do is learn to ride faster so he will not be so bored. I am sure my wife slept more soundly when we were both safely home.



THE CONTINUING SIXTY NINE SCRAMBLER SINGLE PROJECT

story and photos by Craig Ellefson, Member #00380

My love of single-cylinder Ducatis started at E&H Cycle in Spartanburg, South Carolina, when that was all Ducati made: singles. Stories of 350s outrunning 650 Triumphs and BSAs in the mountains piqued my interest. At the time, I was “chopping” a 700 Enfield/Indian. When I saw the inside of the Ducati motors—the elegance, precision, and simplicity—I was hooked.

Being of very modest means (I was working my way through college), I could not afford a new bike or even a runner. Bill Epley and Dave Hodges (the E and H of E&H) allowed me to buy a wrecked '69 350 Scrambler for a measly \$275 in '70 or '71. Front end smashed, forks, wheel, and frame all bent, but the motor had only 800 miles on it, a true fixer-upper. I decided to rebuild the frame, but not stock, more “dirt worthy” with a lighter

front end. I studied the dirt bikes of the day and tried to copy the geometry and weight distribution. To move the motor “back,” I extended the neck and shortened the swing arm and moved the upper shock mounts. A triangulated steering head seemed appropriate, as the “Featherbed legend” was still alive. Ceriani motocross forks, English Wassel tank, and Triumph headlight and fender were adapted, as Brit parts were more available. I rode it for some time with a 19-inch front wheel, as the 21-inch I had laced up to a small Japanese hub (light weight) proved to not stop. Later, a 21-inch wheel from a 450 RT bought from John Hoffman corrected the problem.

Years later, I was at Cycle Specialties with the bike, and the “guys,” John, Dave, etc., got to hoohawing and said, “Let’s put the Harris wheel aligners on it and see



what it’s really like.” To everyone’s amazement, mine included, the frame was straight as a string!

The bike has had periods of rest and rust due to other obligations. A few years ago, Works shocks were acquired from Paul Bunde, ammo-can “panniers” were added to make it a mini adventure bike, and a rear rack was made from an old rack from a Ducati Cadet. Trips to South



America were not necessary, as the dirt roads in Oconee and Greene Counties are adventure enough.

At this time I bought a sand bag, TIG welder, and an English wheel to see if I could make aluminum bits for bikes. The rear fender, seat base, and chain guard were good practice parts. The fender took only five times to get it right: the metal has been hammered, wheeled, and annealed so many times it has stress and fatigue marks visible—part of its charm. The bike had



gotten a bit too much charm recently, as rusty frame, spokes, steel rear wheel, etc. prompted a refresh (not a restoration) but with modest means. The frame was painted, not powdercoated, and I laced the wheels myself (more learning experiences, after all I’m a homegrown mechanic etc., not a super craftsman like Marvin Jensen). The biggest problem was a frozen swingarm pivot shaft. It had been rotating in the clamps, not the



bushings! Success was finally achieved without cutting (another story). An aluminum skid plate was made to replace the steel one, completing the aluminum theme. Six-volt electrics are reliable with new wiring, switches, total charging (no regulator), and gel battery. The lights are quite good for 6-volt Italian electrics. The frame, tank, steel rear fender, etc. were formerly all avocado green, a non-motorcycle color, "70's earth ride," and I decided to leave the tank that color for sentimental

reasons and leave the pin striping, which was a bit shaky but had been done by a friend who has since passed on. The bike starts on the third kick, is quite light, and I have been enjoying riding through the country roads here. It should be good for many years to come.

Special thanks to: Marvin; NPR Ducati, Watkinsville, Georgia; ABC paint, Athens, Georgia; Browns Plating, Maysville, Georgia; and Oconee Trim Shop, Athens, Georgia.



Just Call Me Joe (Or Two Days At Carolina Motorsports Park)

by John Bullard, Member #00272

photos by John Bullard, track photos by Nick Nunez

Find a day at the track, or in this case two, seems simple in concept. It's not much time. And it's on a weekend. What else would I be doing, anyway? Catching up at the office?

How much could it cost? Two bits over \$100 per day to register? A movie for two with snacks and a drink (if you share) is over \$30. Well, the registration fee is the start. The parts, tires, repairs, motel, travel, etc. begin to stack the Ben Franklins. The emotional roller coaster adds drama/trauma to the mix. Since there's a cost, how commensurate is the reward? It may be as the commercial states—priceless.

So here's my Good and Bad for two days at CMP. Painful Ugly (crashes) didn't show its, well, ugly face this time.

Good: Looking forward almost a year to a two-day track event with US DESMO, a great club, on a weekend, at CMP, a great track.



Bad (actually the worst part): MIA the whole weekend from left-at-home, taking-care-of-the-dogs, empty-nest-suffering wife who feels kind of down to begin with.

Good: Recently bought a used race/track bike. No more prepping and un-prepping the over-weight street bike. No more busting fingers with those little electrical connectors I'm never sure I can pull apart and get back



together without stripping the wire out of the little plugs; draining anti-freeze; rolling Allen wrenches between my fingers until they are raw removing fairing screws (my next bike will have quick connect fasteners); losing at least one screw or nylon washer; wondering if the Phillips-head screws on the tail light will finally strip out of the plastic if I remove them one more time; bending fingers backwards and sideways to get that little plug-in, one-candlepower flashlight bulb out of the front headlight assembly; wasting time wondering if I should take off the passenger foot pegs...

Bad: No more excuses for the street bike to look like, well, a scratch-and-dent, crash-dummy special, with mixed yellow-panels-spray-painted-sort-of-reddish-orange and real red panels, ST-4 left and ST-2 right, track bike. Hey, maybe an Andy Warhol paint scheme would complement what's there.

More Bad: Takes up room in the crowded carport.

More More Bad: It's an Oriental-produced bike, the ubiquitous SV650.





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Good: It's a 90° V-twin. It sounds OK.

Sideline Good: Bought a BMW RT (nice bike—pathetic exhaust sound) so the wife could have a (semi-)throne and actually go riding for more than ten minutes.

Sideline Bad: Carport really crowded.

Good: Planning ahead (usually a good thing) to transporting bike to track, I take 4WD S-10 to shop to fix the one front CV joint with a broken boot. I haven't the time to repair it myself and would hate to break down going to or from the track.

Bad: \$1800 later both front CV axles, idler arm, Pittman arm, front shocks, front rotors, pads, and transmission lube are replaced, front aligned, rear brakes cleaned, and brake system flushed; the S-10 is ready to go. (How much is this weekend going to cost?)

Good: Friend offers the use of his trailer. It provides low loading height plus room for the ST-4/2 as a backup if the new/old race bike breaks. I could tow it with the refreshed S-10, but maybe the old Suburban would be better.

Bad: Suburban's turn signals haven't worked since helping my son move a couple of months ago. I take to the shop thinking there is a major wiring issue.

Good: It's just a fuse and the shop installs a heavy-duty flasher relay as well. No charge. So I can take the Suburban rather than the S-10.

Bad: I just paid the shop \$1800 to repair a vehicle I don't need to use.

Good: My sister's ex-husband is my mechanic and gets some of the money. He's OK.

Good: Friend works close to my house and brings his trailer so I don't have to drive 25 miles to his house.

Bad: The straps I ordered 10 days earlier with "stock to two-day shipping" didn't ship.

Good: Friend brings extra straps with trailer.

Bad: Assemble

bike night before leaving. "Improve" upon the previous owners' care. Drill a matching hole in the windshield for the support bracket. I crack the windshield.

Good: Only cracked half-way across. Does that matter at inspection?

Bad: Worry about inspection the next day. Worry about a lot of stuff. Worry, worry, worry...

Bad: Like the old joke adding "in bed" to everything, I get to add "in the rain". Leaving work at noon, I load the bikes in the rain. I pack the car in the rain. I plan on leaving at 3 p.m., latest. I leave the house at 5 p.m., on Friday, in Atlanta, going south on I-285 then east on I-20, in the rain. The radio traffic reporters laugh while exclaiming, "There are accidents everywhere in this rain. Good luck!"

Good: Hhhmmmm?... Let me think... We need the rain?

Good: On the way out, I remember to swing by Sports Authority in the rain to get some long bicycling pants to go under my leathers so I won't freeze tomorrow.

Bad: None in the regular section. I check the clearance section. Ahhh, here's a perfect pair! I check the size—women's medium. God, I hope no one is looking. I could blame poor signage but, really, it is the clearance section. How clear does the constantly changing layout have to



be? Also, someone will make a "Here's your sign" joke or a Coke-bottle-bottom-for-glasses joke, so I'll just leave it alone.

Good: I find what I need in the men's clearance section.

Bad: My size isn't marked down.

Good: Find same thing on different rack that is marked down. Nothing like retail consistency.

Bad: Back on the road, I wait through three long lights in the rain to make one left turn just to get on I-285. Traffic is stopped. Windshield fogs up. Not enough Freon for the defrost to work. Great. My kids drive better cars than I. I have bikes, though.

Good: The entrance ramp becomes the next exit ramp which takes me to Home Depot in the rain. I need some metric screws, nuts, and nylon washers.

Bad: What's with careless and lazy customers? Is it that hard to return items to the correct little bins? How did they ever graduate from kindergarten? You know, round pegs into round holes, put the toys up before you go home stuff. I guess the home improvement stores have given up maintaining those little subdivided drawers. The odds just don't work out—4 million customers to 13 hardware clerks.



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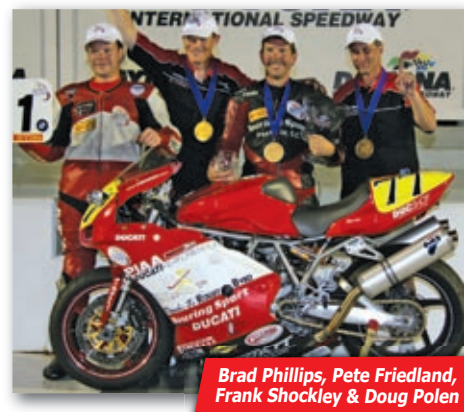


Doug Polen at speed on the Touring Sport Ducati 1000



Pete Friedland running at the front of the pack

Photos by Brian T. Nelson



Brad Phillips, Pete Friedland, Frank Shockley & Doug Polen



Mark Sutton replaces fried clutch plates on a very hot motor while everyone anxiously looks on.

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Good: I find enough of what I need and get back on I-285. Traffic, maturing like a once-immobile baby, has advanced to crawling, in the rain.
Bad: Did I mention it's raining? Did I mention the Suburban's fuse originally blew when towing a trailer moving my son? At night? In the rain? (To a college I always rooted against.) Some thought meanders through my head about doing the same thing expecting different results equals insanity, and I don't wonder if it applies to me. (BTW, I'm very proud of my son keeping the Hope Scholarship over two years and transferring where



he did. It's not easy. I just haven't bought the T-shirt, baseball cap, and window decal, yet. I'm actually proud of him for many other reasons.)

Towing during Friday rush hour, in the rain, with no turn signals, sky darkening, I mumble to the foggy windshield in futility, straining to somehow communicate with the confused drivers surrounding me: "Yes, I know where they are and how to use them. It's the little stalk on the left that goes up and down and clicks." I desperately want everyone to know they've just now broken. Through mental telepathy, I wish peace and understanding with my fellow drivers.

Good: There was an AutoZone on the way to Home Depot where I picked up some fuses in the rain. I'll change them when it quits (Ha!) raining.
Good: I decide to relax and not switch lanes in the rain until away from Atlanta.
Bad: After driving a decade in the rain from Atlanta, it takes another three or four days to drive from Camden to Kershaw after 11 p.m. in the rain.
Good: I see the track! I'm close to fresh sheets, hot shower, and no more windshield wipers!!
Bad: In my excitement I think about honking my horn really long and waving to everyone camping in the rain Friday night. I'm sure they want to share my joy.
Good: I think better of it and focus on the droning wipers. The driver's side window doesn't roll down anyway, raining or not, so I couldn't wave.
Good: Reservation is confirmed; air conditioner/heater works with no rattles; shower has plenty of hot water;

sleep, a wake up call, then coffee. Yes!
Good: Get to the track with plenty of time—unusual for me. No more rain.
Bad: Still worrying and nervous—new bike, some new gear, haven't been to a track in a while—plus the normal butterflies.
Good: I had previously burned out all the oil that migrated into the exhaust when the bike tipped over a while back. (Note to self: if bike tips over, pick it up immediately.) I fogged the neighborhood for mosquitoes. No charge to the neighbors. I started it a couple of days ago just to make sure, and it didn't smoke. Bugs got an undeserved reprieve. (I wonder why the houses on my street don't sell.)
Good: I've lost a little weight (Yeah, South Beach!) and can breathe in my leathers.
Bad: Start bike for first session and it smokes like a son-of-a-gun. Where does this oil keep coming from!!!!?
Good: After tech inspection, rather than starting the bike, I had pushed the bike back to my pit. No one "important" got to see it smoke and begin the laugh-fest.
Bad: Now, do I start taping up the street bike and bunging up my fingers or wait for oil to burn off? How long before the EPA finds me and fines me? More importantly, how much humiliation can I handle? How

long before a crowd gathers to jeer and holler for me to just go ahead, get it over with, rev that sucker and blow it the rest of the way up!? Get rid of that disgrace-to-real-motorcycling non-Ducati!
Good: Helpful mechanic with foreign accent, without laughing, asks, "Is that smoke normal?"—giving me the benefit of doubt that it might be a two-stroke knowing full well it isn't. Cool guy with supreme emotional control trying to help out! With this minimal emotional connection to another human, I can pretend I also am a human rather than a humiliated worm.
Bad: I try to explain. His eyes glaze over. I'm a worm.
Bad: I drive to the far side of the parking area, wishing the wind were blowing away from the pits but it's not, hang my head in shame, don't dare glance over at the other riders, and hope the oil will eventually burn out. I'm so embarrassed. When I got permission to bring the SV, Jim OK'd it but warned me they would point and laugh. When he forgot my dunce hat at check in, I incorrectly thought I was off the hook.
Good: The oil actually burns out before the session is over and I get in a few laps. The session must have been really long. It felt like I pattered back and forth on Humiliation Avenue for at least an hour smoking the place up.
Good: After second session, I finally start to relax. I forget about the rain, turn signals, burning oil, and new bike and start the floating/flying rhythm of the track. It's as close as I can imagine to flying a WWII fighter without leaving the ground.

US DESMO SCHEDULE 2009

Track Day, Monday, March 30, Roebing Road, Savannah, GA.*

Ducks Along The Blue Ridge (DABR), May 1-3, Mt Airy, NC

Track Day, Monday, May 18, Carolina Motorsports Park, Kershaw, SC.

Ducks Head West (DHW), August 7-9, Erwin, TN

Ducks Fly South (DFS), Sept. 18-20, Hiawasse, GA*

Track Weekend, Oct. 10-11, Carolina Motorsports Park, Kershaw, SC.*

Track Weekend, Oct. 31-Nov 1, Roebing Road, Savannah, GA.*

*Indicates new event or new dates for traditional events.

see www.usdesmo.com for more information and registration forms

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Good: Figure out a new goal. It's not to get the knee puck on the asphalt but rather avoid jumpiness when it does touch down.

Bad: Voice bounces around inside helmet rather insistently late in the day: You didn't check your gas like you promised! You're for sure not a racer, but this is a race bike! There is no gas gauge! There is no flashing yellow reserve light! Pit! Like now!

Good: Close, but made it around. No further humiliations for the rest of the day.

Bad: Need a snack close to midnight. It's closing time at the convenience store. Sorry, we can't take a hundred.

We're about ready to close. If you're closing, where's all the money you pulled in today?!* What's wrong with \$100 bills anyway? They buy less than \$20s did when I was a kid. One is barely enough to fill up the Suburban. Nobody likes them. It's like they are not real. (*I know. I worked retail. They already closed out the register and really don't have the change.)

Good: I actually find \$12 to cover the \$11.68 for the snacks and drinks. I can appease the stomach and go to sleep.

Bad: First session of the second day, I discover someone stuck extra-heavy springs in my clutch overnight. Boy, do I ever need to keep exercising. Boy, I'm glad my dirt bike racing cousins say it's OK to upshift without the clutch. Just back off the gas. Boy, I hope they're not wrong. Boy, I wonder how I'm going to downshift.

Good: Left hand eventually starts working.

More good: As many people leave early Sunday, the track becomes more like a private playground. Cool.

Bad: Saying goodbye to the people when they leave.

Good (maybe the best part): Saturday morning I park next to a couple of riders who are as generous, helpful, and thoughtful as can be. One has with him his wife and his four-year-old son, who has a cool collection of Matchbox Monster Trucks he shares with other kids. The other has a four-year-old granddaughter whom he wishes were there as her mother, his daughter, has recently passed away. I join them for dinner at Chili's Saturday

night. I marvel at life sometimes. Like now, parking at random and ending up next to these wonderful people.

I'm not the clearest speaker, and they get my name wrong, so I am Joe all weekend. I actually like the sound of it. Maybe I should have been named Joe rather than John, Jr., with all the attendant expectations of

living up to John, Sr., an impressive and good man. Hearing "Little Johnny Junior" a gazillion times growing up probably twisted me a bit.

So, just call me Joe. (But please, not Little Joey Junior.) And when you ask how much a track day costs, there may be a slight smirk on my face when I answer. I'll not bring up prep, parts, tires, repairs, and driving time or the emotional ups and downs. You may get discouraged and not show up. That would be bad. I'll just say a little over a \$100 a day and hope you'll show up. Maybe we'll have dinner at Chili's.

But, since no one takes hundreds, there's no way one day is only gonna cost a bit over a 100 bucks!

And the reward? What's it worth to fly for two days with new-found friends?



BENCH RACING

Tall tales of fact and "friction"

Ride To No Where

by Jim 'il Capo' Calandro, Member #00001

Today after doing a bunch of club paperwork, I decided to run into town to drop off the deposits, mail some membership packets, and check the post office box. Well, today is late February and it is 62 degrees outside, so I decided it would have to be a bike, not the car. I have not ridden the ST2 in quite a while, so I thought I would blow off a few cobwebs and take it out for these errands. I go to the post office often, and all the counter staff know me and my bad habits. They always get a kick when I come in wearing full leathers. They usually comment about how nice a day it was for a ride. Of course, I shared with them my problem, that somehow it was four miles to the post office but thirty-eight miles home. Gratefully, no one asked me to explain what this meant.

As I progressed up the road and became reacquainted with the ST2, I started to get a rhythm. I came to a series of S-turns but slowed to check on a new road that is just over the blind crest of the first right. As I did, a cop came up over the small hill. Had they not added that small road, I would have been leaned way over and it would have been obvious I was going faster than the posted limit. I checked my mirror and did not see any brake lights, so I rolled on the throttle and caught the next three turns in quick succession. The day was only getting better.

As I came to the end of this road where I would turn left to continue on home, a large truck came up the road and went on its way right in front of me. Now there is only one place to pass on this road if you do not have a

If there was ever a day that explained why I love to ride, today was it.

I have a series of back roads locally that still have not seen extensive development, so the curves are still there and the traffic is not. On my way home, I took a turn onto a particularly nice road. It has some really great turns with no driveways or side streets near them. I came to the four-way stop, and a car had arrived much earlier than I did and was going to turn onto this nice road ahead of me. It is all but impossible to pass safely on this road, so I was doomed. To my great surprise and pleasure, the car driver waved to me, letting me go before him. The day was getting better already.

death wish, so I bided my time and prayed for a clear path. Well, it was getting late in the day and rush hour was getting close, so traffic coming at us was starting to get heavy. We rounded the turn for the passing area and low and behold no traffic, a fourth gear roll on, and the truck was history. Man, I was three for three; it just does not get any better than this. I had run my errand, blown out the cobwebs on both the bike and my brain, and caught three traffic breaks. It was clearly time to go home. If there was ever a day that explained why I love to ride, today was it.



continued from page 3

order up better weather. The only thing missing was a JumboTron for our stands.

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Jim



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