



THE WAY I SEE IT *by Genevieve Schmitt*

What's Next For You?

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I'VE BEEN RIDING FOR 21 YEARS. THE LAST FEW OF WHICH I've started uttering the phrase "Been there, done that" when it comes to certain motorcycle adventures. I got bored with the Laughlin River Run a few years back after having

attended faithfully the previous 10 years. Same with Daytona Bike Week. I'd been for the past six or seven years, and didn't feel the need to repeat the same old thing. As for Sturgis, counting the number of souvenir magnets on my refrigerator, 2011 was my 15th time attending. However, the beauty and serenity of the Black Hills continue to beckon me year after year.

How about you? Will you be attending any of these rallies or others, like say Laconia Bike Week, for the eighth, ninth, or 10th time? Are you saying the same thing when it comes to your 2012 motorcycle calendar: been there, done that? I've tried to keep my motorcycle life interesting by breaking up the monotony every chance I get. I've gone on two two-week-long motorcycle trips (without a rally being the destination), both of them camping part of the way. I jumped at the opportunity to take an organized motorcycle tour, one time north of the border into Canada, and the other south of the border into Mexico. Both were awesome new experiences for me.

I've taken advanced rider training courses, improving my skills tremendously, including the MSF's Experienced RiderCourse, a class I highly recommend to all riders. The course helps you fine-tune everything you've learned so far. Two years ago, I did an eight-day dual-sport ride in the Rocky Mountains of Colorado with 11 other women. We called ourselves the Dirty Dozen, slept under the stars, and raised \$40,000 for breast and gynecol-

ogical cancer research charities in the process. The point is, I've added a lot of new adventures to my motorcycle memories book, keeping it interesting every mile of the way — and isn't that what life's all about?

What are you going to do differently this upcoming year? Have you planned any road trips to places you've yet to visit but have always wanted to? Who are you going with? If you don't want to bother with the details, have you considered going on an organized motorcycle tour? I can attest that OMTs, as they're called, are a great way to experience foreign lands, leaving the often complex details of arranging for motorcycles, meals, map routes, and money exchanges to the experts.

While I've done an awful lot of varied motorcycling activities, there are plenty more on my list. I want to take a motorcycle tour in New Zealand, and while I'm Down Under, hit Australia as well. I've heard the riding is spectacular. I also want to embark on an overnight girls' ride with some of my favorite female friends, stopping at cool places to shop, dine, and relax (i.e. massages!). I'm interested in going off the beaten path some more. My home state of Montana has more unpaved roads than paved ones. I'm itching to explore them but wouldn't think of taking my Street Glide for more than a few miles on a gravel road. I ride a dual-sport for that.

You took up riding because of all the new and exciting experiences it would

add to your life, right? Don't fall into a rut doing the same old thing, forgetting about why you started riding in the first place. It's important to always reach for more and expand your horizons in motorcycling. Some of these activities take a lot of time and planning to get them accomplished. It's important to set a goal and attach a timeline to it. It's also important to identify obstacles that may get in the way of accomplishing your goal. Work is a big one for me as it is for a lot of folks. How can I take two weeks off to go to New Zealand when I'm running my own company? If I start planning now, I can probably get all my ducks in a row so I can leave next year. Another important step to accomplishing a goal is to talk to people who've already done what you want to do. If going on an organized motorcycle tour interests you, talk with people who have already gone with that company. The tour operator should provide you with a list of previous customers you can call. These folks can share advice and allay any fears you might have.

Taking small steps is key to accomplishing that next step in your motorcycling life, or anything big in your life for that matter. Trying to plan and accomplish something sooner than your personal timeline allows can be overwhelming; you may never realize your new dreams that way. Start moving in that direction now. Don't put off your motorcycling dreams any longer. When you start experiencing new things in your riding life, you'll be rewarded with new skills, new stories, and new memories; best of all you'll be a richer motorcyclist for it.

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